

Redesigned Burn Pit Registry Helps Ease Veteran Participation & Advance Research

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced the completely redesigned [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) (Burn Pit Registry), helping to enable VA executive leaders and researchers with the capability to understand and ultimately improve treatment and care practices for the health challenges Veterans face after exposure to airborne hazards and burn pits during service.

The improved research and data capability of the redesigned Burn Pit Registry does help to better identify and study health challenges spanning the Veteran and service member population. This, in turn, can lead to improved care and benefits of Veterans and service members. Participation in or opting out of the registry has no impact nor does it determine eligibility for Veterans' individual VA health care or benefits.



See Burn Pit Registry article, page 3

“ The Burn Pit Registry is fueling groundbreaking research and enabling VA's ability to identify and proactively address health challenges that toxic-exposed Veterans face at a population level,” said **Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** “While the registry does not impact an individual Veteran's health care or benefits, it does serve as a catalyst for advancing new and innovative treatments for the Veteran population as a whole — including informing decisions related to presumptive conditions, more precise predictive medicine, and proactive Veteran care. This redesign massively expands the registry and reduces the participation requirements for Veterans, paving the way for critical research in the coming years.

”

VA Doubles Down on Helping to Improve the Military-to-Civilian Transition Through Grant Program

Organizations Committed to Providing Employment-Based Resources & Tools Helping Recently Separated Members of the Armed Forces & Their Spouses Eligible for Grants



The VA is set to award approximately \$4 million in grants this year through its new program, the Veteran and Spouse Transitional Assistance Grant Program. Eligible organizations providing employment-based resources and tools that help recently separated members of the Armed Forces and their spouses ease transition from service to civilian life are invited to apply.

According to the VA article [here](#), each grant will be in

increments of up to \$500,000 and is to be matched by the grantee organization.

Priority preference will be given to applicants that either provide multiple services or are in a state with any one of these criteria:

- A high rate of unemployment among Veterans.
- A high rate of usage of unemployment benefits for recently separated members of the Armed Forces.
- A labor force or economy that has been significantly impacted by a covered public health emergency.

To learn more about grant eligibility, please visit this [webpage](#). ★

Director's Corner



Services for Vets

We provide financial assistance* for basic living needs to eligible Veterans and their dependents.

- Mortgage payments
- Rent
- Utilities
- Food
- Children's school clothing
- Adult work clothing
- Dentures, glasses and hearing aids

Free to Veterans!

- Regularly scheduled transportation for medical appointments at VA medical facilities and Ohio Veterans Home

* Other types of financial assistance may be considered on a case by case basis. All types of assistance are subject to change based on need and funding.

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

The PACT Act and Your VA Benefits

The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans – and their [survivors](#) – with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. And starting **March 5, 2024**, we're expanding VA health care to millions of Veterans – years earlier than called for by the PACT Act.

This page will help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your loved ones. You can also call us at 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now.

Enrollment Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ)

VA health care covers care for your physical and mental health. This includes a range of services from checkups to surgeries to home health care. It also includes prescriptions and medical equipment.

Here's what you'll need to apply:

- **Social Security numbers** for you, your spouse (if you're married), and any dependents you may have.
- **Insurance card information** for all health insurance companies that cover you. This includes any coverage that you get through a spouse or significant other. This also includes Medicare, private insurance, or insurance from your employer.
- **Your military service history information** and details about exposure to toxins or hazards.
- **A copy of your DD214 or other separation documents.** If you sign in to apply, we may be able to fill in your military service information for you. If you don't sign in to apply, you can upload a copy of your DD214 or other separation documents.

In Appreciation,

Larry D. Moore

Executive Director



Military-Friendly Employers

Search Now



Department of
Veterans Services



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

(330) 643-2830.



Did You Know?

- Registry Participation is Voluntary.
- Participation has **no impact** on eligibility for VA health care and benefits.
- No medical information will be stored in the registry.

Many Veterans Who Deployed After 1990 Automatically Added to Registry

Veterans and service members who served in the military campaigns or theater of operations listed below during the designated time frame—based on information from the Department of Defense (DoD)—will automatically be included.



- Operations and Campaigns: Desert Shield and Desert Storm; Iraqi Freedom; Enduring Freedom; and New Dawn
- Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Djibouti, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, Syria, Uzbekistan, and Egypt between Aug. 2, 1990, and Aug. 31, 2021
- Somalia since Aug. 2, 1990
- The Southwest Asia theater of military operations and Egypt any time after Aug. 2, 1990
- Afghanistan, Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen any time after Sept. 11, 2001
- Associated airspaces with the countries listed above as well as the waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea.

“This tool is a significant improvement in making data available in a way that better serves all those who were exposed to burn pits and other hazards,” said Department of Defense **Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Lester Martinez-Lopez, M.D.** “Being part of the Registry is a way for individuals to help and improve our understanding of the challenges faced by service members and Veterans affected by these exposures.”

