



Roscommon County Veterans Affairs
Monthly Newsletter

Website: <http://www.roscommoncounty.net/201/Veterans>

“Serving those who Served”

Month: February 2016 4th Edition

Deadline for March’s Newsletter: February 22, 2016

Greetings, the office of the Roscommon County Veterans Affairs has decided to publish a monthly newsletter which will be shared with all of our Service Organizations within the county on a regular basis. This newsletter will also be placed on our Roscommon County Veterans Affairs website (<http://www.roscommoncounty.net/311/Veteran-Services>).

It is our hope that this information will be of value to your members and displayed within your organization in a location that your members are aware of and have access to. We have **enlarged the font** for the newsletter based on feedback, hopefully, it will be easier to read. We would like to also announce any future events and/or activities your post is sponsoring that we can help spread the news under the Service Organizations section. If your post has an email address that this can be sent that would be helpful as occasionally this may be publish to advertise a special event involving Veterans in your area.

Electronic copies of the newsletter will allow the reader to have access to the various links found in this newsletter. If individual Veteran wishes to receive these newsletters electronically have the Veteran send a email to veterans@roscommoncounty.net with a Subject Line: Request for RCVA monthly newsletter. Our office will also provide our minutes of our Board meeting monthly as well as the Accumulative Total spreadsheet showing our office service to Veterans in our measurable categories.

The format for this newsletter will be by War Periods, but is not limited to only war time Veterans; **Peacetime Veterans have benefits**, too. For VA benefits available for Veterans during a certain War Periods, see the November 2015 1st Edition for specific information.

World War II (December 7, 1941-December 31, 1946);

World War II Veterans

World War II (WWII) was the most widespread war in history with more than 100 million people serving in military units. About 16 million Americans served during WWII, and many of



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those Veterans are now receiving VA benefits including Pension and Health Care. WWII Veterans who were a part of the Occupation Forces assigned to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan soon after the detonation of Atomic-Bombs over those respective cities, and those American prisoners of war (POW's) who were housed in close proximity to those cities are sometimes called "Atomic Veterans."

Mid Michigan Honor Flight Information: They are looking at a Spring flight for 2016, date to be announce soon. They are constantly fundraising to assist in the cost of these flights for WW II Veterans. If interested call, 231-803-4255.

Korea Conflict (June 27, 1950-January 31, 1955)

Approximately 5.7 million Veterans served in the Korean War. Korean War Veterans are more prone to suffer from disabilities related to cold injures as a result of exposure to severe cold climates. Cold weather accounted for 16% of Army non-battle injuries and over 5,000 U.S. casualties of cold injury required evacuation from Korea during the winter of 1950-1951. In many instances, Servicemembers could not seek or were unable to obtain medical care for cold injuries because of battlefield conditions.

Mid Michigan Honor Flight Information: Discussed opening up the Honor Flights to Korean Veterans. Call the number above for more information.

Vietnam Era (August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975)

Vietnam Veterans

United States military involvement in the Vietnam War officially began on August 5, 1964; however, the first U.S. casualty in Vietnam occurred on July 8, 1959. Approximately 2.7 million American men and women served in Vietnam. During the war, over 58,000 U.S. military members lost their lives and 153,000 were wounded. There were 766 prisoners of war of



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which 114 died in captivity. The war was officially ended by Presidential Proclamation on May 7, 1975.

VIETNAM VETERANS – Check your calendar, March 29, 2016 Saginaw VA Medical Center will host a Vietnam Veteran Recognition Day at all of their Community Based Outpatient Clinic and at the Saginaw Medical Center, itself. More details to follow.

Persian Gulf War/OIF/OEF... (August 2, 1990 through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation)

Gulf War Veterans

More than 650,000 Service members served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm from August 2, 1990 to July 31, 1991. For VA benefits eligibility purposes, the Gulf War period is still in effect. This means that anyone who served on active duty from August 2, 1990, to present is considered a Gulf War Veteran. For example, the Veterans Pension benefit requires service during a wartime period. Therefore, any Veteran who served on active military service for any period from August 2, 1990, to the present meets the wartime service requirement.

