

Polk County Summer Newsletter-2017

Greetings from your Polk County Veterans Service Office.

Well, summer is here, which is hard to tell as I am writing this letter on June 23rd, with a temperature reading of 61 degrees outside. Not exactly the type of summer weather I enjoy.

Our office is excited to announce that Crookston will soon be home to a D.A.V. transportation van for veterans medical appointments. We are hoping to have the van setup and rolling by August of this year. The D.A.V. will need volunteer drivers. If you are interested please contact our office. We will need your full name, date of birth, telephone number, address and social security number. If you have any questions about the D.A.V. van for transportation please give our office a call or call Dan Woods at 1-855-277-9787.



Trent Dilks and Dan Woods. Representatives of the DAV transportation program

As I have talked to many different veterans organizations in the area, I am reminded of how tough a time they are having finding new members to join their organizations. I hope all Americans realize how important these veterans organizations are for veterans. Without them many veterans benefits would not exist and potentially could be in danger in the future. So I ask all of our readers that are not members of these organizations to consider joining and encouraging other veterans to do the same.

Our office will have a booth at the Polk County Fair from July 5th through July 9th. If you get a chance, stop by and say hi. If you are making a special trip to our Crookston Office you may want to call first to make sure someone is in the office during the Fair period.

Thank you all for your service for this great country and hope you enjoy your Polk County Veterans Newsletter.



Important dates:

July 4-Independence Day

July 27-Korean War Veterans Armistice Day (1953)

August 4-Coast Guard Birthday

August 7-Purple Heart Day

August 8--VJ (Victory over Japan) Day (1945)

August 29-Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

September 4-Labor Day

September 11-Patriot Day

September 15-POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 18-Air Force Birthday

September 24-Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day





CHARLOTTE, N.C., May 25, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- **Allegiant** (NASDAQ: [ALGT](#)) today announced *Allegiant Honors* - a special program to support and thank U.S. active duty and retired military for their service with select free services. The program was unveiled with a special announcement at Circle K Speed Street presented by Coca-Cola, in conjunction with NASCAR Salutes Refreshed by Coca-Cola, NASCAR's program paying tribute to our troops. Speed Street attendees may visit the Allegiant booth for information and giveaways, and to enter a special drawing for a chance to win free flights. The festival runs through Saturday, May 27.

"All of us at Allegiant take great pride in supporting the brave men and women who serve our country every day," said Maurice J. Gallagher, Allegiant chairman and CEO. "The *Allegiant Honors* program extends our thanks by making it a little easier for active members of the military, veterans and their families to travel. We are honored to have them fly with us."

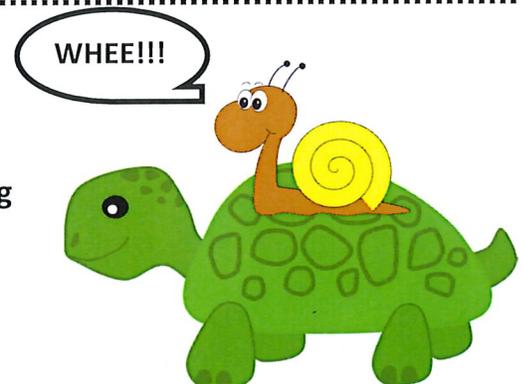
Under the *Allegiant Honors* program U.S. active duty military, retired military veterans, members of the National Guard, military reserve and their dependents are eligible for free services when they fly Allegiant. These include up to three pieces of checked baggage, one carry-on bag, one pet in cabin, courtesy boarding pass printing at the airport and free seat assignments, pending availability. In addition, active duty military may board flights with priority boarding at no charge, and will not be charged a change or cancellation fee due to a change in orders.

All optional items and services will be added to itinerary at the airport – eligible individuals should reserve in person with valid military I.D. Those who have paid for items which qualify for a military waiver may visit the airport ticket counter for a refund of eligible fees.

A complete list of services, as well as eligibility and ID requirements, may be accessed at Allegiant.com/military-discount



What did the snail say when he was riding on the back of a turtle??



Knock Knock. Who's there? Opportunity. Don't be silly - opportunity doesn't knock twice!



Our Story

When one of our family members, who was a Veteran passed away, our family checked into cremation and looked at urns to purchase. After looking at the different options, it was decided that we could make a quality wooden urn that would honor our loved one. After finishing the wooden urn, we decided to honor all Veterans and offer support to their families by providing a free urn. These free urns are made possible by generous donations.

Our Purpose

To provide free urns to all veterans.

Contact Information

Free Urns for Veterans

P.O. Box 689
Anoka, MN 55303
Email: free.urns@gmail.com

Dan Scott, President
Colonel (Ret) USA
Phone: 651-274-9844

Gary Scott, Secretary
Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Ret) USA
Phone: 651-341-7892

James Scott, Treasurer
Experienced Pattern Maker, Retired
Phone: 763-566-5605

Dennis Scott, Board Member
Experienced Pattern & Mold Maker
Phone: 612-382-4741



Scan QR Code
for More
Information

Free Urns for Veterans

P.O. Box 689 | Anoka, MN 55303
www.freeurnsforveterans.org
Nonprofit, 501 (c) (3)

Free Urns for Veterans



Made for Veterans by Veterans & Our Families

Nonprofit, 501 (c) (3)
Federal Tax ID# 47-2412901

www.freeurnsforveterans.org

VETERANS AFFAIRS

*VA News Release***Veterans Matter Program and VA Announce Milestone of Helping 1,500 Homeless Veterans Secure Stable Housing**

06/26/2017 03:40 PM EDT

Veterans Matter Program and VA Announce Milestone of Helping 1,500 Homeless Veterans Secure Stable Housing

WASHINGTON – The [U.S. Department Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#) and [Veterans Matter](#) — a program that provides security deposits to homeless Veterans in 14 states and the District of Columbia — today announced that, through their joint efforts, they have helped 1,500 Veterans exit homelessness and move into permanent housing.

