



Idaho Division of
**VETERANS
SERVICES**

*Caring for
America's
Heroes*

BULLETIN

**July
2021**

STATE OF IDAHO

BRAD LITTLE, GOVERNOR

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES

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LANCE SANTIAGO

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SCOTT THORSNESS

STACY WHITMORE

To be connected with a VA suicide prevention and mental health professional,
call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention hotline and indicate you are a veteran.

(800) 273-8255

ALL EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES ARE ADMINISTERED IN A NONDISCRIMINATORY
MANNER IN CONFORMANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE EEO AND CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

From Bill's Desk..... 3-4

Governor Little Appoints New Administrator..... 4

Law Expands Veteran Housing Benefits..... 4

VA Secretary's Statement on Extension of Moratoriums on Foreclosures & Evictions 5

VA to Readjudicate Veteran & Survivor Claims for Possible Herbicide Exposure..... 5

Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)..... 6

VA & SBA Jointly Support Restaurant Recovery 6

VA, Salesforce Join Forces to Help Veterans & Their Spouses Develop Skills for Tech Jobs 7

Mobius Delivers 1st of 50 Ibots to the VA to Determine How Machines May Help Veterans 7

Go Green and Get the Bulletin Via Email..... 7

Dates to Remember..... 8

Convention Dates 8

The Star Spangled Banner..... 8

DAV Van Contacts To and From VA Medical Centers..... 9

**If you've not already done so, please volunteer to receive the bulletin via email
by emailing
listserv.admin@veterans.idaho.gov**



contact people prior to them registering for assistance. To file a claim, you must call the FEMA COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline at (844) 684-6333. More information can be found at www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance.

As a reminder, we will not be conducting the Annual County and Post Service Officer Training Conference this year. However, mark your calendars, as next year's training is scheduled for August 3, 4, and 5, 2022.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact our offices and have a fun and safe summer!

GOVERNOR LITTLE APPOINTS NEW ADMINISTRATOR

Press Release, April 19, 2021

Governor Brad Little announced on April 19th that he appointed Mark Tschampl as Chief Administrator at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services. “As a veteran himself, I have the utmost confidence Mark will serve and support those who have served our country,” Governor Little said. “His career experience in the military and leadership roles in numerous civilian positions will prove to be extremely valuable in his new role.”

Tschampl was a Commander in the U.S. Air Force, Security Forces, serving from 1998 to 2005. He spent eight years as the director of the Health and Wellness Center on Mountain Home Air Force Base and has been working as a bureau chief within the Family and Community Services Division at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. He received his Master’s in Health and Human Performance from Iowa State University.

“It is my greatest honor to be appointed by Governor Little as the Chief Administrator of the Idaho Division of Veteran Services,” Tschampl said. “As a combat veteran and member of a military family, no work is more important to me than serving those who have served our great nation!”

LAW EXPANDS VETERAN HOUSING BENEFITS

Press Release, May 4, 2021

May is National Moving Month and many veterans may find themselves moving to a new address as they take advantage of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expanded home loan program, which now includes additional benefits for eligible borrowers. The VA is currently implementing Public Law 116-315 containing three key loan provisions for Vietnam War era veterans, eligible National Guard members, and service members, veterans, and certain surviving spouses with VA-guaranteed loans. “The law, known as the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 offers new and renewed homeownership possibilities,” said Acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. “These few changes can have a significant impact on our current homeowners, especially for those who were previously ineligible but now have the opportunity to use the benefits they have earned.”

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, an estimated 35 million people will relocate this year, with most taking place between the start of the peak season for moving in May through September. It’s possible that these numbers could increase with the following expansions to the program:

- Expanded criteria for eligibility among Vietnam Era veterans to those whose wartime service began on or after November 1, 1955. The previous start date to qualify for the VA home loan benefit as a Vietnam Era Veteran was February 28, 1961.
- Enhanced access to service members and some veterans of the National Guard. The new statutory authority extends eligibility to members of the National Guard who have been mobilized to perform full-time guard duty for at least 90 cumulative days, with 30 days of that service being consecutive.
- Service members, veterans, and certain survivors with VA-guaranteed home loans or VA direct loans whose residences have been substantially damaged or destroyed in an area that has been declared a major disaster by the President are now eligible to be charged a first time use funding fee on a VA-guaranteed loan rather than a subsequent use funding fee. The borrower’s next VA-guaranteed loan must be for the repair of the damaged or destroyed residence or purchase or construction of a new home closed within three years of the Presidential declaration of the disaster.

VA SECRETARY'S STATEMENT ON EXTENSION OF MORATORIUMS ON FORECLOSURES & EVICTIONS

Press Release, June 24, 2021

As the nation emerges from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated millions of Americans remain in need of mortgage and rental assistance. To provide continued relief to the veteran and service member community, the Department of Veterans Affairs is extending by an additional month, the foreclosure and eviction moratoriums through July 31st.

Extending the COVID-19 moratoriums on foreclosures and evictions will allow households that may have fallen behind on their mortgages more time to recover. Ultimately the extension will help thousands of VA home loan borrowers stay in their homes and provide those hard-hit by the pandemic, the time needed to get back on a regular monthly mortgage payment schedule.

In addition to the multiple ways the VA already helps borrowers avoid foreclosure, the department is implementing a short-term mortgage repayment assistance program via the VA Partial Claim Payment program, to bring certain borrowers current on their mortgage as they resume regular mortgage payments. VAPCP will be available for COVID-19 impacted borrowers to help them remain in their home and continue to enjoy the benefits of homeownership.

Once the moratoriums end, the VA will take additional steps to prevent foreclosures on VA-backed mortgages until borrowers are reviewed for COVID-19 home retention options that are affordable.

The VA will announce additional steps in July to offer borrowers payment reduction options that will enable more homeowners to stay in their homes. Additionally, the VA will also continue to allow homeowners who have not taken advantage of forbearance to date to enter into COVID-related forbearance through September 30th of this year.

The VHA Homeless Programs Office offers a wide range of resources and services for veterans facing housing crises, having helped more than 850,000 veterans and their families exit homelessness or remain in stable housing since 2010. The VHA Homeless Programs Office Supportive Services for Veteran Families program gives homeless prevention assistance and has taken a proactive approach to reach veterans at risk of homelessness during the pandemic. The SSVF program's Shallow Subsidy intervention initiative will also assist by providing a modest subsidy for two years to extremely low-income veterans who are at risk of homelessness.

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless can call or visit their local VA Medical Center or contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at (877) 424-3838 for help. The White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the Departments of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development also have resources for homeowners and renters needing help.

VA TO READJUDICATE VETERAN & SURVIVOR CLAIMS FOR POSSIBLE HERBICIDE EXPOSURE

Press Release, May 14, 2021

Veterans who were previously denied service connection for an herbicide related presumptive condition due to lack of in-country Vietnam service will have their claims automatically readjudicated by the VA. The department began readjudicating claims in April for veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War, but were denied for one or more herbicide related conditions, on the basis that military service was not performed on the landmass of the Republic of Vietnam or on its inland waterways. "Readjudication means VA will review the evidence of record and provide replacement decisions in the cases of veterans who were previously denied service connection benefits," said Acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. "We have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our veteran community and will ensure all eligible veterans' and their survivors' claims are examined thoroughly and fairly."

The review also applies to eligible survivors of deceased Vietnam-era veterans and is part of the Veterans Benefits Administration's implementation of the November 5, 2020, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California order in *Nehmer vs. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, requiring the VA to readjudicate previously denied claims. The VA will determine if benefits for qualifying disabilities can now be paid retroactively to the date of previously denied claims. The court's decision requires automatic readjudication in such cases without requiring a new claim, and potentially paying benefits to the survivors or estates of deceased beneficiaries.

VA, SALESFORCE JOIN FORCES TO HELP VETERANS & THEIR SPOUSES DEVELOP SKILLS FOR TECH JOBS

Press Release, June 10, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with Salesforce Military to offer programs that will help veterans and their spouses develop skills and employment options in the tech-driven economy. The partnership will build on existing programs and add new ones, offering free technical skills training, career development, and veteran-specific resources in a variety of areas, including:

- VetSuccess on Campus
- Veterans Opportunity to Work
- Hiring our Heroes Fellowship
- The Trailhead Military Program

“Our military men and women are technologically savvy and the best trained in the world but translating those skills to the civilian workforce can be challenging. Finding positions in the technology field can be difficult for veterans and their spouses,” said VA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships Nurse Executive Tracy L. Weistreich, Ph.D. “This partnership will help change that by offering at-home training for great-paying jobs.”

