

MARCH 25, 2024



CHARLES A. WOODFORD POST 2007

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

Since We Last Met

Mar 9: Poppy Day! Our small band of misfits met to collect donations. The Greenmount Commons Lowes was the gathering spot. Poppies in hand, boards in place, and we are collecting. By the end of the day we collected \$590. Thanks to all those came out to help and tell stories.

Mar 16: The 22nd District Commander, Al Mahan, called a Commander's Call. I went to represent the Post. His agenda was membership, getting Posts to District and Division meetings, getting reports to Department on time, and some other minor topics. The Commander is working to make the 22nd District stronger on the membership front.

Not a lot to report this month, but some other things that were being done this month:

Two of our Post members travelled to the Vietnam Wall in Perryville MO. They travelled down on March 23 via

bus. The trip was planned by the Veterans Assistance Commission. Hope you enjoyed the trip.

Rich Gaebel is organizing our Color Guard for the Vietnam Day Ceremony on March 27. He has several members lined up for this event.

We are getting information about the Memorial Day Parade in Belleville. If we can get "marchers", we can walk the parade. There will be a ceremony at Walnut Hill Cemetery. This ceremony will be a joint effort between the American Legion and The VFW. If you would like to assist in these events, please let we know.



Carol and Bob enjoying a past parade

CALENDAR

- Mar 26, 7PM, VAC Meeting, 19 Public Square. Meeting is open to all
- Mar 27, 4 to 10PM, VFW Fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse
- Apr 7, 1PM, 5th Division Meeting, Post 137 in O'Fallon.
- Apr 13, 1PM, Department Executive (DEC) Meeting, Normal IL
- April 14, 1PM, 22nd District Meeting, Post 485 in Dupo
- Apr 20, 9AM to Noon, Flag Collection, 107 Service St., Swansea
- Apr 22, 6:30 and 7PM, Post Meetings, 216 Service St., Swansea

DID YOU KNOW?

VA has processed more than one million Veteran benefit claims in fiscal year 2024, the fastest rate in VA history

March 19, 2024, 1:30 pm

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it has processed its one millionth Veteran benefits claim in fiscal year 2024. VA reached this milestone March 4 — the earliest in VA history and nearly six weeks faster than the previous all-time

record (from fiscal year 2023). VA has completed almost 35% more claims than at this point last year.

As a part of President Biden's Unity Agenda for the nation, VA is continuing to deliver more benefits, more quickly, to more Veterans than ever before. Through February of this fiscal year, VA provided \$69 billion in earned compensation and pension benefits to 6.5 million Veterans and survivors. (continued on back page)

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Meetings are the fourth Monday of the month at 7 PM.
Swansea Improvement Association
301 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)

This milestone builds on last year's historic pace, when VA delivered record amounts of earned benefits to Veterans and survivors.

This increase in Veteran benefits is largely due to the PACT Act, which has empowered VA to expand health care and benefits to millions of Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving our country.

"We're proud to be delivering more benefits, more quickly, to more Veterans and survivors than ever before – but we're not slowing down," said VA Under Secretary for Benefits Josh Jacobs. "We won't rest until every Veteran and every survivor to get the VA benefits and care that they've earned. So, to any Veteran or survivor out there: don't wait, submit your claim today."

Whenever a Veteran files a claim, our goal is to work with them every step of the way to get to "yes." As a result of this approach, VA has been able to grant benefits for 60.4% of claims filed in 2024 – including 75.1% of PACT Act claims – a sharp increase in the grant rate from pre-PACT Act levels.

Veterans also continue to apply for benefits at record rates, with VA receiving 4.5% more claims thus far in fiscal year 2024 than at this point in 2023. Since the PACT Act was signed into law by President Biden, Veterans and their families have filed more than 3.5 million claims.

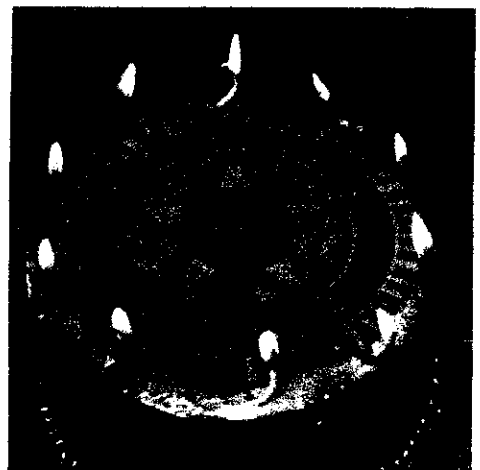
As a part of reaching one million claims, VA processed 221,592 disability compensation and pension claims during January 2024 alone – making it VA's highest single month of claims production ever, surpassing the previous monthly record of 193,411 from May 2023. VA's top 11 best claims production months in agency history all happened in the last 12 months. Additionally, the organization continues to achieve single day processing milestones – VA processed between 9,000 and 10,000 Veteran claims 43 times in fiscal year 2024 and more than 10,000 Veteran claims 35 times during the same time period. February 7, 2024 was the best single production day ever in VBA history with 10,997 claims completed. Before fiscal year 2024, VA had only had three 9,000 claim production days in history.

As a result of this record pace, Veteran claims pending over 125 days – known as the backlog – has decreased by more than 42,000 claims over the past three months. Due to record numbers of claims applications, the backlog is still expected to grow in 2024 before decreasing at the end of this year – and VA will continue to hire new claims processors, invest in continuous learning for all claims processors, and make technology improvements to ensure that Veterans, family members, caregivers and survivors receive the benefits they've earned and deserve as quickly and accurately as possible.

VA remains focused on hiring and training new claims processors and has grown the claims processing workforce more than 50% since fiscal year 2021. This growth, along with new technology to assist those processors, has allowed VA to meet the historic demand for benefits precipitated by the passage of the PACT Act in 2022.

To learn more about VA disability benefits, visit VA's website and apply

From VA Website



TID BITS

On This Day

1584 English explorer Walter Raleigh granted seven-year royal charter by Elizabeth I to explore and colonize North America, after Humphrey Gilbert's death at sea.

1776 Continental Congress authorizes a medal for George Washington.

1813 1st US flag flown in battle on the Pacific by the frigate Essex.

1863 1st US Army Medal of Honor awarded to six army soldiers by US Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in Washington.

1947 Coal mine explosion in Centralia, Illinois kills 111.

Facebook has put our Facebook Group on an "Un-Published List". This action will not allow me to post comments and items. This action was made because we do not meet the Community Standards. I have disagreed with the decision. Stay tuned. *Update: As I was writing this newsletter last night, I got a message that Facebook has put us back on the Publish List. Not sure why we were put on the list.*

There are 55 Departments that make up the American Legion. One Department for each State and Puerto Rico, District of Columbia, France, Latin America, and the Philippines having Departments. Puerto Rico is the largest Department with nearly 3400 members. The smallest, Philippines with about 800 members.

Stay safe until we meet again,

Commander Out