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Monthly Newsletter
October 2024

North Central MN Chapter #7
PO Box 564
Bemidji, MN 56619



NEXT MEETING:
Bemidji Veterans Home at
5441 15th Street NW, Bemidji, MN
Monday, October 21 at 6:30pm

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| COMMANDER: | Gene Schwantes - (218) 556-4592 |
| SENIOR VICE: | Darrel Baltzell |
| JUNIOR VICE: | Tom Annonson |
| ADJUTANT: | Jeff Meyer |
| SERVICE OFFICERS: | Tom Annonson - (218) 251-3025 |
| TREASURER: | Jeri Harvey |
| CHAPLAIN: | Mike Gutz - (218) 444-5015 |
| JUDGE ADVOCATE: | Ward Sutton |
| SERGEANT AT ARMS: | Bruce Tiegen |
| OFFICER OF THE DAY: | Glenn Agard |
| LEGISLATIVE OFFICER: | Joe Vene |
| HISTORIAN: | Vacant |
| EXEC. COMMITTEE: | Bruce Tiegen, Gary Guggenberger, Andy Staudt, Henry Hammerback, Jim Pinsonnault |

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CH. #7 UPCOMING HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| Oct 2nd - Rosh Hashanah begins | Oct 24th - United Nations Day |
| Oct 7th -- DAV Chapter 7 Executive Meeting @ 1630 Hrs. | Oct 27th - Navy Day |
| Oct 7th - Afghanistan War began in 2001 | Oct 31st - Halloween |
| Oct 11th - Yom Kippur begins | Nov 3rd - Daylight savings time ends |
| Oct 12th -- Columbus Day | NOV 5TH - ELECTION DAY— REMEMBER TO GO VOTE! |
| Oct 13th - U.S. Navy established in 1775 | Nov 10th - U.S. Marine Corps Established in 1775 |
| Oct 14th - Columbus Day Observed (Monday Holiday Bill) | Nov 11th - Signing of WWI Armistice in 1918 |
| Oct 21st - DAV Chapter 7 General Membership Meeting @ 1830 Hrs. | Nov 11th - Veterans Day |
| Oct 23rd - Grenada Campaign began in 1983 | Nov 21st - Granada Campaign ended in 1983 |
| | Nov 28th - Thanksgiving Day |



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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Greetings Fellow Veterans,

Well, here we are in September and the leaves are starting to turn color, the forecast is for the temperatures to start dropping and the problem is, once they start to drop, they just keep on going down until hopefully by May they start to climb back up. ANOTHER INDICATOR THAT IT IS STARTING TO GET COOLER IS THAT OUR SNOWBIRDS ALSO START TO LEAVE, SO THIS CREATES AN OPERTUNITY FOR OUR HARTY MEMBERS TO BE ABLE TO COME IN AND HELP THROW SOME BAGS OF CLOTHES WITHOUT HAVING TO BREAK A SWEAT. We hope to see some of our winter folks show up, because the workload doesn't change much from summer to winter, so if you are able, please come and join us for our FREE EXCIRSE PROGRAM and a donut SERVED UP with a bunch of great Comrades.

We had our Chapter Meeting at the new VA Veterans Home here in Bemidji, what a great facility and the staff was great also. They gave us a beautiful room to hold the meeting in and even took care of the cleanup, several of the residents and also members of our chapter were able to attend and participate in the meeting. The Chapter members also approved helping a veteran in need with a car repair and it was reported that the \$100.00 FOR 100 YEARS program was getting wrapped up, the checks should be going out to the electric companies, hopefully by Sept. 18th and if things go smoothly the \$100.00 credit should show up on your bill due in October, if you don't see it, let me know and we will follow up on it.

Coming up, Darrel, Dave, and myself will be attending the Stand Down at Redby, and Jeri, Tom, Ward, and Pete will be attending the DAV Fall Conference.

