



Education

Veteran Services
2100 Campus Drive SE,
Suite 200
Rochester, MN 55904
(507) 328-6355



Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (Chapter 31)

You may qualify for vocational rehabilitation and employment services to help with job training, employment accommodations, resume development, and job seeking skills coaching. Other services may be provided to assist Veterans in starting their own businesses or independent living services for those who are severely disabled and unable to work in traditional employment. Service members who have a percentage rated disability that began or became worse during active duty are eligible to apply. Eligible Service members and Veterans may also apply for educational vocational counseling. Please stop out to the Olmsted County Veterans Service office, and inquire about Vocational Rehabilitation if:

- You have received, or will eventually receive, an honorable discharge.
- You have a VA service connected disability rating of 10% with a serious employment handicap or 20% or more with an employment handicap.

The law generally provides for a 12-year basic period of eligibility in which services may be used. The 12-year period begins on the latter of these dates:

- Date of separation from active military duty or
- Date the veteran was first notified of a service-connected disability rating



HIRING OUR HEROES

Hiring Our Heroes is hosting a job fair for Veteran job seekers, active duty military members, guard and reserve members, and military spouses at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul. Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is a nationwide initiative to help Veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities.

Thursday, February 12, 2015

11:00 am—2:00 pm

Excel Energy Center

199 West Kellogg Boulevard

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Military Hiring fair and Minnesota Wild Salute Night

The first two-hundred pre-registered attendees to the fair and other Hiring our Heroes guests are eligible to receive up to two (2) FREE tickets for them and their families to attend that evening's game between the Minnesota Wild and the Florida Panthers. For the opportunity to register for up to two (2) FREE tickets please visit www.HiringOurHeroes.org



**PTSD Support
Group
for Veterans**

There will not be a February PTSD Support Group.

Next meeting will be Thursday March 26.

*******NO FEBRUARY MEETING*******

Thursday, March 26, 2015

6:30pm-8:30 p.m.

American Legion Post 92

315 1st Ave NW,

Rochester, MN, 55901

Jennifer at 507-328-6324 or

shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us



Olmsted County Veteran's Services



DAV Turkey Hunt

The Minnesota DAV will be hosting their annual Turkey Hunt for Veterans at Camp Ripley May 4-6, 2015. Applications available January 25 through March 6, 2015. Please stop by the Olmsted County Veterans Service Office to apply!

VA HEALTH CARE

The **Minneapolis VA Medical Center just started a QUICK Audiology clinic.** It allows us to see Veterans at a faster rate for simple fixes. **The quick clinic is only for veterans that already have hearing aids from the VA.** These appointments will take 30 minutes or less. If a veteran wants to utilize the quick clinic they can check with the Call Center for same-day availability or if they are already on site they can stop by the clinic to see if a time is available.

Audiology Quick Clinic Hours

Monday – Friday (0800-1100 ONLY)

Quick Clinic is for simple fixes only (NO EXAMS OR NEW FITTINGS):

- Tubing changes
- Order batteries
- Change wax trap
- Clean hearing aids
- Ask a question or go over HA care
- Order batteries
- Simple adjustments & programming
- Pair accessories

The second item is a change to the automated telephone call system, AudioCare, that makes reminder calls to Veterans to alert them of forthcoming appointments. Veteran and staff feedback indicated that the interactive menu associated with the calls resulted in unintentional cancellation of appointments. As a result we've changed AudioCare to an informational only phone call. Veterans still have the option to call "AudioCare Inquiry" direct and access interactive menu options to make changes at **1-855-560-1721**. Or they can talk to a staff member directly at the Patient Call Center for changes: **612-467-1100** or **866-414-5058 enter 9 1100#** M-F 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.



Olmsted County Veteran's Services

Southeastern Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery

A State Veterans Cemetery is under construction in Preston, Minnesota. It is expected to open in spring, 2015.

What is Provided?

