



Butler County Veterans Service Commission

Veterans Serving Veterans

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August 1, 2018

The Mission

Defining, disseminating, and achieving the mission is a universal concept and well-understood by those currently or formerly in the military. A career in the military, regardless of duration, is a quilt work of missions assigned to each individual. Missions in the military feature well-defined behaviors communicated through regulations, manuals, SOPs, orders, and repetition. The typical soldier, Marine, sailor, or airman is well trained, job-focused, and strives for mission accomplishment.

As members of the Butler County Veterans Service Commission, we also have a mission. And that begs this inquiry, "Do we have a defined mission?" The primary mission for the Commission is identification and outreach of all veterans in the county and providing opportunities for clients to realize the applicable benefits offered by the VA and the State of Ohio. For some, these offerings may not match their situation, needs, or expectations. For others the mission will transition to helping the veteran to identify and seek the applicable benefits available.

To this end, the Commission does a commendable job. With confidence, we can attest that all veterans,



Whose situation qualifies for benefits, will be awarded. Similarly, those who do not qualify will know that the best effort was extended on their behalf. Yet, we fall short on the outreach portion, which involves communicating, identifying, and (Cont. on Page 4)

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Upcoming Events

- August 5: Purple Heart Recognition Day w/Warren County, Springboro Cemetery
- August 10—Cincinnati VA Mental Health Summit
- August 24—Dayton VA Mental Health Summit
- September 28—Central Connections Wellness Fair

Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony

In collaboration with Warren County Veterans Services, we will be hosting the 4th Annual Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony.

Sunday, August 5, 2018

Please arrive by 10:30 a.m., ceremony starts at 11:00 a.m.

Location: Springboro Cemetery, 2348 W. Lower Spring-

boro Road, Springboro, OH 45066

There will be food and drinks available after the ceremony along with facilities for rain and an air-conditioned chapel with wheelchair ramp.

Event is open to the public!





VA MISSION ACT SIGNED INTO LAW (militarybenefits.info/va-mission-act/)

On June 6, 2018, President Trump signed into law, the VA Mission Act. This law was designed to greatly improve veteran access to VA healthcare. The VA Mission Act addresses in-network and non-VA healthcare issues, veterans' homes, access to walk-in VA care, prescription drug procedures, and much more.

This VA reform law affects a wide range of areas and the "official" name of this law says a lot about its' focus. The legislation's formal name is the VA Maintaining Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act. Now that the

VA Mission Act has been signed into law, the VA now must work on the criteria to be considered including wait times for VA appointments, quality of VA care, and distance from a VA facility. The VA Mission Act addresses both short term and long care fixes for gaps in VA medical care. The short term improvements includes eliminating a gap in care due to funding issues associated with the VA Choice program. The long-term fixes are associated with the replacement of VA Choice; the VA Mission Act consolidates seven different programs offering community care including VA Choice into a

single entity. Funding is also being provided for education and training, VA medical staff recruitment, and a review of VA medical facilities. This review process is intended as the first step in a modernization program for VA locations that need upgrades.

A significant improvement under the VA Mission Act is that the Department of Veterans Affairs is now required to provide "access to community care if VA does not offer the care or services the veteran requires, VA does not operate a full-service medical facility in the state a veteran resides, the veteran was (Cont. on Page 4)



VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

National Veterans Memorial and Museum (dvs.ohio.gov)



The National Veterans Memorial and Museum Act, which designates the Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, OH, as the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, has been signed into law by President Trump. This museum will be dedicated to honoring America's veterans and educating the American people about their sacrifice.

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum will serve as a civic

landmark to honor, connect, inspire, and educate visitors and Americans about the service and sacrifice of the country's veterans and their families.

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum will honor all of America's veterans and attract new attention to this important landmark.

The mission of the National

Veterans Memorial is to : HONOR contributions of Americans" to their country through military service; CONNECT civilians with veterans and their experiences; INSPIRE visitors to serve their community; and EDUCATE schoolchildren about their history and value of service.

More information can be found at <http://www.nationalvmm.org/>

Blue Water Navy Agent Orange Claims (<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2018/06/25/house-passes-benefits-fix-for-ailing-blue-water-veterans-now-awaits-senates-move/>)



House lawmakers on June 25, 2018, advanced plans to extend disability benefits for nearly 90,000 "blue water" veterans exposed to toxic chemicals during the Vietnam War but until now denied compensation for that danger.

The move was hailed as a major breakthrough by veterans advocates, but it will likely take several months before the Senate moves on the same plan and

officially starts the process of getting payouts to those elderly veterans.

The House approved the plan by a vote of 382-0. It now heads to the upper chamber, where Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson, R-Ga, has called the issue a top priority for the remainder of the year.

However, that committee must first tackle the confirmation of

VA Secretary nominee Robert Wilkie. That work will delay hearings on the new benefits bill for at least a few weeks, leaving no clear timetable on when the legislation may be completed.

Under current department regulations, Vietnam veterans with rare cancers and other illnesses can receive medical care from the VA but are not always guaranteed disability benefits.



Blue Water Navy Agent Orange Claims (Cont.)

Troops who served on the ground in Vietnam or patrolled inland rivers during the war are assumed to have been working with or near Agent Orange, and are given special status when filing disability benefits claims to speed up the process.

But so-called “blue water” veterans—who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam—still need to prove direct exposure to Agent Orange for their illnesses to be labeled as service-connected. In many cases that’s impossible, since scientific evidence from the ships was never collected.

Lawmakers in recent years pushed to fix the oversight and

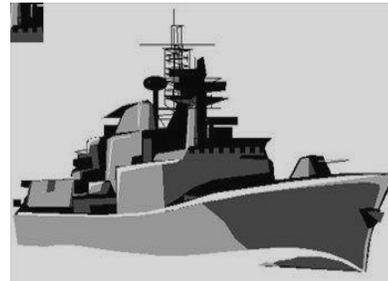
mandate the special status for sailors who served off the coast. But they have also struggled with how to cover the costs.

Last month, lawmakers on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee reached a compromise to raise that \$1.1 billion through a new fee on department-backed home loans.

It’s expected to cost a typical veteran homeowner about \$350 over 10 years, but only about 60% of borrowers will be required to pay for it. Most veterans with a disability rating who use the home loan program will be exempt.

House Veterans’ Affairs

The House-passed bill also extends presumptive exposure status to veterans who served in the Korean Peninsula demilitarized zone beginning in September 1967 and last until August 1971, the same end date for the Vietnam War.



Focus on Staff: Commissioner, Chuck Weber

Chuck Weber originally hails from Akron, OH, but has been a Butler County resident for the past 30 years.

Mr. Weber is a proud Army, Vietnam veteran, serving as Training Operations Officer for the Long Binh post commander. Chuck received many accolades during his military career, including Distinguished Military Graduate upon departing Akron University, Army ROTC; as well as a Distinguished Armor School

Graduate in 1970 at Fort Knox, KY.

After departing the Army, Chuck worked as a teacher for a short period and soon after launched a career in the logistics and trucking industry, as a Sales Trainee with Roadway Express. Chuck served for 35 years in the trucking industry, retiring in 2013 as an Area Vice-President.

Since his retirement, Chuck has dedicated his free time to com-

munity service, including his church, the DAV, VFW, and American Legion. He uses his position on the VSC to give back to his fellow veterans and the veteran community. He is a strong advocate for our agency, spreading the word about our organization to every veteran he meets.

Thank you for your service Chuck and to the veterans of Butler County.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!

Do you have a question about VA Benefits or the Services that the Veterans Service Commission provides? We would like to hear from the veterans of Butler County about specific questions, comments, and concerns that we may be able to address.

A different question will be addressed in each newsletter. If you have a question that you would like for us to answer, please send an email to:

vsc@butlercountyohio.org





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Veterans Service Commission



The Butler County Veterans Service Commission is an agency that provides veterans and their dependents reliable and professional service in providing advocacy and assistance in obtaining veterans benefits, temporary financial assistance, and transportation to VA appointments. The Butler County Veterans Service Commission works closely with our community partners to best meet the needs of the veteran families that we service, thus helping to improve the lives of veterans and their families residing within Butler County.

The Mission (Cont. from Page 1) ...notifying clients of their benefits.

While it is true that the number of veterans served has increased, we must realize that favorable results occurred as a product of outreach. We advertise in print, digital, and radio media. We attend outreach events. We communicate individually to circles of friends. Yet, we still have failed to reach the majority of veterans in Butler County. We experience success, but must not rest on our laurels. The outreach effort calls for "all hands on deck" and might benefit from repetition mixed with creative ideas. We have no shortage of work and we have not yet scratched the surface of our potential. Going forward, commissioners and employees alike must focus on the outreach part of our mission. While some veterans out there may not know yet, they will become our clients and that will make a palpable difference in their lives. Sincerely, Chuck Weber, Commission President

VA MISSION ACT SIGNED INTO LAW (Cont. from Page 2)

eligible for care in the Community under the 40-mile rule in the Veterans Choice Program" and when the veteran meets certain requirements. The VA is required to enter into contracts with private networks to insure veterans get this care when warranted.

The VA is now authorized to enter Veteran Care Agreements with State Veterans homes with the purpose of eliminating competitive contracting; State Veterans Homes are not technically considered to be federal contractors, but under the VA Mission Act, these homes are required to follow federal Fraud, Waste, and Abuse requirements.

Veterans have walk-in care access under the VA Mission Act, but this portion of the law includes certain conditions including a requirement that vets must have used VA healthcare services within a 24-month period prior to requesting walk-in services.

Also under the VA Mission Act, there will be important changes to the VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, including expanded eligibility for veterans with service-connected medical issues.

The VA is now required to ensure its' care providers-including contractors are using "evidence-based guidelines" for prescribing opioid-based painkillers or pain management approaches. These guidelines are found in the Opioid Safety Initiative which must be adhered to as a condition of providing community care. Under the new rules, the VA is required to insure that community health care providers have the appropriate access to patient medical histories including "all medication prescribed to the veteran as known by VA."

Full text of the law can be found at https://veterans.house.gov/uploadedfiles/va_mission_act_summary.pdf



VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs