



WOODBURY COUNTY VETERAN AFFAIRS

HAPPY SPRING! We have made it through the winter months (the cold might say otherwise) and the short, darkest days of the year. We are sure you are all looking forward to the sunshine and warmer days that are right around the corner. Although the weather has been cold and gloomy, the office has not missed a beat in this weather and has stayed as busy as ever.

Since December the office has had just about over 90 appointments/walk-ins, and over 50 claims filed. Woodbury County currently has 1,677 Veterans and/or surviving spouses receiving benefits, resulting in a total amount of \$2,494,376.

This Spring we will have our Nationals training in Denver, CO. All three of our CVSO's will be attending this training in person or virtually, so there will be a week our office will be unavailable. We apologize in advance for the inconvenience, but we will still be available by phone and e-mail!

We have our annual town outreach events scheduled and will be starting those in June. This year we will be visiting the towns of Salix, Pierson, and Smithland. These events have had such great turnouts and we are so happy to continue them once again!

As always, thank you for your patience and thank you for being the best community of Veterans!

STAFF

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HOURS: 8AM - 4PM

**Please make an
appointment.**

WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://WWW.WOODBURYCOUNT
YIOWA.GOV/VETERAN_AFFAIRS/](https://www.woodburycountyiowa.gov/veteran_affairs/)

FACEBOOK:
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/W
OODBURYCOUNTYVA](https://www.facebook.com/woodburycountyva)



Veteran Affairs News!

VA's National Cemetery Administration dedicates new headstones to honor Black Soldiers, correcting 1917 injustice

WASHINGTON — On February 22, 2024, the Department of Veterans Affairs' [National Cemetery Administration \(NCA\)](#) hosted a memorial ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, at [Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery](#). Righting a wrong of the past by dedicating new headstones for 17 World War I Black Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment.

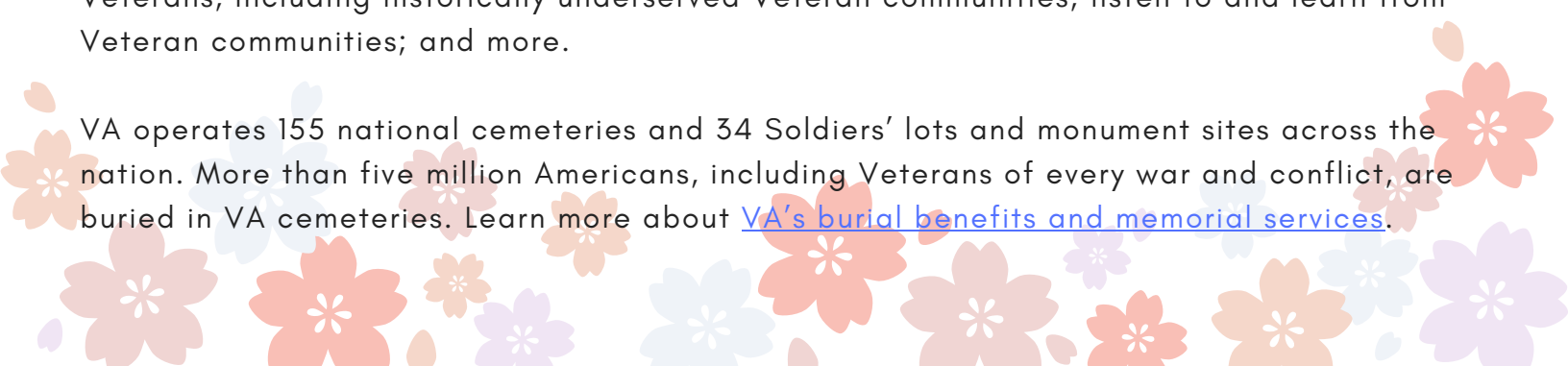
These Soldiers were among those executed following the court martials of 110 Black Soldiers charged with murder and mutiny in the 1917 Houston Riots. Consistent with standard procedure of that time for Soldiers who were sentenced to death in a court martial, their graves were marked with headstones that listed only their names and year of death – as opposed to full honors. The Army [reviewed the cases of these Black Soldiers again in 2023 and marked their trials unfair](#), saying that “these Soldiers were wrongly treated because of their race and were not given fair trials.” The Secretary of the Army set aside all convictions and directed the Soldiers’ records reflect honorable discharges.

Now, the VA has provided these soldiers with new headstones that fully honor their service – including names, state, rank, unit, and date of death – and an updated interpretive sign sharing their story, educating the public, and providing closure for the next of kin.

“Today, we right the wrongs of the past and honor the service of these Soldiers – who served our country with honor,” said VA Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Matthew Quinn. “We are proud to dedicate new engraved headstones that include these Army Soldiers’ ranks, regimental unit, and home states, demonstrating our full commitment to helping correct the injustice of that era.”

Honoring these Soldiers is a part of VA’s comprehensive work to deliver for all Veterans — regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or geographic location. As announced last week, using the [Agency Equity Action Plan](#), VA will work urgently to improve outcomes and eliminate disparities in Veteran benefits and health care; increase access to VA services; enhance economic security for all Veterans, including historically underserved Veteran communities; listen to and learn from Veteran communities; and more.

VA operates 155 national cemeteries and 34 Soldiers’ lots and monument sites across the nation. More than five million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA cemeteries. Learn more about [VA's burial benefits and memorial services](#).



Veteran Affairs News cont...!

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs announced that all World War II Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA inpatient and outpatient health care.

Under this expansion, all WWII Veterans who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are now eligible for VA health care, regardless of their length of service or financial status. These Veterans will not have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays, enrollment fees, or monthly premiums.

