

Update on Veterans Benefits 1/14/2015

1. If you need to contact me, please call (979) 335-4464 OR e-mail me at lerwinkdd@aol.com OR write me at 2254 County Road 291, East Bernard, TX 77435.
2. The new Wharton County Veteran Service Officer is Don Montoya. He will be in Wharton at 1017 N. Alabama Road on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7:30 am until 12 noon and 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm with the same phone number of (979) 532-1311. On Wednesdays, he will be at the El Campo Branch of the Wharton County library from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm. at 200 W. Church Street, El Campo.
3. The Veteran's Support Group started in October 2013 now meets at the Avalon Nursing Home, 1405 Valhalla Drive, Wharton, TX 77488 (behind the Gulf Coast Medical Center/South Texas Medical Center) every Thursday 5:30 pm till 6:30 pm in the conference room behind the nurses' station.
4. A new counseling service will begin on 1/8/2015 at the Wharton County Veteran Service Officer location, 1017 N. Alabama Road, Wharton, TX 77488, from 8 AM until 4:30 PM and every Thursday after the 8th of January. The Houston Vet Center 710, 3000 Richmond Avenue, Suite 355, Houston, TX 77098 will provide counseling services which will include the following: (1) Individual readjustment counseling, (2) Group meeting and counseling, (3) military sexual trauma counseling referral (4) bereavement counseling, (5) marital and family counseling, (6) employment counseling and guidance (7) benefits assistance and referral, (8) substance abuse information and referral, (9) community education, (10) liaison with community agencies. Please contact Don Montoya at (979) 532-1311 to set up an appointment to see the Vet Center representative.
5. In 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs Compensation and Pension (C&P) Service initiated a program to collect data on Vietnam naval operations for the purpose of providing regional offices with information to assist with the development of claims based on herbicide exposure from Navy veterans. As of December 2014, the number of offshore "blue water naval vessels" has increased from 212 to 330. These "blue water naval vessels" conducted operations on the inland "brown water" rivers and delta areas of Vietnam. The VA also has identified certain vessel types that operated primarily or exclusively on the inland waterways of Vietnam in the 330 identified vessels.
6. Request for military records. In January, 2014, I recommended that you send off for your military records before the VA starts charging a fee for all records. Presently, the VA can charge a fee for records that are over 62 years old. Please see me and we can fill out VA Form SF 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records in about ten minutes.
7. In January, 2014, I also told you about two websites. The first www.eBenefits.va.gov lists more than 47 benefits and services provided by the VA. The second www.MyHealthVet.va.gov is excellent for you to keep track of your VA medical appointments, personal data, pharmacy needs, and generally all VA medical exams, treatments, etc. You should also access www.VVA1069 periodically to keep abreast of all the happenings in our VVA Chapter 1069 that Bob Supak does an excellent job of keeping up to date with chapter, state, and national VA news as well as all the information that I have presented over the past 18 months. If you do not have a computer, I have all the information on handouts on my table.