



Service Officer Report 4th District

24 September 2023

Our Quarterly report will also be on the 4th District web site
www.vfwildist4.org

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website
vfwildist4.org

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District Service Officer update

• My extra duties as Legislative chair and working with the VACCC have taken much of my time and I apologize for not making it to your post meetings which I enjoy. Our co-District Service Officer has also been engaged. We are still taking lots of calls constantly from Post Service Officers and others. This shows the great need yet for your PSO to be trained and active. Those posts without a PSO please keep asking for a volunteer. Naturally we will be happy to train them.

• Our Service Office Director Derek Giffin is now remote in several places and expanding. Besides working out of our Taylor Street office. He just started in DesPlaines First Monday of the month, Naperville VFW Post 3873. First Tuesday of every month, Russell Meredith is at Hines VAMC every Thursday and we may have representation at Chicago City Hall once a month.

• **DONATE to our RED WHITE & BLUE PROGRAM utilize your relief fund!** If you need help contact Tom or myself we are here to help.

VACCC

• Tuesday 26 September shall be our membership meeting at our Brookfield post, the 4th district has been one of the driving factors in perhaps the most important missions we have taken on. The meetings are vital the VACCC effects thousands of veterans and millions of dollars. We run it and it is our responsibility because of the Military Veterans Assistance act. Now we must ensure a quorum of 50 % plus one member in person meeting. I want to thank our post for taking this seriously. The enrollment for delegates and alternates takes place 1 January- end of February and the Post commander appoints these members.

Legislative

• We have had a report that we feel is flawed on the Veterans Homestead tax relief Act from the department of revenue. There was also a follow up in one of the more prominent newspapers. The Legislative committee has replied and is still taking steps to safeguard this important benefit that effects over 50,000 Illinois veterans. 24 July Submitted a request to the AG Kwame Raoul for development of a written response to the DOR's Veterans Property Tax Study released by Director David Harris on 12 June 2023.

• The St. Clair county assessor took advantage of a loop hole in the act to deny hundreds of veterans and families of this benefit. It has since been remedied by other legislation, unfortunately this year these veterans and their families shall suffer.

• When the time comes be proactive when we have witness slips especially can't stress how important they are. We need to show unity going forward. Make sure when a call to action comes you and everyone you know gets involved.

• We have added a new member of our legislative team Doug Jameson he shall focus on the VAC's throughout the state.

VA End-of-Life Benefits:

VVA has launched a campaign to inform veterans and their family members about end-of-life benefits. Being aware of available benefits and services before a veteran passes away can help make it easier to navigate the process and plan ahead. <https://www.va.gov/initiatives/end-of-life-benefits/>

Access Vet Center Mental Health Counseling:

Vet Centers offer free and confidential mental health and readjustment counseling in communities across the United States and its territories. While widely known as a resource for veterans, they also assist eligible service members and families. Available services include individual and group therapy, family and bereavement counseling, and referral assistance. <https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/Eligibility.asp> **Pre-Need**

Eligibility for VA Cemetery Burial:

VA Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs Matthew T. Quinn spoke about pre-need eligibility for burial benefits during a presentation at the 124th VFW National Convention. Over the last five decades, VA has expanded the number of national cemeteries creating more access for urban veterans and jump starting an initiative for those in rural areas. However, Quinn revealed that only 16% of veterans will choose a VA national cemetery for their final resting place. <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/>

Review for Potential New Toxic Exposure Conditions:

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced it will conduct a scientific review to determine whether there is a relationship between three conditions — acute leukemias, chronic leukemias, and multiple myeloma outside of the head and neck — and toxic exposures for service members who deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire Southwest Asia theater of operations. The review will help VA determine whether these conditions will be considered presumptive for veterans. <https://news.va.gov/press-room/connections-between-toxic-exposurescancer/>

Expeditionary Medal for Operation Atlantic Resolve Service:

There has been issued an executive order approving the mobilization of select reservists of the armed forces to active duty in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. VFW National Commander Tim Borland renewed his call for DOD to award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to those service members deployed to defend NATO's eastern flank. "Operation Atlantic Resolve is now a named contingency operation and the troops directly supporting this crucial mission deserve proper recognition," said Borland. <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2023/7/vfw-calls-on-secdef-to-recognize-operation-atlantic-resolve-service-with-medal>

Need to contact VA?

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255

Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838 or Chat

White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311

Don't know what number to call?

1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) is never the wrong number

The number to call when you don't know who to call.

You only need to remember one number for information on VA care, benefits, and services or to speak to a live agent for assistance!