How Do I Opt Out?

The data included in the registry includes deployment locations, military personnel information, and demographics to include gender, race, and ethnicity. Again, no medical information will be stored in the registry. Veteran and service member data will be accessible only to select VA epidemiologists and researchers and institutional review board-approved researchers. It will be used to conduct research on the cohort over a period of time. The results will inform the policy decision-making efforts of VA executive leaders, including those related to presumptive conditions.

Veterans who wish to opt out of participation and auto enrollment can complete this [online form](https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp).

Learn More

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp> ★



24/7, Confidential Crisis Support for Veterans and Their Loved Ones

You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to call.

VA Grants Benefits to 1.1M Veterans & Their Survivors – An All-Time Record

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it has granted benefits to 1.1 million Veterans and their survivors, awarding \$137 billion in benefits – including \$127 billion in compensation and pension benefits – as of late July.

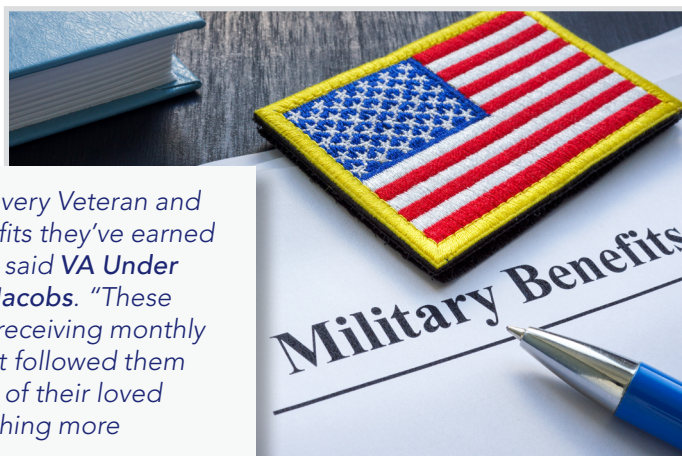
The VA processed more than 2 million claims in 2024 (another all-time record) to reach this milestone. The VA also reported that the grant rate for these claims is 64.6% and the average overall disability rating granted to Veterans this year to-date is 70%, equating to over \$20,000 per year in disability compensation.

The VA also stated it is now delivering more care and benefits to Veterans in these ways, as noted in the recent press release [here](#):

- **More Veterans are using VA health care.**
The VA is on pace to deliver approximately 127M health care appointments in 2024, surpassing last year's record of 120M appointments.
- **More Veterans are enrolling in VA health care.**
412,867 Veterans have enrolled in VA care over the last 365 days, an increase of 27% year over year — and the most since 2017.
- **More Veterans are applying for VA benefits than ever before.**
Due to the largest outreach campaign in VA history, Veterans submitted 2,433,729 claims applications in 2023 – an all-time record and 39% more than in 2022.
- **More Veterans report trusting VA.**
Veteran trust in VA has reached an [all-time high of 80.4%](#) – up from 55% when the survey began in 2016.
- **When Veterans apply for benefits, they are more likely to have their claims granted.**
The VA goal is to work with Veterans to gather evidence to get a yes – whenever a Veteran applies for benefits. Due to this approach, the VA has been able to grant benefits for 64.6% of claims, including 75% of PACT Act related claims, a sharp increase from previous years. ★



Our goal is to make sure every Veteran and every survivor gets the benefits they've earned for their service to this country," said VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs. "These Veterans and survivors are now receiving monthly payments for the conditions that followed them home from war or took the lives of their loved ones – and there is nothing, nothing more important than that.



The PACT Act – Learn More Today Here!



Veterans and survivors can apply or learn more about the PACT Act by visiting VA.gov/PACT or by calling 1-800-MYVA411.

School Clothing Vouchers AVAILABLE for Summit County Children or Qualified Dependents of Honorably Discharged Vets

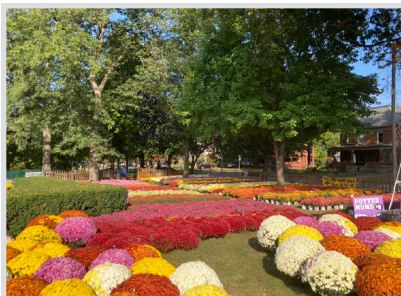


Summer/Fall Clothing Vouchers Available
Until October 1, 2024



Contact the VSC at (330) 643-2830 Today





Join the VSC of Summit County at the Barberton Mum Festival

Visit the 34th annual Barberton Mum Festival and enjoy the 17,000-chrysanthemum backdrop. The Summit County Veterans Service Commission team will be inviting Veterans and family members to make-your-own dog tags and participate in other great giveaways at their booth. Combined with a festival, art and craft show, entertainment and delicious food – it's a wonderful excursion for all. See you there, Veterans! ★



Supporting Veteran Suicide Awareness: Silent Watch at Belden Village this September

[The Silent Watch](#), a program that helps to recognize the need for Veteran suicide awareness and prevention, will take place at Belden Village this September 28.

