

# Montezuma County Veterans Services Newsletter, August 2022

AUGUST 15, 2022

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

***“To enrich the quality of life for Montezuma County veterans and their families by assisting them in accessing all Department of Veterans Affairs and Colorado State benefits they richly deserve.”***



The purpose of a newsletter is to provide information to Veterans. This is the first of many newsletters from your Veterans Service Office. These newsletters will come out quarterly unless there is pressing news that needs to get out to Veterans.

In this newsletter, we will provide useful information on upcoming events, and congress progression on topics that pertain to veterans. Also included within this letter will be information from your local agencies such as Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans DAV, and American Legion.

We are hoping that providing this information will assist Veterans in finding the answers to topics, questions, and helpful information that comes from Veterans Affairs, Healthcare, and Congress. In addition, there will be announcements of military birthdays, upcoming events, and outreach centers providing useful information to assist Veterans in their time of need.

This office along with the others is here to support and assist the Veterans with their VA needs and day-to-day living. If we can not help we will know someone who can and is willing to go above and beyond to ensure that the Veterans of Montezuma County are thriving within the community and of course with the Veterans Ad-

### Special points of interest:

- ◆ Burn Pitt
- ◆ Stand Down
- ◆ Raffle
- ◆ VFW
- ◆ DAV
- ◆ American Legion
- ◆ Exercise you brain



## August 2022

S	M	Tu	W	T	Fr	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### AUGUST MILITARY BIRTHDAYS

Antiterrorism Awareness Month	Month of August
Air Force Day	Aug. 1
Coast Guard Day	Aug. 4
Purple Heart Day	Aug. 7
U.S. Department of Defense Birthday	Aug. 10
Agent Orange Awareness Day	Aug. 10
Navajo Code Talkers Day	Aug. 14
National Airborne Day	Aug. 16
Marine Corps Reserve Birthday	Aug. 29

Montezuma County Veteran Services stands ready to assist our veterans and their family members with accessing a wide variety of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Colorado State veteran benefits including:

Claims for disability and pensions

- ◆ Accessing VA Health Care System
- ◆ VA Education Benefits
- ◆ Burial Benefits
- ◆ VA Life Insurance
- ◆ Disabled Veterans License Plates
- ◆ Locating Military Records
- Certificates of Eligibility for VA Home Loan Guaranty
- Survivor Benefits
- Government Headstones and Markers
- Colorado State Veterans Nursing Homes
- Civil Service Preference Letters
- One time re-issue of Medals

The Veteran Affairs office provides services for active and retired military personnel and their families in Montezuma County

County Veteran Service Officer Sarah Kuhn and Assistant VSO Frank LoBue are located at 107 N. Chestnut, Cortez.

**Office Hours:**

Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Fridays 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**June 2022 Office Activities**

Appointments June 2021	87
Appointments June 2022	161
Increase or Decrease of	+74
Total number of clients assisted	631
New Clients / Visitors	9
New Client / Visitors (year to date)	46
Home / Nursing Home Visits	0
Outreach / Community Events	0
Claims Filed	10



**Highlights**

Decisions	4
Favorable	2
Confirmed / Continued	2
Unfavorable	0

**6 Month Snapshot from January 2022 to June 2022**

Appointments June 2021 (Comparison)	645
Appointments June 2022	855
Increase or Decrease of	+200
Telephone Calls	2,434
Total number of Clients	3,289

[Veteran Services - Montezuma County](#)

# **Burn Pits**

President Biden signed the PACT Act into law Wednesday 8/10/22. The law expands health care benefits for veterans exposed to toxic burn pits while serving in wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and also for survivors. Needing more information on what the PACT ACT Law is all about, press ctrl and your left mouse button on the link and you will be redirected to the VA website: [The PACT Act And Your VA Benefits | Veterans Affairs](#) or stop by the Veteran Service office.

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits 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.

This 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](tel:800-698-2411) (TTY: 711). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now. Wanting more information on the PACT Act go to: <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>

## **What's the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?**

*The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.*

### **The PACT Act will bring these changes:**

- ◆ Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- ◆ Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- ◆ Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- ◆ Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures  
*If you're a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.*

### **What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?**

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. We call these “presumptive conditions.”

We consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

For more information: <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

## AIRBORNE HAZARDS & OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY

### REPORT YOUR EXPOSURES

Exposure to airborne hazards such as burn pit smoke may cause health effects. In June 2014, VA opened the "Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry" for Veterans and Servicemembers.

### CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY

Based on deployment information from the Department of Defense (DoD), registry participation is open to Veterans and Servicemembers who deployed to contingency operations in the Southwest Asia theater of operations at any time on or after August 2, 1990, or Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after September 11, 2001. These regions include the following countries, bodies of water, and the airspace above these locations: Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Djibouti, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and Red Sea.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has established a website explaining the details of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics, or PACT, Act, and encourages veterans to file claims and apply for health care coverage.

The bill, expected to be signed into law Monday by President Joe Biden in a Rose Garden ceremony at the White House, provides health care and disability benefits for certain deployment-related diseases and conditions.

On Tuesday, VA Secretary Denis McDonough encouraged affected veterans, their family members or survivors to apply for benefits by filing a claim.

"Once the President signs this bill into law, we at VA will implement it quickly and effectively, delivering the care these veterans need and the benefits they deserve," McDonough said in a statement to the press.

The VA's new website for the PACT Act can be found here. [The PACT Act And Your VA Benefits | Veterans Affairs](#) Veterans, family members and survivors also can call (800) 698-2411 to have their questions answered. The hearing impaired can access information through 711 via teletypewriter.

### HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The registry is a database of health information voluntarily provided by Veterans and Servicemembers that will help VA to collect, analyze, and report on health conditions that may be related to environmental exposures experienced during deployment.

1. Set up a Premium DS Logon Level 2 account. Visit [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) for more information.
2. Visit [https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AH\\_Burn\\_Pit\\_Registry](https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AH_Burn_Pit_Registry) to get started. You can complete it all at once, or log out and return later.
3. Print the questionnaire for your records.
4. Contact your local environmental health coordinator, found at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>, to set up a free optional registry evaluation focusing on your airborne hazards exposure concerns. Completing the registry online does not cue VA to call you to schedule an exam.

NOVEMBER 2018 W.PUBLICHEALTH.VA.GOV

### BENEFITS OF REGISTERING

- ◆ Better health awareness: Participating in the registry will create a snapshot of your health from which to measure changes over time
- ◆ • Health discussion: You can make an appointment to discuss your questionnaire with your health provider and determine the need for additional evaluation. Participants who discuss their completed questionnaire with a provider will gain better health awareness. You can print your questionnaire, and VA providers can also access an online copy.
- ◆ • Better long-term health care: Help VA better understand the effects of environmental exposures on health, leading to improved health care for you and for all Veterans
- ◆ • Follow-up communications: As VA learns more, they will share this information with participants



## AIRBORNE HAZARDS & OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DO I NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REGISTRY TO SUBMIT A CLAIM FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION THROUGH VA?** Veterans do not need to participate in the registry to submit a claim for disability compensation. The registry and the disability compensation processes are separate and not related. Veterans can find information on how to submit a claim for disability compensation through VA at the following link: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/>

**WHAT IS A BURN PIT?** The use of burn pits was a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside of the U.S. such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Smoke and other emissions from these pits contained an unknown mixture of substances that may have short and long-term health effects, especially for individuals who were exposed for longer periods or those with preexisting conditions such as asthma or other lung or heart conditions.

**WHY DOES THE QUESTIONNAIRE ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT MY CURRENT JOB AND HOBBIES?** It is important for medical providers to have a complete picture of your health. The questionnaire asks a broad range of questions because an individual's health is greatly influenced by their lifestyle. Health conditions can worsen over time from additional or prolonged exposures received during work or recreation. Note: Your current or past jobs, hobbies, civilian exposures, and lifestyle will not affect eligibility for benefits.