For all of you folks with a memory that is like a steel trap, you hear a date for an upcoming event, and you never forget, WRITE DOWN ON YOUR CALENDAR THE DAV ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY WILL BE ON DEC. 16, 2024, AT THE EAGLES CLUB.

It was a very busy summer with all of the things going on at DAV, I would like to give a very Special Thank You to all of the folks that stepped up and came forward to pitch in and make all of these things happen. There were way too many things to list out and a lot of volunteers involved to make it all happen, it takes a team to run an operation like ours, you know who you are, veterans and non-veterans alike, ON BEHALF OF DAV NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER #7 AND MYSELF "THANK YOU, THANK YOU, VERY MUCH".

I look forward to seeing as many of you that are able at our next Chapter Meeting on October 21 at the Chapter headquarters.

Gene Schwantes

AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S CORNER

Happy Fall!!!

Our meeting was canceled for September, so not much to report. Please remember that we will be having a meeting at the DAV HQ building on Monday the 21st of October at 6:30 PM, so plan to attend.

Linda Engesether went to the State Conference on September 19-21st and then went to the National Conference the following week.

Please keep our veterans and families in your prayers and Lyndsey Moe.

Hope you are doing well and get out to enjoy the beautiful weather and leaves.

Sara Gast



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THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER #7

REGULARLY CONVENED ON 14 SEPT 2024 AT 1430.

OPENING CEREMONY: * OPENING PRAYER * PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. ROLL CALL of OFFICERS to determine if a quorum is present.

Commander	Gene Schwantes	Present
Senior Vice Commander	Darrell Baltzell	Present
Junior Vice Commander	Tom Annonson	Present
Adjutant	Jeff Meyer	Present
Treasurer	Jeri Harvey	Present
Chaplain	Mike Gutz	Excused
Judge Advocate	Ward Sutton	Present
Sergeant-At-Arms	Bruce Tiegen	Present
Officer of the Day	Glen Aagard	Excused
Historian	Vacant	N/A

B. Members Present: 22

C. Introduction of Guests or Visitors:

- Five guests from the Bemidji Veterans Home joined us today, plus our own Sandy Sterr from the Chapter 7 Auxiliary. Thank you all for taking the time to attend the meeting and hanging out with us afterward.

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- Minutes were read from the last meeting, with two corrections.
 - Under old business, the annual picnic was held on the 24th of Aug, not the 22d.
 - Under new business, the 90-year-old Veteran's wife was in need.
 - The motion was made to accept with corrections by Tom, Andy made 2d, and the motion was carried.

E. Treasurer's Report:

- The Treasurer's report was read by Jeri, the motion to accept by Andy, 2d by Tom, and the motion carried.

F. Communications:

- Wally and Jill Pottenger sent us a thank you for the lift chair provided to the family as well as a special thank you to Commander Gene for the outstanding flag display he has installed on his property next to Hwy 2.
- Hannah Voge sent us a wonderful thank you card for her selection as the recipient of one of our scholarships.
- Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake sent us a thank you and an update on camp improvements made with our donation, as well as a request for additional donations. They are a budgeted item, so no action was needed.
- Fargo VA has sent us an invitation to participate in their annual VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) banquet to be held on Sept 16th.
- VA has also sent out an update on Veterans' relief of medical bills, as well as an update on Agent Orange disability claims. More information is available from the adjutant or by going to the VA website itself.
- There is a radio show (sorry, no call letters or station number) out of Fargo that is dedicated to Veterans. It is from 12-1 AM daily. You can probably find more information by internet search of Veterans radio shows in Fargo.

G. Committee Reports:

1. Membership:

- New members Paul Hoks, Don Esterbrooks, William Howard, Shannon Reyes, Peter Moen, Doug Moe, Caleb Pearson, Darrel Schoff, and Kurt Christianson were all introduced today, welcome!
- Kendra Olson and Mike Huerd transferred their membership to Chapter 7, Andy and Tom made the motion and the 2d for Kendra, while Tom and Rodney made the motion and 2d for Mike, both carried unanimously.

