

Knox County



Veterans Service Office

411 Pittsburgh Ave.
 Mt. Vernon, Ohio 43050
 Phone: 740-393-6742
 Fax: 740-393-6741
 E-mail: vso@kcvso.com
 www.kcvso.com
 also...FACEBOOK.COM
 Office Hours 8 am to 4 pm

Our Mission

The mission of the Knox County Veterans Service Office is to provide eligible veterans and their families with those benefits to which they may be entitled under federal, state, and local law, in accordance with established policies and procedures.

The Knox County Veterans Service Office shall take those steps necessary to ensure a well trained and professional staff that is available to advise and assist veterans, their dependents, and the widows and orphans of those veterans who, by virtue of their service in the military of the United States of America. They may be entitled to benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs or any other benefit available under federal, state, or local law.

The Knox County Veterans Service shall provide temporary financial assistance to those veterans or their dependents who have demonstrated a financial need due to illness, injury, lack of employment, or an unexpected hardship. Determination of financial need shall be made by the Veterans Service Commission in accordance with the guidelines it alone shall establish and oversee, in accordance with Title 59 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The Knox County Veterans Service Commission shall promulgate programs as required by Title 59 of the Ohio revised Code for services not listed above, such as outreach and the transportation of veterans to and from VA medical facilities.

February

2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Groundhog Day 	3
4	5	6 Radio Show 10A	7 Commissioners Meeting - 3 PM - Public Welcome	8 Vet Center on Location 9am—4pm. Call for an appointment	9	10
11	12	13	14 St. Valentines Day 	15 JVC Meeting 7:30p	16	17
18	19 OFFICE CLOSED: Presidents Day	20	21 Commissioners Meeting - 3 PM - Public Welcome	22 Vet Center on Location 9am—4pm. Call for an appointment	23	24
25	26	27	28			



KNOX COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

VETERANS MONTHLY

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2 DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT FEBRUARY 2018

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK - KEVIN L. HENTHORN

It's February already and thoughts of spring are in the forefront of our minds. It won't be long and we'll be seeing you all at the County Fair! Ok that's a while away, just trying to think warm thoughts.

Your Knox County Veterans Commission / Office has once again requested its full budget allowed by the law, and it was approved by the County Commissioners. We are pleased that there were once again no issues surrounding this request and all parties involved were able to discuss the 2018 budget needs professionally and are very pleased with the working relations with our County Commissioners.

There will be no disruption in services or relief for our Knox County Veterans, widows and families. We hope to continue to grow our services to you all this year. It is our hope that we will be hosting even more service organization meetings. We will also be offering in house financial assistance training and general veterans benefits seminars and training opportunities.

We have many ideas on how to better our services and reach all the veterans and their families we can. However we can't do this on our own, we need your input. If you have any suggestions on how we could better serve our community please let us know.

We would like to have your feedback on the following ideas and services we are contemplating or already doing:

- Office hours
- Outreach programming
- Public Speaking
- Seminars/ Trainings
- Counseling
- Open Houses
- Resource materials

Please feel free to contact and give us any ideas on how we may be able to better serve you. All of our contact info is on the last page of this Newsletter. Thank you once again for the privilege to serve my community and God Bless you all.



Kevin Henthorn,
Executive Director

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Feb. 6th — Veteran's Office Radio Program, WMVO 1300, 10am
- Veterans Service Office Commissioners first & third Wed. at 3 p.m. Public Welcome
- Vet Center Counseling on location Feb. 8th & 22nd, call for an appointment.
- OFFICE CLOSED - Feb. 19th, Presidents' Day



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

MELISSA SHANK

The Veterans Service Commission and office staff are proud to help our area veterans with their financial hardships and to help get them back on their feet. Each application for financial assistance is evaluated on a case by case basis. The Veterans Service Commissioners primary concern is to help the veteran and their dependents that are in need of immediate financial assistance. The financial assistance grants provided are not intended to be on a long term, on going basis. They are designed to provide assistance to those who encounter situations usually of emergent need that threatens their health or safety. An applicant for assistance must utilize all available income and resources. All applicants must provide proof on household income and proof of all bills paid and due for the past 30 days. There are no minimum or maximum levels established for financial assistance. All applicants who are physically capable of work must be actively seeking employment. The financial assistance is for temporary situations and not for month-to-month relief. If you are in need of financial assistance please call our office and set up an appointment. We are open Monday-Friday from 8a-4p

Hello all DAV Van riders !!! It's that time of year again as we reflect on all the services we provide and investigate better ways of serving you as well as audit our current records and policies.

One of our long time policies regarding picking veterans up at their private residence is always at the top of our list of concerns. As you know, mandated by law, we are to provide transportation from **our OFFICE to the VA medical facilities**. However, we feel as though it is important to provide additional "pick up" locations throughout the county to make utilizing our services even easier for you.

