

Coshocton County Veterans Service Office Newsletter

318 Main St., Coshocton, OH 43812 740-622-2313 coshoctoncounty.net/veterans

Fair passes available to county veterans

The Coshocton County Veterans Service Office will again be issuing free Veterans Fair passes to honorably discharged veterans who are residents of Coshocton County and served on active duty.

Each pass will provide one free admission on one day of the Fair. Veterans will have a choice of one day between Monday, Oct. 2nd and Thursday, Oct. 5th on which to utilize their pass.

Passes may be picked up at the Veterans Service Office during regular business hours, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday, Sept.



11th through Wednesday, Sept. 27th. Each veteran must show proof of residency and bring either their veterans ID card or a copy of their DD-214.

Veterans who are unable to get to the office at the aforementioned times should contact the Veterans Service Office to make other arrangements for obtaining their pass.

The numbered passes must be signed for and are not transferable. They must present the pass at any of the fairground entrances.

The passes are being made possible by the co-sponsorship of the Blue Star Mothers Chapter OH #59 and Coshocton County Veterans Council.

The 166th Coshocton County Fair runs from Friday, Sept. 29th through Thursday, Oct. 5th.

The Veterans Office is located in the basement of the Court House, 318 Main St., Coshocton.

Veterans invited to visit Fair booth

During the 2017 Coshocton County Fair the Coshocton County Veterans Service Office invites everyone to stop by their booth, which will once again be located under the grandstand.

There, staff members and folks from the Zanesville Community-Based Outpatient Clinic will be on hand to discuss and answer questions regarding benefits that may be available to veterans and/or their family members.

Originally called the Soldier's and Sailor's Relief Commission, the Veterans Service Commission was established by the Ohio General Assembly in 1886.

The office assists veterans and/or their dependents with claims for service-connected disability compensation; pension benefits; VA healthcare enrollment; temporary financial assistance; employment and education opportunities; medical transportation; burial benefits; and many other issues.

Through the efforts of the Veterans Office, millions of dollars pour into the County each year and it is possible that veterans who have not already

been counseled could be entitled to benefits.

Annually, the Department of Veterans Affairs releases what is called the Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) Report. The report details VA expenditures at the state, county, and Congressional District level.

In fact, in 2016, the VA reported a total expenditure of almost \$16.1 million in Coshocton County - well over the 13.8 reported in 2015.

Included in that amount is \$8.2 million in compensation and pension payments made directly to veterans on the first of each month, tax free. Much of that money has a direct impact on the local economy as well as the quality of life for that veteran and their families.

Other VA expenditures included \$600,000 in education, vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits; \$121,000 in insurance and indemnities; and \$7,146,000 in medical care while serving 997 patients.

We, at the Veterans Service Office, hope everyone supports the Junior Fair and enjoys the food, entertainment and displays that help make ours one of the state's best fairs. state.

Local Taxi company offering rides for vets attending county fair

High Caliber Taxi Cab Company would like to once again offer Veterans free taxi rides to and from the Coshocton County Fair.

The driver will pick up the Veteran at home, drop him or her off at the fair, and then return at a designated time to take them back home.

This offer is available to only Coshocton County Veterans Monday thru Thursday, October 2-5.

Each Veteran must show their Veterans one day pass issued by the Coshocton County Veterans Office, or other Veteran's proof to be eligible for this service.

To receive the free ride, veterans are required to contact High Caliber no less than 24 hours prior to the time they wish to utilize this service.

For more information, contact Elliott at 740-575-6564 or 740-575-6567.



Veterans Service Commission

President

Jack Patterson—VFW

Vice President

David Dilly—AMVETS

Secretary

John Wright—DAV

Member

Gary Kilpatrick—American Legion

Member

John Dotson—KWVA

Service Officer

Jim Barstow

Executive Assistant

Patty Dilly

Assistant Service Officer

Russell Hammond

Assistant Service Officer

Zac Miller

The Coshocton County Veterans Service Commission meetings are at 4 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of each month.

County Veterans Council Officers

Commander

Jack Patterson

Adjutant

John Wright

Quartermaster

Fred Lent

First Vice Commander

Jim Barstow

Second Vice Commander

Tom Apple

First Year Trustee

Jim Groves

Second Year Trustee

Jack Lipps

Third Year Trustee

Jennifer Holz

Chaplain

Gary Kilpatrick

Meetings are at 7 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at AMVETS Post #36. All county veterans are welcome to attend.



