



The Veterans Observer

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Commander Seehafer unveils newest Statue of Liberation

By Jeff Stoffer

American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer helped the free world commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day this week by unveiling the second of two Statues of Liberation in Ste. Mere-Eglise, first French town liberated from Nazi occupation by the Allies on June 6, 1944. The new installation portrays for future generations the Supreme Allied Commander Europe who wrote on the night before the pivotal World War II invasion that if it should fail, all the responsibility belonged to him alone.

"Today, we honor – and must always remember – the courage, decisiveness and accountability, of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who continues to inspire us," Seehafer told a crowd that included members of the Eisenhower family, military authorities (including current Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen. Christopher Cavoli), elected officials, Normandy citizens and visitors from around the world.

"He put the cause ahead of himself – and epitomized what we, in The American Legion, mean when we talk about servant leadership. Long after we all are gone from this earth, future generations must know what it takes to make tough decisions, take responsibility and serve causes greater than

oneself. They can learn that from Dwight D. Eisenhower."

The June 3 unveiling came two years after then-National Commander Paul Dillard unveiled the first Statue of Liberation, of American Legion founding leader Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. – cast in



American Legion National Commander Daniel Seehafer joined the Eisenhower family, military and elected officials and visitors from around the world to unveil the statue of World War II Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in Ste. Mere-Eglise, Normandy, France.

bronze and infused with metals collected from the World War II battlefields of Normandy. The American Legion is primary sponsor of both statues, sculpted by Pablo Eduardo of Gloucester, Mass., in alliance with Amis des Veterans Americains of Normandy, Operation Democracy of Locust Valley,

N.Y., the Airborne Museum in Ste. Mere-Eglise and the City of Ste. Mere-Eglise.

Roosevelt Jr., the oldest officer to storm the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, earned the Medal of Honor for his actions on Utah Beach, helping young soldiers cross the sand through enemy

leadership before issuing orders to launch history's largest amphibious assault. His famous quote – "The eyes of the world are upon you" – is engraved at the top of the panel.

"In The American Legion, we believe in a certain way of thinking, leading and accomplishing goals," Seehafer told hundreds gathered at the Eisenhower ceremony. "We call it servant leadership. You hear that term increasingly. But what does it really mean? First, here is what it is not: servant leadership is not about the advancement of oneself. It's about the suspension of oneself for the pursuit of a greater cause. Eighty years ago, the greater cause was freedom of this very peninsula, of the continent beyond and around the world."

Military historian and longtime visitor of Normandy during the D-Day anniversary commemorations Keith Nightingale discussed attributes that made Eisenhower a historically powerful leader.

"Depictions and discussions of Gen. Eisenhower are most often focused on Ike as a general or as a president, but the quality that made him so successful in both roles was his humanity," Nightingale said. "Ike understood that thousands would die on his order, but he always understood that each

fire, armed only with a pistol and a cane. He died of a heart attack five weeks after entering the fighting in Normandy and was initially buried in one of three temporary cemeteries in Ste. Mere-Eglise.

Eisenhower's statue includes a tableau that pays tribute to his

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Finish your benefits claims within one year to be eligible for the most backdated benefits

From: VBA Office of Strategic Engagement

Last year, more Veterans submitted their “intent to file” (ITF) for benefits claims than ever before. These ITFs are disability compensation claims that Veterans started, but didn’t finish, and they’re an important tool because they help Veterans preserve their earliest possible effective date for their benefits claim, which makes them potentially eligible for backdated benefits.

If you submitted an ITF last year, you must act fast. You only have 365 days from when you submitted your ITF to complete it. Here’s everything you need to know about ITFs and submitting your full claim:

How long do I have to finish my intent to file?

You must finish your intent to file—and submit your complete claim—within 365 days of submitting to preserve the earliest possible effective date for your benefits.

What does this mean under the PACT Act?

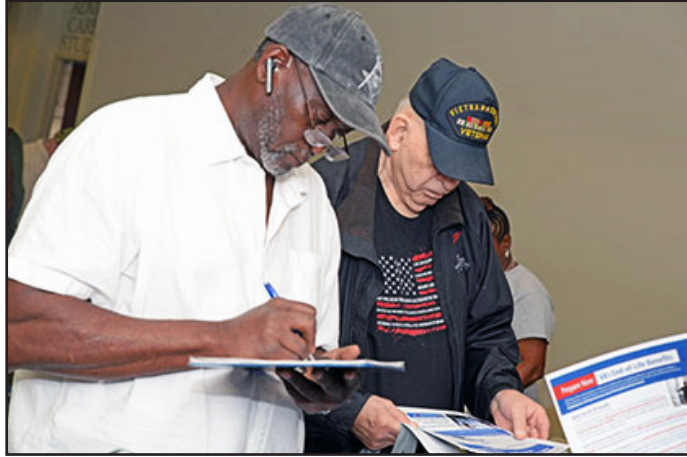
If we grant your benefits under the PACT Act and you submitted your intent to file on or before Aug. 14, 2023, you may be eligible for retroactive benefits dating back to Aug. 10, 2022—the date PACT Act was signed into law.

What does this mean for non-PACT claims?

If we grant your benefits, we’ll provide benefits that likely will date back to at least the date when you began your intent to file. We call this retroactive benefits (or backdated benefits). And this could be thousands of dollars.

How do I check the status of my ITF?

The quickest and easiest way to check the status of your PACT Act claim is to sign into your va.gov account with your existing Login.gov, ID.me, DS Logon or My HealtheVet account. If you don’t have any of these accounts, you can create a free Login.gov or ID.me account. Once you are signed into your account, simply follow these three steps to check the status of your PACT Act claim.



This photo is provided courtesy of the VA

- Go to your “My VA” dashboard. You will find the link for this dashboard in the top right corner of the page once you’re signed in.

- Scroll down to the “Track Claims” section. There, you will see a summary of the latest status information for any open claims or appeals you may have, to include open ITFs.

- Click on the “View Status” button for a specific claim. You’ll go to a page with more details about that claim’s status and supporting evidence. Evidence may include documents like doctor’s reports or medical test results.

Is it too late to file a claim if I haven’t already?

It’s never too late to file a claim or ITF for the benefits you deserve. You can file one by logging into, or creating, a VA.gov account and submitting online. You can also submit to a VA regional office near you, or work with a trained professional, like a VA accredited representative or VSO, to get help filing a claim for disability compensation. Other options include calling 1-800-827-1000

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The American Legion Internet Observer

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Still Serving America

Do you have an ongoing program or activity that serves your community?

Do you have a friend or relative that goes above and beyond the call of duty to help others?

Send an e-mail to chief1921@comcast.net and tell us what your story is or how you or this person is demonstrating that they are Still Serving America, but must be received by the 10th of the month, the month prior.

In submitting your information, please be sure to include your full name, address and telephone number. There’s a good chance the information you send us will make it into The Internet Observer.

A Message From Post 123 Commander Winter

Get ready to Vote

By: PDC Doug Winter, Commander Post 123

Congratulations go to the 11 posts that have reached 100% membership.

The Department of Colorado is sitting at 101.1

Remember, we are a Virtual Post and pay our dues on our anniversary dates. We do not engage in membership drives.

I have had a slow start this month in trying to stick with my Legion Leadership training which includes we don't talk about politics or religion. If you watch any TV or have read any news lately all we seem to get is politics, somewhat tied to religion when you consider the war in Israel. And now the Hunter Biden saga.

I've decided to address what I consider a very serious situation. VOTING. As citizens, we are entitled to vote (That in itself is somewhat of a conundrum. I have been led to believe, but not verified, that some States are offering voter registration when people sign up for a driver's license.)

We have several ways and opportunities to vote:

- 1) In person on election day.
- 2) Most States and Counties offer early voting.
- 3) Mail-in voting.

I'd like to address mail-in voting, and the pros and cons. There is a huge cry at all levels for volunteers to assist and monitor voting. I'm not going to get into the many ways people who want to cheat can, but I'd like to accentuate the positive.

Let me start by saying our ballots are confusing. There are so many people, political positions, State and County referendums, and offices. I find it very hard to think about all of the people and positions while standing at a voting desk or machine. My research into this includes talking to several people and asking them how and not who did you vote for? On more than one occasion I got the answer; "I voted for the president then just everyone in that party". WOW, you mean you didn't know or care about any of the folks except the President.

I'd submit to you that happens more than we'd like to think, and further think that is why our government at all levels needs help. Without beating a dead horse, I'd like to share with you why and how Patty and I approach this very important subject.

- 1) We call or email the County clerk and ask for a ballot by mail.

2) The clerk sends out a form that we sign and return with our signatures for verification.

3) The Clerk mails our ballots to us, with instructions and a postage-paid return envelope.

4) Upon receipt of the actual ballot we copy both sides and put the copies on the desk.

5) We address every name and position.

6) If we don't recognize someone, we look him/she up on the computer.

To refresh your memory here are some of the offices listed on a recent ballot.

- A) US Senator
- B) US Representative
- C) State Senator
- D) State Representative
- E) Public Election Commissioner
- F) District Attorney
- G) County Clerk
- H) County Treasurer
- I) County Commissioner

As if that is not enough to digest and become familiar with, turn the ballot over and look at all of the other bills, boards, etc. Rather than try to address them as they may be different within Counties and States, most are seeking financing in some form or another. In my experience over the many years of voting, I've found that the titles or names of the bills are often opposite of what the bill, if passed, would do.

