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Schedule of Events:

- **Clay County Fair
September 4th-14th,
Veterans Day 8th**
 - **National Suicide
Prevention Week
Sept. 7-13, 2008**
 - **Heartland Honor Flight
Pre-flight dinner Senior
Center September 16th**
 - **Pottawattamie County
Commission of Veteran
Affairs Monthly meeting
September 11th**
 - **Southwest Iowa Honor
Flight September 17th**
 - **State Commission
Meeting September 24th
Iowa Veterans Home**
 - **Career Access Points
(ICAP) Open House
September 26th**
 - **Offutt Air Force Base
Retiree Day October 19th**
 - **Fall Regional Job Fair set
for Oct. 28 at Mid-America
Center**
 - **Military Women’s Event
November 22 Des Moines**
-

Pottawattamie Commission of Veteran Affairs UPDATES

September 2008



Here’s a short summary of the other important legislation that passed this year:

- Making sure Iowa citizen soldiers can return to their jobs with the same seniority, status and pay they would have had if not called to duty (House File 2065).
- Making sure those service members who have custody and physical care of their children prior to being deployed will retain that custody when they return home. Their military service cannot be used against them in a child custody hearing (Senate File 2214).
- Increasing the state dollars that children of deceased service members can receive to attend college and expanding eligibility for this benefit (Senate File 2289).
- Expanding the ways veterans can benefit from the Veterans Trust Fund to include durable medical equipment, prescriptions, in-home nursing care, and vision, hearing and dental care (Senate File 2124).
- Creating four new lottery games to help support the Veterans Trust Fund. It’s estimated that the games will add more than \$3.3 million per year to the trust (House File 2359).
- Improving services to veterans by requiring that Iowa counties have qualified veterans’ services officers and setting minimum hours of operation (Senate File 2134).

Updated Veterans Affairs Website

The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs recently unveiled their recently redesigned website at www.iowava.org. Some of the new features on the website include: 1) information about the Emergency Hotline and other key resources, 2) a clickable Iowa map that links directly to Iowa county veterans affairs offices, 3) a list of benefits and related forms that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides, 4) transition help information for veterans and their families, and 5) information about how to access veteran services.

VA Rolling Out Suicide Hotline Ads in DC

Peake: First-of-Its-Kind Test for VA

WASHINGTON (July 25, 2008) - Veterans and other residents of metropolitan Washington, D.C., have begun seeing outreach information on buses and inside subway cars about the suicide prevention hotline of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The red-white-and-blue displays, the centerpiece of a new three-month outreach campaign, will highlight VA's suicide prevention hotline -- 1-800-273-TALK. If the campaign is successful in raising awareness, VA officials plan to extend the promotional campaign to other parts of the country.

"It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help," said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "That's the message of this outreach."

In D.C., 80 buses, 220 subway cars and 10 subway stations will carry the displays until mid October. VA officials will measure the effectiveness of the outreach campaign by tracking any increase in calls to its suicide prevention hotline from telephone numbers in the metro D.C. area. VA's newest outreach to veterans and their families about suicide prevention includes soon-to-be-released public service ads featuring actor Gary Sinese.

The ads are the latest outreach tool in a suicide prevention program that includes creation of a toll-free, round-the-clock hotline, which began operation last summer; the expansion of hours at VA's 153 medical facilities to care for veterans with mental health problems; the hiring of suicide prevention counselors at each VA medical center; and special training programs for all VA employees in medical centers and clinics to alert them to warning signs in veterans for suicide and other emotional problems.

VA operates one of the largest mental health programs in the country, with about 9,000 mental health professionals, a yearly mental health budget of about \$3 billion and about 1 million patients who have a mental health diagnosis.

VA Announces On-Line Claims Applications

WASHINGTON (July 16, 2008) -

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that on-line applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors and other claimants filing initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

Effective immediately, VA will now process applications received through its on-line application website (VONAPP) without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications.

VONAPP (www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm) is a Web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans, survivors and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery.

VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors.

The on-line application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more.

Over 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from VA and approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS, 55TH WING (ACC)
OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE NEBRASKA

Dear Military Retiree and Family Members

This year's Offutt Air Force Base Retiree Appreciation Day will be held on Sunday, 19 October 2008, in the Offutt Field House, Building 321.

We have a full day of briefings and activities planned to update you on your retiree rights and benefits. Welcome remarks start at 0900 and the day's activities conclude at approximately 1400. The briefings are specifically tailored for retirees, family members and family survivors of active duty or retired personnel of all uniformed services. In addition, speakers and representatives of several supporting agencies will staff information booths to assist participants and hear views or suggestions on matters of concern.

This day is specifically designed to show appreciation for your contributions to the defense of our country. The attached map will help you locate Offutt Air Force Base and a suitable entry point through the SAC, Kenney or Bellevue gates. Gate guards can assist you with directions to the Offutt Field House.

The Offutt Retirees Activities Office would appreciate feedback on your plans and ideas for the Retiree Day. Please take a moment to fill out Attachment 4 and return it to the Retirees Activities Office. We hope you will join us and we look forward to spending the day with you at Offutt Air Force Base.

Sincerely
JONES General, USAF er



Military Women's Event

(reprinted from the August/September IDVA Newsletter)

Mark your calendars for November 22! Women veterans' service to our country will be celebrated at the Military Women Symposium at the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center in Des Moines. The free event begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 1 p.m. Join us for resources, military women health information, and a motivational speaker. The lively speaker is Elizabeth "Betty" Wall. Her fascinating story is as one of our nation's "Fly Girls." During the years 1934-1944, the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) of WWII flew every P-47 off the factory line in 1944, flying over 60,000,000 miles of operational flights and 77 different types of military aircraft including the B-29. Betty Wall was one of these 1,074 WASPS. For more about Betty's life, go to: <http://www.mnlegion.org/paper/html/strohfus.html>.

The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs is one of the sponsors for the "Military Women Event", including: Tama County Veterans Affairs, Ft. Des Moines Museum and Education Center, Iowa Gold Star Museum, 132nd Fighter Wing/Family Support Office, the Iowa Veterans Home, Iowa Department of Public Health, Governor's Office, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Iowa Commission on

the Status of Women. Honorary Chairs include Representatives Jody Tymeson and Helen Miller.

This free event is made possible through the generosity of local veterans' service organizations and businesses. If you would like to be involved as a sponsor, or for more general information about the event, contact the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women at 515.281.4461 or women@iowa.gov. ~

- A new venture for IWD in Council Bluffs! IWD has partnered with Faith Based and Community Organizations to open pilot Iowa Career Access Points (ICAP) across the state. The ICAPs create additional entrance points into the workforce system for individuals at familiar community locations. I have been on the ICAP team in Council Bluffs (one of four sites in Iowa) and we have opened two ICAP sites: Heartland Family Services at MOHMS Place and Sequels Thrift Store. We will have an Open House on September 26, 2008 at MOHMS Place from 10:30 to noon and you are invited to attend to learn more about this outreach project and about future opportunities to develop Access Points within our communities. Please LMK if you've any questions about this project.
- Iowa Workforce Conference Oct 1 & 2: Register to attend the Iowa Workforce Conference in Des Moines! There will be many interesting workshops and speakers at the event. Details at <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/conference2008/index.html>.

May 21, 2008

New UI grant program helps veterans fill gap left by GI Bill

The University of Iowa has created a Veterans Grant Program to help fill the financial gap that many veterans face with existing GI Bill benefits.

The UI will provide grants of up to \$500 per semester to offset educational expenses for veterans who entered service from the state of Iowa and who were on active duty to serve in support of the Global War on Terror, or other periods of hostility.

The UI has allocated \$100,000 for the Veterans Grant Program, according to UI President Sally Mason.

"This grant program was created to support our veterans who have given so much to our country. It's the start of an effort to help these students who have returned to the University of Iowa to improve their lives through education," Mason said.

Larry Lockwood, assistant provost for enrollment services in the UI Office of the Registrar, said, "Many of our students have had to delay their educational goals because they have been called to active duty to meet the needs of our country. The University of Iowa will give back to our veterans and eligible dependents in a small way and do what is right for this generation, as well as past generations who have served in times of conflict."

John Mikelson, advisor for the UI Veterans Center, explained that while the current GI Bill covers some tuition and fees for veterans, it does not cover all costs, depending on individual situations.

"In a best-case scenario, approximately 60 percent of these educational costs are currently covered for veterans, and the UI grant will be a big help to current students," he said, adding that the UI is among the first universities in the country to offer this kind of grant to veterans.

The new UI Veteran's Grant is based on need as determined by completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Students who are eligible for benefits as a dependent of a veteran who became 100 percent disabled or died as a result of military duty may also be awarded this grant. The Veterans Grant is renewable, but cannot exceed eight semesters. To reapply, the veteran must complete the FAFSA each year and must submit an application.

To apply, students are required to complete the FAFSA, and present military discharge papers to the UI Veterans Affairs office, Office of the Registrar, Room 1 of Jessup Hall. Proof of eligibility for benefits can be submitted by dependents of veterans. The Veterans Affairs Office will provide a brief grant application.

OTHER INFORMATION: For a profile about Mikelson and the UI Veterans Center, see <http://www.uiowa.edu/be-remarkable/portfolio/people/mikelson-j.html>. For information about the University of Iowa Veterans Association, see <http://www.uiowa.edu/~uiva>.

STORY SOURCE: University of Iowa News Services, 300 Plaza Centre One, Suite 371, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-2500. MEDIA CONTACTS: Mark Warner, UI Student Financial Aid, 319-335-3127; John Mikelson, Veterans Center, 319-384-2020; George McCrory, University of Iowa News Services, 319-384-0012, george-mccrory@uiowa.edu

When to Fly Your Flag:

The American flag should be displayed on all days and especially the holidays listed below. Wondering **when to fly the flag at half staff**? The dates marked in **red** indicate when you should fly your flag at half-staff.

[New Year's Day](#)

January 1

[Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)

January 21

[Inauguration Day](#)

January 20

[Lincoln's Birthday](#)

February 12

[Washington's Birthday](#)

February 22

[Easter Sunday](#)

March 23

[Mother's Day](#)

May 11

[Peace Officer's Memorial Day](#)

(half-staff) May 15

[Armed Forces Day](#)

May 18

[Memorial Day](#)

(Half-staff until noon)
May 26

[Flag Day](#)

June 14

[Father's Day](#)

3rd Sunday in June

[Independence Day](#)

July 4

[Korean War Veterans Day](#)

(half-staff), July 27

[Labor Day](#)

September 1

[Patriot Day](#)

(half-staff) September 11

[Constitution Day](#)

September 17

[Gold Star Mother's Day](#)

September 28

[Columbus Day](#)

October 13

[Navy Day](#)

October 27

[National Election Day](#)

November 4

[Marine Corps Day](#)

November 10

[Veterans Day](#)

November 11

[Thanksgiving Day](#)

November 27

[Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day](#)

(half-staff) December 7

[Christmas Day](#)

December 25

[Birthdays of Iowa](#)

December 28, 1846

DATES to REMEMBER: Upcoming dates to remember.

Monthly Service Organization

Meetings:

1st Tuesday – CB Disabled

American Veterans Chapter No. 5

7:30 p.m.

