

# Did You Know?

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That each year our Legion Service Officers from all of our State Departments meet in Washington D.C. for training? For three days they are furnished with a wealth of information from The National Veterans Legal Services Program and Department of Veterans Affairs sections including the Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and the National Cemetery Administration. This training is sponsored by the American Legion VA&R Washington office. Following that most of us also attend the annual DC conference. Here are some of the highlights:

The Veterans Administration estimates it will process 1.4 million disability claims this year.

The VA expects an avalanche of appeals and will be asking Congress money to hire almost 700 new employees at the Bd. of Veterans Appeals.

The Legion represents 12% of all appealed claims and currently has a caseload of 8,500.

The VA will treat over 35,000 patients with Hepatitis C and new drugs will be able to cure 95% of them. It is estimated that 5% of all VA patients have Hep. C and most don't know it. Get tested.

New National Cemeteries will be built in Western NY and Southern Colorado.

There are still over 250,000 dependency claims pending, some going back 2-3 years.



The VA has rolled out its National Work Queue. VA offices that are underutilized will get cases from other offices with too many cases. This will make dramatic improvements in timeliness.

Veterans are still hurting their fellow veterans by NOT showing up for their hospital appointments and not notifying the VA. These slots could have been filled by another veteran.

Rules will be changing under the VA's non-service connected pension program. There will be a look back period on asset transfer to families and friends and certain trusts and annuities will no longer be allowed to hide assets. NOTE-these changes will NOT affect service-connected compensation payments.

At the VA National Cemeteries 74% of the employees are veterans and of those 28% are service-connected disabled.

Korean and Vietnam era veteran's claims usually had 2-3 conditions claimed; current Gulf War era veterans average 10 or more conditions.

Although there are claims which take much longer, the average veteran now waits only 91 days for a decision.

Coming: although veterans can't reserve a burial space in a National Cemetery yet they soon will be able to determine eligibility ahead of time so that when that time comes their service data will have already been approved.

The Chicago area has been approved for an urban cemetery to consist of cremated remains however they still haven't found any vacant land within their budget. In other words the land is too expensive.

IT TAKES THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR TO  
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