- Service Officer: Tom reported several Veterans have been directed to the CVSO's Shane and Luke for getting into the VA system.
- Hospital/Sickness and Distress: NA
- Legislative: NA
- Entertainment: NA
- Publicity and Fundraising: Tom reports missing out on the Bemidji Gun Show, no donations this year from this venue.
- Medical Equipment: 9 issues and 11 donations.
- Other: NA

H. Executive Committee Action Items: NA

I. Old Business:

- Jack has been working towards getting the floor repainted in the Chapter HQ. To date Jack has a bid to strip, clean, and epoxy the floor for \$5500 dollars and a bid to clean and repaint the floor for \$2500 dollars. No further action is required as we continue to receive additional bids.
- In Aug a motion was made and approved to help a Veteran in need for medical bills of \$6000 dollars. This has been put on hold as we wait to see what the insurance company will pay first.
- We are waiting for the bill from the contractor for the tub-to-shower conversion previously approved.
- Gene and Jerry are wrapping up the \$100 dollars for a 100-year celebration but still need a list suitable for the newsletter.

J. New Business:

- Veteran in need of car repair bill; upper and lower ball joints, currently quoted by Tires Plus for \$1375.25 dollars. Jeff Aakhus made the motion to pay up to \$1500 dollars for the repair work, Rodney Olson made the 2d, and the motion carried.
- Darrel desires to gather information and bids on siding the lean-to where the trailers are stored. Rodney made the motion to start gathering information and bids on the project, Tom made the second, and the motion carried.
- The Chapter's upcoming annual Christmas party will be held on 12/16/24. Clear the calendar and make your plans now, this will be a special celebration this year.
- Special recognition and thank you was made by Ralph Phillips to physical therapist Sarah Daniels for her work with Veterans at the new Veterans Home in Bemidji.
- Gerald Fenske presented his new book about his experiences in Vietnam as a Seabee.

K. Good of the Order:

- Stellher Human Services, in association with DAV Chapter 7 and the Beltrami County Veteran Services Officers Shane and Luke, have started a Veterans support group. The group meets on the 2d and 4th Fridays of every month at the Stellher Program for Recovery from 10-11 AM. They are located at 1426 Bemidji Ave N, Suite 1 Bemidji, MN 56601

L. Closing Ceremonies performed.

M. Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Andy and second by Tom. Motion carried.

- The meeting adjourned at 1539 hrs.
- Next meeting 10/21/2024 at 1830 hrs.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As we begin to look at our next spiritual temperament, there is another scriptural verse that comes to mind, which is about the riches of His kindness toward us. His kindness is intended to lead us to run away from anything that displeases dishonors or in any other way disrespects God. His kindness is His gift to us through Christ and draws us closer to Him by giving us the desire to change the way we think. This happens when we honor Him and plan our lives around the things He wants us to accomplish in life, instead of the things we want to accomplish. Our gratitude for all the sacrifices God has done for us through Christ's work and suffering on the cross leads us to thank, celebrate and worship Him. Some examples of this may be to keep doing our volunteer activities for the DAV, such as medical equipment, clothing, or running for office. Another example may be to seek employment with a United States government position, or any number of activities resulting in a sense of commitment, contentment and purpose. The scriptural verse we are referring to is Romans 2:4, which leads to gratitude that expresses thankfulness. Now granted, Romans 2:4 was written by Paul in a different context, as one may easily see, however Paul is applying our above discussion to the overall context found in chapter two. This leads us into our discussion about spiritual temperament.

This month we are looking at the traditionalist. The questions for this temperament are:

- I feel closest to God when I am participating in a familiar form of worship that has memories dating back to my childhood. Rituals and traditions move me more than anything else,
- I begin to feel closest to God when I lay something at the altar, sacrificing it for Him (bad habit, the current direction of your life that you want to change, etc.)
- The words *history* and *tradition* are very appealing to me.
- Participating in a formal liturgy, or "prayer book" service, developing symbols that I can place in my car, home, or office for our family, and developing a Christian calendar for our family to follow are activities I would enjoy.
- I would really enjoy developing a personal rule (or ritual) of prayer.

