

*Polk County Veterans Service Office
Spring-2017 Newsletter*

Greetings, from your Polk County Veterans Service Office. I hope everyone has had a pleasant winter. I know that I am ready for spring (bring on the Fishing).

April will start my fifth month as the Polk County Veterans Service officer and I can honestly say I have enjoyed every minute of it. There is no job more rewarding than a job that assist Veterans and their families. In today's fast world it seems that Veterans benefits change daily and can become very confusing. Therefore I encourage Veterans and families to never hesitate to contact us with questions on Veterans Benefits.

On page two I have included the Presumptive list for Veterans exposed to Agent Orange. If you are a Veteran that was exposed to Agent Orange and have any of these conditions below. Please contact your County Veteran Service Officer as soon as possible. You may be entitled to benefits.

Thank you for your service!!

Kurtis R. Ellefson CVSO

Laurie Anderson Asst.

AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVES

AL Amyloidosis

A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs

Chronic B-cell Leukemia's

A type of cancer which affects white blood cells

Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)

A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

Diabetes Mellitus Type 2

A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin

Hodgkin's Disease

A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia

Ischemic Heart Disease

A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, that leads to chest pain

Multiple Myeloma

A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow

Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue

Parkinson's Disease

A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement

Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset

A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.

Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

Prostate Cancer

Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men

Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)

Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus

Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues



VETERANS SPOTLIGHT by Laurie Anderson



This newsletter is spotlighting a couple who met while in the service. Paula and Mike Lundgren.

Paula, is originally from West Bend, WI, which explains all the Packer Fan memorabilia in her midst and I saw no purple.

Paula went on to tell her story of how she decided to join the military.

My father was career Navy and we had moved to San Francisco, Long Beach, California, and then to Indiana and that is where I went to college for one year and found that college was not for me. So I needed to work and you had to have a job to have a car and one needed a car to have a job. I was in a small town and not from there originally. So transplants usually received the left over jobs that no one else wanted. I didn't know what I wanted to do or where life was going to lead me. I had a boyfriend at the time that had been in the Army and had not come to see me in a while, so I was mad at him and went down to the recruiting office and joined the Air Force. I went down to have my physical

and was thinking about the Navy after I saw some of they're recruits in line, but my recruiter assured me that all Air Force recruitments were not on the scrawny side.

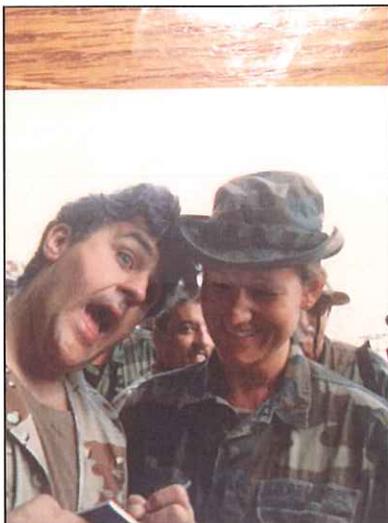
So basic training took me to San Antonio, TX on December 15, 1976. I was thinking it would be nice and warm there-it wasn't. I tested out for Air Traffic Control Radar Maintenance . This area had just opened up to women and I was sent to Biloxi, MS for Tec School. I was totally lost with all of the electronics!! I was then assigned to Kessler, AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi in the Electronics Instillation Squadron to install new radar equipment and pull out the old equipment. I went to Shemya, Alaska on the Aleutian Islands. I remember that the runway was the whole length of the Island and if you missed it you were in water. (The United States Air Force airborne intelligence platforms "[Cobra Ball](#)", "Rivet Amber," and "Rivet Ball" flew [intercontinental ballistic missile](#) tracking flights from this island near the [Soviet Union](#), especially the [Kamchatka Peninsula](#), during the height of the [Cold War](#). The station still operates as a radar station and aircraft refueling station with a staff of about 180 people. The [2000 census](#) reported an official resident population of 27 persons on the island.

One of the most recognizable features of the island is the [COBRA DANE](#) radar system. This radar was built in 1976 and brought on-line in 1977 for the primary mission of intelligence gathering in support of verification of the [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks](#) (SALT) II agreement. Taken from Wikipedia)

I was in Biloxi for 3 years and then shipped off to Wiesbaden, Germany for 2 years. I enjoyed Germany with all it had to offer and I did the tourist things and tried skiing once and that did not go too well. I ended up falling more than skiing with being in the mountains and on those long steep slopes.

I then was in Altus, Oklahoma and only had 6 months left in the service. I got out of the service and then drove up to Tacoma, Washington where my dad lived. I had a friend that was at McChord AFB and saw a sign that said reenlistment career advisor. I talked to him and had 90 days to reenlist and was able to keep my rank.





Jay Leno and myself

I then re-entered at Vandenberg, CA in the Strategic Air Command in January, 1983 and I was stationed there for 3 years.

In October, 1986, I was sent to Incirlik, Turkey. I didn't know at the time how this assignment would change my life. I really liked it there, the people were so friendly and laid back. I joined a Bible group and was involved in the Chapel, which led to making many friends.

My brother who was also in the Air Force was stationed in Great Britain. He was getting married to a Brit and I was planning on attending the wedding. I asked my friend Mike if he would baby sit my house while I was gone to the wedding. I also had air-conditioning, therefore he and his friends could hang out at my house while I was gone, being they did not have air-conditioning.

In September, 1987, I had Mike over for dinner to thank him for watching the house and he came to the door with flowers. I remember making roast beef and potatoes and we now kid it was a man catchers meal because 3 weeks later Mike proposed to me on October 17, 1987. On November 27th we were married by the mayor of Adana. In Turkey the people from the building where we were married all become witness's and we knew this ahead of time as you had to pay the witness's 200 Turkish lira which amounts to 25 cents American. So we were passing money out to all of them. On December 5th we were married at the chapel as we wanted a church wedding and our friends could attend.

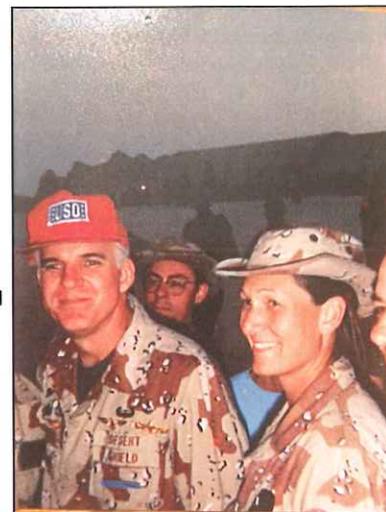
July, 1988, Mike and I were sent to George AFB in Victorville, CA. At this point I was in 10 years and Mike opted to get out after 4 years. We didn't want to take a chance that we would be separated and being I was in longer than he, we choose this route.

I was then sent to Disaster Preparedness (compared to FEMA). August 20, 1990 I was deployed to the Gulf and told I would be there from 30 to 60 days. January of 1991, Mike received a Western Union Telegram stating he was reactivated. He was home with the kids and I was gone and now with him leaving he had to take the children to my brother in California. Mike stayed State side for 50 days. He returned home 1 day before I did after my 7 month deployment.

In 1994, I received my next assignment to Spangdahlem, Germany for 3 years. I was able to take the family with me to Spangdahlem. We knew that we would be going to the Grand Forks, ND AFB and on Memorial Day I received a telephone call from a realtor in Grand Forks. How did they know how to contact us???

July 1994 we arrived in GF, ND and had no plans on staying here but not sure where we would retire to as we had family all over the US. I retired in 1996 and we thought about moving to WI, CO, TX, CA, WA or maybe CO it would be in the middle and my son Aaron said "I'm not moving, I want to stay here". I then decided to enroll at the Northland Community and Technical College in East Grand Forks with a 2 year degree in Occupational Therapy. I interned at the Fargo VA and worked with the Fargo VA social workers and decided to go into social work. I used my vocational rehab and it paid my way to have a masters in social work.

I am currently employed at the Grand Forks VA Clinic. I began working there in April, 2012 and was awarded my 25 years of government service pin in Dec 2016.



Steve Martin and myself

(continued on page 5)

I am currently employed at the Grand Forks VA Clinic. I began working there in April, 2012 and was awarded my 25 years of government service pin in Dec 2016.

This last September, 2016, I went to Camp Bliss a weekend retreat for female veterans. I would recommend this to all as it was very relaxing, great speakers and a time to reflect. There was free time and the meals were great, they were comfort meals that you would have at home. My favorite session was the “Tibetan Singing Bowls” that was so relaxing it could put you to sleep.



Michael Lundgren hails from Seattle, Washington. He joined the USAF in September, 1985.

When I asked Mike why he joined the service? He said, “I loved history and joined the military to get out of Washington and to see the world.” I went to basic training at Lackland AFB and was instructed in Medical Logistics.

I was assigned to go straight to Incirlik, Turkey. When I got off the plane it was so hot and humid it was like whoosh in my face.

I went to the Chapel singles group and there is where I met Paula and you know the rest of the story.

When I got out of the service in 1989, I worked odd jobs. I tried to go to school as I wanted to be a nurse and then had to drop out because Paula was deployed to the Gulf. I then was reactivated so it didn't work out in our situation.

I now work for Altru Health Care in the maintenance department.

We have 3 children, Ashley , Aaron and David. Ashely has our 2 grandchildren, Bryce and Avyn.



Our office receive many questions regarding Emergency Care-When you call the VA , make sure you or your family **writes down the name of the person who gave you the OK for Emergency Care , the date and time.**

Emergency Care for Veterans

This document explains what the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can do for you if you ever need emergency care. When it is not possible for you to go to a VA Medical Center (VAMC), you should go to the nearest hospital that has an emergency room (ER). If you are in an ambulance, the paramedics will usually take you to the closest emergency room.

What is an emergency?

A medical emergency is an injury or illness so severe that without immediate treatment, it threatens your life or health.

How do I know my situation is an emergency?

Your situation is an emergency if you believe your life or health is in danger.

If I believe my life or health is in danger, do I need to call the VA before I call for an ambulance or go to an emergency room?

NO. *Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.*

When Should I contact the VA regarding an emergency room visit?

You, your family, friends or hospital staff should contact the nearest VA medical center as soon as possible, preferably within 72 hours of your emergency, so you are better aware of what services VA may or may not cover. Provide VA with information about your emergency and what services are being provided to you. Ask VA for guidance on what emergency charges may or may not be covered so you can plan accordingly.

If the doctor then wants to admit me to the hospital, must I obtain advance approval from the VA?

- ◆ *If the admission is an emergency-NO, although prompt notification of the VA is necessary*
- ◆ *If the admission is not an emergency-Yes*

If a VA bed is available and I can be safely transferred, do I have to move to the VA hospital?

YES. *If you want VA to continue to pay for your care. If you refuse to be transferred, VA will not pay for any further care.*

If I am admitted to the hospital as a result of an emergency, how much will VA pay?

This depends on your VA eligibility. VA may pay all, some or none of the charges. Some highlights are listed For service-connected conditions, here are some of the criteria that must be met:

1. Care or services were provided in a medical emergency, and
2. VA or another federal facility were not feasibly available , and
3. VA was notified within 72 hours of the admission
4. Ask your local VA Medical Center's Non-VA (Fee) Care Office for further eligibility guidance.

For non-service-connected conditions, here are some of the criteria that must be met:

- * *Veteran is enrolled in the VA Health Care System and*
- * *Veteran has received health care services from VA within the previous 24 months and*
- * *Veteran has no other health insurance coverage.*
- * *Ask your local VA Medical Center's Non-VA (Fee) Care Office for further eligibility guidance.*

How do I know if I have a service-connected condition?

