



Fillmore County VSO Newsletter - Spring 2007

Fillmore County Service Office

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The Fillmore County Veterans Service Office is located in the Fillmore County Office Building. This building is located across from the sheriff's office in Preston. We are located in the lower level of the building. Parking is available on the east side of the building on the corner of County 17 and Farmer's Street. We are immediately inside the doors on the right.

We are open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. No appointment is required to be served, however if you would like to know for sure if we are available, please do give us a call.

We now have a web page on the Fillmore County web site. You can reach it off the main Fillmore County Web page under departments or you can go there directly via this link. <http://www.co.fillmore.mn.us/Veterans/Web/default.htm>.

Note: Once a quarter we be sending out a newsletter with any updated information we have received. This newsletter will be sent to all the Fillmore County Veterans Service Posts and Auxiliaries. Please contact us at vso@co.fillmore.mn.us if you would like to receive this newsletter or be removed from the mailing list. Also, if you have any notices for special events etc. please contact us and we would be happy to include them!

Thought from your VSO

In the last newsletter I told you about a reintegration DVD I have and would like to show to your communities. I still need some service organizations to step up and host an event. A large contingent of National Guard troops will be returning this summer and the community needs to help them rejoin society successfully. Please call me to set up a time and date.

I also want to let you know that Cory Scrabeck is planning a battle of the bands event that he is calling Dobie Dayz. This event will be held in Harmony on the 17th and 18th of August. A major component of this festival will be a salute to veterans. There will be ceremony on the first day to honor all veterans. Recently returned veterans will even receive free admission. Part of the proceeds from this event will go to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. Further details will be provided in the near future.

VA Medical Center Important Phone Numbers

MINNEAPOLIS

Toll Free Main Number

1-866-414-5058

By dialing the main number you get the following options to speed up your call.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Medications | 2 Cancel Appointments |
| 3 Eligibility | 4 Health Concerns |

Toll Free Pharmacy Refills

1-800-661-0827

Toll Free Urgent Care

1-866-NURSE-VA (687-7382)

Telephone Care

1-612-725-2242

Appointment Confirmation

1-866-414-5058 ext 92095

Primary Care Call Center

1-866-414-5058 ext 01100

Remember, you now need to dial "9" before any extension you use.

We also have a full list of extensions to each clinic within the VA Hospital. If you need to have a direct number, please contact us and we will be happy to give you the extension you need.

OTHER FACILITIES

Rochester VA Primary Care Clinic

(507) 252-0885

Tomah VA Medical Center

(608) 372-1777

LaCrosse VA Primary Care Clinic

(608) 784-3886

Fillmore County Van Transportation

Fillmore County has a van that transports any veteran to the VA Hospital in Minneapolis twice a week. Any veteran that has an appointment is more than welcome to ride this van. There is no direct fee to ride the van, however we do ask, that if you receive travel pay, you donate at least \$15 of that money to the van fund.

Our current van has been purchased with our county's gracious Post and Auxiliary donations as well as money from the county funds. It is our hope that everyone will know about this van and the service it provides.

If you have an appointment on a van day, or would like an appointment changed to ride the van, please contact our office and we will be glad to add you to our van list as well as change any appointment you may have.

April, May, June 2007 Van Schedule

<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
4 - Wednesday	2 - Wednesday	1 - Friday
6 - Friday	4 - Friday	4 - Monday
9 - Monday	7 - Monday	6 - Wednesday
11 - Wednesday	9 - Wednesday	12 - Tuesday
17 - Tuesday	15 - Tuesday	13 - Wednesday
18 - Wednesday	16 - Wednesday	20 - Wednesday
25 - Wednesday	23 - Wednesday	21 - Thursday
26 - Thursday	24 - Thursday	27 - Wednesday
	30 - Wednesday	29 - Friday

2007 AIR SHOW SCHEDULE:

The 2007 schedule for the Thunderbirds, U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, can be found on the web: <http://www.thunderbirds.acc.af.mil>. The closest show to our area will be on June 2nd and 3rd in Davenport, IA. The Thunderbirds will also commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Air Force throughout their 2007 season.

