

THE STORY COUNTY VETERAN



Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs (SCCVA) – Story County, Iowa

FALL 2019

Greetings Story County Veterans!



Thank you for your service to our country and welcome to the fall 2019 edition of The Story County Veteran. I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and that you find the

information in this newsletter very helpful for you and your family.

I would like to welcome Nic Briseño and Luke Vance to the Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs as our new Commissioners. If you are interested in serving Story County Veterans as a Commissioner, we have openings from time to time. Applications can be found online at: <http://www.storycountyiaowa.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2496> or we do have applications you can pick up at the VA office.

Brushy Creek Area Honor Flight

Thanks to the Story County Freedom Fun

Run organization we have funds to send WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veterans to Washington D.C. in 2020 to visit their memorials. If you are a Veteran who served during any of the following time periods on active duty and have never gone on an Honor or Freedom Flight, you should highly consider going.

WWII Era: December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946
Korea Era: June 25, 1950 – January 31, 1955
Vietnam Era: February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975

I am not sure if we will be offering any more flights in this area after 2020, so if you want to go on a flight, please stop by Story County VA at 126 South Kellogg Ave. Suite 001 in Ames and fill out an application. Please bring your DD-214 so we can send a copy in and you will be all set for 2020 to take a trip of a lifetime.

Enjoy the newsletter!


Brett D. McLain, Director
Story County Veterans Affairs

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves. Call 1-800-273-8255 or Text 838255

VETERANS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

This annual event will be held Wednesday, January 22, 2020. Please check our website for more details as we receive them: <http://www.storycountyiaowa.gov/va> Iowa Veterans have been doing this for over a decade now, a day set aside for Veterans to visit one-on-one with their legislators about state benefits.

VA HEALTH CARE

If you are not enrolled in VA Health Care, you should consider applying to see if you are eligible for this benefit. Just give the VA Health Care System a call at 1-877-222-8387, and you can apply over the phone. Or you can bring your DD-214 discharge to their booth at the Story County VA Supermarket; the flyer for that event is on page 5 of this newsletter.

IOWA VETERANS EVENT SCHEDULE

Check out this link for current events being held around Iowa for military members, Veterans, and their families. <http://va.iowa.gov/events>



COMMISSIONERS

(L-R) Pat Peakin, term July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021 | Luke Vance, term July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2022 | Nic Briseño, term July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2022 | Amy Rosenberg, term July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021

State of Iowa VA Benefits

Disabled Veteran's Homestead Tax Credit

This legislation, from the year 2014, provides 100% exemption of property taxes for 100% disabled service-connected Veterans and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) recipients.

For more information, see the County Assessor in Nevada at the Administration Building or the Ames Assessor at Ames City Hall if you live in Ames.

Specialty Veteran License Plates

Honorably discharged Veterans (as defined in the Code of Iowa 35.1) are eligible to purchase specialty Veteran license plates for their vehicle. These special plates are available for an additional charge through the Iowa Department of Transportation.

2014 update: The special plate issuance fees charged for plates associated with military service have been eliminated. Note: This is the issuance fee and not the registration fee.

Please see the Story County Treasurer's Office located in Nevada for more information.

Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License

Veterans in receipt of at least a 0% service-connected disability can receive a lifetime hunting or fishing license for a \$7.00 fee. In order to qualify, the Iowa resident must have served on active federal service and was disabled as a result of that service.

Please stop by the Story County Veterans Affairs office in Ames for assistance with this benefit.

Property Tax Exemption

This benefit reduces a Veteran's assessed home value for property tax purposes by \$1,852. In order to qualify, a service member must have served on active duty during a period of war or for a minimum of 18 months during peacetime.

See the County Assessor in Nevada at the Administration Building or the Ames Assessor at Ames City Hall if you live in Ames.

Operation Recognition High School

This State of Iowa program furnishes an honorary high school diploma to qualifying Veterans who did not complete high school (in Iowa) due

to armed service enlistment. The application form is used by the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Education to establish eligibility for honorably discharged Veterans who had active service during one of these dates:

- September 16, 1940 - December 31, 1946 (World War II)
- June 25, 1950 - January 31, 1955 (Korean Conflict)
- February 28, 1961 - May 5, 1975 (Vietnam Conflict)

Veterans Designation on Iowa Driver's Licenses and IDs

Honorably discharged Veterans may request the "Veteran" designation be placed on their driver's license or non-operator identification card. Veterans must present a copy of their DD214 or applicable discharge document to the Iowa DOT. The Veteran must then complete an Iowa DOT Application form.

Note: Veterans may request the "Veteran" designation anytime they seek a new card, not just at the time of renewal. The cost for a duplicate DL or non-operator ID is \$10.00.

