

Becker County Veterans Service Office

915 Lake Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

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Veteran News

VA News

VA Expands Burial Benefits for Veterans and their families

Today, VA announced that Veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors now have access to expanded burial benefits to help with end-of-life expenses related to a Veteran's gravesite, burial, funeral and transportation of remains to their final resting place.

- Expanded reimbursement of transportation expenses, to include costs for transporting remains, to state or Tribal Veterans' cemeteries in addition to previously eligible national cemeteries.
- Instituted a more generous single payment rate for non-service-connected burial benefits.
- Extended the VA plot or interment allowance to Tribal organizations.

<https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-expands-burial-benefits/>

Protecting your GI Bill from SCAMS!!!

VA wants to ensure Veterans are informed when using their G.I. Bill benefits and to help them make the best education decisions. Unfortunately some institutions and programs use misleading practices and overpromise on their program's value. The VA encourages Veterans and their beneficiaries to know warning signs about potential education fraud and best practices in how to deal with them. Common scams include: a) job scams; b) student loan scams; c) scholarship scams; d) seminars; e) free gifts.

Follow this link to learn more about how to protect yourself and your hard-earned benefits:

<https://news.va.gov/123918/protect-your-g-i-bill-benefits-from-scams/>

MDVA / Local News and Events

Updates to Minnesota's Post 9/11 Service Bonus

The 2023 Legislative Session resulted in several changes that expanded Minnesota Veteran eligibility for the Post-9/11 Service Bonus. Newly eligible Veterans now include:

- Veterans who did not enlist/begin their service in Minnesota (Veterans that moved to Minnesota later);
- Recipients of the Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal may now receive the full bonus allotment.

Veterans who were previously denied the bonus or are now eligible for a larger bonus can reapply based on the changes that were made this session. We encourage you to contact our office to discuss how to apply based on your situation.

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Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) Commissioner Retires

MDVA Commissioner Larry Herke retired as of September 22, 2023 due to diagnosis of ALS. “It was an honor to serve veterans and their family members in my role as commissioner and I am grateful to Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan to have had the opportunity. I will continue to serve veterans in retirement as I partner with veteran organizations to advocate for advances in medical research toward a cure for ALS, a disease veterans receive a diagnosis of twice as often as the general population.”

Under Herke's tenure, Minnesota recognized a Veterans Suicide Prevention and Awareness Day for the first time in October 2019. He also worked to address homelessness among vets and ensure their access to social services.

His last day was Sept. 22. Deputy Commissioner Brad Lindsay will serve as temporary commissioner until Walz selects a permanent successor.

Individuals wishing to apply to be Minnesota's next Commissioner of Veterans Affairs can contact gov.appointments@state.mn.us to request an application. Application materials are due by 4:00 pm on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, and should be addressed to Governor Tim Walz. Applicants may contact gov.appointments@state.mn.us or (651) 201-3400 with questions about the application process or to request reasonable accommodations.

<https://mn.gov/governor/newsroom/press-releases/?id=1055-591720>

<https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-veterans-affairs-commissioner-stepping-down/600304040/>

Burial Benefits Seminar.

Reminder: on October 3, 2023, David-Donhower Funeral and Cremation Service is hosting a seminar to discuss the various benefits available to veterans and their survivors, and the eligibility requirements. Topics will include cemetery options, memorial products, burial benefits and survivor benefits, as well as pre-planning and memorialization options. See attached flyer for more information. If you are interested, please RSVP to 218-847-4147.

988 = Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Fargo VA Contact Numbers: <https://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/contact-us/>

Senior Linkage Line at 1-800-333-2433 <https://mn.gov/senior-linkage-line/>

DAV NW MN Transportation line: 1-855-277-9787

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Benefits and Health Care Terminology / Not so FAQs

1. *What is a Community Living Center?*

A Community Living Center is a VA Nursing Home. Veterans may stay for a short time or, in rare instances, for the rest of their life. It is a place where Veterans can receive nursing home level of care, which includes help with activities of daily living and skilled nursing and medical care.

https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/VA_Community_Living_Centers.asp

Unlike many nursing homes in the past, a Community Living Center resembles "home" as much as possible. There are activities for Veterans of all ages. There are family friendly places for visiting, Veterans are invited to decorate their rooms, and pets are allowed to visit or live in the Community Living Center. There are over 100 Community Living Centers across the country.

https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/docs/VA_Community_Living_Center_Locations.pdf

2. *Who qualifies for VA dental care?*

Like many benefits, eligibility for VA dental care depends on a number of factors. The following provide eligibility for some level of dental care, some related to the underlying issue:

- Service connected **dental** disability for which you receive compensation;
- Former prisoners of war;
- One or more service connected disabilities rated 100% disabled (including individual unemployability);
- Request dental care within 180 days of discharge or release from a period of active duty of 90 days or more (one time care unless received prior to discharge);
- Dental condition clinically determined by VA to be associated with and aggravating a service-connected medical condition;
- Actively engaged in 38 USC Chapter 31 Veteran Readiness and Employment Program (dental work required to meet goals of program);
- Currently in VA care or scheduled for inpatient care for health condition and need dental care for a dental issue that is making that health condition harder to treat;
- Enrolled in a VA Homeless Residential Rehab program for at least 60 days.

Find out more here: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/dental-care/>

Free Parking Below Convention Center

ST. CLOUD STAND DOWN

JOB FAIR

Thursday, October 26, 2023 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
River's Edge Convention Center
10 4th Ave S, St. Cloud, Minnesota

NEED HELP?

We offer On the Spot help to all Veterans. Some of the services available are:

- **StandDown Court** (Pre-registration 1 week before event. Call 651-200-4750)
- Free Meals, Quilts, "Bug Out Bags"
- Legal Consultation with MAC-V Attorney
- County Veteran Service (Eyewear, Dental, Eyecare Vouchers)
- Veteran Service Organizations (American Legion, VFW, VVA, Marine Corps League & Others)
- Job Fair with Local Employers
- Drug & Alcohol Treatment Information
- St. Cloud VA, Vocational Rehab, Suicide Prevention, Wellness Exam, Housing Shelter Information, Veteran Justice Outreach
- Lady Veteran Boutique
- Will Preparation
- Agent Orange Information
- Consumer Credit Information
- Religious/Spiritual Support
- Tax Information & Assistance
- Social Service Benefits & Assistance

25th
ANNIVERSARY

Welcome all Veterans, regardless of discharge status
BRING PROOF OF MILITARY SERVICE
For More Information visit www.StCloudStandDown.com