



The Veteran

FALL 2024

Story County Commission of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

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Office Contact:

(515) 956-2626

veteransaffairs@storycountyiowa.gov

Story County Supermarket



of Veterans Benefits



**Free Doughnuts, Coffee, Haircuts & Flu Vaccinations
Free Information & Services!**

Veterans Agencies Waiting to Talk to You!

**When: Saturday, November 9th 2024
9:00 am to 12:00 pm**

**Where: The PLEX @ Christ Community Church
5501 George Washington Carver Ave.
Ames, Iowa**



Story County Supermarket of Benefits

Be a part of the Annual Supermarket of Benefits. The event will be at the PLEX on Saturday, November 9th from 9:00am to 12:00pm. We will have haircuts, flu shots, coffee, donuts, and several providers present. Come visit us during this beautiful fall season and see what benefits and services may apply to you!

Confirmed Providers at the Event:

Homebase Iowa
Story County Assessor
Caption Call
Saluting Service
60 Forward
The Groom Room
Central Iowa RSVP
IDVA
Stand Down

Des Moines Public Contact
Des Moines Vet Center
VA Health Care
Primary Health Care
River Valley Veterans Network
CTC Barber Academy
Veteran Companions
DAV



Atomic Veteran Recognized

Corporal James Despard, USMC (1955-1958) became the first Story County Veteran recognized with the 'Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal' for his participation in the Operation Plumbbob series of nuclear tests at the Nevada Test Site in 1957.

The Secretary of Defense established the Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal (AVCSM) and the Atomic Veterans Service Certificate (AVSC) in 2022 to honor the Veterans who participated in the United States' testing and development of nuclear weapons. Much of this work exposed Veterans to dangerous radiation, which due to the secretive nature of the work, remained unrecognized.

This award to Corporal Despard is the first within Story County to commemorate his service. Thank you to the Ames office of the United States Marine Corps recruiting for the presentation of this long-earned medal.

Does the PACT Act include you?

In 2022, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act was passed... normally referred to as the PACT Act.

The PACT Act expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and **Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era**. This means the eligibility for benefits for Veterans of those eras, with exposure to toxic substances, broadened.

The list of conditions which the VA **presumes service-connected** now includes many new conditions. For a full list of what conditions, visit:

<https://va.gov/PACT>



Quilts for Veterans

A special thank you to the Iowa Veterans Home, as we were able to hand out these 4 great quilts to our Veterans in late July. The Veterans were pleased to receive them and we enjoyed having them to provide. We hope that these quilts provide plenty of warmth and comfort as we move towards the winter season.



Changing of the Guards

Leadership changes at the Story County VA as we continue providing top-quality service for our Veterans.

Brett McClain completed 25 years of service to Story County as the Veteran Affairs director in May of 2024. The Story County Board of Supervisors awarded him a plaque for his long years of service to our county and its Veterans (pictured above).

As of June, 2024, Zachary D. Skelton (pictured to the right) started as the VA Director for Story County. He comes from previously working at the Story County Jail since 2011. His military background is in logistics and is currently serving as a Major in the United States Army Reserves with previous deployments to Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Bulgaria.



First act when coming in was to establish a philosophy and core values for the Story County Veteran's affairs. The following is posted at our front door:

Department Philosophy:

Story County Department of Veterans Affairs' mission is to ensure all Veterans of the county receive support, advocacy, and services they are due.

Our mission is to utilize outreach, technology, and one-on-one interactions to facilitate Veterans and their Families in receiving the benefits they earned. We apply our services to all Veterans of any generation or branch of service. Through our work, we aim to decrease the friction in working the multiple agencies that provide benefits and make the process easier on all affected.

The Department's Core Values

Fairness - All Veterans deserve their due benefits and services.

Community - Veterans give back to and provide improvement for the entire county.

Respect - Sacrifice of a person's time to the nation deserves utmost respect.

Determination - We will provide our earnest efforts in achieving services.

Supportiveness - No Veteran is ever alone, we are here to support each other.

VA of Central Iowa Healthcare System

Virtual Mobile Clinic



Call (515) 401-5452 to Schedule
126 S. Kellogg Ave., Suite 001

VA Mobile Healthcare

Call (515) 401-5452 to setup your appointment. We will have the VA Mobile Clinic in our parking lot on the following dates:

- October 29, 2024
- February 25, 2025
- April 22, 2025
- June 24, 2025

New Commissioners

In July 2024, Beth Hartmann and Amy Rosenberg completed their terms with the Story County VA Commission. Congratulate them on a job well done!

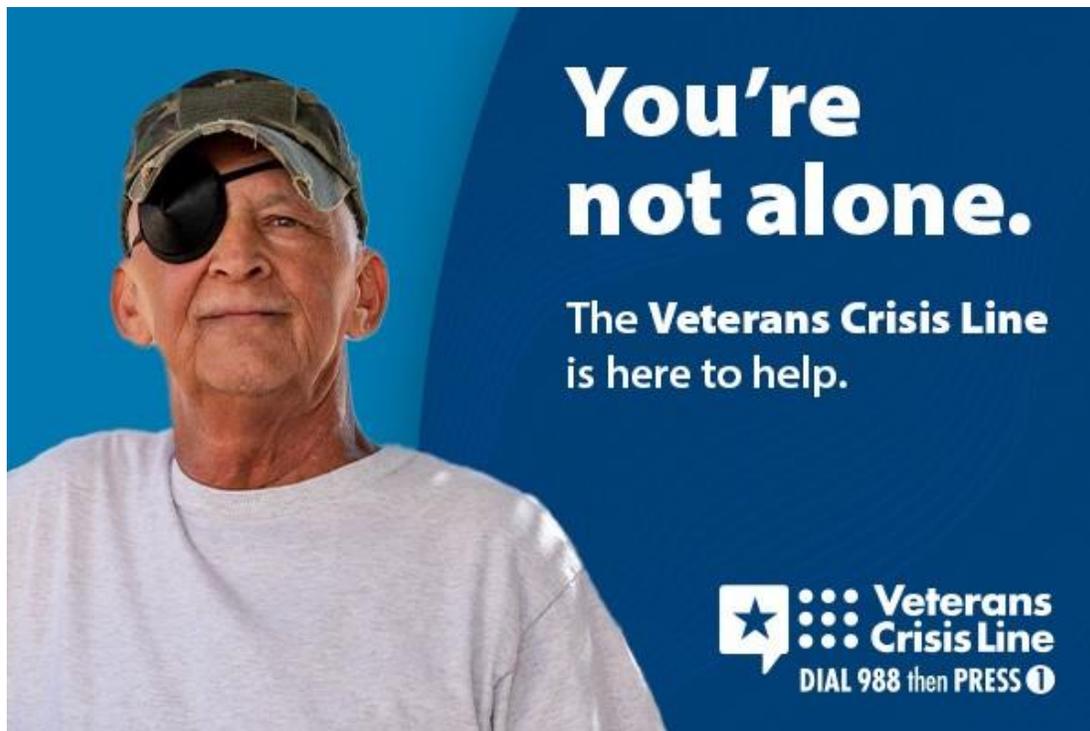
And let us welcome our two new VA Commissioners:

Tommy Chance (Term July 2024-2027 - Army - Zearing, IA)

Tommy is a husband of almost 40 years with two children and seven grandchildren. He has distinguished himself in both the US Army and US Air Force over 25 years. Equally, he has distinguished himself by serving at Danfoss company in Ames for 27 years and is now working in Huxley at Kreg Tool Company. He is an Elder at the Zearing Christian Church, Adjutant for American Post Legion 307 in Roland, and a Disabled Veteran.

Nancy Schultz (Term July 2024-2027 - Coast Guard - Ames, IA)

Nancy grew up in Cedar Rapids, IA. Upon graduating from high school she joined the Coast Guard. Nancy was a Boatswains-mate and a Search & Rescue boat coxswain spending her enlistment in Florida. She was a 911 dispatcher for 27 years then a Law Enforcement Instructor for 8 years, retiring in 2021. Nancy & her husband, David, live in Ames. Nancy is honored to be able to assist the veterans in Story County.



No Veteran should go through a crisis alone. If you or a Veteran you know needs immediate support, **Dial 988 then Press 1.**

For more information, visit VeteransCrisisLine.net.