Veterans Matter, supported by John Mellencamp, Dusty Hill, Katy Perry, Kid Rock and many others in the entertainment industry, was established in 2012 by the Toledo, Ohio-based nonprofit 1Matters.org, and focuses exclusively on providing security deposits to homeless Veterans who qualify for rental subsidies from the joint [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\) program](#). In providing these security deposits, Veterans Matter removes a major barrier to securing stable housing for homeless Veterans.

“VA can’t end Veteran homelessness alone,” said Anthony Love, senior adviser and director of community engagement for the Veterans Health Administration [Homeless Programs Office](#). “Partnerships with innovative, community-oriented groups, such as Veterans Matter, have played a major role in the decline in Veteran homelessness in recent years.”

“In collaboration with VA, we are able to make a greater impact for homeless Veterans than we could on our own,” said Ken Leslie, who founded Veterans Matter and was once homeless himself.

Once Veterans are housed through the HUD-VASH program, VA case managers can connect them to other supportive services — such as employment assistance, health care, mental health treatment and substance use counseling — to help them recover and improve their ability to stay housed.

Based on data released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2016, since 2010, there has been an estimated 47 percent reduction in homelessness among Veterans across the country. Further, HUD said, between 2015 and 2016 alone, the number of homeless Veterans decreased by 17 percent. In addition, of all VA homeless programs that assist Veterans, HUD-VASH assists the largest number of Veterans who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. And of those Veterans in the program, 91 percent remain housed. The program has allocated more than 88,000 housing vouchers nationwide to date.



VA Caregiver Support

As a caregiver, to be strong for your Veteran you must first be strong. Respite care is an occasional way to take a break from your caregiving duties and relax, renew your energy, and avoid caregiver burnout.

Veterans who require a caregiver may be eligible for up to 30 days of respite care each year. This care can be offered in your home, at a VA community living center, at a VA-contracted community residential care facility, or at an adult day health care center.



To see if you are eligible for respite care services, call the Caregiver Support Line—1-855-260-3274, or enter your zip code and call your local Caregiver Support Coordinator. <https://go.usa.gov/xNcjw>

**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT LINE**
1-855-260-3274

With VA's Caregiver Support Line assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you're in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what services you may be eligible for, the caring licensed professionals who answer the support line can:

- Tell you about the assistance available from VA.
- Help you access services.
- Connect you with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA Medical Center near you.
- Just listen, if that's what you need right now.

If you're just getting started with VA, calling the Caregiver Support Line is a great first step to take to learn more about the support that's available to you.



FULLFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

DAV of Minnesota's mission is to "better the life of Minnesota's disabled Veterans and their families."

The DAV Polk County Transportation program is to further that mission. DAV Polk County Transportation is here to assist Veterans needing transportation to and from their VA appointments at the Fargo VA, Hibbing and Grand Forks CBOCs and also VA paid appointments at no expense to the Veteran.

Polk County Veterans Transportation Program

DAV of Minnesota Services

- Free Benefits and Claims Assistance
- Homelessness Assistance
- Transportation Assistance
- Legislative Advocacy
- Employment Resources
- Outdoor Events
- Durable Medical Equipment



Fargo VA Health Care System
2101 Elm St N
Fargo ND 58102

Polk CVSO
612 N Broadway Suite 219
Crookston MN 56716
(218) 281-3066

Polk County Veterans Transportation Program

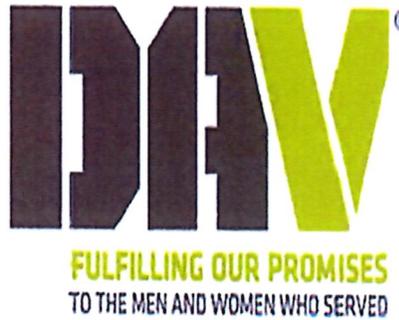
**TO SCHEDULE A RIDE:
1-855-277-9787**

During the spring of 2017 the DAV Polk County Veterans Transportation Program was established.

The purpose of this program is to assist Veterans living in North West Minnesota access their earned medical benefits at VA facilities or VA paid appointments. Through a partnership between the Polk County Veterans Service Office and the DAV of Minnesota a donated vehicle will be servicing county Veterans and scheduled by the DAV NW Coordinator.

Ambulatory veterans and their caregivers can access this service free of charge using dedicated volunteer drivers.

Wheelchair bound veterans will need to contact the Travel Department at the Fargo VA with transportation requests. Please contact the Polk CVSO or DAV NW Coordinator for more information on ride schedules, available ride locations and to schedule your ride.



Consider being a volunteer driver or driving assistant!

We are always looking for people who are interested in volunteering as a driver or as a driving assistant. No need to be a Veteran! If you are interested in volunteering please contact

Polk CVSO:
(218) 281-3066
or
Fargo VA Voluntary
Services
(701) 239-3700 ext 9-3395

Thank You For Riding With Us!

- Schedule your transportation a minimum of a week in advance.
(The earlier the better)
- Inform the dispatcher about special accommodations you may require or if anyone will be riding along with you
- Call if your appointment time/dates change or you no longer need a ride.

Please call the NW DAV Transportation to make your transportation arrangements at:

855-277-9787

Lowe's expands support of U.S. military

New Lowe's discount offers military customers 10% off, easy store checkout and online shopping. All day. Every day.

Dec. 7, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor changed the lives of families all across America, including the family of Lowe's founder Carl Buchan. He and his brothers – all five of them – enlisted in the military to help the war effort.

With an honorable discharge after an injury, Buchan came home and joined his brother-in-law, Jim Lowe, as a partner in a hardware store in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. At the time, Lowe's was a typical, small-town hardware store selling everything from overalls to wash tubs, work boots and even horse collars. Today, Lowe's serves more than 17 million customers a week, and among them are servicemen and women serving our country, just as Carl Buchan did more than 70 years ago.



