



The above mural honoring our Veterans through the era's is on display in our hallway and was created by local artist Galen McCarthy

# VICTOR SIERRA OSCAR COMMO CHECK!

Vol 3 Number 9 | "America's Veterans embody the ideals upon which America was founded." | September 2020

This publication is for Veterans, their families and their communities, The information provided herein is to keep you informed of events, newsworthy items and historical data of interest.

Proud member of



MN and National Associations of Veteran Service Officers



"In the aftermath, we are because they were." R.J. Heller,

## OFFICE INFORMATION

The Jackson County Veterans Service Office is located at:

402 White St. (Door 6)  
Jackson, MN 56143  
507.847.4774

[CVSO@co.jackson.mn.us](mailto:CVSO@co.jackson.mn.us)

Monday 8am-4:30pm  
Tuesday 8am-4:30pm  
Wednesday 8am-Noon  
Thursday 8am-Noon  
Friday Closed

(Available for after hour & weekend appointments case-by-case)

First Monday monthly we are at the Lakefield library 1PM-3:30PM

Hours may be flexed without notice due to meetings and trainings. Please call for an appointment!

Do a friend a favor, do a "Buddy Check" regularly

## BE WARY OF SOLICITORS

"If it looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, we have at least to consider the possibility that we have a small aquatic bird of the family Anatidae on our hands." (Quote by Douglas Adams) I'm sharing this with you as a reminder to be wary about those soliciting for YOUR money, especially for causes you know



nothing or little about or who may be misrepresenting known non-profit aid organizations. There are many great people out there doing what is right but there are many predators too who only want your money,

**Don't become a victim!** In the military it was always "when in doubt, salute", but in cases like this when in doubt give it some serious thought and either approach them with valid questions or just ignore them.

A "non-profit" set up outside the Walmart in Grand Rapids, MN. After some checking it seems to be a legit 501c(3) non-profit. He is asking for donations from every person who walks in, and he received a lot! The area CVSO watched him for 20 minutes and then confronted him. He stated he does not raise funds in his own county but travels around the state to raise funds just like he was doing here.

When he was challenged he became very defensive and accused the CVSO of harassing him. He was dropping names of several organizations and counties who can vouch for him while providing their thank you letters to read. Additionally, he is the sole member and president of this nonprofit.

He may be donating some money and did offer to donate locally if there was an organization who would apply for his grant. His offer was declined and we plan to keep an eye out for him and not have him back in our county. Sadly, he was able to be outside Walmart for two full days before it was brought to our attention. Walmart told him he can't come back and he was confrontational with them as well.

He justifies what he does by calling out what other organizations do and tries to trash them, the DAV in particular. He said he is giving back way more of the donations than they do so he sees nothing wrong with the way he is operating. **One more thing that seemed suspicious, ALTHOUGH NEVER SERVING HE LIKES TO DRESS AND LOOK LIKE A VETERAN.**



## IMPORTANT CORRECTION FROM AUGUST!

Reference page 8 of the August newsletter. It was brought to my attention that I had listed the Veterans Crisis Line toll free number in error. Please make note that the correct number is:

**800-273-8255**

## SPECIAL DAYS THIS MONTH

### SEPTEMBER IS: SELF IMPROVEMENT MONTH!

- 1 – National Hangover Day
- 2 – **VJ Day WWII (1945 - Victory over Japan)**
- 3 – **QPR for Agricultural Communities – Suicide 3PM**
- 7 – **Labor Day**
- 11 – **911 Remembrance Day**
- 13 – Grandparents Day
- 13 – Uncle Sam Day (*first observed in 1813*)
- 17 – Citizenship Day / Constitution Day
- 18 – **USAF Birthday / POW/MIA Recognition Day**
- 19 – International "Talk Like A Pirate" Day
- 20 – Wife Appreciation Day
- 21 – **International Peace Day / World Gratitude Day**
- 22 – Autumnal Equinox (*Fall Begins*)
- 25 – Native American Day
- 26 – Johnny Appleseed Day
- 26 – National Hunting & Fishing Day
- 27 – **Gold Star Mother's Day**
- 28 – National Good Neighbor Day



Your Jackson County CVSO will be on the KKOJ Morning Show the 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Tuesday of every month. Tune in but don't tune out!** The show begins at 8:50AM. Question & answer, interesting information, VA Program updates fun facts, straight talk and announcements. This will be geared for all Veterans, their families and Veteran Organizations...

### **STAY TUNED - STAY INFORMED!**



**Through the vehicle of radio, Thomas Lyons of the MN Military Radio Hour provides information pertinent to today! He has a guest most every week and discusses upcoming events important to you as the Veteran or military family. The MN Military Radio Hour is on KKOJ radio at 3PM Sundays.**

### **FIRST MONDAY MONTHLY IN LAKEFIELD**

**Don't forget that the Jackson County Veteran Service Office is located at the Lakefield Library the first Monday of every month, 1-3:30PM. C'mon down and visit. Recommend that you call for an appointment first at 507-847-4774 or just walk in...**



### **TOGETHER WITH VETERANS**

Joining forces with rural Veterans and their local partners to reduce Veteran suicide in their communities.

The "Together With Veterans" is a five-phase process to support rural communities in developing a local action plan to prevent Veteran suicide.

The five Phases in this toolkit guide the community through identifying Veterans and other key partners; learning about suicide prevention and specific community strengths and needs; and developing and carrying out an effective local Veteran suicide prevention action plan.

