

The Insider

American Legion Department of Illinois News
DECEMBER 2022



BE THE ONE



Lomac Payton



Greetings American Legion Family—
We are in the month of December and Christmas is just a few weeks away. I'm hoping everyone will have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. So much has happened during these last four months since August 2022. We've had post level training and made other changes to The American Legion programs. Things seem to be working and going in the direction we like.

Everyone should have plans in place for the new year starting. I was in Indianapolis, Indiana at Department headquarters. We had a series of training for two days. At the hotel, we had two days of training as well. I had the pleasure of meeting and sharing ideas with other Department Commanders. Other Commanders and I were invited to have breakfast with one of the Vice National Commanders and present our plans for our state for this year. Last month we visited the Haven in Marion, Illinois.

We have plans in place for the annual membership caravan starting in January 2023. We also will be attending the President Truman Pilgrimage in Independence, Missouri. Our post level workshops have been very successful. The participation has been wonderful. Jim has done a great job teaching and pointing out how important it is for Post Commanders, Post Adjutants and Post members to attend these workshops. As we serve our Veterans in The American Legion, it is a continual learning process for all of us. How can you lead where you don't go? How can you teach what you don't know? Continue to read your Officer's Guide and other manuals. Educate yourself about The American Legion and its programs. Then you can teach members in your post. There are three types of people: the ones that make things happen, the ones that watch things happen and the ones that wonder what happened. I encourage you to be the one that makes things happen. Take care and keep each other in your prayers. May GOD bless.

Your Department Commander, Lomac A. Payton

Delmar Buske



To Our American Legion Family—

I think I have recovered from the trip to Florida. What our Legion family did for the victims of Hurricane Ian was a true inspiration. What a remarkable feat to accomplish in less than a week!

The Veterans Day parades and programs were very interesting and Utica's was as impressive as always; it was one of the larger ones in the area and had a lot of military vehicles participate. They also had an airshow going on at the same time. When the smoke cleared from one of the passes of the planes, there was an eagle soaring above the crowd. What a sight to see! I was honored to be the first car right behind the lead police vehicle. Our grandson's school also had a parade of vehicles through their parking lot that all the classes were able to go outside and view. Our grandson was very excited. Monticello has their Veterans Day parade in the evening and it always has a great turnout, no matter the weather. This year's parade was no exception, even with the unofficial temperature being about 20 below zero!

There was a great turnout for Pam Ray's "Cash Bash." What a wonderful fundraiser and a great time had by all! I'm looking forward to more of her fundraisers.

The Haven Jamboree in the 5th Division was a great event as usual. I always look forward to going there for the weekend. The biggest problem is that there is never enough food! Yet somehow, I seem to come back home about three pant sizes bigger than when I left.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the loss of our Department Treasurer. Myron Kirby was not only a great mentor to me, but to many people. He will be sorely missed.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Until next month.....

Janet Bacon



Happy Holidays, American Legion Family!

I cannot believe that we are in the holiday season! As we go through this holiday season, please remember the members of our military and their families in our communities and those that are deployed. A care package or a letter can mean so much.

I had the honor of attending the 85th Annual Egyptian Past Commanders Jamboree. I have been there before but not as the American Legion Auxiliary President. The Haven is a remarkable place. It is such a calming place. The steak dinner on Friday night was wonderful. The tour of the Marion VA was incredible. The things they are doing there to make things easier for our veterans is wonderful. The banquet dinner on Saturday night was outstanding. I had the honor of introducing all of the American Legion Auxiliary Past Department Presidents that were in attendance. It was a very successful night.

I hope you have marked your calendars in January to join us at a stop for the American Legion Family Caravan. Remember that this is for everyone! You can turn in membership, have something to eat and listen to our guest speaker. This year our guest speaker is National Vice Commander Ken Hylton. I hope to see you there.

Please enjoy your family and friends over the holidays whether they are near or far away. My wish is that everyone start the New Year off healthy, and keep our Veterans and their families in your thought and prayers.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Kevin O'Connell



Greetings,

Now that we are past Veterans Day, as well as the Marine Corp Birthday, we can settle in and look forward to the Holidays. Also coming up is the Egyptian Past Commander's Club weekend November 18th to the 20th. Also a big reminder that the Sons Of The American Legion Winter Detachment Executive Committee meeting is Saturday December 3rd at American Legion Headquarters in Bloomington. We are fortunate to be having several dignitaries from National there. We are hoping for a great turn out from our Division, District, and Squadron members. If you've never been to a D.E.C. this would be a great time to show up and see what going on Detachment wise. As a reminder December 7th is Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. This will be the 81st Anniversary of the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and put us into WW2.

National started a program called "Be the One" which is a program designed to locate and help Veterans in need. As a part of the program a new hot line number has been developed, (988). As National say, (998 prevents a 911). As you're aware my special project this year is supporting Veteran Suicide Prevention programs which goes along with National. So take time, especially during the holidays to do Buddy Checks. So Be the One to help a Veteran in need. On the National website there is lots of information on how to properly do buddy checks and be a part of the solution.

Our membership is going well so far. We are ranked 11th Nationally and we are in 2nd place in the Central Division. Our Sr. Vice Commander Mike Vozar is working very hard trying to bring those numbers up. We also have good news as it looks like we may have at least five new Squadrons starting up. This is fantastic because it shows the Sons of the American Legion is growing. If any American Legion Post needs infor-

(Continued on page 5)

Mt Prospect Post 525 presents \$13,657.48 to Veterans Path to Hope

Post 525 Commander Bill Starr is pictured presenting a check for \$13,657.48 to Executive Director Laura Franz of Veterans Path to Hope on Monday November 14, 2022. The donation came from the post's annual golf outing held in October. Veterans path to Hope is a non profit that assists homeless and struggling veterans. Post 525 meets each second Monday @ 7pm at Moose Lodge 660 (exception December).



(Courtesy of Dutch DeGroot, Post 525) Submitted to Dept HQ by Josefina Frances.

JOIN USAA

Membership means more.

We offer benefits, products and discounts for U.S. military members and their spouses, as well as children of USAA members. We're committed to providing our members with exceptional service.



In Loving Memory

Myron Dean Kirby



It is with deep sadness and heavy hearts that we remember late Department Treasurer and Finance Officer Myron Kirby, who was welcomed to Post Everlasting October 30, 2022. Myron was many things to many people; a leader, a mentor, and most importantly, many of us had the privilege of calling him 'friend.'

Myron was a current DeWitt County Soil Chairman of the Board, Past State President of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Past American Legion Post 55 Commander; Past 19th District Commander; Past 4th Division Commander; Past Department Commander; Current Department Treasurer; National Finance Vice Chairman; Past Chef DeGare of Voyager 238 of 40/8; member of Farmer City Masonic Lodge #710 A.F. & A.M.; and member of the National Child Welfare Foundation.

His services were held at Farmer City American Legion Post 55. Hundreds of people gathered during those two days to pay their respects. On behalf of Sandy and the rest of the Kirby family, we'd like to extend the greatest of thanks to the members of Farmer City American Legion Post 55, Commander Gary Risler, Christia Risler, and everyone who helped to clean, cook, set up, etc. to make sure we were able to properly honor Myron's memory. He left a large hole in our American Legion Family and we will miss him dearly.

Sue Cunniff Coughlin

Our Legion Family has also suffered a great loss with the passing of Past Department President Sue Cunniff Coughlin on November 12, 2022.

Not only was she the first and only American Legion Department of Illinois Auxiliary President to serve TWO consecutive terms, but she also did so during a pandemic. She was a wonderful asset to the American Legion Auxiliary for 26 years. She also served as President of Billy Caldwell Unit 806, President of the Ninth District, President of the First Division Cook County Council and was a 26 year member of the 8 and 40 Organization, serving as Chapeau Passe 8 & 40 Northwest Ridge Salon # 573 and Chapeau Passe Departemental d' Illinois - Salon #21.

