

POLK COUNTY WINTER

SEASON GREETINGS TO ALL!!!

I am writing this letter the day after the blizzard “AXL” of December 4th and I can say winter is here and most likely going to stay. With that said, if you are a Veteran and in need of assistance in filling your fuel tank. Please contact our office and we will help you out the best we can to keep you warm this winter.

For the year of 2017, the Polk County Veterans Office stayed busy all year with well over 1,000 document contacts assisting veterans with their benefits. We also have seen a high percentage of compensation claims being granted for 2017 and hope to see many more in 2018 as well. One of the changes for 2018 is the schedule for the EAST GRAND FORKS OFFICE. Currently the schedule is 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Beginning January, 2018, I will be in East Grand Forks every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Keep in mind that we are willing to work with veterans if their schedule doesn't allow them to see us during our scheduled office hours. If you are making a special trip to any of the offices you may want to call ahead to make sure we are open that day. With training, holidays and vacations it is possible the office maybe closed.

I want to finish my letter out by saying thank you all for your service and sacrifice for this country and I wish you all a happy holidays.

Marine survives being a POW in two different wars, returns



Charles L. Harrison was born outside Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921. Barely out of High School, Harrison enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1939. By August 1941 he was on his way to Wake Island, a vital staging area for the coming war in the Pacific.

Of the 449 Marines who manned Wake's defenses when Wake Island was bombarded by Japanese forces a few hours after the Dec. 7 attack on Pearl Harbor, 49 were killed, 32 were wounded, and the remainder, including 20 year old Charlie Harrison, became prisoners of war.

For 45 long months, during which he contracted malaria and other assorted maladies, Harrison suffered under the hands of the Japanese until he was rescued at the end of WWII with less than 110 pounds on his 5-foot 9½-inch frame.

With his courage and love of country intact, Harrison returned home to marry his childhood sweetheart and start a family. He and his growing family enjoyed a peaceful existence until the morning of June 25, 1950, when ninety thousand North Korean troops pushed across the 38th parallel, thus commencing the Korean War.

On Sept. 15, 1950, U.S. Marines under the direction of General Douglas MacArthur made a surprise amphibious landing at Inchon, on the west coast of Korea. Harrison was one of those Marines. On Nov. 29, at the Chosin Reservoir Campaign, after a battle in which Harrison was wounded and for which he later received a Purple Heart, he was captured by the Chinese communist forces and again found himself held as a prisoner of war – one of only two Marines in U.S. history to hold the dubious distinction of being held as a POW in two different wars.

Harrison remained in captivity until he, along with seventeen fellow POWs, managed to escape six months later.

Undaunted and undefeated, despite years of imprisonment and brutality, Harrison continued to serve our country in Vietnam until he was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps as a Lieutenant Colonel on June 30, 1969.

This highly decorated Veteran of three wars and his family chose to move to the foothills of Nevada County, California, after retirement, purchasing a two and a half acre parcel high on a hill in the small town of Peardale.

Harrison became great friends with the Grass Valley police chief, and became an auxiliary police volunteer. He and his wife were active in the Grass Valley Historical Society; he drove the Nevada County Bookmobile and provided all of the photographs for "First Wagons Over The Sierra," a book about the Immigrant Trail written by another Nevada County legend, Chuck Gradon.

This great American hero passed away with little fanfare on Jan. 17, 2015. Throughout his life he exhibited unflinching courage against insurmountable odds and never allowed bitterness or anger to determine the path of his future. How did he retain the hope and optimism that carried him through the remainder of his life?

Harrison described his own feelings on the train ride home after escaping his second imprisonment saying, "Why I had the Great Skipper up there guiding my course into those long years...and both times brought me safely back into home port? Diagnosing my own feelings, I knew that I was a better Marine, a better man, and by far a much better American than I would ever have been otherwise."

"No person who had ever known me well would expect to find me bitter and disillusioned from my double dose of hard luck. I thought of many others, however, who as casual observers would probably expect to see a very dejected and spiritually broken Marine arrive home this second time. If only they could know how to appreciate America as I do," Harrison recalled.