What can a **coalition** do? Find out by clicking on this link <https://togetherwithveterans.org/>

**"So let's be honest with ourselves and not take ourselves too serious, and never condemn the other fellow for doing what we are doing every day, only in a different way."**  
~ Will Rogers

### **MOST UNUSED MN VETERAN BENEFITS**

"Our most underused benefits are the three State Veterans Cemeteries and the Minnesota GI Bill, especially for licensing and certifications." -- Larry Herke, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

<https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/education/minnesota-gibill/>

<https://mn.gov/mdva/memorials/stateveteranscemeteries/>

### **VA MOTTO MORE GENDER NEUTRAL**

Per a published article on Military.COM from 30 Jul 2020 by Patricia Kime concerning a plan approved by the House Veterans Affairs Committee requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to adopt a version of its mission statement which may be more inclusive than the one that it currently emblazoned on most VHA buildings.



VA's motto is currently from President Abraham Lincoln's 1865 quote, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." They wish to create a more gender-neutral version: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those 'who shall have borne the battle' and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."

This is to ensure that the increasing number of women serving in uniform feel welcome, respected and well cared for as well as their male counterparts.



The bill has been introduced for the past two congressional cycles, but until now it had never made it out of committee.

The newer version of the motto is often used during official ceremonies and in correspondence, but the VA is

moving ahead with plans to place plaques with the new statement at all VA cemeteries.

It has been noted that Lincoln's quote as the mission statement assumes gender neutrality in historical usage and context.

*"There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age."*  
- Sophia Loren

## MARTIN COUNTY DEDICATES COBRA 327 HELICOPTER

August 19, 2020 – MN DVA Press Release



After four years of effort, hard work and dedication, the Martin County Veterans Memorial Committee has restored Cobra 327 to its former glory. This internationally famous helicopter is now on public display at the Martin County Veteran Memorial Park as a reminder of the dedication of our Veterans of county, state, country and our allies who have served in our Armed Forces.

On August 1, MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke attended a dedication event for the Bell Cobra Helicopter 327, an important addition to the Martin County Veterans Memorial. Acting Deputy VA Secretary Pamela Powers was also in attendance.

On June 24, 2019, the Bell AH-1F Cobra helicopter arrived in Fairmont on a flatbed semi from California. But that was three years into the effort that required the Martin County Veterans Memorial Committee to incorporate into a 501(c) organization, find a sponsor and raise funds to support the purchase of the helicopter.

The history of this helicopter includes U.S. Army crews flying the Cobra in combat missions in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during the Vietnam War. These missions of combat, recon and armed escort resulted in bullet holes riddling the helicopter 12 times. After a repair, the Cobra was put back in action. At the battle of Lan Son 719, in Laos, the pilot and gunner took on a devastating

projectile in the hydraulic system. Members of the South Vietnamese ARVIN assisted in their rescue and they all made it back alive. Cobra 327 was again put to the test for Kern County, California fire department. Strapped with a 380-water tank and infer-red sensors, it fought night fires, maneuvering in the tightest spots that earned this machine the title of "The SNAKE."

At the August 1 event, Commissioner Herke recalled his experience with a Cobra. "As I was concluding my assignment as the Officer in Charge of the Aviation Brigade at Holman Field in St. Paul, I was treated to an 'honor rotation' on a Cobra," he said. "This includes the pilot cutting the engine causing a rapid descent. If you've ever been in an elevator that seems to be dropping too fast, it's similar to that – but worse. I had both a knot in my stomach and a lump in my throat, but the pilot expertly achieved a soft landing."

Herke also congratulated the Martin County Veteran Memorial County on the successful completion of this project.

The committee's next project is creating statues of a combat patrol made up of a WW1, WW2, Korea, Vietnam, and present-day soldiers in their proper uniforms and weapons, to represent the men and women who sacrificed their lives for this great country.

## UPDATING YOUR DIRECT DEPOSIT

More and more we are seeing things go self-service or paperless and done online.

To improve security and make changes more efficiently, Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) is transitioning to an online process for Veterans to initiate or change their direct deposit information.



*Safe. Simple. Secure.*

While the process is ongoing, Veterans will be able to use the legacy forms and fax method through the end of the year.

As always, we will be able to help any Veteran with questions about the process by calling our helpline at 1-800-827-1000 (TTY: 711), or by going to your nearest VA regional office (if accepting in-person appointments) and change this information in person.

For more information on how to make changes or update your direct deposit account please go online to: [www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit/](http://www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit/)

**DID YOU KNOW**,,, If I don't have a bank account you can still use direct deposit saving you a trip to the bank?

**The Veterans Benefits Banking Program** provides a list of Veteran-friendly banks and credit unions that can set up an account for you so you can use direct deposit. To access, go to (<https://veteransbenefitsbanking.org/>).

**To get started**, call one of the participating banks or credit unions listed on the website. Be sure to mention the Veterans Benefits Banking Program.

***“The minute you read something that you can't understand, you can almost be sure that it was drawn up by a lawyer.”***

– Will Rogers

## **I ALREADY HAVE A POWER OF ATTORNEY**



***“I already have a Power of Attorney” or “Why do I need a Power of Attorney, I don't want someone taking care of my business!” or “What does the Power of Attorney do for me?”***

In this case the term **“Power of Attorney”** or **“POA”** refers not to a person who can handle your debts, income, make decisions about buying or selling property.

**The VA assigns a POA** to assist and represent you with getting your claim through all of the red tape for approval.

**The most frequently used POA's** in our office are with the MN Department of Veteran Affairs, American Legion, VFW, DAV, and PVA. There are many others available if you would wish to use them, just ask your CVSO for a list.

***“What the country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds.”*** ~ Will Rogers

## **NEVER TOO SOON TO TEACH YOUR KIDS!**

Commentary by Jeff Gay

**Kids have brains that are like sponges** ready to absorb all of the information that is fed to them. This includes good, bad or otherwise information! Kids are like a sponge and are truly impressionable, be sure the impression you leave on them is a positive one.