As you may recall the scoring criteria used to obtain the meaningful response from each question to determine Your spiritual temperament can be found in the last two months of the newsletter.

Until we meet again, I trust all is well, and may God's face shine upon.

Mike and Julie Gutz

VETERAN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS

The following is a list of Organizations that cater to taking Veterans on outdoor events, usually at no cost to Veterans and some offer events that are also available to your family members as well. If you are interested in participating in any of these events and don't have access to a computer have a family member help you get in contact with them. Their contact info is listed on their home pages.

American Heroes Outdoor TV

<https://www.americanheroesoutdoors.com/applications/>

Band of Brothers Outdoors

<https://www.bandofbrothersoutdoors.com/>

Brady Oberg Legacy Foundation

<https://bradyoberglegacyfoundation.org/>

Fishing With Vets

<https://fishingwithvets.org/>

Mandatory Fun Outdoors

<https://mandatoryfunoutdoors.org/>

Middle River Veterans Outdoors

<https://mrveteransoutdoors.com/>

Minnesota Veterans Outdoors

<https://www.mnvetsoutdoors.org/>

Warriors and Walleyes

<https://warriorsandwalleyes.org/>

Wounded Warrior Guide Service

<https://wwgsmn.org/>

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Greetings all,

First I want to say congratulations to DAV MN Chapter 20 Faribault! Chapter 20 submitted 3 original resolutions for the Department Convention, all three were adopted at our convention, and I recently received a note showing that all three were also adopted at the National Convention.

These three are perfect examples of why this process is so important as they cover:

- 1) Support legislation to provide for service connection for health conditions that have been determined to be related to the anthrax shot.
- 2) Review the recertification requirements that discourage community based providers from getting recertified with the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- 3) Support legislation to provide fitness supplements for service connection physical and mental health.

These are three very important areas that the DAV did not previously have resolutions for, meaning, if they came up our D.C. office would not have been able to point to a specific resolution to support these important areas. That has changed thanks to the hard work of Chapter 20. Remember, if your Chapter is interested in submitting more resolutions you can start with DAV MN's Resolution Builder here: and you are always welcome to reach out to me.

The other big update is that I still need help getting our 2 Legislative Priorities in front of candidates running for MN House of Representatives. Now is the time to get their commitments to supporting our first two priorities of the year: Increasing the amount of the property tax value exclusion and reduced cost hunting and fishing licenses for disabled veterans in Minnesota. You can find the PDF here . As of now, I have not heard from any members that they have successfully presented our priorities. This is the time to win support and try to get these two things done this session.

As always, don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions at Trent@davmn.org or 651-291-1212.

Regards,
Trent C Dilks
Legislative Director
Disabled American Veterans, Dept. of Minnesota
20 West 12th St., 3rd Flr, St. Paul, MN 55155
O: (651) 291.1212 C: (651) 788.3186



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NEW BENEFIT ALERT - 100% DISABLED VETERANS



Vehicle Registration, Title Fees, Driver's License Fees, etc..

Jan. 1, 2024 changes to veteran benefits

Veterans with a total service-connected disability will be eligible for new benefits from DVS starting Jan. 1, 2024.

What you need to know

- 100% disabled veterans will be exempt from registration fees (including filing fees) for two vehicles of their choosing. This includes passenger vehicles, non-commercial 1-ton pick-ups, motorcycles and RVs.
- Does not include personalized plate fee, annual contributions for special plates, reinstatement fees or impound fees.
- 100% disabled veterans will be exempt from title fees (including filing fees) for vehicles purchased on or after Jan. 1, 2024.
- Does not include salvage inspections or fast track fees.
- Early renewal/titling (before Jan. 1) is not an option for veterans who would like to take advantage of these benefits.
- 100% disabled veterans will be exempt from driver's license and identification card fees for all types of cards: Standard, REAL and Enhanced.
- Starting July. 1, 2024 100% disabled veterans will also be exempt from paying motor vehicle sales taxes for vehicles purchased on or after that date.

To utilize these benefits bring your award letter or statement of benefits with you to show proof of 100% Service Connection

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POSTED ON SEP 5, 2024, BY BRIDGETTE SORRELL

Next month, DAV will celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. The event will honor the veterans the memorial represents while paying tribute to the dedication and vision of those who brought the idea to reality.

What makes this memorial special and different from many of the others around Washington, D.C., is that it represents all veterans from all eras and all branches, even those who have yet to wear the uniform, according to Dennis Joyner, president of the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation.

“Sadly, as long as we’re always in a conflict, we are unfortunately going to have injured service men and women, be it from combat or be it from training in service to their country,” he said.

It’s a reality Joyner and his family know all too well. He became a triple amputee 55 years ago—when he was just 20 years old—from a land mine that exploded while he was serving in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta.

The memorial to honor disabled veterans, which is located not far from the Capitol, started as a shared vision between then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown, then-DAV National Adjutant Art Wilson and philanthropist Lois Pope.

To bring their vision to reality, they founded the nonprofit foundation.

The most pressing issue they had was gaining congressional approval, including an exception to federal guidelines that prohibited Washington, D.C., memorials from commemorating living people — a group Brown, Wilson and Pope wanted their memorial to represent.

They drafted legislation, gained congressional co-sponsors and testified before Congress, which passed an act approving construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in 1998. President Bill Clinton signed the bill into law in 2000. The site was selected and fundraising began in 2003.

Over the next decade, as the memorial progressed through a construction approval process, fundraising continued. Individuals and corporations as well as DAV departments and chapters donated millions of dollars toward its construction.

The memorial’s initial design concept was approved in 2004. The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts approved the final design in July 2009. In 2011, off-site fabrication of elements of the memorial began. In 2013, on-site construction began. The memorial was finished in 2014 and dedicated on Oct. 5 that year.

“We gather in our nation’s capital, a place where honor is bestowed upon nearly every cause and history is remembered in bronze and stone from every vantage,” said Wilson at the dedication ceremony. “We honor our fallen. We honor every branch and the battles and the bold. But until this day, we have not remembered those who lived and whose lives were forever changed by the sacrifices they made in uniform.”

