



Photo: US Signal Corps / Collection: MNHM

In Service to Others

World War II Veteran Dedicates Life to Support of Country, Community

Retired U.S. Army Col. William Miller has always had a proclivity for serving his fellow man – an inclination he credits, in part, to a humanities course he took at the University of Akron (UA) while working toward his undergraduate degree.

“That course did more than any other course to prepare you for life,” Miller said. “You learned about good music, you learned about good literature and you learned about how to serve other people.

“I’ve always served other people,” added Miller, the scoutmaster emeritus of Boy Scouts of America Troop 380 in Bath. “I try to instill this in the young men I work with. Have integrity in all that you do and do the best that you can, but don’t do it for you – do it for other people, and it will come back and be good for you too.”

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, it was Miller’s commitment to serving others that pushed the then 19-year-old Akron

native to put his college education on hold and enlist in the U.S. Army.

“It was to help our country, really,” said Miller, now 94, recounting why he joined. “I love our country, and I’m proud of it and I felt it was my duty.”

Only a few years later, he found himself storming Utah Beach during the Allied invasion of Normandy, fighting under General George Patton during the Battle of the Bulge and taking part in the liberation of a Nazi concentration camp near Gotha, Germany. His platoon’s discovery in April 1945 of that camp – and the hundreds of dead and dying people behind its walls – remains the most horrible thing he’s ever seen. Though his combat experience



Retired U.S. Army Col.
William Miller

VA Strengthens Disability Benefits for Those Who Served at Camp Lejeune

New Rule Establishes Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Related to Exposure of Contaminated Water

Members of the U.S. Armed Forces face many dangers in service to their country, and sometimes those dangers are homegrown. Such was the case for active duty, reservists and National Guard members who lived or worked at U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina from the early 1950s through the late 1980s – and, as a result, potentially were exposed to volatile organic compounds, industrial solvents, benzene and other chemicals discovered in two on-base water supply systems.

Now the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has established a presumption of service connection for eight diseases associated with exposure to those contaminants, significantly easing the medical care claims process for affected military veterans.

“We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our nation and have

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Director's Corner

VA Introduces Pre-Need Burial Eligibility Determination Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has implemented a pre-need burial eligibility determination program to assist anyone who would like to know if they are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. The VA is promoting pre-need eligibility determinations to encourage veterans and eligible family members to plan in advance to use the VA burial benefits earned through military service.

Planning in advance for a veteran's or loved-one's final resting place can reduce delays and stress placed on a family during a difficult time.

Upon request, the VA will make advanced eligibility determinations for burial in a VA national cemetery. Eligible individuals are entitled to burial in any open VA national cemetery, which includes opening/closing of the grave, a government-furnished grave liner, perpetual care of the gravesite and a [government-furnished upright headstone, flat marker or niche cover](#), all at no cost to the family. Veterans also are eligible for a [burial flag](#) and [Presidential Memorial Certificate](#).



Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to all members of the U.S. Armed Forces and veterans who have met minimum active-duty service requirements, as applicable by law, and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who die while on active duty under certain circumstances

or who die while on training duty also are eligible for burial, as are service members and former service members who were eligible for retirement pay at the time of their death. Spouses, minor children and, under certain conditions, dependent, unmarried adult children also are eligible for burial, even if they die before the veteran.

The VA has implemented this pre-need eligibility program so that veterans, spouses and unmarried dependent adult children may better prepare for burial in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Interested individuals may submit [VA Form 40-10007](#) (Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery) along with a copy of supporting documentation of military service, such as a DD214 if readily available, by: toll-free fax to 1-855-840-8299; email to Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov; or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

In Appreciation,

Larry D. Moore

Executive Director



Services for Vets

We assist veterans with basic living needs; these services are available to eligible veterans, their dependents and widows. Services are subject to change.