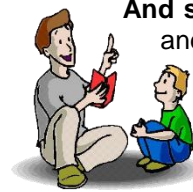
**Kids are innocent, unless** it comes to the cookie jar, that would've been me! That means they are not born with any bias toward any one or thing, racial or otherwise. All that “stuff” is learned from others, family or not. As adults we are role models, remember the old adage **“monkey see; monkey do”**? Yep, they want to be just like you!



**It's an honor and a curse** that they want to emulate you or any part of you. If you display angst against others or make bad decisions so will they but if you're honest and forthright, they will be too.

**Don't expect the school to teach them** social skills. If you don't teach them they'll learn what they pick up from others and the world around them. To name a few of the things they have to get from you are:

- Politeness/Manners
- Common Sense
- They are Important Too
- Their Thoughts Count
- Help Without Asking
- Their Opinions Count
- Handling Finances
- Problem Solving
- Handling Anger
- How to Love
- To be kind
- Do the Right Thing
- Basic Rules of Life
- Respect Others
- Trust
- Common Values



**And so many more!** Children need guidance and positive reinforcement. A cute book that is written in understandable language is **“All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten”**. Another I like is **“Jonathan Livingston Seagull”**. Both have great life lessons...

**They also need to know** what to do in case of an emergency. Such as weather, fire, flood, home repair, auto care & repair, etc.

**This includes knowing what is** in an emergency supply kit, how to take cover, changing a tire on the car, basic first aid, everyday safety, the rules of the road with a bicycle, etc. These are part of your basic parenting skills. Make sure you “pack” them in your child's “toolbox for life”.

**Loaded with these tidbits** your child should be successful in whatever they do! But remember, kids do make mistakes and how you react to those mistakes has a significant bearing on the child's mental well-being. Be firm but be sure they understand what was done wrong. They may end up fearing rather than respecting you.

**Remember to be fair, understanding** and to explain what they did that they are being punished for. Many times they don't know, we just assume that they do!

**Last but by far from least**, try hard not to display your anger at one another as adults or any abuse that may be inflicted. Abuse comes in many forms such as physical, mental, monetary, body language, yelling, bullying, name-calling, etc.



Many of today's domestic abusers “learned” by watching it happen at home and then it becomes a normal for them and the trend continues. There are always consequences and sometimes they are not legal consequences, they are personal such as passing it on to your children.



**Looking back, I have to applaud** my folks for their discretion in some things and for their guidance in many others. Their explanations had an impact on me which

allowed me to learn things I have carried with me all of my years.

**All in all, just remember** that your child is a mini you! Many of their actions you might recognize as something you have done at one time or another and they may have come back to bite you in the form of biting your kids! Be a good mom and dad!

**If you are or have encountered abuse of any kind there, regardless of gender, help is available!**

**If you need immediate assistance call 9-1-1. If not then please call your local crisis center**, if you're in the SW Minnesota area this would be the SW Crisis Center.

There is **NEVER** a reason that **ANYONE** should suffer **ABUSE** from **ANYBODY**!



**Weekly Outdoor Support Groups...** These will be offered every Tuesday for 6 weeks beginning September 15<sup>th</sup> (6 pm - 7 pm). Please join us for a trauma and self-care support group in nature.

**For more information or if you're interested in the Outdoor Support Groups or Yoga please call Addie or Maria at 507-831-2244 or email [addie@mnsbcc.org](mailto:addie@mnsbcc.org) or [maria@mnsbcc.org](mailto:maria@mnsbcc.org)**

***"Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment."*** ~ Will Rogers

## **WEATHER PREPAREDNESS**

**Getting your family prepared** for any disaster by developing an emergency plan, building a kit, and understanding preparedness basics. This is another extremely important life lesson, being prepared for the elements. Storms can develop when you least expect them and you have to be ready to jump into action!

**Children are most vulnerable** when disaster strikes. They cannot adjust on their own when the people, places and routines they depend on for safety and wellbeing are affected by upheaval. They are likely to suffer long-term developmental, physical and psychological setbacks following disaster or other emergencies.

**That's why in addition to** ensuring facilities have strong emergency plans, preparedness education for youth is critically important. Too often, disaster preparedness lessons are limited to school fire drills, active shooting lockdowns or simply avoided all together due to the sensitive nature of the topic. However, learning about disasters and how to respond actually helps children gain a sense of understanding and control so they are equipped to respond more quickly and safely in a crisis.

**Being prepared for disasters starts at home.** Everyone can be part of helping to prepare for emergencies. Young children and teens alike can be a part of the process. As a parent, guardian, or other family member, you have an important role to play when it comes to protecting the children in your life and helping them be prepared in case disaster strikes.

### **Step 1**

**Be sure to teach your kids** about the different natural disasters and how to react in each one and then get your family prepared for any disaster by developing an emergency plan, building a kit, and understanding preparedness basics.

**Build an emergency supplies kit.** Include a three-day supply of water, nonperishable food, flashlights, blankets and kid-friendly activities. Organizations like **FEMA** ([www.ready.gov/kids/family-emergency-planning/build-a-kit](http://www.ready.gov/kids/family-emergency-planning/build-a-kit)) and the **American Red Cross** ([www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/survival-kit-supplies.html)), both sites provide a list of emergency supplies to help you prepare.

**Be sure once you Create a plan** you practice your emergency plan. ([www.ready.gov/kids/family-emergency-planning/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/kids/family-emergency-planning/make-a-plan)) Include two evacuation routes, a safe room and two different meet-up locations — and make sure kids can run through it calmly.

**Run through the basics.** Kids should know how to **call 911**, identify themselves, identify their location, reach emergency contacts and get to predetermined safe locations.

### **Step 2**

**Teach your kids about the different** natural disasters and how to react in each one.

**IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: There is NO SUCH THING as a "Shark-nado". That's all Hollywood!**

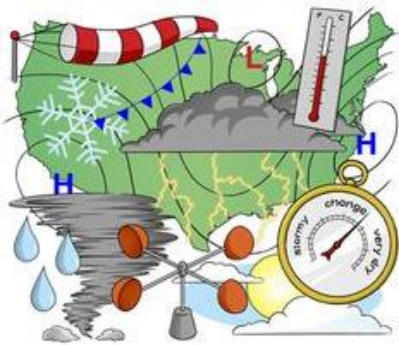


- **Tornado** – If you are in the path of a tornado, go into a tornado safe place. This is typically the lowest level of the building and stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. If you are outside with no car or nearby shelter, lie down in a ditch and protect your head.
- **Severe Thunderstorm** – If you have advanced notice that a severe storm is heading your direction, there are ways to be more prepared. If a storm is sudden, go indoors if you see lightning or hear thunder, and don't use items that plug into electrical outlets. Avoid using running water, as faucets can conduct electricity.
- **Earthquake** – Practice the "Drop, Cover and Hold On" method, and learn to recognize safe places in each room at home and at school.
- **Hurricane** – When you know a hurricane is expected, prepare your home and family for the possibility of impact. During the storm stay away from

glass windows and doors and be ready to follow hurricane evacuation instructions from emergency officials if necessary.

- **Flooding** – Don't go into flooded areas. "Turn Around, Don't Drown!" Just six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- **Wildfire** – If you are under a wildfire warning, get to safety right away. Leave if told to do so. If trapped, call 9-1-1 and use N95 masks to keep particles out of the air you breathe.
- **Snowstorms/Blizzards/Extreme Cold** – Stay off roads, stay indoors and dress warmly. Prepare for power outages and use generators if possible. Look for signs of **hypothermia** and frostbite as well as check on neighbors.

### Step 3



**Update your kit and plan for the "new (Covid) normal."**

**Parents or guardians may be overwhelmed** addressing the needs of their whole family with the upcoming school year. Childcare centers, camps and schools may be closed. The

best thing families can do for protection is to prepare ahead of time to meet the children's unique needs at times of disaster.

**You may also need to adjust your actions** and emergency plan based on the latest guidance from the **CDC** and your local officials. Keep in mind the safety of others as well as your own. Make sure to put extra gloves, face masks and hand sanitizer in your kit. Check with the shelter you go to as it may require the use of face masks while you shelter there during the storm.

### **YOUR "GO BAG"**

**In any case you should always have** a few days of any prescription meds available with you in a "Go Bag". This is a bag or suitcase you can quickly grab that contains a list of your medications, important papers (*i.e. Birth/Marriage/Death/Deed/Bills of Sale/Auto & Real Insurance/Military Discharge/Medical Cards/Prescription List, etc.*) among other things such as clothing, water, emergency rations, and so forth to get you through the next few days if you cannot return to your home.

## **VETERAN CARE GIVERS PROGRAM**

Veterans Affairs News Release

After a yearlong delay, veterans from World War II through Vietnam who need around-the-clock care from a loved one can apply for the Department of Veterans Affairs' family caregiver program, starting Oct. 1.

The VA announced Friday in the Federal Register that the program's expansion to include veterans who served on or before May 7, 1975, will begin with several changes that affect all who are enrolled, including current veterans and caregivers.

Under the new rules, veterans with a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or higher, who also meet certain criteria and served before the 1975 date, are eligible to apply in October.

The VA will determine whether the applicant fits into one of two categories: Level 1, those who need substantial caregiving but are more capable than the most disabled cohort; or Level 2, those who are not able to "self-sustain in the community," meaning they require continuous supervision and help with three or more daily activities.

According to the VA, the stipend amount for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregiving will be dependent on geography and level. A caregiver in Dallas, supporting a Level 2 veteran, for example, would receive a monthly stipend of roughly \$2,803.17. For someone caring for a Level 1 veteran, it would be \$1,751.98.

Those currently enrolled in the program and those with a pending application will be reassessed under the new eligibility criteria over the next year, according to the VA.

If a reassessment results in an increased stipend, the veteran and their caregiver would receive the new amount, as well as a lump sum of retroactive pay back to Oct. 1, 2020. If the assessment determines the veteran is eligible for a decreased amount, the VA will give them notice by Oct. 2, 2021, and the decrease would go into effect "no earlier than 60 days" after they receive the notice.

For veterans who are currently enrolled but deemed during the reassessment to be ineligible under the new criteria, the VA will inform the veteran at or around Oct. 1, 2021, and their benefits would continue for 90 days following discharge from the program.

As part of the assessment, the VA will examine the level of activity veterans can do themselves each day, taking into account whether they can dress themselves, bathe, groom themselves, adjust a prosthetic or orthotic device on their own, go to the bathroom without assistance, feed themselves or need help moving around their homes.

The 2018 VA Mission Act required the department to expand its caregiver program to include combat veterans from previous wars. The current program, which was established in 2011, serves combat-wounded veterans of the post-9/11 era and has helped 38,000 former service members at a cost of roughly \$900 million annually.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said Friday that the new regulation allows the most "vulnerable veterans to stay home with loved ones for as long as possible."

"The expanded regulation addresses the complexity and expense of keeping Veterans at home with their families who provide personalized care," Wilkie said in a release.

Under the Mission Act, the program will undergo another expansion on Oct. 1, 2022, to include combat veterans who served between 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001.

In addition to expanding eligibility beyond those who are combat wounded, the new regulations define new procedures for discharging former service members from the program, standardize operating procedures and provide new training for staff and caregivers. The changes also will give caregivers access to financial planning and legal services.

VA News

The program was the target of a VA Office of Inspector General investigation in 2018 that found problems with how the department managed the program, accepted applicants and monitored the health of those who were discharged from the program.

The IG found that the department also paid out \$4.8 million to caregivers of veterans who weren't eligible for the program.

Last year, four spouses and two fiancées of veterans eligible for the program sued the VA for allegedly improperly revoking their benefits or denying them.

More information on the VA's caregiver program can be found on its website.