The question of residential pick up often comes up with a small percentage of riders. There are multiple reasons as to why we are unable to provide residential pick up. The difficulty in locating your residence in the dark or bad weather, the liability of pulling into or backing out of private property in relation to getting stuck or damaging property, and also the issue of riders not being ready or the need to wait additional time for riders to enter or exit our vans. There are multiple reasons as you may now see. However, one of the biggest reasons is TIME. This meaning we transport almost 2,000 riders every year. It takes too much time to pick every rider up at his or her home and get underway to the clinic. We simply cannot spend an hour driving around the county navigating back roads and driveways before leaving the county. It should not be a hardship on any of you to ride our vans. NO veteran should have to spend over 2 hours in a van before reaching the Columbus clinic. Only 2 veterans needing residential pick up can add 30 minutes to a route. Our pick up locations are on public property, well lit, with safe and ample parking, as well as provides safe, clean and level areas for loading and unloading.

Our ONLY exception for residential pick up is if a veteran is **'MEDICALY HOUSEBOUND'**. This means that we need confirmation that your driving privileges have been **'MEDICALY REVOKED'** by your doctor. Even still if your spouse or household family member can provide transportation, you must still come to a pick up location.

We understand that there are many things that can render it difficult to get to a pick up location. We are sympathetic to these issues but we owe it to the other 2,000 veterans we serve to provide an expedited service to and from the clinics the best we can.

Situations such as, *not owning a car, not having a drivers license, car is broke down, no one able to drive you to PU location*, **ARE NOT** basis for residential pick up. We suggest that you utilize whatever means you may use throughout your daily life such as, going to the store, shopping, church and other places... We are confident that you will utilize family, friends, neighbors and even our local public transportation KAT for rides to and from our pick up locations. KAT is only about a \$1 for most rides.

We hope that you enjoy the services we provide and will utilize them as much as you need. For additional details, please feel free to contact me or attend a Commission meeting anytime.



www.shutterstock.com - 374771890



New Online Tool Will Provide Veterans With Customized Instructions for Discharge Upgrade Process

WASHINGTON — The Department of Defense (DOD), through a joint initiative with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), has launched a new web-based tool that will provide customized guidance to Veterans who desire to upgrade or change the conditions of their military discharge.

By answering a few short questions, Veterans will receive information on the specific armed services board to contact, the form/s to fill out, special guidance applicable to their case, where to send their application and helpful tips for appealing their discharge.

"This new tool and partnership with DOD is one of many VA initiatives offered to Veterans who believe they may have been unfairly discharged or received an unfair discharge characterization," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Veterans who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous or warrants an upgrade are encouraged to use the tool and then apply for review."

DOD officials also praised the new innovative tool.

"We are thrilled to have partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs in developing this wonderful and easily accessible tool," said Mr. Robert Wilkie, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. "We support our Veterans, whether they served recently or long ago, and we are excited to introduce a tool that will individualize the guidance for those who desire an upgrade or change in their military discharge."

The military has estimated that tens of thousands of Veterans with less than honorable discharges are especially likely to have unjust discharges deserving of upgrades. These are Veterans who were discharged due to incidents relating to post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury or sexual orientation. Fragmented and confusing information has historically deterred Veterans from obtaining crucial information and — in many cases — necessary benefits.

The discharge upgrade tool is available at <https://www.vets.gov/discharge-upgrade-instructions>.

VA, Health and Human Services Announce Partnership to Strengthen Prevention of Fraud, Waste and Abuse Efforts

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a partnership to share data, data analytics tools and best practices for identifying and preventing fraud, waste and abuse.

This newest partnership enhances ongoing efforts between the country's two largest public-private health-care payment organizations to help America's Veterans by leveraging the gains made by CMS.

"The VA-HHS alliance represents the latest example of VA's commitment to find partners to assist with identifying new and innovative ways to seek out fraud, waste and abuse and ensure every tax dollar given to VA supports Veterans," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "This effort marks another step toward achieving President Trump's 10-point plan to reform the VA by collaborating with our federal partners to improve VA's ability to investigate fraud and wrongdoing in VA programs."

CMS continues to focus on reducing and eliminating fraud, waste and abuse in Medicare, and in 2010, it established the Center for Program Integrity to help with this work. CMS estimates that its program integrity activities saved Medicare operations \$17 billion in fiscal 2015. Other HHS combined efforts — including law enforcement — contributed to greater program savings.

VA plans to capitalize on the advancements in analytics CMS has made by concentrating on its use of advanced technology, statistics and data analytics to improve fraud detection and prevention efforts. Additionally, in November 2017, VA invited industry experts to provide information on the latest commercial sector tools and techniques to enhance VA's fraud detection capabilities. In April, VA will invite these industry experts to demonstrate their capabilities for detecting and preventing fraud, waste and abuse and recovering improper payments.

"We have a special obligation to keep America's promise to those who have served our country and ensure that Veterans receive high-quality and accessible health care," said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. "CMS is sharing lessons learned and expertise to support VA to identify waste and fraud and eliminate these abuses of the public trust. Using state-of-the-art data analytics, CMS is partnering with VA to better detect and prevent wrongdoing in its programs."

By using CMS' successes in its program integrity protocols, VA will be able to close existing gaps in its own claims payment process.