- Avoca American Legion

1st Wednesday - Hancock

American Legion and Auxiliary

1st Thursday – CB AMVETS Post

2nd Tuesday – Treynor American
Legion

AMVETS – Walnut

2nd Wednesday - CB AL Auxiliary

2nd Thursday – Carter Lake VFW
Auxiliary

3rd Monday – CB VFW

3rd Wednesday – CB VVA Post
798

LOCAL PHONE NUMBERS

- National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (September)
- National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (September)
- Labor Day – (September 1st)
- Grandparents Day (September 7th)
- Patriot Day (September 11th)
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day (Third Friday in September) (September 19th)
- Citizenship Day and Constitution Week (September 17 and week thereof)
- Family Day (fourth Monday in September) (September 22nd)
- Gold Star Mother's Day - (last Sunday in September) (September 28th)
- Autumn – (September 22nd)
- National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15–October 15)^[5]
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October)
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October)
- Child Health Day (first Monday in October) (October 6th)
- German-American Day - (October 6)
- Fire Prevention Week (week of October 9)
- Leif Erikson Day - (October 9)
- Columbus Day (second Monday in October) - October 12th
- General Pulaski Memorial Day - (October 11th)
- White Cane Safety Day - (October 15th)
- National Bosses Day – (October 15th)
- United Nations Day - (October 24)
- Halloween (October 31st)

Operation Recognition

Operation Recognition is for veterans who did not receive their high school diploma because of enlistment to serve in WWI, WWII, Korean, or Vietnam War. The program furnishes an honorary high school diploma to qualifying veterans. The application form is used by the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Education to establish eligibility for honorably discharged veterans. The Veteran's DD214 is also required. A link for the application form can be found on the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs webpage at https://www.iowava.org/images/Operation_Recognition.pdf.

On Thursday, July 17, 2008, the President signed into law:

H.R. 634, the "American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act," which requires the Department of the Treasury to mint and issue coins in 2010 in commemoration of disabled American veterans;

WHY VETERANS REUNITE

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades....such good men."

Author unknown

DID YOU KNOW?

- Filing for VA benefits is a “FREE” benefit to the veteran and his or her dependents. If you are paying for these services; STOP!
- Do you require quality nursing home assistance? Are you an Honorable Discharge Veteran or the widow of an honorably discharged veteran? You may meet the requirements to stay at the Iowa Veteran Home.
- A 0% Service-Connected hearing disability can entitle the veteran to hearing aids through the VA Medical Center.
- A 10% Service-Connected rating can entitle the veteran to hearing aids and or eye glasses through the VA Medical Center.
- Purple Heart Recipients are automatically qualified for medical care Priority Group 3.
- A service-connected disability can be increased when the disability worsens and medical documentation is available as proof.
- Pharmacy co-pays through the VA are \$8.00 per 30 day supply, and are refillable by phone.
- VA Pension is designed to assist veterans with non-service-connected disabilities who meet a minimal income threshold
When you apply for a rating increase three things could possibly happen to your rating:
 1. Rating is Increased
 2. Rating is Decreased
 3. Rating remains unchanged

Office Locations And Hours

Pottawattamie County Commission of Veterans Affairs
223 South 6th Street, Court House Annex
Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501
712-328-5797 FAX 712-328-5726

e-mail: veterans@pottcounty.com

Monday –Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 pm closed 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Assistance can be provided by appointment during
nontraditional hours

Avoca Court House Tuesdays 8:00 am – 4:00pm
712-307-6409

Commissioners:

Phillip Jacobs, Chairman
Michael Carter, Secretary
Philip Killion, Member

Staff:

Darlene McMartin, B. S.W., Administrator
Peggy Becker, Case Worker III
Lori Swisher, Case Worker II
Michael Grap, Case Worker II
Pamela Wilke, Receptionist

The staff of the Veterans Service Office can assist you with the following subjects:

- **Compensation or Pension**
- **Disability Retirement**
- **Death Indemnity Compensation**
- **Appeal to Board of Veterans Appeal**
- **Hospital and Outpatient Benefits**
- **State of Iowa Benefits**
- **Educational Benefits**
- **Vocational Benefits**
- **Debt Waivers**
- **Obtaining Lost Military Records**
- **Review of Military Discharge**
- **Claims for Insurance Payments**
- **Burial Allowance**
- **SBP/ChampVA**
- **CRSC/CRDP**

Special Notice: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number **1-800-273-8255**, available 24/7, and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.