-- Patricia Kime can be reached at [Patricia.Kime@Monster.com](mailto:Patricia.Kime@Monster.com). Follow her on Twitter [@patriciakime](https://twitter.com/patriciakime).

**"The best way out of a difficulty is through it."** ~ Will Rogers

## **USING "MYCHART"**

**If not all, most major health care systems** are using some form of web-based charting for you to keep abreast of your health treatment and medications.

**The VA uses "MyHealtheVet"** where you can check on prescriptions, order new ones, use a secure email to contact your PCM (*Primary Care Giver*), view your charts and so forth. Sanford and Avera (in our area) has much the same.

**These all are designed** to be for your convenience and allows you to be part your own health care and, in many cases, giving you a better understanding.

**To take advantage of this** please contact your PCM, civilian and/or VA, for instructions on how to sign up and set it up on your computer or tablet.

**I use MyHealtheVet regularly!** to get signed in just go online to [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home) and in the upper right of the page click on "About" and it will explain the program better for you. If you have more questions just ask your VA PCM.

**"People's minds are changed through observation and not through argument."**

~ Will Rogers

## **VA PARTNERSHIP WITH ON-STAR**

VA News Release

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it is partnering with OnStar's emergency services to improve **access to suicide prevention resources for Veterans**.



This partnership will offer Veterans in crisis the opportunity to be transferred to around-the-clock, confidential support via VA's Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) when they use the emergency services button in an OnStar-equipped vehicle or OnStar Guardian smartphone app.

*"The VA-OnStar partnership aims to promote suicide prevention and reduce deaths by suicide by providing additional resources to Veterans,"* said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. *"This partnership will help Veterans access suicide prevention support services and assistance directly and immediately. More than 400 VA suicide prevention coordinators and their teams, located at every VA medical center, connect Veterans with care and educate the community about suicide prevention programs and resources daily."*

An average of 20 Veterans die by suicide each day. Through this partnership, VA and OnStar, a wholly owned subsidiary of General Motors, will collaborate to provide education and training to VA clinicians and OnStar call center staff to facilitate suicide prevention efforts for Veterans. Additionally, VA will provide resources and education to OnStar about military culture and how to determine if a caller is a Veteran.

*"OnStar services are designed to help our customers go out into the world feeling safer, and we recognize that for many people, and in particular Veterans, a crisis can start from within,"* said Catherine Bishop, senior global emergency services manager for OnStar. *"This partnership with VA allows our emergency-certified advisors to better serve the heroes who have served us."*

Suicide prevention is a top priority and VA has made great strides in Veteran suicide prevention, especially in crisis intervention. Partnerships such as this are coordinated by the Veterans Health Administration's Office of Community Engagement.

## **COMENTARY ON THE "GOOD OL' DAYS"**

CVSO Jeffrey L. Gay

**This morning I was in my office** sitting at my desk with my window open. A relaxing gentle breeze was moving through it tousling my hair and lifting some of the paper in its path.

**The aroma of frying bacon** came wafting through the screens. Someone in a home near here was probably making breakfast. About that same time a diesel-powered vehicle rolled by and the heavy smell of diesel exhaust permeated the air mixing with the bacon aroma.



**Suddenly my olfactory senses** came alive sending synaptic waves to the memory part of my brain and I was mentally transported back in time and location. It conjured memories of arriving at Fort Polk in June of 1971 or, for that matter, could have been any number of other military bases in the zero dark hours of the morning.

**It's amazingly funny** how your brain can bring vivid detail to memories of long ago just by a whiff of the air.

**A couple of weeks ago** I was amongst some pine trees and the fresh scent of the pine took me back to the first night I arrived at my basic training reception station. It lasted probably for a mere instance in time but in my mind it was sped up to much longer as I recalled the events, the smells, the sounds of that moment.



**I remembered the cool** humid evening air and the feel of the bus as it rocked, rumbled and bounced along the roadways after leaving the airfield. The sky was black and the stars were bright as the silhouettes of pointed pine trees and dark buildings passed by us.

**The bus was unusually** quiet for the amount of people on board. The anticipation, the anxiety, the angst, the trepidation of what lay ahead of us all consumed our minds and we each pondered what realities we would endure in the next few weeks.

**The bus came to a stop** but before it quit rolling there were guys jumping on board in starved fatigues and the venerable "Smokey the Bear" hats yelling on us to grab our s\*@t and get out of the bus! Some of the guys had been sleeping as the bus rolled in but now they were animate and stumbling over one another to acquiesce to the DI's "requests".



**The air was thick with humidity** and pine odor, the crickets were chirping loudly and there wasn't even a trace of breeze to chase the muggy heat away. We hustled as fast as we could to get into what the DI's called "formation" and we stood there, sweating as they called out a roll call while others were dropping us for push-ups.



**Finally, roll call complete,** we were herded together into a line and entered the building in single file. It was a dining facility (*mess hall*) thick with a combined bouquet of grease, cooking oil and PineSol. There also was a trace scent of bacon being fried for the **Cadre**. Trays in hand we filed through the line and were served a hamburger and limp, greasy fries. There were probably other tidbits of culinary joy but we were still glassy eyed

suffering from the shock of the past few moments meeting out new "minders". The realization hit me, "We're not in Kansas anymore Toto..."



**This was the "Reception Station".** All I could think of was, "What the hell did I get myself into?!?!?!"

**I was revived from the trance** I was in by the ringing phone on my desk and all was suddenly as it should be but I did notice the little smirk on my face as I smiled at those memories of yore still remain in my heart. All this because of a simple odor passing my nose. Welcome to the US Army!