- Financial Assistance
- Mortgage payments / Homeowner's insurance
- Rent
- Utilities
- Roofs
- Furnace (replacement and repair)
- Stoves and refrigerators
- Food
- Children's clothing
- Adult work clothing
- Car payments, repairs and insurance (limited)
- Medical / Dental (including dentures, glasses and hearing aids)
- Regularly scheduled transportation to VA medical facilities and Ohio Veterans Home
- Grave markers and flags

Veterans Affairs Assistance

- Assistance applying for Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits
- Preparation of VA forms and paperwork
- Supportive documentation of claims and pertinent data
- Proper submission of claims to the VA
- Service connected compensation
- Non-service pension
- Widows pension
- Burial benefits
- Headstones

If you are a veteran in financial need or need help with your VA claim, please visit us at 1060 E. Waterloo Rd., Akron, or call

330-643-2830

National News

Don't Get Taken for Ransom

Protecting Yourself From Cyber Crime in the Digital Age

Imagine discovering this message on your mobile device:

"You need to pay for us, otherwise we will sell portion of your personal information on black market every 30 minutes. WE GIVE 100% GUARANTEE THAT ALL FILES WILL RESTORE AFTER WE RECEIVE PAYMENT. WE WILL UNLOCK THE MOBILE DEVICE AND DELETE ALL YOUR DATA FROM OUR SERVER! TURNING OFF YOUR PHONE IS MEANINGLESS, ALL YOUR DATA IS ALREADY STORED ON OUR SERVERS!..."

That's exactly what happened earlier this year to one victim who downloaded a Google Play store app embedded with ransomware, a common form of malicious software that encrypts data on a computer or mobile device and blocks users from accessing their files – sometimes even threatening to leak them on the Internet – until they pay up. In this particular instance, cybersecurity firm Check Point Software Technologies was able to quarantine the device before it infected a larger network, but not everyone is so lucky.

As the world becomes more connected, cybersecurity risks are growing in lockstep. Ransomware has become a favorite tool of cyber criminals, with ransom demands ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars per attack. *Fortune Magazine* recently reported that U.S. victims – from everyday Internet users to large corporations – lost nearly \$2.9 million last year, up from \$1.6 million in 2015. That number is only expected to grow.

Ransomware is just one of the many cybersecurity threats we face as a result of increasing dependence on interconnected technology. Computing solutions firm Intel Corp. predicts there will be more than 200 billion "smart" objects globally by 2020, and the proliferation of these objects means that nearly anything and everything is either digitally connected or capable of being so. While these technologies are designed to add convenience to our lives, they also can leave us vulnerable to data breaches and serious financial consequences.

Improve Your Security

Two hundred billion connected devices means 200 billion potential points of entry for cyber criminals, and the threat of hacking extends beyond desktop computers and mobile devices to vehicles, home alarms, pacemakers, power grids, traffic systems and many, many others. There are a variety of ways you can reduce your own vulnerabilities, and it starts with understanding what those



vulnerabilities are. Researching ways in which data can be stolen and used is the first step in understanding how to lower your risks.

Steps you can take in order to avoid having your private information compromised include:

- Randomize passwords for different accounts and keep track of them using a password manager such as LastPass, 1Password or Apple's iCloud Keychain;
- Take advantage of the ability to use multiple forms and layers of user authentication on digital devices;
- Use non-default passwords on routers, home security systems, smart TVs and other devices capable of connecting to the Internet;
- Don't open emails and other files from unfamiliar sources;
- Protect yourself from encryption-based attacks like ransomware by backing up critical data on a hard drive that isn't left connected to the computer you're backing up;
- Conduct regular scans with antivirus and anti-malware technology;
- Patching operating systems, software and firmware on digital devices;
- Stay on top of the latest security updates through social media platforms;
- Avoid oversharing personal information on social media; and
- Download secure apps only from official app stores.

It's never too late to take steps to improve your personal cybersecurity, and doing so could protect you from untold financial losses. If you suspect you've been a victim of cyber crime, file a complaint with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at www.ic3.gov. ★

Seven Compensable Disabilities Face Elimination



The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) provides U.S. Armed Forces veterans access to disability compensation for a variety of medical conditions that occur or worsen during active-duty military service, but compensation for several conditions designated as service-connected may be disappearing in the near future.

In its recent "Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2017 to 2026" report, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) proposed narrowing eligibility for disability compensation by excluding seven conditions deemed by the

Government Accountability Office as being unlikely to be caused or exacerbated by military service. This option would eliminate VA disability compensation for the following conditions, beginning in January 2018:

- Arteriosclerotic heart disease;
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;
- Crohn's disease;
- Hemorrhoids;
- Multiple sclerosis;
- Osteoarthritis; and
- Uterine fibroids.

In 2015, the VA paid approximately 716,000 veterans a total of \$3.7 billion to compensate for these medical conditions, the CBO reported. Under this proposal, not only would veterans who apply for compensation for these conditions in the future be denied, but compensation for those currently receiving benefits would be reduced or even eliminated.

