

# UNDER THE BIG SKY

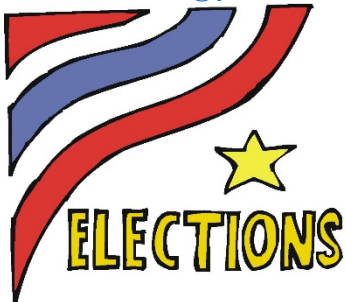


## A TREASURE STATE NEWSLETTER

February 2016 Issue

### MONTANA STATE COUNCIL APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

The bi-annual meeting of the Montana State Council will be held on April 16th at the American Legion in Bozeman. This will be an election meeting. Officers for President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer are open. All interested members intending to run should send a letter of intent to President Beverly Stewart with a short bio to be printed in the March newsletter. Email to [vvamontanasc@yahoo.com](mailto:vvamontanasc@yahoo.com)



An abbreviated list of some of the duties of each position has been sent to the chapters. Anyone needing information can contact any of the current State Council officers.

Any VVA member or other interested individual can contact the State Council by clicking on the Contact Us link next to the Home link on the web page

#### CHAPTER MEETINGS

GLENDIVE 234-3RD Mon  
BILLINGS 334-2nd Tues  
HELENA 626-1st Tues  
BOZEMAN 788-1st Tues  
BITTERROOT 938-1st Wed  
NORTHWEST 1087-2nd Wed  
For Contact Information for each chapter visit the State Council Website  
[www.vvamontana.org](http://www.vvamontana.org) and click on Who We Are.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD???

[WWW.VVA788.ORG](http://WWW.VVA788.ORG)

[WWW.VVA938.ORG](http://WWW.VVA938.ORG)

[VVACHAPTER 1087 FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

**CONTACT SENATOR DAINES' OFFICE IN YOUR AREA AND  
ASK ABOUT THE VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT. IT IS YOUR  
LEGACY.**

## ***MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup> IS THE OFFICIAL MONTANA WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERAN DAY***

All chapters should be getting their plans in order to celebrate this day. The bill officially marking this date was signed into law in 2012. As soon as you know your activities contact the Montana State Council so they can be posted on the website and broadcast to the local media.

**THIS IS YOUR DAY TO SHINE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
SERVICE AND WELCOME HOME!**



**Good news -ALL LIFE MEMBERSHIPS IN VVA ARE NOW \$100!**

***URGENT!*** CONTACT CONGRESS ZINKE. IT IS TIME HE STEPPED UP TO THE PLATE! HE STILL HAS NOT SIGNED ONTO HOUSE BILL 1769 THE TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH ACT.

## TRICARE Pharmacy Copays to Change Feb 1, 2016

According to a January 4 Health.mil posting by TRICARE staff, military pharmacies and TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery will remain the lowest cost pharmacy option for TRICARE beneficiaries when some TRICARE pharmacy copays change in 2016. On Feb 1, 2016, most copays for prescription drugs at Home Delivery and retail network pharmacies will increase slightly. The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requires TRICARE to change its prescription copays. All drugs at military pharmacies and generic drugs through Home Delivery are still available at no cost to beneficiaries. Copays for brand-name drugs through Home Delivery increase from \$16 to \$20, for up to a 90-day supply. At retail pharmacies, generic drug copays go from \$8 to \$10, and brand name drug copays go from \$20 to \$24, for up to a 30-day supply. Copays for non-formulary drugs and for drugs at non-network pharmacies will also change.

Beneficiaries can save up to \$208 in 2016 for each brand name prescription drug they switch from retail pharmacy to Home Delivery. Home Delivery offers safe and convenient delivery of your prescription drugs right to your mailbox. To see the new TRICARE pharmacy copays, learn more about the TRICARE Pharmacy benefit, or move your prescription to Home Delivery, visit [www.tricare.mil/pharmacy](http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacy).

### New VA Apps for Women

A guide to VA's new mobile apps for women veterans is available at <https://mobile.va.gov/app/caring-4-women-veterans>

Check out these stories and more at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

VA Plans to Propose Expanded Disability Benefits Eligibility for Veterans Exposed to Contaminated Water at Camp Lejeune - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. (12/17/15)

VA Makes Changes to Veterans Choice Program - The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced a number of changes to make participation in the Veterans Choice Program easier and more convenient for Veterans who need to use it. The move, which streamlines eligibility requirements, follows feedback from Veterans along with organizations working on their behalf. (12/1/15)

**Defense Dept. Agrees to Quarterly Disclosure of PTSD Records VVA, NVCLR Settle FOIA Suit Over "Bad Paper" Discharges**

(Wash., D.C.) Last week, the U.S. District Court in Connecticut approved a settlement in *Vietnam Veterans of America et al v. Dept. of Defense et al.*, a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by the National Veterans Council for Legal Redress and Vietnam Veterans America against the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). The veteran's groups sought records regarding implementation of a September 2014 directive by then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel requiring that military record correction boards give "liberal consideration" to applications by veterans with PTSD who had received an other-than-honorable or other bad discharge and later seek to have their discharge status upgraded. Under the settlement, DOD agreed to release statistics on a quarterly basis for the next two years concerning PTSD applications and adjudications by each board and each service branch. "Vietnam Veterans of America has long held that thousands of Vietnam veterans suffering from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder were wrongfully discharged with bad paper," said John Rowan, VVA National President. "The overwhelming majority of them were not malingerers. They were not cowards. They served honorably and well and did what was asked of them. But they were suffering from what is now known as PTSD at a time when PTSD was not an accepted mental health diagnosis. This settlement will help veterans and the public ensure that the record correction boards faithfully implement Secretary Hagel's instruction and enable many of these veterans to get a modicum of the justice denied them for so long." "Nearly two years ago, NVCLR and my brother Conley Monk helped bring a class-action lawsuit against the Department of Defense to hold its record correction boards accountable," said Garry Monk, Executive Director for the National Veterans Council for Legal Redress. "For decades, these boards denied upgrades to veterans with less than honorable discharges when these men and women had service-related PTSD. We welcomed the Hagel Memo and believe this settlement will allow the public to monitor the military's compliance with its command. We now need the Department of Defense to make a serious and coordinated effort to reach out to veterans to make sure our troops know where they can find help to apply for an upgrade and remove the lifelong stigma of a bad paper discharge." "The court order approving this settlement requires DOD to disclose, on a quarterly basis and for the next two years, the number of PTSD applications received by each Army, Navy, and Air Force record correction or discharge review board, as well as the number of applications approved and denied and their docket numbers," said Prof. Michael J. Wishnie, Director of the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School, which represented the plaintiffs in the suit. "For the first time, this will allow veterans, their advocates, and the public to know whether DOD is fulfilling its twin obligations under the Hagel Memo to conduct a vigorous campaign of outreach to eligible veterans and to give 'liberal consideration' to the discharge upgrade applications the boards actually receive." The Hagel Memo is available [here](#). "Unfinished Business: Correcting 'Bad Paper' for Veterans with PTSD," a November 2015 report that analyzes information previously released as a result of this lawsuit and which was prepared for VVA and NVCLR by Sundiata Sidibe and Francisco Unger of the Veterans Legal Services Clinic, is available [here](#).