Services/Benefits for All Service Members

Veteran designation on Michigan Driver’s licenses and state IDs: More than 57,000 Michigan Veterans have taken advantage of this program to have their licenses and/or IDs identified with a Veteran status. Veterans may receive this designation **free during renewal** or pay a small fee before or after renewal dates to have it placed on your license. Proof of service, such as a discharge document (DD-214) is required at the Secretary of State office. Any questions, please call our County office at (989) 275-6047. This Veteran designation **does not** meet several of the chain stores (i.e., Home Depot, Lowes) requirements for a Veteran discount. It never hurts to ask any business/restaurant if they offer a discount to Veterans. Do us a favor and let us know if it is in Roscommon County and we will add it to our list.



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Certified Veteran –Friendly Employer program: Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency (MVAA) has recognized 34 organizations for their efforts to hire and support Veteran talent in the workforce.

57 schools earn veteran-friendly status: Student veterans and their dependents can choose from more than 50 veteran-friendly schools committed to providing on-campus, veteran-centric services to better support their academic and transitional needs.



MVAA's Veteran-Friendly School program recognizes institutions of higher learning for their dedication to student veterans and dependents utilizing their G.I. Bill and other educational benefits. Michigan 43 colleges and universities are 100 % compliant with the Choice Act, offering in-state tuition to all recently released Veterans and their families.

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund: In FY 2014, \$2,482,845 dollars distributed to 2,157 Veterans and their families in need of emergency assistance. These funds are only available to war time Veterans.

Radical Individual Ready Reserves (IRR) Plan to Call Back Veterans: The goal is to make this historically disorganized component into a more integrated, reliable and useful part of the “total force” in an era when the services are under pressure to reduce active-duty personnel strength and its associated high costs. If you have members in your organization who have not serve their total service obligation, they need to be aware of this plan and the potential implications.

Helpful Veterans Information

Michigan is home to the 11th largest Veterans population in the country with 658,469 Veterans; here in Roscommon County we have 2,821 Veterans.



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Michigan Veterans receive capita federal spending ranked at 48th out of 53 states and territories, which is an improvement as several years ago Michigan was dead last or 53rd of 53 states and territories.

Michigan is projecting 30,000 plus Michigan Veterans returning to Michigan due to the recent drawdown. A lot of the younger Veterans are having a hard time transferring their skills to civilian workplaces. Unemployment rate for Michigan Veterans was 7.3% in 2013.

More than half of Michigan’s 658,469 Veterans are not officially counted in the labor force. Only about 44% of our Veterans are in the workforce.

Michigan Veteran Community Action Teams (VCAT) - The concept behind these VCAT is to implement the no wrong door concept among service providers to Veterans **and their families**. A “warm hand off” is the operational concept of making sure the Veteran is not only given the service provider information but for the agency to call the service provider while the Veteran is still in the office and provide the Veteran a Point of Contact within the service agency. Please call the Roscommon County Veterans Affairs office for more information.

In Michigan, nearly three quarters (72%) of Veterans are aged 55 and older.

Michigan’s Veteran population is older than that of the U.S. Veteran population as a whole, with a significantly higher proportion Vietnam Veterans residing in the state.

No Wrong Door for Michigan Veterans: The Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (MVRSC) and MichiganVeterans.com provide one-stop access for Veterans and their families seeking information, resources and support as they transition through each chapter of their lives. Callers to 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838) are provided Veteran-specific programs as well as a warm hand-off to programs available to all Michigan citizens.

Veteran Homes in Michigan – Michigan is home to two (2) superb state owned Veteran homes in Michigan, one in Grand Rapids and one in Marquette.



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National Cemeteries in Michigan - one in Battle Creek known as Fort Custer Cemetery and one in Holly, Mi known as Great Lakes National Cemetery.

Roscommon County Helpful Information

Roscommon County Veterans Affairs (RCVA) office is open five days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the County Building in Roscommon and has started offering office hours every Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Houghton Lake Community Center (aka Houghton Lake Senior Center) starting Thursday, December 3, 2015.

The RCVA office recently requested local businesses to identify if they provide any type of Veterans discounts here in Roscommon County. Sadly, only one business responded to this attempt though our office is aware that there are more service providers and/or businesses in Roscommon County who do offer Veterans discount. Our office is asking for your help in developing this list for Roscommon County. Our office is also aware certain "chains" may offer Veterans discount but this varies from one business to another.

The one business who did reply was:

Family Eye Care, P.C., Dr. Jay C. Jenkins in Houghton Lake and Roscommon

- 40% off materials from usual and customary on any spectacle orders
- 30% off services, to include specialty testing such as Visual fields, Ocular coherence and Visual Evoked Potentials for disease management

Minutes of our January 7, 2016 Roscommon County Veterans Affairs monthly meeting are as follows:

Meeting called to order at 12:00 noon by Chairman Don Mraz.

