American Legion to VA: Open doors to WWII veterans

The American Legion, OCT 31, 2019

American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford called on the Department of Veterans Affairs to open its health care system to World War II veterans that are not already enrolled.

“Mr. Secretary, The American Legion has confidence that you will not fail or forsake the heroes who literally saved the world three quarters of a century ago. Please act now to open the VA’s great system to all of our nation’s World War II veterans,” Oxford said in a letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie Jr. sent Oct. 31.

Oxford pointed out that the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996 exempted all Spanish American War and World War I veterans from the means test required to enter the VA health care system. “It’s time to do the same for our World War II veterans,” he wrote.

Delegates at The American Legion’s national convention in 2017 unanimously passed a resolution urging VA to extend the means test exemption to World War II veterans. Since the resolution passed, the population of living veterans has declined dramatically. VA estimates that of the original 16 million U.S. veterans who served in World War II, only 282,000 will be living on September 30, 2020. Moreover, 73.6 percent of male and 67.3 percent of female World War II veterans in 2016 were already utilizing VA benefits.

You can recognize these remaining heroes with actions far more meaningful than words. The Veterans Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996 exempted all Spanish American War and World War I veterans from the means test required to enter the VA health care system. It’s time to do the same for our World War II veterans.

Earlier this year, you spoke of Gen. Matthew Ridgeway’s reading of the Book of Joshua on D-Day. “I will not fail thee and I will not forsake thee,” was God’s promise to his faithful warrior. Mr. Secretary, The American Legion has spoken loudly in support of this proposal. Delegates at our 2017 National Convention in Reno, Nev., unanimously passed a resolution calling for an amendment to the 1996 law which would open access for these elderly veterans.

Most Sincerely,

James W. “Bill” Oxford
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Join The American Legion

Help Our Nation's Veterans

The American Legion Internet Observer

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Still Serving America
Do you have an ongoing program or activity that serves your community?
Do you have a friend or relative that goes above and beyond the call of duty to help others?
Drop us a line and tell us what your story is or how you or this person is demonstrating that they are Still Serving America, but must be received by the 10th of the month, the month prior.
In submitting your information, please be sure to include your full name, address and telephone number. There's a good chance the information you send will make it into The Observer. Please send to: Still Serving America, The American Legion, 7465 East 1st Ave. Ste D Denver, CO 80230.
As you know, my theme as your national commander is A Foundation for the Future. That theme encompasses every mission of The American Legion, including our children and youth through our programs.

The Americanism Division held several conferences last month in Indianapolis to discuss youth programs such as Shooting Sports, Oratorical, Legion Baseball, Boys State and more. Our Junior Shooting Sports Program chairman and volunteers know that teaching young people marksmanship is just a very small part of what they do.

They’re also building confidence in these youth, providing leadership skills and teaching self-discipline. Legion Baseball chairman and coaches are doing more than teaching rules and techniques of the game as they are mentoring, teaching sportsmanship and developing good citizens.

When you consider the things that we do to mentor, coach, develop and teach, we are creating a foundation for our great organization for the future. Please remember that you are instilling far more than just the fundamentals of your particular youth programs. You are teaching fairness, discipline, sportsmanship and good citizenship.

You do this by simply being you. Proud veterans and members of The American Legion.

Whether they express this verbally to you or not, these young people are looking at you. They are looking at you as mentors, leaders and adult role models. What you do and say matters. The people leading American Legion youth programs do far more than produce good marksmen, baseball players, orators, Scouts or civic leaders. They produce something even more valuable. They produce good Americans.

Our foundation and our future will always require great Americans.

Preamble change extends to Fatheads

The change to the American Legion Preamble approved at the Fall Meetings in October is leading to changes to all kinds of Legion publications. And it has already been made to the historical Fathead decals available through Emblem Sales. Since the decals are printed on demand, after Oct. 25 new or pending orders will include the new phrase “all wars.” Contact Emblem Sales with any questions, at (888) 453-4466 or emblem@legion.org.

Select your Fathead decal – from among the numerous other 100th Anniversary items
“BUDDY CHECK”
By: Dean Noechel, Department Commander

As American Legion members, our most sacred responsibility is to look out for each other and our fellow veterans. As a way to reach out to our members and former members who may need help. We need to conduct a Buddy Check with all Veterans, these contacts may be made by a personal visit, phone or email, or a combination. The important part is to reach out to our Colorado veterans in your community to let them know that we care and can provide whatever assistance they may need. It’s what we do for our battle buddies. I am asking all our members, Posts and Districts to conduct Buddy Checks from November through January. The holiday season is a tough time for many of our brothers and sisters in arms, let’s reach out and check on them, let them know we are here for them.

How do you organize a Buddy Check?

1. Gather up a team if possible to call or personally visit members and former members of The American Legion. If each member in a team of 10 contacts just 10 Legionnaires or former Legionnaires, 100 veterans can be reached in one sitting.

2. If you don’t have a list of members and former members at your fingertips, visit myLegion.org and download the names of current members and those who have let their memberships expire. Please check with your Post Commander or Adjutant.

3. Divide up the call list among your team members. Some may have personal connections with the member or the former member and should make that particular buddy check.

4. Start making connections – either from a quiet place inside the post or from your home – to see how the members and former members are doing, ask if they need anything and invite them to any event or activity planned to help celebrate Veterans Day.

5. Make sure you thank the member or former member in the beginning and at the end of your call for their honorable service to our great country.

6. Leave contact information in case the member or former member can’t take the call or needs anything in the future.

Remember this “BUDDY CHECK” is not a membership drive, this is to check on ALL VETERANS in our communities! We need to engage our members and let them know they are an important part of our team and our voice. We need them on our team, we need you on our team, we need all Veterans on our team.

The Thanksgiving Holiday is coming upon us, I ask that you please reach out to our fellow brothers and sisters and invite them to share a meal with you. Sometimes that is all we have to do is just ASK. You could make a difference in the life of a Veteran by just inviting them to join you and your family. Many of our Posts will be hosting dinners so reach out to your Post and join them for a great holiday celebration. We have so much to be thankful for.

