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Waukesha County Veterans Services

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FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL BENEFITS UPDATE

NEWS UPDATE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS



New Regulations for “Friendly Fire” Impacts Purple Heart Medal



The following information is from: The Wisconsin Military Order of the Purple Heart “The Purple Heartier” - September/October 2011 Vol 64 No. 5

The U.S. Dept of Defense has changed its regulations to make military personnel hit by friendly fire (fratricide) eligible for Purple Heart medals (which until now were explicitly for those injured by enemy fire).

The new regulations exclude injury or death caused by illegal actions (accidental or intentional self-inflicted wounds or murder). The new rules also recognize that, since World War II, American forces have usually brought most of the firepower to the battle. With all those American bombs and bullets flying around, it’s inevitable that some U.S. troops get hit. But, in part, because of the old Purple Heart regulations, troops and officers avoided accurately identifying friendly fire wounds. Research into the matter in the last few decades has revealed the truth.

At the same time, U.S. Army friendly fire losses have reached historic lows. Since September 11, 2001, about one percent of combat deaths were from friendly fire. This is about half the official rate during World War II. The rate during that war was actually much higher because, until recently, friendly fire was much more of a problem than the official statistics showed. Warfare has reached the point where it’s very difficult for there to be unrecorded

friendly fire incidents, where in the past, it was much easier to hide friendly fire incidents.

During World War II, following interviews with veterans, it was found that some 20 percent of all U.S. casualties were probably from friendly fire. That was more than ten times the official friendly fire rate. The combat veterans were particularly reluctant to talk about instances where rifle fire or grenades were the cause of friendly fire losses. This was quite common, and confirmed by checking with battlefield surgeons (who could tell a U.S. bullet from an enemy one.)

The percentage apparently stayed the same in Korea, but may have gone up a bit during the Vietnam War (where the official friendly fire rate was 2.85 percent.) The most common place for friendly fire casualties to occur, and not be reported as such, is during infantry combat. In fire fights, or battle in urban areas, gun fire and grenades were going every which way and it was often hard to determine who was hit by whom. The only witnesses to this sort of the thing were reluctant to report it. For one thing, everyone knew that any of them could be the one to shoot one of their friends in the chaos of combat. Having your

(Continued on page 3 - Purple Heart)



COMMENTARY CORNER

By: Tom Ludka, Veterans Service Officer

VETERAN'S DAY

With Veteran's Day just around the corner, many people are surprised that there is no one definition of a veteran for benefit purposes. When benefit programs are established, they are usually created for certain groups of veterans. Consequently, when you served and sometimes where you served defines your veteran status for benefits.

If you served from 1971-1975, you might be eligible for a VA pension. However, if you served 1977-1981 you are not considered eligible for a VA pension. The difference being one veteran served during the Vietnam War and one served during a peacetime. Those who served during a peacetime era are not eligible for VA pension.

When we have two veterans who served during the same period, 1971-1975, then where you served could affect benefits. If both veterans develop, Diabetes Type II later in life but one was in Vietnam and one was not then the one who was in Vietnam could be compensated due to exposure to Agent Orange. The veteran who was not in Vietnam would have to provide proof of the condition beginning in service or because of their service.

Veteran Service Organizations have their own eligibility requirements, which limit membership to their organizations by their Congressional Charters. The American Legion – have served during a wartime period. The VFW - earned a campaign or expeditionary medal. DAV – incur a service-connected disability, others may join as an associate member. Military Order of the Purple Heart – have been combat wounded and earn the Purple Heart. The Marine Corps League – have served in the United States Marine Corps. AMVETS – Have served anytime since December 7, 1941, any branch active or reserve.

The VA Medical system separates veterans into eight groups for treatment purposes. About half of all veterans are categorized as priority group eight and do not qualify for medical treatment at a VA facility.

The character of the discharge can affect your ability to receive benefits. Federal education benefits may only be obtained with an Honorable discharge. Whereas a General discharge under Honorable conditions can qualify you for other VA benefits but not education.

When you add requirements for State Veterans benefits, you may redefine your veteran eligibility again. With a General discharge under Honorable conditions, you may be eligible for the Wisconsin GI Bill but not the Federal education benefit. However, if you did not enter the service from Wisconsin then even an honorable discharge will not help you obtain this benefit.

As you can see, war era, politics, budgets, where you served and limited resources all work to define who is a veteran for benefit purposes. Consequently, veterans themselves are not always sure of their status.

In my office, I have a poem that hangs on the wall. It is a short poem penned by an unknown author. It is also the best definition of a veteran that I have ever read and one that I wish could replace all the statutory definitions.

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A veteran – whether active duty, retired, National Guard or reserve is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a check made payable to “The United States of America,” for an amount of “up to and including my life”. That is Honor and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it.

On this Veteran's Day, let us never forget those blank checks we wrote and resolve to work together for the good of each other, our communities and our nation.

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The Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office

If you have any questions or comments about the contents of the newsletter, please contact Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office at 262-548-7732.

New Address for the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC)

The following information was found at <http://www.ftleavernworthlamp.com/news/>

New Address:

National Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St Louis, MO 63138-1002

The majority of personnel have moved to the new location and the military personnel records are in the process of moving. The entire move should be completed by the end of the Summer of 2012.

As a reminder, ALL retirees and Honorably Discharged veterans should ensure that their family knows the location of their military Separation Document (DD Form 214 from 1950 to present and WD (War Department) Form 53-55 and other variations prior to 1950). Note that registering a copy at the county court house may make that document a public record. Separation Documents issued after 1969 may contain a Social Security Number which could be used for identity theft. Storing the Separation Document in a safe deposit box may make it difficult to retrieve immediately upon the death of the retiree or honorably discharged veteran. The better storage locations are:

1-Fire safe in a secure location of the house (not in the bedroom, as this is where most thieves search first). Be sure spouse/NOK knows the location and has key/combination.