The Blue Angels (the U.S. Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron), will be performing in the area on May 19th and 20th in LaCrosse, WI.

The Blue Angels were formed in 1946, and are the world's first officially sanctioned military aerial demonstration team. Additional details can be found at

<http://www.blueangels.navy.mil/index.htm>.

"One Stop Website" for Minnesota veterans now online

~ Education, Benefits, Employment, Medical resources and information on new web site ~

St. Paul – Minnesota veterans now have a "One Stop Web site" for information about education, medical, employment, and other benefits.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs announced that the new site features links and information from sources that provide goods and services to veterans and their families. The various programs span dozens of agencies across state, federal and local governments as well as private and non-profit organizations.

"We are committed to ensuring that veterans, their dependents and survivors receive the full measure of benefits and services to which they are entitled," said Clark Dyrud, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. "This new Web site consolidates important information geared toward helping veterans in one easy to find location."

Information concerning military retirement, state and federal benefits, as well as education and pending legislation are just a few topics that can be found on this new site.

Governor Pawlenty proposed the Veterans One Stop Website as part of his comprehensive military and veterans support legislative package earlier this year.

The website is located at:
www.minnesotaveteran.org

UNITED NATIONS MEMORIAL WALL:

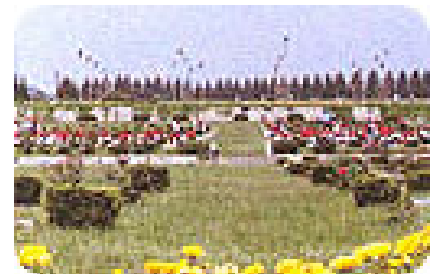
The United Nations Memorial Wall can be found in the UN Memorial Cemetery, Daeyon-4dong, Nam-gu, Busan Metropolitan City, Korea. The Memorial Wall was dedicated with



virtually no fanfare or publicity on 24 OCT 06, marking the 61st anniversary of the 1945 founding of the United Nations.. It is a little known memorial and work of art measuring two meters high by approximately 150 meters in length (one and one-half football fields) that contains the names of 40,895 allied servicemen who lost their lives on United Nations service during the Korean War.



The UN Memorial Cemetery Commission oversees the cemetery and is comprised of the Ambassadors (or their representatives) of the countries of the interred servicemen. The cemetery occupies 14.7 hectare of land donated by the Korean government. It became a burial ground in APR 51 following relocation of the graves by the UN Forces Command in Korea from six temporary graveyards scattered around the nation, Kaeseong, Incheon, Daejeon, Daegu, Milyang, and Masan. Although there have been about 11,000 of the UN's fallen braves interred at the cemetery in the years from 1951 to 1954, now there rest only 2,300. Currently interred are 36 Americans, 281 Australians, 378 Canadians, 44 French, 117 Dutch, 34 New Zealanders, 1 Norwegian, 36 Koreans, 11 South Africans, 462 Turkish, 885 British, 4 unknown, and 11 non-combatants. [Source: Korea Vet News (Canada) 11 Feb 07 ++]



Korean Americans and the Forgotten War Exhibit- April 14 to June 2, 2007

STILL PRESENT PASTS embodies life stories from the Korean American Memories of the Korean War Oral History Project, directed by Ramsay Liem, professor of psychology at Boston College. Motivated by the personal quest of several younger Korean Americans to acquire a deeper understanding of their families' experiences during the Korean war, the project currently has three dozen oral histories from three generations of Korean Americans living in the greater Boston and San Francisco Bay areas. These remembrances are among the first public remembrances by Korean Americans of the devastation of this horrific civil and international conflict. They also reveal multiple legacies of the war that influence individual, family, and community life, to this day. These oral histories provide a counter point to the invisibility of the Korean War in public consciousness and the U.S. historical record.