To honor his legacy and thank them for their service, Lowe's is celebrating National Military Appreciation Month and, beginning May 1, expanding its support of the military by announcing an enhanced military discount – 10 percent off personal purchases every day to current and honorably discharged members of the U.S. military. Receiving the discount is easy. Visit [Lowes.com/military](https://www.lowes.com/military) and enroll, then shop in a Lowe's store in the U.S. or make purchases online at [Lowes.com](https://www.Lowes.com), where parcel shipping is free.

It's Lowe's way of saying thank you to generations of military veterans and their families for helping grow the small North Carolina hardware store where the company got its start more than 70 years ago.

In addition to the military discount program, Lowe's offers employment opportunities for military personnel after their service ends. More than 10,000 veterans and members of the Guard and Reserves work to serve Lowe's customers. Currently, nearly 800 employees are deployed to active duty and Lowe's provides differential pay during their service, along with other benefits to help them and their families.

To enroll or for additional details about the discount, visit [Lowes.com/military](https://www.Lowes.com/military)

Here's how to get your 10% discount every time you shop at Lowe's:

1. Visit [lowes.com/military](https://www.lowes.com/military).
2. Complete the personal profile.
3. Make sure you check the "MyLowe's" card box.

Once you receive your "my Lowe's" card and shop at Lowe's present your card or give the cashier your phone number.



Veterans Choice Program (VCP) Phone Line Imposter

It has come to VA's attention that a phone line has been set up by an unknown party to potentially "mimic" the VCP phone line. This imposter phone line may be intended to reach Veterans who inadvertently dial the VCP number incorrectly.

VHA Office of Community Care (VHA CC) has reported the "mimic" line to the VA Office of Inspector General for a possible civil or criminal investigation.

"Mimic" Phone Line

The phone line established to "mimic" the VCP phone line is 1-**800**-606-8198. You know you have reached the wrong VCP phone line when:

The phone line offers callers a \$100 rebate **if** the caller provides a credit card.

The phone line does **not** state the caller has reached U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the VCP phone line.

Be aware that this phone number incorrectly confirms callers had reach the VCP *if the caller asks that question.*

VCP Phone Line

The correct VCP phone line is 1-**866**-606-8198. This line is for Veterans to check their eligibility for the VCP and ask questions about the program.

If you are unsure if you have reached the correct phone line, hang up and dial 1-**866**-606-8198 again. The phone line will state the called **has** reach the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Behind the Numbers

80

Nearly 80 Percent of Americans report that they have gambled in the past year. (Source: NCPG PGAM info)

6

The number of people, in millions, that will experience serious problems with their gambling (Source: NCPG PGAM info)

10.9

Percent of elderly (Over 65) patients in a primary care facility who were at risk gamblers (Levens et al., 2005)

\$4.7 billion

The estimated amount of money wagered on Super Bowl LI (Source: American Gaming Association)

800-333-HOPE

The phone number for the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Morris “Moe” Berg—The Baseball Catcher and the Spy

Moe berg’s life proves the adage that “truth is often stranger than fiction.” One of the best educated, intellectually accomplished and patriotic Jewish athletes in the history of American sports, Berg got his start in baseball in 1906, at the age of four, playing catch with the beat policeman in front of his father’s Newark, NJ, pharmacy. Berg became an excellent linguist while an undergraduate student at Princeton University, where he studied Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Sanskrit. He began his career as a spy on a hospital roof in Japan (more about that later).

After graduating from high school at the top of his class, Moe went to Princeton, an unusual accomplishment for a poor Jewish boy in the 1920s. He became the star shortstop of the college baseball team, graduated magna cum laude and was offered a teaching post in Princeton’s Department of Romance Languages. Wanting to study experimental phonetics at the Sorbonne (Paris University) but unable to afford graduate study overseas, Berg accepted a contract to play shortstop for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Moe’s hitting was below par and he was sent to the minors after the 1924 season. It was Moe who inspired a professional scout to coin the immortal baseball phrase, “Good field, not hit.” One teammate said, “Moe, I don’t care how many of them college degrees you got, they ain’t learned you to hit that curve ball no better than the rest of us.”

Berg returned to the majors in 1926 with the Chicago White Sox. At the same time, he attended Columbia Law School. Despite his hectic schedule, the brilliant Berg managed to finish second in his class at Columbia. That year, the White Sox asked him to play catcher, a position that took advantage of his strong arm and intelligence. Casey Stengel compared Berg’s defensive skills to the immortal Bill Dickey. Moe hit .287 in 1929 and received votes for the Most Valuable Player but in 1930 he seriously injured his knee, ending his career as a full-time player. He played as a reserve for three more teams until he retired in 1939.

In 1934, Berg toured Japan with a group of major league all-stars, including Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. Still respected as a linguist, Moe was invited to lecture at Meiji University, where he delivered an eloquent speech in Japanese. Apparently, before the trip, the U.S. Government had recruited Berg as a spy. While at a Tokyo hospital ostensibly visiting an American mother who had just given birth, he sneaked onto the roof and took photos of the city. Pilots reportedly later used the photos during bombing raid in WWII.

As a Jew wanting to fight Nazism, Berg volunteered to serve when America entered the war in 1941. He was asked to become a Goodwill Ambassador to Latin America. Before he left on his ambassadorial mission, Berg made a radio broadcast to the Japanese people over the radio in which, to quote his biographers Harold and Meir Ribalow, “In fluent Japanese, he pleaded at length, ‘as a friend of the Japanese people,’ for the Japanese to avoid a war ‘you cannot win.’” The Ribalows report, “Berg’s address was so effective that several Japanese confirmed afterwards they had wept while listening.”

After his stint in Latin America, Moe returned to the U.S. to work for the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency. He parachuted into Yugoslavia and, after meeting Tito, suggested that the U.S. back him rather than his Serbian rival. Despite the fact that he was not a scientist Berg was next assigned to help determine how close Germany was to developing an atomic bomb. In a few weeks studying textbooks, Berg taught himself a great deal about nuclear physics. Traveling through Europe, Berg discovered that a factory in Norway was producing an atomic bomb component for the Nazis and Allied planes bombed it. Berg then learned that the Nazis had an atomic research center at Duisberg, Germany, and it too was bombed.

He (Moe Berg) bluffs his way up onto the roof of the hospital, the tallest building in Tokyo at the time. And from underneath his kimono he pulls out a movie camera. He proceeds to take a series of photos panning the whole setting before him, which includes the harbor, the industrial sections of Tokyo, possibly munitions factories and things like that. Then he puts the camera back under his kimono and leaves the hospital with these films," says Nicholas Dawidoff, a Berg Biographer.

Moe Berg has long enjoyed a reputation as the most shadowy player in the history of baseball. Earning more notoriety for being a frontline spy than for being a backup catcher, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction in Berg's undercover career. Just Berg being a spy begs the questions: How much of the fiction might have been used as cover?

Morris Berg was born in a cold-water tenement on East 121st Street in Manhattan on March 2, 1902, to Russian-Jewish immigrant parents—Bernard, a druggist and Rose. The family moved across the Hudson River to Newark, N.J., in 1906. Berg's father, Bernard, taught his son Hebrew and Yiddish. His father disapproved of his son's career and never once watched his son play baseball despite Moe's pleadings.

At seven, Berg began playing baseball for a Methodist Church team under the pseudonym Runt Wolfe. He later starred at Barringer High School. From there, it was on to Princeton, where he majored in modern languages and played shortstop on the baseball team. He and a teammate, also a linguist, would communicate on the field in Latin.

A student at Columbia Law School, in 1926 he joined the White Sox, who had bought his contract from Reading of the international League. Berg became a catcher by accident the next season. In August 1927, after three Chicago receivers were injured in a matter of days, he volunteered for the job.

A deft handler of pitchers and possessor of a rifle arm, by 1929 he was the White Sox's regular catcher. He hit a career-high .288 in 106 games and received two votes in balloting for the American League's Most Valuable Player.

Unfortunately for Berg, the following year in spring training he suffered a knee injury and spent the rest of his career (with the Cleveland Indians, Washington Senators and Boston Red Sox after Chicago) as a bench warmer. When he called it quits at 37, he had just 441 in 1,812 at-bats, with only six home runs and 206 RBI's.

After two years as a Red Sox coach, Berg left baseball on Jan. 14, 1942, the same day his father died. Bernard Berg always regarded his son's choice of a career as a waste of fine intellect. Moe's love of the game—and of the travel and social hobnobbing it afforded him—was a matter of contention between them to the end.

It is at this point, just after the start of the United States' entry into WWII, that Berg's life became the subject of much speculation. Nelson Rockefeller gave him a job with the Office of Inter-American Affairs that allowed him to travel through South and Central America studying the health and fitness of the population.

He parlayed that post into becoming an officer in the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA, in 1943.

Berg, according to one biography, was prone to blunders: getting caught trying to infiltrate an aircraft factory during his training, dropping his gun into a fellow passenger's lap, and being recognized by wearing his O.S.S.-issue watch.

Despite these mistakes, Berg was well-regarded enough to have been chosen to carry out one of the O.S.S.' more ambitious endeavors—a plot to possibly assassinate Werner Heisenberg, the head of Nazi Germany's atom-bomb project. Berg, who spoke German fluently, was sent in December 1944 to Zurich to attend a lecture by Heisenberg. Berg's assessment of the situation was that Germany was not close to having a nuclear bomb, and there was never an attempt to kill Heisenberg.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Another story involving Berg's spying career came at the end of the war, when while traveling through Soviet-occupied Czechoslovakia with some other agents, he produced a letter with a big red star on it when asked for credentials. The Americans lacked any authorization, and supposedly what Berg showed the Soviet soldiers was a copy of the Texaco Oil Co. letterhead.

After being forced out of the spy business in the late forties, Berg didn't hold a regular job. A bachelor, he often freeloaded off friends and relatives, especially his brother Sam, who once sent Moe two eviction notices to get him out of his house. After almost 17 years of having Moe live with him and with papers and books piling up to the point that it was driving him insane, Sam finally asked Moe to leave. Moe did not budge. Dr. Sam had lawyers draw up eviction papers to get Moe out of the house. Moe then moved in with his sister Ethel for the final eight years of his life.

After the war, Moe Berg was awarded the Medal of Merit-America's highest honor for a civilian in wartime. But Berg refused to accept, as he couldn't tell people about his exploits. After his death, his sister accepted the Medal and it hangs in the Baseball Hall of Fame, in Cooperstown

To the end, however, Berg remained a dandy.

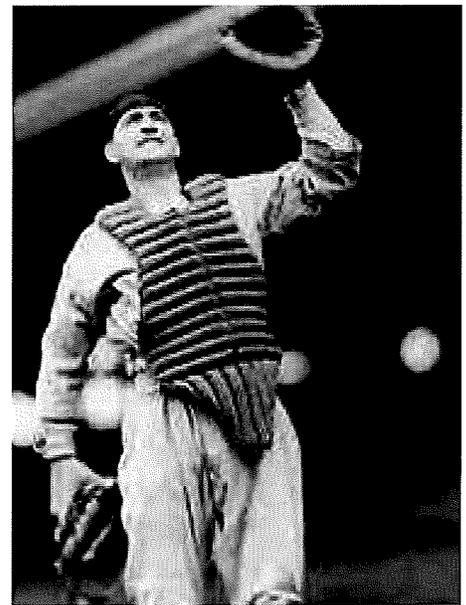
In 1960 out of financial necessity, he was prepared to break his lifelong silence about his supposed exploits and agree to write a book. However, the project collapsed when the editor glowingly praised the prospective author's movies on the mistaken assumption that he was about to sign a contract with Moe of The Three Stooges.