The Coshocton County Honor Guard members conducted Military Funerals during July and August, 2017. Veterans receiving honors included:

July



Paul V. Marlatt

Korea



Paul D. Fortune

Korea



Donald L. McMillen

World War II



Russell R. "Dick" Boyd

Korea



Thomas T. Goodwin

World War II



James V. Kleinknecht

Korea



Dean F. Wyler

Korea



Matthew A. Jones

Iraq



John L. Lowe

World War II

August



James H. McIntosh

Korea



Dale F. Birkbeck

Korea

Guidelines for military funerals

The following is a list of criteria for deceased veterans being entitled to Military Funeral Honors conducted by the Coshocton County Veterans Council Honor Guard.

*Military members on active duty or in the Selected Reserve; Former military members who served on active duty and departed under conditions other than dishonorable.

*Former military members who completed at least one term of enlistment or period of initial obligated service in the Selected Reserve and departed under conditions other than dishonorable.

*Former military members discharged from the Selected Reserve due to a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

More information can be obtained by contacting the Veterans Service Office.

Nashville-based group's patriotic song making a hit

While the Priest Lake Pickers have not yet made the big time, they are becoming a local legend after releasing an original patriotic song.

Dubbed "The Flag Still Flies", the song has gotten the attention of some major news networks. It received on-air playing on Fox 5 in Washington D.C. and Atlanta, GA and the group is hoping more people will view the song.

The video can be seen on MusicScope1 and YouTube, according to promotor Deke Little of Nashville, TN.

"The group isn't trying to become rich or famous with the song," Little said. "They just want people to hear it and appreciate it.

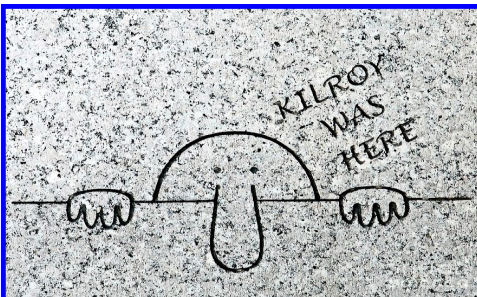
"These are very trying times in America and the release is a tribute intended to honor our military, veterans and law enforcement officers."

The Priest Lake Pickers are made up of singer/songwriter Tommy Dallaire; singer/songwriter Frank Parker and professional vocalist and bassist Joel "Thumper" Little.

Dallaire is credited for writing the tribute song.

All three band members are Nashville entertainers and studio musicians. Deke is an older brother of Joel Little.

"We're hoping everyone will log on to the video sites and listen to the song and then like us on Facebook. We don't take their sacrifice and service for granted and this song is for our heroes who have kept and continue to keep this nation free and safe."



Veterans Service Office Closings

Monday, Sept. 4th
(Labor Day)

Friday, Sept. 15th
(Staff Training)

Monday, Oct. 9th
(Columbus Day)

Meetings, Events & Observances

Thursday, Sept. 7th

(Ohio Means Jobs Employment Expo, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Lake Park Pavilion)

Monday, Sept. 11th
(Patriot Day)

Sept. 29th-October 5th
(Coshocton County Fair)

Honor Flight Columbus still taking applications

Honor Flight Columbus still has seats available this year for World War II and Korean War veterans to fly to Washington, D.C. and enjoy a day of honor, celebration and sharing.

Honor Flight Columbus accepts applications from America's Senior Veterans: Currently, these are the men and women who served during WWII and Korean War years. In addition, it puts terminally ill veterans from any era at the head of the line.

Beginning in the spring of 2017, Honor Flight began accepting Vietnam War veterans for regular flights.

Accordingly, WWII veterans will continue to have top priority, with Korean veterans now comprising the majority of each flight. Korean veterans who are on the waiting list for their flight are called in the order that their applications are received.

"It is our goal to transition veterans of wars by the sequence of the conflicts as long as donations from the public continue," said Carolyn Barger, Executive Assistant Director.

As of August 1st, a total of 1,051 applications were on the Honor Flight Columbus waiting list.

Upcoming flights include Sept. 9th (filled); Sept. 30th and Oct. 21st.

During three earlier flights in 2017, Honor Flight has transported 34 World War II veterans; 105 Korea; 96 Vietnam and 12 who served in two or more war periods.

Persons wishing to learn more about the Honor Flight or want to complete an application may contact the Veterans Service Office or visit honorflightcolumbus.org.



Zanesville CBOC Summer Bash Picnic



Several Coshocton County residents enjoy a picnic lunch during the Zanesville Community-Based Outpatient Clinic's annual Summer Bash held Friday, July 14th at the Muskingum Family YMCA park.