OVERVIEW

The Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program offers grants to certain Servicemembers and Veterans with severe service-connected disabilities to assist them in building, remodeling, or purchasing an adapted home.

WHAT IS A SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING (SAH) GRANT?

The SAH grant is designed to help disabled Veterans by providing a barrier-free living environment, such as a wheelchair accessible home, that affords Veterans a level of independent living they may not otherwise enjoy. Veterans and Servicemembers with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet their adaptive needs, up to the current maximum of \$ 77,307.

The SAH grant is available to certain Veterans and Servicemembers who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

Loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair, or

Blindness in both eyes, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, or

Loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with (1) residuals of organic disease or injury, or (2) the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity, affecting balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair or,

Loss or loss of use of both upper extremities at or above the elbows, or

A severe burn injury.

WHAT IS A SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION (SHA) GRANT?

The SHA grant can be used to increase the mobility of eligible Veteran and Servicemembers throughout their residences. Veterans and Servicemembers with specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to this type of grant, up to the current maximum of \$ 15,462.

The SHA grant is available to certain Veterans and Servicemembers who are entitled to disability compensation due to:

Blindness in both eyes with 20/200 visual acuity or less in the better eye with the use of a standard correcting lens or,

The anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow, or

A severe burn injury.

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WHAT IS A TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ASSISTANCE (TRA) GRANT?

A temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans and Servicemembers who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member. The maximum amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is \$ 33,937 and for the SHA grant is \$ 6,059.

WHAT IS A HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS (HISA) GRANT

Veterans and Servicemembers may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities. A Veteran may receive a HISA grant in conjunction with either a SAH or SHA grant. The HISA program is available for both Veterans with service-connected disabilities and Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities.

- Home improvement benefits up to \$6,800 may be provided to Veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- Home improvement benefits up to \$2,000 may be provided to Veterans with non-serviceconnected disabilities.

Learn more about [HISA grants](#).

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

You can apply by completing [VA Form 26-4555, Veterans Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant](#), and submitting it to your local VA Regional Loan Center. You may also apply online; please visit the Veteran's portal at www.ebenefits.va.gov to register and submit an application for Specially Adapted Housing benefits.

Learn more about [SAH grants](#).

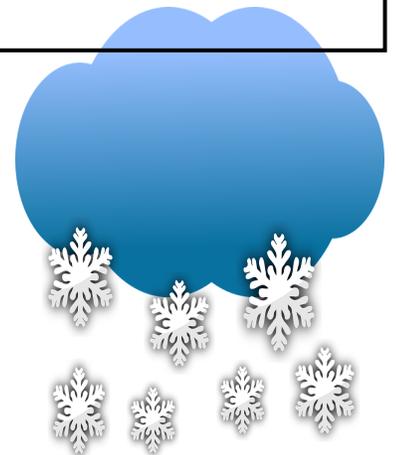
For more information, call toll-free 1-800-827-1000 or visit Our Web Site at [Home Loan Guaranty](#).

Military Pranks Are Scarier Than Bombs

The military has a long, proud tradition of pranking recruits. Here are some favorites from rallypoint.com:

- ◆ Instructed a private in the mess hall to look for left-handed spatulas
- ◆ Sent a recruit to medical-supplies office in search of fallopian tubes
- ◆ Had a new guy conduct a "boom test" on a howitzer by yelling "Boom!" down the tube in order to "calibrate" it.
- ◆ Ordered a private to bring back a five-gallon can of dehydrated water (in fact, the sergeant just wanted an empty water can)

When a soldier came to the clinic where I work for an MRI, he was put into the machine by an attractive, young technician. Sometime later, when the examination was over, he was helped out of the machine by a far older women. The soldier remarked, "How long was I in there for?"