Pledge of Allegiance was given to the National Flag.



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Members present: Don Mraz; Ken Melvin, Ron Schrieber and Tom Sheppard; Staff: Director of Veterans Affairs: Kevin C. Sherman. Excused: Heath Nemeth, County Veteran Service Officer in Houghton Lake office; **Guests:** None

Public Comments – None.

Minutes of last meeting, 3 December 2015, and Office Report Accumulative Totals for December 2015 were presented, accepted and filed. Motion by Tom Sheppard and seconded by Ken Melvin to approved minutes and Office Report. Motion Carried.

Correspondence. RCCF Grant Announcement and YHT Advertising/Placemats. RCCF Grant Award letter for \$500 was accepted by Committee. Motion by Ron Schrieber, 2nd by Tom Sheppard that we accept the grant. Motion Carried. Letter of acceptance will be returned to RCCF.

Burial and Graver Markers:

Roscommon County had expenses for 3 burials at \$900.00 and 5 grave markers for \$525 for a total of \$1425. Motion by Tom Sheppard and seconded by Ken Melvin to approved burial expenses. Motion Carried.

Medical Transportation

We had 11 trips for medical transportation for \$938.32. Collections from the office throughout the month was \$119.05. Motion by Tom Sheppard, seconded by Ken Melvin to pay transportation claims for \$938.32. Carried

Monthly Office Expenses:

Claims and Accounts for monthly office expenses submitted for \$643.72. Motion by Tom Sheppard, seconded by Ron Schrieber to pay monthly office expenses. Carried

Veteran's Relief Fund Application:



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One application was presented. One application for \$230.00 (Voucher 232) was approved by the Director for a Veteran’s weekly car payments who was found walking to an appointment. Veteran has wife and four children. Motion by Tom Sheppard and seconded by Ken Melvin to approve this application. Motion carried.

Veteran’s Relief (Cont’d)

Ron Schrieber made a motion that Heath Nemeth be allowed to grant up to \$500 for emergency assistance through the County Relief Fund with final approval of the full Veteran Affairs committee at monthly meetings. 2nd by Tom Sheppard. Carried.

Director’s Report

The Monthly Office Report, Accumulative Spreadsheet, is now tracking face to face contacts at the Houghton Lake office as well as St. Helen for commodity day.

Term Dates for Board Members have been corrected through the County Commissioners and appointments letters. The Veteran Affairs Committee poster has been corrected and will be posted around the County Building.

Motion by Ken Melvin, seconded to Ron Schrieber to approve the Director’s Report. Carried.

Old Business:

MVAA Grant for \$17,500, \$15,000 was approved for employee, denied the \$2,500 for new equipment. Formal announcement should be received this week.

As stated above, RCCF Grant for medical transportation was received in the amount of \$500.

New Business:



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Election of Officers – Motion by Ron Schrieber, seconded by Ken Melvin that Don Mraz be elected as Chairperson. Don accepted nomination. Motion Carried

Motion by Ken Melvin, seconded by Tom Sheppard that Ron Schrieber be elected as Secretary. Ron Schrieber accepted nomination. Motion Carried.

Wreath Across America campaign was presented. The Committee will wait for feedback from the service organizations before taking any action on this campaign.

Green Light campaign was presented. The Committee agreed to purchase 100 green lights for the office and provided the funding for the first 100 light bulbs. A donation can will be available for any donations to keep this campaign going.

Good of the Order: None

Public Comments: None

Motion by Tom Sheppard, seconded by Ken Melvin to adjourn, Meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Minutes taken by: Ron Schrieber, Secretary

Questions and Answers/ Requests Driven

Q&A/ I am 70% Service Connected Disabled Veteran and I’m understanding there may be a way to increase my rating to 100% due to Individual Unemployability. Is this true?

WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY?

Individual Unemployability (IU) is a part of VA’s disability compensation program that allows VA to pay certain Veterans compensation at the 100% rate, even though VA has not rated their service-connected disabilities at the 100% level.



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WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY?