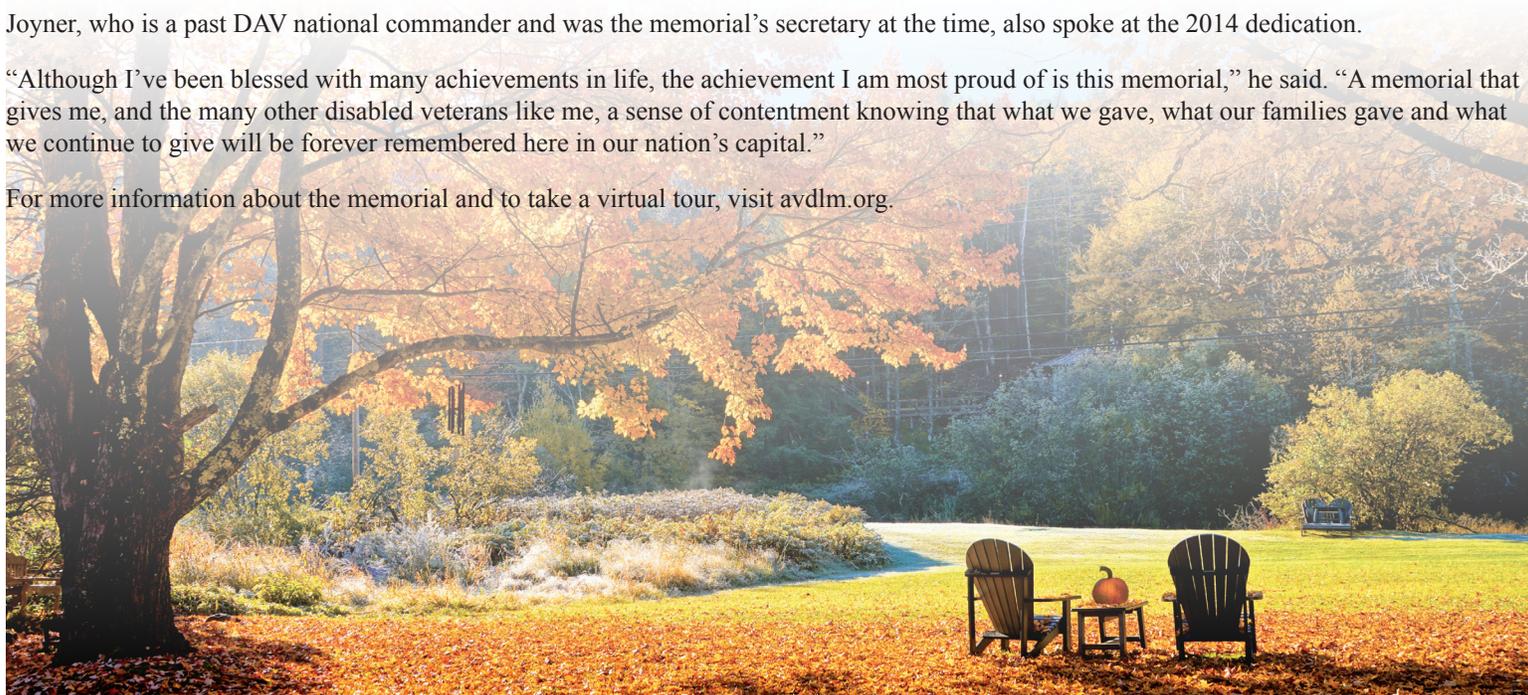
The 2.4-acre site features a star-shaped fountain with a solitary flame at its center. Granite slabs and glass panels tell the story of veterans forever changed by their visible and invisible wounds of war.

“The experiences etched on these walls remind us that, for those who serve and their families, wars often continue long after the final bullet is fired,” Wilson said. “The most difficult fight often begins after an injury is sustained.”

Joyner, who is a past DAV national commander and was the memorial’s secretary at the time, also spoke at the 2014 dedication.

“Although I’ve been blessed with many achievements in life, the achievement I am most proud of is this memorial,” he said. “A memorial that gives me, and the many other disabled veterans like me, a sense of contentment knowing that what we gave, what our families gave and what we continue to give will be forever remembered here in our nation’s capital.”

For more information about the memorial and to take a virtual tour, visit avdlm.org.



As DAV benefits advocates, we occasionally hear from veterans who are disappointed after receiving a 0% disability rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs. While this means you don't get monetary benefits or an increase in your overall compensation, that zero still has value.

It's important to remember that even with a 0% disability rating, which the VA calls a non-compensable disability, veterans may be eligible for benefits that include VA health care, prescriptions, co-payment waivers and federal hiring preferences.

As with all disability ratings, veterans can file for an increase if they think that their disability is more severe than the current rating indicates. If you or any veteran feels like this might be the case, reach out to DAV by visiting benefitsquestions.org so we can assist in a review of symptoms and rating criteria.

Under the PACT Act, hypertension became a new presumptive condition. According to the VA, over 82% of PACT Act-related claims for hypertension have received a 0% disability rating.

A 10% disability rating for hypertension is only assigned if continuous medication is required for blood pressure control and their past diastolic pressure before taking medication was predominately 100 or greater.

Hypertension can lead to serious health conditions over time and can be fatal, especially if left untreated.

We remind all veterans that they should never stop taking prescribed medications prior to any disability evaluations to try and obtain a higher rating.