**WHAT TO EXPECT** The questionnaire takes about 40 minutes to complete. The questions have been designed to give VA a broad picture of your health and current and past exposures. You will be asked a series of questions in the following categories:

- ◆ Deployment timeframes and bases to which you were stationed • Conditions and health issues that cause difficulty with daily activities
- ◆ Current and past health symptoms
- ◆ Residential history (where you lived)
- ◆ Occupational history (what type of work you do)
- ◆ Dust, gas, vapors or fumes exposures
- ◆ Home environment and hobbies
- ◆ Health care use
- ◆ Contact preferences In addition to this registry, VA offers other environmental registry exams for Veterans, including the Gulf War Registry exam and Agent Orange Registry exam. [https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registryCONNECT WITH US: evaluation.asp](https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registryCONNECT%20WITH%20US%3A%20evaluation.asp)

VISIT <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry> NOVEMBER 2018 | [WWW.PUBLICHEALTH.VA.GOV](http://WWW.PUBLICHEALTH.VA.GOV)



# VFW

## History

The VFW resulted from the amalgamation of several societies formed immediately following the Spanish–American War. In 1899, little groups of veterans returning from campaigning in Cuba and the Philippine Islands, founded local societies upon a spirit of comradeship known only to those who faced the dangers of that war side by side. Similar experiences and a common language drew them together. The American Veterans of Foreign Service (predecessor to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) was established in Columbus, Ohio, September 29, 1899, by Spanish–American War veteran James C. Putnam. The Colorado Society, Army of the Philippines, was organized in Denver, Colorado, on December 12, 1899. Shortly thereafter, a society known as the Foreign Service Veterans was born in Pennsylvania. These three veterans' organizations grew up side by side, increasing in scope and membership until August 1913, when at an encampment held at Denver, they merged their interests and identities in a national organization now known as the VFW.

## Purpose

The purpose of the VFW is to speed rehabilitation of the nation's disabled and needy veterans, assist veterans' widows and orphans and the dependents of needy or disabled veterans, and promote Americanism by means of education in patriotism and by constructive service to local communities. The organization maintains both its legislative service and central office of its national rehabilitation service in Washington, D.C. The latter nationwide program serves disabled veterans of all wars, members and nonmembers alike, in matters of government compensation and pension claims, hospitalization, civil-service employment preference, etc."

## Logo

Redesigned in November 2018, the official logo of the VFW includes an artistic representation of service stripes, easily recognizable insignia indicative of military service. Worn on most service uniforms, they denote length of service. As such, the first and leaner of the two service stripes represents the VFW's entry into its second century of service to America's veterans, service members and their families. The second, broader stripe represents its first century of service, spanning back to 1899.

## Great Seal

The Cross of Malta is the VFW's official emblem. The cross, radiating rays, and Great Seal of the United States together symbolize the character, vows and purposes distinguishing VFW as an order of warriors who have traveled far from home to defend sacred principles. Its eight points represent the beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure, the merciful, the peacemakers; blessed are they who mourn, seek righteousness and are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The eight-pointed Cross of Malta harks back to the Crusades, launched during the 12th century.

## Eligibility

Membership in the VFW is restricted to any active or honorably discharged officer or enlisted person who is a citizen of the United States and who has served in its armed forces "in any foreign war, insurrection or expedition, which service shall be recognized by the authorization or the issuance of a United States military campaign medal."

The following is a list of U.S. campaign medals, ribbons, and badges used by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to determine membership eligibility.

If you would like to join contact any VFW member or come to one of our meeting on the first Thursday of every month at the senior annex at 107 N. Chestnut, Cortez, CO 81321. Additionally, checkout our website at <https://www.facebook.com/VFWPost5231/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VFW>

# VFW



## MONTEZUMA STAND DOWN FOR VETERANS



*Proudly Hosted by VFW Post 5231  
Saturday, September 17, 2022  
9:00am until 3:00pm County Annex Building  
107 N. Chestnut  
Corner of W. Montezuma Ave and N. Chestnut  
Cortez, Co*

### *Services and access will include:*

- VA Enrollment/Benefits
- Secure Area for Belongings
- Homelessness Prevention
- Hygiene Supplies
- Employment
- Education
- Veteran Service Officer
- Suicide Prevention Info
- National Park Access Info
- Hair Cuts
- Housing Assistance
- Military Records
- Hearing Checks
- Mental Health Support

**Substance Abuse Support**  
*And More!*

*Please Bring your Military ID or your DD 214 to help us help you.  
If you do not have one, we will have services available to help you obtain one.  
This event is open to any veteran, honorably discharged, from any branch of service.  
Please attend and see what it is that we can do for you.*



To learn more about this event, sponsoring a vendor table, donating funds or materials or volunteering to staff this event or any general questions please call Corena at 970-570-5755 or Tom at 970-560-5242.

