



Highland Park Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Post 4737 NewsGram

P.O. Box 47, Highland Park, Illinois 60035
Meetings at Wooden Nickel, 444 Lakeview Ave., Highwood IL
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November 2018

Honor the Dead by Serving the Living

POST WILL MEET: On Thurs, Nov 8, 2018, 7:00pm at the Wooden Nickel, 444 Lakeview Ave, Highwood, IL. Future mtgs: Dec 13, Jan 10 and all second Thursdays of the month, unless otherwise notified. The Post will provide after-meeting fare from the Wooden Nickel menu.

Main Agenda Items: Status of Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen programs. Post judging must be completed by **Nov 15**. Also, **Highland Park's Veterans Day Ceremony** is on **Nov 12**. Our Post presents The Colors, provides the Closing Prayer and supplies the bell for a Bell Ceremony.

POST HOSPITAL NITE: Our Bingo Hospital Nite at Lovell is on **Monday, Nov 26, at 6:30 PM** and on most following fourth Mondays at Bourke Hall, Bldg. #4, Lovell FHCC. We provide pastries and other refreshments to about 40 patients. Bingo isn't a big deal, but it gives the veteran patients a chance to leave the wards. Volunteers can check cards or just mingle with the patients for a bit of conversation.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIVE DATES: November 11 (Signing of the WWI Armistice, 1918-Veterans Day); December 7 (Pearl Harbor Day, since 1941.); December 31 (End of WWII declared officially by the President, 1946). Remember to display the Flag.

CHAPLAIN FERRER RUNS FOR VETERANS: On Oct 7, Chaplain Ferrer ran in the Chicago Marathon on the Salute, Inc Team. Salute is a 501c3 not-for-profit started in Palatine IL in 2003 to aid veterans and their families. The runners are sponsored by organizations like our Post. 143 runners on the Salute Team collected \$208,000.00 in donations.

FREE GROCERIES & COATS: In honor of Veterans Day, the Grainger Foundation is sponsoring this event at Midwest Veterans Closet, Nov 13, 12 noon to 2:00pm, 2323 Green Bay Rd, North Chicago, IL, 847-354-2108. Must have military, dependent or veteran ID.

CONGRESSMAN SCHNEIDER VETERANS BREAKFAST: Friday, Nov 9, 9:00-10:30am, Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep cafeteria. Sign up at <https://schneider.house.gov/> or call 847-383-4870.

KEEP COPIES OF ALL VA CLAIM RECORDS: For most of you that had/have pending claims of any sort with the VA, keeping copies of all records, communications and copious telephone notes is second nature. But many veterans are haphazard about this task, often to their detriment. This tedious task has become more important because the VA is in the process of digitizing records. An Oct 23, 2018 VA News Release states:

"The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently completed a significant modernization effort in which more than 7.8 million paper files were removed from 60 locations in fewer than 22 months, enabling rapid scanning into VA's electronic claims processing system by multiple third-party vendors. This will lead to faster claims decisions for Veterans."

While this process appears commendable on the surface in order to speed up claim processing and reducing costs, many of us remember how the VA operated a few years ago. As recently as 2016, the VA's Office of the Inspector General reported on widespread shredding of veterans claim records.

So, excuse your Editor from wondering how many records will be mis-filed or lost during this huge process. As in the home mortgage debacle of 2008-09, no big players at the VA were ever indicted or jailed for the decades of criminal mis-management at the VA. Maybe things are improving, but don't risk your claim on it.

CHANGES TO ACTIVE/RETIREE DENTAL/VISION INSURANCE: Effective **January 1, 2019** retired members of the uniformed services and their families, and family members of active duty service men and women, will be eligible for the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). Eligible individuals must enroll during the 2018 Federal Benefits Open Season (November 12, 2018, to December 10, 2018) to have coverage starting January 1, 2019. The current U.S. Department of Defense's TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) will sunset on December 31, 2018.



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MEETINGS AT WOODEN NICKEL IN HIGHWOOD

VA DENYING VETERANS OUT OF NETWORK EMERGENCY CARE: According to the Veterans' Emergency Care Fairness Act, signed into law on 2011, the VA is required to reimburse veterans enrolled in VA health care for the cost of emergency treatment if the veteran has no insurance or outside insurance that only covers part of the cost. A simple concept. Veterans earn their healthcare from a grateful nation, and it's not their fault if a VA facility is not nearby when they have a heart attack. Apparently, the VA doesn't see it that way.

On Oct 30, The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) filed a class action lawsuit in the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) against the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Robert Wilkie. The suit is the latest chapter in an 8-year saga to get the VA to honor its obligations to reimburse veterans for emergency medical expenses incurred at non-VA facilities.

This is the second time that NVLSP has filed suit in the CAVC over VA's failure to comply with the Emergency Care Fairness Act. In the first lawsuit, filed in 2014, the CAVC forced the VA to pay on the basis that Congress intended the VA to step in as a "secondary payer" where other health care insurers cover only a portion of the cost of the veteran's emergency treatment.

But the VA remained unconvinced that its mission is to assist veterans. During the next 21 months, the VA put a moratorium on deciding the tens of thousands of pending reimbursement claims. Nice job. Let the vets dangle and get harassed by bill collectors. Finally, in January 2018, the VA issued a new, screw-the-vets, the VA won't pay regulation, and began to decide the backlog of reimbursement claims with a "don't pay" bias.

And so, a new lawsuit is needed.

VA FAILS STUDENT VETS AGAIN: Some student veterans are facing eviction because the VA is behind on GI bill payments, with over 200,000 veterans left waiting for their money. Some monthly housing payments for student veterans have been delayed up to 90 days. And some schools won't let veterans graduate or register for classes because their tuition is late.

The VA has acknowledged that it's behind on the payments. In a statement, a spokesperson said VA employees are working overtime to process the claims, and it has brought on 200 additional people to speed up the process. The VA faced similar problems in 2009 but issued emergency payments to veterans.

The House Veterans Affairs committee hearing looking into the issue is set for Nov. 14. The VA says veterans who aren't receiving their payments should call its customer service number: 888-442-4551.

HO TAI PUP TENT NO. 67 - A brief resume of "Louse-y" News

SCRATCH, SCRATCH: Dec 6, Jan 3 and all subsequent Scratches (first Thurs unless otherwise notified) will be held at 6:59 1/2 PM, at the Highland Park Police Dept. Training Room, 1677 Old Deerfield Road, Highland Park, IL.

COOTIE HOSPITAL NIGHTS: Capt. James Lovell Fed Health Care Ctr, Bldg. 134, Bingo and Ward visits, 6:30 PM. Coming dates are Nov 15, Dec 20 and all third Thurs, unless otherwise notified.

"KEEP 'EM SMILING IN BEDS OF WHITE"

CONTACT THE NEWSGRAM WITH NEWS/COMMENTS THROUGH: Editor Peter A. Quilici, 7501 Kostner Ave., Skokie, IL 60076/ Phone: (847) 997-7662 (cell) or (847) 763-1793 (home hard line) / E-mail: pquilici@ameritech.net. Please feel free to submit for publication news of interest to veterans.

