



Veterans Service Program Newsletter



July 2010



New Option for Marking Veterans' Graves in Private Cemeteries Veterans' Medallion

WASHINGTON (June 29, 2010) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki announced today that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is offering bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a Veteran. "For Veterans not buried in a national or state Veterans cemetery, or those without a government grave marker, VA is pleased to offer this option that highlights their service and sacrifices for our country," said Secretary Shinseki. The new item can be furnished instead of a traditional government headstone or marker for Veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Under federal law, eligible Veterans buried in a private cemetery are entitled to either a government-furnished grave marker or the new medallion, but not both. Veterans buried in a national or state Veterans cemetery will receive a government headstone or marker of the standard design authorized at that cemetery. The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1 ½ inches in width. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word "Veteran" at the top and the branch of service at the bottom. Next of kin will receive the medallion, along with a kit that will allow the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the medallion to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover. More information about VA-furnished headstones, markers and medallions can be found at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmtype.asp>. VA is currently developing an application form for ordering the medallion. Until it is available, applicants may use the form for ordering government headstones and markers, VA Form 40-1330. Instructions on how to apply for a medallion are found on the VA Web site at www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp. Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a

burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or grave marker. The new medallions will be available only to Veterans buried in private cemeteries without a government headstone or marker. Families of eligible decedents may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment. VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than 3 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict -- from the Revolutionary War to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan -- are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the VA Web site on the Internet at www.cem.va.gov or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

VA Announces Change to Medication Copays

Taking effect July 1, the increase to \$9 from \$8 is the first change in VA's medication co pay since Jan. 1, 2006. Veterans who generally have higher income and no service-connected disabilities - referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 Veterans - will now pay an additional \$1 for each 30-day supply of outpatient medications. This change does not impact Veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 who will continue to pay \$8 for each 30-day supply of medications for their non-service connected conditions unless otherwise exempted. These Veterans will also continue to have their out-of-pocket expenses for VA outpatient medications capped at \$960 per calendar year. Veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a disability rated 50 percent or greater -- who are known as Priority Group 1 Veterans -- are exempt from the co pay. VA generally sets its outpatient medication co pay rate based upon a regulation that ties the rate to the Medical Consumer Price Index for prescription drugs. Veterans who have difficulty paying copayments for outpatient medications should discuss the matter with their local VA enrollment coordinator. Veterans may also contact VA at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit VA's health eligibility Web site at www.va.gov/healtheligibility.

If you have news or events you would like to post, please submit the information to:
Cindy Stivers, VSO at Cindy.Stivers@mvc.dps.mo.gov or
Karla Alsberge, OSA at Karla.Alsberge@mvc.dps.mo.gov for submission
www.mvc.dps.mo.gov



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MO STATE FAIR

The State Fair runs from August 12 – 22. As in years past, we have the opportunity to have a booth and reach out to the Veterans and their families of Missouri and inform them of the benefits and programs of the Missouri Veterans Commission.

Some dates to keep in mind:

Thursday, August 12 – Opening Day!!

Two Buck Bonanza: \$2 admission all day,
\$2 concession and vendor specials

Sunday, August 15 – Homegrown Heroes Day

(Military Appreciation): Free admission for active military and Veterans with ID, \$1 off admission for immediate family members, \$5 admission after 5 p.m. for others

Thursday, August 19 – Thrift Thursday

\$4 admission all day

Sunday, August 22 – Fair Finale/ ½ Price Day

\$4 admission all day

Still in need of volunteers - I hope you will consider volunteering for a shift. Please contact Jamie Reed for scheduling times available at 573-522-4228 or Jamie.Reed@mvc.dps.mo.gov.

Information from Bob Harvey

When interviewing veterans about a claim for service connection, the first requirement is that a disability, whether residuals of an injury or disease, must exist currently. The fact that an injury or disease occurred during active duty does not automatically warrant service connection. The medical evidence must show current existence; and, either a link to the service event, or, continuity of the condition in a chronic state since service. We see a lot of claims for acute injury or illness in service many years ago; with no current evidence it still exists.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Central Office/Veterans Services Program/Cemeteries Program.

Robert Willson, Veterans Service Officer for the Southwest Region, was selected as the July 2010 Missouri Veterans Commission Employee of the Month.

Robert was selected for the exemplary and consistent manner in which he carried out his duties while managing a number of changes in his VSP coverage area. These changes included moving his home office from Branson West to the county courthouse in Forsyth, managing the opening of a new and very busy outreach location at the Branson VA clinic, and helping secure American Legion support for a new outreach location at the Kimberling City American Legion post. Additionally, Robert agreed without hesitation to cover a weekend veteran's outreach event outside of his coverage area. All of this was accomplished without asking for assistance and with a minimum of "fuss and bother."

Robert will be honored at a ceremony at the Missouri Veterans Commission Central Office on July 12, 2010 at 10:30 am.

Congratulations Robert!

Retirement September 1, 2010

Karen Etzler , Women Veteran Coordinator.

Karen has worked for Missouri Veterans Commission for 11 years and within the last 6 years held the position of the Women Veteran State Coordinator. In September 2009 was appointed to the Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. Karens' dedication and hard work towards the Veterans, the Women Veterans Program and the Women Veteran newsletter will be admired and greatly appreciated. I hope she takes good memories with her on her new chapter. We wish her Congratulations on her Retirement and she'll be missed.

Congratulations Karen !!

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