VA is reaching out by phone and mail to encourage WWII Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA care to apply today. Veterans who enroll may also keep their private providers, Medicare, and most other insurance to meet their health care needs.

“These members of Greatest Generation answered the call to serve when our nation – and the world – needed them most. Now, it’s our job to serve them in every way that we can,” said **VA Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Shereef Elnahal**. “We are proud to provide world-class, low- or no-cost health care to these heroes at VA, and we encourage all of them to enroll today.”

All WWII Veterans are encouraged to enroll in VA health care – the best, most-affordable health care in America for Veterans. Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in [overall quality ratings](#) and [patient satisfaction ratings](#).

Veterans who were not approved for VA health care in the past due to income limits should apply again; income levels no longer apply due to this expansion. VA cannot automatically enroll these Veterans in health care; WWII Veterans must [apply for VA health care](#) if they are not currently enrolled.

While World War II Veterans will no longer have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays, they may still have to pay modest medication or urgent care or long-term care copayments in some cases, depending on their [eligibility and service connection](#).

This expansion is made possible through the Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2022 ([Cleland-Dole Act](#)), signed in December 2022.

To apply for VA health care, please call our office to make an appointment!



Update to the release: Nursing home care is free (no copays) for nearly all World War II Veterans who are eligible for nursing home services at VA, including 1) anyone in need of such care for a service-connected [disability](#), (2) anyone in need of such care who also has a service-connected [disability](#) rated at 70 percent or more. However, contrary to the language of the release, not all World War II Veterans are eligible for nursing home care under this new law.

Additionally, as stated in the release, all World War II Veterans are eligible for VA health care and will not have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays. However, these Veterans may still have to pay modest copayments for medication or urgent care or long-term care in some cases, depending on their [eligibility and service connection](#).

We at VA apologize for this mistake and any confusion that it may have caused. We are continuing to reach out directly to these Veterans to inform them of the expansion of care available to them, and we urge any WWII Veteran to enroll in VA health care today.

Direct Deposit - ATTENTION

By April 20, 2024, you must have a single bank account for all VA benefit payments

Check your direct deposit information in your VA.gov profile (*see below). If you currently have more than one bank account listed for disability compensation, pension, and education benefit payments, you'll need to update your information. You must have the same account listed for all benefits.

We're making this change to help protect you from fraud and to make sure we can pay you on time, every time, without error.

You can update your direct deposit information for these 3 types of benefit payments in your VA.gov profile:

- Disability compensation payments
- Education benefit payments
- Pension payments

You'll need your bank account and routing number. For more information on how to change your direct deposit, please click on the following link: <https://www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit/>.

*When you create an account in VA.gov, you can access and manage your VA benefits, health care and information online. To create an account for VA.gov, please click on this link: <https://www.va.gov/resources/creating-an-account-for-vagov/>

Expansion of Healthcare Eligibility

VA has announced that they are expanding healthcare eligibility to all veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11/2001. Originally, the PACT Act called for a phased in approach, but at the direction of President Biden, **VA has instead opened this expanded eligibility to VA Healthcare effective March 5, 2024.**

Specifically, all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving our country – at home or abroad – will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits.

- That includes all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11.
- It includes all Veterans who deployed in support of the Global War on Terror.
- And it includes Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty here at home – by working with chemicals, pesticides, lead, asbestos, certain paints, nuclear weapons, x-rays, and more.

Event if you don't need this care today, you might need it tomorrow, or the next day, or 30 years from now. It's quick and easy to apply. And once you're in, you have access for life.

PLEASE APPLY NOW!

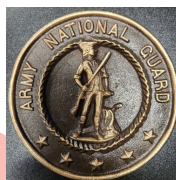
For more information please review VA's official statement [here](#).

Upcoming Events

- April 16-18: Spring School, Johnston, IA
- May 12-18: National School, Cenvor, CO
- June 11- Sioux City Vet Center Advisory Board
- June 19- Salix Town Outreach Event, Salix Community Center, 10am to 2pm

Flag Holders

Our office has cemetery flag holders available to any Veteran buried in a Woodbury County Cemetery. We need the Veterans DD214 or NGB22 with the name of the cemetery. Also, we can request a VA provided Headstone, Bronze Plaque, Niche or Medallion. **Please call our office so we can help Honor your Veteran!**





U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans in Suicidal Crisis

The VA will provide, pay for, or reimburse emergency care for certain veterans and individuals, for ambulance transportation costs, follow-on inpatient, or residential care related to the event for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days, including social work. Inform the emergency care provider to report your emergency treatment to the VA Centralized Emergency Care Reporting Center as soon as possible after your treatment starts by using the VA Emergency Care Reporting portal or calling the VA 72-Hour Notification Hotline at 844-72-HRVHA (844-724-7842).

Military dates to remember:

April (Month of the Military Child)

- 5- Gold Star Wives Day
- 9- National Former POW Recognition Day
- 14- Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 23- Army Reserve Birthday
- 30- National Military Brats Day

May (Month of the Military Caregiver, National Military Appreciation Month)

- 1- Silver Star Service Banner Day
- Military Spouse Appreciation Day (Friday before Mother's Day)
- 13-20 Armed Forces Week
- 13- Children of Fallen Patriots Day
- 20- Armed Forces Day

June (PTSD Awareness Month)

- 6- D-Day Remembrance
- 12- Women Veterans Day
- 14- Army Birthday, US Flag Day
- 23- Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- 25- Anniversary of the start of the Korean War
- 27- PTSD Awareness Day



SEE YOU IN JULY 2024 WITH OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER!