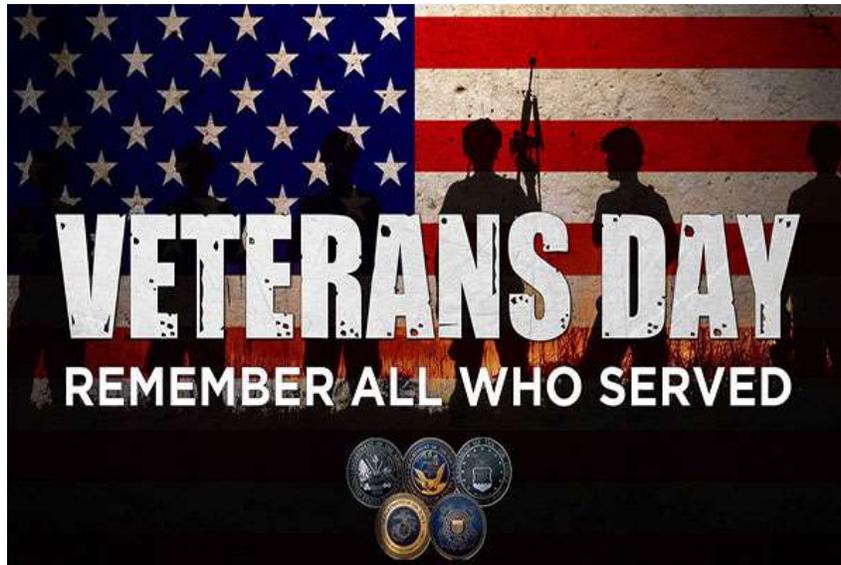


# NOBLES COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE NEWSLETTER



## Quick Note

November is a time to give thanks for what we have in our lives. It is a time to say “thank you” to the people who have made a positive impact on us as an individual. Considered National Gratitude Month, it is also fitting that Veterans Day is recognized during this month as well.

There are common misconceptions regarding this federal holiday. Unlike Memorial Day, Veterans Day honors **all** American veterans, living or deceased. **This includes those who are currently serving.** This holiday will be observed on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Please take the time to show your appreciation and gratitude for the veterans that you come across for their service to our great nation.

Thank you!

# **VA PROCESSING CLAIMS FOR GULF WAR VETERANS**

As of August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, the Department of Veterans Affairs has started processing disability claims related to particulate matter exposure. They have determined the following conditions as being presumptive:

- Asthma
- Rhinitis
- Sinusitis

These conditions are based on a presumptive basis due to exposure during military service in Southwest Asia and other areas. These conditions will be examined if they manifested within 10 years of a qualifying period of military service.

To be eligible for a potentially successful claim, you must meet the following requirements:

- Served in the Southwest theater of operations beginning August 2, 1990 to the present

OR

- Served in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria, or Djibouti beginning on September 19, 2001 to present.

## **FAQ**

**Q: What do you mean by Southwest Asia theaters?**

**A: This area identifies Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and the airspace that covers these regions.**

**If you believe that you qualify, please feel free to contact the Nobles County Veteran Service office at (507) 295-5292 and schedule your appointment today.**

## **VA Offering Course to Enhance Suicide Awareness**

September was Suicide Prevention Month, but the fight to eliminate veteran suicide does not stop upon months end. A recent partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and the Mental Health Association of New Jersey will be working together in an attempt to reduce these alarming numbers.

The course will offer first aid training to veterans and their family members. It is also available to those who are currently serving as well. The training consists mainly of identifying those who are in crisis and how to go about responding to them in a compassionate manner.

This program is also used as a reintegration tool that assists veterans in the acclimation to civilian life once they have separated from the service. This program is offered nationally at all VA facilities and consists of eight hours in first aid training.

If you are a veteran or know of a veteran who might benefit from this course, please reach out to your nearest VA hospital for more information. The month of September may be over, but the fight to end veteran suicide still continues.



## DAV Transportation Program



**FULFILLING OUR PROMISES**  
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

The Nobles County DAV Transportation Program is here to assist veterans who are in need of transportation to and from their scheduled or paid VA appointments. The program is completely free for the veteran.