The exhibit is the result of two years of collaboration among artists Yul-san Liem, Injoo Whang, and Ji-Young Yoo, documentary filmmaker Deann Borshay, historian Ji-Yeon Yuh and project director Ramsay Liem.

The exhibit will run from April 14 to June 2, 2007 at:

Intermedia Arts

2822 Lyndale Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN

(612) 871.4444

<http://www.intermediaarts.org/>

Exhibit website: www.mnstillpresentpasts.org

MDVA Newsletters Available

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) has a new service that is available to keep you informed about Minnesota military and veteran events and issues. They have created 5 (five) e-mail newsletters that you can sign up for that will provide you with information about:

- Minnesota Legislative Issues - Newsletters containing information on legislative issues related to Minnesota Veterans.
- Events - Newsletters containing information on events for Minnesota Veterans.
- MDVA Newsletter - A monthly newsletter from the MN Dept. of Veterans Affairs about veteran issues.
- Flag at Half-Staff - Notification when the flags at the Minnesota Capitol are lowered to half-staff.
- News Flash - Press releases and other news items related to Minnesota veterans.

You can go to www.mdva.state.mn.us/newsletter.htm and sign up for the newsletters that interest you.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs also has a new site featuring links and information from sources that provide goods and services to veterans and their families. The various programs span dozens of agencies across state, federal and local governments as well as private and non-profit organizations: www.minnesotaveteran.org

VA Is Nation's Largest Provider of Mental Health Services *Department a World Leader in Outreach, Research*

WASHINGTON – As more newly returned combat veterans turn to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for health care, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson said the Department continues to enhance services that will provide them with world-class care, including mental health care.

“Not all combat injuries are made by bullets and shrapnel,” Nicholson said. “That’s why we have taken – and will continue to take – steps to make certain our veterans receive comprehensive, accessible and compassionate care for their mental health concerns.”

With an annual budget of nearly \$3 billion for mental health services, VA is the country’s largest provider of mental health care. VA employs more than 9,000 front-line mental health professionals – psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers – up more than 15 percent from 2003.

“VA’s mental health programs are evidence-based and tailored to the needs of our patients,” said Dr. Ira Katz, chief of VA’s mental health program. “Maintaining mental health through the challenges of deployment, combat and reentry is a challenge facing many veterans – a challenge that with persistence and VA’s skillful professional assistance can be overcome.”

Mental health services are provided at each of VA’s 155 medical centers and nearly 900 community-based outpatient clinics. Each medical center has a PTSD Clinical Team or a specialist that focuses on treatment of PTSD.

VA is a world leader in treatment and research concerning PTSD. The Department’s National Center for PTSD is internationally recognized for its research into PTSD, other combat-related mental health issues and non-combat mental health trauma. A key component of VA’s mental health program are the 209 community-based Vet Centers that provide veterans with PTSD counseling and mental health screening, along with help for family members dealing with bereavement and loved ones with PTSD.

At the Vet Centers, VA has hired 100 veterans of the Global War on Terror to provide outreach to other newly returned veterans. An important mission of the outreach effort is maintaining contact with local National Guard and reserve units.

Nicholson also recently announced that VA will open 23 more Vet Centers within the next two years.

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Local VA Mental Health Care can be obtained by calling:

Minneapolis VAMC: 1-866-414-5058

Rochester Outpatient Clinic: 507-252-0885

St. Paul Vet Center: 612-725-2234

(MN Psych Urgent Care 612-725-1921)

ARMY RETIRED SOLDIERS PIN:

