



# ***NEWSLETTER***

Quarterly APRIL 2010

## **HAMILTON COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION**

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Clifford H. Park – Veterans of Foreign Wars  
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### **STAFF:**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE – BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES**

12/16/09

#### **U.S. Armed Forces Symbol Now Available on Driver Licenses and State Identification Cards**

Columbus – Members of the U.S. Armed Forces now have the option of displaying a symbol representing this on their driver license (DL) or state identification card (ID)

through the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV).

House Bill 450 of the 127<sup>th</sup> General Assembly gave the BMV the authority to place this special symbol on DLs and IDs. Certain merchants may offer discounts or unique services to veterans or current members of the Armed Forces and they will now be able to conveniently use their DL or ID to prove their affiliation for these discounts. This symbol is not intended to be used in

lieu of a military identification card issued by any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

There is no additional cost to have the symbol added, other than the normal fees associated with applying for or renewing a DL or ID. The Armed Forces symbol can be added to the DL or ID at any Deputy Registrar. The applicant must submit a copy of his/her DD 214 displaying their military service or Honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed forces.

**NEWS RELEASE**  
Department of Veterans  
Affairs 1/20/10

**VA Reaching Out to  
Students and Schools to  
Speed Benefit Payments  
“Shared Responsibilities”  
Among Schools, Students  
and VA**

WASHINGTON – In a coordinated effort to speed up the processing of Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits this spring, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it has been reaching out to student Veterans, service members, university officials and other partners to meet its commitment to an aggressive processing goal by 2/1/10. February 1 is the first date spring payments are due and presently VA has processed over 72,000 of the approximately 103,000 spring enrollments received. Since inception of the historic new program last year, VA has paid over 41.3 billion in benefits to more than 170,000 students.

“Only by VA and all of our partners working together will students be better served,” said VA’s Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Mike Walcoff. “We are making a concerted effort to reach

out to everyone to provide the timely benefits that those who served our nation deserve.”

Walcoff said there are “shared responsibilities” between VA, universities and the students to ensure the success of processing the education benefits on time.”

VA has sent letters to university presidents and school certifying officials, state Veterans affairs directors, and notified Veteran service organizations, congressional members and other education stakeholders highlighting VA’s emphasis on the importance of timely submission of school enrollment information.

VA also released a “Hip Pocket” guide and checklist, with helpful tips to assist Veterans in the application process. The guide and checklist can be found on college campuses and VA’s GI Bill website [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)

VA is working to provide timely payments to all eligible Veterans to ensure that students are spared the financial hardships which some faced during the fall 2009 term.

To help address the high volume of claims received for the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, VA hired 530 employees, bring the total number of education claims processors to 1,200. Employees have been working mandatory overtime since August 2009. Additionally, the department awarded a temporary contract to assist with education claims processing.

Veterans, service members, reservists, and members of the National Guard who served on active duty since September 11, 2001 are potentially eligible for the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. It provides payments for tuition and fees, as well as a housing allowance and stipend for books and supplies for many participants.

Under the new GI Bill, some members of the armed forces may transfer benefits to a spouse or dependent children.

Information about the Post-9/11 GI Bill, as well as other educational benefit programs, is available at VA’s website [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) or call 1-888-a442-4551.

**NEWS RELEASE**  
Department of Veterans  
Affairs 3/18/10

**VA Recognizes  
“Presumptive” Illnesses  
in Iraq, Afghanistan  
Decision Simplifies  
Application for Disability  
Pay**

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking steps to make it easier for Veterans to obtain disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf War or Afghanistan. This will be the beginning of historic change for how VA considers Gulf War Veterans illnesses.

Following recommendations made by VA’s Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, VA is publishing a proposed regulation in the *Federal Register* that will establish new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War, or in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001.

“We recognize the frustrations that many Gulf

War and Afghanistan Veterans and their families experience on a daily basis as they look for answers to health questions, and seek benefits from VA,” said Secretary Shinseki.

The proposed rule includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with the nine diseases: Brucellosis, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Coxiella burnettii* (Q fever), malaria, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Nontyphoid *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

For non-presumptive conditions, a Veteran is required to provide medical evidence that can be used to establish an actual connection between military service in Southwest Asia or in Afghanistan, and a specific disease.

With the proposed rule, a Veteran will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan, and a current diagnosis of one of the nine diseases. Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after

consideration of all comments received.

The decision was made after reviewing the 2006 report the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), titled, “gulf War and Health Volume 5: Infectious Diseases.” The 2006 report differed from the four prior reports by looking at the long-term health effects of certain diseases determined to pertinent to Gulf War Veterans.

The 1998 Persian Gulf War Veterans Act requires the Secretary to review NAS reports that study scientific information and possible associations between illnesses and exposure to toxic agents by Veterans who serviced in the Persian Gulf War.

Because the Persian Gulf War has not officially been declared ended, Veterans serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom are eligible for VA’s new presumptions. Secretary Shinseki decided to include Afghanistan Veterans in these presumptions because NAS found that the nine diseases are prevalent in that country.

Noting that today’s proposed regulation reflects a significant

determination of a positive association between service in the Persian Gulf War and certain diseases, Secretary Shinseki added, "By setting up scientifically-based presumptive service connection, we give these deserving Veterans a simple way to get the benefits they have earned in service to our country."

Last year, VA received more than one million claims for disability compensation and pension. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and beneficiaries. Presently, the basic monthly rate of compensation ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 to veterans without any dependents.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable, monthly monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.

For more information about health problems associated with military service during operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and related VA programs go to [www.publichealth.va.gov/](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/)

[exposures/gulfwar](http://www.va.gov) or [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for information about disability compensation.

### **ATTACK PROOF YOUR HEART** Veterans Health 2010

About a half-million Americans die each year from coronary heart disease, which is caused by a narrowing of the coronary arteries that feed the heart and puts people at risk for a heart attack.

While age and a family history of heart disease are risk factors you can't change, you can improve your overall heart health by finding ways to reduce other risks with heart lifestyle changes.

**-Eat better.** Choose a balanced diet with foods from all major food groups, emphasizing fruits, vegetables and grains.

**-Choose to lose.** Make the commitment to lose excess weight with a good diet and exercise.

**-Lower cholesterol levels.** Avoid foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol and trans fatty acids. If diet isn't enough to produce improvements, ask your doctor about taking a cholesterol lowering drug.

**-Watch your blood pressure.**

Have your blood pressure checked frequently. If lifestyle changes don't work, your doctor may prescribe antihypertensive medication to control high blood pressure.

**-Enjoy yourself.** Take up a sport or exercise to help lower blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, as well as to stay in shape and reduce stress.

**-Give up smoking.** It's not easy to quit, but there are many sources of help, from gums and patches to smoking cessation classes. Keep trying until you find what works for you.

**-Ask your healthcare provider about taking an aspirin a day.** It prevents blood from clotting, the primary cause of heart attacks. But aspirin therapy may not be right for everyone.

### **NEWSLETTER**

**This Newsletter is published quarterly. The VSC welcomes articles of general interest to the veteran community of Hamilton County. Please submit your articles by mail or fax to our office. Be sure to include a contact person and telephone number.**

**Deadline Next Issue  
JUNE 15, 2010**

# OUTREACH



**APRIL – MAY – JUNE**

**NORWOOD SENIOR CENTER  
1810 COURTLAND AVENUE  
NORWOOD, OHIO 45212**

*Wednesday, April 28, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.*

**NORTH COLLEGE HILL SENIOR CENTER  
1586 GOODMAN AVENUE  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45224**

*Tuesday, May 4, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.*

**AMERICAN LEGION POST 199  
10700 CAMPBELL ROAD  
HARRISON, OHIO 45030**

*Wednesday, June 23, 2010 from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.*

**HAMILTON COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION  
230 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 1100, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  
Phone: 513-946-3300  
Fax: 513-946-3320**

# MEMORIAL DAY

MAY 31, 2010



**CHEVIOT, OHIO**

***HONORING VETERANS PAST  
AND PRESENT***

**PARADE**

**STARTS AT HARRISON AND FRANCES AVES. AT 11:00 AM AND  
ENDS AT HARVEST HOME PARK**

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PARADE AT HARVEST HOME LODGE  
PARADE AWARDS PRESENTATION AND MILITARY MEMORIAL  
SERVICE INCLUDING RIFLE SALUTE AND TAPS**

***SPONSORED BY THE WESTERN HILLS VETERANS COUNCIL***