The program includes virtual, self-paced skills training and opportunities to take Salesforce certification exams at no cost. Salesforce will help program participants connect with potential employers. The initiative will also educate veterans and their spouses about VA benefits, vocational readiness programs, and other resources. “This partnership allows us to support the military community with high-demand technology expertise and offer assistance during career transitions,” said Salesforce Chief Impact Officer and Executive Vice President of Corporate Relations Suzanne DiBianca. “Our combined efforts with VA will help veterans and military spouses land growing careers in the technology ecosystem.”

MOBIUS DELIVERS 1ST OF 50 IBOTS TO THE VA TO DETERMINE HOW MACHINES MAY HELP VETERANS

Press Release, June 8, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs accepted a donation of 50 iBOT Personal Mobility Devices from Mobius Mobility LLC, May 27th to help veterans with spinal cord injuries regain their autonomy. The iBOT PMD increases the user’s mobility by allowing them to independently elevate, interact at eye-level, climb stairs, and cross various terrains.

As part of the “Operation Mobility Tour” kickoff, Acting VA Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Carolyn Clancy, M.D. welcomed the first donation at the VA East Orange Medical Center from Dean Kamen, inventor of the iBOT PMD and president of DEKA Research and Development. An iBOT was donated to the center’s Spinal Cord Injuries/Disorders Center as well as the first veteran recipient. “VA’s New England Center for Innovation Excellence offers the innovation community a clinical trial partner, practical health care assistance and real-world patient input,” Clancy said. “This allows VA to secure priority access to the latest life-saving medical treatment and high-tech devices for our veterans.”

The iBOTs will be distributed to all 25 VA SCI/D clinics and another 24 iBOTs will be donated directly to veterans — as appropriately determined by the local SCI/D clinic — based on need, a clinical assessment, and prescription. “Our goal is to deliver the mobility and independence our disabled veterans deserve,” Kamen said. “It’s often said as a nation we are in debt to veterans for their service and sacrifice. The best way to repay this debt is to deliver advanced technology that enables them to live life on their own terms and to be as healthy and independent as possible.”

GO GREEN AND GET THE BULLETIN VIA EMAIL

In our continual effort to reduce costs and lessen our “ecological footprint,” the Office of Veterans Advocacy is again asking for your help. In order to reduce printing and mailing costs, as well as the amount of paper used, we are asking you to volunteer to receive the bulletin via email.

The bulletin will arrive in your in-box every quarter as a PDF document, which will allow to you forward or print and disseminate as many copies as you like. In addition to receiving the quarterly bulletin, you will also receive our annual Veterans Resource Directory via email.

If you can help us with our goal of reducing costs and the saving paper, please email listserv.admin@veterans.idaho.gov. Thanks for your help with this most worthwhile endeavor! And don’t forget you can always view and print the Bulletin and Resource Directory by visiting our website at www.veterans.idaho.gov.

DAV VAN CONTACTS TO AND FROM VA MEDICAL CENTERS

BOISE & SURROUNDING AREA TO BOISE VAMC

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

For the schedule or an appointment, call Jim Rossette at the Boise VA Medical Center (208) 422-1000 ext. 7555.

LEWISTON & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

For the schedule or an appointment, call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

LIBBY & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

For the schedule or an appointment, Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

COEUR D'ALENE & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

For the schedule or an appointment, Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

SANDPOINT & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

For the schedule or an appointment, call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

LEWISTON TO WALLA WALLA VAMC

Thursdays: Walla Walla VA Medical Center Van. 8:00 a.m. departure from the CBOC at 1630 23rd Avenue, Building 2.

Arrives at Walla Walla at 10:00 a.m. Departs Walla Walla at 1:30 p.m. Arrives Lewiston at 3:30 p.m.

If your appointment runs past the departure time of 1:30, there is no alternative for returning to Lewiston.

POCATELLO, IDAHO FALLS, & SURROUNDING ARE TO SALT LAKE CITY VAMC

All appointments for rides should be made 72 hours in advance.

For the schedule or an appointment, call the VTS/DAV Transportation Office at (800) 613-4012 ext. 2003 or 1027.

