

FEBRUARY 26, 2024



CHARLES A. WOODFORD POST 2007

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

Since We Last Met

...or since we were scheduled to meet!

Jan 22: Ice everywhere! Travel conditions are expected to deteriorate. Post meeting is cancelled.

Jan 23: Post Member Adolph Choura passes away.

Jan 30: Commander meets with Guy Cooley to finalize his transfer from Breeze Post.

Feb 3: Walk through for Adolph Choura. Adolph was a transfer from Post 53 in Caseyville when that Post closed. His visitation and internment was at Lake View in O'Fallon.

Feb 13: Several members of the Post met at McAlister's in Shiloh. This was a fundraiser night! We had a few members stop in to eat or just to say hello. We raised \$234 plus for the evening. Thanks to all that came out to work and eat!

DID YOU KNOW?

2023: End-of-year Veteran benefits update

December 20, 2023

Josh Jacobs, VA Under Secretary for Benefits

Happy holidays! As we head into the new year, we wanted to give you a quick update on VA's non-health benefits for Veterans. Partly thanks to the historic PACT Act, Veterans like you have applied for benefits at record rates over the past year—surpassing the previous all-time record by 39%—and that's a

Feb 15: Blood Drive day! The day went well. We were able to collect 10 units! Thanks to Legionnaires Doug J. and Bill M. for coming in to donate.

Feb 17: I had the pleasure of traveling to Headquarters for a session on membership. This was a meeting to discuss the coming year plan to reach our membership goals. The best part of the meeting is the exchange of ideas and methods to increase membership. The Department Sr Vice, Joe Lampert, reminded us that we all need to work membership, together we will reach our goals.

Feb 18: I was notified that another Post member had passed. Robert McGlynn. Robert transferred into the Post about two years ago. Robert was a 78 year member of the American Legion.

great thing. As a result of your benefits applications, we at VA have been able to deliver more earned benefits to more Veterans than ever before, including \$150 billion in benefits during 2023 alone. That's exactly what Veterans like you deserve.

Because of this record increase in applications, there has also been an anticipated increase in the number of claims applications that take longer than 125 days to process (otherwise known as the backlog), which is currently at 378,000 claims. (Continued on 2nd Page)

CALENDAR

- Feb 27, VAC Meeting, 7PM, 19 Public Square
- March 9, Poppy Day, 9AM to 3PM, Lowes at Greenmount Commons
- March 10, Daylight Saving Time Starts, spring forward!
- March 16, 22nd District Commander's Call, Noon, Post 137 in O'Fallon
- March 16, Flag Collection, 9AM to Noon, 07 Service St., Swansea
- March 25, Post Meetings, 6:30PM Executive, 7PM General
- March 27, VAC Meeting, 7PM, 19 Public Square
- April 7, 5th Div. Spring Caucus, 1PM, O'Fallon Post 137
- April 12, 22nd District Spring Caucus, 1PM, Dupo Post 485
- April 20, Flag Collection, 9AM to Noon, 07 Service St., Swansea

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Meetings are the fourth Monday of the month at 7 PM.

Swansea Improvement Association
216 Service St, Swansea IL 62226

Check Out Our Facebook Page
Swansea Post 2007

Post Email: ilpost2007@gmail.com

STILL SERVING AMERICA

DID YOU KNOW (CONTINUED)

While the total claims inventory has been decreasing over the last several weeks, the backlog is expected to grow in 2024 before returning to normal levels. We have been taking aggressive steps to address this increase and to ensure timely processing of your claims.

Here's what this means for you:

Although the backlog has increased, you will likely receive a benefits decision more quickly than during previous surges: Right now, the average claim is processed by VA in 149 days, which is 198 days faster than in 2013 (the last time applications were nearly this high). We also process some parts of your claims faster than others, so if part of your claim is granted, you may get a first payment before your full claim is finished.

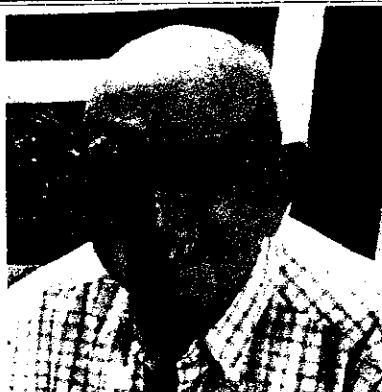
We are granting benefits at higher rates: Whenever you file a claim, our goal is to work with you every step of the way to get to "yes." As a result of this approach, we were able to grant benefits for 65% of claims filed in 2023—including 76% of PACT Act claims, which is a sharp increase from previous years.

We are processing more claims than ever before: In fiscal year 2023, VA processed nearly 2 million of your benefits claims—beating the previous all-time record by 16%—and we're on pace to break that record again in fiscal year 2024.

Most importantly, we want you to apply for benefits: We want every Veteran, family member and survivor to get the care and benefits they deserve, so we want you to apply today. We've hired thousands of claims processing employees in anticipation of this surge in applications, and we have 1,400 more coming onboard soon. So don't worry and don't wait: submit your claim today and we will process it for you as soon as possible.

We are proud to serve you each and every day. Thank you for applying for your VA benefits at record rates in 2023 and for encouraging your friends and family members to do the same.

As we head into the new year, please keep spreading the word. Let's break the applications record again in 2024—and in doing so, ensuring that as many Veterans as possible get the health care and benefits that they so rightly deserve.



Adolph Choura

Transferred to Post Everlasting



Robert McGlynn

Transferred to Post
Everlasting

TID BITS

On This Day

1863: Abraham Lincoln signs National Currency Act, establishes single national US currency

1914: HMHS Britannic, sister to the Titanic, is launched at Harland & Wolff, Belfast

1929: US President Calvin Coolidge establishes Grand Teton National Park

1944: 1st female US navy captain, Sue Dauser of nurse corps, appointed

1970: The Beatles release "Hey Jude" compilation album in US (originally to be titled "Beatles Again")

1987: NBA's Michael Jordan's 58 points in one game is a Chicago Bulls record

1994: St Louis Blues beat Ottawa Senators 11-1



The Four Chaplains were Lt. George L. Fox, a Methodist minister from Pennsylvania; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, a Reform rabbi from New York; Lt. Clark V. Poling, a Reformed Church in America minister from Ohio; and Lt. John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest from New Jersey.

The American Legion Emblem

The Wreath forms the center, in loving memory of those brave comrades who gave their lives in the service of the United States that liberty might endure.

Commander Out