Berg died at 70 on May 29, 1972 in Belleville, N.J., of an abdominal aortic aneurysm. Ethel took his ashes to Israel. To this day, no one knows where his remains are buried.

In death, as in life, Moe Berg was a mystery.

Coming Soon

Paul Rudd Set To Star As Moe Berg In Fact-Based WWII Tale 'The Catcher Was A Spy'. The date of the movie release is to be determined. Filming began February, 2017.



VA
**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**
Fact Sheet

 Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

 Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS FOR BURIAL - IN ADVANCE OF NEED

Summary

Many individuals would like to know, in advance, whether they are eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemetery. To assist them, VA is launching an initiative, the "Pre-Need Eligibility Determination Program," specifically aimed at helping individuals with burial planning and making sure their wishes are known.

VA will upon request make pre-need determinations of eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery in advance of need. Having this information will help Veterans use the VA benefits they have earned, for their families and for themselves.

Once VA determines that individuals are eligible, those individuals will be entitled to the same benefits they would receive were a determination made at the time of need (time of death). These include any or all of the following, at no cost to the family:

- Burial in any open VA national cemetery, including opening and closing of the grave
- Grave liner
- Perpetual care of the gravesite
- Government-furnished upright headstone, flat marker or niche cover

Burial flag

Presidential Memorial Certificate

Eligibility

The law provides eligibility for burial in a national cemetery to:

- Members of the armed forces

Veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements as applicable by law and who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable

Members of the reserve components of the armed forces are also eligible, provided they:

- Died while on active duty under certain circumstances, or while performing training duty;
- Have 20 years of service creditable for retired pay; or

Were called to active duty and served the full term of service.

The Veterans' spouse, minor children and under certain conditions dependent unmarried adult children are eligible for burial even if they predecease the eligible Veteran.

Applying for Benefits

VA encourages Veterans and their spouses to apply for a pre-need burial eligibility determination. Authorized representatives can also apply on behalf of eligible claimants.

Individuals do not need to request a pre-need burial determination to be eligible at the time of need. There is no obligation for those found eligible to be buried in a VA national cemetery.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

To apply, submit:

VA Form 40-10007, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery ; and

Proof of military service, such as a DD Form 214, if available. If unable to locate proof of military service, apply anyway as VA will attempt to obtain military records necessary to make a determination.

Information should be submitted to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by any of the following methods:

- Fax: 1-855-840-8299 (this is a toll-free number)
Email: Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov
Postal mail: NCSO, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis MO 63151

What to Expect After Applying

VA will review pre-need burial applications and provide written notice of a determination of eligibility (a decision letter). VA will save the information electronically for future reference and to expedite processing burial claims at the time of need.

Note: Applicants should save a copy of all documents submitted and the decision letter received. It is also a good idea to communicate with one's loved ones or estate planners where the documents are, and about the preference to be buried in a VA national cemetery.

At The Time of Need

At the eligible individual's time of need (death), the family or personal representative responsible for making the final arrangements, should contact VA's National Cemetery Scheduling Office to request burial benefits. VA will confirm the pre-need eligibility determination and schedule the burial.

Because laws and personal circumstances change, VA will validate the pre-need decision using the laws in effect at the time VA receives the burial request. We will also check for any bars to receipt of the burial benefit.

Please note that applicants may indicate a preference for a VA national cemetery on the application form, but a pre-need determination of eligibility does not guarantee burial in a specific VA national cemetery or a specific gravesite. VA assigns gravesites in cemeteries with available space once death has occurred and the burial is scheduled.

For More Information

Additional information about the VA Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program is available on the VA website at <http://www.cem.va.gov/preneed>.

Never Lose A Tank

When I lost my rifle, the Army charged me \$85. That's why in the Navy, the captain goes down with the ship.

Know Risks Of A Reverse Mortgage

Minnesota Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman is urging Minnesota homeowners who may be considering a reverse mortgage to make sure they fully understand the risks as well as the benefits involved with this complicated financial product. Rothman's agency recently fined a California company for deceptive marketing of reverse mortgages.

A reverse mortgage is a special type of home loan that allows older homeowners to "cash out" the equity they have built up in their homes and defer repayment until they pass away, sell or move out. The borrower may receive either a lump-sum payment, a series of monthly payments or a line of credit.

"Older Minnesotans who are considering a reverse mortgage to tap into their home equity must be careful about jeopardizing their family's financial security," said Rothman, whose department regulates mortgage companies.

"Advertisements for reverse mortgages can sometimes confuse or mislead seniors about the real costs and potential drawbacks of these loans, putting their homes and hard-earned life savings at risk."

The Minnesota Commerce Department recently took action against American Advisors Group for sending prospective borrowers marketing material in an informational DVD which falsely claimed that a senior could not lose their home after taking out a reverse mortgage. The DVD did not properly disclose that borrowers could in fact lose their homes if they did not pay the required insurance and property taxes.

Under the terms of a consent order with the Commerce Department, the company must pay a \$20,000 fine and comply with Minnesota law that prohibits false, deceptive or misleading advertising related to residential mortgage loans.

The U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently conducted focus groups on reverse mortgage advertisements. After viewing ads, many consumers did not understand that reverse mortgages were loans with fees and interest that had to be paid back. Many were also left with the false impression that a reverse mortgage ensured that they could live in their homes and enjoy financial security for the rest of their lives.

Reverse mortgages allow home-owners over the age of 62 to convert home equity into cash. They are often marketed as a financial opportunity for seniors who own their homes but have fixed incomes or limited assets.

While reverse mortgages may be a good option for some people they are also complex and costly financial products that are not risk-free or suitable for everyone.

Rothman offers these tips for senior homeowners who may be considering a reverse mortgage: Consider other options. If you only need to borrow a limited amount of money for a specific period of time, look into a traditional home-equity loan or line of credit instead.