LEGION ACT- The Legion Act has been doing great things for our American Legion, All we have to do is just ASK! Have you signed up a new member form the LEGION ACT?

RE-IGNITE PATRIOTISM- Many Posts and Districts have been engaged in our Flag Certificate program, this is a great way to say THANK YOU for always flying our nations colors. If you have questions or need certificates please send me an email d.noechel@coloradolegion.org

MID YEAR- Mid Year Conference will be held in Colorado Springs at the Hotel Elegante January 16-19, 2020, we are planning to have some good training at this event and a lot of fun for all members. We will have Candidate for National Commander Randall Fisher with us all weekend.

TRAINING- Our Annual Training and Education Conference will be May 15-17, 2020, we will have guests again this year, our leading Candidate for National Commander Paul Dillard (TX) will be with us all weekend long. I hope that you will plan to attend this great training session.

In closing I need your help to RE-IGNITE PATRIOTISM in your communities and in our COUNTRY. Will you please join me?

“VA helped me get back on my feet.”
Congratulations Department of Colorado posts for reaching our October 9th membership target of 55% with 55.6%. It shows that when everyone is working together engaging all our members, we not only reach our targets but continue to grow. I personally appreciate and thank each and every one of you for making this possible. Please continue to keep this momentum going in all corners of our great state.

We have recently started posting on the “The American Legion, Colorado “Membership Minute” again. You will notice we are posting patriotic items on there to help Re-Ignite Patriotism as well as membership. Postings will include many items to help get the word out about who we are and what we do. Information is obtained from the Membership Impact Report and other sources on Legion.org. We are currently exploring and working on doing informal videos but ask everyone to be patient as we work out the kinks.

We encourage each and everyone who reads this to take a minute every day and look at the Facebook page as well as invite all your Legionnaire friends to like and join this page as well. We feel that this is a good way to get education out in an easy and quick way to every member across the state. We would also like to encourage anyone to post on this page as well but ask that you keep postings respectful and positive towards promoting our membership.

We are constantly wanting to engage our members, but the question is how? Well this is one of the many methods. If we are all able to understand what it is that The American Legion does to benefit communities, states, and our nation then engagement will become easier. Look at the Membership Impact Report and see how those little bits of facts each month relate to our four pillars. Share that information with your posts and more importantly share it with your community thru social media, Newspapers, and Television/Radio stations on Public service announcements.

If our local citizens see the great things directly benefiting the community, they will be more likely to help promote our cause. If we are seen doing great things, then veterans and veteran family members will want to join us and become a member of the largest veterans service organization in the country doing amazing things for our communities.

We cannot afford to keep The American Legion, or how to become engaged, a secret! Let’s show what it is that we are doing and encourage everyone to be proud active members.

The Membership Minute is Back
By: Greg Jackson, Department Sr. Vice Commander

Greg Jackson
Department Sr Vice Commander

VA completes home loan funding fee refund initiative

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently completed an aggressive initiative to process home loan funding fee refunds to Veteran borrowers, issuing more than $400 million in refunds.

The refunds are the culmination of a multi-year internal review of millions of VA-backed home loans spanning almost two decades. “VA staff worked diligently throughout the summer reviewing 130,000 cases, which is an average of 16,000 loans reviewed per week,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This effort included loans dating back nearly 20 years. Our administration prioritized fixing the problems and paid Veterans what they were owed.”

The VA’s Loan Guaranty Service (LGY) program identified more than 130,000 loans where a refund was potentially due. While some funding fees charged were found to be attributable to clerical errors, most fees were charged correctly. The exception was for those Veterans whose exemption status changed following the issuance of a disability rating after the closing of their loan. Letters were mailed notifying Veterans who were eligible for a refund.

VA has made several program and systems changes to provide Veterans and lenders with the most up-to-date information possible on a Veteran’s funding fee exemption status. The changes include:

- Enhancements to Veteran-focused communications to better inform about the loan funding fee and when it may be waived as part of the loan transaction.
- Policy guidance directing lenders to inquire about a Veteran’s VA disability claim status during the loan underwriting process and obtain an updated Certificate of Eligibility no more than three days prior to loan closing if the Veteran had a disability claim pending.
- System and procedural changes to ensure regular internal oversight activities swiftly identify Veterans eligible for fee waivers and potential refund cases.

Veterans who believe that they are entitled to a refund of the VA funding fee are strongly encouraged to call their VA Regional Loan Center at (877) 827-3702 to find out if they are eligible.
A Message From Department Jr. Vice Commander Kossow

2019 Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Program

By: Chip Kossow, Department Jr. Vice Commander

We are fast approaching the deadline for the Posts to turn in their 2019 Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year nominee to the District. Please don’t miss this opportunity to recognize your local first responders for their outstanding professional achievement and community service.

Each Post is encouraged to meet with their local police and fire departments to find nominees. This is open to city, community, county, state, and federal agencies as long as the nominees are Colorado certified (please see the packet for all requirements). While meeting the chiefs, introduce your Post to them and let them know about the American Legion and how our missions can align. Many departments will have veterans that may be interested in joining our great organization.

Chip Kossow
Jr. Vice Commander

The Department of Colorado law enforcement officer and firefighter of the year winner will be awarded at the mid-year conference in January 2020. Regardless of the Department winner, each Post and District should recognize their winner at the local level in a public ceremony. Help the Department to honor our first responders for their hard work and dedication to our communities.

The nomination instructions, eligibility requirements, and nomination packets are located on the Department website in “About Us” drop down menu – “Annual Reports”. You may also contact me directly for the packet and any questions you may have.

Please act fast. The due dates are 01 December to Districts and 15 December to Department.

Help the Department to honor our first responders for their hard work and dedication to our communities.

Respectfully,

A Message From Department Chaplain Hamamoto

The Chaplain's Corner - Belonging to God

By: Stanley Hamamoto, Department Chaplain

Has God been good to you???

As this is the time for thanksgiving I thought that it would be appropriate to talk about belonging to God. But before I do that I would like to say thank you to all of the districts that allowed me to take time from your meeting to say a few words. This month most of the districts have met and a few will meet in November, but for the better part, most of them have done their fall meeting. It was nice to see all of you and to meet some new members.

I pray that God has been good to you and that HE will continue to bless you in the weeks ahead.

As you sit down to have your Thanksgiving Dinner, I hope that you will say a prayer for all of the veterans and their families that are not as fortunate as you are. Pray that they will be able to find a hot meal and some warm place to sleep during this cold weather. There are more and more becoming homeless because they just cannot afford to keep up with the cost of living. Wages do not go up like the cost of living does, this is not right but this is how our society does things. Pray for all of those who are not veterans, but are homeless as they also need our prayers.

Here are a few scriptures for you to think about. Psalm 103: 2-4 says: “My whole being, praise the Lord and do not forget all his kindness. HE forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. HE saves my life from the grave and leads me with love and mercy.” Then there is Zephaniah 3:17 and it says: “The Lord your God is with you; the mighty ONE will save you. HE will rejoice over you. You will rest in HIS love; HE will sign and be joyful about you.” And then there is 1 Corinthians 7: 19 & 23, it says: “The important thing is obeying God’s commands. You all were brought at a great price, so do not become slaves of people.”

For all its peculiarities and unevenness, the Bible has a simple story. God made man. Man rejected God. God won’t give up until he wins him back. God will whisper. HE will shout. HE will touch and tug. HE will take away your burdens; HE’LL even take away your blessings. If there are a thousand steps between us and HIM, HE will take all but one. But HE will leave the final one for us. The choice is yours. Please understand. HIS goal is not to...
make us happy. HIS goal is not to get you what you want; it is to get you what you need.

Think about what is just being said. Many times we feel that we want something but we don’t get it. That is because God does not think we really need it. But yet we think that we really need it. What God gives to us and what we want, many times do not agree with each other. But God has the final word, what HE wishes for us is what we will get, or not get. I myself have been in that situation many times and could not figure out why I did not get what I wanted so badly. God is in control, not me or you. HE gives us only what we need and nothing more or nothing less. So this Thanksgiving, thank HIM, the one who controls us and our lives, all of the praise and thanks that HE deserves. Again I ask that at your dinner table or if you celebrate it at lunch, pray for the many who cannot sit down like you and your family and friends are doing. I pray that all of you will have a great Thanksgiving with your families and friends. God bless you all and:

My last three words to all of you are: GO TO CHURCH!!!!!!

VA ribbon-cutting ceremony brings health care closer to home for rural Veterans

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) celebrated its latest telehealth innovation Oct. 16 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6786 in Eureka, Montana, with the grand opening of the first VA Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations (ATLAS) site which will benefit up to 300 Veterans living in that community.

This state-of-the-art remote telehealth exam room is the first of many that will be opened in partnership with Veteran Service Organizations, bringing VA health care closer to rural Veterans in their communities and reducing the need for them to travel long distances for select health care appointments.

“Our goal is to make sure every Veteran has access to health care,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “ATLAS addresses another health care hurdle for Veterans living in rural areas or with limited Internet access and it’s a great example of how public and private organizations can work together to solve the challenges of health care.”

ATLAS exam rooms, provided by the VFW and designed in its partnership with Philips, provide telehealth equipment in a secure and private space, allowing Veterans to conduct virtual appointments with VA providers. Philips is a health technology company focused on improving people’s health and enabling better outcomes by leveraging advanced technology and deep clinical and consumer insight.

In addition to Eureka, Montana, the 10-site pilot program will have initial locations inside American Legions and VFW Posts in Springfield, Virginia, Los Banos, California and Linesville, Pennsylvania.

“Improving access to care for our nation’s Veterans is something that will take collaboration across the public and private sector. As we expand the VA’s success in telehealth and move these solutions closer to home, together with forward thinking service organizations, we can give our nation’s Veterans greater access to the care they deserve,” said Vitor Rocha, chief market leader, Philips North America.

There are more than 9 million Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system with three million living in rural or remote areas and 27% of that population not having internet access at home.

Visit VA’s Connected Care website to learn more about ATLAS or VA’s Anywhere to Anywhere telehealth initiative.

2019 9-11 Sweepstakes Winners

1st Place Post 190
$1,500.00
Charles P Childress

2nd Place Post 209
$750.00
Paul H Brown

3rd Place Post 911
$500.00
Ronald L Addicott

4th Place Post 56
$200.00
Kenneth D Callison

5th Place Post 113
$100.00
John Seymour

6th Place Post 4
$100.00
Raymond E Burnham

7th Place Post 1
$100.00
John Kerlin

8th Place Post 38
$100.00
Harold C Hitt

9th Place Post 66
$100.00
John A Horn

10th Place Post 21
$100.00
Myron J Burt
Insurance trust benefits

By: Pat Smith, Department Adjutant

One of the reasons we joined The American Legion was to re-establish the camaraderie that existed while we were wearing the uniform of our country. As brothers and sister in arms we took care of one another. We trusted each other to perform our assigned duties and to keep us out of harm’s way. We knew that we would have each other’s back when faced with critical situations. We joined the American Legion to have that same feeling, to care for one another and to support those currently wearing the uniform and their mission today.

One of the benefits of belonging to The American Legion is that we can pool our resources together and provide our members with products and services at discounted rates. One of our premier providers of discounted insurance services is the Legionnaire Insurance Trust. Over 50 of our Legion Departments have joined together to form this trust, known as The LIT. Once a year the trust directors from each department get together and review all of the insurance plans available and make decision on which plans would benefit our members the most. Those plans are then made available to our members at premiums that are very competitive with any plans on the open market.

Right now is the open enrollment period for the Medicare plans. The LIT can provide you with very competitive quotes for your plan. The LIT offers a “No Cost LegionCare” accidental death plan with up to a $5,000 benefit paid to your beneficiary. Your beneficiary will receive a check for $5,000.00 if you suffer a fatal covered accident while you are traveling to or from or participating in any covered event conducted for Legion business, or $1,000.00 for all other fatal covered accidents. You pay nothing for this coverage.

