



The Straight Scoop

Department Newsletter of the
Marine Corps League
Department of West Virginia
P.O. Box 11828
Charleston, WV 25339



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Department Officers:

Commandant: Michael McLain, 304-464-5049
Sr. Vice Commandant: Scott Kirby, 304-588-0318
Jr. Vice Commandant: Jerry Bain, 304-675-1905
Judge Advocate: Richard Sneigle, 304-588-7901
Jr. Past Commandant: Richard Shank, 304-633-1814
Legislative: Hershel Williams, 304-743-1026
Chief of Staff: Roger Ware, 304-636-4365
Web Sgt: Steven Swenton, 304-277-8872

Adjutant: Patti Leib, 740-591-8611
Paymaster: Patti Leib, 740-591-8611
Chaplain: Frank Armentrout, 304-837-4011
Sgt.-at-Arms: Chuck Ghuste, 304-692-0334
Asst Sgt-at-Arms: Roy Wood, 304-339-3326
Service/VAVS: Roger L. Estep, 304-380-7930
Public Relations: Jean Lamb, 304-595-1482
Historian: Mike Lynon, 304-419-0982

Department E-mail contact: mclain@suddenlink.net

Department Web site: <http://www.mcleaguedeptofwv.org/> Department

Adjutant/Paymaster: pattileib024@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Roger Ware, 181 Weese Street, Elkins, WV 26241 E-mail: rrware@yahoo.com

New Member/Reinstatement Dues

New members August 31 – Last day of February

Full dues expire August 31 next year - \$25

Full dues MAL expire August 31 next year - \$30

New members March 1 – August 30

Partial dues expire August 31 same year - \$15

Partial dues MAL expire August 31 same year - \$15

Reinstatements

Must be delinquent at least 1 full year

Full dues \$20 (or \$30 for MAL) August 31 - last day of February

Partial dues \$10 or \$15 March 1 – August 30th

THERE IS A NEW DUES TRANSMITTAL FORM ON LIBRARY SITE BELOW

Dues Notice

Membership Process

New Members:

Members who join between August 31 – last day of February

Pay \$25 and expiration date will be August 31 of the following year

Example: Member who joins August 31, 2018 – end of February 2019 will expire in August 2019

Members who join between March 1 – August 30

Pay \$15 and expiration date will be August 31 of current year

Example: Member who joins March 1, 2018 – August 30, 2018 will expire in August 2018

Going forward all members will expire August 31 and pay \$20 each year for renewal. This will be the New Member guidelines going forward, this is not temporary.

Reinstatements: Members who are reinstating

(Reinstating members are members who have been delinquent more than a year and do not want to pay all back dues and keep their length of membership, they will get a new enrollment date, which would affect eligibility to join MODD – there is a one year membership rule to join.)

Members with a reinstatement date of August 31 – end of February
Pay \$20 and the new expiration date will be August 31 of the following year

Members with a reinstatement date of March 1 – August 30
Pay \$10 and the new expiration date will be August 31 of the current year. Then each member will owe \$20 each year on August 31.

Members at Large - MAL

Members who join between August 31 – the last day of February
Pay \$30 and expiration date will be August 31 of the following year
Example: Member who joins August 31, 2018 – end of February 2019 will expire in August 2019

Members who join between March 1 – August 30
Pay \$15 and expiration date will be August 31 of the current year
Example: Member who joins March 1, 2018 – August 30, 2018 will expire in August 2018

Going forward all members who expire August 31 will pay \$30 each year

MCL Current Websites

MCL National <https://www.mclnational.org/>

MCL National Library <https://www.mcleaguelibrary.org/>

MCL Mideast <http://www.mclmideast.com/>

Membership Recruiting

Always be on the lookout for indications of whether or not someone is a Marine veteran. Look for bumper stickers or license plates in a parking lot. Are they wearing any Veteran apparel? As this is a way to determine if they are a Marine Veteran. If so start a brief conversation, introduce yourself, and ask if you can call the person at a later time when it is most convenient for them. Tell them you would like the opportunity to tell them a little more about the Marine Corps League. It may not always go smoothly, but if you don't put yourself out there, you'll never know. You have to quit being afraid of being told no.

Always remember to be respectful of the potential member's time. Keep the introductory conversations to a few minutes. There's nothing worse than being pushy, because that's when you lose a potential member. Make sure to actually follow up in a timely manner. If you say you are going to call or visit in a few days, be sure to do it.

Here are a few pointers you should be aware of: Be sure to maintain a neat, professional appearance; shake hands; use everyday words when speaking; don't use profanity; Always say thank you; Acknowledge and talk to other individuals who might be with the veteran; put away all vices, such as tobacco products or cell phones; Address potential members as "sir" or "ma'am". Whether you are working a membership booth in a mall or festival or approaching someone in the grocery store parking lot, remember these 4 basic steps:

Introduction: Introduce yourself and make it clear you are with the Marine Corps League because not everyone will know what the MCL stands for

Qualification Questions: Use specific questions to determine if the veteran is qualified to join the MCL.

Show MCL facts: Offer brochures and present facts about the MCL to illustrate what the organization does and why it is important for them to join.

Ask to join: If you never ask them to join, they never will.

The survivability of the MCL is reliant on good recruiting practices. Being courteous and respectful goes a long way in recruiting. Don't get discouraged and never give up.

**2018 MCL Department Convention Schedule
The Quality Inn, Gallipolis, Ohio
May 4-5, 2018**

Friday, May 4, 2018

1300-1600 Professional Development & Leadership Training
1300-1600 MCL & MODD Registration
1200-1300 Lunch on your own
1300-1700 Department Audit Committee*
1600-1700 Commandant's Council for Detachment Commandants/**Staff Officers Meeting**
1700-1830 Dinner on your own
1700-2230 Hospitality Room open
1830-1900 MODD Pack Board Meeting - At call of Dept Commandant, Pack Leader, MODD
1900-2100 MODD Growl of the Pack

Saturday, May 5, 2018

0600-0930 Breakfast on your own
0800-1000 MCL registration
0800-0815 Flag-raising Ceremony - Dept Sgt-at-Arms
0820-0930 Memorial Services, all hands attending - Dept Chaplain
0930-0945 Department Budget Committee Meeting*
0930-0945 Department Nominations Committee Meeting*
1000-1200 MCL Business Meeting
1200-1315 Lunch on your own
1315-1600 MCL Business Meeting
1615-1640 New Officer Installation & Department Officers' Meeting
1800-1900 Formal Reception
1900-2200 Grand Banquet
* At call of Chairman for Audit, Budget and Nominations Committee

Professional Development Training at Gallipolis, Ohio

On Friday May 4, 2018 at the Quality Inn in Gallipolis, Ohio there will be several professional development classes presented which will include duties of the Detachment Board of Trustees, Recurring reports – 990 N efile, Annual Corporate Reports, new 2018 Dues transmittal form, Paymaster and Adjutant duties, Dept Guidebook for Detachments, Membership Retention Team, “Guidebook for Elections”, “Guidebook on How to Submit a Bid for Dept Quarterly Meeting or Convention”. These periods of instruction will be short and focused on how to keep your detachment administratively functional. Most will be on a computer with projected DVD. Discs will be available. All classes commence at 1 PM and go until 4 PM. This material is essential to help you gain more knowledge of admin procedures and business communications.

Annual Corporate Report

Every detachment must be incorporated within the state so after annual officer installations are complete, the Detachment must complete and file a Corporation Annual Report prior to 30 June each year and mail to the WV Secretary of State, Business and Licensing Division. If Officers are installed or changed after 1 July, the Detachment must file an Application to Appoint or Change Officers, and/or Office Addresses with the WV Secretary of State. Once the form is completed, a copy should be mailed to the Department Adjutant for record purposes. Every detachment that is incorporated must file an Annual Report for Corporations. The cost is \$25 and is payable to the WV Secretary of State's office. This must be completed before June 30 of each year. This should be done as soon as you have your elections and officers installed. The Secretary of State has mailed out a postcard reminding all corporations that their report is due prior to June 30. If you have not received your renewal form, contact the WV Secretary of State at 1-877- 826-2954 or 1-866-767-8683 and have one sent to your detachment. Companies that do not file their annual reports on time are at risk of being administratively dissolved or revoked and will be assessed a mandatory late fee of \$25 (twenty-five dollars) for non- profit organizations as required by the West Virginia Code.

Detachment Commandants, Paymasters, Adjutants and Adjutant/Paymasters

It is time for most, if not all, of the Detachments to elect their Officers for the 2018 - 2019 term. That also means it is time for you to submit your Report of Officer Installation (ROI) for 2018 - 2019. Remember that you must send in a Report of Officer Installation (ROI) every year even if none of your Officers change.

Mail your Original ROI to me at:

Patti Leib
Adjutant-Paymaster
Department of West Virginia – MCL
PO box 1224
Athens, OH 45701-1224

Thank you,
Patti

Detachment Awards

It is the responsibility of the Commandant to ensure that members are recognized for performing Detachment events, displaying USMC or MCL Principles and Purposes, outstanding community involvement and promoting patriotism. There are various awards and MCL certificates that can be fabricated and presented.

Actual performance must exceed normal expectations and merits a respective award to ensure integrity of the Award. No award should be given because they are a member. Must be able to justify award. The impact upon detachment or community will determine the award level. Thanking members is also a reward. Certificates can be presented to businesses or organizations.

Ceremonial Guard Ribbon (with authorization noted on the certificate to wear the Ribbon)

Must participate in 10 events for each award. Events include Color Guard, Funeral/Honor Detail, Rifle Detail or Marching Squad. Just walking or riding on a float in a parade does not qualify unless it is part of a specific detail or program such as a Marching Unit. This Award is retroactive to 1 January 2010 for all individuals who have met the qualifications for the Award.

Distinguished Citizen Medal - Bronze

Awarded to detachment members and community citizens for outstanding service or those who have been examples of patriotism and exemplary citizenship

Distinguished Service Award (with authorization noted on the certificate to wear the Medal/Ribbon)

Awarded to detachment members for outstanding service and those who have excelled and exceeded expectations

Detachment Recruiter Medal - Bronze - (with authorization noted on the certificate to wear the Medal/Ribbon)

Awarded to member who signs up most new members within a year

MCL Community Service, VAVS Service, or JROTC Service Ribbon

Awarded to individual for either Community Service, VAVS and or JROTC Service

Meritorious Individual Commendation Ribbon

Awarded for individual meritorious action or contributions to detachment or community

Certificate of Appreciation

Awarded for performance that reflects on the detachment or other community service

The following Awards are automatically authorized to be worn by Detachment members:

Detachment Commandant Medal

Detachment Marine of the Year Medal

Detachment Staff Medal - Elected

Detachment Staff Medal - Appointed

MCL Medal (Membership) is automatically authorized for a member who has been in the League for five (5) continuous years and has not had their membership revoked.

Detachment Marine of the Year (with authorization noted on the certificate to wear the Medallion and ribbon)

This award is presented to the Detachment member demonstrating outstanding performance and dedication above and beyond expectations of the principles of the MCL that merit nomination for the award. The selection for the Detachment Marine of the Year (DMOY) may be selected by the membership or by a committee of all previous Detachment Marine of the Year recipients. This will be the Detachment Marine of the Year Committee. The criteria for selecting the annual DMOY will be determined by the Committee. The previous recipient will be the Chairman and will call for the Committee to meet. The Leaguer selected will be presented the Detachment Marine of the Year Medal at a ceremony and will be authorized to wear it in accordance with the prescribed Uniform Code. A suitable certificate will be presented and will be included in the Detachment Minutes.

Boy Scout Eagle Scout - Marine Corps League Good Citizenship Award - Presented to a Boy Scout who has attained the rank of Eagle Scout. Usually presented during Boy Scout Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony. Appropriate words of remarks should be made during presentation by Marine Corps League representative.

Maynard Smith | MOH Recipient Demoted to Private

Given a choice between jail or the military, Maynard Smith reluctantly opted for the army. This 31-year-old Private was a discipline problem from the start and was reported to be spoiled, insubordinate, and unliked by all he encountered. When he arrived in England for combat as an aerial gunner, no one wanted to fly with him, and it was only upon direct orders that the other crews would do so. Odd as it may seem it was on his very first mission that Maynard "Snuffy" Smith inexplicably emerged with the Medal of Honor.

Born in 1911 Caro, Michigan, Maynard Smith developed an early reputation as a spoiled kid prone to trouble and the ability to annoy almost anyone. On leaving school, it was apparent his plan was to live off his inheritance for as long as he could until eventually taking up a job in the tax field. Smith fathered a child which oddly enough led to his unique path to the military. He and the child's mother separated, but his failure to pay child support put the 31-year-old troublemaker in the hands of a judge. He was given two choices in 1942, go to jail

or join the military.

Once in the Army, Smith found it tough taking orders from anyone particularly men nearly ten years younger than him. Consequently, he opted for the quickest route to acquire rank which at the time was to volunteer for Aerial Gunnery School. Considering the Bombers he was to crew often had a 50% survival rate; it seemed an odd choice for a typically selfish man. By the time he arrived in England in 1943, his obnoxious personality and reputation for failing to be a team player preceded him. Making no friends in his new location, he earned the nickname "Snuffy" for his obtuse personality. On May 1, 1943, now Staff Sergeant Smith climbed into the ball gun turret of his B-17 and headed out for France. The target was a series of U-Boat pens near Saint-Nazaire which was a heavily defended location with the nickname "flak city." Despite its reputation, at least one group of bombers arrived on target and met little resistance from the German forces. Dropping their bombs and heading for home, the crew of Smith's B- 17 felt they had made it. Unfortunately, the lead plane made a navigational error, and while he believed they were heading for England, he was leading the group straight to the heavily fortified city of Brest, France. As the group began to descend from the clouds, they were met by a welcoming party of German fighters and intense anti-aircraft fire. Smith's bomber was instantly hit. Enemy fire ripped through the plane's fuel tanks causing a massive fire to erupt in the middle of the fuselage. Their communications system went down, the oxygen system was destroyed, and the power to Smith's ball turret was knocked out.

With the fire raging, three of the crew members decided it was time to bail out. They parachuted over the channel never to be heard from again. Smith, on the other hand, leaped into action. He tended to the wounded crew as the pilots attempted to navigate the plane home. However, German fighters were still riddling the plane with bullets, and the fire continued to rage threatening to melt the fuselage. They were a long way from home and Smith spent the next 90 minutes treating the wounded, manning the machine gun, and fighting the fire. The temperature in the plane became so intense the extra ammo began to explode. Smith threw the exploding ammunition through the holes in the fuselage the fire had created. Anything not bolted down he ejected. When the fire extinguishers were empty, Smith donned some protective clothing and attacked the fire by hand. As the plane finally approached England Smith had put the fire out, in part by urinating on it.

The plane landed on the first available airfield and broke in half upon touchdown. Somehow, they had made it and the man they dubbed "Snuffy" now found himself an unlikely hero. Unfortunately for Smith, it did nothing to alleviate his personality problems, and his fellow soldiers only seemed to resent him more.

The week that Smith was to receive his Medal of Honor from the Secretary of War he was assigned to KP duty for disciplinary problems. After the presentation, Smith continued to fly on four more missions before being diagnosed with "operational exhaustion". He was reduced in rank to Private with a clerical job far from the skies where he earned the nation's highest military honor.

Smith lived until 1984. He was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery as the war hero with whom no one wanted to fly. His actions on that fateful day in May 1943 will forever remain noted as a real display of inexplicable courage; obnoxious personality or not.

Non-Deployable Troops - Pentagon New Retention Policy

The Pentagon on 12 FEB released its new policy on military lethality, which will begin separation procedures for service members who have been non-deployable for the last 12 months or more. "This new policy is a 12-month deploy or be removed policy," Robert Wilkie, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told a Senate panel Wednesday. "However, there are exceptions." As Military Times previously reported, there will be exceptions, such as pregnancy. Medical boards will review wounded personnel, and the services will retain the ability to grant exceptions to wounded warriors.

“The situation we face today is really unlike anything we have faced, certainly in the post-World War II era,” Wilkie told the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on personnel and readiness. “On any given day, about 13 to 14 percent of the force is medically unable to deploy. That comes out to be about 286,000 [service members].” Wilkie said that the new policy was the result of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis’ 21 JUL memo that “everyone who comes into the service and everyone who stays in the service is world-wide deployable.” Wilkie likened having 14 percent of forces non-deployable to Jeff Bezos at Amazon walking into his company on Christmas week and finding that 14 percent of his employees were unable to work. “He would no longer be the largest company in the world,” Wilkie said.

Wilkie acknowledged several deploy ability challenges that are “on us,” such as unit leaders not ensuring that all of the service members under their leadership had gotten all of their required dental and medical care. Command Sgt Maj. John Troxell, the senior enlisted adviser to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Joe Dunford, estimated that as many as 99,000 military personnel are unable to deploy because they were missing a medical appointment or immunization. But “the other thing we’ve seen is that in the down years of recruiting for the military, we offered too many medical waivers” Wilkie said. “The medical conditions those service members have followed them into the service as they progressed through their careers. We have to address that”.

Non-Service-Connected Pension

Did you know if you are a veteran who is 65 years-old or older, or permanently and totally disabled you may be eligible for the VA Non-Service Connected Disability Pension (NSC)? This is a program that provides financial support to wartime veterans with a limited income. The amount payable under this program depends on the type and amount of income the veteran and his/her family members receive from other sources. Monthly payments are made to bring a veteran's total annual income (including other retirement and Social Security income) to an established level. You may be eligible for the NSC pension if you were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, and you served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war time*, and your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law, and you are permanently and totally disabled, OR you are age 65 or older. See a Veterans Service Officer for more details.

VA Launches Telehealth Program for Rural Vets with PTSD

The VA has launched a pilot program that will offer telehealth treatment to rural veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The program is designed to take the treatment to the veterans rather than make the veterans come to the treatment. Many rural veterans must travel long distances to see a VA mental health specialist, and that can prevent them from seeking the treatment they need.

The new program hopes to improve access and make it easier to these veterans to get treatment on their terms. Each veteran participating in the program is assigned a care manager who will communicate with the veteran regularly via telephone. The care manager also helps veterans access services provided by off-site psychiatrists and psychologists. Psychotherapy is delivered via interactive video from a VA medical center to a VA community-based outpatient clinic or to the veteran’s home.

The care manager also monitors the veterans’ progress and helps them overcome barriers to care by coordinating treatment on the VA end.

“Our researchers have worked diligently in recent years to establish the safety and efficacy of PTSD psychotherapy delivered remotely, ensuring veterans will get the same quality of PTSD care as if they were in a

doctor's office at a VA medical center," said VA Secretary David Shulkin. "We are excited to see this program help greater numbers of veterans living in rural areas and pleased that it will save them time and effort to get to a VA facility that is far from their homes."

Participants may choose between the two main forms of evidence-based, trauma-focused psychotherapy used in VA: cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure therapy.

VA also offers several mobile apps to assist veteran and family members deal with, diagnose, and treat PTSD symptoms.

The program is currently operating in the Charleston, SC; Iowa City; Little Rock; Denver; San Diego, and Seattle areas with plans to expand in the future.

VA Mustard Agent Care Compensation Approved

Last week, March 6, 2018, 17 World War II era veterans finally gained the care and benefits they need from the Department of Veterans Administration (VA). Last year, President Trump signed a bill to help veterans who were intentionally exposed to mustard gas by covert Department of Defense (DoD) experiments. The Bill was designed to provide benefits and compensation to those veterans exposed to mustard gas in those secret experiments. The WWII era veterans reaped in more than \$1 million from the VA. In case you didn't know, the following locations are considered presumptive locations for mustard gas exposure in the 1940's:

Bari, Italy.

Hart's Island, New York Bushnell, Florida

Horn Island Installation, Mississippi

Charleston, South Carolina Huntsville Arsenal

Alabama Camp Crowder, Missouri

Naval Research Laboratory, Virginia Camp Lejeune, North Carolina

Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C. Camp Sibert, Alabama

Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland

Dugway Proving Ground, Utah

Ondal, India

Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland

Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Colorado

Ft. Detrick, Maryland

San Jose Island Panama Canal Zone

Ft. McClellan, Alabama

Toole Army Depot, Utah

Great Lakes Naval Training Center, IL USS Eagle Boat No. 58

Note: Some servicemembers may have participated in Allied mustard agent testing in Porton Down, England, and Finschhafen, New Guinea.

According to the VA, service-connection may be granted by presumption for disabilities which are due to mustard gas. The conditions considered presumptive for exposure to mustard gas are:

Acute nonlymphocytic leukemia, Chronic conjunctivitis, keratitis, corneal opacities, and scar formation

The following cancers: nasopharyngeal; laryngeal; lung (except mesothelioma); or squamous cell carcinoma of the skin Chronic laryngitis, bronchitis, emphysema, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

To assess for consideration for benefits see a local VSO. Make sure and have documentation in your service medical records or other military documents that you were stationed in the areas above or spent time there on military orders.

National Resource Directory for Veterans

The [National Resource Directory](#) is one of the largest online collections of government and non-government resources specifically designed for Veterans, their families and caregivers. The Directory contains more than 16,000 organized and vetted resources and provides information covering a variety of topics. The directory is a one-stop alternative to searching through multiple websites and publications to find what you are looking for. At www.nrd.gov, all resources and information for a topic area can be found within a single website and are easily located using the site's search engine. For more information, visit the National Resource Directory website and read the VA Vantage Point Blog

VA Accredited Representatives - Disability Claim Assistance

An accredited representative is an individual who has undergone a formal application and training process and is recognized by VA as being capable of assisting claimants with their affairs before VA. Most accredited representatives work for veteran service organizations (VSOs) many of which are private non-profit groups that advocate on behalf of Veterans, Service members, dependents and survivors. Accredited representatives may also work for state or county government entities. The accreditation process includes an examination, a background investigation, and continuing education requirements to ensure VSOs are providing the most up-to-date information. Recognized organizations and individuals, whether congressionally chartered VSOs or VA accredited claims agents or attorneys, can legally represent a Veteran, Service member, dependent, or survivor before VA. Non-recognized organizations and individuals can provide information, but cannot be a representative.

What is the role of an accredited representative? A VSO, along with state, county, and other local Veteran service representatives are trained to help you understand and apply for any VA benefits you may be entitled to including: compensation, education, vocational rehabilitation and employment, home loans, life insurance, pension, health care, and burial benefits. Additionally, your VSO can help you gather any evidence needed and submit a Fully Developed Claim on your behalf. Many VSOs provide their services free-of-charge, but they may request reimbursement for unusual expenses.

In addition to assisting Veterans and their families with VA claims, VSOs also sponsor a range of Veteran-centric programs such as providing transportation to and from VA medical center appointments, funds and volunteers for disaster relief, and grants. VSOs also lobby Congress on behalf of issues facing Veterans and help support requests for resources needed by VA to better serve Veterans, their families, and survivors. The VA Office of General Counsel maintains a list of VA-recognized organizations and VA- accredited individuals that are authorized to assist in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of VA benefit claims. For more information is available to veterans at <https://www.va.gov/ogc/accreditation.asp> on how to select a representative, find out who can charge fees relating to representation, file a complaint about your representative, or to dispute a charged by an agent or attorney based on reasonableness.

Fee for Service Unlike VSOs, VA accredited claims agents and attorneys may charge a fee for their services. For more information on what to do if you believe you were charged an unreasonable fee by a claims agent or attorney, see the fact sheet on How to Challenge a Fee at:

<https://www.va.gov/OGC/docs/Accred/HowtoChallengeaFee.pdf>.

How to find a Representative Online - You can find a local representative including a recognized VSO, attorney, or claims agent by state/territory, zip code, or by the organization's name online using eBenefits. At your nearest VA regional benefit office. To find a VSO office located in or near your local regional benefit office, use VA's directory of VSOs <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vso/varo.asp>.

How to Appoint a VSO or Representative You may appoint an attorney, claim agent, or VSO to represent you or manage your current representative online using eBenefits. You may also appoint a VSO or representative by completing VA Form 21-22, Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative and mailing it to:

Department of Veterans Affairs, Claims Intake Center, PO Box 4444, Janesville, WI 53547-4444

It is recommended that you first speak to the service organization before you submit your request to VA.

VA Benefits Eligibility Based on Disability Rating

Take a look at the eligibility matrix below to see what benefits you are eligible for based on your disability rating:

Rating of 0% - 20%

Certification of Eligibility for home loan guaranty. Home loan guaranty fee exemption.

VA Priority medical treatment card.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling under Title 38 USC Chapter 31 (must be at least 10%).

Service Disabled Veterans Insurance (Maximum of \$10,000 coverage) must file within 2 years from the date of new service connection.

10-point Civil Service preference (10 points added to Civil Service test score).

Clothing allowance for veterans who use or wear a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (artificial limb, braces, wheelchair) or use prescribed medications for skin condition, which tend to wear, tear or soil clothing.

Temporary total evaluation (100%) based on hospitalization for a service connected disability in excess of 21 days; or surgical treatment for a service connected disability necessitating at least 1 month of convalescence or immobilization by cast, without surgery of more major joints.

Rating of 30%

Additional allowance for dependent (spouse, child(ren), step child(ren), helpless child(ren), full-time students between the ages of 18 and 23 and parent(s).

Additional allowances for a spouse who is a patient in a nursing home or helpless or blind or so nearly helpless or blind as to require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

Rating of 40%

Automobile grant and/or special adaptive equipment for an automobile provided there is loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet, loss or permanent loss of one or both hands or permanent impaired vision in both eyes with central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in better eye.

Special adaptive equipment may also be applied for if there is ankylosis of one or both knees or one or both hips.

Rating of 50%

VA Medical outpatient treatment for any condition except dental. Preventative health care services.

Hospital care and medical services in non-VA facilities under an authorized fee basis agreement.

Rating of 60% - 80%

Increased compensation (100%) based on Individual Unemployability (IU) (applies to veterans who are unable to obtain or maintain substantially gainful employment due to service connected disability).

Rating of 100%

Dental treatment.

Department of Defense Commissary privileges. Veteran’s employment preference for spouse.

Waiver of National Service Life Insurance premiums.

National Service Life Insurance total disability income provisions.

Specially adapted housing for veterans who have loss or permanent loss of use of both lower extremities or the loss of blindness in both eyes having light perception only plus loss of use of one lower extremity or the loss or permanent loss of use of one lower extremity with loss or permanent loss of use of one upper extremity or the loss or permanent loss of use of one extremity together with an organic disease which affects the functions of balance and propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes or wheelchair.

Special home adaptation grant (for veterans who don’t qualify for Specially Adapted Housing) may be applied for if the veteran is permanently and totally disabled due to blindness in both eyes with visual acuity of 5/200 or less or loss or permanent loss of use of both hands.

Rating of 100% (Permanent and Total) In Addition to the above:

Civilian Health and Medical Program for Dependents and Survivors (CHAMPVA).

Survivors and dependents education assistance under Title 38 USC Chapter 35.

Quotable Quotes Things to Think About

- ~ Betsy Salkind... Men are like linoleum floors. Lay 'em right & you can walk all over them for thirty years.
- ~ Jean Kerr... The only reason they say 'Women and children first' is to test the strength of the lifeboats.
- ~ Prince Philip... When a man opens a car door for his wife, it's either a new car or a new wife.
- ~ Harrison Ford... Wood burns faster when you have to cut and chop it yourself.
- ~ Spike Milligan... The best cure for Sea Sickness, is to sit under a tree.
- ~ Jean Rostand... Kill one man and you're a murderer, kill a million and you're a conqueror
- ~Arnold Schwarzenegger... Having more money doesn't make you happier. I have 50 million dollars but I'm just as happy as when I had 48 million.
- ~ WH Auden... We are here on earth to do good unto others. What the others are here for, I have no idea.
- ~ Jonathan Katz... In hotel rooms, I worry. I can't be the only guy who sits on the furniture naked.
- ~ Robert Benchley... I have kleptomania, but when it gets bad, I take something for it.
- ~ John Glenn... As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind - every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder.
- ~ David Letterman... America is the only country where a significant proportion of the population believes that professional wrestling is real but the moon landing was faked.
- ~ Old Italian proverb... After the game, the King and the pawn go into the same box

The Cynical Philosopher

1. I read that 4,153,237 people got married last year, not to cause any trouble but shouldn't that be an even number?
2. I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather. Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car.
3. I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you.
4. When wearing a bikini, women reveal 90% of their body. Men are so polite they only look at the covered parts.
5. Relationships are a lot like algebra. Have you ever looked at your X and wonder Y.
6. You know that tingly little feeling you get when you like someone? That's your common sense leaving your body.
7. Money talks... but all mine ever says is good-bye.
8. You're not fat, you're just... easier to see.
9. I always wondered what the job application is like at Hooters. Do they just give you a bra and say, "Here, fill this out?"
10. I can't understand why women are okay that JC Penny has an older women's clothing line named, "Sag Harbor."
11. My 60-year kindergarten reunion is coming up soon and I'm worried about the 175 pounds I've gained since then.
12. Denny's has a slogan, "If it's your birthday, the meal is on us." If you're at Denny's and it's your birthday, your life sucks!
13. The location of your mailbox shows you how far away from your house you can be in a robe before you start looking like a mental patient.
14. The reason Mayberry was so peaceful and quiet was because nobody was married. Andy, Aunt Bea, Barney, Floyd, Howard, Goober, Gomer, Sam, Earnest T Bass, Helen, Thelma Lou, Clara and, of course, Opie were all single. The only married person was Otis, and he stayed drunk.

Why Four Agent Orange Ailments Still Not Covered

VA Secretary David Shulkin suggests he favors expansion of Agent Orange-related health care and disability compensation to new categories of ailing veterans but that factors like cost, medical science and politics still stand in the way.

Shulkin told the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on Wednesday that he made recommendations to White House budget officials last year on whether to add up to four more conditions: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension (high blood pressure) to the VA list of 14 illnesses presumed caused by exposure to herbicides used during the Vietnam War. I've transmitted my recommendations to the [White House's] Office of Management and Budget. I did that by Nov. 1st", Shulkin said. "And we are in the process right now of going through this data. In fact, we met with [OMB officials] on Monday. They asked for some additional data to be able to work through the process and be able to get financial estimates for this. So, we are committed to working with OMB to get this resolved in the very near future." Shulkin didn't say which of the four conditions, if any, he wants added to the presumptive list, if and when cleared by the White House.

At the same hearing, the VA chief was asked his position on Blue Water Navy veterans of the Vietnam War who also suffer from illnesses on the VA presumptive list but aren't eligible to use it to facilitate claims for care and compensation.

They "have waited too long for this," Shulkin agreed, but then suggested the solution for these veterans is blocked by medical evidence or swings on the will of the Congress.

"I would like to try to find a way where we can resolve that issue for them, rather than make them continue to wait," Shulkin said. "I do not believe there will be scientific data [to] give us a clear answer, like we do have on the Agent Orange presumptive" list for veterans who had served in-country. "For the Blue Water Navy epidemiologic studies just aren't available from everything I can see. So, we're going to have sit down and do what we think is right for these veterans."

Vietnam veterans who served even a day in country who have illnesses on the presumptive list can qualify for VA medical care and disability compensation without having to show other evidence that their ailments are service connected.

Shulkin said VA "recently" received the last report of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), which found a stronger scientific association than earlier studies between certain ailments and herbicide exposure. In fact, however, VA has had the that report, *Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014*, for two years.

It was written by a committee of medical experts that reviewed medical and scientific literature on select ailments and herbicide exposure published from Oct. 1, 2012, through Sept. 30, 2014. Released in March 2016, the report found evidence to support raising the strength of association between herbicide exposure and bladder cancer and hypothyroidism. The report upgrades the link from "inadequate or insufficient" evidence to "limited or suggestive" evidence of an association.

In years past VA decided that for some ailments, such as Parkinson's and ischemic heart disease, "limited or suggestive evidence" was enough to add these illnesses to the Agent Orange presumptive list. For others, including hypertension, a more common disease of aging, VA deemed it wasn't enough.

This last NAM report, however, looked again at cardiovascular conditions and herbicide exposure. It didn't upgrade the link to heart ailments but it did affirm limited or suggestive evidence that hypertension is linked to herbicide exposure.

It also studied whether Parkinson's-like symptoms should fall into the same limited or suggestive category as Parkinson's disease itself. The 2016 report found "no rational basis" to continue to exclude Parkinson-like symptoms from the same risk category. Parkinson's disease itself was added to presumptive list in 2010.

VA secretaries under both the Obama and Trump administration reacted more slowly on the last NAM perhaps, by law, they could. Congress in 2015 let a portion of the Agent Orange law expire, language that required the VA Secretary to decide on new presumptive conditions within 180 days of accepting a NAM report.

The impact was immediate Though a senior VA official tasked with reviewing this last NAM report said then-VA Secretary Bob McDonald would make his decisions within three months, it didn't happen. McDonald left it to his successor. Shulkin waited more months and, in July 2017, vowed to decide by Nov. 1. OMB blocked an announcement, however, presumably over projected costs.

Cost has been a factor too in Congress not passing legislation to extend VA benefits to Blue Water Navy veterans diagnosed with illnesses on the presumptive list. Budget analysts a few years ago estimated a cost of \$1.1 billion over 10 years.

Also, NAM did conduct a review of medical and scientific evidence regarding Blue Water Veterans' possible exposure to herbicides and concluded in a May 2011 report that "there was not enough information...to determine whether Blue Water Navy personnel were or were not exposed to Agent Orange."

Blue Water Veterans remain be ineligible to use the Agent Orange presumptive list. A lone exception is granted for veterans with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Vietnam veterans with this ailment may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in country.

In every session of Congress, going back years, Blue Water Navy bills have been introduced. They would, if passed, “include as part of the Republic of Vietnam its territorial seas for purposes of the presumption of service connection for diseases associated with exposure [to] herbicide agents while in Vietnam.”

The current House version of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (HR 299), introduced in January 2017 by Rep. David Valado (R-Ga.), has 327 co-sponsors. Yet prospects of passage remain dim. Valado reminded Shulkin at a mid-March hearing of the House Veterans Affairs Committee that, six months ago, Shulkin said he was seeking more recommendations from “subject matter experts” on the issue and would be ready to update Congress in the coming months.

“Have you come to a decision on Blue Water Navy veterans?”

“I am aligned with you that these veterans have waited too long,” Shulkin said, “and this is a responsibility that this country has. And, as our veterans get older, it’s unfair....I believe it is imperative upon us to resolve this issue.

“I also believe,” Shulkin continued, “that there will not be strong scientific data to help resolve this,” in other words to justify benefit expansion. “This is going to be an obligation that we feel as a country, that these veterans shouldn’t be waiting any longer. And I am on the side of trying to find a way to resolve this for the Blue Water Navy veterans.”

Shulkin said his staff is “working hard to look at offsets” which means cuts to other parts of the VA budget to pay for Blue Water Navy benefits, or to find “other ways to be able to do that. And it is a high priority for us.” Reminded by Valado that “with these types of cancers, time is of the essence,” Shulkin replied, “Absolutely.”

New Trump Transgender Military Policy Bars Those with Gender Dysphoria

A new policy memo from President Donald Trump concerning transgender service members may allow some to serve but keep in place tight restrictions for many. The White House memo, released late Friday night, highlights recommendations from Defense Secretary Jim Mattis that individuals with a history or diagnosis of gender dysphoria be barred from serving, saying these people “may require substantial medical treatment, including medications and surgery. “With limited exceptions that are not spelled out in the memo, these people will be disqualified from military service, according to the policy.

“On the advice of experts, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security [Kirstjen Nielsen] have concluded that the accession or retention of individuals with a history or diagnosis of gender dysphoria, those who may require substantial medical treatment, including through medical drugs or surgery presents considerable risk to military effectiveness and lethality,” the White House said in a released statement. The new policy, the statement continued, would allow the military to apply health standards equally to all who serve.

Earlier Friday, Mattis' full memo was made public in a filing by the U.S. Department of Justice in U.S. District Court in Seattle. In the three-page memo, Mattis also recommends that transgender persons who “require or have undergone” gender transition be disqualified.

Those with a history or diagnosis of gender dysphoria should be allowed to serve, he said, only if they have been “stable” in their biological sex for 36 months prior to entering the military or if they receive a diagnosis while currently serving but do not require a change of gender and remain deployable.

Currently serving troops who have been diagnosed since policies created to enable transgender service were

introduced under Carter may continue to serve in their preferred gender and receive appropriate treatment, Mattis said. Gender dysphoria is defined as a conflict between an individual's biological or assigned gender and the gender with which they identify.

In his memo, Mattis called those with gender dysphoria a "subset" of transgender people who experience "discomfort" with their born sex, "resulting in significant distress or difficulty functioning."

"I firmly believe that compelling behavioral health reasons require the Department to proceed with caution before compounding the significant challenges inherent in treating gender dysphoria with the unique, highly stressful circumstances of military training and combat operations," Mattis wrote.

The White House memo comes about eight months after Trump first announced, in a series of tweets, that he intended to ban transgender people from serving in the military "in any capacity."

Those tweets caught the Pentagon off-guard; only a year before, then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter had announced a new policy allowing transgender individuals to serve openly. He ordered each of the military services to develop guidance and policies governing transgender personnel, including gender transition procedures and medical treatment.

Mattis' findings come to light as a result of the court system entering the fray in the wake of Trump's tweets. Four courts have now filed injunctions prohibiting new Pentagon policies on transgender personnel as four separate lawsuits against Trump move through the system.

The U.S. District Court in Seattle, which is adjudicating one of the lawsuits, had ordered the White House to turn over meeting documentation having to do with experts brought in to consult as Pentagon brass and the White House crafted the military transgender policy. It's not clear how many of the estimated between 3,000 and 15,000 serving troops who identify as transgender would be considered to have a gender dysphoria diagnosis, but the policy is expected to bar most troops.

"The Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to the U.S. Coast Guard, may exercise their authority to implement any appropriate policies concerning military service by transgender individuals," Trump's memo concludes. The specific mention of the Coast Guard is notable. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft was the first of the military service chiefs to publicly state support for transgender troops in uniform.

In August 2017, days after Trump's tweets, Zukunft told an audience at the Center for Strategic and International Studies that his office had reached out to all the openly serving transgender Coast Guardsmen to say the service did not plan to "break faith" with them.

In a December interview, Zukunft told Military.com he had determined that a tweet did not constitute an executive order, and thus felt empowered to make his statement. At the time, Zukunft said a lot of progress had been made on the topic and the services were now moving forward "in lockstep" to craft policy on transgender troops.

The Palm Center, a think tank on LGBT issues in the armed forces, denounced Trump's policy Friday night in a brief statement.

"Today's announcement fulfills President Trump's July 2017 tweet calling for the reinstatement of the transgender military ban," Palm Center Director Aaron Belkin wrote. "In service to the ideological goals of the Trump-Pence base, the Pentagon has distorted the science on transgender health to prop up irrational and legally untenable discrimination that will erode military readiness. There is no evidence to support a policy that bars from military service patriotic Americans who are medically fit and able to deploy. Our troops and our nation deserve better."



Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor awards were recently presented to DHL Detachment 981 members Marty De Persig (middle) and Ted Riley (right) by Past Department Commandant Roger Ware. They were honored for their long term selfless service to veterans, community and country.

Pending Calendar

2018 Department of West Virginia Convention will be May 4-6, 2018 at [The Quality Inn Gallipolis, 577 State Route 7 North, Gallipolis, OH 45769](#). Phone: (740) 446-0090.

Preregistration is \$5 or \$7 at the door. Preregistration is due by April 15th

MGM Detachment 1180 will be the host detachment. Rooms rate: \$85.00 plus tax. A block of 30 rooms has been set aside to accommodate everyone. Banquet includes choice of: Prime Rib \$25, Chicken \$20. Dinners include salad, 2 vegetables, rolls, beverage, and dessert. Amenities: Group Rate includes free Wi-Fi, free parking, free cable, free in-room coffee, free breakfast for two guests per room (each additional guest in a room pays \$6) Breakfast is 6 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Please note the deadline for Registration and Dinner Reservations! If you haven't sent in your registration and choice of dinner, you still have a small window of time!!

Also, Ads for the ad book are due to the printer ASAP

Donations for the Woody Williams Scholarship Auction can be brought to the Hospitality Suite upon arrival to the Convention.

2018 Mideast Division Conference

will be June 15-16, 2018 at the Turf Valley Resort, 2700 Turf Valley Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

Phone: 410-465-1500. Room rate: \$109.00 plus tax Use Group Code: 2944UW.

Hosted by Department of Maryland.

2018 MCL National Convention will be August 12-17, 2018 at the Buffalo Hyatt, Two Fountains Plaza, Buffalo, NY 14202. Phone: (844) 612-8010. or 716-856-1234 (Ask for Laci) or Call 888-421-1442 for reservations. Cutoff date is July 9, 2018. Reservations open 0801 21 August 2017. Buffalo.hyatt.com. Room price \$113 for one and \$130 for 2 people plus room tax. Free parking, free breakfast and free Wi-Fi. To any needing a camp ground for RVs or travel trailers the closest is AA Royal Motel and Camp Ground in N. Tonawanda NY. Their rate is \$53.10 per night. Reservations can be made now and identify yourself as with the Marine Corps League Convention. Address is [3333 Niagara Falls Blvd](#), phone - [716-693-5695](#) and they are pet friendly

2018 Modern Day Marine Expo will be Sep 25-27, 2018 at MCB, Quantico, VA. 2019 MCL Midwinter

Staff Conference will be Feb 28 – Mar 2, 2019 at the

Fredericksburg Hospitality House and Conf. Center, 2801 Plank Rd, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. group code: MCLMDWINTER17 Phone: (540) 786-8321 Room rate includes up to 4 breakfast vouchers per occupancy. TBA per night + prevailing tax (currently 11.3%) Please make your room reservation direct to the hotel no later than TBA at 540-786-8321.

2018 MCL National Convention will be August 2019 in Billings, Montana.