A service-connected condition refers to an illness or injury that was incurred in or aggravated by military service and has a rating assigned by the Veterans Benefits Administration.

How long do I have to file a claim for reimbursement for emergency medical care?

File your claim with the nearest VA Medical Center quickly because time limits usually apply. For non-service-connected care, the time limit is 90 days. Again consult your local VA Medical Center for more information.

Will VA pay for emergency care received outside the United States?

VA will only pay for emergency care outside the U.S. if your emergency is related to a service-connected condition. For more information about care provided outside the U.S., contact the Foreign Medical Program (FMP) at (877) 345-8179, or go to the FMP website at: <http://www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/fmp>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE November 9, 2016

VA Releases Major Report on Progress of “MyVA” Transformation Process Multi-year Effort Showing Measurable Improvements in Homelessness, Health Care, Claims

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs released a major update on the MyVA transformation, Secretary McDonald’s effort to transform VA into the top customer service agency in the federal government. This third edition of the program’s semi-annual report shows progress serving veterans with more services, in better time.

“Guided by Veterans’ needs, we’ve left old, unresponsive ways of doing business behind,” writes Secretary Robert McDonald. “We’ve changed leadership. We’ve added staff. We’ve adjusted policies. We’re eliminating bureaucracy and unproductive work. We’re encouraging innovative approaches to serving Veterans, and we’re sharing best practices across the Department. In short, we’re making VA the high-performing organization that it can be, and that my fellow Veterans, expect and deserve.”

Key results in the report include:

Veteran trust of VA is on the rise. In June 2016, nearly 60% of veterans said they trust VA to fulfill our country’s commitment to Veterans – from 47% in December 2015.

We are completing more appointments, faster. In FY 2016, VA completed nearly 58 million appointments – 1.2 million more than in FY 2015 and 3.2 million more than FY 2014. More of them are provided by a network of more than 350,000 community providers – a 45% increase in the number of providers since last year.

Processing of disability claims is faster and more accurate, too. The average wait time to complete a claim has dropped by 65%, to 123 days. We completed nearly 1.3 million claims in FY 2016, and reduced pending claims by almost 90%.

Urgent care is available when a Veteran needs it, and for non-urgent appointments, wait times are down. By September 2016, the average wait time for a completed appointment was down to less than 5 days for primary care, less than 7 days for specialty care, and less than 3 days for mental health care. Veteran homelessness has been cut in half; it’s down 47% since 2010 nationwide, thanks in part to VA’s work with nearly 4,000 public and private agencies.

In the last 18 months, VA has facilitated dozens more collaborations, bringing in more than \$300 million in investments and in-kind services to support America’s veterans.

Quality is improving. 82% of VA facilities improved quality overall since the fourth quarter of FY 2015.

The report details the changes and innovations, large and small, which produced these results. It also lays out a path forward for the agency – including an important role for Congress before the end of 2016.

Read the full report online here @ <http://www.va.gov/myva/docs/MyVA-3-0-v9-digital-11816>

A GAME WARDEN found a man standing at the edge of a lake, fishing pole in hand. “Sir, You can’t fish here,” he said. “I’m not fishing,” the man replied. I’m teaching my worm to swim.”

A WOMAN caught her husband on the weight scale, Sucking in his stomach. “That won’t help,” she commented. “Oh, it helps a lot,” he replied. “It’s the only way I can see the numbers.”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 13, 2017

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

VA to provide disability benefits for related diseases

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

The rule will be effective either 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, or following conclusion of the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.

Purchase & Cash-Out Refinance Home Loans

With a *Purchase Loan*, VA can help you purchase a home at a competitive interest rate and if you have found it difficult to find other financing.

VA's *Cash-Out Refinance Loan* is for homeowners who want to take cash out of your home equity to take care of concerns like paying off debt, funding school or making home improvements. The Cash-Out Refinance Loan can also be used to refinance a non-VA loan into a VA loan. VA will guaranty loans up to 100% of the value of your home.

About the VA Home Loan Guaranty

Most VA Home Loans are handled entirely by private lenders and VA rarely gets involved in the loan approval process. VA "stands behind" the loan by guaranteeing a portion of it. If something goes wrong and you can't make the payments anymore, the lending institution can come to us to cover any losses they might incur. The VA loan guaranty is the "insurance" that we provide the lender.

VA Home Loan Advantages

The guarantee VA provides to lenders allows them to provide you with more favorable terms, including:

- ◆ No down payment as long as the sales price doesn't exceed the appraised value
- ◆ No private mortgage insurance premium requirement
- ◆ VA rules limit the amount you can be charged for closing costs
- ◆ Closing costs *may* be paid by the seller
- ◆ The lender can't charge you a penalty fee if you pay the loan off early
- ◆ VA may be able to provide you some assistance if you run into difficulty making payments
- ◆ You don't have to be a first-time homebuyer
- ◆ You can reuse the benefit
- ◆ VA-backed loans are assumable as long as the person assuming the loan qualifies

Find A Lender

Locate a lending institution that participates in the VA program. You may want to get "pre-qualified" at this point-that is, find out how big a loan you can afford. Lenders set their own interest rates, discount points and closing points so you may want to shop around.

Find A Home and Sign a Purchase Agreement. Make sure the purchase and sales agreement contains a "VA Option Clause."

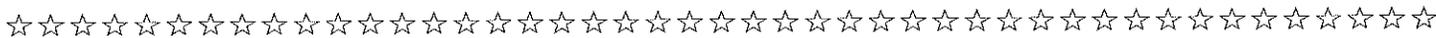
Here's a sample of a "VA Option Clause."

"It is expressly agreed that, notwithstanding any other provisions of this contract, the purchaser shall not incur any penalty by forfeiture of earnest money or otherwise be obligated to complete the purchase of the property described here in, if the contract purchase price or cost exceeds the reasonable value of the property established by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The purchaser shall, however, have the privilege and option of proceeding with the consummation of this contract without regard to the amount of the reasonable value established by the Department of Veterans Affairs."