**"Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment."** ~ Will Rogers

## **SF VA HOSPITAL STAKEHOLDER NOTES**

- The Sioux Falls VA Hospital has opened a drive through location for COVID testing, for pre-procedure surgery patients and pulmonary function patients. Patients can drive in the circle drive to get tested and do a U-turn to leave the same way they drove in.
- Walk-ins are discouraged and we are encouraging everyone to call ahead and make an appointment. Continue to have challenges with walk-ins. Patients coming in with no appointments to be seen. We are trying to accommodate them while not inconveniencing Veterans who do have an appointment while keeping the waiting room safe.
- **CITC** Call Center averages 163 calls per day. This is a lot more than we were expecting. We are very excited about their progress.
- Comprehensive Assistance for Family Care Givers final ruling has been determined. The VISN is giving us details for implementation. We have requested an additional 4 positions to support the program. One of our staff has been detailed to Central Office to assist with the implementation of the adjustments to the electronic system that supports their program.
- There is an estimate of 33,000 Veterans in the Sioux Falls catchment area
- The Emergency Dept. entrance is now open.
- CLC Compare Scores rate us as a 5-star facility. This rating is based on the unannounced Long-Term Care Facility survey this year.
- An Eye on KELO Land story aired August 5th about our \$70M infrastructure and upgrade projects that are ongoing. We have recently been approved for three more infrastructure projects for: air conditioning





in Pharmacy and building 5, and the laundry project. To view it go online to [www.keloland.com/news/eye-on-keloland/sioux-falls-va-hospital-receives-a-70-million-facelift/](http://www.keloland.com/news/eye-on-keloland/sioux-falls-va-hospital-receives-a-70-million-facelift/).

- VA is doing a story about our tele oncology partnership with Durham NC. This story is going to feature one of our Veterans walking through his appointment and his experiences with tele oncology here in SF. It will highlight the benefit this is to have these doctors supporting us, so our Veterans stay in their community during their care.

**"The people [of our country] are the masters of both Congress and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert it!"**

~ Abraham Lincoln

## **HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED?**



**Have you ever wondered** what happens at a US Flag retirement ceremony? How to honor your Flag and country as you retire a Flag that has become unserviceable?

## **CEREMONIAL DISPOSITION OF OUR FLAG**

**The leader comments** (*begins when the flag has been secured at the top of the flagpole*)

**"This flag has served its nation well and long. It has worn to a condition in which it should no longer be used to represent the nation. This flag represents all of the flags collected and being retired from service today. The honor we show here this evening for this one flag, we are showing for all of the flags, even those not physically here."**

1. The leader should:
  - Call the group to attention;
  - Order a salute;
  - Lead the entire group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag; and
  - Order the flag retired by the color guard.
  - Slowly and ceremoniously lower and then respectfully fold the flag in the customary triangle.
  - Deliver the flag to the leader and then dismiss the group.

2. This concludes the Ceremony of Final Tribute

### **"Ceremonial Burning" – Fire Preparation:**

**It is important that the fire be sizable** -- preferably having burnt down to a bed of red-hot coals to avoid bits of the Flag being carried off by a roaring fire -- yet be of sufficient intensity to ensure complete burning of the Flag.

### **"Ceremonial Burning" – Flag Preparation:**

**The color guard assigned** to the flag opens up its tri-corner fold and then refolds the flag in a coffin-shaped rectangle.

### **When all is ready:**

1. Assemble around the fire. The leader calls the group to attention.
2. The color guard comes forward and places the flag on the fire.
3. All briskly salute.
4. After the salute, but while still at attention, the leader should conduct a respectful memorial service as the flag burns. National Flag Foundation recommends singing "God Bless America" followed by an inspiring message of the flag's meaning followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance" and then silence.
5. When the flag is basically consumed, those assembled, with the exception of the leader and the color guard, should be dismissed single file and depart in silence.
6. The leader and the color guard remain until the flag is completely consumed.
7. The fire should then be safely extinguished and the ashes buried beneath the sod and the sod placed back over them.

**If your flag has become tattered or torn**, stained, faded or rendered unserviceable in some other manner don't just toss it in the trash. You can drop it off at any Legion, VFW or your local Veteran Service Office for disposition or you can contact the local Boy Scouting organization in your community.

## **DISAGREE WITH VA DECISION?**

**February 2019 marked** the successful implementation of the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act (AMA)*, which resulted in faster and easier ways to appeal your compensation claim. AMA created a new decision review and appeals process that features three lanes for you to choose from. As always, we recommend that you work with your VSO or representative to assist in making the best decision for you.



**If, after you receive your initial decision** from VA, you disagree with this decision, you must choose one of three lanes: Supplemental Claim, Higher-Level Review, or an Appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (*Board*).

**The Supplemental Claim lane is an option** if you have new and relevant evidence. The Higher-Level Review lane is beneficial for those who believe there was a mistake in the initial decision. These lanes will get you a second decision in the quickest amount of time.

**The final lane is a direct appeal** to the Board. If you choose a Board appeal, you must then choose one of three more paths:

- Direct Review
- Evidence Submission
- Hearing with a Veterans Law Judge (VLJ)

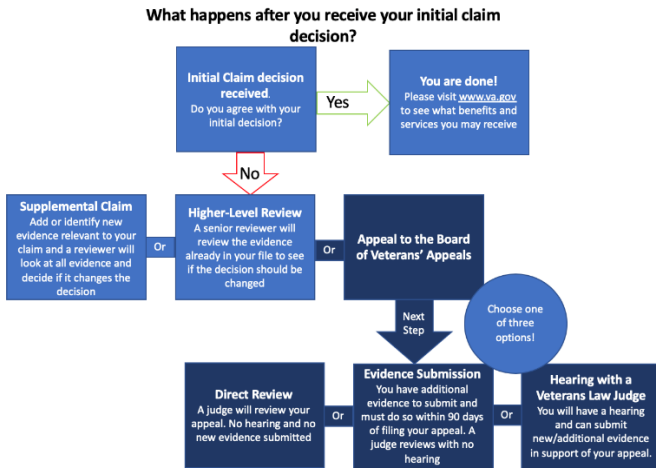
**APPEAL**

The **Direct Review path** is the fastest option at the Board, and it is for those who feel there has been a misinterpretation of the law or the facts of your case.

