



# Veteran's Advocate

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## Tomb of the Unknowns Replica Coming to Rochester



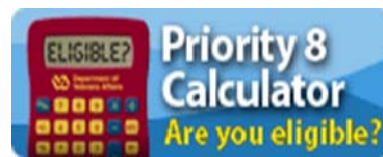
From July 3<sup>rd</sup> through July 5<sup>th</sup> the Tomb of the Unknowns, also known as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, replica will be on display at the Peace Plaza (1st Ave and 1st St. SW) in downtown Rochester.

The Tomb of the Unknowns is at the center of Arlington Cemetery in Washington DC and contains the remains of an unknown soldier from WW I, WW II and the Korean War. The remains of an unknown soldier from the Vietnam War was previously interred there, but was identified in 1998 and returned to his family in St Louis and buried in his childhood home. It was determined that it is unlikely that another soldier would truly be unknown, so the tomb is to remain empty with a new inscription to honor soldiers that are never found. The inscription now reads, "Honoring and Keeping Faith with America's Missing Servicemen." Volunteers will be on duty constantly at the Tomb from noon on July 3<sup>rd</sup> until noon on July 5<sup>th</sup> to answer questions and will have information available about the Tomb.

There will be a short program at 4:00pm on July 4<sup>th</sup> with a former member of the Old Guard, Brian Schacht as the featured speaker. The Old Guard guards the Tomb and performs graveside ceremonies at Arlington Cemetery along with other official duties. Since April 6, 1948 the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has been guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, regardless of weather. Millions of Americans annually visit the Memorial Amphitheater to watch these dedicated soldiers of a new generation, dutifully pace 21 steps

## Priority Group 8 Enrollment Relaxation Changes

VA eligibility rules changed on June 15, 2009, making it easier for more veterans to enroll in VA's health care system. Under this new regulation, VA relaxed income restrictions on enrollment for health benefits. While this new provision does not remove consideration of income, it does increase income thresholds. A web based calculator is available for veterans to enter their income information, dependents, and zip code to assess if their income would fall within the proposed income threshold adjustments at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator/](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator/)



In January 2003, VA made the decision to stop enrolling new Priority Group 8 (higher income) veterans whose income exceeded VA income thresholds. The rationale was that this would ensure the availability of quality and timely health care to veterans with service connected conditions, special authority based on military service, low income, and those with special health care needs.

In Olmsted County, this means that the 2008 income limit for a single veteran has increased from the previous limit of \$42,400.00 to \$46,640.00 and from \$48,450.00 to \$53,295.00 for a veteran with one dependent. Veterans who have applied for enrollment since January 1, 2009 and were denied care because they fell into Priority Group 8, should be automatically reconsidered and approved if they fall within the new limits.

across a black mat on the west face of the Tomb. It is a time honored ritual, executed with great precision and filled with American pride.

In addition, there will also be a wreath laying ceremony with Vicki Bruce and her daughters, to remember Travis Bruce, a local soldier who was killed in Iraq and the reading of a poem written especially for this program by Jane Belau.

For further information, please contact Wayne Stillman at (507) 289-8981.



## 2009 National Marine Corps League Convention

Thor Detachment, Dept. of Minnesota has been picked to host the 86th National Marine Corps League Convention. There has never been a National Marines' Convention held in the State of Minnesota before and everyone is very excited. Dates are 31 July to 8 August, 2009. This will not be your usual weekend convention, but an 8-day Mega Event! (Information on registering, lodging, etc, can be found on the Rochester Visitor and Convention Bureau website:

[www.rahrahrochester.com/events/2009\\_Marine\\_Corps\\_League/index.aspx](http://www.rahrahrochester.com/events/2009_Marine_Corps_League/index.aspx)

The host hotel is the Kahler Grand; which is right across the street from the Mayo Clinic. Most meetings will be at this location. Overflow hotel will be the Kahler Inn & Suites; which is one short block from the Kahler. The Convention Rate for these hotels is \$89.00 plus tax.

Next to the Kahler Grand, and again, across from the Mayo Clinic, is the Rochester Marriott Hotel; same owners as the Kahler. This hotel is also available, but their discounted rate will be \$139.00 plus tax. All these hotels will have plenty of ramp parking available.

Breakfast & Parking will be complimentary for all Marine Corps League Convention "hotel guests" only. Please book your room now at either of these three hotels by calling their Reservations Office at 1-800-533-1655. They are open 24/7. Tell them you are with the 2009 National Marine Corps League Convention to get the rate.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to Commandant David Nogosek at (507)281-2076 or cell (507)951-5191



**The Veteran Services office will be closed on July 3rd in observance of Independence Day. There will be no van to the Minneapolis VA that day as it is also closed.**

## Rochester VA Clinic Set To Move in July



With the ongoing commitment to serving veterans in the communities they live, the Rochester VA Clinic will move to a new larger location and look forward to caring for you in the new clinic starting Monday, July 27th.

Patient care at the present location will continue as usual, up to noon on July 24th. There are no scheduled appointments from noon on July 24th until Monday, July 27th at 8am.

Staff will be busy moving at the present location on Thursday. On Friday, July 25th, all medical staff will be at the new location unpacking. If there is an urgent need to be seen there will be very limited ability to see you and they ask that you call the phone center at (612) 467-1100. At noon on the 24th, all phone calls to the clinic will be answered by the call center at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Your providers will be available to the call center for consultation regarding your concerns. If an emergency arises, please go to a local emergency room.

The Rochester VA Clinic provides primary and preventative care, as well as continuing care for chronic diseases such as diabetes. Mental health counseling is also available. Onsite lab services will be available with plans to add telehealth services. Radiology services will be provided by contract with a community provider.

The new clinic is located at:

**Rochester VA Community Clinic**  
3900 - 55th St. NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
(507)252-0885