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Kurtis Ellefson, Polk County Veterans Service Officer

kurt.ellefson@co.polk.mn.us

218-281-3066

Polk County provides new option for proper disposal of worn U.S. flags

New flag disposal box installed at the Polk County Government Center

WASHINGTON – In partnership with the National Association of Counties, the National Flag Foundation and the National Sheriffs Association, Polk County has installed a flag retirement box, at no cost to the county, at The Polk County Government Center on the 2nd floor by the main entrance. Flags should be folded respectfully before being placed in the box.

The United States Flag Code prescribes flag etiquette — everything from flying it near other flags to instructions on how to raise and lower it. “The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning,” says the code.

Polk County Veteran Services will be responsible for the proper disposal of the worn flags.

Said NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase, “We are pleased to be able to partner in the provision of these flag retirement boxes. Proper disposal of the U.S. flag goes hand in hand with the commitment we make to public service while simultaneously benefiting our residents.”

The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public’s understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. More information at: www.naco.org.



What is a Veteran Identification Card (VIC) and how do I get one?

The Veterans Identification Card Act 2015" (Public Law 114-31) was enacted on July 20, 2015. The purpose of the Veteran Identification Card (VIC) is to serve as proof of service in the Armed Forces which can be used to obtain discounts on goods and services offered to Veterans. The VIC does not qualify Veterans for additional benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and does not serve as proof for any benefits to which you may be entitled. Also, the VIC will not grant access to military post or installations.

VA will begin accepting applications for the VIC November 29, 2017. For those who wish to obtain a VIC, Veterans should log into Vets.gov to apply. If eligible, you will receive your ID card (at no cost to you) in the mail within 3 weeks. For more information please go to: <https://www.vets.gov/#> . **This is the only way to apply for the VIC, your medical center or regional office will not be able to assist you. Questions regarding the new VIC can be directed to the Vets.gov Help Desk 1-855-574-7286 TTY: 1-800-877-8339 Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. (ET)**

In the meanwhile, the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to provide a Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC) for veterans to use at VA medical facilities. The VHIC will be issued only to veterans who are eligible for VA medical benefits and only for the purpose of identification and check-in for VA medical appointments. The new card protects personal privacy by not showing Social Security Numbers or dates of birth on the front of the cards. For more information on VHIC, go to www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic/index.asp

VA has Service Connected, POW and Purple Heart (PH) indicators on the new VIC. Veterans who have been awarded service-connected status after their VIC has been issued or SC status is not properly documented on their card, will need to present their letter showing their SC rating to the eligibility clerk at the local VA Medical Center where they obtain treatment. After verification, the eligibility clerk will submit a request to National Card Management Directory (NCMD) System for a new card to be issued to the veteran.

Once a veteran has his/her picture taken for the new card at the VA medical facility, the card will be mailed to the veteran at the address that has been provided. To ensure that a veteran receives the new VIC card, the veteran should please verify that VA has the correct address on file. If the U.S. Postal Service cannot deliver the card, it will be returned to the facility at which the card was requested. The card will then be held in a secure location at the facility for 90 days. If the card is not picked up within the 90-day period, the card will be destroyed.

With regard to the use of veteran ID cards for store discounts, please note: The VA identification card, once available will allow Veterans to demonstrate proof of service for discounts at private restaurants and businesses.

It should be noted that the identification card is different from a [Veteran Health Identification card](#) or a [DoD Uniformed Services or retiree ID card](#). As such, the VA identification cards cannot be used as proof of eligibility to any federal benefits and does not grant access to military installations.





DISABILITY COMPENSATION

“PRESUMPTIVE” DISABILITY BENEFITS

WHAT IS “PRESUMPTIVE” SERVICE CONNECTION?

VA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service. VA does this because of the unique circumstances of their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in a Veteran in one of these groups, VA presumes that the circumstances of his/her service caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded.

WHAT CONDITIONS ARE “PRESUMED” TO BE CAUSED BY MILITARY SERVICE?

Veterans in the groups identified below: Entitlement to disability compensation may be presumed under the circumstances described and for the conditions listed.

Veterans within one year of release from active duty: Veterans diagnosed with chronic diseases (such as arthritis, diabetes, or hypertension) are encouraged to apply for disability compensation.

