



## *The Straight Scoop*

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



**Volume 11, Issue 1, January 2018**

### **Department Officers:**

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### **Department of WV MCL Quarterly Meeting**

2018 Department of WV Quarterly Meeting will be held on January 13, 2018 hosted by by Huntington Det 340 10 AM January 13, 2018 in Huntington, WV at American Legion Post 16, 1421 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Huntington, WV 25701. Directions: Take I-64 W toward Huntington, take WV-10 Hal Greer Exit 11, turn right onto 16<sup>th</sup> St Rd/Hal Greer Blvd 2.5 miles. Turn left on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave for 0.2 miles. American Legion Post 16 will be on your left.

Staff Officers Meeting is 0930 AM with general business meeting at 1000 AM. WV Pack Growl will immediately follow Dept. Meeting.

The uniform code has been modified for the department regular meetings as members can wear polo shirts and black pants, with fore and aft cover. The uniform code must be followed for the Department Convention.

### **Department Regular Meeting Reports Sep 9, 2017 to Jan 13, 2018**

**Detachment Commandant** Each detachment Commandant or appointed representative attend the meeting to submit their detachment report. If unable to attend, please contact the Department Commandant to be excused and mail or email a copy of your report to the Dept. Adjutant/Paymaster Patti Leib before the date of the regular meeting.

Bring 15 copies of your detachment report to set out on the reports table for other detachment Commandants and Officers to view. Ensure the Dept. Adjutant/Paymaster, Sr. Vice Commandant, Jr. Vice Commandant, Judge Advocate and Chaplain get a copy of your report.

### **National Funeral Report**

National wants the total number of funerals each Det has conducted over past year. There might be funds from USMC for this. Report these to dept Adj so they can be compiled in one report.

**Membership and Retention Team:**

List number of paid life members: paid members: total paid: and total unpaid as of December 31, 2017

Have you generated a dues notice letter for mailing to your unpaid members?

Do you have a roster of every member that includes mailing address, phone number, date of birth, and email address? Do you have an accurate data base for all members?

Does your detachment have a Membership Retention Team that includes detachment Jr. Vice Commandant, detachment Paymaster and one appointed member.;

Does your detachments MRT report membership totals in your business meetings and list the unpaid members.?

How many new members have joined your detachment since Sep 9, 2017

How does your MRT contact your unpaid and delinquent members and other members?

What recruiting events has the detachment conducted since Sep 9, 2017

Does your MRT members contact every detachment member at least every 3 months?

Do you send your monthly meeting minutes to those members who do not attend meetings?

**Department Awards:**

Has your detachment nominated members for various awards

**Detachment Awards:**

How do you recognize your members? Do you submit recommendations for department awards?

**Department Marine of the year Award:**

Has your detachment nominated a member for this award

**Professional Development Training:**

Is your detachment implementing Professional Development Training into your membership? Are you using the Guidebook for Det. Officers, Dept. DVD training disc to assist in training? What PDT classes have been conducted in your detachment meetings since May 7, 2017?

**Chaplain's Report:**

List deceased members from Sep 9, 2017 to Jan 13, 2017

Have death notices for these members been filed by your detachment Chaplain and forwarded to the Dept. Chaplain?

**Detachment Commandants additional Comments:**

In this section of your report the Detachment Commandant can make any comments, requests and or suggestions to the Dept. of WV Staff.

**Americanism and Civic Events:**

Summarize your most important activities or significant events.

**Membership attendance:**

What are reasons that members chose not to attend detachment or quarterly meetings or department conventions?,

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**Veterans Visibility Day at the WV Legislature Wednesday, February 7, 2018**

Veterans Visibility Day during the 2018 Legislative Session will be Wednesday, February 7 in the lower Rotunda.

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**Tax Burden for West Virginia Retired Vets - As of December 2017**

Many veterans planning to retire use the presence or absence of a state income tax as a litmus test for a retirement destination. This is a serious miscalculation since higher sales and property taxes can more than offset the lack of a state income tax. The lack of a state income tax doesn't necessarily ensure a low total tax burden. States raise revenue in many ways including sales taxes, excise taxes, license taxes, income taxes, intangible taxes, property taxes, estate taxes and inheritance taxes. Depending on where you live, you may end up paying all of them or just a few. Following are the taxes you can expect to pay as a VA rated disabled veteran or military retiree if you retire in West Virginia.

Sales Taxes State Sales Tax: 6% (prescription drugs exempt). Food taxed at 1%. Seniors age 60 and older are eligible for the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card that can be used for pharmaceutical discounts, retail and professional discounts. Some municipalities may add a local sales tax of up to 1%. To apply or obtain more information, call 304-558-3317 or 877-987-3646. Gasoline Tax: 50.6 cents/gallon (Includes all taxes) Diesel Fuel Tax: 6.6 cents/gallon (Includes all taxes) Cigarette Tax: \$1.20/pack of 20

Personal Income Taxes Tax Rate Range: Low – 3%; High – 6.5% Income Brackets: Five. Lowest – \$10,000; Highest – \$60,000. For joint returns, the taxes are twice the tax imposed on half the income. Personal Exemptions: Single – \$2,000; Married – \$4,000; Dependents – \$2,000 Standard Deduction: None Medical/Dental Deduction: For tax year

2007, if you had no employer and were not self-employed, you may claim as a subtraction from income 33.4% of the amount you paid for medical care insurance. If you had an employer or were self-employed, you may be able to claim a subtraction from income for the amount you paid for medical insurance. It does not include long-term care insurance. Federal Income Tax Deduction: None Retirement Income Taxes: The beginning point for West Virginia taxation is federal adjusted gross income. Therefore, any amount of the IRA distribution or pension income that is taxable and included in federal adjusted gross income is taxable on the West Virginia income tax return. \$2,000 of civil, and state pensions are exempt. Social Security income is taxable only to the extent that the income is includable in your federal adjusted gross income. Taxpayers 65 and older or surviving spouses of any age may exclude the first \$8,000 (individual filers) or \$16,000 (married filing jointly) of any retirement income. Out-of-state government pensions qualify for the \$8,000 exemption. An individual, regardless of age, may deduct up to \$2,000 of benefits received from the West Virginia Teachers Retirement System, West Virginia Employees Retirement System, and military and federal retirement systems. Retired Military Pay: First \$2,000 is exempt. Military retirees are able to take an additional decreasing modification for military retirement up to \$20,000. Military Disability Retired Pay: Retirees who entered the military before Sept. 24, 1975, and members receiving disability retirements based on combat injuries or who could receive disability payments from the VA are covered by laws giving disability broad exemption from federal income tax. Most military retired pay based on service-related disabilities also is free from federal income tax, but there is no guarantee of total protection. VA Disability Dependency and Indemnity Compensation: VA benefits are not taxable because they generally are for disabilities and are not subject to federal or state taxes. Military SBP/SSBP/RCSBP/RSFPP: Generally subject to state taxes for those states with income tax. Check with state department of revenue office.

**Property Taxes** Property tax is administered by county officials and officials of several state government agencies. Although the Department of Tax and Revenue plays a major role in the administration of this tax, less than one-half of one percent of the property tax collected goes to state government. The primary beneficiaries of the property tax are county boards of education. Property taxes are paid to the sheriff of each of the state's 55 counties. Each county and municipality can impose its own rates of property taxation within the limits set by the West Virginia Constitution. Property is assessed at 60% of fair market value.

The West Virginia legislature sets the rate of tax of county boards of education. This rate is used statewide by all county boards of education. However, the total tax rate for county boards of education may differ from county to county due to excess levies. The total tax rate is a combination of the tax levies from four state taxing authorities: state, county, schools, and municipal. This total tax rate varies for each of the four classes of property, which consists of personal, real, and intangible properties. Property is assessed according to its use, location, and value as of July 1. The amount of property tax paid depends on the following factors: the assessed property value as determined by a county assessor, and the tax rate levied against each \$100 of the property's assessed valuation.

The assessed value of the property must be 60 percent of the property's true and actual value, which is defined as the amount of money the property would be worth in a sale. Go to <http://www.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx#government> for more information on Property taxes.

Senior citizens eligible for the Homestead Exemption Program may be entitled to a Senior Citizen Tax credit. The credit is based on the amount of property taxes paid on the first \$10,000 or portion thereof, of the taxable assessed value over the \$20,000 Homestead Exemption. The credit is based on the amount of property taxes paid on the first \$20,000, or portion thereof, of the taxable assess value over the \$20,000 Homestead Exemption. Taxpayers who pay the federal alternative minimum tax cannot claim this credit. Seniors who are 65 or older and who experience a property tax increase of at least \$300 on their owner occupied West Virginia home over the past year may qualify for the Senior Citizen property Tax Deferment if their income was no more than \$35,000. The credit must be approved by your county assessor's office.

The state's homestead Excess Property Tax Credit is a refundable personal income tax credit for real property taxes paid in excess of your income. The maximum refundable tax credit is \$1,000.

For more information on the above refer to <http://www.wv.gov/agencies/Pages/default.aspx> .

Inheritance and Estate Taxes There is no inheritance and the estate tax is limited and related to federal estate tax collection.

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### **What is the Decision Ready Claim (DRC) Program?**

The DRC Program allows you to submit VA compensation claims that are decision-ready so you can get your claim processed as fast as possible.

To submit a DRC, you must:

- Appoint and work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO),
- Gather all relevant and required evidence to support your claim, and
- Attend a VA claim exam, if needed, before submitting your claim.

When you work with an accredited VSO and provide all the necessary evidence with your application, you can get a decision on your claim in 30 days or less.

### **How do I find an accredited VSO?**

To find an accredited VSO near you, go to the [VSO Search](#) page on eBenefits. Accredited VSOs are fully trained on the DRC Program and can help you determine if a DRC is right for you

## What type of claims can I file through the DRC Program?

Currently, the DRC Program is available for the following types of compensation claims:

- **Direct Service Connection Claims:** Claims for conditions that began during your military service or were caused by an event while serving.
- **Presumptive Service Connection Claims:** Claims for conditions that are presumed to have been caused by an event during your military service, even if there is no specific evidence showing a connection between your condition and your military service in your service records. This includes conditions related to Agent Orange, chronic disabilities, and the following conditions tied to service during the Gulf War:
  - fibromyalgia,
  - chronic fatigue syndrome, and
  - functional gastrointestinal disorders.
- **Secondary Service Connection Claims:** Claims for conditions that were caused or aggravated by a service-connected disability.
- **Increased Disability Claims:** Claims for existing service-connected conditions that you have medical evidence to show have gotten worse.
- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claims:** Claims for surviving spouses of Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease or who was rated 100% disabled due to service-connected conditions (including entitlement to Individual Unemployability) for 10 years prior to their death. To learn more about DIC, including eligibility requirements, go to the [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation page](#).
- **Pre-Discharge Claims:** Claims for disability compensation filed by Servicemembers who have less than 90 days remaining before their separation from military service.

To file a DRC, you must have previously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from VA on that claim (this does not include DIC and Pre-Discharge claims). Go to the [eligibility section](#) to see a full list of exclusions that would remove your claim from the DRC Program.

## Will I be able to file other types of claims through the DRC Program?

Yes, VA is currently working to expand the DRC Program to include more types of claims. Revisit this page or check with your VSO to see if any updates have been made to the Program.

## How do I file a Decision Ready Claim?

Gather all relevant and required evidence to support your claim, including federal and medical records and completed Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs).

As part of the DRC Program, your VSO can also request a claim exam for you, if needed. You will then work with a VA partner to quickly schedule an exam at a time that works

best for you. The results of your exam can then be included along with your application.

Your VSO will check to make sure all of the necessary information is included and help you electronically submit your claim to VA. Giving VA all the relevant evidence when you submit your DRC allows your claim to go directly to a VA Rating Specialist for a decision.

### **Am I eligible to file a claim through the DRC Program?**

To file a DRC, you must have previously filed a VA claim and received a rating decision from VA on that claim. The following exclusions also apply for DRC claims:

#### **All Disability Compensation DRCs**

- Waiting for a decision on a pending disability claim
- Currently appealing the condition you want to file a DRC for
- Filing a claim for a previously denied condition
- Rated at 100% for your condition
- Filing a direct service connection DRC for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Camp Lejeune Contaminated Water (CLCW), and conditions related to Mustard Gas or as a Former Prisoner of War (FPOW)
- Filing a claim for a disability incurred during a prior period of active duty for training or inactive duty for training
- Filing a claim for Pension
- An incarcerated Veteran
- Claiming Individual Unemployability
- Seeking Special Monthly Pension
- Seeking only Special Monthly Compensation
- Living outside of the U.S.
- Submitting a DRC application without a Veteran signature
- Filing for Chapter 18 (Spina Bifida) and any other birth defects for dependent children
- Filing a restricted access claim (includes VBA employees, relatives of VBA employees, National Service Officers, or high-ranking government officials)

#### **Pre-Discharge DRCs**

Your Pre-Discharge claim will be disqualified from the DRC Program if you are:

- A Servicemember participating in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) Program
- A Servicemember participating in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) Program
- Filing a claim with 90 days or more remaining on active duty

## DIC Decision Ready Claims

Your DIC claim will be disqualified from the DRC Program if you are:

- Filing a claim for Parents Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Filing a burial claim (unless it's submitted with a DRC-eligible DIC claim)

### Where can I get more information?

Have more questions? Reach out to your local VSO or call the VA toll-free number at 1-800-827-1000.

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### 2018 VA Compensation Rates

Percent	Single	With Spouse
10	\$136.24	\$136.24
20	\$269.30	\$269.30
30	\$417.15	\$466.11
40	\$600.90	\$667.20
50	\$855.41	\$938.03
60	\$1083.52	\$1182.46
70	\$1365.83	\$1480.74
80	\$1587.25	\$1719.85
90	\$1783.68	\$1932.60
100	\$2973.86	\$3139.67

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### Link between Dementia and Urea

An international team of scientists have confirmed the discovery of a major cause of dementia, with important implications for possible treatment and diagnosis.

Professor Garth Cooper from The University of Manchester, who leads the Manchester team, says the build-up of urea in the brain to toxic levels can cause brain damage - and eventually dementia.

The work follows on from Professor Cooper's earlier studies, which identified metabolic linkages between Huntington's, other neurodegenerative diseases and type-2 diabetes.



The team consists of scientists from The University of Manchester, the University of Auckland, AgResearch New Zealand, the South Australian Research and Development Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University.

The latest paper by the scientists, published today in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shows that Huntington's Disease - one of seven major types of age-related dementia - is directly linked to brain urea levels and metabolic processes. Their 2016 study revealing that urea is similarly linked to Alzheimer's, shows, according to Professor Cooper, that the discovery could be relevant to all types of age-related dementias.

The Huntington's study also showed that the high urea levels occurred before dementia sets in, which could help doctors to one day diagnose and even treat dementia, well in advance of its onset.

Urea and ammonia in the brain are metabolic breakdown products of protein. Urea is more commonly known as a compound which is excreted from the body in urine. If urea and ammonia build up in the body because the kidneys are unable to eliminate them, for example, serious symptoms can result.

Professor Cooper, who is based at The University of Manchester's Division of Cardiovascular Sciences, said: "This study on Huntington's Disease is the final piece of the jigsaw which leads us to conclude that high brain urea plays a pivotal role in dementia.

Alzheimer's and Huntington's are at opposite ends of the dementia spectrum - so if this holds true for these types, then I believe it is highly likely it will hold true for all the major age-related dementias.

"More research, however, is needed to discover the source of the elevated urea in HD, particularly concerning the potential involvement of ammonia and a systemic metabolic defect.

"This could have profound implications for our fundamental understanding of the molecular basis of dementia, and its treatability, including the potential use of therapies already in use for disorders with systemic urea phenotypes."

Dementia results in a progressive and irreversible loss of nerve cells and brain functioning, causing loss of memory and cognitive impairments affecting the ability to learn. Currently, there is no cure.

The team used human brains, donated by families for medical research, as well as transgenic sheep in Australia.

Manchester members of the team used cutting-edge gas chromatography mass spectrometry to measure brain urea levels. For levels to be toxic urea must rise 4-fold or higher than in the normal brain says Professor Cooper.

He added: "We already know Huntington's Disease is an illness caused by a faulty gene in our DNA - but until now we didn't understand how that causes brain damage - so we feel this is an important milestone.

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He added: "We already know Huntington's Disease is an illness caused by a faulty gene in our DNA - but until now we didn't understand how that causes brain damage - so we feel this is an important milestone.

"Doctors already use medicines to tackle high levels of ammonia in other parts of the body Lactulose - a commonly used laxative, for example, traps ammonia in the gut. So it is conceivable that one day, a commonly used drug may be able to stop dementia from progressing. It might even be shown that treating this metabolic state in the brain may help in the regeneration of tissue, thus giving a tantalising hint that reversal of dementia may one day be possible."

Explore further: Kidney disease increases risk of diabetes, study shows

More information: Renee R. Handley et al., "Brain urea increase is an early Huntington's disease pathogenic event observed in a prodromal transgenic sheep model and HD cases," PNAS (2017). [www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1711243115](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1711243115)

Journal reference: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

Provided by: University of Manchester

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### **The Chapel of Four Chaplains - February 3**

February 3, 1943 is the date that four Army chaplains, George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling and John P. Washington lost their lives. The Chapel of Four Chaplains memorializes the courageous act of these four Army Chaplains who gave their lifejackets to others when the troopship USAT Dorchester sank after being torpedoed on

February 3, 1943, and honors the 672 men who perished. The Chapel of Four Chaplains is a national nonprofit organization, founded in 1947, which recognizes and encourages cooperation, brotherhood, and selfless service. The work of the Chapel is sustained solely by the cooperation and contributions of friends who share in the dedicated spirit of the Four Chaplains.

Many of the members in our department are recipients of the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award. The Chapel is a lasting tribute to those four Army chaplains who lost their lives on Feb 3, 1943 when the USAT Dorchester was torpedoed by a German submarine. The Chapel will soon be mailing out donation requests to every member who has been inducted into the Legion of Honor, asking for their support in keeping the Chapel of Four Chaplains vibrant. The Chapel's motto of "Unity without Uniformity and the recognition of "ordinary people who do extraordinary things" continues to be manifested in so many ways all over the country, and to so many people. Please consider supporting the Chapel with a donation and mail to : The Chapel of Four Chaplains, 1201 Constitution Avenue, The Navy Yard, Building 649, Philadelphia, PA 19112-1307.

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Marine Corps League members Roger Ware and Roy Wood stand among boxes of toys at the Toys for Tots distribution site in Elkins. Detachment 956 members collected over 15,500 toys during their annual campaign and distributed them to 2,105 needy and underprivileged children in 1,063 families in the region.



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### **Food for Thought**

An old man, a boy & a donkey were going to town. The boy rode on the donkey & the old man walked.

As they went along they passed some people who remarked "What a shame the old man is walking and the boy is riding."

The man and boy thought maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions.

Later they passed some people who remarked, "What a shame.... he makes that little boy walk." So they then decided they'd both walk!

Soon they passed some more people who remarked, "They're really stupid to walk when they have a decent donkey to ride."

So, they both rode the donkey. Now they passed some people who shamed them by saying "How awful to put such a load on a poor donkey."

The boy and man figured they were probably right, so they decide to carry the donkey.

As they crossed the bridge, they lost their grip on the animal and he fell into the river and drowned.

The moral of the story?

If you try to please everyone, you might as well... Kiss your ass goodbye!

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### **Letter to God**

There was a man who worked for the Post Office whose job was to process all the mail that had illegible addresses. One day, a letter came addressed in a shaky handwriting to God with no actual address. He thought he should open it to see what it was about.

The letter read:

Dear God,

I am an 83 year old widow, living on a very small pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse. It had \$100 in it, which was all the money I had until my next pension payment.\* Next Sunday is Christmas, and I had invited two of my friends over for dinner. Without that money, I have nothing to buy food with, have no family to turn to, and you are my only hope..Can you please help me?

Sincerely, Edna

The postal worker was touched. He showed the letter to all the other workers. Each one dug into his or her wallet and came up with a few dollars. By the time he made the rounds, he had collected \$96, which they put into an envelope and sent to the woman.

The rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of Edna and the dinner she would be able to share with her friends. Christmas came and went. A few days later, another letter came from the same old lady to God. All the workers gathered around while the letter was opened. It read:

Dear God,

How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your gift of love, I was able to fix a glorious dinner for my friends. We had a very nice day and I told my friends of your wonderful gift. By the way, there was \$4 missing. I think it might have been those workers at the post office.

Sincerely, Edna

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### **Pending Calendar**

2018 Department of WV Spring Quarterly Meeting will be January 13, 2018 at American Legion Post 16 in Huntington, WV.

2018 MCL Midwinter Staff Conference will be March 1-3, 2018 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 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. MGM Detachment 1180 will be the host detachment. Rooms rate : \$85.00 plus tax Banquet includes choice of: Prime Rib \$25, Chicken \$20. Dinners include salad, 2 vegetables, rolls, beverage, and dessert. Amenities: Group Rate includes free WiFi, 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.

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 or 888-883-8873. 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. Cut off 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 wifi.

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