Get advice. Before deciding on a reverse mortgage, discuss your circumstances with a trusted friend, adviser or family member. Both federal and state law now require that you meet with an independent housing counselor approved by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) before taking out a reverse mortgage.

Be sure you understand ALL the risks of a reverse mortgage. Don't sign loan documents unless you fully understand how a reverse mortgage works. Because you are deferring repayment until you move out of your home or die, the amount you owe will grow substantially over time.

There may be little or no home equity left to pay for long-term care expenses or, when you die, your heirs will have to repay the loan in full to retain ownership of the home.

Watch out for high upfront costs. Make sure you understand all fees and costs in the transaction. These expenses tend to be higher than with a regular mortgage and they may not be readily apparent to you when paid directly from the loan proceeds.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

Don't give in to high-pressure sales tactics. Look out for reverse mortgage scams. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

You can change your mind. Federal regulations allow borrowers to cancel a reverse mortgage within three business days of execution. Minnesota law also has a seven-day "cooling-off period" after a borrower's acceptance, in writing, of the lender's written commitment to make the mortgage. During this time, you cannot be required to close or proceed with the loan.

Check out your lender. Use the *License Lookup tool on the Minnesota Commerce Department* website to make sure the company or individual you are doing business with is licensed in the state as a mortgage originator.

POW/MIA Update 88 ▶ 1st Lt. Robert Eugene Oxford.

More than 70 years ago, a U.S. Army bomber plane dubbed "Hot as Hell" was headed for India on a supply mission. It never arrived, and no one went looking for the doomed aircraft or the eight men on board because military

officials had no way of pinpointing where it went down. All signs of the mission were lost until 2006, when a hiker in northeast India spotted a wing and panel sign inscribed with the bomber's name. It wasn't until 2015 that the U.S. Defense Department investigated the crash site and found the remains of 1st Lt. Robert Eugene Oxford.

The remains of the WWII veteran arrived at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport about 4 p.m. 8 JUN, said Terrell Moody of Moody-Daniel Funeral Home, which is handling burial arrangements in Oxford's tiny hometown of Concord, Georgia. Moody said the State Patrol, Patriot Guard and Pike County Sheriff's Office accompanied a hearse carrying Oxford's casket on the 50-mile (80-kilometer) journey from the airport to Concord, where the remains will be buried with full military honors alongside those of Oxford's parents this weekend. Photos of his seven fellow crewmen, none of whom was ever found, will lie beside the coffin and then be placed inside it for burial. "We were ecstatic that Eugene was found, but we feel guilty there are seven other men on that mountain top," said Merrill Roan, the wife of Oxford's nephew. "So we are honoring the other seven. ... We have to honor them as well, because they may never get any closure."

Oxford's plane departed Kuming, China, on Jan. 25, 1944, said Staff Sgt. Kristen Duus at the Defense Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Agency. Oxford was declared dead two years later. Oxford's family didn't know the wreckage had been found until 2007, when Merrill Roan saw a message on a genealogy website from a relative of another service member on the aircraft. That relative wanted help persuading military officials to investigate the crash site. Duus' agency confirmed the crash site correlated with the missing aircraft in 2008. But harmful weather coupled with access issues and security delayed recovery operation efforts until late 2015, Duus said. Officials say a DNA analysis of Oxford's remains matched his niece and nephew. Roan said the family was "shocked and excited" when they heard the news.

Duus said Oxford is one of 74 veterans who have been identified so far this year. She said all service members are returned to the U.S. for identification before their families are notified, and they are all given funerals with military honors. Eighty service members were identified in 2015, and that number more than doubled with 164 the following year, Duus said. The Missing in Action Agency website says there are more than 86,000 Americans still missing abroad from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Advancements in DNA testing technology and partnerships with other nations have helped find and identify more missing service members than ever, Duus said.

Oxford's parents, siblings and any other relatives who saw him leave for World War II have all died since he went missing, said Moody. Still, the long-overdue homecoming of his remains won't go unnoticed. A funeral was scheduled to be held 11 JUN in a school auditorium, the biggest venue in Concord, Moody said. "It's just a huge historical event for our little town," Moody said. "The phone constantly rings from people wanting information." Oxford will be buried in the same plot with his parents, Charles and Bessie Oxford, who had placed a memorial marker for their lost son at the gravesite after his plane went missing seven decades ago. [Source: The Associated Press | Jonathan Landrum Jr. | June 8, 2017++]



Exchange Online Shopping Update 10 ► Verification Site Not A Scam

Exchange officials have verified 18,011 honorably discharged veterans for online shopping privileges, including nearly 15,000 in the first four days of the new verification process, officials said 9 JUN. And no, the site that handles the verification, www.VetVerify.org, isn't a scam. A number of veterans have contacted Military Times and exchange officials with identity theft concerns, but "there is no need to worry about the security or authenticity of the site," said Chris Ward, spokesman for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, which administers the verification process. "VetVerify.org is a shared service for all the four military exchanges with the sole purpose of supporting the newly approved veterans online shopping benefit."

The verification process began 5 JUN allowing honorably discharged veterans to get their credentials in order before the online exchanges open to veteran shoppers 11 NOV. The new benefit is for online shopping only, and doesn't extend to exchange stores on installations. The exchange provided a breakdown of the verification process as of noon 9 JUN:

Of the 38,622 applications, 18,011 have been approved. Of those approvals, 3,200 came as part of a soft launch of the process, prior to Monday's announcement.

Of the applicants who likely are honorably discharged veterans, about 73 percent have completed the process successfully. The site relies on veteran records that exist in the Defense Manpower Data Center database; if a veteran's records are not there or aren't complete, the veteran will receive instructions on how to upload the information.

Nearly 14,000 applicants either weren't veterans or already were eligible to shop at exchanges.