The **Evidence Submission path** allows you to submit additional evidence to the Board for consideration. This option will take longer than Direct Review.

The **final option is the Hearing path**. The Hearing path allows you to have a hearing with a Veterans Law Judge. This path will take the longest for you to receive a second decision.

Below is a flow chart that may help you decide which



**“Our Flag represents a living country (and all citizens who live under it) and is itself considered a living thing.”**

~ United States Flag Code

## WORDS & STUFF GLOSSARY

<b>Anatidae</b>	biological family of water birds that includes ducks, geese, and swans
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control
<b>ARVIN</b>	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
<b>Coalition</b>	a body formed by the coalescing of originally distinct elements or parties
<b>Legacy</b>	of, relating to, associated with, or carried over from a n earlier time
<b>Hypothermia</b>	subnormal temperature of the body as opposed to “ <b>hyper</b> thermia” which is an exceptionally high fever especially when induced artificially for therapeutic purposes
<b>CITC</b>	Care in the Community
<b>s*@t</b>	A universal military expletive we all know well!!!!!!
<b>cadre</b>	the complement of commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers of a military unit responsible for training the rest of the unit.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please place these numbers close by in case you would ever need to call one. We hope that the need never arises but we also understand that it’s a real possibility. Better to be prepared and to know where to call for help when help is needed...

### National Suicide Prevention Hotline



**OR TEXT TO “838255”**

### NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE

1-800-522-4700

**Veterans Linkage Line**  
your link to experts

minnesotaveteran.org | **1-888-LinkVet**  
(546-5838)

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

1-800-662-HELP  
(4357)

www.samhsa.gov/treatment  
For Information on Prevention and Treatment Referral

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
HOTLINE

1-800-799-7233

**DON'T FORGET – LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**  
[www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices](http://www.facebook.com/JacksonCountyMNVeteranServices)

Visit us online [www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans](http://www.co.jackson.mn.us/veterans)

**COMMO CHECK!!!!!!**  
**HOW COPY? OVER...**  
**GOOD COPY! OUT!**



## GOIN' ON-LINE

Below are web addresses which can help you, entertain you and keep you abreast of news, views and changes in benefits. Watch for additions to the list as we move forward!

### NEWS & VIEWS

Marine Times	<a href="http://www.marinecorpstimes.com">www.marinecorpstimes.com</a>
Air Force Times	<a href="http://www.airforcetimes.com">www.airforcetimes.com</a>
Military Times	<a href="http://www.militarytimes.com">www.militarytimes.com</a>
Military.COM	<a href="http://www.military.com">www.military.com</a>
SOFREP News	<a href="https://sofrep.com/news/">https://sofrep.com/news/</a>

### BENEFITS & OTHER INTEREST

U.S. Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>
MN Dept. of Vet Affairs	<a href="https://mn.gov/mdva/">https://mn.gov/mdva/</a>
My Health-e Vet	<a href="http://www.myhealth.va.gov">www.myhealth.va.gov</a>

### SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

American Legion	<a href="http://www.legion.org">www.legion.org</a>
MN American Legion	<a href="http://www.mnlegion.org">www.mnlegion.org</a>
Veterans of Foreign Wars	<a href="http://www.VFW.org">www.VFW.org</a>
Disabled American Vets	<a href="http://www.DAV.org">www.DAV.org</a>
AMVETS	<a href="http://amvetsnsf.org">http://amvetsnsf.org</a>
Vietnam Vets of America	<a href="https://vva.org/">https://vva.org/</a>
Military Order of Purple heart	<a href="https://moph.org">https://moph.org</a>

### MILITARY SERVICE BRANCHES

US Army	<a href="http://www.goarmy.com">www.goarmy.com</a>
US Marine Corps	<a href="http://www.marines.mil">www.marines.mil</a>
US Navy	<a href="http://www.navy.mil">www.navy.mil</a>
US Air Force	<a href="http://www.airforce.com">www.airforce.com</a>
US Coast Guard	<a href="http://www.uscg.mil">www.uscg.mil</a>
US Space Force	<a href="http://www.spaceforce.mil/">www.spaceforce.mil/</a>
National Guard (Army/Air)	<a href="http://www.nationalguard.com">www.nationalguard.com</a>

### OF INTEREST TO MILITARY RETIREES

TRICARE Health	<a href="http://www.tricare.com">www.tricare.com</a>
DFAS MyPay (Finance)	<a href="https://mypay.dfas.mil">https://mypay.dfas.mil</a>
Military Officers Assn.	<a href="http://www.moaa.org">www.moaa.org</a>
DoD Lodging Site	<a href="http://www.dodlodging.net">www.dodlodging.net</a>
America's Warrior Part.	<a href="http://americaswarriorpartnership.org">americaswarriorpartnership.org</a>
Dental & Vision – FEDVIP	<a href="http://www.benefeds.com">www.benefeds.com</a>
The American Flag	<a href="http://www.usa.gov/flag">www.usa.gov/flag</a>
US Flag Code	<a href="http://www.military.com/flag-day/us-flag-code.html">www.military.com/flag-day/us-flag-code.html</a>

### LINKS PROVIDING INFO AND ASSISTANCE

Nat'l Archives (Records)	<a href="https://archives.gov/veterans">https://archives.gov/veterans</a>
MACV (Financial/Legal)	<a href="http://www.mac-v.org">www.mac-v.org</a>
Minnesota LinkVet	<a href="https://minnesotaveteran.org">https://minnesotaveteran.org</a>
Senior Linkage Line	<a href="http://www.seniorlinkageline.com">www.seniorlinkageline.com</a>
Wounded Warrior Proj.	<a href="http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org">www.woundedwarriorproject.org</a>
"Make the Connection"	<a href="http://www.MakeTheConnection.net">www.MakeTheConnection.net</a>
MN Military & Vet Exch.	<a href="http://www.mnme.us">www.mnme.us</a>
Minnesota Help!	<a href="https://mnhelp.info/">https://mnhelp.info/</a>
Ctr for Disease Control	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
Veterans Court	<a href="http://www.mncourts.gov/district/5/">www.mncourts.gov/district/5/</a>
FEMA	<a href="http://www.reacy.gov">www.reacy.gov</a>



## "WHO YA GONNA CALL?!"

Occasionally you need to call for help. Besides your local CVSO the numbers below may be helpful for you.