2-In a watertight food container (Glad, Tupperware, etc.) in the refrigerator. Most refrigerators are fire resistant. Additionally, a refrigerator is heavy enough to fall through the floor of a building into the cooler part of the fire in the basement and better survive. Finally, a refrigerator is large enough to be easily located in the ash and rubble of a fire or other serious incident. (As a bo-

nus, everyone has a refrigerator, not everyone has a fire resistant storage box). Be sure to inform your spouse and relatives where to locate your Separation Document - and any other important papers.

As a reminder, the preferred method of submitting a request to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is via the Internet. Please note that in some cases using a browser other than Internet Explorer may create problems with data entry. As you know, the NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. Our web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating our mailroom processing time. Also, since the requester will be prompted to supply all information essential for us to process the request, delays that occur when we must go back for more information will be minimized. You may access this application at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This improved on-line request process should be used INSTEAD OF Standard Form 180 for requests from the veteran or the veteran's next of kin, if possible. Your assistance with this initiative will allow us, and you, to better serve the needs of our veterans. If you do not wish to use the Internet, you should use Standard Form 180. You should print Standard Form 180 as you need it, not in advance because the form is periodically revised and updated. It should not be available on your web site. You can have a link to the NPRC web page. The link is: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>.

(Purple Heart—Continued from page 1)

friends killed in battle was bad enough without having the dead man's family know it was American troops that did it. There are still friendly fire casualties in these circumstances. But the lower number of casualties, and better investigative capabilities, makes it more difficult for friendly fire casualties to be inaccurately reported.

Extensive research into the subject has led to a

new set of numbers for the percentage of casualties caused by friendly fire. It's now believed that it was 21 percent during World War II, 18 percent in Korea, 39 percent in Vietnam, 49 percent in the 1991 Gulf War, seven percent in the current Iraq war and 11 percent in Afghanistan. In the last two years, friendly fire casualties have been reduced by over 90 percent. Military personnel (or, if deceased, their families) wounded by friendly fire in past wars may now apply for a Purple Heart award.

1st Infantry Division Vietnam Certificate Program

The following information is from: The First Division Museum at Cantigny

In May 1966, the First Division Museum at Cantigny in Wheaton, IL, began to issue certificates of recognition to 1st Infantry Division soldiers returning from the Vietnam War. The First Division Museum recently uncovered a cache of these original certificates from 1966-1970 in mint condition. Each certificate is cosigned by the President of the Society of the First Division at the time and by the Commanding General under which you served.

Our goal is to send out these certificates to any 1st Infantry Division Vietnam veteran who desires one while our supply of original certificates lasts.

To receive a 1st Division Vietnam Certificate we require a photocopy of your DD214 (do not send your original) with a cover letter containing the following information:

- Your mailing address
- Daytime phone number
- Email address (if available)
- Your name as you'd like it to appear on the certificate
- The final rank you held while with the division in Vietnam

- Dates of your Vietnam tour(s) with the BRO (mo./year–mo./year)
- Your unit(s) (Co, Bde, Regt, etc.)

The information you provide will be used to complete the certificate. Requests received without a DD214 will not be honored. We strongly suggest that you white-out your Social Security number before you send your DD214. All DD214s we receive will be archived by our McCormick Research Center as a very valuable record of your service. Please mail all requests to:

**Vietnam Certificate
Dave Blake
First Division Museum at Cantigny
1s151 Winfield Road
Wheaton, IL 60187-6097**

DO NOT E-MAIL OR FAX YOUR REQUEST. Please allow a minimum of 8–12 weeks for processing your certificate. If you have questions, please contact Dave Blake at 630-260-8234 or DBlake@firstdivisionmuseum.org.

Thank you, Vietnam Veterans, for your service.

Transitional Health Care for Reservists NAUS Weekly Update—August 12, 2011

The following information is from: NAUS Weekly Update—mplumer@naus.org

Leaving the military way of life can be stressful for service members and their families. When service members leave active duty, TRICARE offers a transitional health care option for eligible beneficiaries and their families while they look for new health coverage. The entire family is covered for an additional 180 days. This program is predominately for National Guard or Reservists separating from active duty and returning to a reserve program.

The program is called Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) and extends TRICARE eligibility for sponsors and their family who involuntarily separate from the military prior to retirement. In order to qualify, the service member must:

- ◆ Be involuntarily separated under honorable conditions.
- ◆ Be a National Guard or Reservist who is separated from the military, following an active duty period

of more than 30 consecutive days.

- ◆ Separate from the active duty, but be involuntarily retained for reserve duty.
- ◆ Separate from active duty, following a voluntary agreement to stay on active duty status for a period of less than one year.
- ◆ A sponsor who receives a sole survivorship discharge.
- ◆ Be separated from active duty and who agrees to become a member of the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve of a reserve component.

Under TAMP the sponsor and family members are automatically covered under TRICARE Standard and Extra. During TAMP, dental care provided in military dental treatment facilities is on a space-available basis. For more info visit the TRICARE Dental Program [website](#) or to learn more about TAMP and enrollment options, go to the [TAMP website](#).

VA to Take Applications for New Family Caregiver Program VA Implementing Enhancements to Existing Services for Veterans and Their Caregivers.

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published the interim final rule for implementing the Family Caregiver Program of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. This new rule will provide additional support to eligible post-9/11 Veterans who elect to receive their care in a home setting from a primary Family Caregiver.

"We at VA know that every day is a challenge for our most seriously injured Veterans and their Family Caregivers," said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. "I know many Veterans and their Family Caregivers have been waiting anxiously for this day and I urge them to get their applications in as soon as possible so they can receive the additional support they have earned."

On May 9, staff in VA's Office of Care Management and Social Work will open the application process for eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers to designate their Family Caregivers.

Additional services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program. The program builds on the foundation of Caregiver support now provided at VA and reflects what families and clinicians have long known; that Family Caregivers in a home environment can enhance the health and well-being of Veterans under VA care.

Starting May 9th, Veterans may download a copy of the Family Caregiver program application (VA CG 10-10) at www.caregiver.va.gov. The application enables the Veteran to designate a primary Family Caregiver and secondary Family Caregivers if needed. Caregiver Support Coordinators are stationed at every VA medical center and via phone at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) to assist Veterans and their Family Caregivers with the application process.

"Providing support to Family Caregivers who sacrifice so much to allow Veterans to remain at home surrounded by their loved ones, is very important to us at VA. We offer a range of Caregiver support services including training, counseling and respite care to ensure that our caregivers have the tools and support they need to continue in their care giving role," said Deborah Amdur, VA's Chief Consultant for Care Management and Social Work. "We appreciate the patience, support and assistance we have received from Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, and the greater Caregiver community in shaping this program and bringing this new VA program to our wounded warriors and their dedicated Family Caregivers."

Caregivers for Veterans of all eras are eligible for respite care, education and training on what it means to be a caregiver, how to best meet the Veteran's care needs, and the importance of self-care when in a care giving role. The full range of VA services already provided to Caregivers will continue, and local Caregiver Support Coordinators at each VA medical center are available to assist Family Caregivers in identifying benefits and services they may be eligible for. The Caregiver Support Coordinators are well versed in VA programs and also have information about other local public, private and non-profit agency support services that are available to support Veterans and their Family Caregivers at home.

VA programs for Veterans and their Family Caregivers include:

- ◆ In-Home and Community Based Care: This includes skilled home health care, homemaker home health aide services, community adult day health care and Home Based Primary Care
- ◆ Respite Care: Designed to relieve the Family Caregiver from the constant challenge of caring for a chronically ill or disabled Veteran at home, respite services can include in-home care, a short stay in one of VA's community living centers or an environment designed for adult day health care.
- ◆ Caregiver education and training programs: VA currently provides multiple training opportunities which include pre-discharge care instruction and specialized caregiver programs in multiple severe traumas such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders, and Blind Rehabilitation. VA has a Family Caregiver assistance healthy living center on My HealthVet, www.myhealth.va.gov as well as caregiver information on the VA's main Web page health site; both Websites include information on VA and community resources and Caregiver health and wellness.
- ◆ Caregiver support groups and other services: Family Caregiver support groups, offered in a face to face setting or on the telephone, provide emotional and peer support, and information. Family Caregiver services include family counseling, spiritual and pastoral care, family leisure and recreational activities and temporary lodging in Fisher Houses.
- ◆ Other services: VA provides durable medical equipment and prosthetic and sensory aides to improve function, financial assistance with home modification to improve access and mobility, and transportation assistance for some Veterans to and from medical appointments.

Retroactive Traumatic Injury Benefits No Longer Just for OEF/OIF Injuries

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is extending retroactive traumatic injury benefits to Servicemembers who suffered qualifying injuries during the period Oct. 7, 2001 to Nov. 30, 2005, regardless of the geographic location where the injuries occurred.

“Now all of our nation’s Servicemembers who suffered severe traumatic injuries while serving their country can receive the same traumatic injury benefits, regardless of where their injury occurred,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We at VA appreciate the efforts of Congress and the President to improve benefits for our troops.”

Effective Oct. 1, the Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) Traumatic Injury Protection benefit, known as TSGLI, will be payable for all qualifying injuries incurred during this period. This retroactive benefit is payable whether or not the Servicemember had SGLI coverage at the time of the injury.

The Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2010, passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in October of 2010, removes the requirement that injuries during this period be incurred in Operations Enduring or Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). This is welcome news for the many Servicemembers who suffered serious traumatic injuries while serving stateside or in other areas outside of OEF/OIF during this time period, but until now have not been eligible for TSGLI.

TSGLI provides a payment ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to Servicemembers sustaining certain severe traumatic injuries resulting in a range of losses, including amputations; limb salvage; paralysis; burns; loss of sight, hearing or speech; facial reconstruction; 15-day continuous hospitalization; coma; and loss of activities of daily living

due to traumatic brain injury or other traumatic injuries.

National Guard and Reserve members who were injured during the retroactive period and suffered a qualifying loss are also eligible for a TSGLI payment, even if the cause was not related to military service, such as a civilian automobile accident or severe injury which occurred while working around their home.

National Guard and Reserve members make up more than 40 percent of the total force which has been deployed since 9-11. Those who are no longer in the National Guard or Reserves can also apply as long as their injury occurred while they were in service.

“I am extremely pleased that these total force warriors who defend our freedoms are getting the recognition and benefits they have rightfully earned in service to our nation,” added Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey.

VA is working with the Department of Defense to publicize this change in the TSGLI law. Additionally, all of the branches of service are identifying any claims previously denied because the injury was not incurred in OEF/OIF and reaching out to those individuals.

Although applications are currently being accepted by branch of service TSGLI offices, benefits will not be paid until Oct. 1, 2011, the effective date of the law.

For more information or to apply for a TSGLI payment, Servicemembers and Veterans should go to <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm> or contact their branch of service TSGLI Office (contact information available at above link).

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE™
1-800-273-TALK

It takes the courage and strength
of a warrior to ask for help....

If you're in an emotional crisis
Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
“Press 1 for Veterans”

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

VA Posts Online List of Ships Associated with Presumptive Agent Orange Exposure

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (Sept. 2, 2011)—Veterans who served aboard U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships operating on the waters of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, may be eligible to receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation for 14 medical conditions associated with presumptive exposure to Agent Orange.

An updated list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships confirmed to have operated on Vietnam's inland waterways, docked on shore, or had crewmembers sent ashore, has been posted at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/> to assist Vietnam Veterans in determining potential eligibility for compensation benefits.

"Posting of the ships list is an important recognition of the sacrifices U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Veterans made for this Nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "It provides an easier path for Veterans who served in Vietnam to get the benefits and services they are entitled to under the law."

