



Service Officer Report 4th District

21 August 2022

Our Quarterly report will also be on the 4th District web site
www.vfwildist4.org

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District Service Officer update

It seems that I get calls to help veterans at a steady rate. In one way or another average of 1 a day. The calls vary from a veteran needing to apply for benefits, family hoping for nursing home care, burial benefits, dependency and Indemnity compensation, how do I get into the VA system, sometimes homeless issues. The list goes on and I do what I can to help. Most of the answers are found through va.gov and is the final word. My question is how many calls/assistance does your Post Service Officer handle each month? Certainly we don't expect 30 clients a month but there should be a couple and a few would be good. Let's strive as Post leadership and members to market their PSO help them be relevant in our community. Tom and my aim are always to be their back up when they need assistance, not to take the place of your PSO.

Still looking forward we plan to do another zoom service officer VA benefits training session. For this we reach out to all the districts in Illinois for not only service officers but any member wishing to be educated in the in and outs of the VA system, and benefits.

Still looking to introduce a post communications workshop. This would cover using mass e-mail platforms in conjunction with social media and websites (either your own or the national canned site). If there is interest in the district and perhaps expanding this as well outside of the district. I normally include the local American Legion and AMVET post in our area.

Lake County VAC Under Attack

Lake County has what I consider the model for Veteran Assistance Commissions. Many of you may not be aware of how important these VAC's are to our veterans community. Public Act 102-0732 which we the VFW worked so hard to pass now insures funding for counties with populations under 3 million of .02 % of the tax levee. In Lake County there where powerful forces spreading false rumors and doing all they could to repeal this Public Act. Myself as Assistant Department Chair and our senior department leadership found out about a secretive LC board meeting and with other organizations called out what was happening and perhaps this is the end of problems for VACLC and other VAC's getting interference in their work of helping veterans and their families.

VACCC Updates

As you may or may not know the VAC of Cook County has been in a flux for a few years. The VFW Department of Illinois is committed to helping the VACCC revitalize itself and help the estimated 130,000 plus veterans in Cook County. The tax levee from PA 102-0732 does not apply to Cook county but other parts of the bill does and it is a revision of the VAC stature. The VAC's are controlled by the veterans groups in that county they should be Federally Chartered or State Chartered. The State chartered needs to be clarified by law. Each post/chapter that meets the criteria should have a vote and a member and alternate. The meetings are once a month and can be attended by zoom. They are in the process of hiring a new superintendent, changing outdated by-laws which I'm on the committee. Commander MacInnes is also committed to this endeavor. We hope to have the new superintendent and perhaps leadership attend our next district meeting.

Ft Sheridan National Cemetery

We urge all veterans to attend this upcoming meeting 29 August

To all Veterans:

It's time for your action!

The Lake County Forest Preserve Board meeting to vote on the transfer of 4.7 acres of Lake County Forest Preserve land to the Fort Sheridan National Cemetery will be held on:

Monday 29 August 2022, 1300

Lake County Forest preserve office,
1899 Winchester Libertyville Illinois.

For all veterans, this is a battle we can't lose.

Please help by attending this meeting in person.

NOTE: You do NOT have to be a resident of Lake County to attend.

Thank you for your support! Michael Peck Chairman, Legislation, VFW of Illinois

Pact Act Highlights

The biggest act to help veterans ever pushed through congress. added more than 20 burn pit and other toxic exposure presumptive conditions based on the PACT Act. This change expands benefits for Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans. There are also other eras of serviced covered

Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veteran eligibility

These cancers are now presumptive:

Brain cancer

Gastrointestinal cancer of any type

Glioblastoma

Head cancer of any type

Kidney cancer

Lymphatic cancer of any type

Lymphoma of any type

Melanoma

Neck cancer

Pancreatic cancer

Reproductive cancer of any type

Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

These illnesses are now presumptive:

Asthma that was diagnosed after service

Chronic bronchitis

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Chronic rhinitis

Chronic sinusitis

Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis

Emphysema

Granulomatous disease

Interstitial lung disease (ILD)

Pleuritis

Pulmonary fibrosis

Sarcoidosis

Vietnam era Veteran eligibility

These are now presumptive:

added 2 new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

High blood pressure (also called hypertension)

Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

added these 5 new locations to the list of presumptive locations:

Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976

Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969

Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969

Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980

Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977

If you served on active duty in any of these locations, we'll automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to Agent Orange.

Need to contact VA?

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255

Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838 or Chat

White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311

Don't know what number to call?

1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) is never the wrong number

The number to call when you don't know who to call.

You only need to remember one number for information on VA care, benefits, and services or to speak to a live agent for assistance!