The Silent Watch organization aims to raise awareness and help work toward decreasing the rising epidemic of Veteran suicide and to help fund at-risk Veterans receiving the Stellate Ganglion Block, a procedure known to help PTSD symptoms.

The Silent Watch event will begin at 11 a.m. and conclude at 5 p.m. inside Belden Village Mall – in front of Macy's. Volunteers can choose a timeslot to stand watch for 15-20 minute rotations. For more information, or to stand a watch, call (330) 451-7439. ★



Submit Your Summit County Veterans Service Commission 'Veteran of the Year' Nominee Today!

Now in its 34th year, the Summit County Veterans Service Commission "Veteran of the Year" program has opened the nomination process for submitting deserving, selfless Summit County Veteran nominations. Candidates for the award need to be honorably discharged Summit County residents who generously serve their communities through volunteer work, serving Veterans and the Summit County community. The Summit County Veterans Service Commissioners sponsor this event annually in honor of the late James C. Seminaroti, after whom the VOTY award is named. Army Vet Seminaroti served local Veterans after service in World War II and later helping our region support Veteran affairs, efforts and recognition programs.

To nominate a local hero today, visit [here](#) to download and submit the nomination form. Nomination forms need to be received by October 7, 2024. If you have questions, please contact David Burden at (330) 643-7636 or by email at dburden@vscsummitoh.us. ★



Reserve Your Tickets Today for the 34th Annual Veteran of the Year Recognition Dinner

Join us for our 34th annual Veteran of the Year Award Dinner Oct. 17, 2024, at the Summit County Veterans Service Commission located at 1060 E. Waterloo Road, Akron, Ohio 44306. The hospitality/cash bar will be from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

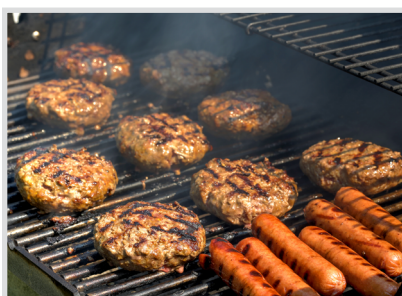
Help us celebrate and show appreciation for the designated Veteran who is recognized for his or her collective contributions, sacrifices, and commitment – not only to the citizens of Summit County but to all American citizens – by registering [here](#) for tickets! The deadline for reservations is October 14, 2024. Contact David Burden at (330) 643-7636 or by email at dburden@vscsummitoh.us. ★



Register Now for the Seventh Annual James Seminaroti Golf Outing

Now in its seventh year, the James Seminaroti Benefit Golf Outing for ALS is accepting registrations for the popular fall 18-hole golf tournament. The Summit County VSC and American Legion Post #473 host the event and offer attendees 18 holes of golf with a cart, lunch at the turn and a strip steak dinner.

This year's event will be held at Good Park Golf Course, 530 Nome Ave., Akron Ohio 44320, and check in will start at 9 a.m. Tee time start at 11 a.m. Register your four-person team today and come ready to participate in the optional 50/50 raffle, door prize awards and raffle giveaways. Proceed benefit the ALS Association. An **RSVP** is required. Payment can be made with registration or at the course the morning of the outing. Checks should be made payable to American Legion Post 473, C/O James Seminaroti ALS Benefit. For more details about sponsorship opportunities or to register, contact David Burden at (330) 643-7636 or by email at dburden@vscsummitoh.us. Sign up [here](#) today! ★



You're Invited: Veteran Appreciation Cookout October 26!

Ready to celebrate freedom and our local Vet community? We are! If you're a Summit County Veteran, you're officially invited to join us October 26, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for free lunch, games and dog tags! We'll even have live music thanks to the Guitars for Vets members. Get your Veteran I.D. card AND free burgers or hot dogs – and let's gather for Veteran fellowship at the Veterans Service Commission of Summit County, 1060 E. Waterloo Rd., Akron 44306. Enjoy raffles and a silent auction, too – come join in the fun! Raffles and auction benefit our local chapter of Guitars for Vets, a music program that helps enrich the lives of local Veterans. ★



Gather Toys & Gift Card Donations Now for Summit County Vets This Holiday Season

Watch those shopping circulars and keep your eyes open for discounted toys to collect for the upcoming holiday VSC of Summit County Toys & Gift Card Drive! This November and early December, the VSC will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and gift cards for children and dependents of Veterans for our annual holiday donation drive. Stock up during fall Back-to-School sales and help make the holidays special for Veterans in Summit County. ★

Don't miss the latest news, events & resources from the Summit County VSC



Signup Today!



www.vscsummitoh.us/eyesright-signup/



Happy Labor Day!

Our offices are closed Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day. Enjoy the holiday!