We were honored to call her sister and friend. She will be sorely missed.



(SAL Commander, Continued from page 2)

growing. If any American Legion Post needs information on how to start a Squadron we would be more than happy to help.

We wish everyone in the American Legion Family Happy Holidays and please stay safe. God Bless you and God Bless our Country.

Kevin O'Connell



DECEMBER



DECEMBER 3: BIG 4

[SAL D.E.C. @ DEPT. HQ](#)

DECEMBER 7: PEARL HARBOR DAY

75% ALA TARGET DATE

DECEMBER 11: **LEGION COLLEGE (DEC 11-16)**

DECEMBER 23: DEPT HQ OFFICE CLOSED
(WILL REOPEN JAN 2)

DECEMBER 25: **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

DEC 31/JAN 1: **NYE/HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Top 10 District & Division Rankings

District	Commander
----------	-----------

13	Gibbs
22	Swaim
8	Petersen
3	Fitch
17	Abdelnour
18	Morris
19	Smith
9	Florentino
21	Baumann
11	Oikion

Division	Commander
----------	-----------

4	Garrett
2	Kraut
5	Maden
3	Seward Jr.
1	Thompson III

American Legion Post 328 Flag Presentation to Honor Past Post Commander Dale Usterbowski



(Left) Sergeant-at-Arms Jerry Brearton presented the flag to Nancy Usterbowski, the widow of Dale Usterbowski during his Celebration of Life. Dale was the Commander of the American Legion Post 328 in Morrison IL for eight years (2010-2018).

(Right) The Honor Guard stood at Present Arms during the flag presentation awaiting to fire three volleys, followed by the playing of taps by Carolyn Aiken. Left to right are: Chaplain Garry Seaman, Flag Bearer Ron Wierserma, Past Commander Terry Jones, Adjutant Ken Petersen, Bob Brands, Commander Larry Zuidema, Jeff Steele, Larry Saling and Senior Vice Commander Dennis VanZuiden.

Information submitted by J.W. Brearton

The American Legion Department of Illinois High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

LOCATION CONFIRMED



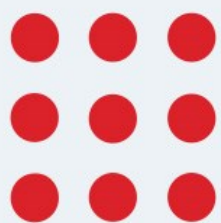
As many of you know, we distributed our first round of brochures and applications for the 2023 contest with location noted as TBD. We are excited to announce that it will be held at the President Abraham Lincoln Springfield—DoubleTree by Hilton. **Please note that dates have changed to February 24-25, 2023!**

Department Leadership Tours Marion VA Medical Center



In November, Department of Illinois Legion Family leadership toured the Marion VA Medical Center. They were also joined by National Vice Commander Ken Hylton.

Pictured (From left to right) are National Vice Commander Ken Hylton, NEC Wayne Erickson, Department Commander Lomac Payton, Special Aide to Commander Bill Seward, Detachment Commander Kevin O'Connell, Auxiliary President Janet Bacon, Senior Vice Commander Delmar Buske, Immediate Past Detachment Commander Jeff Trout



Veterans Crisis Line

DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**



Merry Christmas!

FROM THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT & VA&R STAFF

Thomas A. Peyton

Delmar Buske



Christy Rich

William J. Vaughan

Dee Dalton



Cheryl Hutson

Terry Abdelnoor

Zina Abdelnoor

Shandi Green

Sheila Graham

David Scott

Patricia Caraker

Wayne Macejak

Carolina Contreras

Toy Jenkarnchang

Georgiann Callaway



Contribution Form for Department Commander Payton's Special Project

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL OR POST:

POST #: _____ DIV #: _____ DIST #: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

ZIP CODE: _____ PHONE NO.: _____

AMOUNT \$ _____

Payment Type: _____ Check -or- _____ Credit Card

Please Charge \$ _____ on my Credit Card



Card No.: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____

(Required)



“STRONGER TOGETHER!”

Illinois Veterans helping their own! Department of Illinois Commander Lomac Payton is asking for your donations, *large or small*, to help with two important resources that are dear to his heart; to keep building the Illinois Disaster Relief Fund and contributing to The Haven in Carbondale. Your contribution will ensure that funds are available in times of crisis and also to provide a place of sanctuary for our veterans. These funds will be dedicated to Veterans right here in our very own state. All donations will be split 50/50 towards the IDRf and The Haven

☆ Please make checks payable to the
Department of Illinois and earmarked ***“Commander’s Special Project - IDRf/HAVEN”***

☆ Send contributions to:
The American Legion—Dept. of ILL
2720 E. Lincoln St.
Bloomington, IL 61704

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE



Children & Youth Committee

2023 Special Olympics Winnter Games

Dave or Sue Johnson 815-520-4643

Dates: January 31; 8 am to 4 pm, February 1; 8 am to 4 pm & February 2; 8 am to 12 pm

Locations: Galena, Illinois

1. Chesnut Mountain, 8700 W Chestnut Mt. Rd.
2. Eagle Ridge, 444 Eagle Ridge Rd.

I will be there from _____ To _____ Tuesday Jan 31

I will be there from _____ To _____ Wednesday Feb 1

I will be there from _____ To _____ Thursday Feb 2

Name _____ Address _____

Phone # _____ Post/Unit # _____ Dist# _____ Div# _____

I will bring _____

Here is my donation of \$ _____ to help with supplies for Special Olympics

<u>Legion</u>	<u>SAL</u>	<u>Auxiliary</u>	<u>ALR</u>
Unpowered gloves M – XL	Plastic Thank You	Store Bought Cookies	Monetary
Cheese Balls	Grocery Bags	Little Debbie/Hostess	Donations
Pirate Boat Puffs	Apple Sauce in	Individual Wrapped	Appreciated
Crackers	Squeeze bags	Individual Muffins	Apples
	Peanut Butter Crackers	Halos	Bannanas
	Veggie Straws	Grapes	
Return to:	Water Bottles	Celery, Gold Fish Crackers, Pretzels,	
The American Legion	OR The American Legion Auxiliary	Chips	
Dept of Illinois	Dept of Illinois		
P.O. Box 2910	P.O. Box 1426		
Bloomington, Il 611072	Bloomington, Il 61072		

2023 AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY January 13 - 22, 2023 MEMBERSHIP CARAVAN SCHEDULE

DATE	Div#	Dist#	Post #	CITY	MEAL
JANUARY 13	3	15	381	ABINGDON	BREAKFAST 8:30 AM
JANUARY 13	3	14	227	EAST MOLINE	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 13	2	13	193	GALENA	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 14	2	12	337	GENOA	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 14	2	10	771	GURNEE	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 15	1	9	36	DES PLAINES	BREAKFAST 8:30 AM
JANUARY 15	1	5	687	STICKNEY	HORS D'OEUVRES 11:30 AM
JANUARY 15	1	2	923	CHICAGO	HORS D'OEUVRES 2:00 PM
JANUARY 15	2	11	80	DOWNERS GROVE	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 16	4	18	51	WESTVILLE	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 16	4	19	55	FARMER CITY	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 17	CARAVAN DAY OFF ★		CARAVAN DAY OFF ★		CARAVAN DAY OFF
JANUARY 18	5	23	1168	EDGEWOOD	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 18	5	24	306	METROPOLIS	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 19	5	25	147	MARION	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 19	5	22	199	EDWARDSVILLE	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 20	3	20	1083	KAMPSVILLE	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 20	4	21	386	VIRDEN	DINNER 6:00 PM
JANUARY 21	3	16	979	BARTONVILLE	LUNCH 11:30 AM
JANUARY 21	4	17	1115	SPRING BAY	DINNER 6:00 PM



National Vice Commander, Ken Hylton will be our special guest during the 2023 Illinois American Legion Family Caravan. Please make time to come to one of the caravan stops nearest you to visit with him. Also, if you plan on attending the meal you need to R.S.V.P. the host post.



Bring all membership cards with you to turn in...even if it's just ONE!

2022—2023 DIVISION & DISTRICT MEETING DATES

DATE	DIST. / DIV.	TIME	POST	CITY
12/03/2022	1ST DIVISION	TBD	OPERATION CANES-OPSEC @ POST 626	HILLSIDE
12/03/2022	19TH DISTRICT	10:00 AM	REVITALIZATION @ NEOGA POST 458	NEOGA
01/08/2023	5TH DIVISION	1:00 PM	MARION POST 147	MARION
01/15/2023	23RD DISTRICT	1:00 PM	TEUTOPOLIS POST 924	TEUTOPOLIS
01/18/2023	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	MORTON GROVE POST 134	MORTON GROVE
01/22/2023	22ND DISTRICT	1:00 PM	DUPO POST 485	DUPO
01/22/2023	25TH DISTRICT	TBD	THE HAVEN	CARBONDALE
01/29/2023	10TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	WAUCONDA POST 911	WAUCONDA
02/01/2023	1ST DIVISION	7:30 PM	MORTON GROVE POST 134 (DEC @7:00)	MORTON GROVE
02/15/2023	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	EVANSTON POST 42	EVANSTON
02/18/2023	14TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	EAST MOLINE POST 227	EAST MOLINE
02/25/2023	13TH DISTRICT	TBD	LANARK POST 357	LANARK
03/05/2023	15TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	IPAVA POST 17	IPAVA
03/05/2023	16TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	GLASFORD POST 35	GLASFORD
03/12/2023	3RD DIVISION	1:00 PM	PEORIA POST 2	PEORIA
03/12/2023	18TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	DANVILLE POST 210	DANVILLE
03/12/2023	19TH DISTRICT	1:00 PM	DECATUR POST 105 / LUNCH @ 11:30	DECATUR
03/12/2023	21ST DISTRICT	1:00 PM	PALMYRA POST 1034	PALMYRA
03/15/2023	7TH DISTRICT	7:30 PM	JOSEPH M. SESTERHENN POST 166 @ MORTON GROVE POST 134	MORTON GROVE
03/17/2023	10TH DISTRICT	7:00 PM	ROUND LAKE POST 1111	ROUND LAKE PARK

VETERANS CORNER

Submitted by Jerry Vogler

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR DAY

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, marks the 81st anniversary of the one of the worst days in our Nation's history, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This is a day to remember sadly, the loss of life and our reluctant entry into World War II. However, it also must be a day remembered as the beginning of the Nation coming together as one, and a revitalization of our spirit after a decade of economic suffering. Americans supported the war effort by producing a great portion of the War equipment and materials for the rest of our Allies in the war, as well as for our own armed forces who fought all over the world. The united National effort is considered the greatest manufacturing and supply-line creation and execution in history. It is right to mourn the losses, but it is equally right and moral to celebrate that we Americans accomplished so much to benefit not only ourselves but the entire world. In these current times of divisiveness and attacking the very foundation of what America was, is and shall be, we should not forget that we can come together on the same principals that our founders gifted to us, and become united, again. I hope that it does not take another tragedy like a major war to create the fertile ground where such unity can be seeded and prosper.

Q: I served four years in the Army back in the 1990's but received a General Discharge Under Honorable Conditions. I have several medical problems which occurred while I was on active duty. I have been reluctant to apply for VA healthcare benefits. Am I eligible for VA Healthcare?

