



New Potter County Veterans Service Committee Launches

Potter County's restructured Veterans Service Committee held its first meeting last week at the Gunzburger Building in Coudersport. Purpose of the committee is to advise Potter County Director of Veterans Affairs Michael Pepper (right) and conscientiously serve the county's veterans through the engagement of representatives from each veterans' service post in the county.



A roundtable discussion was held on areas of need in the county. Transportation, housing and suicide prevention were identified. Among potential projects to be pursued is a comprehensive Veterans' Benefit Fair. Members asked that a display case in the Gunzburger Building be expanded to commemorate the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Wall visit to Potter County last year. Committee members also plan to pursue a local Vietnam Veterans Appreciation Dinner.

They also informed Director Pepper that they would like to have publication of the newsletter, *Potter County Veterans News*, resumed. Potter County Commissioner Paul Heimel volunteered to produce the newsletter, which will be distributed to American Legion and VFW posts and be available to the public at the Gunzburger Building or online.

Attending were: Rodney Cowburn, Berwyn Calcote (Ulysses Legion – Post 963); Kerry Ehrensberger (Austin VFW – Post 7810); Ted Parsell (Coudersport Legion – Post 192); Mitch DeLong, Daniel Antonioli (Shinglehouse Legion – Post 530); Michael Thompson (Galeton VFW – Post 6611); Michael Pepper (Director of Veterans Affairs); and Danielle Gietler (Volunteer).



Next meeting is scheduled for April 15 at the Gunzburger Building. Among projects to be discussed are expansion of the Veterans Gravestone Restoration Project and the Veterans Discount Program.

Veterans' Resource/Job Fair April 9 in Bradford



Veterans and their families are invited to attend a free “one-stop shop” to learn about VA services and community resources during a Veteran Resource and Job Fair from 2-7 pm April 9 at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. Veterans and their families will be able to meet face-to-face with a variety of VA and community resources including:

- VA health experts who can provide blood pressure screenings for veterans and information on a variety of VA health topics, including eligibility, behavioral health, whole health, women veterans' services, and more.
- Veterans Benefits Administration representatives available to answer questions regarding benefits and/or claims.
- Representatives from the University of Pittsburgh and Northern Pennsylvania Regional College to discuss educational opportunities.
- Specialists from the Mobile Vet Center, available to provide readjustment counseling to combat vets.
- Pa. CareerLink representatives prepared to share employment information.
- Homeless & Transitional Housing representatives.
- Community and government resources.

Veterans who have never enrolled for VA services are encouraged to bring a copy of their DD-214 service discharge papers. More information is available from Zach Pearson at 814-887-3241 or Byron Sutton at 814-363-9100.

Shattering myths surrounding veterans' services

Many veterans don't know that they may be eligible for services from the VA. Here are some misconceptions.

⇒ **Myth 1: “I didn't serve in combat/I wasn't injured in service, so I'm not eligible for VA care.”**

False. If you served in the military – even during peacetime – in the active military, naval, or air service, and are separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA health care benefits.

⇒ **Myth 2: “I don't want to go to the VA. Those appointments for those who really need it.”**

Fact: the more veterans that use VA services, the more funding and resources the agency receives so it can continue serving more veterans.

⇒ **Myth 3: “I make too much money.”**

Fact: it's not all about income. There are many other factors taken into consideration when applying for VA health care. Other factors include having a service-related injury or illness (such as exposure to Agent Orange), when and where you served, if you are a former Prisoner of War, if you received a Purple Heart Medal, and others.

⇒ **Myth 4: “I want to go to the VA, but I will lose my private health insurance.”**

False. Assuming you are eligible for VA health care, you do not need to give up your private health insurance. You can keep your own insurance and seek health care from the VA as well.

Veterans discount program in Potter County

Potter County military veterans are reminded that they can sign up for discounts on products and services from more than two dozen local businesses participating in the first-ever Potter County Veterans Discount Program. The county's Veterans Affairs Department is seeking greater participation by veterans as well as providers of products and services in Potter County.

To register, veterans should provide full name, mailing address, contact information (telephone and email, if possible) to the county's Office of Veterans Affairs. There are three ways to apply: send required information by an email addressed to mpepper@pottercountypa.net; send regular mail to Veterans Affairs, Gunzburger Building, 1 N. Main St., Coudersport PA 16915; or call 814-274-8290, extension 210, to schedule an appointment or obtain additional information (office hours are 8:30 to 4:30 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

Each veteran who registers for the program will receive a membership card that must be shown at participating businesses to qualify for a discount. Veterans will also receive a brochure that identifies participating businesses by name and address, along with the particulars of their discount offer.

Under the program, merchants and professional service providers extend discounts – typically 10 percent or more – to Potter County veterans. Certain restrictions may apply. Businesses wishing to sign up or learn more about the program should call 814-274-8290, extension 207, or send email to pcexecsec@pottercountypa.net.



American Legion Post 192 honors local couple



American Legion Post 192 in Coudersport paid tribute to a local couple, John and Connie Kallerson, by presenting each of them with one of the organization's top awards.

A retired U.S. Army colonel who now serves as pastor of the St. Paul Lutheran Church, John was named Legionnaire of the Year. He was honored for his service as chaplain and board member of Post 192. He was also recognized

for his work in the community and his service during the visit of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Wall. Connie Kallerson was named Citizen of the Year in recognition of her work in a successful local Wreaths Across America last December. They received their awards from Post 192 Commander John Orlowski (left) during the annual Post 192 Anniversary Dinner. Guest speaker Michael Pepper, Director of Veterans Affairs, discussed the founding and continued service of the American Legion, which celebrates the centennial of its founding this year.

News & Notes



American Legion: Century of Service!

This month we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American Legion, which traces its roots to a Paris conference in March 1919. That was the seed from which some 12,500 posts would sprout across the nation. From that early gathering, a constitution draft called for an organization of military veterans to “perpetuate the principles of justice, freedom and democracy for which we have fought, to inculcate the duty and obligation of the citizen to the state; to preserve the history and incidents of our participation in the war; and to cement the ties of comradeship formed in service.” The American Legion centennial period continues in earnest through Nov. 11, 2019, the 100th anniversary of the first national convention.

New scams targets military supporters

Scammers will use any means necessary to steal. They'll set up fake websites, steal Social Security numbers and identities, or pose as a foreign millionaire seeking help to shelter millions of dollars. In March, the Federal Trade Commission exposed the bogus "Veterans of America" for running an alleged series of sham charities that falsely claimed to collect tax-deductible donations of cars, boats, and other items of value. Scoundrels have also added a new twist to “the grandparent scam.” They're plucking information from social media and contacting grandparents, disguising themselves as grandchild in military service desperately needing help. If you've been targeted, report it to your local police.



Show your support of PA's nearly one million

VETERANS!

The Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF), administered by the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), provides funding to assist and support Pennsylvania veterans and their families. The VTF will issue grants to statewide charitable organizations that assist veterans, veterans service organizations and county directors of veterans affairs. The fund can assist veterans in need of shelter and with necessities of living.

How can you help?

✓ The next time you apply for or renew your Pennsylvania driver's license or photo ID or renew your motor vehicle registration, you will have an opportunity to make a \$3 tax-deductible contribution to the VTF.

✓ You don't need to be a veteran to show your support of veterans by purchasing the "Honoring Our Veterans" license plate. This plate is available for passenger cars and light trucks up to 10,000 pounds and costs \$35. Fifteen dollars from the sale of each license plate goes to the VTF.

✓ You can make a tax-deductible grant, gift or donation directly to the VTF.

Policy Effective Date			Policy Expiration Date		
Mo.	Day	Yr.	Mo.	Day	Yr.

If you wish to contribute \$3.00 to the VTF please check the block to the right



Learn more at:



pennsylvania
VETERANS' TRUST FUND



PA Veterans' Trust Fund
Bldg. 0-47 Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003
Phone: 717-861-6491 | Fax: 717-861-8589 | www.vtf.state.pa.us

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Potter County Veterans News is a publication of the Potter County Veterans Affairs Department. Copies are available for download from the county's website, pottercountypa.net. For more information, contact Paul Heimel at 814.274.8290, Ext. 203.