The Army has created a new pin for retired Soldiers to emphasize retiree's lifelong bond with the Army. The pin combines the Army logo with the word "retired" emblazoned above. The Army Chief of Staff's (CSA) Retiree Council recommended replacing the "Retired, Still Serving" lapel pin. The Council asked for a larger pin that could be recognized from afar, be worn on clothing other than a suit jacket, and that would show the continuing bond between the retired Soldier and the Army. Over the next few months, a packet containing the new pin will be mailed to retired Soldiers. It will also include a letter from the CSA and the Sergeant Major of the Army, underlining the unending commitment between the Army and its retired Soldiers. Completing the packet will be news on the Army Strong theme and the recently increased recruiting referral bonus. It will be sent to the correspondence address on file at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's Retired Pay Center. The mailing will occur over four months so you may hear from retired Soldiers who receive the pin before you do. A goal is to have all pins in the mail by late spring. [Source: Army Echoes Jan-Apr 07]

RETIREE MEDAL WEARING POLICY:

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson recently urged veterans to show pride in their service by wearing their medals on Veterans Day. He said he hoped this display of military decorations, which he called the "Veterans Pride Initiative," would become a traditional part of Veterans Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and other patriotic observances. Guideline for wearing awards are found in Army Regulation 670-1, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia, retired Soldiers which states, "... retired soldiers may wear all categories of medals (described in this regulation) on appropriate civilian clothing. This includes clothes designed for veteran and patriotic organizations on Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and Armed Forces Day, as well as at formal occasions of ceremony and social functions of a military nature. Personnel may wear either full-size or miniature medals. Personnel who wear medals on civilian clothes should place the medals on the clothing in approximately the same location and in the same manner as on the Army uniform, so they look similar to medals worn on the Army uniform." [Source: Army Echoes Jan-Apr 07 ++]

FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO MILITARY & FAMILIES THROUGH STATE BAR PROGRAM

Members of the U.S. armed forces, veterans and their families have a source of free legal assistance through a new Minnesota Bar Association military assistance program.

Nearly 100 lawyers have signed up to volunteer their services on matters involving family law, consumer law, estate planning, employment law and other areas that affect military personnel, especially those who have been mobilized recently.

“We’re grateful to be able to use our skills to ease the burden of these brave men and women who are serving the country,” said Trevor Oliver, chair of the MSBA’s Military Law Committee. “Many of us have experience in the military and understand the challenges of dealing with everyday life while you’re deployed or adjusting to life after deployment.”

For more information, contact the Minnesota State Bar Association at 612-333-1183 or 800-882-6722.

STATE SOLDIERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The State Soldiers Assistance Program (SSAP) provides financial assistance for veterans and their dependents. There are several different sections of financial assistance within the program. Veterans and/or their dependents apply for this program through their County Veterans Service Officers or the departments' Outreach Program staff.

The first section is based on having a disability statement of at least 30 days, and meeting strict financial guidelines based on a "schedule of allowance". Our "schedule of allowance" rates are similar to MFIP rates. Individuals under this section may be on this program for a maximum of six (6) months or, by exception, longer if waiting for permanent disability benefits from the US Department of Veterans Affairs or Social Security Administration. If qualified under this area the assistance may include:

Housing (Mortgage or Rent)	Personal Needs Allowance	
Dental (Routine, Extractions, Dentures)	Optical (Exams, Glasses, Contacts)	Utilities

The second section is based on the "schedule of allowance" asset and income section, but the veteran does not need to have a disability statement. This area helps lower income veterans and their dependents with:

Dental (Routine, Extractions, Dentures)	Optical (Exams, Glasses, Contacts)
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The third section is a newly added section called "Special Needs Allowance". This section provides financial assistance on a case by case basis, once in a lifetime, for veterans and their dependents that have fallen into unexpected financial crisis based on a variety of reasons. These individuals do not necessarily fall within the parameters of our "schedule of allowance" requirements. Some of the areas the department has helped with have been:

Housing (Mortgage or Rent)	Vehicle Payments and Repairs	Insurance
Refrigerator for insulin storage	Medical and Dental Funeral Expenses	Utilities
Wheel chair ramp	Home flooring for handicapped vet	
Assistance while waiting for US Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill benefits		
Furnace, Hot Water Heater, and Well Replacement and Repairs		

The fourth section is the departments Education area. The department provides verification of War Orphan eligibility status so that war orphans receive free tuition from MN State Colleges and Universities and a \$750 grant, once per year, from this department. War Orphans receive this benefit until they receive a Bachelors Degree. The department also provides a one time grant of \$750 to a veteran who has exhausted all their federal education benefits, to help complete their degree.

The last section is the departments Homeless Veteran area. The department contracts with a variety of private, nonprofit vendors to provide services for veterans and their dependents that are homeless or in imminent danger of becoming homeless. Areas covered by these providers include:

Housing and Housing Placement	Chemical Dependency Follow-up	Financial Planning
Individual and Family Counseling	Legal Services	
Help with Job Skills, Computer Skills, and Employment Placement		

**Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
Schedule of Maximum Monthly Allowances
Effective February 1, 2007**

DENTAL AND OPTICAL BENEFITS

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Asset Limit	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Income Limit	1,471	1,744	1,895	2,046	2,197	2,348	2,499	2,650	2,801	2,952

Dental Treatment: \$1000 maximum per person per year.

Dentures: \$2,000 for extractions to prepare for dentures; \$3,000 for dentures per lifetime

Optical Care: Maximum of \$400 for eye exam and/or prescription eyewear, per person, per year.

SUBSISTENCE BENEFITS

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Shelter – Lease Or Mortgage	Actual Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Amount	Actual Amount
Shelter – No Lease/Mortgage	400	500	600	700	800	900	1,000	1,100
Personal Needs	205	260*	532	621	697	773	850	916
Asset Limit	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000

*The Personal Needs amount for a veterans and spouse is \$260, for a veteran and one child it is \$437.

Veterans receiving non-inpatient treatment (ADS or PPH) while housed at Bldg. 10, Minneapolis VAMC are eligible for a grant of up to \$50 to defray the costs of laundry, toiletries, and transportation. Application for this grant must be made while the veteran is still housed at Bldg. 10.

We will pay full utilities (gas, electric, garbage, water and sewer) and medical and dental insurance for veterans and their families who qualify for subsistence. Bulk fuel (propane, fuel, oil and wood) requires written pre-authorization from MNDVA staff prior to each delivery.

Contact the Fillmore County Veterans Service Office at 765-4937 to apply or for further information.

VA Weight Control Campaign Ramps Up

Obesity, Diabetes Major Health Threats: Secretary Nicholson WASHINGTON (January 23, 2007) - By the start of Healthy Weight Week (Jan. 21-27), more than 41,000 veterans were participating in a weight management program designed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reduce the high rates of illness among VA's patients caused by obesity.

"There is a growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes in the nation, especially among veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "Seventy percent of the veterans VA cares for are overweight and one in five has diabetes, both of which increase the risk of many diseases."

The MOVE! program - "Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere" - not only encourages veterans enrolled in VA care to get in shape but also offers information to family members and anyone trying to lose weight through an Internet link.

VA started MOVE! to encourage veterans to increase their physical activity and improve their nutrition. Through individual and group counseling, physicians, nurses, dieticians and recreational therapists help enrollees change their eating behavior and increase their exercise.

Primary care teams at all VA medical centers stay in touch with participants to track their progress. Increasing numbers of VA community-based clinics also are enrolling veterans.

Among activities they promote are competitions in fitness challenges, joining community exercise programs that partner with VA medical facilities, and leading families and friends into movement and nutrition routines.

Anyone can log onto www.move.va.gov <<http://www.move.va.gov/>> , where a questionnaire helps identify personal barriers to weight control. The questions link to about 100 informational materials on the site. People not enrolled in VA health care can take the information about themselves to their personal health care providers.

Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway is promoting the VA campaign. He began appearing in television public service announcements (PSAs) nationwide in early January. In the 15-, 30- and 60-second PSAs, Elway is seen at the playing field of the Denver Broncos, encouraging veterans to become more active and improve their nutrition habits. The Elway PSAs can be viewed at www.healthierUSveterans.va.gov.