A Veteran must be unable to maintain substantially gainful employment as a result of his/her service-connected disabilities. Additionally, a Veteran must have:

One service-connected disability ratable at **60** percent or more, *OR*

Two or more service-connected disabilities, at least one disability ratable at **40** percent or more with a combined rating of **70** percent or more.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Submit *VA Form 21-8940, Veteran’s Application for Increased Compensation Based on Unemployability.*

Send your completed application to your nearest VA regional office. To find the closest regional office to you, go to <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1> or call 1-800-827-1000.

CAN I WORK? Veterans who are in receipt of Individual Unemployability benefits may work as long as it is not considered substantially gainful employment. The employment must be considered marginal employment.

- Substantially gainful employment is defined as employment at which non-disabled individuals earn their livelihood with earnings comparable to the particular occupation in the community where the Veteran resides.
- Marginal employment is generally deemed to exist when a Veteran's earned income does not exceed the amount established by the U.S. Census Bureau as the poverty level for the Veteran only. For more information on the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty thresholds, see <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html>

WHAT IF I DON’T MEET THE PERCENTAGE CRITERIA?

Special consideration will be given for Veterans when the following criteria is met:

- The Veteran is considered unemployable due to a service-connected disability(ies) but fails to meet the minimum percentage standards, *OR*



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- There is evidence of exceptional or unusual circumstances to impairment of earning capacity due to disabilities (for example, interference with employment or frequent periods of hospitalization)

Note: Veterans may have to complete an employment questionnaire once a year in order for VA to determine continued eligibility to Individual Unemploymentability.

Q&A/ What is EBenefits?

eBenefits (www.ebenefits.va.gov) is a joint VA/DoD Web portal that provides self-service capabilities to Veterans, Service members, their families and caregivers.

Development of eBenefits was initiated in March of 2007 at the recommendation of the President’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors (Dole/Shalala). With quarterly releases, eBenefits continues to evolve as a “one-stop shop” for Veterans, Service members and their families.

December Roscommon County Veterans Affairs Office Totals

December Veterans or Dependents Office Visits 96 Coordination of volunteer medical transport 19
 Personal Interviews 77 Telephone calls made 191 Telephone calls received 286
 Claims submitted/reviewed 62 Home or Nursing Home/Assisted visits 5 Records Request; DD 214 or other 3
 County Veteran Relief Fund Requests/Application 3 Medical Transportation: Number of Trips 16
 Burials 9

General Information

TRICARE Nurse Advice Line: TRICARE has established a Nurse Advice Line (NAL) that is available at no cost to TRICARE beneficiaries in the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. The NAL is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The NAL has health care professionals on staff ready and able to answer urgent care questions, give health care advice, provide assistance locating a doctor, and schedule next-day appointments at military hospitals and clinics. More than half of the calls to the NAL are related to pediatric health concerns, which are routed to the NAL’s



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experienced team of pediatric registered nurses. The NAL may also answer questions about high fevers, allergic reactions, rashes, and/or accidents, and advise you on the clinically appropriate level of care you should seek for your child. To learn more about the NAL, visit:

<http://www.tricare.mil/ContactUs/CallUs/NAL.aspx>.

Applications being accepted for 2016 National Veterans Golden Age Games

Event takes place in Detroit, July 10-14

The 2016 National Veterans Golden Age Games take place in Detroit, Michigan, July 10-14. Nearly 800 athletes are expected to compete in the national rehabilitative multi-sport and recreation competition for senior Veterans. The event encourages participants to make physical activity a central part of their lives, and supports VA’s comprehensive recreation and rehabilitation therapy programs. Competitive events include air rifle, badminton, bocchia, bowling, cycling, field, golf, horseshoes, nine ball, power walk, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis and track.

Veterans and their families may be eligible to file taxes absolutely free

Taxpayers have until Monday, Apr. 18 to file their 2015 tax returns and pay any tax due because of the Emancipation Day holiday in Washington, D.C., falling on Friday, April 15. The IRS expects more than 70 percent of taxpayers to again receive tax refunds this year. Last year, the IRS issued 109 million refunds, with an average refund of \$2,797.

Shown below are several ways Veterans and their families have access to free tax preparation and electronic filing services to keep more of their hard earned money.

- IRS’ [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance](#) (VITA) and [Tax Counseling for the Elderly](#) (TCE) programs are available to taxpayers that earned less than \$54,000 in 2015. More than 3.7 million tax returns were prepared using these services in 2014. All tax returns completed through VITA are prepared by IRS certified volunteers, so you can feel confident your tax return is accurate. Even better, there are over 12,000 convenient locations across the country. To find the VITA location nearest you, enter your zip code into the easy-to-use [VITA/TCE Locator](#).