We as VETERANS are a cohesive group. We are the leaders and the workers and everything and everyone in between. My opinion is that we are the backbone of our Nation. I stand proud to be the Commander of AMERICAN LEGION POST 123, The Virtual Post in this our 20th year. Happy Anniversary Legionnaires of Post 123.

PS: Keep an eye out for THE VETERANS OBSERVER coming out in a couple of weeks. There will be an exciting announcement!



(Monday Continued from Page 2)

Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST or by fax using 844-531-7818.

Will I be charged for submitting a claim or intent to file?

No. Remember, VA will never charge you for assistance filing for benefits. They are your benefits, and you earned them. To protect yourself from predatory claims agents, you have the right to verify

anyone's credentials before filing a claim or providing personal information.

If I miss the one-year deadline, what happens?

You can still finish your claim anytime, and we encourage you to do so. The only thing that may change is the effective date of your benefits.

For more information about ITFs, visit <https://www.va.gov/resources/your-intent-to-file-a-va-claim/>.

Another National Commander From Colorado is Coming

By: Pat Smith

At our 2019 Department Convention, a Resolution was overwhelmingly passed to endorse Jay Bowen for National Commander. As a result and to observe him in leadership roles, for the past five years Jay was given the opportunity to serve as chairman for two very important National positions; three years as Membership and Post Activities Committee Chairman, and two years as the Veterans Employment and Education Chairman.

Jay proved he was up to the task because at the Spring Meetings in May, it was announced he is to be the next candidate for National Commander. So, when the gavel falls closing the National Convention in New Orleans on Thursday, 29 August, Jay Bowen will start his two year campaign to officially become only the second person from Colorado in the 107 History of our great organization to serve as National Commander. Tom Bock holds the distinction of being the first from Colorado as National Commander when he served during the 2005-2006 year. If things progress as expected, Jay will be elected at the National Convention in Louisville, KY in 2026.

Jay will join several distinguished Colorado Legionnaires who have served at a national level with great distinction. Colorado was privileged to have had two National Historians, Dorothy Long and,

just recently, Deb Davis. Stan Hamamoto served as our National Historian. Jim Parker served as National Sgt At-Arms during Tom Bock's term. Ralph Bozella served for 12 years as the Chairman of the VA&R Commission and was endorsed as a candidate for national commander. Earl Franklin served for many years as the Chairman of the Children and Youth Committee and also was endorsed as a candidate for national commander. Colorado has produced numerous excellent leaders for this organization and Jay will be among the greats.

During the campaign, he plans to visit as many of the lower 48 states, plus Alaska as possible and will be hosting four, three-night hospitality events in Indianapolis. He is currently putting together a campaign team to assist with fundraising and hospitality events. His plan is to have about 25-30 people to serve on the campaign team consisting of Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, and members of the Sons of The American Legion. If you are interested in joining Jay's campaign team, or know of someone who would be interested in joining the team, have them reach out to Jay ASAP at legionnairejay@yahoo.com.

Congratulations Jay! We are extremely proud of your efforts and we know you will represent The American Legion and Colorado well.



Join The American Legion



Help Our Nation's Veterans

(Person Continued from Page 1)

person he commanded was a singular being who deserved everything he could provide, in the way of spirit and belief.

“He was everyone’s father, brother and confidant. He was their leader, more than their commander.”

Nightingale explained that Eisenhower spoke personally with the troops he was sending into battle as D-Day neared “as much to encourage himself as to encourage them. There would be a price to be paid for the enterprise, and it was a price that he would deeply bear.”

The general and U.S. president-to-be wrote a note the night before Operation Overlord “to be used in case of failure,” explained his granddaughter, author and international relations consultant Susan Eisenhower. “In it, he asserted that if there was any failure attached

to the invasion, the blame was his and his alone. These are stories of individual courage and bravery, and what Eisenhower called devotion to duty. They will be remembered.”

Caroline de Carvalho, a great granddaughter of Eisenhower, told the crowd on the town square that the ideals of the great World War II leader continue to influence new generations, including her own four children.

“In the months of preparation for the D-Day invasion, Eisenhower managed to bridge a cultural and human divide, in order to unify military and political leaders from different allied countries around a single strategic purpose – the Normandy invasion,” she told the crowd. “He truly understood the risks involved and was prepared to personally suffer the consequences if the invasion were to fail.”