Established in 2017, the sole purpose of the program is to assist Southwest Minnesota veterans with access to the medical benefits that they have earned at VA facilities. Through a partnership with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the Veteran Service office provides a donated van that is stationed in Worthington and is coordinated by the Veterans Service Officer (VSO). Veterans who are ambulatory can access this service. Caregivers are welcome to ride along if it is needed.

<b>WHEN SHOULD I SCHEDULE A RIDE?</b>	<b>WHAT IF THE VETERAN IS NON-AMBULATORY?</b>	<b>WHAT IF THE DATES/TIMES CHANGE FOR MY APPOINTMENT(S)?</b>
SCHEDULE YOUR RIDE REQUEST A MINIMUM OF A WEEK IN ADVANCE	WHEELCHAIR BOUND VETERANS CANNOT BE SAFELY TRANSPORTED AND THEY WILL NEED TO CALL THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICE AT THE SIOUX FALLS VA	CALL THE VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE IF THESE CHANGE AND/OR YOU NO LONGER NEED A RIDE

## **Topic: Intent To File (ITF) vs Fully Developed Claim (FDC)**

When a veteran files a claim, he/she may or may not have all of the necessary evidence for the VA to go off on. That is why it is so important to understand the difference between an Intent To File (ITF) and a Fully Developed Claim (FDC).

**An Intent To File (ITF)** is an informal claim that is used when the veteran does not have all of the relevant evidence to support the disability claim being sought. This evidence mainly revolves around medical evidence such as a diagnoses for an injury/illness during their time in military service. A veteran can then complete an ITF to hold their spot while they gather the necessary evidence to support their claim. It is important to note that **an ITF is good for one (1) year**, giving the veteran ample time to collect the relevant evidence.

**A Fully Developed Claim (FDC)** is a formalized claim that is used when the veteran has all of the relevant evidence for the VA and has nothing else left to submit for their claim. This is a quicker way of getting your claim processed, **but you should only file an FDC if you have all of the necessary evidence to support your claim!**

If you are still not sure of which approach you should take, please feel free to reach out to the Veterans Service office and schedule your appointment at (507) 295-5292. This office will be happy to assist you in any way possible.

## **Redwood Falls Breaks Ground on Veteran Cemetery**

Redwood Falls became just the fourth location for a veterans cemetery on October 13<sup>th</sup>. The ceremony was held with several residents, representatives, and veterans in attendance. This has come after nearly 12 years of planning and organizing to ensure that this project became a reality.

It is hopeful that this cemetery will be fully operational by the year 2023. Many hope that this new location could alleviate those who travel hundreds of miles to Fort Snelling in Minneapolis-St. Paul or to Sioux Falls to see their loved ones. The features of the new cemetery is expected to have 21.7 acres of land, along with casket burial sites and in-/above-ground cremation.

If you are a veteran who has any interest in the veteran cemetery sites that states offer, it is encouraged that you visit with your local Veterans Service Officer (VSO) for details. You are also encouraged to contact the veteran cemeteries throughout the state of Minnesota and Sioux Falls below:

- **Fort Snelling National Cemetery:** (612) 726-1127  
7601 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue S Minneapolis, MN 55450
- **MN State Veterans Cemetery (Duluth):** (218)-520-0120  
4777 Hwy 53 Duluth, MN 55811
- **MN State Veterans Cemetery (Little Falls):** (320)-616-2527  
15550 Hwy 115 Little Falls, MN 56345
- **MN State Veterans Cemetery (Preston):** (507)-765-7320  
715 Highway 52 Preston, MN 55965
- **South Dakota Veterans Cemetery (Sioux Falls):** (605)-277-8094  
25965 477<sup>th</sup> Avenue Sioux Falls, SD 57104

## GWOT Challenge Coins

In recognition of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, this office will be, for a limited time only, distributing challenge coins to veterans who have been deployed as part of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

If you are a veteran who has served this nation since that tragic day, please stop by this office and I will give you your free coin. Again, these supplies are limited and are only around for a short time. You also have the option to register online as well (information below).

### Commemorative Coin available to GWOT Veterans

In recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and subsequent Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has created a commemorative coin as an expression of appreciation to Minnesota Veterans who have served since that fateful day. These coins are a limited edition and available for a short time.



Minnesota GWOT Veterans are invited to register for this **free** coin by visiting: <https://bit.ly/GWOTvetcoin>. Coins will be distributed by County Veterans Services Officers.

