

Did You Know?

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That in the 44 years I have been a service officer I have run across so many situations that I think to myself that is a “No Brainer.” But then I think about it further and realize many veterans are not aware of certain simple things which they should be doing. So, with that said here are some of my “No Brainers.”

1. If you are the spouse, partner or a relative who may find themselves taking a veteran to the ER for a medical emergency be sure you have a good and current list of their medications and dosages. Often times the veteran is in great pain, confused or unconscious at the time of their visit. Current info helps the staff avoid confusion and possible overdose.
2. If not taking the vet to the VA ER then also be sure you have a copy of their NEW Medicare card with the new number. Also copies of private insurance cards.
3. Relatives and partners may have a close relationship to the veteran but they can't make medical decisions if the veteran is unable. Have a current properly executed Power-of-Attorney for health care.
4. Many veterans will experiment with living together with their partners. Before you know it they have gotten accustomed to this arrangement and years go by. I often hear when the vet dies that they were going to get married but kept putting it off. Illinois is not a common-law state so there would be no benefits for their partner. And even if the vet realizes their death is near and tie the knot, a couple has to be usually married for at least a year to later get benefits. I just had one case exactly like that and the vet died 11 months after their marriage. Sorry, no VA survivors benefits.
5. Children often times could care less about the veterans medals and don't want to hold on to them. Discuss this with your kids and if they don't want them do what my uncle did; he had them placed into the casket with him
6. As much as you feel your spouse has been honest to you if he or she says they have been married before and just don't want to talk about it, get at least the date and place of the divorce. Otherwise you may be in for a surprise when the first spouse pops up and there was NO divorce.
7. And my perennial comment, exactly where is the vet's DD 214 if it's needed. Having it in a safe place is no good if no one knows where that safe place is!

These are just a few of “No Brainers” I have run across. If you have a favorite let me know via my e-mail address shown about. Maybe I'll include it in my next article.