Gravesite or Columbarium Niche
Pre-placed Grave liner (Standard Size)
Headstone/Niche Cover
Perpetual Care

Cost Veteran \$0 all burial options

Spouse/Eligible Dependent* \$700 (all burial options)

**Fees for spouse/eligible dependents cannot be prepaid and are subject to change.*

Pre-Registration

Pre-registration ensures your eligibility in advance and eliminates delays in providing military documents to the cemetery. Pre-registration applications are available at the Olmsted County Veterans Service Office, contact at: 507-328-6355.

Burial Arrangements

The funeral director or the next of kin makes burial arrangements for an eligible Veteran, spouse or dependent at the time of need by contacting the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery. A spouse or dependent is buried based upon the eligibility of the Veteran. To establish the Veteran's eligibility, a copy of the Veteran's military discharge document or a DD214 must be provided. The cemetery staff will set a tentative date for the committal service pending verification of service and character of discharge, and will notify the applicant when the committal service is scheduled. The proposed date and time will be approved only when the cemetery verifies eligibility and confirms the arrangements.

Floral Policies

Fresh cut flowers may be placed on graves at any time. Temporary containers and water are provided in locations around the main cemetery drive. Floral items will be removed from graves by cemetery personnel as soon as they become faded or unsightly. Artificial flowers may be placed on graves during the periods specified on the floral regulation signs located around the main cemetery drive. Plantings, statues, vigil lights, breakable objects of any nature and any other type of commemorative items are not permitted on the graves.

Committal Services

The cemetery can do seven committal services per day, Monday – Friday, on a first-come first served basis, every hour from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Committal services are limited to 20 minutes. All committal services should be brief and need to start on the hour at the scheduled time. Families who extend their services can greatly affect others who have reserved the following time. All committal services are held in the committal service building rather than at the actual gravesite because of burial rates and operational considerations. This ensures the family's safety and provides a fitting location for military honors and the ability of our staff to continue cemetery operations. The remains are removed from the committal service building for burial following the family's departure and are never left unattended by cemetery staff. Clergy services and other arrangements are the responsibility of the family or family representative. These arrangements are normally coordinated through the chosen funeral director.

Casket

A pre-placed grave liner will be provided, by the cemetery, for all casket burials. Traditional gravesites are available for individuals who choose to purchase a sealed burial vault from their chosen funeral director.

Cremation (In-ground)

In-ground cremation gravesites provide a traditional burial option for cremated remains.

In-ground cremation gravesites are marked with an upright granite headstone. The choice for the placement of cremated remains either in-ground or above-ground will need to be determined by the next-of-kin.

Cremation (Columbarium)

The columbarium provides an above-ground option for cremated remains. Columbarium niches are marked with a granite niche cover. The choice for the placement of cremated remains either in-ground or above-ground will need to be determined by the next-of-kin.



Upcoming local events

American Legion

3rd Tuesday of each month

315 First Ave NW

Rochester, MN 55901

7pm

Legion Riders

2nd Thursday of each month

7pm

Forty et eight at the American Legion

2nd Tuesday of each month

7pm

Military Order of the Purple Heart

3rd Thursday of each month,

6pm, March, May, July, September, and

November

VFW Post Meeting

2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215

16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902

7pm

DAV Meeting

2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge

1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901

5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm

Korean War Veterans

Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen

1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906

(Silver lake plaza)

8 AM

Marine Corp League Meeting

4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm, American Legion

315 First Ave NW, Rochester, MN 55901

POW/MIA Riders Association, Member Meeting

2nd Saturday of the month 11am-1pm, VFW Post

1215 16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902



January 9, 2015

RE: Stars and Stripes Article dated January 8, 2014

Olmsted County Veterans', Dependents' and Survivors',

Foremost, I would like to draw your attention to the attached article (following page). Please read this article and then revert back to this memo for our, the Olmsted County Veteran Services Office's, reaction to this article. The article speaks for itself and unfortunately this is not the first incident of this type of unethical behavior among County Veterans Services Officers in America. We do not personally know the individual depicted in this article but he shared our title.