Musical entertainment was provided by an Andrews Sisters tribute group during the picnic in Zanesville.

Licking County Veterans Appreciation



One of the features of the Licking County Veterans Appreciation event was the Budweiser Clydesdales and their handlers.

Member of the Air Force Reserve Color Guard unit post colors during the Licking County Veterans Appreciation event in downtown Newark on July 14th.

VA's Choice program extended by Trump

President Donald Trump has signed an emergency spending bill that will pump more than \$2 billion into a program that allows veterans to receive private medical care at government expense.

The bill, which addresses a budget shortfall at the Department of Veterans Affairs that threatened medical care for thousands of veterans, provides \$2.1 billion to continue funding the Veterans Choice Program, which allows veterans to seek private care.

Another \$1.8 billion will go to core VA health programs, including 28 leases for new VA medical facilities.

The Choice program was put in place after a 2014 wait-time scandal that was discovered at the Phoenix VA hospital and spread throughout the country. Veterans waited weeks or months for appointments while phony records covered up the lengthy waits.

The program allows veterans to receive care from outside doctors if they must wait at least 30 days for an appointment or drive more than 40 miles to a VA facility.

VA Secretary David Shulkin has warned that without legislative action, the Choice program would run out of money by mid-August, causing delays in health care for thousands of veterans.

The bill will extend the program for six months. Costs will be paid for by trimming pensions for some Medicaid-eligible veterans and collecting fees for housing loans.

Veterans groups applauded the bill being signed, though some criticized the delay and the cost.

Trump criticized the VA for long wait times and mismanagement, saying he would give veterans more options in seeing outside providers.

To slow spending, the department last month instructed VA medical centers to limit the number of veterans it sent to private doctors. Currently, more than 30 percent of VA appointments are in the private sector, up from fewer than 20 percent in 2014. The VA has an annual budget of about \$180 billion.

DoD changes policy on upgrading discharges

The Defense Department on Monday issued a sweeping policy change to afford more leeway to veterans seeking upgrades to their other-than-honorable discharges.

A memorandum dated Aug. 25 instructs the Army Review Boards Agency — the office charged with changing military records — to give “liberal consideration” to veterans looking to upgrade their less-than-honorable discharges, or “bad paper,” because of mental health conditions or traumatic brain injury, sexual assault or sexual harassment and outlines what should be considered when deciding an upgrade.

The Government Accountability Office released a report in May stating more than 57,000 servicemembers suffering from PTSD, TBI or adjustment, anxiety, bipolar and substance abuse disorders were separated from the military for misconduct from 2011 through 2015.

Researchers found the Defense Department didn't consistently apply its policy to take into consideration that a service-related medical disorder could lead to misconduct.

Most of the servicemembers were given a “general” discharge, making them ineligible for some services

through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

But more than 13,000 were given the more stringent “other-than-honorable” discharge, which disqualifies them from receiving any VA health care, as well as education benefits, preferential hiring and tax breaks.

In December, Congress passed the Fairness for Veterans Act, requiring military boards to consider evidence from a veteran's health care provider when deciding upgrades. Later that month, the Defense Department announced a review of its policies for upgrading discharges.

The memo requires boards to ask whether a veteran had a condition or experience that would excuse or outweigh their other-than-honorable discharge.

Vietnam Veterans of America has previously sued the Pentagon over its treatment of veterans with

PTSD. John Rowan, the group's president, said Tuesday that the memo was a “step in the right direction.”

In March, VA Secretary David Shulkin announced the VA would provide urgent mental health care to veterans with other-than-honorable discharges — aid that wasn't available previously. The policy started July 5, and veterans with bad paper can now receive up to 90 days of mental health care.



Vets want Vets when utilizing new VA hotline

On August 11th, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that the two-month pilot phase of the new White House VA Hotline that began in June has demonstrated that Veterans calling the hotline respond best when their calls are answered by fellow Veterans and others with first-hand experience on their issues.

As a result, VA announced that it will target

highly qualified Veterans to staff the hotline going forward, instead of contracting the service to a third-party vendor, and is hiring additional VA personnel to complete the planned move to a 24-hour operation.

“The message we've heard loud and clear is Veterans want to talk to other Veterans to help them solve problems and get VA services,” said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin. “

This decision will delay the full-time stand-up of the 24-hour service by two months, to no later

than October 15th, in order to ensure the hiring and training processes are complete.

Until that time, the hotline's current pilot program service is available to receive calls from Veterans from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

The phone line at 855-948-2311 is designed to “collect, process and respond to the complaints of individual veterans in a responsive, timely and accountable manner,” according to Department of Veterans Affairs officials.



The Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky is a 427-bed nursing home facility and is located approximately 110 miles from Coshocton.

VA appeals process Looking at overhaul; bill on Trump's desk

Congress has sent the president a bill aimed at trimming a rapidly growing backlog of veterans' disability claims.

The House approved the bill by voice vote on August 11th during a brief session, sending the measure to President Donald Trump.

It would overhaul the appeals process, allowing veterans to file "express" appeals if they waive their right to a hearing or the ability to submit new evidence.

The VA could test the new program for up to 18 months until Shulkin could certify it was ready for a full rollout with enough money to manage appeals effectively.

Lawmakers hope the legislation ultimately could reduce average wait times to less than a year. Currently, veterans could wait five years or more to resolve their appeals over disability claims.

Still, the legislation offers no immediate fix for the bulk of the 470,000 appeals claims in VA's backlog; the changes would apply almost entirely to newly filed appeals.

Shulkin has said Trump's proposed VA budget for the next fiscal year beginning Oct. 1 doesn't account for \$800 million in "hiring surges" that would be needed if VA hoped to clear the current backlog within 10 years.

The department provides \$63.7 billion in disability compensation payments each year to about 4.1 million veterans with disabling conditions incurred during their military service.

VA prosing changes to construction of Veterans homes; rural Ohio could benefit

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin announced recently that VA plans to propose changes to regulations for its State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program to make it easier for States to receive VA funding to construct Veterans homes in rural areas.

State Veterans Homes provide Veterans with nursing home, domiciliary or adult day health care and are owned, operated and managed by State governments.

Currently, the construction grant regulations focus on Veteran demographics as well as nursing home and domiciliary bed need within a State, when determining priority group placement based on projected demand for assistance. Unfortunately, this makes it difficult for some rural areas to compete for VA State Home Construction Grants.

"We want to remove the red tape," said Secretary Shulkin. "Veterans in rural areas need to be able to get nursing home care when it's needed as close as possible to their homes, families and friends. Changes in VA regulations can save families from having to travel long distances to visit a loved one in a facility far from home."

The closest option for Coshocton County veterans is in Sandusky, which has a 427-bed nursing home facility where two levels of care are offered, including standard care for those in need of any intermediate level of care, and special care for veterans with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia.

However, the distance is approximately 110 miles and entails at least a 2½ hour drive.

The other option is in Georgetown, near Cincinnati. It offers 168 beds for nursing home care. Like Sandusky, two levels of care are offered but is even further at 180 miles and translates into a 3½ hour drive from Coshocton.

By incorporating a consideration for the need of Veterans in rural areas into the ranking priorities for grant applications in the regulations, rural States may find it easier to compete for the limited VA construction grant funding that is available.

VA anticipates that the revision of these regulations will be completed by the end of this calendar year (2017). The updated regulations will be available for public comment. VA is working to ensure that the updated regulations go into effect as soon as possible.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Decision pending on adding Agent Orange presumptive conditions

VA Secretary David J. Shulkin will decide “on or before” November 1st whether to add to the list of medical conditions the Department of Veteran Affairs presumes are associated to Agent Orange or other herbicides sprayed during the Vietnam War.

Any ailments Shulkin might add to VA’s current list of 14 “presumptive diseases” linked to herbicide exposure would make many more thousands of Vietnam War veterans eligible for VA disability compensation and health care.

The process was sparked by the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) 10th and final review of medical literature on health effects of herbicide exposure in Vietnam.

The 1,100-page report concluded in March 2016 that recent scientific research strengthened the association between herbicide exposure and bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson-like symptoms.

Specifically, the institute, or IOM, found “limited or suggestive” evidence of an association to herbicide versus its previous finding of “inadequate or insufficient” evidence of an association.

The IOM report also reaffirmed from earlier reviews “limited or suggestive evidence” of an association between

herbicide sprayed in Vietnam and hypertension and also strokes.

That same level of evidence was used in 2010 by then-VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to add ischemic heart disease and Parkinson’s disease to the Agent Orange presumptive list.

Shinseki had stronger evidence, an IOM finding of “positive association” to herbicide for chronic lymphocytic leukemia, which he also added to the list that year.

Shulkin, the current secretary, has authority to use 18 IOM findings to add all five diseases to the presumptive list, or he can choose to look at other studies and scientific evidence to support adding fewer ailments or none at all.

A spokesman said VA continues to work “diligently to review the National Academy of Medicine report on potential new presumptions for Agent Orange and prepare the Secretary to make an informed decision.”