You may also want the purchase agreement to allow you to "escape" from the contract without penalty if you can't get a VA loan.

The lender orders a VA appraisal and begins to "process" all the credit and income information.

(Note: VA's appraisal is not a home inspection or a guaranty of value. It's just an estimate of the market value on the date of the inspection. Although the appraiser does look for obviously needed repairs, VA doesn't guarantee the condition of the house. The appraiser, who is licensed, is not a VA employee. The lender can't request a specific appraiser; assignments are made on a rotating basis.) **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)**



☆ **VA home loans can be used to:**

- ☆ * Buy a home, a condominium unit in a VA-approved project
- ☆ * Build a home
- ☆ * Simultaneously purchase and improve a home
- ☆ * Improve a home by installing energy-related features or making energy efficient improvements
- ☆ * Buy a manufactured home and/or lot

☆ **SPOUSES**

☆ The spouse of a Veteran can also apply for home loan eligibility under one of the following conditions:

- ☆ • Unremarried spouse of a Veteran who died while in service or from a service connected disability, or
- ☆ • Spouse of a Servicemember missing in action or a prisoner of war
- ☆ • Surviving spouse who remarries on or after attaining age 57 and on or after December 16, 2003 (Note: a surviving spouse who remarried before December 16, 2003 and on or after attaining age 56, must have applied no later than December 15, 2004, to establish home loan eligibility. VA must deny applications from surviving spouses who remarried before December 6, 2003 that are received after December 15, 2004.)
- ☆ • Surviving Spouses of certain totally disabled veterans whose disability may not have been the cause of death

☆ **HOUSING GRANTS FOR DISABLED VETERANS**

☆ VA provides grants to Servicemembers and Veterans with certain permanent and total service-connected disabilities to help purchase or construct an adapted home or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability. Two grant programs exist: the Specially Adapted Housing grant and the Special Housing Adaptation grant.

☆ **Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant**

☆ SAH grants help Veterans with certain service-connected disabilities live independently in a barrier-free environment. SAH grants can be used in one of the following ways:

- ☆ ♦ Construct a specially adapted home on land to be acquired
- ☆ ♦ Build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing
- ☆ ♦ Remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing
- ☆ ♦ Apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant
- ☆ ♦ View and share VA's SHA infographic to help spread the word

☆ **Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) Grant**

☆ SHA grants help Veterans with certain service-connected disabilities adapt or purchase a home to accommodate the disability. You can use SHA grants in one of the following ways:

- ☆ ♦ Adapt an existing home the Veteran or a family member already owns in which the Veteran live
- ☆ ♦ Adapt a home the Veteran or family member intends to purchase in which the Veteran will live
- ☆ ♦ Help a Veteran purchase a home already adapted in which the Veteran will live

☆ To apply for a grant, fill out and submit VA form 26-4555, Application in Acquiring specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant. You can access this form by:

- ☆ 1. Applying online via www.benefits.va.gov
- ☆ 2. Downloading VA Form 26-4555 and mailing it to your nearest Regional Loan Center

☆ Calling VA toll free at **1-800-827-1000** to have a form mailed to you



Get 15 or more correct to pass!!

Quiz Average: 19.86 correct

How well do you know our great country?

1. Who is considered to be the "Father of Our Country"?
 - a. George Washington
 - b. Alexander Hamilton
 - c. Thomas Jefferson
 - d. James Madison
 - e. Christopher Columbus
2. Who Wrote the Declaration of Independence:
 - a. George Washington
 - b. Alexander Hamilton
 - c. Thomas Jefferson
 - d. James Madison
 - e. Christopher Columbus
3. What is the supreme law of the land?
 - a. The Executive Branch
 - b. The Constitution
 - c. The Honor System
 - d. The Bill of Rights
 - e. The Magna Carta
4. The Notion of self-government is present in the first three words of the Constitution. What are the three words?
 - a. United we stand...
 - b. Give me your...
 - c. We the people...
 - d. Congress shall make...
 - e. You have the...
5. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called...
 - a. Article One
 - b. The Bill of Rights
 - c. The Declaration of Independence
 - d. The Federalist Papers
 - e. The Preamble
6. How many amendments does the Constitution have in total?
 - a. 1
 - b. 10
 - c. 27
 - d. 50
 - e. 142
7. What is one right or freedom NOT provided by the first Amendment?
 - a. Speech
 - b. Religion
 - c. Assembly
 - d. Pursuit of happiness
 - e. Petition the government
8. How many U.S. senators are there and how long is a senator's term?
 - a. 50 senators; 2 years
 - b. 50 senators; 6 years
 - c. 100 senators; 2 years
 - d. 100 senators; 6 years

9. Why do some states have more representatives than other states?
 - a. States with more people have more representatives
 - b. States with more land have more representatives
 - c. Each state has the same number of representatives
 - d. Each state's number of representatives is random

10. What other position does the commander in chief of the military hold?
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President
 - c. Speaker of the House
 - d. Secretary of State
 - e. Secretary of Defense

11. If both the president and the vice president can no longer serve, who becomes president?
 - a. Attorney General
 - b. House Majority Leader
 - c. Speaker of the House
 - d. Secretary of State
 - e. Secretary of Defense

12. Which of the following is not a branch of government?
 - a. Executive
 - b. Legislative
 - c. Financial
 - d. Judicial
 - e. None of the above

13. What stops any one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
 - a. Executive Orders
 - b. The United Nations
 - c. The National Security Agency
 - d. A system of checks and balances
 - e. Journalists and the national media

14. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government and some powers belong to the states. Which is not a power of the federal government?
 - a. Print Money
 - b. Provide driver's licenses
 - c. Declare War
 - d. Create an Army
 - e. Make treaties