In Olmsted County we pride ourselves with being strong advocates for our claimants. We all came from different backgrounds, upbringings, military occupations, and civilian experiences before we chose to pursue a career in veterans' advocacy. Despite diverse backgrounds we all uniquely share core similarities that stem directly from wearing the uniform in various parts of the world. These include; passion, morals, honor, selfless service and empathy to name a few. I strongly believe this is why each of us chose this career. Individuals like the one depicted in this article do not belong in our field as this type of behavior clearly works against the mindset that any good advocate should possess.

Although we, in Olmsted County, cannot possibly relate to the individual depicted in this article, we can however relate to you as our constituents and fellow servicemen and women. It is for this reason why we deemed it important to share this article with you, stating our opposition to the behavior depicted in the article, and affirming that this type of behavior will never occur in Olmsted County or to veterans that seek services from outside of our county borders. Good advocates educate veterans on various topics, including difficult ones.

We strive to deliver quality benefits to our eligible beneficiaries. This work is at times extremely difficult, stressful, time consuming and case specific. We work with a high volume of claimants each and every day. We are not perfect by any means and sometimes I must admit we can get so consumed in our work that we might overlook something but we also rely on your self-advocacy to correct us when and if we are wrong. Regardless of how difficult our job is, it is still one of the most enriching and powerful jobs one could ask for. Clearly, the advocate in the article diverted his power in the polar opposite direction of where it should have been allocated, in his claims work.

We, at the Olmsted County Veterans Services Office, look forward to serving you for years to come. Any benefits you receive through the assistance of our office are well earned on your part, because of the blood, sweat, and tears of your service. The only thing we will ever expect of you is for you to make yourself known to us and use our services, for that is what gives us enrichment and enjoyment. Olmsted County pays our wages and fringe benefits. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this article please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Neil T. Doyle
Veterans Services Supervisor

Stars and Stripes Article, Published: January 8, 2015

A county's Veterans Affairs director in Michigan resigned Monday after emails were published in which he is shown to be demanding payment or other favors of veterans whom he had been helping with their health benefits. In emails obtained by media outlets, former Calhoun County Veterans Affairs Office Director Scott Losey asked for "a few dead presidents," "Christmas presents" and other gifts from those seeking the department's help. In one of the emails, dated Oct. 20, 2011, Losey wrote about the hard work he'd done at his own home for one veteran. "We will discuss a gentleman's agreement to compensate for my personal time," Losey wrote. "I have worked cases for veterans who reside outside Calhoun County over the past couple of years with the same kind of agreement. I will not gouge you like your Social Security lawyer. Perhaps 7 to 10 percent is typically the agreement. I have had veterans screw me over big time as well. Does this sound cool?" "Also, where is my Christmas present," Losey wrote in all capital letters in one email in December 2009. "Just so you know, my wife and I like to go out every once in a while for dinner..."

Losey also said in one of the emails to a veteran that "a few pain meds from your stash will suffice for now," and in another that "I suppose now is as good as any to request one month truck payment as a confidential gentleman's agreement for a job well done." Losey, director of the office for 15 years with an annual salary of \$64,351, resigned after a veteran's widow claimed he had shaken her down for \$200 for the work he'd done on her husband's claim. The office is not part of the federal Department of Veterans Affairs but rather the local government of Calhoun County, which includes the city of Battle Creek. The county government's website said the office serves as a "medium of communication" to make sure veterans in the area are aware of federal, state and local benefits they are entitled to and how to get them. Calhoun County Administrator Kelli Scott told local outlet 24 Hour News 8 the case has been turned over to the federal government for investigation. A county attorney, Richard Lindsey, said the county has also opened up an investigation. "The emails that you got copies of were disappointing, to say the least," Scott said. "Accepting gifts on behalf of service performed in his official duty as a county employee absolutely would not be acceptable," she continued. The emails were sent out as recently as December. "When the decision comes back as a winner and you receive that big fat retroactive check," he wrote in an email dated May 22, 2014. "I need \$1,600 to repair my transmission and YOU are going to help me out. DEAL?"