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What to know if you get care outside of VA

From: My Healthevet

A Veteran receives information from a health care provider. If you’re experiencing a medical emergency, you shouldn’t hesitate to get emergency care. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room quickly. A medical emergency is an injury, illness, or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, you believe your life or health is in danger.

Some Veterans live far away from a VA emergency room and need to get care quickly. If + go to a non-VA emergency department for care, VA may still offer coverage.

Notifying VA is necessary for getting coverage and sharing important medical updates. We have the information you need to make it happen.

Notify VA as soon as possible

During a medical or mental health emergency, we encourage you to seek immediate medical attention right away. You don’t need to check with VA before calling 911 or going to an emergency department. But it’s important that the facility treating you notifies VA within 72 hours.

Promptly notifying VA allows them to coordinate care or transfer to a VA medical facility, if necessary. It helps VA check if the requirements for them to pay for the care are met and may impact a Veteran’s eligibility for coverage.

Payment by VA is limited to the time of stabilization except when both of these are true:

- VA is contacted upon stabilization but can’t accept the transfer of the Veteran, and
- The community care facility made and documented reasonable attempts to transfer the Veteran to a VA or other facility

How to notify VA

It’s best to ask your emergency care provider to report the treatment to VA’s Centralized Emergency Care Reporting Center as soon as possible. If you’re able, tell your care provider that you’re a Veteran. It’s a good idea to remind caregivers and other family who might be with you in an emergency that they should tell a care provider your Veteran status.

Your emergency care provider should report the treatment using the VA Emergency Care Reporting portal or by calling 844-724-7842.



Photo is courtesy of the VA

Be prepared

If you live in an area where you may need to seek health care outside of VA, prepare before you go. Locate your closest emergency department so that you don’t have to worry about that during an emergency.

You can also plan by locating your nearest urgent care facility. [Urgent care is different](#) from emergency care. Urgent care services are for less than life-threatening illnesses or injuries, like strep throat or pink eye. Save yourself time later by keeping a handy list of the [urgent care clinics closest to you](#). Find out in advance which ones are

in-network with VA.

Remember: If you’re seeking emergency services, you don’t need to check with VA before calling 911 or going to an emergency room. Getting care when you need it is the priority.

My HealtheVet Emergency Information

Be sure to keep your [emergency contact information](#) up to date in My HealtheVet. Log a name, contact method, and phone number for people who should be contacted in case of emergency. This tool is for your records only—your VA health care team won’t see it unless you share it with them.

Colorado Native returned after 82 years

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR CLIFFORD H. STRICKLAND

MISSING WWII POW COLORADAN
IDENTIFIED AFTER 82 YEARS



DONATE
HERE:



DPA recently announced that **U.S. Army Tech Fifth Grade Clifford H. Strickland**, 25, of Fowler, Colorado, who was captured and died as a P.O.W. during World War II.

JUNE 29 8AM-10AM

**Runyon Field Sports Complex
400 Stanton Ave, Pueblo CO, 81003**

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL: (719)583-6195

IN LIEU OF FLOWERS THE FAMILY REQUEST DONATIONS BE MADE TO:



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AMERICA

(Years Continued from Page 5)

And in the years that followed, as he led the United States into an era of peace, prosperity and friendship among nations, “He never forgot the lessons of war and loss of human life necessary for Allied victory.”

“When I was a young girl, my parents told me that my grandfather Dwight Eisenhower would appear on a television special to mark the 20th anniversary of D-Day,” explained Susan Eisenhower, who served on The American Legion’s 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee. “He visited the beaches of Normandy with Walter Cronkite to tell him the story of the epic events that occurred here. This program was the first time I saw the village of Ste. Mere-Eglise. It never occurred to me that 60 years later, I would be in this village, thanking the citizens and the American sponsors, The American Legion and Operation Democracy, for the statue of Dwight Eisenhower that will stand in this place for generations to come.”

The national commander thanked the alliance of organizations in France and the United States for bringing the Statues of Liberation project to life. “I also want to thank our friends at DHL Express for the care and expedience they deployed in shipping this work

of art from a foundry in the state of Maine, in the United States of America, to this beautiful location in Normandy,” he added. “They were truly respectful and, above all – honored to be a part of this, as we are.”

On Tuesday, June 4, the national commander and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley (retired) delivered remarks at the Roosevelt statue, drawing out similarities between the two leaders.

“Today, we reflect on this rare and remarkable leader – a true servant leader – as was Gen. Dwight Eisenhower,” Seehafer said at the Tuesday ceremony. “Roosevelt Jr.’s commitment to service, camaraderie and strength not only laid a foundation of values for The American Legion in 1919, his spirit continues to guide this great organization, which I now have the honor of leading, more than 105 years later.

“May generations yet to be born understand, through his immortal gaze, cast in bronze and bullet casings, the kind of leadership it took – and will always take – to save a world and build lasting friendships.”

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Eastern Colorado Health Care System
1700 N Wheeling St
Aurora, Colorado 80243
303-399-8020**

Departments	Scheduling Questions	Clinical Questions
Cardio-Thoracic	720-723-6392	720-857-2710
Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)	720-857-5404	720-857-5571
Bariatrics	720-723-6363	720-723-4782
Urology	720-723-4775	720-857-5829
OBGYN	720-857-5701	720-857-5377
Vascular	720-723-6392	720-723-4780
Plastics	720-723-3271	720-857-4782
Breast	720-723-6363	720-857-4780
Orthopedics	720-723-6683	720-857-5580
Podiatry	720-857-5406	720-857-5577
Colorado Springs	719-227-4690	719-227-4432
Neurosurgery	720-723-6684	720-723-4782
General Surgery	720-723-6363	720-857-5816

For other concerns: Dial 303-399-8020 then

Press 1 for Pharmacy

Press 2 to make or change an appointment.

Press 3 to speak to a Nurse.

Press 4 for Eligibility and Registration

Press 5 for Billing Questions

Press 6 for Community Care and Mission Act information.

Press 7 for Veterans Crisis Line

The Legion's role in immigration reform

By: The American Legion

Illegal immigration is a topic of high importance to The American Legion. It has tracked border policy for decades and remains committed to engaging in dialogue on the evolving issue. Not only is illegal immigration a national security issue but estimates also say that 40% of border patrol agents are veterans.

As members of Congress politicize the issue, states fight to exert control and immigrant children face the threat of exploitation, The American Legion is leading the way in forging a solution.

"There has been a lot of political showmanship and conjecture related to illegal immigration across our southern border," American Legion National Commander Daniel Seehafer said. "But those talking points, used by both sides of the debate, don't actively work to solve the problem. That's why The American Legion has conducted multiple trips to the border to get a first-hand look at the issue, learn from those at ground zero and use these fact-finding tours to get a comprehensive understanding of what's at stake."

Recently, Seehafer led a delegation to Eagle Pass, Texas, with American Legion National Security Director Mario Marquez. Their trip followed an earlier visit to the border in Arizona by American Legion National Security Chairman Matthew Shuman.

"I was impressed by the caliber of men and women serving in the Border Patrol, Sheriffs' Departments and Guard units from multiple states," Seehafer said. "But seeing scattered shoes in the middle of the desert worn by a child, muddy backpacks lying in debris and hygiene items in the brush, you can't help but picture the hell that some of these families go through in making that dangerous trip to enter our country. If the natural elements weren't bad enough, they are subject to sexual exploitation, drug trafficking and extreme violence by smugglers and cartels."

After his visit with two members of Congress in late March, Shuman shared a report with the commission and others.

"My trip was invaluable as I came away with deep learnings and profound insight," he said. "Among my experiences were literally seeing a cartel scout and witnessing and meeting many passionate Border Patrol agents who not only care and love our great nation, but also have deep passion and respect for the people who cross our borders. In fact, I learned that during a government shutdown, many agents spent their own personal money to purchase food, toys and other necessities for the people under their care at processing stations."

Shuman's trip was two-fold: a visit to the border in Nogales and meetings with those in charge of the Tucson Sector, the largest area to monitor along the border. In 2018, the Tucson Sector

reported 52,172 encounters, while the estimate in 2024 is 322,922. Additionally, the Tucson Sector holds illegal immigrants for about 22 hours, to conduct a rudimentary background and documentation check, assigns them a court date for their asylum request, which is often years away. However, they are often released to non-government organizations that collectively received about \$650 million U.S. taxpayer funds.

Another issue that is a concern to many veterans is whether resources from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are being diverted to illegal immigrants and whether illegal immigrants are receiving VA health care.

VA claims agents process claims on behalf of other federal agencies. This includes Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which has a contract with the VA Financial Services Center (FSC) to process medical claims. However, VA does not incur any costs for the claims which come from the ICE program.

According to VA Press Secretary Terrence Hayes, "No resources meant for veterans are used as part of this agreement. FSC provides an administrative function for ICE, using ICE funds, which has zero impact on veteran health care or benefits."

Currently, there are at least 13 resolutions approved by the National Executive Committee

that address immigration topics, ranging from drug trafficking to asylum reform to immigration rates and more. [Resolution 23, Immigration Reform](#), approved by the NEC during Spring Meetings in 2022 is the most sweeping, covering six of the 13 categories.

Following his visit, Shuman said he evaluated the issue and the Legion's long history in it.

"The American Legion has it correct," he summarized. "We already have several resolutions calling for the right things to happen, from appropriate and adequate funding of a physical border wall where needed, to acquiring modern technology to increasing the number of agents. Our Legion has consistently passed resolutions with logical steps. I am proud of our Legion for approaching this topic with genuine logic. I also think it's time we prioritize this issue and begin demanding Congress take responsibility and take action."

Seehafer agrees.

"This is a national problem which will require bipartisan solutions and bipartisan action by our Congress, president and governors," he concluded.



This photograph was provided by The American Legion

Copays not required by veterans for first three outpatient mental health visits through 2027

By: The American Legion

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that veterans no longer need to pay copays for their first three outpatient mental health care and substance use visits through 2027. This copayment exemption dates back from June 27, 2023, and by law will end Dec. 29, 2027. The benefit will provide veterans with better access to mental health services and lower out-of-pocket expenses.

For veterans to be eligible for this copayment exemption, the outpatient visit must be with a qualified mental health professional at VA or have been provided through VA's network of community care providers. If eligible, the VA will automatically refund veterans for any copays paid to VA on or after June 27, 2023, for these appointments. No action is required by veterans.

"We want every veteran, regardless of their financial status, to have access to the mental health care they deserve — and that's

what this copayment exemption is all about," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We are constantly working to expand access to mental health care, and we won't rest until every veteran has access to care whenever and wherever they need it."

VA also released a new suicide prevention policy in 2023 that allows eligible veterans and certain former servicemembers in acute suicidal crisis to go to any VA or non-VA emergency facility for no-cost emergency healthcare. More than 60,000 veterans and former servicemembers have benefited from this lifesaving care. Additionally, because eligible veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system or go to a VA to use this benefit, nine million veterans have had access to emergent suicide care at no



Photo courtesy of The American Legion

cost.

Visit the [VA's mental health website](#) for more information.

Learn more about the copay exemption benefit for veterans, which is part of the [Cleland-Dole Act of 2022](#).

From around the state

Post 123 donation

By: Doug Winters, Commander Post 123

POW/MIA table that Post 123 donated to the Homelake Veterans Center. Many posts have such a display. POW/MIA stands for prisoners of war and missing in action. NO ONE eats at it! It is a tribute to the POW/MIA,s.

Post 123 Adjutant Larry Larsen, is who made it happen on behalf of Post 123



CHAMPVA: Simplify pharmacy claims

Let the pharmacy do the work

By: Stephanie Slater, VA Office of Integrated Veteran Care

Save time by letting pharmacies submit your prescription claims for you.

If you are enrolled in the [Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs \(CHAMPVA\)](#), the easiest way to get reimbursed for your prescriptions is to let the pharmacy electronically file your claim for you.

Pharmacies know what is required, and electronic filing means faster processing and payment. All you need to do is give them your prescription (or have your doctor electronically send it to your pharmacy) and show them your pharmacy card.

If CHAMPVA is your secondary payer, the pharmacy can bill electronically and save you the hassle. If you haven't received your pharmacy card or misplaced it, you can get a temporary card until your replacement card arrives. To request a replacement card, call OptumRx at 888-546-5502.

Why pharmacy electronic claims are better

Saves you time. By letting your pharmacy do the work for you, you only pay a cost share and deductible, and you won't have to wait up to 90 days to get reimbursed. You will also save time spent filling out paperwork and mailing your claim in.

Prevents errors that delay processing. Having your pharmacist submit your claim ensures all the necessary information is included. If a claim is submitted with missing data, VA has to request that missing data, which extends the reimbursement timeline.

Let your pharmacy do the legwork so you can gain back valuable time to focus on yourself and your loved ones.

Take advantage of CHAMPVA pharmacy cost-savings

Enroll now. Make sure to enroll in CHAMPVA to take advantage of CHAMPVA pharmacy benefits. [Check your eligibility](#) before applying.

No other health insurance, no problem. If you're using CHAMPVA (and do not have other insurance with prescription coverage) you can use both OptumRx and Meds by Mail services.

Amplify your other health insurance. If you have other health insurance, like Medicare, CHAMPVA can help cover the cost of medications as a secondary payer within the OptumRx network.

Find out which option is right for you:

[Find a participating pharmacy near you](#) in the [OptumRx network](#) to fill your prescriptions. OptumRx offers over 66,000 participating retail pharmacies that can electronically submit your

claims. (Note: You can take advantage of OptumRx if CHAMPVA is your primary or secondary health care benefits provider).

Use Meds by Mail to get prescription medications delivered to your door with no extra fuss. Meds by Mail is a safe and easy way to get non-urgent or maintenance medications. (Note: Only available if you do not have other health insurance.)