All 3,200 veterans who were verified prior to Monday's launch received early access to the online exchanges, part of a beta testing program that will give some veterans the chance to shop prior to 11 NOV. Officials will add more beta shoppers as they continue to verify veterans for shopping privileges, Ward said. "We are allowing them to shop and provide us feedback on their online experience," Ward said. "Beta testing is critical to verify that the entire process from verification, to the ability to set up a profile, to the shopping experience, is a great one." Along with evaluating the technical support end of the veterans benefit, exchange officials will monitor shopping patterns so they'll stock the right mix of items on their online sites. At this point, among the veterans who have been shopping, officials have not seen any major differences in online shopping patterns compared with current shoppers, Ward said.

USS Independence (CV-62) ► Last Port of Call



The former CV-62 decommissioned USS Independence has arrived at its last port of call. The mothballed 61,000-ton Forrestal-class aircraft carrier passed through the jetties of the Brownsville Ship Channel on the afternoon of 1 JUN. A group of the ship's past crew members stood and watched as the ship was towed up the channel toward International Shipbreaking Ltd., the recycling company that won the contract to scrap the ship. The ship had left Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington, on 11 MAR and was towed around Cape Horn in South America to the Port of Brownsville. The USS Independence was launched from the Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1958, commissioned the following year and decommissioned in 1998. It was among several U.S. military ships to carry the name Independence. [Source: The Associated Press | June 1, 2017 ++]

"The deadliest weapon in the world is a Marine and his rifle." - Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing, U.S. Army Commander of American Forces in World War I

Department of Defense Extends Online Military Exchange Shopping Privileges to Veterans

Release No: NR-010-17

Jan. 13, 2017 | The Department of Defense announced a policy change that will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military.

The veterans online shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families. This policy change follows careful analysis, coordination and strong public support.

"We are excited to provide these benefits to honorably discharged veterans to recognize their service and welcome them home to their military family," said Peter Levine, performing the duties for the under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

"In addition, this initiative represents a low-risk, low-cost opportunity to help fund Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs in support of service members' and their families' quality of life. And it's just the right thing to do," Levine added.

The online benefit will also strengthen the exchanges' online businesses to better serve current patrons. Inclusion of honorably discharged veterans would conservatively double the exchanges' online presence, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments, and improved efficiencies, according to DoD officials.

"As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members. Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say, 'Thank you' to those who served with honor," Levine said.

All honorably discharged veterans interested in shopping online at the military exchanges can begin their verification process immediately, exchange officials said, and some may be able to shop prior to the program's full launch.

Some veterans who register at VetVerify.org will be invited to be beta testers, with the ability to shop online earlier than the planned Nov. 11 launch date. Officials said the sooner veterans register on the site, the better their chances of being chosen as a beta tester.

The exchange websites offer tax-free shopping, as well as discounted pricing. Actual online pricing can be seen only by those who are authorized to shop at the websites: shopmyexchange.com; shopcgx.com; mymcx.com; and mynavyexchange.com.

VetVerify.org uses information from the Defense Department's Defense Manpower Data Center to verify a veteran's status; veterans will receive notification of their acceptance as online shoppers or, if their records are incomplete, will receive guidance on the steps they can take to update those records.

Doing this process ahead of time will allow veterans to start shopping Nov. 11, or earlier if they are among the "beta testers" chosen to try out the system in advance of the launch.

This new benefit, which would increase the online shopping base by an estimated 13 million veterans, applies only to shopping online at the military exchanges, not at the physical buildings on military installations. Until now, online military exchange shopping was available only to active-duty, reserve and Guard members, retirees, 100 percent disabled veterans and their dependent family members, and certain others.

The exchanges currently provide more than \$300 million a year from their profits to support military quality of life programs. The veterans online shopping benefit is expected to increase that monetary support. In a Jan. 18 DoD memo, officials noted that AAFES will invest about \$1.8 million a year to cover costs associated with the expansion of the online platform. If 0.3 percent of the newly eligible veteran group, or about 45,000 veterans, shop online, that cost is expected to be recouped.

Mission to Honor Forgotten Vietnam Gold Star Families

May 16, 2017 | [Amanda Best](#)

In May 1972, combat helicopter pilot, Jim Crigler fulfilled a Vietnam battle field promise made to his mentor and brother in arms, Thomas Shaw. It was Shaw's wish that should he be killed in action, he wanted Crigler to bring him back home to his family in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

This was the first time Crigler met a Gold Star Family. He remembers the visit as if it was just yesterday. "It was the toughest mission of the war for me," said Crigler.

After the war, Crigler returned to civilian life, but out of the blue 40 years later the Shaw Gold Star Family reached out to him for a reunion and remembrance. He met with them, felt their still painful sorrow, and realized they were largely forgotten by their nation.

Since that time he has met with hundreds of Vietnam Gold Star Families. He was shocked to find, that due to the controversial nature of the war, the majority had never been rightfully honored for their sacrifice. The families were left to grieve alone.

"Their sons were drafted or joined the military, and then they would get a devastating telegram or knock on their door," he said. "Ten days later, they would get a coffin with a neatly folded American flag. They buried their sons and never talked about it again."

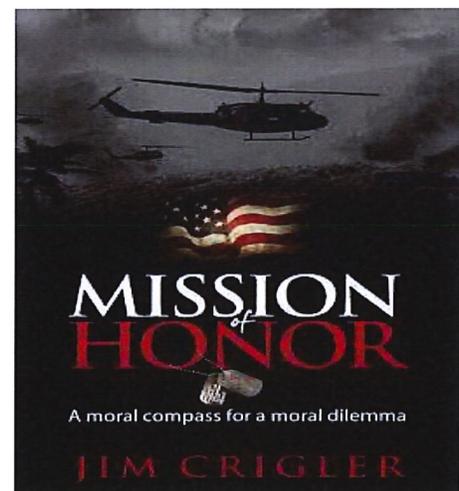
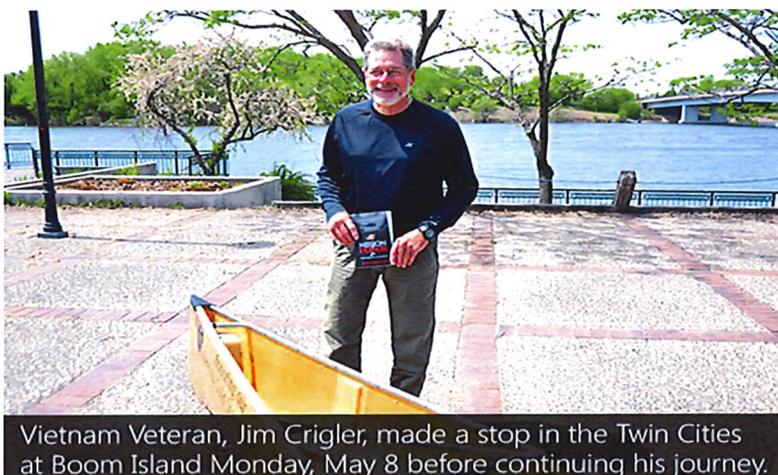
As a result, to honor those forgotten families, on April 22, the 67-year-old Winona resident embarked on a solo canoe trip to paddle the entire length of the Mississippi River - 2,300 miles from Lake Itasca to New Orleans. His goal is to increase awareness for the sacrifice of Vietnam era Gold Star Families and raise funds to build a museum to memorialize their service to our nation.

"I'm trying to start a movement of normal everyday American citizens to get out there and thank a Gold Star Family," said Crigler.

With 500 miles down, Crigler hopes to make it to New Orleans by the end of June.

Canoeing to raise awareness for Gold Star Families is just the start for Crigler. In addition, he is raising money for American Huey 369, a charitable organization that gives helicopter flights to Veterans and Gold Star Families. Crigler also wrote a book "Mission of Honor," an autobiography about his experience as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. He is donating proceeds of the book to Huey 369.

Learn more about Jim Crigler at missionofhonor.org.



Grand Forks Vet Center

3001 32nd Ave S, Suite 6A

(Right next to PetCo)



VIET NAM VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

IF YOU ARE A VIET NAM VETERAN or know a veteran who is, there is a support group starting on Thursday, June 22nd

from 3:00-4:30 p.m. This group will meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Call to sign up and/or ask questions. Hope to see you there!

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL

(701)620-1448 www.vetcenter.va.gov

MIDDLE RIVER VETERANS OUTDOORS

Is organized for the sole purpose of providing no cost outdoor recreation opportunities for any and all veterans

To include winter and summer fishing, hunting and other shooting sports, our signature event: "The Middle River Disabled Veterans Goose Hunt", Golf and some youth hunting and shooting sports



Is a legal 501 (c) (3) organization governed and operated by an eleven member board of directors.

All board members and volunteers serve without compensation of any kind.

We are supported by many local community organizations and Veterans Service organizations.



July 8th – 10th, 2017 at noon: Fishing on Devils Lake ND 18 spots available – 7 are filled

Sept 9th, 2017: Youth Waterfowl Hunt 10 spots available – 7 are filled

Oct 7th , 2017: Disabled Veterans Goose Hunt 20 spots available – 3 are filled

Jan 8th, 2018: Ice Fishing on Lake of The Woods 20 spots available – 0 are filled

To participate in one of our events all you need is the appropriate fishing or hunting license, seasonal outdoor clothing and the desire to have a great time in the company of other veterans.

We furnish food, ammunition, bait, blinds and other supplies. We also have guns and fishing gear for those that need them.



**FOOD, REFRESHMENT, FISH
STORIES & COMRADERIE
AFTER A FULL DAY ON
THE LAKE**

Your organization is the greatest,
The guides and volunteers put
their heart and soul into the
events and the comraderie is
amazing to see. *Detray Larson,*
Cmdr, American Legion Post 444

I participated in a Middle River Disabled Veterans Goose hunt, the food was great, the hunting was excellent, the guides and volunteers were friendly, engaging and worked very hard to make this a wonderful experience. The guides even cleaned the birds and packaged the meat for us. This is the best by far, for any veterans hunts I have been on. I want to thank this organization for the hard work they did putting on a great hunt for our veterans.

*Hank Sadler, MSgt. USAF (Ret) Nicollet
County CVSO (Ret)*

**There are many great
organizations for targeted
groups of Veterans,
*We are Different, we
invite and encourage any
and all Veterans to apply
for our no cost events.***

*To participate in one of our
events all you need is the
appropriate fishing or hunting
license, seasonal outdoor
clothing and the desire to have a
great time in the company of
other veterans*

*We furnish food, ammunition,
bait, blinds and other supplies.
We also have guns and fishing
gear for those that need them.*

**We have no paid employees
and 100% of donations go to
direct support of our mission.
Federal Tax ID 81-3710895**

**For information and
event schedules contact us
or visit our website**

Middle River Veterans Outdoors
PO Box 66
Middle River, MN 56737
Telephone: 218-686-9114
Email: mrvetsod@wiktel.com

Website:
MRVETERANSOUTDOORS.COM



13th Anniversary

MC Ride

for Homeless & Wounded Warriors

Motorcycle Ride & Rib Smoke Out

Saturday, August 26th

**Sponsored by Homeless & Wounded
Warriors - MN**

Registration 9:30am-11am
\$25 per Rider \$35 per Couple

Registration & Start at Aitkin Legion Post #86
20 1st Ave Ne Aitkin, MN

Finishes at Crosslake American Legion Post 500
35112 County Road 3 Crosslake, MN

Pre-Registration Available at:
www.homelessandwoundedwarriors-mn.org
All Individuals & Groups Welcome



Camping & Hotel
Accommodations
Available

Route Details Available:
Randy - (218) 820-9845
Steve - (320) 267-0376

TAX ID: 81-283-4281

*"Four Wheels Move
The Body,
Two Wheels Move
The Soul"*



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FOR YOU.**