A: Basic eligibility for VA HealthCare includes a person who served in the active military, naval or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. A Veteran meeting those guidelines may qualify for VA Health Care benefits including qualifying Reserve and National Guard members. Additionally, Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible. This minimum duty requirement may not apply to Veterans discharged for hardship, early out or a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. To apply for VA Healthcare, complete VA Form 10 10 EZ Application for Health Care Benefits, get a copy of your DD 214 Certificate of release or discharge from active duty. Contact the nearest VA Clinic or Medical Center, (Bloomington VA Clinic 1-309-827-4090) to set an appointment with the eligibility section of the local VA. The eligibility review of your DD 214 and your completed VA form 10 10 EZ will usually take less than 30 minutes and you will be notified either at that time, or after your DD 214 is vetted by the VA Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Regardless, you will know within about one week of your eligibility.

DID YOU KNOW?

Traveling Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare will receive the same, consistent care, whether at their local VA treatment site or an alternate VA care site. Winter is always a time when Veterans who live in locations where cold weather and snow are regular parts of their life, often travel to warmer locations. "Snowbirds" who are enrolled with VA health care may need VA health care services while they are traveling or "wintering"! In order to ensure that such Veteran maintain their VA healthcare undiminished when the Veteran leaves the local VA health care area the VA requests that the Veteran contact their local VA PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team), and the Team will coordinate the Veterans Health Care at an alternative location where the Veteran will be traveling. The notification should be made six to eight weeks ahead of the travel date and should include Travel destinations(s), and temporary address; a valid telephone number; arrival and departure dates; and specific care concerns. The PACT team will contact the national Traveling Veteran Coordinator, who will assist in coordinating care at the alternative facility. Contact you PACT team at your local VA Clinic or Medical Center or a Traveling Veteran Coordinator at the local VA facility.



ILLINOIS PREMIER BOYS STATE REGISTRATION OPEN

Now! Yes, right now. Identify those deserving youth that are excelling all around your community. They are identified in the paper every week as standouts in the high school golf, football, volleyball, cheer squad, poms, fall play, band, and cross country programs amongst others. These are the kids parents you talk to now and have them register for boys and girls state. Registration is open for boys state. Get your commitments early. There is no shortage of kids that can go. Don't undersell or under represent your community. If your local post somehow can't afford to sponsor 6 or so kids interested, reach out to your district officers. They will find a post that will help. Register at illinoisboystate.org.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:

We are happy to include your District/Division Meeting Dates, Happenings at your local post/community, announcements, etc.

*Email sgreen@illegion.org OR send by mail to:
American Legion, Dept. of IL
P.O. Box 2910 Bloomington, IL 61702
ATTN: SHANDI GREEN*

If any changes or updates need to be made to the schedule or other submissions, please submit them as soon as possible to Shandi Green in by email (or in writing).

NOTE: WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO INCLUDE YOUR SUBMISSIONS BUT CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT THEY WILL BE. IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE, PLEASE SUBMIT BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR

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SHANDI GREEN

Now Is The Time To Stand Together For Our Flag

* One year Subscription to the Department News
\$20.00 for 11 issues

Newsletter articles must be at Department Headquarters by the
15th of each month for it to be in the next month's issue.

Department of Illinois ~ Official Member of The National American Legion Press Association



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DECEMBER TRIVIA

1. When was the first Christmas card sent and who designed it?
2. Which was the last US state to declare an official holiday for Christmas?
3. Which was the first country to issue a Christmas postage stamp?
4. When was Christmas declared as a federal holiday in the United States?
5. What was the real department store featured in a Christmas movie and what movie was it?
6. Who played George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life?"

ANSWERS:

1. The first Christmas card was sent in 1843 and was designed by John Horsley.
2. Oklahoma
3. Canada
4. 1870
5. Macy's in "Miracle on 34th Street"
6. Jimmy Stewart



The new PACT Act



- » Expands toxic-exposed Veterans access to VA care
- » Extends health care eligibility for Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 era combat Veterans
- » Adds new presumptive conditions for radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War toxins, and burn pit exposures

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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

