

1ST DISTRICT SERVICE OFFICER VA & R REPORT FOR JUNE 24



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VA NEWS & INFORMATION:

The Milwaukee Soldiers Home National Historic Landmark District is one of three remaining original Soldiers Homes in the country. It is an outstanding representation of the development of a national system of medical and residential benefits for disabled veterans. The homes were designed as places of refuge and recuperation for physically and mentally disabled soldiers who had survived the Civil War. The Milwaukee Soldiers Home campus announced that it has leased half of its available supportive housing units to veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Veterans who qualify to live in the Soldiers Home will pay approximately 30% of their income in rent. Units in The Administration building come fully furnished for veterans requiring additional assistance. Nearly 40 veterans have been accepted to live in Old Main via the HUD-VASH program.

Did you know the VA has made significant changes to its regulations concerning character of discharge? These amendments will positively impact thousands of veterans, ensuring they receive the benefits and support they rightfully deserve.

Social Impairment Disorder is a condition that significantly impacts veterans, often causing them to avoid discussing their symptoms. It is crucial for veterans to recognize the signs and seek support to overcome these challenges. By opening up about their experiences and seeking help, veterans can break free from the burden of silence and work towards a healthier, more fulfilling life. Remember, reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness.

In a recent segment on 60 Minutes, the show delved into the profound impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a contagion, shedding light on how the symptoms can be passed down from veterans to their offspring. The story highlighted the intricate ways in which PTSD can infiltrate and disrupt the entire family system, emphasizing the need for greater awareness, support, and resources to address the far-reaching effects of this complex mental health condition.

As a society, we owe a great deal of gratitude to our veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country. However, it's important to recognize that their service often comes with a heavy toll on their mental and physical health. Anxiety disorders are a common affliction among veterans, and can have a debilitating impact on their ability to work and function in daily life. In addition to the psychological toll, anxiety disorders can also lead to physical ailments and other health complications.

The VA is deeply concerned about thousands of veterans who are unknowingly carrying a time bomb in their bodies in the form of a debilitating liver condition. This silent threat has already claimed the lives of hundreds of veterans and is particularly affecting those who served in Vietnam. The severity of this condition is such that it is causing immense suffering among veterans.

Dysthymia, a persistent depressive disorder, poses significant risks to veterans, potentially leading to a higher incidence of homelessness among this demographic. By raising awareness about the impact of dysthymia on veterans, the VA can work towards implementing effective support systems and interventions

to address this issue and ensure that those who have served our country receive the care and assistance they deserve.

A half a century after serving in Vietnam, thousands of veterans have a new reason to believe they may be dying from a silent killer, a time-bomb of a disease that shows no signs of surrender. Latest test results from multiple studies show some veterans may have been infected by a slow-killing parasite while fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

Did you know VA will no longer offer community care to veterans under the Veterans Choice Program (VCP)? As a result, VCP eligibility criteria will no longer be used to determine eligibility for community care. To prepare for the end of VCP, VA began transitioning its authorizations for care away from VCP to ensure veterans do not experience a lapse in care

The latest government reports indicate there are more than 21 million living veterans. Of the 21 million, only a small percentage utilize the services of Vet Centers, which is a highly supported VA program. For those veterans who use Vet Center services, they know the services to be a very nice accouterment from the larger VA setting for counseling, education, and support. Also, many veterans find Vet Center staff members useful in support of their disability claims. Vet Center counselors and support staff tend to be user-friendly, compassionate, and eager to assist veterans who are pursuing disability claims.

Did you know in February 2024, the VA proposed a rule that for the first time would allow disability compensation to veterans for Agent Orange exposure at 17 U.S. bases in a dozen states where the herbicide was tested, used, or stored?

Did you know a recent study that included female Veterans from the Gulf War found that 25 years after the conflict, females who were deployed to the Gulf reported an almost 2-fold increase risk of a variety of symptoms related to cognitive, neurologic, mood, and respiratory complaints over that of females who were not deployed?

Did you know VA defines burn pits as an area devoted to open-air combustion of trash? The use of burn pits was a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside the United States, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. The smoke from such pits contains substances that can have serious health effects in the short and medium term.

Did you know a non-service-connected death of a veteran who died on or after October 1, 2023, may get a burial allowance of \$948. An additional allowance of \$948 is available if the veteran is not buried in a national or state veterans cemetery and there are expenses for a burial plot. If applicable, a headstone or marker allowance is \$231 if the veteran died on or after October 1, 2021. For a service-connected death on or after September 11, 2001, the maximum allowance is \$2,000. The VA may pay some or all of the transportation costs if the veteran is buried in a national cemetery.



Remember..... That all gave some, but many gave all!