Veterans with continuous service of 90 days or more: Veterans diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)/Lou Gehrig's disease at any time after discharge or release from qualifying active service is sufficient to establish service connection for the disease, if the veteran had active, continuous service of 90 days or more.

Former Prisoners of War	Vietnam Veterans (Exposed to Agent Orange)	Atomic Veterans (Exposed to Ionizing Radiation)	Gulf War Veterans (Undiagnosed Illness)
<p>(1) Imprisoned for any length of time, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> psychosis any of the anxiety states dysthymic disorder 	<p><i>Served in the Republic of Vietnam between 1/9/62 and 5/7/75:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy* AL amyloidosis B-cell leukemias chloracne or other acneform disease similar to chloracne* chronic lymphocytic leukemia 	<p>Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a POW in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before 2/1/92 at a diffusion plant in Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or Oak</p>	<p>Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War with condition at least 10 percent disabling by 12/31/11. Included are medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom</p>

(Continued on Page 8)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organic residuals of frostbite • post-traumatic osteoarthritis • heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease and their complications • stroke and its residuals <p>(2) Imprisoned for at least 30 days, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avitaminosis • beriberi • chronic dysentery • helminthiasis • malnutrition (including optic atrophy) • pellagra • any other nutritional deficiency • irritable bowel syndrome • peptic ulcer disease • peripheral neuropathy • cirrhosis of the liver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diabetes type 2 • Hodgkin's disease • ischemic heart disease • multiple myeloma • non-Hodgkin's lymphoma • Parkinson's disease • porphyria cutanea tarda* • prostate cancer • respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea) • soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma) <p>*Must become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service.</p>	<p>Ridge, TN; or service before 1/1/74 at Amchitka Island, AK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all forms of leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia) • cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (kidneys, renal pelves, ureters, urinary bladder and urethra), brain, bone, lung, colon, ovary • bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma • multiple myeloma • lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease) <p>primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated)</p>	<p>illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic fatigue syndrome • fibromyalgia • irritable bowel syndrome • any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines warrants a presumption of service connection <p>Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include: fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory symptoms, sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, weight loss, menstrual disorders</p>
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Holocaust survivor: I'm giving \$1 million to help wounded American veterans, to express my thanks



At 83 years old, I am one of the few remaining Holocaust survivors – thanks to the American troops who rescued me in what seems like a lifetime ago.

Since World War II, I've felt a deep connection to American troops for saving my life – a feeling that resurfaces every year on Veterans Day and throughout the holiday giving season.

And so this year I'm saying "thank you" to the American soldiers of the 1940s by donating \$1 million to organizations serving wounded American veterans today.

My donation to the Wounded Warrior Project and the Services for Armed Forces program of the American Red Cross is my way of giving back, thanking previous generations of warriors for helping me. I hope this inspires others to give back as well.

Even though more than 70 years have passed since my rescue, it's not too late to give back. That's a lesson I hope the next generation recognizes, because it's all too easy to let procrastination give way to inaction. But action is what brings hope to those who need it.

I have met many American people who I am lucky enough to call my friends. First, Americans saved us. Then decades later, they welcomed us.

As a child, I spent most of World War II hiding from Nazi invaders in my native France, where my parents moved after fleeing the pogroms in Poland. Unfortunately, with the German invasion in 1940, we were again at risk. On July 16, 1942, the French police led a big roundup of Jews in Paris. More than 13,000 Jews were detained before being deported to Nazi death camps.

The police came to our apartment at 6 a.m. My parents managed to take me to my aunt's home. She was married to a French soldier and was protected.

A few hours later, my mother was arrested as she and my brother were trying to get information about my father, who was hiding in a nearby grocery store. A concierge had pointed them out to the police. They ran, but my mother was not fast enough. She was detained and sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. She perished there – probably within three weeks.

I was 7, and for the next two years I lived on borrowed time, shielded by other families on the outskirts of Paris. The same was true for my future wife, who was also a child in hiding. If the war had continued much longer, we would not have survived.

