

The Official Newsletter of the Cedar County Veterans Affairs Office

VA WARNS VETERANS OF TELEPHONE PRESCRIPTION SCAM

ISSUE 2

Fall 2009

(Courtesy of news release from the Department of Veterans Affairs September 17 2009.)

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

“America’s Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the Department built for them,” said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “VA simply does not call Veterans and

ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone.”

Veteran Service Organizations have brought to VA’s attention that callers are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say VA recently

changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and ask for the Veteran’s credit card number.

“VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines,” Cross said. “Nor has VA changed its long-standing commitment to protect the personal information of this nation’s Veterans.”

Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, toll-free, 1-877-222-8387.



New Efforts to Explore Health Consequences of Vietnam Service

(Courtesy of news release from the Department of Veterans Affairs September 14, 2009) Washington—Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today plans to begin additional research by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to better understand the health consequences of service in Vietnam.

“The National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study (NVVLS) will allow VA to pursue another valuable research tool,” Secretary Shinseki said. “The insight we gain from this study will help give us an understanding of how to better serve America’s Veterans.”

NVVLS will study the Vietnam generation’s physical and psychological health. The new study will supplement research already underway at VA, including studies on PTSD and on the health of women Vietnam Veterans. This is a follow-up study to a previous one that concluded in 1988.

VA has begun work to solicit bids to conduct the study, which is expected to run from 2011 through 2013.

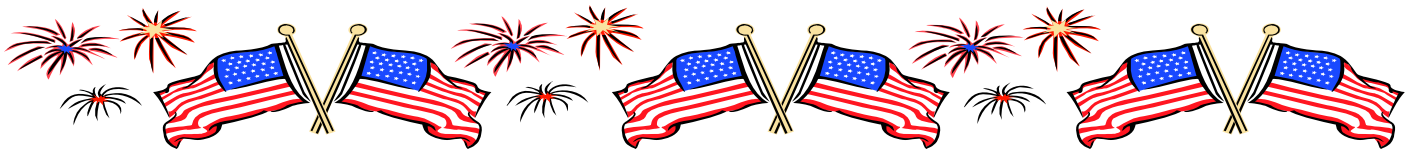
Special points of interest:

- Monthly Commissioner Meetings are held at 5:30 p.m. in the basement of the Cedar County Courthouse. The meetings will be as follows: October 14th, November 18th, and December 16th.
- The normal office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, please remember that the office is operated by 1 staff member. Therefore, there will be times when the office is closed. **For your convenience, it is best to call 886-2170 before coming to the office to set up an appointment time.**

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DEATH PENSION AND BENEFIT INFORMATION

A death pension is a benefit paid to eligible dependents of deceased wartime Veterans.

Eligibility Requirements:

- The deceased Veteran was discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions; AND
- He or she served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a war, or must have had a service-connected disability justifying discharge for disability. If the Veteran died in service but not in the line of duty, pension may be payable if the Veteran had completed at least two years of honorable service; AND
- The dependent is the surviving spouse (spouse must not have remarried), or the unmarried child of the deceased Veteran (children must be under the age of 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA - approved school); AND

- The dependent's countable income is below an annual limit set by law.

No death pension shall be paid under this chapter to a surviving spouse of a Veteran unless the spouse was married within a specific time frame as follows:

- January 1, 1957 in the case of a surviving spouse of a World War II Veteran; or
- February 1, 1965, in the case of a surviving spouse of a Korean conflict Veteran; or
- May 8, 1985, in the case of a surviving spouse of a Vietnam era Veteran; or
- January 1, 2001, in the case of a surviving spouse of a Veteran of the Persian Gulf War;
- For one year or more; or
- For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

There are income limitations. These limitations are effective December 1, 2008. These limitations are based on annual income and need.

For instance, a surviving spouse alone must have annual income less than \$7,933. If you are housebound without dependents is \$9,696.

If you are a surviving spouse in need of aid and attendance (nursing home care or assisted living) your annual income must be less than \$12,681.

VA pays eligible spouses and dependents the difference between his or her countable income and the annual income limit outlined in the above table. The difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar.

The VA shall deny or discontinue payment of pension to a surviving spouse when the corpus of the estate of the surviving spouse exceeds the net worth limitations.

HONORS CORNER

This corner is reserved for recognizing the Cedar County Veterans who have left us. If you have recently lost a loved one who served in the military, please contact the office with their information.

We will publish names, branch of service and service times of those who have recently passed.

Please understand that the office does not receive a list of Veterans who have

passed. The only names that can be published are those received from family or friends who contact the office with the information.

We will do our best to honor those who served our country honorably and be sure to publish it as such.



Military Service Member Homeownership Assistance

The Iowa Legislature created the Military Service Member Homeownership Assistance Program (MHOA) in 2005 to help eligible armed forces service members purchase a primary residence in Iowa. The program provides up to \$5,000 that may be used toward down payment on a qualifying home purchase and/or closing costs on a qualifying first purchase money mortgage. The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) administers the program.

Eligible home buyers:

The program is available to service members who at the time of applying for a grant under the program:

- Have served 90 days active duty since September 11,

- 2001 (other than training);
- Is a federal status injured service person having served in active duty since September 11, 2001; or
- Is a surviving spouse of said eligible service person, all who have served honorably.

AND

- Is purchasing a qualified home;
- Utilizes an IFA Participating Lender (if financing the purchase); and Uses IFA's FirstHome or FirstHome Plus program, if eligible. Or if not eligible for FirstHome or FirstHome Plus, uses a permanent mortgage loan for financing the purchase. To learn more, call 1-800-432-7230.

Qualifying homes:

A home is eligible under this program if it:

1. Is located in the state of Iowa;
2. Is purchased by the eligible service member as the service member's primary residence;
3. Falls into one of the following categories:
 - Single-family residences (including "stick-built" homes, modular homes, or manufactured homes, provided the home is attached to a permanent foundation and is taxed as real estate);
 - Condominiums;
 - Townhomes; or
 - Duplexes, if one of the units will be the primary residence of the service member.

Miscellaneous State of Iowa Military Programs

Military Property Tax Exemption:

Military veterans who (1) served on active duty and were honorably discharged or (2) members of reserve forces or Iowa National Guard who served at least 20 years qualify for this exemption. The Veteran must apply with the local assessor. Once accepted, the exemption is ongoing. \$2.4 million has been appropriated for fiscal year 2010.

Iowa Veterans Cemetery

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery began operation on July 3, 2008. The cemetery is available for honorably discharged Veterans, their spouses, and children for burial. Honorably discharged Veterans will be interred at no charge, their spouses and dependents will be buried for a \$300 fee. For more information contact the cemetery at (515)996-9048.

WWII Honor Flight

WWII Veterans are eligible for a free flight to visit the WWII monument in Washington DC. The all-day trip provides an incredible experience and WWII Veterans are encouraged to apply. Handicap assistance is available. Flights are available out of Des Moines or Council Bluffs. Applications are available. Contact Cedar County Veterans Affairs for more information.

**The Official Newsletter of the
Cedar County Veterans Affairs
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Veteran Commissioners

Who are your Cedar County Veteran Commissioners?

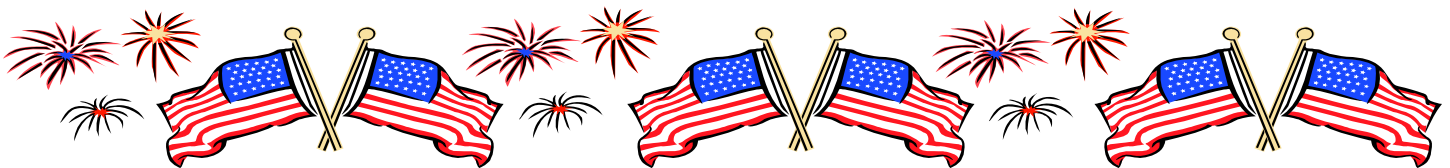
Bruce Jeffries, Chairman

John Sauer

Patrick Ihns

Marlin Hillyer

Virgil Kruckenber



Holiday Food Certificates

The Cedar County Veterans Affairs office is getting ready for another year. The office annually gives assistance to those in need in the form of a food certificate.

This program is possible through county tax dollars and donations. This program assists those that fall within 185% of the federal poverty level. Food certificates are given to those that qualify and the denomination depends on the number of family members residing in the home.

There are items that do not qualify

for purchase with the certificate. They are tobacco, alcohol, soda drinks, and deli items.

In the past years, local service organizations have also donated to the cause. Those monies are separated from the general donations to help Veterans or Widows of Veterans specifically.

Sign up for these food certificates start on **Monday November 16th and run through December 18th. In order to sign up you will need to make an appointment.** At this appointment your financial infor-

mation will be requested. The appointment will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

If you are interested in applying for a certificate, please contact the office on Monday November 16th or before December 18th. The office **will not** be making appointments prior to November 16th for this program.

If you are interested in making a financial donation, please make your check payable to Cedar County Veterans Affairs and mail to the office.