You can elect to use a non-network pharmacy.

When you take advantage of your CHAMPVA pharmacy benefits, let your pharmacy do the work for you to electronically file your claim.

About CHAMPVA



Photo courtesy of the VA.

CHAMPVA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. Qualified spouses, widows(ers) and children of a Veteran are eligible if their Veteran is rated by VA as permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability or was rated permanently and totally disabled at the time of death.

To receive CHAMPVA benefits, you cannot be eligible for TRICARE.

Support and resources

[Pharmacy Benefits – Community Care](#) (va.gov)

[Meds by Mail \(MbM\) – Community Care](#) (va.gov)

[CHAMPVA – Community Care](#) (va.gov)

[CHAMPVA Eligibility – Community Care](#) (va.gov)

[How to Apply for CHAMPVA – Community Care](#) (va.gov)



Legion supports \$337 billion VA budget request

By: The American Legion

The American Legion threw its support behind the FY25 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, which the House plans to vote on today, June 5.

In a letter to House Speaker Mike Johnson and Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, The American Legion said it supports the \$337.4 billion request for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is \$75.5 million above the FY25 budget request and \$30.2 billion above the FY24 enacted level.

Additionally, the letter also voiced support for these elements of the legislation:

- The full funding of the Veterans Health Administration and the advanced funding for the Toxic Exposures Fund.



Photo courtesy of The American Legion

“This level of funding will ensure the continued care that our veterans have earned and provide the support programs that allow veterans to make our society even stronger,” the letter stated.

- The full funding of homeless assistance programs, substance use disorder programs, and the opioid prevention and treatment program. The American Legion wrote. “These initiatives provide the support veterans need to right their own ship and return to safe and productive lives.”

[To Read the full letter click here.](#)

NCA's Cemetery Restoration Project thrives

By: Richelle Taylor, NCA Public Affairs Specialist and Navy Veteran

Since 2020, the National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) Cemetery Restoration Project has formed partnerships that aim to educate communities about private cemetery owners and the caretakers who honor and memorialize Veterans buried without headstones. The restoration project also restores these private resting places to reflect the dignity and honor these Veterans deserve for their service and sacrifice to our nation.

Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Matthew Quinn has pushed for NCA to continue aiding with private cemetery restoration efforts. In his testimony to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee earlier this year, he stated, “Every grave, every resting place of a Veteran ought to be a national shrine, not just if they're in a national cemetery, but every place they are laid to rest.”

Latest restorations

On April 13, our partners at the Friends of Lebanon Cemetery

in York, Pennsylvania, held a dedication ceremony to unveil the restored headstones for five Veterans, one of whom served in the Civil War.



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On the same day, NCA's partner Diane Z. Christopher, a caretaker of Sacred Hearts Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Dinwiddie, Virginia, had more than 50 volunteers from the military, scouts and churches gather in support of a clean-up effort on the 6-acre property.

On May 3, the Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Washington D.C., held a ceremony to unveil a headstone for “Hello Girl” Edmee LeRoux—who served in War World I, died in 1945, and was buried in an unmarked grave. Thanks to the work of her family, along with NCA, the World War One Centennial Commission, the Doughboy Foundation and the Military Women's Memorial, LeRoux—who was denied Veteran status until 1979—finally

received the recognition she deserves.

(Continued on Page 13 See Last year)

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(Last year Continued from Page 11)

Last year, NCA partnered with the historical African American Saints and Sinners Cemetery, located in Oak Hill, Florida, that was used as a dump site in the 1980s. According to researchers, 22 gravesites of Veterans who served in WWI and WWII were discovered, and the history of this cemetery is now being turned into a documentary film.

The NCA team also provided best practices to help the Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois, erect and restore a headstone for Cpl. Silas Sappington, who died in 1922.

National appeal

The effort to ensure no Veteran is forgotten has taken nationwide appeal. Media stories include a concerned man cleaning headstones of Veterans buried at Elmwood Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri; the Daughters of the Revolution in Omaha, Nebraska, helping locals to install new headstones for Revolutionary War soldiers, Isaac Sadler and John McConnell; a local church in Hauppauge,

New York, dedicating a headstone for Alfred Griffin, a formerly enslaved Union soldier; and about 299 headstones being restored at the Historic Fairview Cemetery in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for Veterans buried there between 1926 and 1988.

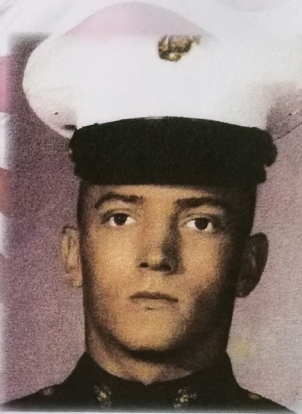
Moreover, these activities have a direct impact on the VA Veterans Legacy Memorial, where nearly 10 million of our nation's heroes now have individual commemorative pages. Each time an unmarked grave is marked, that Veteran gets added to these pages, which currently reflect an increase of more than 5 million Veterans over the past year alone.

For this year's Memorial Day, let us remember that these stories and many more demonstrate the significance of cemetery preservation and restoration. The honor and dignity bestowed to these sacred spaces and service members should never be understated, nor the efforts of individuals to tell their stories undervalued.

For more information email us at VANACOMREL@va.gov

Michael Hanratty - Vietnam POW/MIA Project

MIKE HANRATTY MEMORIAL PROJECT



MARINE PFC THOMAS "MIKE" HANRATTY GREW UP IN BEULAH, ATTENDING BEULAH SCHOOL AND PUEBLO COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL. AFTER HIGH SCHOOL HE DECIDE TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY AND JOIN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS. HE WENT MISSING IN A HELICOPTER CRASH WHILE SERVING HIS COUNTRY IN VIETNAM. TO THIS DAY HE IS LISTED AS "MIA" IN SPITE OF SEVERAL EFFORTS TO LOCATE HIS REMAINS. TO HONOR HIS SERVICE AND HIS MEMORY BEULAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS WORKING WITH THE STATE OF COLORADO TO NAME COLORADO HIGHWAY 78 IN MIKE HANRATTY'S HONOR. COLORADO STATE SENATOR CLEAVE SIMPSON *and Sen. Hendrickson* IS SPONSORING A RESOLUTION TO NAME THE HIGHWAY DURING THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

THE PUEBLO VETERANS RITUAL TEAM ALONG WITH MARINE LEAGUE OF PUEBLO, THE RETIRED ENLISTED ASSOCIATION (TREA) AND OTHER VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS OF PUEBLO WILL HAVE A MEMORIAL MASS FOR MIKE HANRATTY AND HIS FAMILY ON JULY 6, 2024. AT OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC CHURCH 8800 NORTH MARYKNOLL BLVD AT 10AM. *Beulah*

After ~~BEULAH~~ MASS, A MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE HELD AT THE MEMORIAL SITE NEAR MILE MARKER # 16, BEULAH COLORADO AT 11AM. SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE DREW DIX, MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIANT, (VIET NAM WAR).

LUNCH WILL FOLLOW THE MEMORIAL SERVICE AT THE RED BARN AT 7970 HWY 78.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MIKE HANRATTY MEMORIAL PROJECT MAY BE MADE TO MINNEQUA WORKS CREDIT UNION 1549 E ABRIENDO AVE, PUEBLO COLORADO 81004.

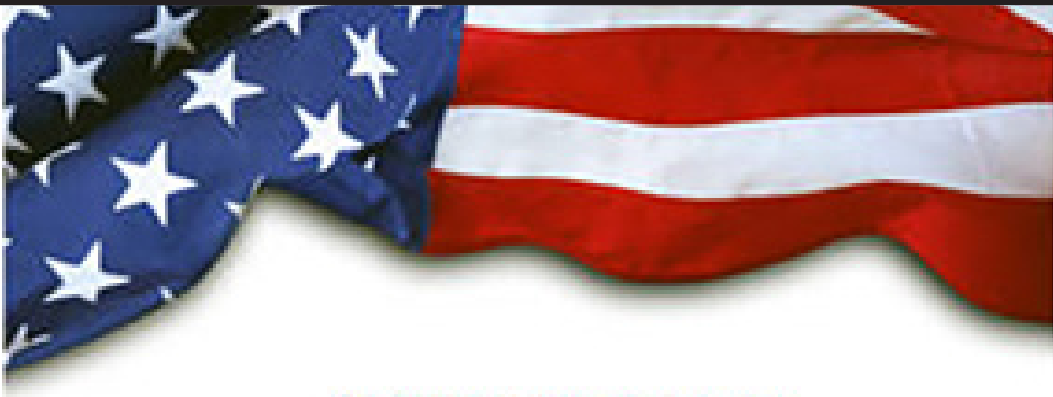
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL DAN HANRATTY 719 568-1774 OR KEN MONTOYA 719 248-9907.

By: Tom Florez

A project, which we are supportive from our local American Legion Posts.

I forwarded this FYI to our Boy State Group as one of our Boy State cities is named after him.

His Memorial Project is in Beulah, Colorado and I have spent time with his cousin Joe Hanratty developing and discussing support in our region and throughout the state.



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 20 - 22, 2024

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