This includes everything from what the science is indicating, necessary regulations and a com-

plete regulatory impact analysis. There is no delay in the decision process. Rather VA is taking appropriate time to ensure we are prepared to provide any benefits and services based on the Secretary’s decision.

Also, thousands of sailors and Marines who served on ships in the territorial waters off Vietnam continue to press VA and the Congress to make Blue Water Navy veterans eligible for Agent Orange benefits.

Ailments under review as possible adds to the presumptive diseases list include: bladder cancer; hypothyroidism; Parkinson-like symptoms without diagnosis of that particular disease. Hypertension (high blood pressure) and stroke also might be embraced, or ignored, as part of the current review.

Records center working to reconstruct vets’ files

On July 12, 1973, approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files were destroyed when a fire ripped through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. More than 40 years later, staff at the NPRC still are attempting to piece together those records.

Kevin Pratt, NPRC’s assistant director for Military Records, told American Legion Department Service Officers School attendees that teams at the facilities are reconstructing 2,000-3,000 records per week.

Using information that was not destroyed, and working with other agencies and the military branches to get additional information, close to 6 million records have been reconstructed since the fire.

“It is probably the most painful thing

I have to deal with on a day-to-day basis,” Pratt said. “It’s very difficult to tell a veteran and family members that we don’t have their records and that it was destroyed in the fire. It’s frustrating to deal with, but we’ve done a lot of things over the years to try to ... satisfy the requirement for the service veterans.

“We’re at about 90 percent-plus able to do a record recreation of that veteran’s service and produce a document they can use for the (Department of Veterans Affairs) and other benefits. That’s a good thing, but there’s obviously a lot of history lost in that fire.”

The NPRC houses military records of individuals who served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard dating as far back as 1886 and as recently as 2008.

No National Guard records are stored at the NPRC unless a Guardsman served on active duty or was fed-

eralized.

Those who were never called up to active duty will likely be referred to their respective state. No military unit information is housed at the facility, though Pratt said staff there has contacts with agencies that can help locate that info.

Pratt urged anyone seeking a veterans’ records for the sake of receiving VA benefits makes sure to state that is the reason for the request.

There is a fee of \$25 per five pages to receive a record, but there is no fee if the request is to secure a veteran benefits.

With 77 million records that include several of the same names, Pratt urged providing the most specific information possible when submitting a records request. But, “if a veteran sends it to us on a cocktail napkin, we’ll honor that request as long as they sign it,” he said.

Coshocton County Veterans Organizations

VFW Post #1330

Commander: Linus Kilchenman
 133 S. Sixth St.
 Coshocton, Ohio 43812
 740-622-6175

Meetings are the second Saturday of each month at 11:00 a.m.

DAV Chapter #74

Commander: Ed Skerness
 P.O. Box 116
 Coshocton, Ohio 43812

Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at the AMVETS Career Center at 6:00 p.m.

AMVETS Post #36

Commander: Stan Schmitt
 986 Otsego Ave.
 Coshocton, Ohio 43812
 740-623-0538

Meetings are the third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

Army/Navy Garrison #628

Commander: Jim Groves
 628 Walnut St.
 Coshocton, Ohio 43812
 740-622-9110

Meetings are the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

American Legion Post #466

Commander: Jack Patterson
 116 E. Main St.
 West Lafayette, Ohio 43845
 740-545-9773

Meetings are held on an as needed basis

Coshocton County Veterans Council

Commander: Jack Patterson
 Meetings are the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

AMVETS Post #36
 986 Otsego Ave.,
 Coshocton, OH 43812



American Legion Post #634

Commander: Gerald Fox
 26811 SR 60
 Warsaw, OH 43844

Meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at the Fire House in Warsaw at 7:00 p.m.

American Legion Post #65

Commander: Delbert Meddings
 652 Main St.
 Coshocton, Ohio 43812
 740-622-6106

Meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Korean War

Veterans Association

President: Bob Jones
 52650 TR 166

West Lafayette, OH 43845
 Meetings are on an as-needed basis

Coshocton County Vietnam Veterans

Commander: Dale Foster
 P.O. Box 341
 Coshocton, Ohio 43812

Meetings are the second Saturday of each month at Hardee's Restaurant, 325 S. Second St., Coshocton, at 9:00 a.m.

Blue Star Mothers OH59

President: Becky Bowden
 P.O. Box 1655
 Coshocton, OH 43812
 740-327-2235

Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at the AMC Nazarene Church, 1030 Orange St., Coshocton, OH 43812