You can file a claim for a new disability as a secondary claim. This means if a new disability arises that is caused by or linked to a service-connected disability, then service connection and compensation can be awarded even if the original condition is rated as 0% disabling.

Here's an example of when a veteran might file a secondary claim:

A veteran develops heart disease caused by high blood pressure that the VA already concluded was connected to their service. The veteran would get service connection for that heart disease, which could have a higher rating than hypertension.

We know that receiving a 0% disability rating might be confusing or even frustrating, but it's important to know that it still does come with various VA benefits and could be reevaluated for a higher rating in the future.

Again, if you have questions about or need assistance with filing for VA disability compensation, please contact your nearest DAV service office by visiting benefitsquestions.org.

MILITARY HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCE DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- Oct. 13 – Navy Birthday
- Oct. 26 – National Day of the Deployed

UPCOMING DAV MN OUTDOOR EVENTS

The Minnesota DAV Department's Outdoor program has scheduled their upcoming events and posted them on their website. Check them out at: <https://davn.org/events-activities/events-for-veterans/>



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Bemidji National Guard Armory • Solway in front of bar • Shevlin in front of bar • Bagley Cenex Station west end of town
Fosston at LaPiere's on the east end of town • Mahnommen northside of town • Ada Country Store • Mainstreet Leonard & Clearbrook

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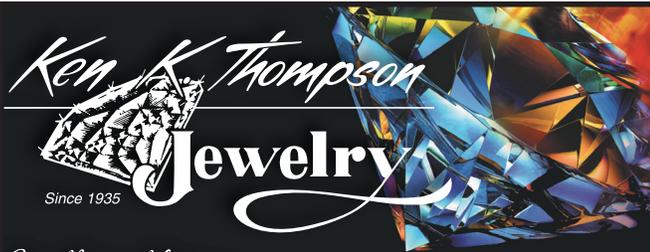
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THE PACT ACT AND YOUR VA BENEFITS

The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve. And starting **March 5, 2024**, we’re expanding VA health care to millions of Veterans—years earlier than called for by the PACT Act.

This page will help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your loved ones. You can also call us at 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now.

- File a disability claim online
- Apply for VA health care

On this page

What’s the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care? What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure? Am I eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act? Gulf War era, and post-9/11, Veteran eligibility, Vietnam era Veteran eligibility, Getting benefits, Toxic exposure screenings, and Information for survivors.

What’s the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you’re a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. We call these “presumptive conditions.”

We consider a condition presumptive when it’s established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don’t need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

Am I eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act?

You’re eligible to enroll now—without needing to apply for disability benefits first—if you meet the basic service and discharge requirements and any of these descriptions are true for you:

- You served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11, **or**
- You deployed in support of the Global War on Terror, **or**
- You were exposed to toxins or other hazards during military service at home or abroad

Specific toxins and hazards include burn pits, sand and dust, particulates, oil well or sulfur fires, chemicals, radiation, warfare agents, depleted uranium, herbicides, and other occupational hazards. Find more military exposure categories on our Public Health website

Note: Even if none of these descriptions are true for you, you may still be eligible for VA health care based on your service. Check the full health care eligibility requirements

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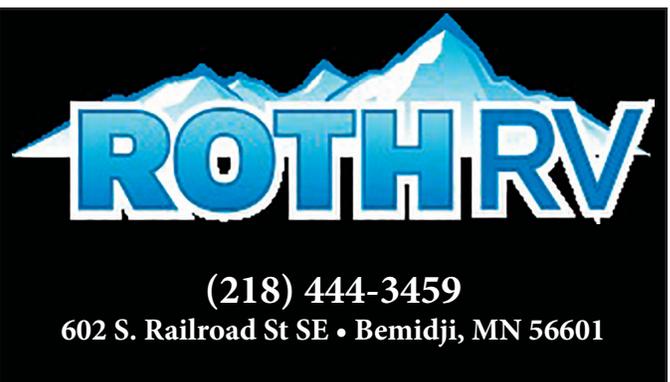
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