I vividly remember the arrival of the hundreds of thousands of American troops who landed in Normandy to liberate us in June 1944. They were our saviors, doling out packets of sweets to half-starved, war-weary children who had almost given up hope for freedom.

The gratitude I feel to these men is beyond words. They freed our country and they saved our lives. Without American troops, my family and I simply would not have existed. I think of that every time I look at our family photos.

Since the end of the war, life has been good to me. I've had a successful career as co-owner of one of Europe's largest home appliance retailers, working alongside my brothers. I've also enjoyed raising my family, celebrating extended family gatherings of 20 people.

My wife and I have a deep sense of gratitude for America. So in the early 1990s, freshly retired, we bought a home in South Florida. I travel with my wife each winter from our home in Paris to the warmth of Miami Beach. We still appreciate our second home there, where we now spend almost a third of our time.

I have met many American people who I am lucky enough to call my friends. First, Americans saved us. Then decades later, they welcomed us.

But as I watched news stories this fall of hurricanes, flooding and wildfires striking America, inflicting suffering among civilians and veterans alike, I realized that I still had an important task left to complete in my life. I had not yet given back to the American soldiers who saved my life nearly three-quarters of a century ago.

That is why I want to help modern American veterans today. They pursue the tradition of the young men who landed on the shores of Normandy in June 1944 and who I will never forget. In giving this donation, I want to thank Americans with all my heart for coming to rescue us in our hour of need.

But I also want to make a public stand in support of America. I hope that my donation can trigger a movement and lead others to take action. My story shows it's never too late to give back, especially for a cause that's close to your heart. If it wasn't too late for this octogenarian, it's not too late for you.

Bernard Darty is a Paris native and retired co-founder of Darty Group, an electrical retailer operating more than 340 stores in three European countries.

Merry Christmas



Minnesota Veteran Suicide Data Sheet



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conducted the Nation's most comprehensive analysis of Veteran suicide rates in the United States. The resulting report, released in 2016, examined more than 55 million records from 1979 to 2014 in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Data from the report have allowed us to examine Veteran suicide rates in each state and region.

This Minnesota Veteran Suicide Data Sheet is based on a collaborative effort among VA, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The statistics herein are derived from multiple data sources, including the VA Office of Enterprise Integration, the VA Serious Mental Illness Treatment Resource and Evaluation Center, VA Post-Deployment Health Services, the VA Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention, and the Defense Suicide Prevention Office. Cause of death was identified through the NCHS National Death Index (NDI).

For additional information, please email Dr. Megan McCarthy, Deputy Director, Suicide Prevention, VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, at megan.mccarthy@va.gov.

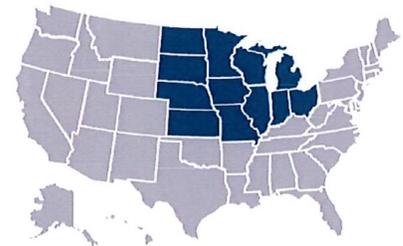
Minnesota Veteran Suicide Deaths, 2014

Sex	Veteran Suicides
Total	113
Male	100–110
Female	<10

Because of Minnesota's relatively smaller Veteran population for select populations, suicide deaths are presented in ranges rather than precise counts, where applicable, in order to protect individual information.

Midwestern Region

Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nebraska
North Dakota
Ohio
South Dakota
Wisconsin



Minnesota, Midwestern Region^a, and National Veteran Suicide Deaths^{b,c}, by Age Group, 2014

Age Group	Minnesota Veteran Suicides	Midwestern Region Veteran Suicides	National Veteran Suicides	Minnesota Veteran Suicide Rate	Midwestern Region Veteran Suicide Rate	National Veteran Suicide Rate
Total	113	1,516	7,388	35.0	36.4	38.4
18–34	16	250	1,171	66.0*	79.2	70.4
35–54	33	493	2,193	53.1	52.3	47.7
55–74	45	517	2,594	30.2	27.4	30.4
75+	19	256	1,430	21.8*	25.2	32.0

* Denotes that this rate was calculated with fewer than 20 in the numerator and the rate should be considered unreliable.