### Resources for SW/WC MN Area Veterans

VAMC, Sioux Falls, SD	605.336.3230
(Toll Free)	(800.316.8387)
<i>(Press "0" or your party's extension to interrupt message)</i>	
A Nurse or Telephone Care	866.687.7382
Telephone Triage	x7140
Patient Advocate	x6688
Pharmacy Refills	855.560.1723
VA Billing Questions	866-347-2352
CBOC, Spirit Lake, IA	712.336.6400
CBOC, St James, MN	507.375.9670
MN Vet's Home, Luverne, MN	507.283.6200
Toll Free	877.588.8387
Vet Center, Sioux Falls, SD	605.330.4552
MACV, Mankato Office	507.345.8258
SW Ctr for Independent Living	507.532.2221
MDVA SW MN Higher Education Coordinator	507.537.7213
MDVA Tribal VSO, SW MN	507.637.1534
MDVA Veterans Linkage Line	888.546.5838
Senior Linkage Line	800.333.2433
VA Crisis Line/Suicide Line	1.800.273.TALK press 1 (273.8255)
Defense Finance & Acc't. Svc	888.332.7411
TRICARE West Region	844.866.9378

### MN Veterans Service Organizations' Dept. HQ's

The American Legion	866.259.9163
Veterans of Foreign Wars	651.291.1757
Disabled American Veterans	651.291.1212
Military Order Purple Heart	651.227.4456
Vietnam Veterans of America	651.224.6345

### IDENTIFICATION CARDS/DEERS UPDATES

*(Call for appointment and bring proper paperwork)*

NG Armory, Mankato, MN	507.389.6219
100 Martin Luther King Drive	Mon-Wed-Fri
114 <sup>th</sup> FW, Sioux Falls, SD	605.988.5845
1201 W. Algonquin St.	
196 <sup>th</sup> MEB, Sioux Falls, SD	605.357.2900 or 2985
800 W. National Guard Drive	
NG Armory, Montevideo, MN	320.269.9284 or 5180
711 S. 17 <sup>th</sup> St.	Mon-Fri / 9am-3pm

YOUR LOCAL  
CVSO IS:

### FINDING A LOCAL VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

MN Ass'n of Vet Service Officers	<a href="http://www.macvso.org">www.macvso.org</a>
Nat'l Ass'n of Vet Service Officers	<a href="http://www.nacvso.org">www.nacvso.org</a>

# DISTRICT 8 SW MINNESOTA COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS

**Cottonwood - Todd Dibble**  
 41385 US Hwy N  
 Windom, MN 56101  
 507.831.5522  
[todd.dibble@co.cottonwood.mn.us](mailto:todd.dibble@co.cottonwood.mn.us)

**Jackson - Jeffrey Gay**  
 402 White Street – Door #6  
 Jackson, MN 56143  
 507.847.4774  
[cvso@co.jackson.mn.us](mailto:cvso@co.jackson.mn.us)

**Lincoln - John Hovland**  
 Box 29319 N. Rebecca St.  
 Ivanhoe, MN 56142  
 507.694.1033  
[jhovland@co.lincoln.mn.us](mailto:jhovland@co.lincoln.mn.us)

**Lyon - Heidi Fier**  
 607 W. Main St.  
 Marshall, MN 56258  
 507.537.6729  
[heidifier@co.lyon.mn.us](mailto:heidifier@co.lyon.mn.us)

**Martin - Douglas Landsteiner**  
 2423 Albion Ave.  
 Fairmont, MN 56031  
 501.238.3220  
[doug.landsteiner@co.martin.mn.us](mailto:doug.landsteiner@co.martin.mn.us)  
 (NOTE: Martin Co is actually district 9)

**Murray - James Reinert**  
 Government Center; PO Box 57  
 Slayton, MN 56172  
 507.836.1169.  
[jreinert@co.murray.mn.us](mailto:jreinert@co.murray.mn.us)

**Nobles - Bill Brockberg**  
 315 10<sup>th</sup> St,  
 Worthington, MN  
 507.295.5292  
[bbrockberg@co.nobles.mn.us](mailto:bbrockberg@co.nobles.mn.us)

**Pipestone - Renae Schuch**  
 811 5<sup>th</sup> SW  
 Pipestone, MN 56164  
 507.825.1183  
[renae.schuch@co.pipestone.mn.us](mailto:renae.schuch@co.pipestone.mn.us)

**Redwood - Dustin Hunter**  
 P.O. Box 130403 South Mill St  
 Redwood Falls 56283  
 507.637.4034  
[dustin\\_h@co.redwood.mn.us](mailto:dustin_h@co.redwood.mn.us)

**Rock - David Haugum**  
 204 E. Brown St.  
 Luverne, MN  
 507.283.5061  
[dave.haugom@co.rock.mn.us](mailto:dave.haugom@co.rock.mn.us)



[WWW.MACVSO.ORG](http://WWW.MACVSO.ORG)



*“Liberty has never come from Government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of it. The history of liberty is a history of limitations of governmental power, not the increase of it.”*

-Woodrow Wilson