The CBO estimated that this

option would reduce outlays by \$26 billion from 2018 to 2026, with most savings resulting from curtailing payments to current recipients of disability compensation. It also added that a broader option eliminating compensation for all disabilities unrelated to military duties could result in more savings but might also be more difficult to administer, depending on the VA's eligibility criteria.

The Department of Defense offers a separate disability compensation system for service members who can no longer fulfill their military duties because of a disability. The CBO proposal would not impact this system.

While the option would make the disability compensation system for military veterans more comparable to civilian systems – as few employers offer long-term disability benefits – the CBO noted that, unlike a civilian job, military service "confers unique benefits to society and imposes extraordinary risk on service members." ★

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been exposed to harm as a result of that service," said former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald. "Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned."

The presumption of service connection applies to those who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 consecutive days between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987. Diseases eligible for free care include adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and Parkinson's disease.

Presently, these conditions are the only ones for which a creation of presumptions is supported by scientific and medical evidence. In establishing the service connection, environmental health experts in the VA's Technical



Photo By: Lance Cpl. Ashley Lawson

Workgroup reviewed scientific evidence, including analysis and research performed by the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Environmental Protection Agency, International Agency for Research on Cancer, National Toxicology Program, and National Academies of Science.

In accordance with the 2012 Camp Lejeune law, the VA already provides free health care for veterans who served at least 30 consecutive days of active duty at the camp between Jan. 1, 1957, and Dec. 31, 1987, and have since been diagnosed with several medical conditions. Conditions that still qualify for cost-free health care under the 2012 law but do not meet the criteria to establish a presumptive service connection include esophageal cancer, breast cancer, renal toxicity, female infertility, scleroderma, lung cancer, hepatic steatosis, miscarriage and neurobehavioral effects. ★

exposed him to indescribable atrocities, it never lessened his positive attitude or his desire to serve others.

Miller was decorated for valor and earned a Purple Heart for his service during the war. After his combat tour in Europe was cut short by a mortar shell injury, he returned to the U.S. and picked up where he left off, earning his bachelor's degree in business administration from the UA in 1947. That year he also married his wife, Alice, who passed away in 2009.

He earned his juris doctorate from Case Western Reserve School of Law in 1954. Soon after, he began a career as a partner in Financial Planning Services, providing investment advice and assistance for thousands of clients – many of whom he still serves today.

All the while, Miller remained in the Army, joining the 83rd Infantry Division reserve unit and periodically returning to active duty until he retired as a full colonel in 1982. Though he served his country proudly, working to help members of his local community has been his greatest passion.

"It's not what you do in the service," he said. "It's what you do with your life afterward, and my life has been dedicated to community service and working with young people."

Miller has devoted much of his time to [Boy Scouts](#). An Eagle Scout himself, he served as scoutmaster of Troop 380 for more than 30 years and continues to mentor boys as an Eagle advisor. Since he joined the troop in the 1960s, it has turned out more than 180 Eagle Scouts.



He has been active in other ways, serving as a member of the Akron Rotary Club, a founding member and past president of the Fairlawn Chamber of Commerce, past president of the Akron Optimist Club and a member of various other organizations. In recognition of his achievements and community service, he was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame last year.

Offering advice to fellow veterans, Miller emphasized that it's important to get an education – whether it be a college degree or studying a trade – and, above all else, seeing their work through to completion.

"I'm a very strong believer in that," he said. "Whatever you do, give it 100 percent, no matter how menial it is." ★



Tip of the H.A.T. Helping America's Troops

Locals Spread Good Cheer to Veterans

The 2016 holiday season saw members of the Summit County community putting their generosity on display in support of local military veterans and their families. With the assistance of volunteers and donations from multiple local organizations, the VSC was able to spread good cheer – and gifts – to a record 98 families during its fifth annual holiday toy drive.

Organizations such as the [Polish American Citizens Club](#), [American Legion Posts 449](#) and [473](#), [Toys for Tots](#), VFW Post 7971 and VA Home Based Primary Care of Northeast Ohio contributed donations of gift cards and over 1,000 toys, which were given out to more than 300 children. Volunteers Charles and Barbara Duvall, Thomas and Edna McNellis, Forest Thornton, Elva Pounders and John Life manned tables for several hours each day during the two-week drive, helping to pair families with gifts.

Veterans receiving financial assistance through the VSC are permitted to use that aid only for real needs like utilities and groceries, and spending it on gifts would result in a discontinuation of benefits. The toy drive ensures that their children don't go without a gift during the holidays.

"Members of the U.S. Armed Forces put their lives on the line every day to defend our freedom, and it's rewarding to be able to show gratitude and support to those of them who are in need," said David Burden, project manager, VSC. "We would like to thank everyone who supported the toy drive and helped to make the lives of these veterans and their families a little brighter."

For Barbara Duvall, a retired Akron Children's Hospital nurse, the desire to support military veterans is deeply personal.

"My father was a U.S. Marine who fought at Iwo Jima and my husband was in Vietnam, so we have a lot of



admiration for the military," said Duvall, who initially came to the VSC as a client seeking hearing aids for her father. She began volunteering with the VSC a few years ago following her retirement, initially assisting with records scanning. She and her husband Charles have participated in the toy drive for the past three years.

"The toy drive is my husband's favorite," she said. "It's sad to see so many veteran families in need of assistance, but it brings my husband and I a lot of joy to help them."

To learn more about how you can partner with the VSC to help area veterans, please contact David Burden at 330-643-7636 or by email at dburden@vscsummitoh.us. ★



Submit Memorial Day Events

Know of a Memorial Day event that you think other veterans would find interesting? Please send all pertinent event information to dburden@vscsummitoh.us to be posted on the VSC website.

Volunteers Needed for Memorial Day

On the Saturday before Memorial Day, May 27, volunteers from the Summit County veterans' posts visit our county's cemeteries and honor veterans by placing a flag on each gravesite. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to help with this tradition or to volunteer in a different capacity. Please complete the volunteer form available on the VSC's website at www.VSCsummitOH.us or contact David Burden at 330-643-7636.

Flag Day and Proper Flag Disposal

Flag Day is Wednesday, June 14,

and it commemorates the adoption of the U.S. flag in 1777. It also is a perfect opportunity to ensure that Old Glory is flying proudly. The Northeast Ohio weather can wreak havoc on flags, and as many people know, flying a damaged flag is disrespectful.

Flags that are ripped, torn or frayed along the edges should be replaced, and flags whose red stripes have faded to pink should also be properly discarded. The VSC accepts worn-out flags at its office and disposes of them according to standard flag etiquette. If it's time for you to purchase a new flag, please bring your old one to the VSC.

Job Boot Camp, Job Fair Scheduled for June

The VSC will host a Job Boot Camp on Saturday, June 3 for veterans who are seeking employment opportunities or career changes. The one-day workshop – taking place from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the VSC headquarters at 1060 E. Waterloo Road in Akron – will provide veterans with assistance in the form of resume analysis, skill assessment, dress-for-success tips and advice from local professionals. For more information or to register, call 330-643-7636 or visit www.VSCsummitOH.us.

Memorial Day Events

Monday, May 30

Fairview Cemetery

3990 Brecksville Road
7:45 a.m. – Assemble
9:00 a.m. – Services

West Richfield Cemetery

4219 Broadview Road
9:30 a.m. – Assemble at Historical Building (Old Town Hall)
10:00 a.m. – Services

Bath Memorial Services

(Across from the schoolhouse)
11:45 a.m. – Services

The following week, the VSC invites all interested area veterans to attend a Veteran & Community Job and Career Fair geared toward skilled trades like carpentry, electrical, heating, ventilation and others. Taking place June 7 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the VSC office, this free event is open to all veterans and their dependents. Representatives from local companies as well as the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will be on-site. ★



Created in 1886 to aid veterans upon their return from duty, the Veterans Service Commission of Summit County provides comprehensive support services to Summit County residents who have served in any branch of the military.

Executive Director

Larry D. Moore

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Contact Us for Your Free e-News Subscription

In addition to financial, transportation and VA claim assistance, the Veterans Service Commission of Summit County is dedicated to providing local veterans with news relevant to these and other topics in the form of our EyesRight quarterly newsletter, now available exclusively in a digital format. Did you find the information in this newsletter informative and valuable? If so, **sign up at** www.vscsummitoh.us/eyesright-signup, and we'll be sure to keep you up-to-date with the latest news and information impacting Summit County veterans and their families. ★