Hometown Outreach

For the last year or so I have been setting up a table in your area for a day. In most of the towns that I have went to I have been finding space to set up at City Halls, a Community Center, or at American Legions. I have been going to a different town on Wednesdays, so be

watching for when I come to your town next. You don't need an appointment when I am there, just come on in.

I hope that by my being set up for a day closer to where you live, we might find some time to sit down and chat, and

who knows, we might be able to find a VA benefit that you may be eligible for.

Brett D. McLain
Story County VA Director



Army Corporal Ralph Bennett Accounted For From WWII

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that Army Cpl. Ralph L. Bennett, 22, of Ames, Iowa, killed during World War II, was accounted for on April 29, 2019.

In June 1944, Bennett was a member of Headquarters Company, 209th Engineer Combat Battalion, as an engineer in the China-Burma-India Theater. On June 13, 1944, Bennett's battalion fought in the siege of Myitkyina, Burma, after successfully taking the airfield west of Myitkyina from Japanese control. Bennett was reported to have been killed during the battle.

The remains of servicemen killed during the battle were buried in at least eight different temporary cemeteries and numerous isolated burial locations. Eventually, all known burials were concentrated into the U.S. Military Cemetery at Myitkyina, including the remains of those who were not identified. In January and February 1946, all of the remains at the U.S. Military Cemetery were disinterred and transferred to the U.S. Military Cemetery at Kalaikunda, India. The exhumation of the U.S. Military Cemetery at Kalaikunda was conducted in September and October 1947.

One set of remains, designated Unknown X-48 Kalaikunda, was reportedly disinterred on Oct. 21, 1947 and transferred to Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, where they were unable to be identified. They were subsequently buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu, in March 1949.

On July 16, 2018, DPAA disinterred Unknown X-48 Kalaikunda from the Punchbowl and accessioned the remains into the laboratory.

To identify Bennett's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally,



the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

DPAA is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs for their partnership in this recovery.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died during the war. Currently there are 72,708 service members (approximately 26,000 are assessed as possibly-recoverable) still unaccounted for from World War II. Bennett's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in Taguig City, Philippines, along with the others missing from

WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Bennett was buried August 3, 2019 in Ames next to his brother, mother, and father.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil or call (703) 699-1420/1169.

Bennett's personnel profile can be viewed at <https://dpaa.secure.force.com/dpaaProfile?id=a01t0000000ccR8EAI>

Participate in the 2020 U.S. Census

- ★ Your participation impacts legislative apportionment and federal funding for numerous jurisdictional programs.
- ★ People in Story County will soon participate in the 2020 U.S. Census through mailed paper forms and using internet and/or cell phone and the U.S. Census secured website.
- ★ For additional information search www.census.gov/2020census or contact U.S. Census Customer Services Center at (301) 763-INFO or 1-800-923-8282. For local assistance, contact Story County Planning and Development at 515-382-7245 or pzweb@storycountyia.gov

The U.S. Census Bureau will have a table at the Story County VA Supermarket on November 15, 2019 at The Plex in Ames.

Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for “Blue Water Navy” Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975.

Vietnam Veterans may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law June 25, 2019 and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2020. They may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

To qualify under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e).

Veterans seeking more information should contact Brett or Erin, your local Veteran Service Officers at 515-956-2626 or 956-2625.

LEGION Act Signed into Law

In a significant legislative victory for The American Legion, President Trump signed a bill July 30, 2019 that declares the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941.

The LEGION Act (Let Everyone Get Involved In Opportunities for National Service Act) also opens the door for approximately 6 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

“Recognizing the service of these wartime veterans is the right thing to do and it is long overdue,” National Commander Brett Reistad said. “The families of those who were killed or wounded during these wartime acts

should take pride in knowing that we recognize their sacrifice and service. Moreover, we are proud to welcome any of the six million living veterans from the previously unrecognized periods into our organization and call them ‘Legionnaires.’”

Now that the legislation has been signed, The American Legion’s eligibility criteria immediately changes from seven war eras to two: April 6, 1917 to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941 to a time later determined by the federal government. No other restrictions to American Legion membership are changed.

<https://www.legion.org/membership/246557/legion-act-signed-law>

Story County Veterans Appreciation Event

On June 14th, 2019 from 5-8pm, the Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs hosted their first BBQ at Shagbark Shelter at Inis Grove Park in Ames.

This event was FREE for all Veterans and their families and was well-attended with over 75 that evening. It was such a hit that the Commission will be hosting another one next summer.



SERVING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED

We are extremely proud of the Story County Veterans who have honorably served our country and extend a warm welcome home from the Director and Commission of Story County Veterans Affairs.

To better assist you please call and schedule an appointment, Brett 515-956-2626 or Erin 515-956-2625. This will prevent us from missing you or long wait times in the lobby as we do have training days and out-of-the-office appointments.