15. Who was president during World War 1?
 - a. Woodrow Wilson
 - b. Lyndon B. Johnson
 - c. Richard Nixon
 - d. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - e. George H.W. Bush

16. Who did the United States fight in World War II?
 - a. Germany
 - b. Japan
 - c. Italy
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the Above

17. How old must a citizen be to vote for president?
 - a. 16
 - b. 17
 - c. 18
 - d. 21
 - e. 25

18. What is the economic system in the United States?
 - a. Socialist
 - b. Communist
 - c. Capitalist
 - d. Mercantilist
 - e. Laissez-faire

19. Which state does not border Mexico?
 - a. California
 - b. Arizona
 - c. Nevada
 - d. New Mexico
 - e. Texas

20. Which of the following is **NOT** an American Indian tribe in the United States?
 - a. Cherokee
 - b. Sioux
 - c. Seminole
 - d. Apache
 - e. Sabine

21. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax returns?
 - a. January 1
 - b. April 15
 - c. May 20
 - d. July 4
 - e. December 31

22. What is the political party of the current president?
 - a. Republican
 - b. Democrat

23. What is the capital of the United States?
 - a. Philadelphia, PA
 - b. Annapolis, MD
 - c. New York, NY
 - d. Washington, DC
 - e. Juneau, AK

24. What do the stripes on the American flag represent?
 - a. The number of signatures on the Declaration of Independence
 - b. The number of signatures on the Constitution
 - c. The original 10 colonies
 - d. The original 13 colonies
 - e. Nothing

25. Which of the following is not a federal holiday?
 - a. Memorial Day
 - b. Election Day
 - c. Independence Day
 - d. Labor Day
 - e. Veterans Day



Fargo VA Health Care System
News Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 4, 2016

Fargo VA begins new Veterans Choice Program initiative to help Choice-eligible Veterans better coordinate their medical care in their communities

FARGO, N.D. – Beginning Oct. 4, Veterans enrolled in the Fargo VA Health Care System who are eligible for the Choice program will now be able to work directly with VA staff located in Fargo to help schedule and coordinate community medical care appointments.

Entitled the Choice Program Care Coordination initiative, Veterans can contact the Fargo VA Health Care System Clinical Resource Management Department at 866-517-9363 to facilitate their healthcare needs in their respective communities.

The initiative is a direct response from Veterans reporting concerns that calling an out-of-state Veterans Choice Program third-party administrator for scheduling of community medical care resulted in coordination challenges attributed to the administrator's lack of understanding of North Dakota and Minnesota geography and other issues unique to the area. Under the initiative, the VA is re-establishing direct connections with Veterans.

Because of an understanding of the local geography and relationships with community providers, Fargo VA staff will help Veterans schedule and coordinate community care appointments. Veterans Choice Program third-party administrator staff will continue to provide administrative and provider support.

"The VA is working every day to improve the community care experience," said Dr. Baligh Yehia, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Community Care. "Innovative solutions like this one, developed in direct response to Veterans' and community providers' concerns, are key to the development of our consolidated community care program. We cannot lose sight that healthcare is local and we will need flexibility to meet the needs of each community across North Dakota, Minnesota, and the nation."

The Fargo VA's Choice Program Care Coordination initiative is one of only a few of its kind in the nation. The current process and laws make community care cumbersome. The Care Coordination initiative is just one way VA is working to improve the community care experience for Veterans. VA is also actively working with all its partners, especially Congress, to simplify community care eligibility criteria, streamline clinical and business processes, and standardize provider payment. The VA is committed to providing a Community Care program that is easier to understand, simple to administer, and improves the community care experience for Veterans, providers and VA Staff.

"I am very pleased to see the focus placed on local Veteran and provider needs," said Lavonne Liversage, Fargo VA Health Care System Director. "Having Fargo VA staff work directly with Veterans and our community healthcare providers will allow for better communication of care needs and improved Veteran experience; this initiative will benefit those who have given so much."

For more information or questions relating to the Care Coordination initiative, please contact the Fargo VA Health Care System Clinical Resource Management Department at 866-517-9363.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2017

VA statement about Office of Inspector General review of implementation of the Veterans Choice Program

VA appreciates the Office of Inspector General (OIG) review of VA's implementation of the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). The OIG report reviewed the VCP from its inception, over two years ago, in November of 2014 through September of 2015. Overall, the Department concurs with the findings in the report. However, VCP is no longer the program it was when it rolled out. The Department has made significant improvements since the inception of the program. VA did not wait for the OIG report to publish before taking critical steps towards improving the program, including working with Congress to amend the law four times to increase Veterans access and satisfaction with VCP, including increasing the provider base, increasing the number of scheduled appointments, and implementing numerous process changes for both VA and our contract partners.

