



Montgomery County

Veterans Service Commission

Newsletter

August 2021

Director's Message

For the first time, some burn pit victims will get presumptive status for disability benefits. It is estimated that more than 3.5 million troops were exposed to the toxic smoke from burn pits during overseas deployments over the last 20 years. Currently, only about 241,000 Veterans have signed up for the VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. This registry is designed to track illnesses related to burn pit exposure and ease access to Veterans benefits.

Even though only three illnesses are covered under the new burn pit presumptives, there are many rare cancers and respiratory illness that have afflicted our Veterans exposed to burn pits.

The rules could change again in coming months. Both the House and Senate are considering a sweeping toxic exposure bills that would grant the grant the presumptive benefits status for Veterans suffering from certain rare cancers and other respiratory illnesses that are not covered on the newly passed presumptives. If not already registered. Please get registered on the VA Burn Pit Registry at publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp.

Kimberly Frisco
Executive Director

Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits

Veterans exposed to harmful burn pit smoke while serving in certain overseas war zones will for the first time get presumptive disability benefits status as reported by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Currently, this presumptive benefit will cover only three illnesses - asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis - only if they manifested within 10 years of a Veteran's overseas service.

The areas and time periods covered include the following areas:

*Southwest Asia theater of operations (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and more) from August 1990 to the present; or

*Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti from September 19, 2001 to the present.

Any Veteran who has a pending claim on those issues identified does not need to resubmit a claim or any paperwork. But individuals whose claims were rejected before the new ruling will need to reapply under the new rules.

Coping with Current Events in Afghanistan

Veterans who served in Afghanistan may be experiencing a range of challenging emotions related to the U.S. withdrawal from the country. Veterans who served during other conflicts may also be feeling strong emotions as they may be reminded of their own deployment experiences.

Feeling distress is a normal reaction to negative events, especially ones that feel personal such as:

- Feeling frustrated, sad, helpless, distress, angry or betrayed
- Worrying about Afghans who worked with the U.S. military, like interpreters
- Experiencing an increase in mental health symptoms of PTSD or depression
- Sleeping poorly, drinking more or using more drugs
- Trying to avoid all reminders or media or shy away from social situations
- Having more military and homecoming memories
- Questioning the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made

Feeling distress is a normal reaction to negative events, especially ones that feel personal. Strategies for managing ongoing distress:

- Engage in positive, healthy activities that are rewarding, meaningful, or enjoyable
- Spend time with people who give you a sense of security, calm, or happiness
- Practice good self-care by engaging in activities such as listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing routines, spending time in nature or with animals, journaling or reading inspirational text
- Limit media exposure, especially if it is increasing your distress

If your distress continues or you are unable to function, consider seeking help. Dayton VA Medical Center is at 937-268-6511, the Vet Center is at 937-296-0489, or you can contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, press 1.

PAWS Act of 2021

This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to implement a grant program for the purpose of pairing service dogs with eligible veterans. Organizations that receive grants must provide veterinary health insurance coverage, hardware, and travel expenses for each service dog and veteran participating in the program.

Eligible veterans are those who (1) are enrolled in the VA health care system, (2) have been evaluated and treated for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but remain diagnosed with PTSD, (3) may benefit from a service dog, and (4) agree to successfully complete training provided by an eligible organization. Veterans are required to see a VA health care provider at least once every six months to determine whether the veteran continues to benefit from a service dog.

Read more about the VA's veterinary health benefits at <http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/ServiceAndGuideDogs.asp>.

Congratulations

Awarded "Volunteer of the Year" by The Presidents Club of Dayton. This organization encourages the spirit of servant leadership through active volunteer community service in our region. The organization celebrates this ideal by conducting celebrations of community volunteerism and sponsoring student scholarships for future community leaders.



Dan Semsel
Deputy Director,
MCVSC

Outreach

Looking for opportunities to share information on benefits Veterans have earned through the Department of the VA and assistance that the Montgomery County Veterans Service Office can provide? Please call 937-225-4808.



This Month in History

August 4, 1790 - Coast Guard established. Happy 231st Birthday!!!

August 7, 1782 - Purple Heart Medal established.

August 7, 1964 - United States enters into the Vietnam War

August 14, 1945 - End of War with Japan announced

August 14 - National Navajo Code Talkers Day

August 16 - National Airborne Day

About Us

Montgomery County Veterans

Services Commission

627 Edwin C. Moses Blvd.
4th Floor, East Medical Plaza
Dayton, OH 45417

Office Hours: Monday - Friday,
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Appointment Hours:
Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Phone: (937) 225-4801

SAVE THE DATE

November 17 - Veteran Coat Giveaway - Call for more information at 937-225-4801

Transportation Available for all VA and Community Medical Appointments

Offering day bus passes, Uber assistance for those not on a bus line or unable to walk to a bus stop, and Paratransit for those utilizing mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Call 937-225-4801 for more information.

Commission Meetings:

September 8, 2021 at 10:00am
October 13, 2021 at 10:00am
November 10, 2021 at 10:00am
December 8, 2021 at 10:00am

Our Commissioners

Jerry Hays, President,
Disabled American Veterans

Federico Rojas, Jr.,
Vice President,
Veterans of Foreign Wars

William Fried, Secretary,
Vietnam Veterans of America

James Dare,
American Legion

John Theobald,
AMVETS