Story County Supermarket of Veterans Benefits

When: Friday, November 15, 2019

9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Where: The PLEX

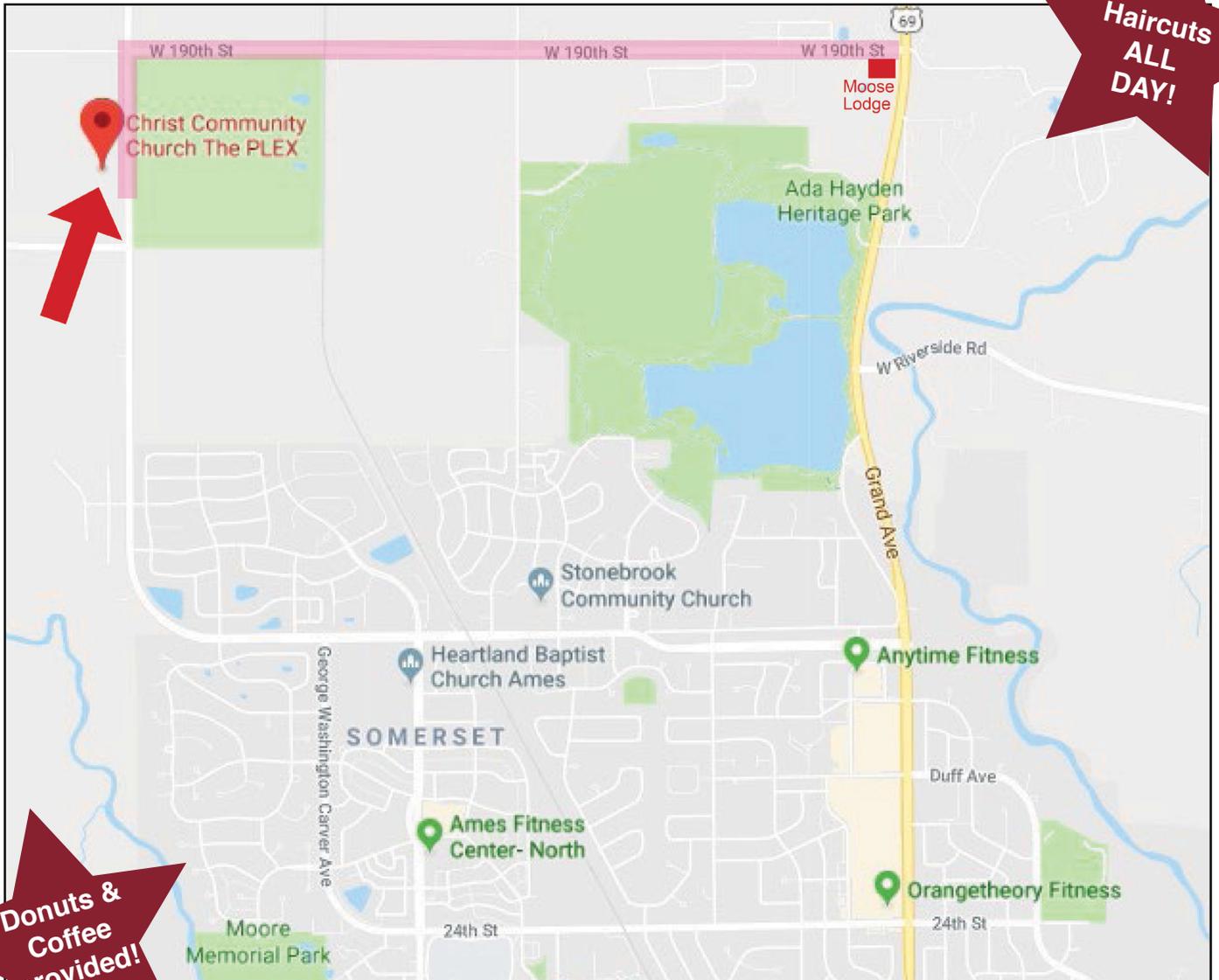
5501 George Washington Carver Ave. Ames, IA



Story County Iowa VA Office



storycountyiowava



Haircuts ALL DAY!

Donuts & Coffee provided!

All information and services are FREE OF CHARGE!

Please note lunch will not be provided.

Iowa Department of VA / Story County Veterans Affairs / Iowa Veterans Home / VA Regional Office / VA Medical Center / Shot Clinic / Homeless Outreach / IA Transition Assistance Advisor / ISU Vet Center / VA Vet Center / VA County Treasurer / Story County Assessor / American Legion / Disabled American Veterans / Vietnam Veterans of America / E-Benefits and My HealtheVet / Veterans Golfers Association

Contact info: 515-956-2626 Brett McLain or 515-956-2625 Erin Rewerts



1861 RIFLED CANNON

Located at the Story County Administration Building in Nevada, IA.

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 14
Ames, IA 50010

Story County Veterans Affairs
126 South Kellogg Avenue, Suite 001
Ames, Iowa 50010