



# IOWA COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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**Jeffrey T. Lindeman, County Veterans Service Officer**

## SPRING, 2017

### MEMORIAL DAY FLAG ORDER

Posts and Cemetery Officials please contact the Veterans Service Office with your Memorial Day flag order by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

“We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

Environmental health experts in VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science.

Veterans with 30 or more cumulative days of active duty service, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period are already eligible for certain medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas. The final rule was published on January 12, 2017 and takes effect on March 14, 2017

## **NEW REGULATION DECREASES COST OF OUTPATIENT MEDICATION COPAY FOR MOST VETERANS**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its regulation on copayments for Veterans' outpatient medications for non-service connected conditions. VA currently charges non-exempt Veterans either \$8 or \$9 for each 30-day or less supply of outpatient medication, and under current regulations, a calculation based on the medication of the Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI-P) would be used to determine the copayment amount in future years.

“Switching to a tiered system continues to keep outpatient medication costs low for Veterans,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David J. Shulkin. “Reducing their out-of-pocket costs encourages greater adherence to prescribed outpatient medications and reduces the risk of fragmented care that results when multiple pharmacies are used; another way that VA is providing better service to Veterans.”

This new regulation eliminates the formula used to calculate future rate increases and establishes three classes of outpatient medications identified as Tier 1, Preferred Generics; Tier 2, Non-Preferred Generics including over-the-counter medications; and Tier 3, Brand Name. Copayment amounts for each tier would be fixed and vary depending upon the class of outpatient medication in the tier.

These copayment amounts will be effective February 27, 2017:

- \$5 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 1 outpatient medication
- \$8 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 2 outpatient medication
- \$11 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 3 outpatient medication

These changes apply to Veterans without a service-connected condition, or Veterans with a disability rated less than 50 percent who are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition, and whose annual income exceeds the limit set by law. Medication copayments do not apply to former Prisoners of War, catastrophically disabled

veterans, or those covered by other exceptions as set by law.

Copayments stop each calendar year for Veterans in Priority Groups 2-8 once a \$700 cap is reached.

## **TOMAH VA RESIDENTIAL COMBAT PTSD PROGRAM**

Are you a former Combat Veteran diagnosed with PTSD? If so, the Tomah VAMC may be able to help. They have a residential treatment program to help veterans deal with the symptoms of PTSD such as: guilt, shame, anger, relationship or sleep problems. Treatment is on-site at the Tomah VAMC and involves:

- Groups with others who have had similar combat experiences from different branches and different MOS.
- Supportive veterans in your group that may give you the feeling like “back in your unit” or “squad”. A bond with a brotherhood, bonds that may last beyond treatment.
- Supportive Staff: Therapists, Nurses, Recreation, Occupational Therapy and Nutrition
- Facing threats or you fears in an intense but safe way to help work through your triggers successfully.
- There is one day each month for family and/or other support persons to learn about PTSD, other struggles, education and support.

If you are interested in learning more about or applying to the program you can contact the Combat PTSD Program directly at (608)372-1758 or you are welcome to contact the Iowa County Veterans Service Office at (608)930-9865.

## **GOV WALKER APPOINTS NEW SECRETARY TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Effective on Thursday, February 2, 2017, retired military intelligence officer, Daniel Zimmerman, will serve as the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Zimmerman served 25 years in the U.S. Army, retiring in 2008. He is a two time recipient of the bronze star. Since

his retirement, he has worked as a training consultant for the U.S. National Guard Bureau and as an exercise officer and threat planner at Wisconsin Emergency Management, within the state Department of Military Affairs.

### **WDVA & AMERICAN LEGION IDENTIFY AND PROPERLY INTER REMAINS OF WISCONSIN VETERANS**

As part of a recent initiative to identify and properly inter the remains of Wisconsin veterans, the cremated remains of 20 unclaimed Wisconsin veterans were laid to rest at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery with full military honors January 12 and 13.

The veteran's remains all came from a local funeral home which follows a 2015 initiative from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Department of Wisconsin to identify the remains of any veteran currently being held by any Wisconsin funeral home.

Each of the 20 received separate and full military honors at 15 minute intervals, which included a funeral honors team from the Wisconsin National Guard, a bugler and firing detail. Also in attendance were veterans groups committed to seeing their brothers-in-arms without family or next-of-kin laid to rest.

"It is our great honor to pay these veterans their deserved final respect," said WDVA Interim Secretary Kathy Marschman. "Just like the military, we leave no one behind – this initiative and partnership with the American Legion Department of Wisconsin shows exactly that."

"While we don't always know why these veterans come to us this way, we are extremely comforted to know we have done our best to give these veterans the final honors they earned by their military service," said American Legion Department of Wisconsin Commander Rev. Daniel J. Seehafer. "There are a great many people who made this possible and we will continue to work to ensure our veterans receive the military funeral honors they deserve."

The veterans' remains were vetted and verified through military records and the National Personnel Records Center.

These 20 bring the total interments to 31. This includes two buried at private cemeteries.

When a veteran is located who died without a next-of-kin or without enough funds to cover burial, the American Legion has created a restricted fund to assist with burial costs to ensure the veteran receives the dignified memorial service he or she deserves. The WDVA and American Legion have reached out to the more than 450 funeral homes in Wisconsin to identify the remains of unclaimed veterans.

### **VA DEBT COLLECTION CROSS SERVICING**

Under the VA's new Cross Servicing program, debts, such as healthcare and medication co-pays that are not paid after 90 days will automatically transfer to VA's Debt Management Center for offset of VBA (pension/ compensation) benefits. If VBA benefits are not available, Veterans will have an additional 30 days to make payment arrangements to satisfy the debt. If arrangements to pay the outstanding debt are not made, Veterans Health Administration will automatically refer it to the Treasury Cross-Servicing program who will issue notification letters to the Veteran. If the letters go unanswered, the U.S. Treasury will use their offset program to collect delinquent debt. The Treasury Offset Program is used to intercept any federal payments to include federal tax refunds, Social Security benefits, military pay, retirement pay and other federal payments that are not exempt by law.

### **VETERAN OWNED BUSINESS**

A previous edition of the newsletter included a listing of the veteran owned businesses in Iowa County. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs offers a certificate to each certified veteran owned business in the state. The certification process is quite simple involving the submission of business owner(s) information, employer ID number and proof of ownership by a veteran per Wisconsin Statute 45.01(12)(a-j). If you are interested in obtaining one of these certificates for display in your business, feel free to contact the Iowa County Veterans Service Office and I will be happy to help with the application form.

Iowa County Veterans Service Office  
303 West Chapel St., Suite 1300  
Dodgeville, WI 53533

# **Veterans Newsletter**

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Daylight savings time begins. "Spring Ahead"
March 31 <sup>st</sup>	Flag Orders for Memorial Day are due from Posts and Cemetery Officials
April 16 <sup>th</sup>	Easter
May 29 <sup>th</sup>	Memorial Day

## **VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE CLOSINGS**

Spring Day	Friday, April 14 <sup>th</sup>
Memorial Day	Monday, May 29 <sup>th</sup>