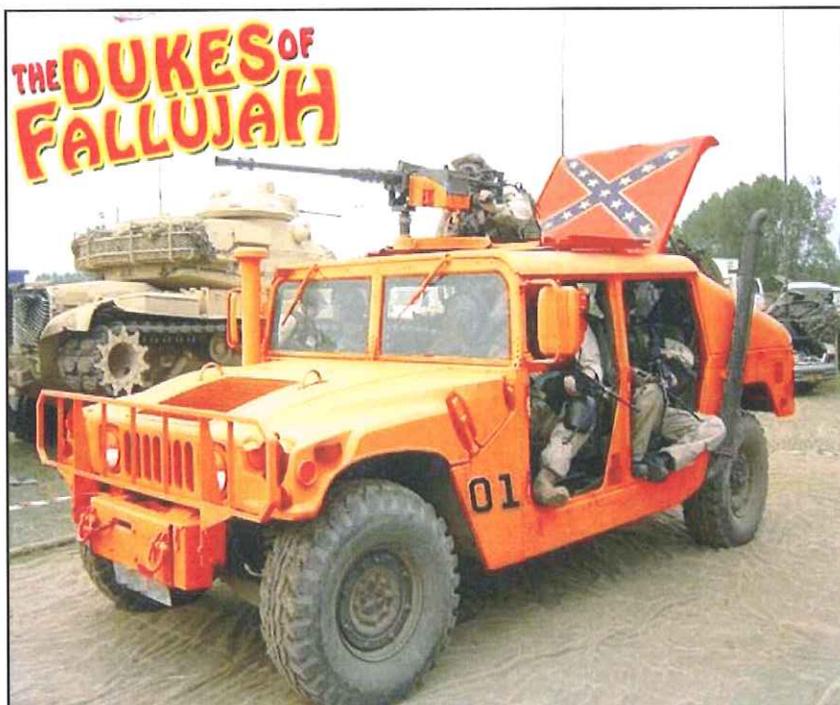
VA is moving in the right direction, towards an integrated healthcare network that improves Veterans' healthcare experience by delivering the best of VA and the community. From fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2016, total community care authorizations increased by 25%. Over the same period, the VCP network of providers grew 67% to over 360,000 providers and facilities contracted. We are committed to deliver a program that meets the needs of Veterans and community providers while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Even with the improvements, we recognize more work needs to be done. VA will continue working with Congress and all of our stakeholders and partners to deliver a community care program that meets the needs of Veterans and their families.

VCP continues to expand timely access to care for Veterans. Over 6 million VCP appointments have been completed since VCP's inception. VA can't make all the necessary changes to the VCP alone. We need Congress to act on our proposed Plan to Consolidate Community Care so we can continue to build on the progress we have made.

Answers to "How well do you know our great country?" (Page 12-14)

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. a | 14. b |
| 2. c | 15. a |
| 3. b | 16. d |
| 4. c | 17. c |
| 5. b | 18. c |
| 6. c | 19. c |
| 7. d | 20. e |
| 8. d | 21. b |
| 9. a | 22. a |
| 10. a | 23. d |
| 11. c | 24. d |
| 12. c | 25. b |
| 13. d | |



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2017

VA and GAO Agree: Appeals Reform Needed

Current legal process detrimental to Veterans

WASHINGTON — In response to a report released by the Government Accountability Office's (GAO), "VA Disability Benefits: Additional Planning Would Enhance Efforts to Improve the Timeliness of Appeals Decisions," the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the following statement:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) appreciates the work of the Government Accountability Office (GAO). This report confirms that the current law and process for adjudicating appeals is not consistent with the commitment we have made to our nation's Veterans.

"Veterans are waiting far too long for decisions in our current appeals process," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin. "We have made bold changes to remove the bureaucratic red tape that has caused Veterans to wait an average of three years before they get a decision."

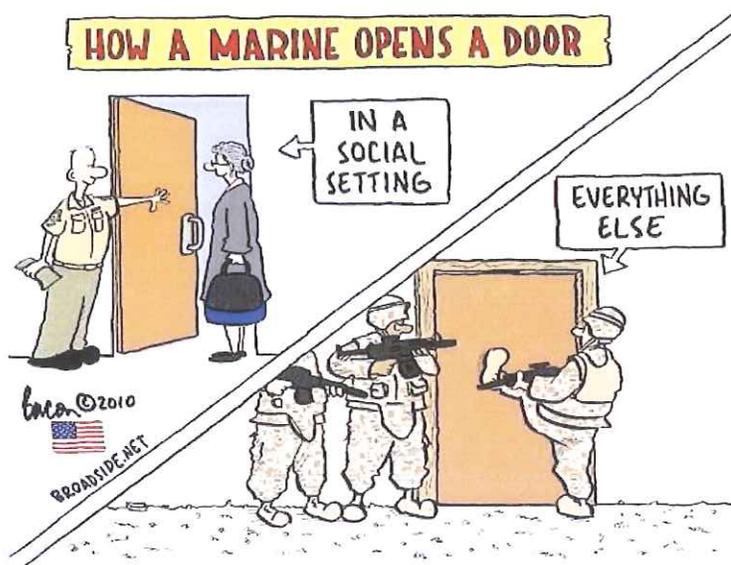
VA has developed sound and aggressive plans regarding hiring, training and mitigation strategies that are already being aggressively implemented. In addition, VA recognizes the importance of effective management practices for the development of information systems to help integrate and streamline the appeals process. Our new Caseflow system will help us anticipate new information requirements, allowing us to quickly address challenges and provide our employees the support they need.

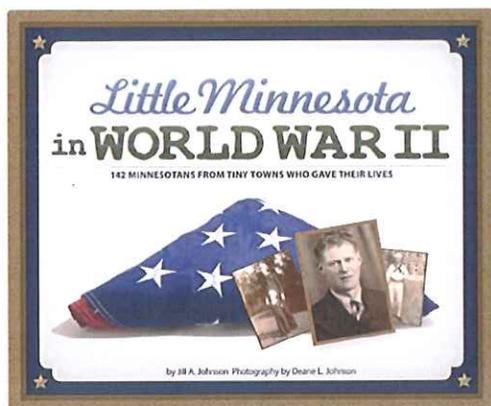
There is broad consensus that the current VA appeals system is broken and in urgent need of reform. Our proposal for a new appeals process was designed in conjunction with Veterans Service Organizations and other key stakeholders. VA strongly disagrees with GAO about the need for any type of piloting, which would only unnecessarily delay the implementation of the bold changes Veterans expect us to make.

"We have a number of reports and studies, including this one from GAO, which have helped us clearly identify the problems in the current system," said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Tom Murphy.

VA is working to make as many changes to the system allowed by current law.

"We need our partners in Congress to act swiftly, so we can implement the changes we all agree need to be made," Secretary Shulkin said. "I am personally committed to work with Congress over the coming months to get this done."





Jill and Deane Johnson sent our office an excerpt from their writings including the names of those from Polk County who sacrificed their lives for our country. Little Minnesota in World War II will be released in September, 2017.

Preview of Little Minnesota in World War II

In 2007, we began researching our first book, Little Minnesota: 100 Towns Around 100, and were astounded at the number of men who died in World War II from our state's tiniest towns. One hundred sixty-three men died in WWII from Little Minnesota in a heroic effort to break the tyranny of Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Emperor Hirohito. Several women from Little Minnesota served in the military but none died in war.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, thousands of young men and women answered President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's call to service. Little Minnesotans, the sons and daughters of farmers, loggers, shopkeepers, pastors and teachers, joined the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, National Guard and Merchant Marine. Two men joined the Royal Canadian Air Force after they were denied admittance to the United States Air Force due to their height. Little Minnesotans were pilots, crewmembers on bombers, paratroopers, glidermen, sailors, medics, infantrymen, mariners and truck drivers. Most had never traveled outside their small towns and now fought in unknown places: Kasserine Pass, Monte Cassino, Utah Beach, Omaha Beach and Sainte-Mere Eglise; the Hurtgen Forest and the Ardennes; and on the other side of the world, Bataan, Guadalcanal, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, Tarawa and Okinawa. One man died on the Alaskan island of Attu, the only World War II battle fought on American soil. Four men were awarded the Bronze Medal, nine men were awarded the Silver Star and two men received the Distinguished Service Cross. All received the award no one wanted – the Purple Heart.

Little Minnesota in World War II tells the stories of 141 men who died in the war that changed the world forever. **Five of the men are from Polk County:** Captain Oscar Hanson and Pfc. Archie Olson who have roots in Trail, Pfc. Sigwald Anderson from Beltrami, and Tech.5 Palmer Ringstad and Pvt. Henry Kroll who grew up in Gully. Another 22 men who died in accidents or illness stateside are also listed in the book.

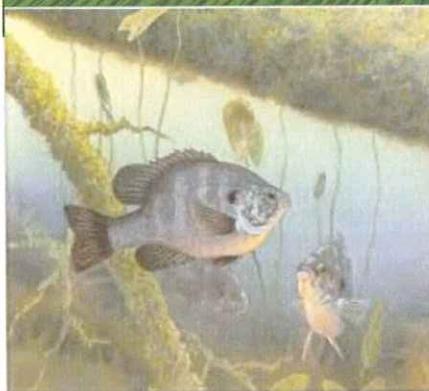
The families of the men made Little Minnesota in World War II possible. They researched family history, dug through old trunks in attics, and reconnected with relatives and family historians. Along the way, they rediscovered a treasured family member who gave his life over seventy years ago in a war that changed the world. Their stories and photos are heartbreakingly beautiful, and our thanks is unending.

Little Minnesota in World War II will be available at area bookstores, and currently is on Amazon for pre-order with a release date in September 2017.

Our deepest gratitude and thanks to the men who died in World War II from Little Minnesota. This book is yours and yours only.

Jill and Deane Johnson
Park Rapids, Minnesota

FISHING FOR ALL



JUNE 2-4, 2017

Summer is the season to pull out the boats and dust off the fishing rods in preparation for fishing! Our goal is to open up the great outdoors for people with disabilities through the world of fishing! We welcome anyone with any type of disability. We want you to join us at Camp Bliss for a weekend of fishing. We want everyone to enjoy just being outside, the excitement of catching a fish, and being able to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. So, come join us for fun packed weekend and enjoy the beauty of 48 acres of incredible pine and hardwood forest in a breathtaking north woods setting on three beautiful lakes!

Cost: \$75.00 for the weekend. If you bring your own PCA, there is an additional charge of \$35.00. Includes; lodging, fishing and supplies, all meals and beverages.

You must have a fishing license. What to bring: Appropriate clothing, medications, snacks and anything else you will need for the weekend. Transportation is available from St. Cloud for an additional \$15.00.

This Fishing Trip will be held at the LODGE

****We need to receive your registration five (5) days prior to Retreat date****

To register: Fill out the registration on the back and return it with your payment to Camp Bliss



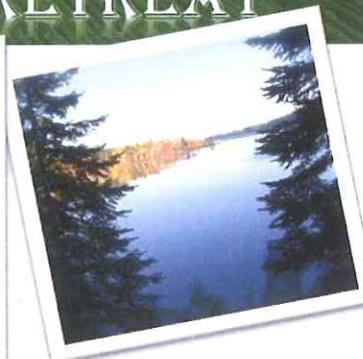
For more information about Camp Bliss
please go to our website:
www.campbliss.org
Camp Bliss
6150 Camp Fish Road, Walker, MN 56484



COME UP NORTH AND FIND YOUR BLISS!

See Page 19 for more dates at Camp Bliss and how to find applications
for the retreats

FEMALE VETERANS WELLNESS & PAMPERING RETREAT



APRIL 28-30, 2017

*We appreciate the women who have served our country! Join us to relax, reflect, rejuvenate and connect with other female Veterans. Get the special treatment you deserve. Enjoy the beauty of the north woods, learn new ways to unwind and cope with stress and how to enhance your self-care! You will check in Friday between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Meals are included. Cost is \$50.00 for the weekend. *Massages are offered for an additional \$30.00 per ½ hour and must be booked in advance.*

PAMPER yourself

This Retreat will be held at the BLISS HOUSE

****We need to receive your registration five (5) days prior to Retreat date****

To register: Fill out the registration on the back and return it with your payment to Camp Bliss



For more information about Camp Bliss
please go to our website:
www.campbliss.org
Camp Bliss is located at: 6150 Camp
Fish Road, Walker, MN 56484
218.547.4004 - office@campbliss.org



COME UP NORTH AND FIND YOUR BLISS!

Camp Bliss offers a variety of retreats that will leave you blissful. Check out the list of retreats for the 2017 season below to find the perfect getaway for you!

See Page 2 of each flyer for registration instructions.

[2017 Camp Bliss Retreat Brochure](#)

Veterans Retreats

[Veterans with PTSD, Depression or Disability & Spouses Retreat – January 20-22, 2017](#)

[Veterans w PTSD, Depression or Disability and Spouses Retreat – February 17-19, 2017](#)

[Female Veterans Retreat – March 23-26, 2017](#)

[Female Veterans Retreat – April 12-14, 2017](#)

[Female Veterans Retreat – April 28-30, 2017](#)

[Female Veterans Retreat – May 19-21, 2017](#)

[Vietnam Veterans Retreat – June 22-25 2017](#)

[Female Veterans Retreat – October 13-15, 2017](#)

Retreats for people with disabilities

[Ice Fishing Retreat for People with Disabilities – January 27-29, 2017](#)

[Fishing for All – June 2-4, 2017](#)

[Celebration of Abilities at Camp Bliss – October 7, 2017](#)

[Wellness & Socialization for Women w/ Disabilities – Oct 6-8, 2017](#)

[Wellness & Socialization for Men with Disabilities Retreat – November 17-19, 2017](#)

Retreats for Caregivers

[Caregiver's Retreat – February 24-26, 2017](#)

[Caregiver's Retreat for People with Disabilities – February 24-26, 2017](#)

[Caregiver's Retreat – March 10-12, 2017](#)

[Caregiver's Retreat for People with Disabilities- March 10-12, 2017](#)

Special Getaways

[Crafting & Scrapbooking for Women – January 13-14, 2017](#)

[Couples Weekend Getaway – February 10-12, 2017](#)

[Wellness & Yoga Retreat for Women – March 10-12, 2017](#)

[Mother/Daughter Getaway \(Ages 9-13\) – April 7-9, 2017](#)

[Womens Pampering Weekend – April 21-23, 2017](#)

[Crafting and Creativity for Women – September 22-24, 2017](#)

[Mother/Daughter Getaway \(18+\) – October 20-22, 2017](#)

[Oh Deer! Girls Gone Wild! – November 3-5, 2017](#)

[Escape the Holiday Frazzle Fundraiser – December 5, 2017](#)



MINNESOTA MILITARY MUSEUM
 CAMP RIPLEY, 15000 HIGHWAY 115
 LITTLE FALLS MN 56345
 320-616-6050
www.mnmilitarymuseum.org

January 23, 2017

NEWS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For additional information contact:

Executive Director, Jeff Thielen

jthielen@mnmilitarymuseum.org

CAMP RIPLEY, MN – County Honor Rolls of WWI veterans are now available online after a joint project between the Minnesota Military Museum, St. Cloud State University, and the Minnesota Digital Library.

A joint project between the Minnesota Military Museum at Camp Ripley and the St. Cloud State University archives has made 35 Minnesota County Honor Rolls available to the public through the Minnesota Digital Library.

“The best way to describe these books is to picture a high school year book, but instead of smiling high school seniors, the photos and stories are of the men and women in uniform” stated Ryan Welle Minnesota Military Museum archivist. “It is unclear how many counties in Minnesota published these books on their WWI Veterans, but we had 35 of them and wanted to share them with all Minnesotans,” continued Welle.

Scanning of the books was coordinated with St. Cloud State University Archivist Tom Steman and Metadata was entered by the staff of the military museum.

“This project is a great resource for anyone doing research on relatives involved in WWI and very appropriate with our currently featured exhibit on the 100th anniversary of WWI, “In the Fight, Minnesota and the First World War”, concluded Welle.

For all the resources available from the Minnesota Digital Library, go to <http://reflections.mndigital.org/> Search the Military Historical Society of Minnesota for all of their submissions.

The Minnesota Military Museum winter hours are Thursdays and Fridays from 0900 – 4:00 and by appointment for groups.

The Minnesota Military Museum is an outreach effort of the Military Historical Society of Minnesota, a non-profit 501 c 3 educational organization dependent on donations from members and supporters to preserve and protect Minnesota’s rich military history.

Significant days and observances for the United States Armed Forces

APRIL

April 14, 2017-Air Force Reserve Birthday

April 16, 2017- Easter Sunday

April 23, 2017 Army Reserve Birthday

MAY

National Military Appreciation Month

A month which recognize and show appreciation to the Armed Forces of the United States of America

May 1, 2017-Loyalty Day

A day set aside for American citizens to reaffirm their loyalty to the United States and to recognize the heritage of American freedom

May 4, 2017-National Day of Prayer

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May, inviting people o all faiths to pray for the nation.

May 8, 2017-VE (Victor in Europe) Day (Celebrated May 7 in commonwealth countries.

A day which marks the anniversary of the Allies' victory in Europe duing WWII

May 14, 2017-Mother's Day

May 20, 2017-Armed Forces Day

May 29, 2017-Memorial Day (Decoration Day)

JUNE

June 6, 2017- Anniversary of the World War II Allied Invasion in Normandy, France, know as D-Day (1944)

June 14, 2017-Army Birthday

- Flag Day

June 18, 2017-Father's Day

June 23, 2017-Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday

June 25, 2017- Anniversary of the start of the Korean War (1950)

June 27, 2017- National PTSD Awareness Day



Recruitment Event & Port of Entry Tour

Presented By:

Customs and Border Protection - Office of Field Operations



Who: Anyone interested in a career in federal law enforcement

What: Presentation by Officers, Port of Entry Tour, K-9 Demonstration, Vehicle Search Scenario, Walk through of day to day operations

Where: Pembina, ND Port of Entry – 10980 I-29 North

When: Saturday April 29th, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m.

Why: Learn about our Agency & Career Opportunities - Now Hiring!!

**** Anyone who wishes to attend must RSVP (with full name and date of birth) by April 18th ****

RSVP to: Supervisor Matthew J. Gruenberg at: matthew.j.gruenberg@cbp.dhs.gov