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- **MyFreeTaxes**, operating the only free online tax preparation and filing assistance platform available in all 50 states and Washington D.C., who earned \$62,000 or less in 2015, allows qualified Veterans, active-duty military, their families and all other qualifying taxpayers to file both a federal and state tax return absolutely free. In addition to e-filing, MyFreeTaxes also provides in-person help to individuals and families earning \$20,000 or less in 2015. For more information, please visit: www.myfreetaxes.com. The MyFreeTaxes initiative is managed by United Way, with the assistance from legacy partners, National Disability Institute and Goodwill Industries International, and is sponsored by the Wal-Mart Foundation

Wreaths Across America

On Wreaths Across America Day (December 12, 2015), 70,000 volunteers placed 240,185 remembrance wreaths on headstones in Arlington, and with over 1,100 participating locations nationwide 901,000 remembrance wreaths were placed overall. The remembrance wreaths were gifts of respect and appreciation donated by private citizens or organizations.

Visiting Field Service Officer from American Legion at Roscommon County Building.

On the Second and Fourth Wednesdays of every month, Elizabeth Cuddington from the American Legion, will be in the Roscommon County Building, Veteran Affairs office from 12:30- 3:30 p.m. to assist Veterans with claims related issues. Walk ins are welcome, appointments are not needed. During winter months, please call our office in the morning to ensure she is able to get in that afternoon.

American Legion District Service Officer Tom Sheppard also provides office hours at the Prudenville American Legion Post on Tuesday evenings from 4pm-6pm and at St. Helen American Legion on Wednesdays from 5pm – last Veteran is seen.



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Service Organizations in our County

FWW Post 4159 (Dues \$50)

Post **4159 Charles M. Engel Post** (11th
District)
PO Box 774

Roscommon, MI 48653
United States
Phone: (989) 275-4136

*Meeting Location &
Time*

219 Terrace Dr
Roscommon, MI 48653
United States
7:00 PM 2nd Wednesday
Commander: David A. Luck
Service Officer: Ronald R. Schrieber
Quartermaster: Gerald McCormick

FWW Post 4034

Post 4034 Fred & Paul Kalis Post

PO Box 591
Houghton Lake Heights, MI 486300591
United States
Phone: (989) 422-6404
Meeting Location & Time
935 Loxley Rd
Houghton Lake Heights, MI 48630-5051
United States
7:00 pm 2nd Wednesday

Quartermaster:
Commander: Steven Bidstrup

VFW Post 5680 St. Helen Post

PO Box 376
Saint Helen, MI 48656
United States
Phone: (989) 389-7492

Meeting Location & Time

1914 Lake St
Saint Helen, MI 486569756
United States
7:00 PM 1st Wednesday

Quartermaster: Bruce Bridson
Commander: Robert Hurd

Service Organizations in our County

AMERICAN LEGION POSTS

Roscommon Post #96 (Dues \$45)

PO Box 744
Roscommon, MI 48653
United States
Phone: (989) 389-0164

Meeting Location & Time

219 Terrace Dr
Roscommon, MI 48653
United States
7:00 PM 3rd Thursday
Adjutant: Don Croff
Commander: George Ferguson
Service Officer: Kevin C. Sherman



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St. Helen Post #416

10062 Ford Drive, St. Helen, MI 48656

Phone: (989) 389-4630

Meeting Location & Time

10062 Ford Drive, St. Helen, MI 48656

7:00 PM 1st Thursday

Adjutant: Don Mraz

Commander: Phil Maylum

Service Officer:

Prudenville Post #245 (Houghton Lake-
Higgins Lake) Dues \$45 3564 S. Reserve Rd

PO Box 318, Prudenville, MI 48651

United States

Phone: (810) 751-9983

Meeting Location & Time

3564 S. Reserve Rd

Prudenville, MI 48651

United States

7:00 PM 3rd Wed

Adjutant: Elizabeth Cuddington

Commander: Bill Jammer

Service Officer: Tom Sheppard

Service Organizations in our County

AMVETS

Amvet Post #13 (Dues \$37)

8009 N Ausable Rd

PO Box 335

Higgins Lake, MI 48627

United States

Phone: (989) 821-9838

Meeting Location & Time

2nd Tuesday at 6 pm

8009 N Ausable Rd

Roscommon, MI 48653

United States

Commander: Jerry Kilburn

Service Officer:

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Marine Corps League #684 CPL Jack A.

Davenport

3564 S. Reserve Rd.

Prudenville, MI, 48651

United States

Phone: (989)

Meeting Location & Time

3564 S. Reserve Rd

Prudenville, MI 48651

United States

7:00 PM 2nd Wed

Commander: Jim Bowman

Service Officer: Mel Ward (989) 422-7415



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[Vietnam Veterans of America \(VVA\)](#)

VVA Chapter #264

PO Box 773

Roscommon, MI 48653

Meeting Location & Time

FW Post #4159

Roscommon, MI 48653

United States

7pm, 4th Wednesday

Commander: Ed Nolff

Service Officer: Ronald R. Schrieber

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Veterans are among our most community-oriented citizens. The study shows that they volunteer an average of 160 hours annually, 25 percent more than non-veterans. **They belong to civic groups and attend neighborhood meetings, often assuming leadership roles. Furthermore, 48 percent of them vote in elections regularly, 16 percent more than non-veterans.**

Continuing to Serve

Think today's veterans are mostly suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and barely making ends meet? According to a recent report by [Got Your Six](#), just the opposite is true. Got Your Six notes that today's veterans tend to be engaged citizens, more likely to volunteer and vote than the general population. As a group, they earn more than non-veterans with comparable qualifications, complete educational programs at the same rate as non-veterans, and comprise only 8.6 of the homeless population.

These findings should surprise no one. Those who serve in today's all-volunteer military usually do so out of a sense of commitment. Although the government offers educational, health, and other assistance to service members, of the scores of veterans I have interviewed, every single one has named duty to country, not benefits, as his or her primary reason for serving. Furthermore, nearly all -- including severely wounded soldiers -- say they would do it again.

Once soldiers transition to civilian life, many want to continue serving.



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Service Organizations Page

Service Organizations: The Roscommon County Department of Veterans Affairs is asking all of our county service organizations in our county to provide our office with their annual dues and a contact list of their officers. Our office would like to refer returning Veterans to your organization and it would be nice if we can give them a good contact person. I've asked in previous correspondence for applications with your dues amount completed, if your organization have not done so, please consider helping us help you in your recruiting.

Please Review:

Recently, our office received a phone call that described this situation: Family member of a deceased soldier from out of town stopped by two of our local service organizations to inquire on how to notify these organizations of Veteran's death. Family member indicated there was no signage on the building on who to contact for such notification (deceased Veteran belonged to these two organizations, location unknown by family member). Family member further stated if a Veteran is in need and would stop by these two organizations for assistance the Veteran would not be able to determine who to contact. Example, Veteran is from out of town and needs gas money to get back to Home of Record after attending a funeral of a loved one. Any ideas on how to address this at your service organization? Could our office be a point of contact, though we do not have an after hour number?

February/March Service Organizations Visits – It is my hope to visit all of our service organizations during February/March though one night three of our service organizations meet at the same time.

The Roscommon County Veterans Affairs Committee members and staff say to all of our Veterans and their families, "God bless our Veterans and God bless America."



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1. *Camp Lejeune Veterans: Presumptive Service-Connection for 9 Disabilities Proposed*

VA announced that it plans to propose presumptive service connection regulations for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

Following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for nine conditions associated with these chemical solvents.

These conditions are:

- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma
- Leukemia
- Multiple Myeloma
- Scleroderma
- Parkinson's Disease
- Aplastic Anemia
- Myelodysplastic Syndromes

VII. *Hearing Loss and Tinnitus Claims for Reserve and Guard*

In December 2015, VA updated the M21-1 to clarify that Reserve and Guard members who experience a decrease in hearing ability (auditory acuity) during active duty for training or inactive duty for training as a result of acoustic trauma may be granted service connection for hearing loss.

Duty MOS should be considered in whether the veteran was exposed to acoustic trauma (an “injury” allowing service connection during inactive duty for training, as well as active duty service). Audiometric results should show a threshold shift (decrease in hearing ability) during service, but service connection may be granted even if the hearing loss threshold for disability purposes in 38 CFR 3.385 was not met in service, as long as it is met during the claim process.

Editor Note: This is our office fourth newsletter and we are open for articles for future newsletters and/or events you would like us to publicize with this monthly newsletter. Next month deadline is identified above, if you have any questions please call Kevin C. Sherman, Director, at (989)275-6047.