VA presumes herbicide exposure for any Veteran with duty or visitation within the country of Vietnam or on its inland waterways during the Vietnam era. Comprehensive information about the 14 recognized illnesses under VA's "presumption" rule for Agent Orange is also located on the webpage.

In practical terms, Veterans with qualifying Vietnam service who develop a disease associated with Agent Orange exposure need not prove a medical link between their illnesses and their military service. This presumption simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

For questions about Agent Orange and the online list of ships, Veterans may call VA's Special Issues Helpline at 1-800-749-8387 and press 3.

When a claim is filed by a Veteran, surviving spouse or child, VA will determine whether the Veteran qualifies for the presumption of exposure based on official records of the ship's operations. Ships will be regularly added to the list based on information con-

firmed in these official records.

Even if a Veteran is not filing a claim, a Veteran may conduct his or her own research and submit scanned documentary evidence such as deck logs, ship histories, and cruise book entries via email to 211_AOSHIPS.VBACO@va.gov.

Service on board ships anchored in an open water harbor, such as Da Nang Harbor, or on ships on other open waters around Vietnam during the war, is not considered sufficient for the presumption of Agent Orange exposure. For Veterans interested in obtaining deck logs, contact the National Archives at College Park, Md., at <http://www.archives.gov/dc-metro/college-park/researcher-info.html>.

The Agent Orange Claims Processing System website located at: <https://www.fasttrack.va.gov/AOFastTrack/> may be used to submit claims related to the three conditions added to the list of Agent Orange presumptives last year (Parkinson's disease, hairy cell and other chronic B-cell leukemias, and ischemic heart disease).

This website makes it easy to electronically file a claim and allows Veterans and their physicians to upload evidence supporting the claim. It also permits online viewing of claim status.

Veterans claiming other conditions may file online at VA's My-eBenefits web site at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>. They can check the status of their claim with a premium account (confirming their identity), and use a growing number of online services.

Servicemembers may enroll in My-eBenefits using their Common Access Card at any time during their military service, or before they leave during their Transition Assistance Program briefings.

Veterans may also enroll through their myPay or MyHealthVet accounts, by visiting their local VA regional office or Veteran Service Organization, or by calling 1-800-827-1000.



Information on the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR)

The following information was found on the internet WDVA.Media.Relations@dva.state.wi.us

WHAT IS THE PDBR?

The Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) provides Veterans who were medically separated from their Military Service between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009, with the opportunity for review of their disability ratings to ensure fairness, consistency and accuracy. The PDBR was created by Congress as part of the *Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act of 2008*. Signed into law by President Bush on January 28, 2008, the PDBR began reviewing its first cases in June 2009.

WHO CAN APPLY TO THE PDBR?

To be eligible for PDBR review, a Veteran must have been medically separated between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009 with a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less, and not have been found eligible for retirement. Former reserve members with greater than 20 years of Total Federal Military Service yet with fewer than 20 years of Active Duty and who meet the criteria listed above are also eligible to apply. There are roughly 75,000 eligible Veterans who are eligible to apply to the PDBR under the stated criteria. As of July 2011, just over 2,500 Veterans have applied.

HOW DOES THE PDBR OPERATE?

The Department of Defense (DoD) designated the Air Force as the lead component to establish and operate the PDBR. The PDBR evaluates and reviews cases for all services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard) and their reserve components. Located in Arlington, VA, the PDBR is a true joint service board (and the only existing joint service disability evaluation and review board). Each case is jointly reviewed by representatives from three separate services (to include the service of the applicant). The PDBR examines each applicant's medical separation, compares DoD and Veteran's Administration (VA) ratings, and makes a recommendation to the respective Service Secretary (or their designee) as to whether or not the Secretary concerned should change a disability rating (which reflects a more accurate rating at the original time of separation) resulting in the Veteran's transfer to the Disability Retirement rolls. By law, the PDBR may not recommend a lower disability rating for any rating reviewed. All changes to disability ratings that are approved by the Service Secretary concerned will be backdated and effective the date of the original Physical Evaluation Board. The PDBR exclusively uses the Veterans Administration Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) as its adjudication

guidance in reviewing unfitting conditions considered by the Disability Evaluation System [Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB)]. If a particular condition was recognized and documented by the Service Department Disability Evaluation System, the PDBR will review it to ensure the Veteran was properly credited for physical ailments which may have caused the eventual medical separation of the Veteran. If a Veteran has a condition he/she feels should have been considered by his/her MEB or PEB, but it was not a part of his/her MEB or PEB, the avenue of redress is not through the PDBR; but instead through the Veteran's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCMR/NR).

Upon receipt of a Veteran's application, the PDBR will request copies of all applicable VA medical and rating documents as well as all Military Service Department Physical Evaluation Board related records, including the Veteran's Service Treatment Record (STR). The Veteran may submit any additional information pertinent to the request with his/her application. The review is records based only and no provision is made for a personal appearance by the Veteran or his/her representative.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY TO THE PDBR?

Since the PDBR began reviewing cases in June 2009, in more than 50% of cases, Veterans have had their original disability determination upgraded, resulting in a disability retirement for the Veteran. Although no guarantee of this re characterization rate can be made going forward, it is a good indicator of the degree of success applicants have had with the board up until now. If a Veteran is awarded a disability retirement as a result of the review process, it may not result in any *immediate* monetary gain by the Veteran (previously awarded payments from the VA and DoD as related to the original disability must be recouped by the government, prior to new payments being made; but this recoupment is made from the new monthly disability annuity payments going forward). Regardless, from the time of disability retirement award, the Veteran becomes eligible for all retirement benefits normally awarded military department retirees (health care, exchange, commissary, travel, etc).

Information about the PDBR, how to apply, including links to the application form (DD Form 294) is available at the following website: <http://www.health.mil/pdbr>

Pre-Registration for Interment at the State of Wisconsin Cemeteries (Spooner, King or Union Grove)

The following information is from <http://dva.state.wi.us/>

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) operates the state veterans cemeteries at Northern Wisconsin – Spooner, Central Wisconsin – King, and Southern Wisconsin – Union Grove.

A [brochure](#) is available to download and print which has information about all three cemeteries.

Upon meeting eligibility standards, veterans are provided a burial at no cost, spouses and dependent children will incur a burial fee.

Pre-registration allows a veteran, spouse, and/or dependent child to establish eligibility for interment at one of the three state veteran's cemeteries. There is no cost for pre-registration and it does not obligate the veteran to be interred at the cemetery selected. Pre-registration is intended to establish eligibility and simplify the process for the veteran's next-of-kin at the time of death. A separate pre-registration is

not necessary for dependents. **Grave spaces are assigned at time of need**, specific gravesites are not reserved.

To pre-register at one of our three cemeteries located at Spooner, King, or Union Grove; complete the pre-registration application ([WDVA 2111](#)) and email, or send to the address listed on the application, or to the cemetery of choice. Forward the appropriate documentation of your military service – **DD214**, Wisconsin residency and if married, a copy of your marriage license or certificate. *Online registration is currently under development.*

Once all documents have been received and/or eligibility has been established a notice of confirmation regarding pre-registration will be sent to you.

(An application for your convenience is located on page 16 of this newsletter)

Afghanistan, Iraqi Campaign Medals

The following Article is from the RAO Bulletin of 15 July 2011

The following information can be found at: <http://www.veteransresources.org/category/rao-bulletin/>

Afghanistan, Iraqi Campaign Medals: The Defense Department announced 30 JUN it is adding a seventh star to the Iraq Campaign Medal and a fourth to the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Each star recognizes a period of time and service members who serve more than one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan are eligible to pin on 22 additional stars. Multiple deployments mean some service members could wear one, two, three or more stars on their medals. The newest star for service in Iraq is for the period the Pentagon is calling "New Dawn." It begins Sept. 1, 2010 "through a date to be determined." It follows, in order, the periods known as, "Liberation of Iraq," "Transition of Iraq," "Iraqi Governance," "National Resolution," "Iraqi Surge" and "Iraqi Sovereignty." Afghan war veterans who have served since Dec. 1, 2009 "through a date to be determined" are now eligible for a new star dubbed simply, "Consolidation III." That follows the "Liberation of Afghanistan" from Sept. 11, 2001 to Nov. 30, 2001, and consolidation I and II. The services will announce implementing instructions to their members about wear of the new campaign stars. Service members who have qualified for the ICM and ACM may display a bronze campaign star on their medal for each campaign phase in which they participated. A silver campaign star is issued in lieu of five bronze stars. Six other campaign phases were previously identified for Iraq, and three in Afghanistan.

In Iraq, they are:

- ◆ Liberation of Iraq, March 19 to May 1, 2003;
- ◆ Transition of Iraq, May 2, 2003 to June 28, 2004;
- ◆ National Resolution, Dec. 16, 2005 to Jan. 9, 2007;
- ◆ Iraqi Surge, Jan. 10, 2007 to Dec. 31, 2008; and
- ◆ Iraqi Sovereignty, Jan. 1, 2009 to Aug. 31, 2010.

In Afghanistan, the previously identified campaign phases are:

- ◆ Liberation of Afghanistan, Sept. 11 to Nov. 30, 2001;
- ◆ Consolidation I, Dec. 1, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2006; and
- ◆ Consolidation II, Oct. 1, 2006 to Nov. 30, 2009.



Iraq Campaign Ribbon (Top)

Afghanistan Campaign Ribbon (Bottom)

GI Bill Updates

The following Articles are from the RAO Bulletin of 1 August 2011

The following information can be found at: <http://www.veteransresources.org/category/rao-bulletin/>

GI Bill Update 99: Rep. Dan Boren (D-OK) has introduced Legislation that would allow the surviving spouse of a deceased service member to use that member's Post 9/11 GI Bill benefit. Current law allows the spouse of a deceased military member to receive education benefits through the Survivors and Dependents Education Assistance program. But the benefit is less than under the Post 9/11 GI Bill. "The Spouses of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act is an important step for meeting the needs of military families," Boren said in a statement. "We must do everything within our means to care for our nation's surviving spouses." [Source: NGAUS Washington Report 19 Jul 2011 ++]

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GI Bill Update 100: Changes are coming for Post-9/11 GI Bill users this summer/fall when the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2010 - S.3447 goes into effect. Many veterans, servicemembers, and their eligible family members will see some significant changes in the benefits. Keep in mind that Congress is working on additional changes to the changes that will be implemented as those in the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011 - HR 1383. Unfortunately, it is still unknown if the changes to the legislation will be passed before the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act goes into effect. The intent of the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act is to expand eligibility, simplify tuition rates, and ensure that the Post-9/11 GI Bill offers the same types of benefits as older versions of the GI Bill. To do so, congress was forced to reduce the cost by trimming certain aspects of the original program. In the end, some veterans will have their benefits reduced so that others may have a share of the benefits. The following summary explains how these changes will affect the education benefits of specific groups of Post-9/11 GI Bill eligible students.

National Guard Members: Eligibility Expanded - Certain National Guard members mobilized on Title 32 orders on-or-after September 11, 2001 are now eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill and any qualifying Title 32 mobilization may be used to increase your percentage of eligibility. Effective August 1, 2009, but not payable until October 1, 2011.

Online Students: New Housing Allowance - The housing allowance which will become effective 1 OCT 2011 be payable to students enrolled solely in distance learning inclusive of online education. The housing allowance is half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. For 2011 the rate will be \$673.50. This amount is subject to prorating based on the number of credits being taken. Note: This does not include active duty or their GI Bill eligible spouses.

Active Duty Post-9/11 GI Bill Users

- ◆ Tiered Benefits - Active duty members will see their tuition and fees prorated based on the eligibility tiers (40%-100%). This previously applied to veterans only. These same limitations apply to transferee spouses of active duty servicemembers. - Went into effect on March 5, 2011.
- ◆ Tuition Rate Limits - Active Duty Members and their transferees will be subject to the same national rate as veterans (\$17,500 a year) for enrolled in a private or foreign school pursuing a degree. In addition, they will have their tuition and fees at public schools limited to the in-state tuition and fees rate. - Effective August 1, 2011.
- ◆ Transferability Expanded - NOAA and PHS personnel are now eligible to transfer their entitlement to eligible dependents. - Effective August 1, 2011
- ◆ New Book Stipend - Allows students on active duty (and their eligible spouses) to receive the books and supplies stipend. - Effective October 1, 2011.

Veterans Using Post-9/11 GI Bill

- ◆ Tuition and Fees Changes - Tuition and fee rates for those attending a public school will have all public school tuition and fees covered at the in-state (or resident) rate. Tuition and fee rates for those attending private and foreign school will have the tuition and fee payments capped at \$17,500 annually. Note: The Yellow Ribbon Program still exists for out-of-state fees and costs (non-resident) above the cap.
- ◆ Monthly Kicker Payments - The VA will pay MGIB (Chapter 30) and MGIB-SR (Chapter 1606) kickers' or Army/Navy College Fund payments, on a monthly basis instead of a lump sum at the beginning of the term. - Effective August 1, 2011.
- ◆ Prorated Housing Stipend - Students enrolled at more than half-time but less than full-time will begin having their housing allowance prorated based on the number of classes they are taking (also called rate of pursuit). This amount

(Continued on page 11 - See 9/11 GI Bill)

(9/11 GI Bill—continued from page 10)

will be rounded to the nearest tenth. For example a student enrolled with a rate of pursuit 75% would receive 80% of the BAH rate. - Effective August 1, 2011.

- ◆ End of Payments During School Breaks – The VA will no longer pay benefits during breaks – like spring or winter break. The end to “interval pay” applies to all VA education benefit programs unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency, such as a natural disaster or strike.
 1. This means that when your semester ends (e.g. December 15th), your housing allowance is paid for the first 15 days of December only and begins again when your next semester begins (e.g. January 10th) and is paid for the remaining days of January.
 2. Students using other VA education programs are included in this change. Monthly benefits will be pro-rated in the same manner.
 3. Entitlement that previously would have been used for break pay will be available for use during a future enrollment.
- ◆ Multiple Licensing, Certification and National Placement Exams – Reimbursement for more than one ‘license or certification’ test will be possible. In addition to reimbursement of fees paid to take national exams used for admission to an institution of higher learning (e.g., SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT). - Effective August 1, 2011.
- ◆ Expanded Vocation Training Opportunities – Veterans will be eligible to Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to cover the following:
 1. Non-college degree (NCD) programs: Pays actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees at public NCD institutions. At private and foreign institutions, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees or \$17,500, whichever is less. Also pays up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
 2. On-the-job and apprenticeship training: Pays a monthly benefit amount prorated based on time in program and up to \$83 per month for books and supplies. Learn more about OJT and Apprenticeship.
 3. Flight programs: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,000, whichever is less.
 4. Correspondence training: Pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$8,500, whichever is less. - Effective October 1, 2011.
- ◆ New Voc-Rehab Stipend Options - Vocational Rehabilitation participants may now elect the higher housing allowance offered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill if otherwise eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. - Effective August 1, 2011. [Source: Military.com | Benefits Week of July 18, 2011 ++]

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GI Bill Update 101: On 21 JUL the Restoring G.I. Bill Fairness Act (H.R.1383) sailed through the Senate with unanimous support. Following a 424-0 vote in the House the bill heads to the President’s office later this week. "Today, we kept our promise to America’s student veterans. Together with our colleagues in the Senate, Congress is sending a bill to the President that keeps the original intent of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill intact, said Rep. Jeff Miller [R-FL] who sponsored the House version of the bill. “Our veterans who have returned home and are in the process of getting an education at the school of their choice should not have been penalized for choosing one school over another, only to then find out Congress changed the rules on them midstream.” Miller’s legislation in the House mirrored a nearly identical version in the Senate, which was sponsored by Sen. Charles E. Schumer [D-NY]. Schumer said in a statement that he was “confident the president will quickly sign this bipartisan bill.”

Since going into effect nearly two years ago, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill has provided educational assistance to veterans returning home from war. It entitled a veteran who served for a minimum of three years after 9/11 to a full tuition subsidy at a public college. An additional provision called the Yellow Ribbon Program enabled thousands more veterans at private schools to attend college free of cost. But at the end of last year, Congress voted to change those rules by capping tuition assistance at in-state public rates for out-of-state veterans attending public colleges and, beginning in AUG, limiting tuition assistance to \$17,500 per year for veterans in private schools. H.R.1383 will temporarily preserve higher rates for tuition and fees for programs of education at non-public institutions of higher learning pursued by individuals enrolled in the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs before the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010. [Source: Huff Post college Amanda M. Fairbanks article 26 Jul 2011 ++]

Post 9/11 GI Bill Benefit Transfer Guidance for Soldiers Separated Since August 1, 2009 (ARNG-GSE-E)

The following information from the National Guard Bureau, Arlington VA

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL ARNG Education and Incentives Personnel of All States, Puerto Rico, The Virgin Islands, Guam and the District of Columbia, other support agencies, and eligible Soldiers.

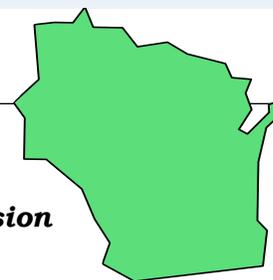
1. The Post 9/11 GI Bill became law on 30 June 2008, effective 1 August 2009. Title 32 service was not included in this law. On 4 January 2011, the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Improvements Act of 2010 was signed into law. This amendment expands the definition of eligibility to include Title 32 Service. A special provision for those Soldiers who were omitted in the original law and left the service after 1 August 2009, will allow the option to transfer benefits to their dependents.
2. Soldiers are classified "Solely Title 32" if they meet the following criteria:
 - a. Must have served 90 days or more of honorable service under Title 32 Full-Time National Guard Duty (AGR) "for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing or training" on or after 11 September 2001; or,
 - b. Must have served 90 days or more of honorable service under Title 32 under section 502 (f) "for the purpose of responding to a national emergency", on or after 11 September, 2001. (Operation Noble Eagle 11 Sept 2001 – 31 May 2002 is currently the only qualifying orders in the category).
3. Must not have qualified due to mobilization or Active Duty service under Title 10 USC section 688, 12301(a), 12301(d), 12301(g), 12302, or 12304 for 90 days or longer on or after 11 September 2001. These codes may be listed on your orders or DD214. If you qualified for the Post 9/11 GI Bill under the original law, you should have already transferred your benefits
4. Soldiers who solely qualified under Title 32 and retired after 1 August 2009, may apply for transferability under the following conditions:
 - a. Classified as Solely Title 32; and,
 - b. Separated from service with a DEERS-eligible dependent; and,
 - c. Completed a minimum of 10 years in the Armed Forces.
5. Since these soldiers are no longer in service, they are no longer capable of using the Transfer of Education Benefit (TEB) website process. They can contact the Centralized GI Bill Support Team to accomplish the initial transfer of benefits to their dependents. Once the initial transfer request has been approved, the Soldier will be able to use the TEB website to modify or revoke months of benefits as needed. To transfer benefits:
 - a. Email GI Bill Support Team at gibill.ch33@ng.army.mil with the subject header "Solely Title 32 Transferability", or,
 - b. Call the GI Bill Support Team at 1-866-628-5999 and ask to speak to a GI Bill Counselor; indicate Solely Title 32 status.
6. The GI Bill Support Team identified 715 Solely Title 32 separated Soldiers and will contact these members. State GI Bill Managers may contact the GI Bill Support Team to request this information. All transfer transactions will be handled by the support team and documented in each Soldier's IMARC record in the "Remarks" section.
7. The point of contact for this memorandum is
 MAJ Jeremy Serafin,
 GI Bill Programs Manager
 703-601-7907 or
jeremy.serafin@us.army.mil.

JOSEPH R. BALDWIN
 LTC, EN
 Chief, Education, Incentives and
 Employment Division



In Memory...

NEWS UPDATE FOR STATE BENEFITS



Governor Proclaims Recognition Year to Honor the Legacy of the Civil War

2011 the Year of the Wisconsin Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission

The following information is from WDVA.Media.Relations@dva.state.wi.us

(MADISON) – Governor Scott Walker, in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, has proclaimed 2011 as the year of the Wisconsin Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission.

In 2010, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) announced the formation of a 12-member, volunteer commission to honor the legacy, service and sacrifice of the state’s citizen-soldiers who fought in the Union Army. From 1861 to 1865, Wisconsin sent more than 91,000 men to war, and suffered more than 12,000 casualties.

“The history of the Civil War and Wisconsin soldiers who served is important to our state’s legacy,” said Gov. Walker. “We learn from the past and go forward in the future to honor our service members, past and present.”

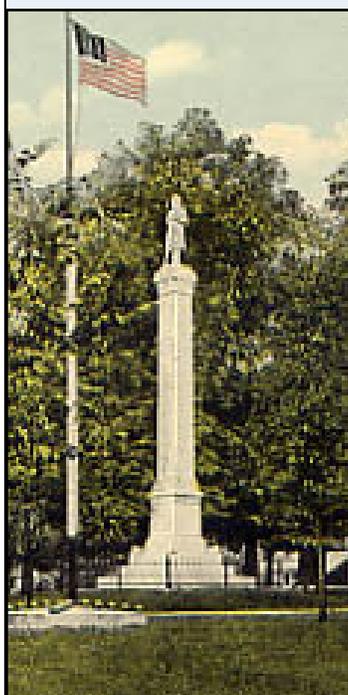
In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, Governor Scott Walker and First Lady Tonette Walker are pleased to announce the addition of Civil War themed artwork and artifacts to decorate the interior of Wisconsin’s Executive Residence.

The Wisconsin Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission brings together Wisconsin’s museums, libraries, historical societies and veterans organizations to develop educational programming, encourage exploration of Wisconsin’s role in the war and make resources available to the public, particularly at WDVA’s Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

“We thank the volunteers from around the state, with varied backgrounds, for working together on the Commission,” said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos. “The photos, letters, diaries and materials presented help bring the Civil War time period to life.”

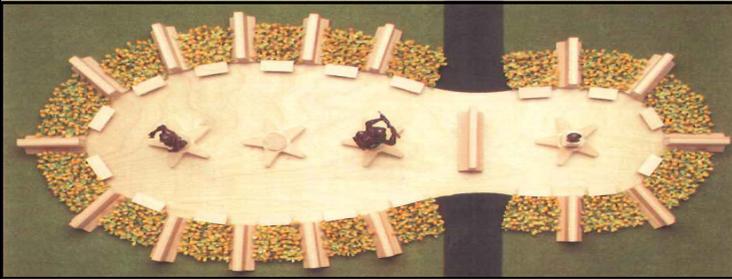
Featured until the end of September 2012 is a Civil War exhibit entitled, “From Paper to Iron,” a display of never before seen Civil War artifacts from the Museum’s collection. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is a free public educational activity of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and is located at 30 W. Mifflin St., across the street from the State Capitol. To learn more about the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War, visit www.CivilWarWisconsin.com. For more information about the Museum’s Civil War exhibit and other activities, visit www.WisVetsMuseum.com/.

Civil War Monument—Rededication Ceremony Cutler Park—Waukesha—Sept. 10, 2011

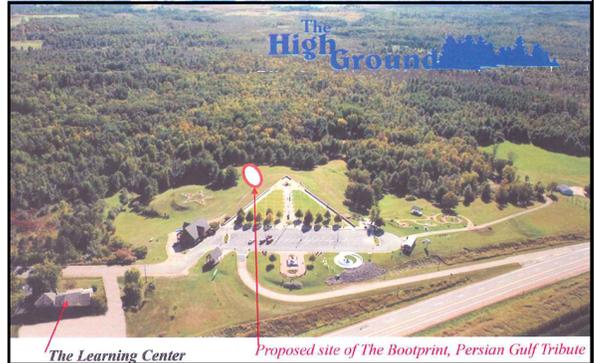


Persian Gulf Tribute Coming to The High Ground

The following information was received from: www.thehighground.org



The impression of the bootprint symbolically recalls the impression these men and women have had in our world.



The Bootprint Design is the next tribute at The High Ground. The tribute will honor those that served in Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the Global War on Terrorism. The High Ground is located 4 miles west of Neillsville on Hwy 10. Their phone number is 715-743-4224

2011 / 2012 Calendar of Events: Come Join us for some Great Ceremonies

All of November @ Learning Center	George Skypeck Military Prints Daily 10:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M.
November 11th	Veteran’s Day Celebration 11:11 A.M.
November 15th	Dept of Corrections Veterans Day Observance 11:00 A.M.
All of December @ Learning Center	WWI Veterans Tribute Daily 10:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M.
All of January @ Learning Center	Honoring Service Animals & Handlers Daily 10:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M.
January 21st @ Learning Center	Board of Directors Meeting 10:30 A.M.
January 21st @ Loyal American Legion Hall	Volunteer Appreciation Pot Luck 1:00 P.M.
All of February @ Learning Center	Honoring Service Animals & Handlers Daily 10:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M.
February 25th	Friends of the Highground Dinner 5:00 P.M.
All of March @ Learning Center	Vietnam Veterans Tribute Daily 10:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M.
March 13th	Porch Greeter Luncheon—12:00 Noon

Please send donations to:

The Highground
PO Box 457
W7031 Ridge Rd
Neillsville, WI 54456
or call 715-743-4224
Email: highgrnd@tds.net

 Yes, I will help with a donation
towards the *Persian Gulf Tribute*.

Contact _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

NEWS UPDATE FOR THE LOCAL AREA



Veterans Memorial—New Berlin WI

The following information was received from Ted Wysocki

A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO SERVED



SITE LOCATION:—Corner of West National Ave. and Casper Dr. in New Berlin, WI.

HISTORY—The Veterans Memorial was conceived in late 2004 to honor those soldiers that gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The dedication of the site was in May 2007. The fallen warriors are now remembered through the memorial statute and the memorial bricks that are in front of the statue.

OUR MISSION:

- ◆ To maintain the memorial built with your contributions. This special place must be maintained at a high level to show respect for those we honor.
- ◆ To raise awareness for those we are honoring and increase support for our society through special events.
- ◆ To conduct veteran’s outreach programs, within the New Berlin Community.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ◆ You can be a member of this very worthwhile Society for a yearly donation. \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a family membership.
- ◆ We continue to offer memorial bricks—allowing you to recognize the sacrifice of a loved one or friend.
- ◆ We ask you to support our special events: New Berlin Veteran’s Family Day, 4th of July ceremonies, Memorial Day activities and the Christmas tree lighting ceremony.
- ◆ We welcome volunteer help for any of our programs.
- ◆ We ask your permission to allow us to contact you (infrequently) by email or US Mail.

For more information or questions please contact Ted Wysocki at 262-782-0267. For more information online: www.newberlinvetmemorial.com.





PRE-REGISTRATION FOR CEMETERY INTERMENT — APPLICATION

Cemetery Control #: _____

This application is used to establish eligibility of a veteran for interment at one of the state veteran's cemeteries: Spooner, Union Grove or King. Follow registration procedures regarding submission of military service, residency and/or marriage documentation. Once eligibility has been established, you will receive pre-registration confirmation to your request.

CEMETERY PRE-REGISTRATION FOR Spooner (NWVMC) Union Grove (SWVMC) King (CWVMC)

If you desire to be contacted by e-mail, please enter your e-mail address below or correspondence will be by mail.

Your E-mail Address: _____

VETERAN APPLICANT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last Name	Suffix <input type="checkbox"/> I <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> III <input type="checkbox"/> IV <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> Sr.	First	Middle Name
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Present Street Address:

City	County	State	Zip
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Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Social Security Number	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Marital Status <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Legally Separated
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Service Type: (Type of interment can be changed at a later date.) Casket Cremation

SPOUSE APPLICANT PERSONAL INFORMATION: (Complete only if pre-registering.)

Last Name	Suffix <input type="checkbox"/> I <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> III <input type="checkbox"/> IV <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> Sr.	First	Middle Name
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Check if you are a veteran or current military member

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Social Security Number	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Marital Status <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Legally Separated
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Service Type: (Type of interment can be changed at a later date.) Casket Cremation

VETERAN'S MILITARY SERVICE INFORMATION

Branch of Service: (Must be consistent with rank.)

Army Marine Corps Navy Air Force Coast Guard Merchant Marine Other

Period of Service: (Check applicable box(es).)

Persian Gulf	Vietnam	Korea	World War II	National Guard or Reserves (20 years of qualifying service or retired)	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Service / Social Security Number: _____

Highest Rank Attained: _____

PERIODS OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY SERVICE: (If more than 3 active duty periods, enter the longest.)

First Service Period Entry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Separation Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Second Service Period Entry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Separation Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
Third Service Period Entry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Separation Date (mm/dd/yyyy)		

I certify that all information I have provided on this application and the supporting documentation is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____ DATE: _____

THIS PORTION TO BE COMPLETED BY CEMETERY PERSONNEL

RESIDENCY CONFIRMED: CHARACTER OF SERVICE CONFIRMED:

Name: _____ Application is: Approved Denied

Title: _____ Date: _____

If Denied, Reason: _____

Date confirmation sent to applicant confirming pre-registration: _____