

WOODBURY COUNTY VETERAN AFFAIRS

Hey there Woodbury County Veterans! Wow, I cannot believe we are already over half way through the year! The office hasn't slowed down the last few months and has been working diligently to prepare for our summer events, while still keeping up with the flow of the office.

We have had an influx of Veterans reaching out for benefits and had over 120 appointments/walk-ins and over 75 claims filed. Woodbury County currently has 1,730 Veterans and/or surviving spouses receiving benefits, resulting in a total amount of \$2,609,112.

The office wrapped up Spring with our State Spring training in Des Moines and a month later we had our National training in Denver, CO. These are great networking events for the office as well as getting training on any new guidelines put out by the Department of Veteran Affairs, and/or a refresh on everything we have in our tool box.

There is also a new option on our website where you can leave a review for the office! This is a new

feature we hope our Veterans utilize to let us know how we can improve or how we helped you! These reviews will be routed to our Commissioners and not our office staff.

Our website link is to the right ----->

COMMISSION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

1211 Tri View Ave.
Sioux City, IA 51103

[Driving Directions](#) 

CONTACT INFORMATION

712-279-6605
712-279-6606
712-224-4093 (Fax)

HOURS

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
By Appointment Only
[Holiday Closures](#)

LEAVE US A REVIEW!

STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
LONI KUHLMANN

CVSO:
SASHA DOWNS
LISA ROBINSON

COMMISSIONERS:
JOSEPH DONOVAN
EMILY CLAYTON
JOHN MANSFIELD
TJ FENNELL
ZANE CHWIRKA

1211 TRI VIEW AVE, STE A
SIOUX CITY, IA 51106
712-279-6606
FAX 712-224-4093

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!

As you are all aware, the Siouxland area was hit with a devastating amount of flood damage. If you are seeking financial/disaster assistance due to this tragedy, here is a list of resources:

- American Legion National Emergency Fund Application: <https://www.ialegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NEF-Application-2020.pdf>
- DAV Veterans Disaster Relief Funds: <https://www.dav.org/get-help-now/veteran-topics-resources/disaster-relief/> Des Moines Office: (515) 323-7539
- FEMA Disaster Assistance Website (not Veteran Exclusive, veteran may be able to apply for this assistance in addition to Veteran Specific programs): <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>
- Iowa Veterans Trust Fund: <https://dva.iowa.gov/benefits-assistance/iowa-veterans-trust-fund>
- Small U.S. Business Disaster Loans: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>
- VA Guidance On Natural Disasters: (for VA Home Loan Borrowers): https://benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/documents/docs/va_policy_regarding_natural_disasters.pdf
- VFW 'Unmet Needs Program' "strives to assist current active-duty service members (to include activated Guard/Reserve members) and their families during financial hardship. Access information regarding this program and it's application at" <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>

New Law In Iowa Expands the Definition of Veteran

Governor Kim Reynolds signed House File 259 on April 18th that addressed training and other requirements for county commissioners, executive directors, and administrators. The bill expands the definition of "Veteran" to include a resident of the state who served in any component of the US Armed Forces who has a service-connected disability and was honorably discharged.

Gov. Reynolds said, "This closes a gap in the current code to ensure men and women who were injured in training, but do not meet the active duty requirement are eligible for Veterans services."



Veteran Affairs News Continued...

Salix Outreach Event

Our first outreach event of the summer in Salix was a success! We had at least 12 Veterans stop by and file claims, apply for a fishing & hunting license, ask questions or just stop by for a donut! We were kept pretty busy throughout the day and were happy to meet with some new Veterans! Thank you to the town of Salix for having us! Sorry if we missed you but you can always reach out to us at the office. We will be in Smithland and Pierson next!



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.

Even 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

- July 4th- Bronson Parade, Bronson, IA
- July 5th- Mardi Gras Parade, Tyson Event Center, Sioux City, IA
- July 10th- Pierson Outreach Event, Community Building, Pierson, IA
- July 17th- Smithland Outreach Event, Legion, Smithland, IA
- July 31st - Aug 4th- Woodbury County Fair
- Aug 11th- 185th Airmen Day Event
- Aug 25th- Veteran BBQ Event

Veteran Affairs News Continued...

Help us welcome our new Commissioner!



Hello, my name is Zane Chwirka. I was born and raised in Sioux City and graduated from North High in 1999. I am married to my amazing wife Jayme and we have two boys that are turning into great young men, Zander and Dylan. They are my world.

I joined the Iowa Army National Guard by raising my right hand back in March of 2001. Served on the Army side for 7.5 years as an 88M then an MP before crossing over to the Air Guard. In May of 2008 I became a member of the 185th Air Refueling Wing in the Security Forces Squadron where I spent the rest of my military career and retired as Master Sergeant March of 2022. 21 years in total of wearing the uniform and ready to answer the call.

I have been to some cool places and some not so fun places. The people and friends I meet along that journey from all over was one of my greatest experiences. During my retirement I

could only remember the great moments over the 21 years, don't get me wrong there were some horrible ones. The good memories outshine the bad.

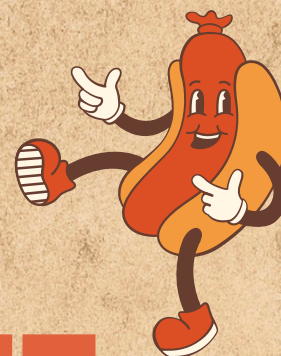
Today I'm employed by the Woodbury County Sheriff's as a Deputy Sheriff, this is my 16th year. I started as a correctional officer back in May of 2008. I worked in the jail for a month shy of 5 years before coming out to the road as a Patrol Deputy. My current job title with the WCSO is SRO (school resource officer).

As a member of the Woodbury County Veterans Commission Board, I am looking forward to helping out and meeting our fellow veterans in Woodbury County.



COME & JOIN US FOR THE FABULOUS AFTERNOON!

VETERAN BBQ PARTY



Hosted by

**WOODBURY COUNTY
VETERAN AFFAIRS**

**SUNDAY
AUGUST
25**



**901 E TOPAZ DR
SGT BLUFF, IA
11:00AM - 2:00PM**

**FOOD & DRINKS
VETERAN RESOURCES
KIDS ACTIVITIES
AND MORE....**



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:

July

- 4- Independence Day 🇺🇸🇺🇸
- 25- National Hire a Veteran Day
- 27- Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- 28- National Buffalo Soldiers Day
- 29- Anniversary of the Army Chaplain Corps

August

- 4- Coast Guard Birthday
- 7- **Purple Heart Day** 🎖️
- 10- US DOD Birthday
- 16- National Airborne Day
- 29- Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

September (National Suicide Prevention/ Service Dog Month)

- 11- Patriot Day
- 18- Air Force/Air Guard Birthday
- 29- VFW Day
- Third Friday- POW/MIA Recognition Day
- Last Sunday- Gold Star Mother's and family's day

Happy
INDEPENDENCE
Day!