The Department of Colorado endorses this coverage to stand by your family with up to $1,000.00 cash benefits paid straight to your beneficiary, if you suffer a fatal covered accident at home, on the job, in your car, on vacation, while traveling, wherever you are.

Another major plan is the Cancer Care Insurance Plan. If you find yourself battling cancer, you may want help to cover the high cost of treatment and recovery. That’s where this coverage comes in. Colorado American Legion endorses the Cancer Care Insurance Plan, it helps pay towards the cost of cancer – which may run into the thousands of dollars. Your current health insurance may not be enough to cover all of these costs. That’s why this coverage offers benefits – up to a lifetime maximum of $300,000.00 – to Legionnaires who have been diagnosed with cancer. These benefits are paid directly to you or anyone you choose – not to doctors, hospitals or anyone else.

Another great plan is the ID RESOLVE identity theft plan. In today’s world, identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America. If you or your spouse fall victim to identity theft what would you do? Where would you turn? With Legionnaire ID Resolve you’ll have 24-hour identity theft resolution that helps protect your money, your time and your financial reputation. If you haven’t fallen victim to identity theft yet, don’t think you’re safe. Data breaches happen every day, where thieves can steal your name, address, date of birth, credit card information, medical records, and most critically your Social Security number. Colorado has endorsed this ID Resolve plan. A new program to help Legionnaires fight back — instead of being a victim and not knowing where to turn.

There are many other great benefit plans, from dental to travel accident, to long term health care. To see all of the great benefit plans visit the Legionnaire Insurance Trust at https://www.thelit.com/. Keep the spirit of camaraderie alive in The American Legion Department of Colorado.
Inspired by your service.

As a veteran who has received an Honorable discharge, you’re eligible for membership in USAA. With advice, tools and products to aid you with insurance, banking, investments and retirement, USAA is committed to stand alongside you wherever life takes you.

Explore the benefits of USAA membership now.

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Purchase of a product other than USAA auto or property insurance, or purchase of an insurance policy offered through the USAA insurance agency, does not establish eligibility for or membership in USAA property and casualty insurance companies. Use of the term “member” or “membership” does not convey any eligibility rights for auto and property insurance products, or legal or ownership rights in USAA. Membership eligibility and product restrictions apply and are subject to change. To be eligible for auto and property insurance, separated military personnel must have received a discharge type of Honorable. Eligible former dependents of USAA members may purchase auto or property insurance if the member obtained USAA auto or property insurance. USAA means United Services Automobile Association and its insurance, banking, investment and other companies. Banks Member FDIC. Investments provided by USAA Investment Management Company and USAA Financial Advisors Inc., both registered broker dealers. Financial planning services and financial advice provided by USAA Financial Planning Services Insurance Agency, Inc. (known as USAA Financial Insurance Agency in California, License # 0E36312), a registered investment adviser and insurance agency and its wholly owned subsidiary, USAA Financial Advisors, Inc., a registered broker dealer. The American Legion receives financial support from USAA for its sponsorship.
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Cripple Creek Post 171 recognizes U.S. Flag flying businesses

1. Cripple Creek Ace Hardware, Owners Terri and Maurice Woods. One of the Cripple Creeks Largest Supporters. Butte Theater and Top of The World Rodeo are just Two of the Events they support.
2. Pioneer Pizza and Subs, Kurt and Lori Hale
3. Gold King Mountain Inn, Part of the Wildwood Casino, Cyndi Fowler-Garver
4. Colorado Traders, Jack Maberry, Owner, Member of American Legion Post 171, Past Pres. Two Mile High Club.
5. Cripple Creek Historical Tours, Kathi Pilcher Owner and a Daughter Of The American Revolution.
7. Your Neighborhood Realty, Mike Slaback, Broker and Owner, Addie Miller, and Wendy Wood.
9. Enchantedgreen Images, Mark Green, Member of American Legion Post 171, Elks, Cripple Creek Fire Corps, and VP of the Two Mile High Club. 15% Military Discount on Photography and Banners.
10. The Little Store. Lou and Fat Goldman
Membership remember our target dates!

By: Nick Arceo, Commander, SAL Detachment of Colorado

Thank you, Sons of The American Legion, for your dedication, for your commitment, for your hard work, for your love of American, for your help and assistance to our Veterans. I could go on and on about all the great things that you all do!! I am truly honored to be your Commander.

I am really enjoying my travels around our great state, it’s been great to see all of you that have made it to the Fall District Conferences in your area. These District Conferences will continue well into November, I want to invite you to attend and join in the round table discussion.

As we enter the Holiday Season, continue to “Get back to the basics”, Supporting Veterans and their families, Promote Patriotism that benefits the Youth of our Country and support a program that benefits the youth of our Country. Sons, this is what you are the best at!

One very important date this month is November 11, Veterans day. I want to encourage you to get out into your communities and take part in a Veterans Day ceremony. I’m sure your sponsoring Posts have activities planned, join them and remember our Veterans; they are the reason we joined The Sons of The American Legion.

Don’t forget about my number one goal for this year, Increase Membership. Keep this date in mind, November 14, 2019, this is our 35% target date. let’s get those cards into Adjutant Scott Garrett, don’t hold onto them. Last month, I had the privilege of presenting our first new Sons Charter to Squadron #65 in Delta, to SAL Commander Randy Forsythe. This is the first new Squadron this year, but not the last! We have a few more in the works.

Remember another goal I have is to have a “Triple Nickle” year. We are well on our way, thanks to all your hard work, thank you all!

Thanksgiving is the last Thursday of the month. Let’s remember to be thankful for all our freedoms and liberties we enjoy living in the Greatest Nation on earth. I leave you with my Theme for the year “you can make a difference”. Start each day with this thought and you will truly make a difference in your communities! Please let me know what I can do for you. God Bless.

For God & Country

VA provides Veterans fleeing domestic violence with housing and supportive services

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reminds Veterans nationwide that VA’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Grant and Per Diem (GPD) provide housing and other services for Veterans experiencing domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

Additionally, in observance of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, VA’s Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program will gather with internal and external national partners this October to help promote the department’s mission to foster healthy relationships and safety.

“VA recognizes the impact domestic violence has on Veterans and their families and is committed to raising awareness about this serious problem,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We want to remind Veterans in these tough situations they are not alone, and that VA is here to help them access safe, stable housing and supportive services.”

Veterans losing their housing because they are fleeing domestic violence are eligible for SSVF rapid rehousing, which is an intervention designed to help homeless Veterans and their families quickly access permanent housing. The GPD program provides housing and supportive services to help homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and incomes and achieve greater self-determination.

In 2017, Public Law 114-315 expanded eligibility for participation in the SSVF and GPD programs by broadening the definition of homeless to include any individual or family fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking — or other situations making it dangerous to remain in the home — which include situations that jeopardize the health and safety of children. Eligible Veterans must have no other residence and lack both the resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
Happy 100th Birthday, American Legion Auxiliary! For the past century, the ALA has upheld the pledge ‘to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion’. The American Legion Auxiliary renews this pledge to continue our support of the American Legion for the next century and beyond.

We continue to thank those, who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms, by giving the gift of time, talent and treasure. Auxiliary members volunteer at their Post home, VA care facilities, in their communities, and give monetary gifts to honor their ‘why’ by supporting scholarships opportunities, Girls and Boys State programs, and other activities that support the aims and purposes of the American Legion.

To continue our pledge, we need our members to renew! Our strength is our membership, and our future is in the hands of our younger members. Eligibility in the American Legion Auxiliary has changed, therefore, all daughters, granddaughters, mothers, sisters, and spouses (yes, both men and women spouses!) of those who have served honorably since December 7, 1941 are now potential members.

Happy Birthday to members of the American Legion Auxiliary! And, more importantly, THANK YOU to all those who have served!

Blessings
On November 11th we honor all Veterans for their patriotism, love of country and willingness to serve and be willing to make a sacrifice for the common good.

Veterans Day seeks to honor and give thanks to all the men and women who have served and are serving in the US Armed Forces. This is a day that started to reflect upon those who died in our country’s service. Originally called Armistice Day as the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice (that took effect at the 11th hour, on the 11th day of the 11th month) that ended the first World War but was later changed to Veteran’s Day in 1954 to honor all Veterans for their service – a day to stand united in respect for all our Veterans and their service.

Ceremonies are held across the country at Veterans Hospitals, cemeteries, and National Monuments. At 11:00 a.m. EST, the Veterans Day National Ceremony is held at Arlington National Cemetery. At this ceremony the President of the United States, or his assigned ambassador, places a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

**Auxiliary’s Ornament Project**

*By: Ann Ritacco, NEC*

The call was sent out to all Units to help the VA Hospital in Grand Junction get ornaments for their Christmas tree, for their lobby. I would like to say that we got ornaments. They are beautiful and I wish I could be there to help decorate the tree.

Our Dept Juniors answered the call and decorated some red, white and blue ornaments and painted some clear ones. They did a fantastic job.

Then I mentioned this to my company: CRS Insurance Brokerage, and they wanted to help too. So, I set up a box in the office and they filled it. I am so grateful my coworkers who helped with this project.

Send a Veteran a card and let them know they are thought of. Giving honor and thanks to a Veteran brings us to giving thanks for what we have and a day of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving Day is a celebration of giving thanks. Originally giving thanks for the harvest and blessings of the past year. Many people celebrate in different ways and different reasons. It can be a day of giving thanks to God for his many blessings; expressing our gratitude to friends and family members. It is celebrated in the United States. The first Thanksgiving Day dates back to the Reformation Period in the fall of 1621 at Plymouth, Massachusetts. There were not really any holiday celebrations in the following years until President Lincoln established Thanksgiving a United States holiday in 1863 at the height of the Civil War and then in 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt designated the fourth Thursday of November as the official Thanksgiving Day celebration just before the United States entered into World War II. Give thanks for all we have.

Scott Garret, SAL Adjutant, helped get the ornaments to Grand Junction. He delivered them to the hospital.

Then Delta Unit 65 will get with the hospital to decorate the tree for them.

This was a project that several members of the Family helped-out and community did too.

If you still have ornaments, please get them to Auxiliary Dept office and I will get them to Grand Junction. Please get them there no later 15th. Thank you.

All ornaments Collected

**Photos of the ornaments collected**

![Photos of the ornaments collected](image)
Sioux Falls SD here we come!

**By: Ann Ritacco, Juniors Chairman**

What have the Department Juniors been doing? Well they have been doing some learning about the American Legion Auxiliary. In September we held a meeting/sleepover at Keenesburg Post 180. We showed videos of the ALA history- where we have been and where we are going. We then painted poppies and talked about why they are important and the history. The juniors came up with some great pictures.

We then shifted to helping the VA Hospital in Grand Junction. The Hospital needed ornaments for their Christmas Tree for their lobby. So, we got some supplies for a patriotic themed ornament and they went to town. In no time they had some beautiful ornaments that will look great on the tree. Can’t wait to see them on the tree.

On Sunday morning we got up early and drove to I-25 and North of the Firestone exit. We got out flags. The girls went and handed them out. Then we lined I-25 and waited for the buses carrying the Honor Flight to pass us. They waved the flags as the buses passed. We practiced good flag etiquette. What a great weekend with these young ladies.

In October the Dept Junior Officers: Kailey, Emberly, Adrianna and Kira and one member Caitlyn attended the Junior Meeting in Sioux Falls, SD. On Thursday night we meet in Longmont. Got a good night sleep and headed out early before 4 AM. We were driving to SD this year. We were able to secure a 15-passenger van with a donation from CRS Insurance Brokerage Give Back.

By 10 AM Friday morning we had made it through three states, Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska and we were working our way through the fourth state, South Dakota. We saw some great rock formations and other interesting things along the way. In Mitchell SD we saw the Corn Palace. They had done a salute to the Military this year.

Arrived in Sioux Falls and got ready for our meeting the next day. The girls learned about Americanism, Poppies, Adaptive Sports, Membership, Leadership, sang songs and did some craft projects. The last thing we did was sing Happy Birthday to the Ala for our upcoming 100th Birthday.

It is now Sunday and we are heading back to Colorado. Thanks to Faline, Rhonda and Terra for supervising the girls on this trip.

We are working on the agenda for Mid-year conference and will get that out soon. Mid-year is January 17-19th, in Colorado Springs at the Elegante Hotel.
Opportunities Include:
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• VA Preference Letter (If applicable)
• Schedule A Letters
• Vaccination records
• SF15
• Government Issued ID

Please pre-register at vafederaljobs.eventbrite.com
Same Day Interviews and Candidate Selections, Suitability, Blood Draw, and Fingerprinting for Selected Candidate ----- If you are interested in any other open position within VA, please apply at www.usajobs.gov
Fall Conferences 2019

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<tr>
<td>District 7</td>
<td>Saturday, November 02, 2019</td>
<td>Colorado Springs Post 5</td>
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<td>District 13</td>
<td>Sunday, November 10, 2019</td>
<td>Library Rifle</td>
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American Legion Leo Hill Post 44 celebrates 100th Anniversary

On the evening of October 15, 1919, 40 World War I veterans meet in the County Courthouse to form one of the earliest American Legion Posts in the State. At that meeting the members elected the first commander, named the Post after Leo Hill the first soldier from Steamboat Springs to be killed in the “War to End All Wars.”

For the next 100 years the Post has organized, promoted and influenced many of the activities that Steamboat Springs still embellishes today. Also, over these 100 years, Post members have become the business leaders, and served as government leaders for both the city and county. But most of all during these 100 years, the Post never lost sight of promoting the 4 pillars of the American Legion and its commitment to assisting local veterans and their families with the medical, financial, educational and employment needs.

From the early 1930’s into the early 1960’s the Post’s home’s became the community center for not only Legion events, but a place for all community organization to hold meetings, dances, banquets and programs. The Post sponsored many of the fund raisers thru dances to help fund many projects to benefit the community and even National causes such as the March of Dimes.

The Post held the first Memorial Day ceremony in 1921 and has never missed honoring our deceased veterans to this day. Also, since November 1919, has not missed having some ceremony or event to honor Armistice Day and after 1954, Veterans Day. The Post from 1924 till the early 1960’s put on the annual 4th of July rodeo and parade to celebrate this patriotic holiday. From 1935 till 1996, Post members also put on a fireworks show as part of the celebration.

This 100th anniversary makes the Post one of the oldest continual organizations in Steamboat Springs, and an organization that over these 100 years has had a profound impact of the growth of Steamboat Springs, and making it a great place to live.

PROCLAMATION

of

The City of Steamboat Springs, Colorado

A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE AMERICAN LEGION LEO HILL POST #44 FOR THEIR 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO.

WHEREAS, the American Legion Leo Hill Post #44 was formed on October 15, 1919 in Steamboat Springs, Colorado and is one of the oldest continual organizations in Steamboat Springs;

WHEREAS, the Post has served the community in many ways such as supporting the community center and contributing to its growth;

WHEREAS, the Post has served the community in many ways such as supporting the community center and contributing to its growth;

WHEREAS, the Post has been a leader in community activities such as the original Legionnaires’ Dance Hall and contributions to the community center;

WHEREAS, the Post has sponsored many community events such as the annual 4th of July rodeo and parade;

WHEREAS, the Post continues to support active engagement of youth and veterans in our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, by the City of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, honors the American Legion Leo Hill Post #44 for their 100 year anniversary in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

ADOPTED THIS__ 15th day of October, 2019.

Mayor

Tina Kyprois, President

City Clerk

The look of the Post Home, around the 1950. Photo provided by Post 44.

Picture, Back row left to right: Calder Young, Hal Matthes, Doc Daughenbaugh, Buck Buckland, John Pitchford, Don Murry and Fred Sandelin, Front Row left to right: Jim Stanko and Mike Arroyo holding the proclamation, Tina Kyprois, Bob Grippa, Chuck Parsons and Loretta Kulhman.
VA and Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States partner to increase access to suicide prevention resources for its members

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently partnered with the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) to promote the availability of vital VA-developed education resources for suicide prevention, substance use and abuse and mental health education to current and former members of the National Guard.

Since Aug. 12, the partnership has explored opportunities for identifying and contacting Veterans who are not enrolled in the VA health care system to provide them with information about enrollment.

“VA engaging members of the National Guard is a priority set in the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This partnership enhances the access to these resources for current service members and Veterans already connected with VA.”

“This collaboration will provide access to VA-developed education resources for current and former National Guard members who otherwise do not qualify for VA services, especially when it comes to mental wellness, substance use struggles and necessary emotional support,” said retired U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Frank Yoakum, EANGUS executive director.

VA will share these resources with the 414,000 EANGUS members in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, as well as the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands. Additionally, it will discuss potential mental health educational initiatives with colleges and universities.”

Go to VA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention to learn more.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can contact the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.
How will you pay for expenses that Medicare doesn’t cover?

With the high cost of healthcare today, Medicare Supplement insurance is becoming a necessity for more and more Americans. That’s why it’s good to know that you now have a choice of Standardized Medicare Supplement plans at affordable group rates, offered to members like you. And, all plans are underwritten by a company known for its prompt, personal, responsive service.

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Send to: Medicare Supplement Processing Dept.
P.O. Box 1341
Valley Forge, PA 19482-9946

782336101 25554730
ID RESOLVE
A New Program to Help Legionnaires Fight Back Against Identity Theft

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America and has affected more than 18.7 million victims, with veterans being especially vulnerable targets. Data breaches are becoming more frequent and, when an identity thief strikes, most victims are left to clean up the mess themselves, unsure of where to turn to first. We’ve heard Legionnaire’s concerns around the growing threats of identity theft and are proud to provide a new service to address this concern.

ID Resolve focuses solely on the aftermath of identity theft and resolving the issue. With call centers located in the US, Legionnaires can activate an important set of services to fix the situation and restore their name. ID Resolve’s Identity Resolution Specialists are certified in identifying and repairing any type of identity theft such as medical fraud, Social Security identity theft, and financial theft.

ID Resolve is available to Legionnaires at a special member-only rate and provides resolution services for a full year. Plus, Legionnaires can take up to 30 days to review ID Resolve and decide if it’s right for them; if not, a full refund is available as long as the services have not been used.

There are two annual memberships available:

Member: $79/year
Couple: $99/year

To learn more or enroll in ID Resolve, visit www.thelit.com/IDResolve

ID Theft by the numbers
Claims a new victim every 2 seconds
18+ mill. victims targeted in the U.S.
$16 billion in losses
Veterans are 50% more likely to be the victim of identity theft
There were 1,579 data breaches last year
40+ hours spent resolving an identity theft case

Services provided by Generali Global Assistance. Generali Global Assistance has been a leading provider of identity and digital protection solutions, travel insurance, and other assistance services for more than 35 years. Generali Global Assistance is part of the multinational Generali Group, which for over 185 years has created a presence in 60 countries with over 74,000 employees. Generali’s success has been built on the foundation of trust that clients have placed in their ability to provide assistance in the most difficult of circumstances.
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United States Census 2020
THE 2020 CENSUS:
AN IMPORTANT WAY TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Every ten years, the U.S. Census Bureau is responsible for conducting the nationwide census. While the next census itself will be taken in 2020, the Census Bureau is already recruiting to fill important positions. With the help of organizations like yours, we plan to recruit and employ thousands of Americans as Census Takers throughout the country. Since most communities are best known by the people who live and work there, you can help us—and help your community—by getting the word out about 2020 Census jobs in your community.

Why should you or your organization help the Census Bureau recruit applicants?
An accurate count is the goal of every census, the 2020 Census included. The results of the census have real-world impacts—and consequences—for communities across our country. From determining the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives to planning for roads, schools, and hospitals, an accurate count is crucial. By helping to recruit Census Taker applicants from your community, you can help to ensure that your community is properly represented.

How can you or your organization help to get the word out about 2020 Census jobs?
You can help by doing any of the following:
• Posting information about 2020 Census jobs using your organization’s social media channels, as well as by tagging other organizations that might also be willing to share this information
• Posting information about 2020 Census jobs on your organization’s website and/or in newsletters
• Distributing promotional materials about 2020 Census jobs to your clients, customers, and/or members
• Displaying promotional materials about 2020 Census jobs in your offices and other facilities
• Allowing a Census Bureau recruiter to distribute promotional materials to your clients, customers, and/or members
• Sending an email with 2020 Census jobs information to your contacts
• Inviting a Census Recruiter to present information about 2020 Census jobs at your meetings or other gatherings, or being willing to provide 2020 Census jobs materials at those times yourself
• We are also very interested in any ideas you may have; since nobody knows your organization better than you, we look forward to working with you in what you believe will be the most effective ways

How will you know what information to distribute? Or will the Census Bureau provide the materials and messages?
We will make sure you have everything you need. To learn more about this, and to obtain materials and messaging, please visit www.census.gov/regions for information on how to contact your Regional Census Center.

Applicants are encouraged to apply online at 2020census.gov/jobs or to call the toll-free number at 1-855-JOB-2020 with questions, or to obtain more information or assistance.

Thank you for your interest in helping to promote 2020 Census jobs!

Best regards,
2020 Census Recruiting Team

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Talk to experts about a variety of resources important to military members, veterans and their families, including employment, healthcare, housing, transition support, crisis resources and much more!

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or email L.Lewis@communityreachcenter.org
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To learn more go to https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/66963/amtrak-offers-veteran-military-member-discounts/
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connectingcolorado.com

We know what it means to serve
★ Veterans are entitled to priority of service. ★
American Legion survey reveals mental care disconnect

By: The American Legion

Over 30 percent of respondents to a recent American Legion survey said they personally knew a veteran who committed suicide. And nearly 40 percent were unsure if the veteran they knew was eligible for VA mental care services.

The survey, conducted by The American Legion’s Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Committee, received a record-breaking 13,648 responses from across the country last summer. Nearly 97 percent of respondents were veterans, 66.5 percent of the Vietnam War and over 12 percent from the post-9/11 era.

The gap between veteran suicidality and use of VA mental health services matches the message Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie delivered Aug. 28 at the 101st American Legion National Convention. He explained that just six in 20 daily veteran suicides are committed by people enrolled in the VA health-care system. He and others in VA have called upon The American Legion and other veterans service organizations to help them get word to at-risk veterans that care is available.

“Suicide prevention is the No. 1 clinical priority of the president of the United States,” Wilkie said at the convention. “It’s my top priority for veterans. As long as we are still seeing veterans struggle, we must all guide them back to the community of this brotherhood, this military family. They need our love and support.”

The survey found that 82.47 percent of respondents had received no formal suicide-prevention training. The 1,688 who reported having had some suicide-prevention training generally agreed that the training “provided them with the appropriate resources to prevent suicide.”

The survey also found:

- 76.46 percent of respondents have never sought mental health care from a VA medical center
- 84.23 percent have never sought mental health care from a VA Vet Center
- 80.48 percent have never sought mental health care outside of a VA facility
- 46.68 percent said they were “not likely to seek mental health services from the VA for any future mental health care needs”

Roudebush VA Medical Center suicide-prevention coordinator Travis Field reported to the Legion’s TBI/PTSD Committee on Aug. 24 that the Indianapolis-based VA system is trying to reach into communities to close the gap between veterans in need and those who know services exist to help them.

“We have to take the work of suicide prevention into the community,” Field told the committee. “It’s much, much broader than the hospitals. We have to be working in the community, and with others.”
Vietnam Pinning

This is a picture of the group of veterans that were presented Vietnam Lapel pins at my wife’s hometown annual Czech Days celebration this June.

I did this in conjunction with the local American Legion Post in Tabor. We pinned 85 living vets, 6 surviving spouses and 9 killed in action, two of which are still listed as Unaccounted for.

It was quite an emotional event for all attending. One KIA, missing in action veteran was a school mate of my wife’s. His daughter was at the event to receive the immediate family Certificate of Honor and lapel pin. This is a very special Certificate of Honor only prepared by the DOD.

All living immediate family members for each KIA received the Certificates and pin.

She was only 14 months old when he was listed as missing. He is now listed as KIA, still missing. The DOD gives her an update on their efforts to find his remains every 6 months.

After the ceremony several of her father’s classmates shared their stories of him. Somethings she never knew about her father. Very moving for her and every one there.

Gene.

Valor - Vets - Care

Hello everyone, my name is Gabriel Buza. I am a Marine Corps Veteran (08-19) and fellow member of The American Legion. I recently moved to the area with my wife, Savannah, who is currently active duty in the world’s finest U.S. Navy. We have no kids, but our two dogs more than make up for it! I currently work as a Project Manager at Valor Roof and Solar.

Why Valor: Valor Roof and Solar is a veteran-owned, local roofing company that provides its services to the Front Range of Colorado. We cover from Fort Collins to Pueblo and everywhere in between. Our objective is to be your one point of contact for all residential and commercial roofing or solar needs. Since the roofing industry is widely known as one of the most untrustworthy businesses in the United States, our goal is to build a better reputation—one roof at a time! Keeping with the HIGHEST standards of integrity, we believe in providing outstanding customer service, and excellence in craftsmanship.

You may have seen Valor on the news a few times in the last year. Normally, when you hear about a contractor on the news it is a bad thing; however, that is not the case for us. A few gracious homeowners called the news stations to tell them about how Valor gives back!

Vets Supporting Vets: Valor Roof and Solar has created a charity called Valor Vets Care or VVC. Our mission and commitment, is to honor and serve the brave men and woman who have sacrificed time and time again for this great nation. For every roof that is installed, we take a portion out and put it aside for our charity. VVC has been replacing roofs for Veterans in need, at ZERO cost to the homeowner. With the blessing of donations and the gracious contributions of our suppliers, partners and labor force, we want to complete as many roofs as possible! Our goal for 2020 is one roof a month!

We would love to serve all of our brothers and sisters throughout the communities, but also need your help to find our next Valor Vet! If you know of a Veteran or active duty service member that is unable to afford and in need of a new roof, please go to our Valor Vets Care Facebook page. Submit their name, number and either a short video or written description of who they are, where they served and why they should be our next Valor Vet.

Contact: Please feel free to reach out to me directly if I can be of any assistance. I can be reached by Call/Text/Email at (330) 714-1509 or Gabriel.Buza@Valorroof.com.
We get letters too!

Gary Burkholder  
Adjutant Post 189  
PO Box 294  
Yampa, Colorado  
80483

4th October 2019

Dean M Noechel  
Dept. of CO. Commander  
7470 Sun Prairie Dr.  
Colo. Spgs., Colorado  
80925

Dear CMDR Noechel

As per your request, Commander Ken Montgomery, Vice Commander Richard Villa, Past Commander Larry Bond, and I Adjutant Gary Burkholder, all of A.L. Bird-Howe Post 189, toured South Routt County to collect the names of those flying the American Flag. Attached is our list of names for 109 locations. It was a rewarding task for five different reasons. Number one, we were ambassadors for the American Legion. Number two, we were able to inform people that we have a Post in Yampa. Number three, we collected flags that were not serviceable, and we were able to inform people as to where they could bring their old Flags, and of our Flag retirement ceremony on Flag Day. Number four, we informed people of the Veterans Day Ceremony put on by South Routt Elementary school. Last but not least we made contact with prospective new members. Also while we never commented on the condition of anybody’s Flag, they would usually tell us of their plans to replace the bad ones and apologize for their condition. While I am sure we missed a few we did put in a good effort. Also I would like to request at least four blank signed certificates for people that we were unable to get their names because they were not home at the time. We could fill in their names when we deliver them. We would take more then four if you feel it is appropriate. We thank you for the challenge it’s been a rewarding exercise.

Sincerely,

Gary Burkholder
Denver VA Regional Benefits Office Hours & Locations

Denver Public Contact Reception Area
Office Hours:
  Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm
Location:
  Denver VA Regional Office
  Room 201
  155 Van Gordon St.
  Lakewood, CO  80228

The VBA Office in the PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom VA Clinic in Colorado Springs:
Office Hours:
  Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm
Location:
  PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom Outpatient Clinic at Colorado Springs
  Suite 1300
  3141 Centennial Boulevard
  Colorado Springs, CO 80907

The VBA Office in the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center:
Office Hours:
  Monday – Friday, 9 am – 11 am & 12-3:30pm (new hours!)
Location:
  Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
  1700 North Wheeling Street (South Entrance, near Pharmacy check-in kiosk)
  Aurora, CO  80045

The VBA Office in the VA Western Colorado Health Care System:
Office Hours:
  (VACANT-outreach provided in Western Slope 4th of the month until position is filed)
Location:
  VA Western Colorado Health Care System
  Room 1410B (new office number!)
  2121 North Avenue
  Grand Junction, Colorado 81501

For all locations of VA Facilities:
Visit our website for directions and maps:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/denver/other-va-facilities.asp
To call: 1-800-827-1000
To send an email: https://iris.coauthelp.com/

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NEW! Denver VA Regional Benefits Office Hours & Locations

Do you have a question about your VA Benefits?

Compensation Claim, Pension Claim, Aid and Attendance, Appeals, survivor and burial benefits, Home Loans, Employment, or Education?

The VBA Office in the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center is holding office hours:
Office Hours:
   Monday – Friday, 9 am – 11 am & 12-3:30pm (new hours!)
Location:
   Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
   1700 North Wheeling Street (South Entrance, near Pharmacy check-in kiosk)
   Aurora, CO 80045

(Sign in near the Pharmacy check in kiosk)

For all locations of VA Facilities:
Visit our website for directions and maps:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/denver/other-va-facilities.asp
To call: 1-800-827-1000
To send an email: https://iris.custhelp.com/

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