# DAV

## *History*

In the aftermath of World War I, disabled veterans in the United States found themselves seriously disadvantaged, with little governmental support. Many of these veterans were blind, deaf, or mentally ill when they returned from the frontlines. An astonishing 204,000 Americans in uniform were wounded during the war. The idea to form the Disabled American Veterans arose at a Christmas party in 1919 hosted by Cincinnati Superior Court Judge Robert Marx, a U.S. Army Captain and War World I veteran who had been injured in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in November 1918. Although it had been functional for some months by that time, the Disabled American Veterans of the World War (DAVWW) was officially created on September 25, 1920, at its first National Caucus, in Hamilton County Memorial Hall in Cincinnati, Ohio. While touring across the U.S. as part of the election campaign of James M. Cox, Judge Marx publicized the new organization, which quickly expanded. It held its first national convention in Detroit, Michigan on June 27, 1921, at which time Marx was appointed the first national commander. In 1922, a women's auxiliary organization was founded. The DAVWW continued working through the Great Depression to secure the welfare of disabled veterans, although their efforts were troubled by fundraising challenges and the desire of the public to put the World War behind them. In the midst of these troubled years, DAVWW was issued a federal charter by Congress, on June 17, 1932.

The demands of World War II required the urgent expansion of the organization, which officially changed its name to Disabled American Veterans to recognize the impact of the new war. In 1941, DAV launched a direct mail campaign, distributing "IdentoTags", miniature license plates which could be attached to a keyring with instructions that lost keys should be mailed to the DAVWW, who would return them to the owners. In 1944, the DAV began offering a National Service Officer Training Program at American University in Washington, the first step of education that completed with a two-year mentorship program. In 1945, the DAV expanded the Idento Tag program and brought the manufacturing in-house, eventually purchasing complete ownership of the program in 1950. The program proved long-lasting and highly successful, both in bringing in donations and employing veterans in manufacture. By 1952, 350 people were employed in the endeavor, which brought in over \$2 million a year in donations. Meanwhile, the number of disabled veterans had been increased by the still-ongoing Korean War.

The DAV suffered a decline in the later 1950s and into the 1960s, with diminishing leadership and funds, but it rallied around the veterans of the Vietnam War and also focused heavily on working for Prisoners Of War (POWs) and Missing In Action (MIAs). Vietnam veterans soon filled the diminished ranks of the National Service Officers. On Veterans Day, 1966, the DAV moved its headquarters to Cold Spring, Kentucky. The following year, the IdentoTag program was discontinued in favor of providing address labels, with a request for donation, when changes in license plate practices made continuing the IdentoTag program impracticable.

The DAV underwent substantial change in 1993, when internal arguments concerning the governance of the organization led to a watershed election that turned over the administration to new hands and the National Service Program was overhauled.

In 1998, DAV National Adjutant Arthur Wilson joined with philanthropist Lois Pope and for Secretary for Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown to push for congressional authorization of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. By the time fundraising was complete in 2010, the DAV and its affiliates had raised more than \$10 million for the memorial. Dedication of the memorial took place on October 5, 2014.

DAV headquarters moved to Erlanger, KY in 2021. The new headquarters is visible from the I71/75 & I275 interstate exchanges and will bring greater awareness to their free service and support for America's injured and ill veterans.

## *Seal*

The organization's seal has since its foundation featured a World War I soldier, armed, kneeling before Columbia, who dubs the man knight. The logo design was taken from certificates used in World War I for sick and wounded veterans. A painting by the American painter Edwin Blashfield, commissioned by the 28th President of the United States Woodrow Wilson, the certificate featured above the words "Columbia Gives to Her Son the Accolade of the New Chivalry of Humanity" and, below, the words "Served With Honor in the World War and Was Wounded in Action." <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DAV>

If you would like to join contact any DAV member or contact the office at (970) 565-4310



DAV

DAV®



A Century of  
Service to Veterans



Vintage M1 Garand Raffle!

Ammo Included.

Tickets: \$5.00 Each. or 5 Tickets for \$20.00

Drawing to be held @2pm, November 26, 2022

County Annex, 107 N. Chestnut, Cortez Co.

Need not be present to win.

# American Legion

The American Legion, commonly known as the Legion, is a non-profit organization of U.S. war veterans headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. It is made up of state, U.S. territory, and overseas departments, and these are in turn made up of local posts. The organization was formed on March 15, 1919, in Paris, France, by a thousand officers and men of the American Expeditionary Forces (A. E. F.), and it was chartered on September 16, 1919, by the United States Congress.

The Legion played the leading role in the drafting and passing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the "G.I. Bill". In addition to organizing commemorative events, members provide assistance at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics. It is active in issue-oriented U.S. politics. Its primary political activity is lobbying on behalf of interests of veterans and service members, including support for benefits such as pensions and the Veterans Health Administration. It has also historically promoted Americanism, individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; peace and good will.

## *History*

The American Legion was established on March 15, 1919, in Paris, France, by delegates to a caucus meeting from units of the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.), which adopted a tentative constitution. The action of the Paris Caucus was confirmed and endorsed by a similar meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri, from May 8 to 10, 1919, when the Legion was formally recognized by the troops who served in the United States. The Paris Caucus appointed an Executive Committee of seventeen officers and men to represent the troops in France in the conduct of the Legion. The St. Louis caucus appointed a similar Committee of Seventeen. These two national executive committees amalgamated and were the initial governing body of the Legion. The temporary headquarters was located in New York.

## *Headquarters*

The national headquarters, informally known as American Legion headquarters, is located on the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza at 700 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, Indiana. It is the headquarters for the National Commander of The American Legion and also houses the archives, library, Membership, Internal Affairs, Public Relations, and *The American Legion* magazine's editorial offices. The national headquarters has expanded multiple times since its establishment.

## *Emblem*

The World War I Victory Button on a narrow circular band of blue enamel, containing the words "American Legion" in gold letters, forms the central element of the American Legion Emblem. The Legion emblem or "button" was officially adopted by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion on July 9, 1919.

## *Eligibility*

Membership in The American Legion was originally restricted to soldiers, sailors, and marines who served honorably between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918. Eligibility has since been expanded to include personnel who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or armed forces associated with the U.S., between December 7, 1941, through a date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the federal government, and was an American citizen when they entered that service or continues to serve honorably. U.S. Merchant Marines who served between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, are also eligible. Honorary, associate, social, or guest memberships in the Legion are not permitted. Members must be eligible through the nature and timing of their military service.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Legion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Legion)

If you would like to join contact any American Legion member or contact the office at (970) 565-8151 .

# Exercise your brain

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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 2 10 17 26 6 17 23      21 22 16 14 4      21 7 2 15 10 20 14 6 16

T      C      T  
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5 23 14 24 19 17

L L      L T  
 5 21 23 23 21 19 17      5 21 26 26 4 4 22      5 26 14 6 16 8 23 14 17 19

C      C      L L      C      C  
 15 10 7 23 15 10 14 26 26      15 4 7 23 21 19 17      15 21 22 21 24 14 21 22 2

C      C      L T      C      L  
 15 21 18 21 23 21 24 17 23 14 17      15 10 17 22 22 21 7 26 6      15 14 3 14 26

C      L  
 24 17 11 17 22 2 17      15 4 23 21 26      2 17 21

T  
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L T T L      L L  
 24 4 4 26 14 6 6 26 17      24 17      19 21 7 26 26 17

## Decode the message.

Each letter in the phrase has been replaced with a random letter or number.

Try to decode the message.

Answers to this puzzle will be in the next issue, along with a new puzzle.