After accounting for differences in age, the Veteran suicide rate in Minnesota was not significantly different from the national Veteran suicide rate ($p=0.9890$)^d.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Mental Health and
Suicide Prevention

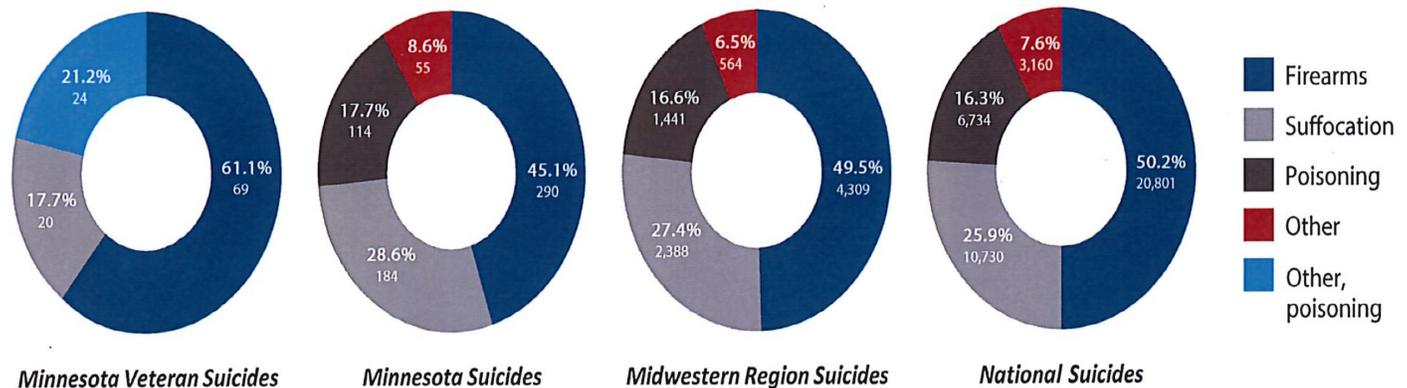
Minnesota Veteran and Overall Minnesota, Midwestern Region^a, and National Suicide Deaths^{b,c,e}, by Age Group, 2014

Age Group	Minnesota Veteran Suicides	Minnesota Total Suicides	Midwestern Region Total Suicides	National Total Suicides	Minnesota Veteran Suicide Rate	Minnesota Suicide Rate	Midwestern Region Suicide Rate	National Suicide Rate
Total	113	643	8,702	41,425	35.0	15.4	16.7	17.0
18–34	16	181	2,411	10,732	66.0*	14.5	15.6	14.5
35–54	33	241	3,304	15,473	53.1	16.9	18.8	18.4
55–74	45	185	2,299	11,637	30.2	16.2	15.8	17.5
75+	19	36	688	3,583	21.8*	10.4	15.5	18.1

* Denotes that this rate was calculated with fewer than 20 in the numerator and the rate should be considered unreliable.

After accounting for differences in age, the Veteran suicide rate in Minnesota was significantly higher than the overall national suicide rate ($p < .0001$)^d.

Minnesota Veteran and Overall Minnesota, Midwestern Region, and National Suicide Deaths by Method^f, 2014



Statistics contained herein are derived from the U.S. adult population 18 years of age or older. Suicide rates displayed are standard unadjusted mortality rates per 100,000 people. These rates are based on the number of suicide deaths within the 2014 calendar year divided by the population estimates multiplied by 100,000. The national statistics displayed include the contiguous United States, plus Alaska and Hawaii. The overall state, regional, and national rates presented include both Veterans and non-Veterans. Significance testing and rankings are derived from the direct age-adjusted rates, using the 2000 standard U.S. population^g. Because suicide rates based on less than 20 suicide deaths are considered unreliable, any comparisons of age-adjusted rates with underlying age-specific rates with less than 20 suicide deaths should be interpreted with caution.

A customary "rule of twenty" was applied to all rates based on a number of suicides that was less than 20. These rates are marked with an asterisk (*) as unreliable because rates calculated on a small number of deaths are considered unstable, and a small change in the number of suicides can result in a large change in the rate.

The method of suicide death is based on the cause of death listed on the state death certificate using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10), and for which the underlying cause of death is defined as (a) the disease or injury which initiated the train of events leading directly to death, or (b) the circumstances of the accident or violence which produced the fatal injury (World Health Organization, Manual of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries, and Cause of Death, based on the recommendations of the Ninth Revision Conference, 1975; Geneva, 1977). For purposes of this data sheet, the ICD-10 codes used to define suicide deaths are X60–X84 and Y87.0.

^a Midwestern region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

^b Rates presented are crude rates per 100,000. Death counts and rates are suppressed when based on 0–9 people. Rates calculated with a numerator of less than 20 are considered unreliable, as indicated by an asterisk (*).

^c Veteran and overall population estimates used for rate calculations are obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Specific population estimates used in rate calculations are available upon request.

^d Suicide rates presented here are unadjusted for age and are influenced by the underlying age distribution of the state or region. Age-adjusting suicide rates ensures that differences in rates are not due to differences in the age distributions of the populations being compared. In some cases, the results of comparisons of age-adjusted rates differ from those of unadjusted rates.

^e National, regional, and Minnesota state total suicide counts are obtained from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WONDER online database. For more information on CDC WONDER, please refer to <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>.

^f Methods are defined based on ICD-10 codes X72 to X74 for firearm, X60 to X69 for poisoning (including intentional overdose), and X70 for suffocation (including strangulation). "Other" includes cut/pierce, drowning, fall, fire/flame, other land transport, struck by/against, and other specified or unspecified injury.

^g Klein, RJ, and Schoenborn, CA. Age adjustment using the 2000 projected U.S. population. Healthy People Statistical Notes, no. 20. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. January 2001.

Vietnam Vet: What Veterans Day Means to Me

By Jack Lyon



Veterans Day is the day to recognize the men and women who stepped forward to serve our country and a cause greater than themselves. Like an arrow leaving the bow, their lives move forward on a path of service for their country and community. It's a path that keeps going even after the wearing of one type of uniform ends and another begins.

How that manifested in my life is through co-founding the residential program called [Veterans Village of San Diego \(VVSD\)](#) as a way to process and move forward from my time as a Marine in Vietnam. It was, and remains, another way to serve. One lesson

learned as a Veteran is that you understand, come from and embody a culture of "us" rather than "me." You learn how to be a team player and accomplish the mission as a team--the power of synergy. That's a lesson that I feel all people in this country need to understand: we are all in this together.

During the War, I was wounded getting out of a helicopter during a bad situation in Vietnam. At that moment, moving in the open meant you most likely would be killed. Despite that, a young marine risked his life to come out and pull me to safety. That's extraordinary; in that moment where a fellow human being is willing to lay down his or her life to save another, humanity transcends war. I think to one degree or another, Veterans have had a taste of that, certainly if they've been in combat. Once you get a glimpse of that selfless love, it stays with you for the rest of your life. It is a gift.

Marine Veteran Jack Lyon is awarded the Purple Heart Medal during the Vietnam War. What me and my other co-founders did when we started VVSD was to help ourselves and the other guys who were struggling. Wherever these Veterans in San Diego were, we pulled

them in one by one, just like in the rice paddies and jungle. In 2004, after I retired from the business, I began to run combat stress groups at the Naval Medical Center San Diego, which I'm still a part of today. The arrow of service continues its flight. The idea is not about me. It's about realizing that we're all in it together as a society. If you can help someone out, you help yourself. Any way that I can help get Veterans back in the game of life is better on us all because we need Veterans. We need men and women in the workforce who are loyal, committed, accountable, selfless and can adapt and overcome. Veterans bring all that during and after the military and so it is appropriate that we have this day to remember their contributions with profound gratitude.



PHILIPPINE SCOUT, ARMY VETERAN SHARES STORY OF HIS ESCAPE FROM THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH



Amado Ante enlisted with the Philippine Scouts in February 1941 at the age of 22. Just five months later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a military order calling all organized military forces in the Commonwealth of the Philippines into active service of the United States Armed Forces. Ante responded to the call and was assigned to the 12th Quartermaster Regiment, Company B.

Just hours after the Pearl Harbor attacks, Japanese forces invaded the Philippines. Ante would deploy to Bataan in support of the fight against Japan. After months of fighting, Ante's unit had to retreat to the Bataan Peninsula. Ante's regiment was surrounded with nowhere to escape.



To save lives, the commanding general surrendered the troops. Ante, along with approximately 75,000 Filipino and American Soldiers, was rounded up by the Japanese and forced to march some 65 miles from Mariveles, on the southern end of the Bataan Peninsula, to San Fernando.

The men were divided into groups of approximately 100, and what became known as the Bataan Death March typically took each group around five to seven days to complete. The marchers made the trek in intense heat and were subjected to harsh treatment by Japanese guards.

Ante had hidden a little sugar under his belt to sustain his survival. On the fifth day of the march, Ante was stricken with malaria. His feet were badly swollen, and he could no longer walk. When the Japanese guards were on relief duty, his fellow soldiers urged him to escape immediately or risk death. Ante's comrades pushed him into a ditch where he crawled into the bushes and laid low until dark. Later that night he was found by local civilians, who provided him with food, shelter and medical care. He stayed with them for three months until he was fully healthy.

Ante reenlisted and joined the guerilla movement until General Douglas MacArthur's forces liberated the Philippines in 1945. Ante received various military medals including the Bronze Star. At the age of 99 on Nov. 10, 2017 Ante was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award in the United States.

Ante receives care through the [San Francisco VA Health Care System's](#) home-based primary care program (HBPC). The program provides comprehensive care for Veterans with complex medical, social and behavioral conditions.

Ante and his family have been complimentary of the care and services. "The HBPC program has been beneficial for my father; I'm certain it's added years to his already long life," said Ante's son Steve.

For the staff, it's an honor and privilege to care Ante and other Veterans.

"My work is very meaningful to me," said nurse practitioner Cindy Cosby. "I am providing personalized primary care, with the goal of supporting our most fragile Veterans in their homes. I am so proud of my multidisciplinary team who work very hard on behalf of our Veterans."

VA Mental Health Resources

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Make the Connection

Make the Connection is an online resource designed to connect Veterans, their family members and friends, and other supporters with information and solutions to issues affecting their lives. On the website, visitors can watch hundreds of Veterans share their stories of strength and recovery, read about a variety of life events and mental health topics, and locate nearby resources.

www.MakeTheConnection.net

   @VeteransMTC



Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, and text-messaging service. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

www.VeteransCrisisLine.net



Coaching into Care

Coaching into Care is a national telephone service of the VA that aims to educate, support, and empower family members and friends who are seeking care or services for a Veteran. Our goal is to help Veterans and their family members, and other loved ones find the appropriate services at their local VA facility and/or in their community. Coaching is provided by licensed psychologists or social workers, free of charge.

www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching

 @CoachingIntoCare

 @CoachingIn2Care



Veteran Training

The Veteran Training online self-help portal provides tools for overcoming everyday challenges. The Portal has tools to help Veterans work on problem-solving skills, manage anger, develop parenting skills, and more. All tools are free, their use is entirely anonymous, and they are based on mental health practices that have proven successful with Veterans and their families.

www.veterantraining.va.gov



AboutFace

AboutFace features the real stories of Veterans who have experienced PTSD, their family members, and VA clinicians. By watching the videos on AboutFace, you can learn about PTSD, explore treatment options, and get advice from others who have been there.

www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/AboutFace



Community Provider Toolkit

The Community Provider Toolkit supports the behavioral health and wellness of Veterans receiving services outside the VA health care system. Community providers play an essential role in providing America's Veterans with the support they have earned. Resources available in the toolkit include information on screening for military service, handouts and trainings to increase understanding of military culture, and mini-clinics focused on relevant aspects of behavioral health and wellness.

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders

