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Commander Kerby Says Farewell

The Illinois AMVETS Convention in June will bring Paul Kerby's year long term as Commander to an end. Leading the organization requires dedication and commitment not to mention time and travel. Commander Kerby's tenure tested all that is required in the position.

Shortly after his swearing in, Commander Kerby hit the road to participate in and show support for Veterans across the state of Illinois and the Nation. He made the trip to Sparks, NV for the National Convention, Alexandria, VA for the Fall and Spring NEC's, and Ft. Madison, IA and Indianapolis, IN for the 4th National District meetings.

Celebrations and dedications are an always on the agenda to show appreciation for those volunteering for AMVETS and those that serve our country past and present. In July the Commander was in a 4th of July parade in East Moline. This was followed by the dedication of a Veterans Memorial in New Berlin.

AMVETS Posts throughout Illinois are dedicating their resources to improve the lives of veterans and their families all year long. To keep abreast of current activities and provide direction the Commander attended Department of Illinois District meetings

at Hines, Fox River, Jacksonville, Beecher and Granite City. He said it is 'very gratifying' to hear all the posts report on the good work they are doing.

On September 4th the Illinois AMVETS Veterans Center at Marion VA held a long awaited ribbon-cutting ceremony. "The Illinois AMVETS are incredibly proud to have the Illinois AMVETS Veteran's Center open. We truly believe that this facility and the services offered to



our nation's heroes will help our veterans returning home," says Commander Kerby. Although the gavel has been passed numerous times during the lifecycle of this project it's something all AMVETS statewide can be proud to say they were a part of creating. Continuing the commitment to improving the healthcare Veterans receive in Illinois, Dr. Karen Chapman-No-

by the 2013-2014 Department of Illinois Commander. Every Commander brings a new perspective to the common goal of the organization and each year Beecher Post 67 invites the Past Post Commanders together for a dinner in their honor.

The annual picnic for disabled and hospitalized veterans hosted by Cary Post 245 is one of the events that encountered weather challenges but after a two month delay it went off as planned with the Commander in attendance to help.

The issues of the Veteran community are at the forefront of Commanders agenda and AMVETS as an organization. This means supporting legislation for veterans and working the issues on the front lines in Illinois communities. He was in attendance for Governor Quinn's signing of HB2353 and SB 2229 at Hero Street Memorial Park in Silvis on August 10th. These bills improve the college education benefits for veteran college students. Homeless Stand Downs in Peoria and Rock Island provided valuable goods, services and information to the homeless veterans in the area were also part of the Commanders travels.

Camp Butler National Cemetery started hosting regular ceremonies to honor veterans recently interred at Camp Butler cemetery who weren't afforded funeral honors at the time of burial. Commander Kerby attended the inaugural ceremony and encourages all AMVETS to participate in these. He put the flags out and retrieves them at this ceremony and at a similar event in Pekin.

Veteran of the Month Ceremonies at Kankakee and Centuria, Good Friday at the Quincy



vakofski was again the recipient of an AMVETS grant for diabetes research at the University of Illinois

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Commander Kerby's farewell continued

VA Home, Awards dinner at Cary, Fundraiser for Warrior Games, Marine Corp League Building Dedication and the Veterans History Project at the Illinois State Library with Jesse White were also attended.

Among all of the festivity and remembrances there is the business operation of AMVETS that requires the Commanders leadership and attention. The business of budgeting, personnel committee, finance committee and tax filing meetings that require time, leadership and decision making to keep AMVETS in business. It has been hard but fulfilling work and Commander Kerby wishes his best to our next leader.

Please read Commander Kerby's final letter below:

Fellow AMVETS:
Another busy month just ended. Next month is the State Convention where we will elect new officers. In August, we will be having the National Convention in Memphis, Tennessee.

During this past month, we unfortunately have lost one post and possibly will be losing one more. I will

be traveling to the Post and I hope to find out if there is anything that can be done to salvage the Post. Our membership continues to decline. The primary reason is because our members are getting along in age, and we are not attracting the young folks needed to replace them. It is my hope that we learn to work

within the problem and find ways to make AMVETS and organization that is tangible to our younger Veterans. I want you all to know what a pleasure and an honor it has been to have served as your commander for the past year. It has been a very busy 11 months so

far and it doesn't look like it will slow down any through the end of my term.

It seems we are fortunate enough to be invited to all the activities that concern our vets that take place in the state.

National Headquarters is calling for the public appearance for the Secretary of the VA, Eric Shinseki, to address the problems within the VA and what he is doing to solve them. They want us to write our Congressional members and ask for legislation targeting the elimination of the bureaucratic red tape currently hindering VA leadership's ability to address weaknesses and do something constructive. I want to call upon you to act on this endeavor. Let's do just that, and ask everyone in your community to do the same. Our American Veteran brothers and sisters depend on us. Let's show them that we care.

Diane Zumatto, AMVETS National Legislative Director has served it up this way: "It is extremely disappointing that the VA often appears to be working at cross-purposes with veteran's interest. Veterans deserve better. They have sacrificed for our country and are left without what they deserve from the VA." Let's do what we can folks.

Enough griping, we need action. Let's get back to working for our veterans, and ourselves, and getting things done. Thank you for allowing me to be your Commander.

God Bless us all, the AMVETS, America, and our Service men and women and their families.

Yours in AMVETS,
Paul Kerby
Commander



Vietnam Veteran's 26th Annual Vigil



Left: Commander Kerby and Rich VanNatta place wreath at Vietnam Memorial, Oakridge Cemetery in Springfield at opening ceremony on May 3, 2014.
Above: AMVETS attending Ceremony Carol Leonard, Rich VanNatta, Commander Paul Kerby, Mary Kerby

Membership Department



AMVETS:

It is hard to believe another year with AMVETS is coming to an end! This also means as your Senior Vice Commander of Membership will soon be over as well.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the members of AMVETS. I have had a great time this year traveling around the state, going from post and district meetings, talking about all the various changes going on with the membership year this past year as well as what our organization has to offer.

It was great to see and meet so many AMVETS and to hear about all of the great things they are doing in their posts for veterans and to be able to thank them for all of their hard work. Let's keep up the good work and let me also say, "thank you," to all of the AMVETS working in our communities.

We are now down to our last three months in this membership year. The second renewals have been sent out. If you have any post members that have not renewed yet, now is the time to get that completed.

When I was out in Washington D.C. this spring for the

spring NEC, there were a couple of states talking about trying to pass another resolution for raising life membership dues again. If you have any members thinking about becoming a life member, now would be a good time to have that discussion and encourage them to do so. Life membership dues are still at \$250.00 right now but it looks like that number will be higher in the near future.

Next year, all renewed members will be getting a sticker to put on their new plastic membership card that they received this year. If you lose or break your card, National HQ will now be charging five dollars to replace it. Make sure you are careful with the card so you can avoid replacement fees.

I hope to see everyone our 69th Annual State Convention this year in Springfield on June 5th-8th where we will be electing the new state officers to guide us for the next year.

Once again I want to thank you for all of your hard work this past year for AMVETS. Let's not forget about the troops that are still in harms way defending our freedom. God bless you and the United States of America.

Yours in service,

Christopher Studebaker
S/V of Membership

Programs Department



AMVETS:

Convention is quickly approaching. I encourage you to attend, as we elect new officers for the coming

year. Headquarters staff is trying to put together some new, funthings to do while we are at the convention. I believe there is talk of a "pub crawl" and a shopping trip prior to the Commander's Banquet on Saturday night.

Reporting has been pretty slow for this period. We really need to step it up and get those numbers into Nicole at Headquarters or report for your post online. Anybody in the post can do the reporting. If the Jr. Vice isn't able to record the Programs, anyone available from the Post can do it.

I encourage the post to report at least every other month, unless you have quite a bit of activity in a month. It is best with a big program to report it right after it is done so hours and volunteers are not forgotten.

It is important to report everything we do. This program information is taken before Congress to show them what we are doing and helps in maintaining our organization's nonprofit status.

I am fortunate to hear what our Posts are doing for our brothers and sisters at arms and at home at District meetings and you are out there doing wonderful work. Be proud of yourselves and be sure to report!!

Providing your own food pantry or volunteering at the local food pantry is a great program for Posts to offer. Remember that many veterans struggle feeding their families or themselves and during the spring and summer months, food pantries don't receive as many donations as in the winter months closer to the Holiday Season.

There are two Posts that have set up Career Centers. Post 100 in Jacksonville and Post 326

in Chicago are both operating well. Returning Vets can go there and learn skills on computers, job search, or work on resume writing. They are both off the ground and although it is a lot of work, it is definitely the kind of work we need to see more of.

Recently, I attended the NEC and Silver Helmet Awards. At the NEC, I attended several committee meetings I was also fortunate enough to spend Good Friday at the Quincy Veterans Home. I visited with the Vets and served food.

I recently attended the opening ceremony at the Illinois Vietnam Memorial 24 Hour Vigil with the Commander, Ladies Auxiliary Sergeant at Arms and AMVET member Carol Leonard. The Commander and I laid a wreath at the memorial during the ceremony.

Remember, to get a grant a Post has to have less than \$5000, attend 2 District meetings and send in tax returns. I encourage you to attend the District meeting to find out what other Posts are doing and if eligible, consider applying for a grant and replicate some of the activities our more active Posts are doing. It is also a great way to meet other AMVET members and create bonds that can help us continue to help each other and other Veterans.

Yours in Service,

Richard Van Natta
SR/Vice Commander
Programs

Upcoming Events

69th Annual Convention

Thursday, June 5 -

Sunday, June 8, 2014

Abraham Lincoln Hotel

Location: 701 E. Adams St. in
Springfield, IL

Lincoln's Thunder

Sunday May 25, 2014

Location: Camp Butler and Oak Ridge
Cemetery

in Springfield, IL

Contact: Mike Lee

Phone: 217-741-3009

Email: biker1950@comcast.net

Ride starts at Rock and Roll Hardees for a 7 a.m. staging, departs at 9 a.m. for Camp Butler, where there will be a wreath ceremony, then from there ride to Vietnam War Memorial for a closing ceremony.

Manteno AMVETS Post 107 Golf

Outing

August 15, 2014

Kankakee Elks Country Club

10:30 am Registration & Lunch

12:00 pm Shotgun Start

Contact: Ryan Carruthers

Phone: 815-573-2361

Email: carruthersryan@yahoo.com

Benefiting the residents at the Illinois
Veterans Home at Manteno



Giving More Power to the AMVETS and



Exelon / Clinton Power Station recently made a presentation of a \$1000.00 check to the Clinton AMVETS Post 14. This is the eighth consecutive year they have made a significant contribution in support of AMVETS Post 14. Pictured above is the Clinton Plant Manager – Ted Stoner, left center, presenting the check to the AMVETS Post 14 Commander – Jessie Owens, right center. Six other Post members were present for the generous contribution and to say thank you to Mr. Stoner for the company's and plant's continued support of Post 14 and of Veterans. Exelon has a very high number of past and present Veterans on staff at the plant and several belong to AMETS Post 14, as well as other Veterans organizations.

The AMVETS use contributions such as this to help Veterans in a variety of ways. One such way is to help the Veterans in the Danville Veterans' Hospital be able to buy "extras," like haircuts, goodies from the hospital commissary, and other such needs. The Post also uses its money to help local Veterans who may need financial help, as determined by the Post members. Finally, the Exelon/Clinton Power Station contribution last year helped buy winter uniforms for the Post's Honor Guard, who provide a volunteer service at the funerals of Veterans.

The AMVETS want to extend a hand of thanks to Exelon and the Clinton Power Station employees for continuing to support our cause: Veterans Helping Veterans.



North Pekin AMVETS Post 169 Ladies Auxiliary annually awards a scholarship to a Tazewell County senior. Amanda Webb, president of the Auxiliary, is shown presenting the 2014 scholarship to Zachary Fuelberth, a senior from Pekin Community High School who will be attending Bradley University in the fall

New Officers for AMVETS Riders Chapter 169



New officers for AMVETS Riders Chapter 169 were elected at their May meeting. Shown left to right are Paul Vinnedge, sergeant at arms, Debby Dant, secretary, Bob Dant, president, Joyce DeBoer, second vice president, Terri Hintz, chaplain, and Bryan Coulter, first vice president. Not pictured is Terry Perkinson, finance officer.

Good Friday at Quincy VA Home



Above: Commander Kerby and Dave Hicks serving residents.
Below: Kneeling, Mary Kerby, Debbie Dant
Row 1 Left to Right; Sydney Webb Penny Goins Granddaughter, Zachery Webb, Nora Haynes, Row 2 Left to Right: Carol Leonard, Penny Goins and Grandson, Leslie Nell, Commander Kerby, Row 3, Left to Right: Jimmy Duncan, Unknown (Blue Shirt), Teresa Pickle Unknown, Dave Hicks, Rich VanNatta



COVERING YOUR FINAL EXPENSES IS MORE AFFORDABLE THAN YOU THINK!

Planning our own funeral or making plans for our own post-mortem can be uncomfortable. Ben Franklin said it best, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." It may be easier to avoid confronting mortality by leaving the funeral planning up to our families, but it's also a taxing legacy to leave behind. Providing our survivors the ability to mourn without the added pressure of financial uncertainty is a responsibility everyone should consider.

Prices rise – it's just a fact of life. Increases in grocery bills are becoming the standard. Heck, last year bacon was 3.19lb, just yesterday I saw it a \$5.29lb. That is almost a 70% increase in one year! According to the National Funeral Directors Association, in 1960, an average funeral cost \$708. Today's families are spending an average of \$6,560 (and that figure is from 2009). Keep in mind we're talking the cost of the funeral only. This figure doesn't factor in the cost of a cremation or cemetery plot and marker or any other memorial expenses that often bring the grand total to \$10-\$15,000 or more. In 1984, The FTC said "The emotional trauma of bereavement, the lack of information, and time pressures, place the consumer at an enormous disadvantage in making funeral arrangements."

Financial preparation can help. Fortunately, there are several insurance policies specifically designed to ease the financial

burdens and remove some of the stressful decisions that our families are left with after we pass.

CONSUMERS FIRST, through the AMVETS Insurance Program can help you look at the options available.

If you haven't already, call CONSUMERS FIRST. They are a veteran owned, Independent Agency faithfully serving Missouri and Illinois families for over 30 years. Ask them to shop your Insurance for you. There is no obligation and EVERY policy you purchase from them

helps funds AMVETS. After you have saved money, tell a friend to shop. Everyone can benefit from saving money and when you save money and purchase coverage, AMVETS, Department of Illinois wins!

Please contact the AMVETS Insurance program to learn more. Call 1-888-215-0613 or go to www.SupportAMVETS.org. Insurance services are provided by CONSUMERS FIRST. Offering may vary by state.

CONSUMERS FIRST continually shop top-rated companies to find clients the best products for the best value. Also, when you, your family or friends purchase insurance through the AMVETS Insurance program, Illinois AMVETS receives funding.

What you have to buy anyway can now help fund what you really care about.

AMVETS Insurance Program

Fund AMVETS programs just by paying your insurance bill.

Call toll free 888-215-0613 or online at www.SupportAmVets.org.

AMVETS does not sell insurance products. Insurance services are provided by CONSUMERS FIRST which pays a fee to AMVETS.

BUILDING OPERATOR CERTIFICATION OFFERED IN ILLINOIS

The State of Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) have teamed up to help unemployed and underemployed military veterans in Illinois earn the nationally-recognized Building Operator Certification (BOC®) and transition to civilian careers in facilities management. BOC increases job competitiveness and supports placement in the high growth green jobs sector by arming participants with hands on skills that allow them to achieve cost and energy savings from the first day of classes.

The program directly addresses the issue of high unemployment among Illinois veterans by providing full tuition scholarships for technical operations and maintenance training to eligible underemployed or unemployed veterans. According to the Council of Economic Advisors, in October 2013 the unemployment rate for all veterans was at 6.9 percent, 10 percent for post- 9/11 veterans.

One underemployed veteran Michael Weist recently completed the Building Operator Certification Level II program at Lincoln Land Community College.

"I think it was a great program," Michael said. "I really learned a lot. I liked the diversity of topics the program covered and the different perspectives from multiple instructors and hearing their experience. I especially enjoyed learning more ways to save money for facilities.

I already had a background in lighting, but I learned a lot about HVAC systems."

Veterans who qualify for BOC attend eight days of technical training and complete five hands-on projects with the assistance of mentors like ComEd. Mentorships are coordinated by MEEA to support the participants throughout the

program. MEEA works with Veteran Program Employment Partners Franklin Energy, CLEAResult, Ecova, and Lockheed Martin to provide resources like resume reviews, internship opportunities, job postings, and career guidance to assist veterans in their job search. The project partners are now working with the veterans to pursue full-time employment in building operations and maintenance.

BOC Illinois classes start in fall of 2014 and will be held in Champaign, Chicago, and at Prairie State College in Chicago Heights. For more information about BOC or to register for classes, please visit www.BOCcentral.org. To apply as an underemployed or unemployed veteran or to become an Employment Partner or Mentor, please contact Jennifer Allen at (312) 784-7243 or jallen@mwea-lliance.org.

The BOC Veterans Program is made available through funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) State Energy Office.



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Pat Quinn, Governor

New ID Cards for Vets Enrolled in VA Health Care

VA is introducing a new, secure identification card called the Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC). VHIC replaces the Veteran Identification Card (VIC), which was introduced in 2004.

VA is committed to providing the high quality, safe and effective health care Veterans have earned and deserve, and part of this effort includes ensuring the personal security of Veterans.

As part of a phased rollout, on February 21, 2014, VA began issuing the newly designed, more secure VHIC to newly enrolled and other Veterans who were not issued a VIC. Starting in April VA will begin a replacement effort to automatically mail the more secure VHIC to Veterans who have the old VIC.

All Veterans who are enrolled and have the old card should have their new replacement card by July.

VA expects to complete mailings of the replacement VHICs by July. To ensure receipt of the new VHIC, enrolled Veterans should make sure that VA has their correct mailing address.



The new VHIC is distinguished by additional security features and will have a different look and feel. The Social Security number and date of birth were removed from the barcode and magnetic strip. Similar to a typical health insurance card, the VHIC displays the Veteran's Member ID and branch of service emblem, a new unique identifier, as well as a Plan ID which reflects the Veteran's enrollment in VA health care. The VHIC is for use in VA medical facilities and does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA medical facilities.

Veterans can continue to use their current VIC card until their new VHIC is received as VA



health care applications have been enhanced to read both the new VHIC as well as the old card. VA recommends Veterans safeguard their VIC as they would a credit card, and cut up or shred the card once it is replaced with the new VHIC.

If enrolled in VA health care, a Veteran who does not currently have a VIC can request a VHIC at their next VA health care appointment. In order to ensure your identity, you'll need to present an appropriate form of ID, such as your driver's license. And while you're there make sure that your record is updated with your current address. Your VHIC will be mailed to you, generally within 5-7 days.

If you are not enrolled with the VA and want to receive a VHIC, you will need to apply for enrollment. You can do that online (which is the fastest way to apply for enrollment) at www.va.gov/health-benefits/enroll. You can also apply by phone at 1-877-222-VETS (8387), by mail or in person at your local VA health care facility. Of course, you will need to go to your local VA to have your picture taken.

Veterans find it is convenient to bring in their identification documents and get their picture taken for their VHIC at their first scheduled appointment. Be sure to bring an appropriate form of ID such as your driver's license. Once your enrollment is confirmed, your new VHIC will be mailed to you, generally within 5-7 days.

Have a fine AMVETS DAY!!!

George Sebastian
Veteran Service Officer

AMVETS Department of Illinois Ladies Auxiliary

Dear Ladies Auxiliary members,

Spring has finally arrived and I know I am glad to see the green grass again. It was such a long, long winter!

With June convention just around the corner, this is my last article as your Department President for the 2013-14 year. The 68th annual Convention is June 5th-8th 2014 at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Springfield. Come and meet the present officers and the newly elected officers for the 2014-15 year. Good luck to all those who are running.

Convention brings a game night with fun games like Texas Hold-em, Stud, Left,Right, Center, Eucker and Bingo with prizes. There is a pub crawl this year on Friday night and another new event Saturday afternoon as well. A shopping day at the mall in Springfield will take place Saturday afternoon prior to the Commander's Banquet. Buses will be furnished for both events and it will be a great time. Thank You AMVETS Headquarters for securing the donated buses for this from "The Curve."

Convention is exciting and a great way to learn what is happening and changing in our organization. I want to give all my Officers and Chairwomen a huge thank you for all of your hard work this year. You are the best!

To Commander Kerby: Thank you for your guidance and thoughtfulness and especially for keeping the lines of communications open day and night. You truly are the best. You and Mary went above and beyond the call of duty for me. I am proud to have served with you and I will never forget our time leading together.



To all of the members I met in my travels, it was a pleasure meeting you and I wish I could have met with every Auxiliary this year. This year brought some unexpected twists and turns for myself and my husband.

Not many people knew at the time, but in December my husband Mike and I had the H1N1 flu virus. I spent 41 days in two hospitals. I was not given treatment until I collapsed in my home in March. I was seriously ill but thankfully, I am back and getting stronger every day. Thank you for all the thoughts, prayers and cards you sent to me while I was down. They mean more to me than I can say.

I would like to again wish the newly elected Officers and Chairwomen luck in the 2014-15 year. Thank you for a year I will never forget. It has been an Honor to serve as your Department President.

God Bless You.

Yours in service,
Cindy Callaghan
Ladies Auxiliary President
2013-2014

Prayers from the Chaplain

Almighty God, mercifully look
Our Father in Heaven, give us the
right view for our work in this
world. Claim the best we have
to give and enable us to fulfill
the promise of our lives. Stir our
enthusiasm for the good and keep

us humble.
Amen.

Yours in Auxiliary Service,
Janet Van Deusen
Department Chaplain

In the Know: Veterans Legislation

The 98th General Assembly kicked off on January 13th, 2014 and things have been extremely busy at the state house. There has been several veterans' related bills come before the assembly, here are some of the more dynamic bills currently being tracked (listed in no particular order).

HB5601- Amends the Disabled Veterans Housing Act. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall adopt general rules for determining the question of whether an applicant was a resident of this State at the time he or she entered the service or was discharged while being a resident of this State (rather than whether an applicant was a resident of this State at the time he entered the service), and shall prescribe by rule the nature of the proof to be submitted to establish the fact of residence. **Referred to rules committee.**

HB3347- Creates the Military Emergency Direct Insurance Contingency Act and the Military Emergency Direct Insurance Contingency Program under the Act. Provides for the administration of the program by the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. Sets forth eligibility requirements for veterans. Requires the Department to purchase or provide health care benefits for eligible veterans that are identical to the benefits provided to adults under the State's Medicaid program, except for nursing facility services and non-emergency transportation. Includes provisions for co-payments and monthly premiums for health care services. **Referred to rules committee.**

HB4449- Amends the Illinois Income Tax Act. Makes changes to a credit awarded for wages paid to qualified veterans. Provides that the credit shall be: (1) \$5,000 (instead of 20% of the gross wages, but not to exceed \$5,000) for certain veterans who were unemployed at the time of hire; and (2) \$1,200 (instead of 10% of the gross wages, but not to exceed \$1,200) for other qualified veterans. Changes the

definition of "qualified veteran" to include all Illinois residents who are members of the National Guard, reserve, or regular component of the Armed Forces of the United States. Allows the credit to be prorated. **Referred to rules committee.**

HB3328- Amends the Personnel Code. Provides that the maximum number of preference points awarded for military service to a veteran who applies for a position with the Department of Corrections shall be equal to the number of points awarded to an applicant for having a bachelor's degree plus the number of points awarded to an applicant for college credit. **Referred to rules committee.**

SB2905- Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Reinserts the provisions of the introduced bill with changes. Provides that the disabled veterans exemption for specially adapted housing applies to property with an assessed value of up to \$100,000 (currently, \$70,000). In a provision of the introduced bill extending that exemption to housing and adaptations donated by a charitable organization, adds a requirement that the home must be inspected and certified by a licensed home inspector to be in compliance with applicable standards set forth in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration Pamphlet 26-13 Handbook for Design of Specially Adapted Housing. **Assigned to Property tax Subcommittee.**

SB3521- Amends the Illinois Veteran, Youth, and Young Adult Conservation Jobs Act. Creates the Illinois Young Adult Recreation Corps for the purpose of making grants to local sponsors to provide wages to young adults operating and instructing in conservation or recreational programs. Provides that local sponsors who can provide necessary facilities, materials, and management for summer conservation or recreational activities within the community may apply to the Department of Natural Resources for a grant under the Act for the purpose of hiring managing supervisors and eligible young

adults for conservation or recreational programs. **Assigned to the Appropriations General Service Committee.**

HB3058- Creates the Veterans Day Act. Provides that an employer shall provide each employee who is a veteran with paid or unpaid time off for Veterans Day, November 11, if the employee would otherwise be required to work on that day, in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Provides that an employer, in complying with the Act, shall have the discretion of providing paid or unpaid time off on Veterans Day. Provides that an employer may only refuse to grant paid or unpaid time off as requested under the Act when providing time off would impact public health or safety or would cause the employer to experience significant economic or operational disruption.

HB4500- Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Provides that any veteran who holds proof of a service-connected disability from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and who has obtained certification from a psychiatrist that the service-connected disability qualifies the veteran for issuance of registration plates or decals to a person with disabilities, may, without the payment of any registration fee, make application to the Secretary of State for disabled veterans license plates displaying the international symbol of access. Amends the Fish and Aquatic Life Code. Provides that, beginning with the 2014 license year, a veteran who holds proof of a service-connected disability from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and whose degree of disability has been declared to be 50% or more, shall be eligible for a free fishing license. Amends the Wildlife Code. Provides that, beginning with the 2014 license year, a veteran who holds proof of a service-connected disability from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and whose degree of disability has been declared to be 50% or more, shall be eligible for a free hunting license. **Referred to rules committee.**

HR0965- Creates the Task Force on Veterans' Suicide to investigate the causes to and prevention of suicides among returning Illinois veterans of the United States Military. **Assigned to Veterans' Affairs committee.**

SB3222- Amends the Military Code of Illinois and the State Finance Act to create the Illinois National Guard Billeting Fund. Further amends the Military Code of Illinois to provide that the Fund shall be funded from proceeds collected by the Department of Military Affairs incident to billeting operations conducted by the Illinois National Guard at locations within the State. Provides that moneys within the Fund shall be used to pay the expenses of billeting operations not eligible for payment with federal or State appropriated funds. **Referred to rules committee.**

These are just some of the nearly 400 bills researched that could possibly affect our veterans. The 10 bills listed are considered moving and having a good chance to be acted upon soon. Please contact your legislatures and voice your support for these important veterans related bills. Furthermore, once they are called to a committee I urge everyone to voice their support by completing a witness slip. These little gestures greatly improve the success of these bills and are relatively simple to complete. Additionally, simply notifying our legislatures reminds them that we are paying attention to their actions and how they treat veterans. As a veteran non-for-profit it is our goal and duty to stand as one and support our past, present, and future veterans anyway we can. Remember if it wasn't for the sacrifice of some, no one would be able to enjoy freedom. Thank you for reading and if you have any questions please call or email me

Questions? Contact Legislative Director Keith Wetherell. •

How You Can Help Us

Donation Drop Off Locations

Generous donations of gently used clothing and household items are main source of funding for AMVETS programs and veteran services.

In the Chicago-area you can drop off your tax deductible donation at one of the donation sites listed at the right or call 708-388-7800 to schedule a pick up at you home.

City	Retail Partner	Address	Attendant Hours
Bridegview	Kmart Lot	7325 W. 79th St.	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
Bridgeview	Walmart	10260 S. Harlem Ave.	10-4 Daily
Darien	Walmart P	1 blk. west of 75th & Fairview	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
Des Plaines	Kmart West	Oakton/Lee Rd.	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
North Joliet	Walmart	1401 Illinois Rte. 59 (Theodore & Rte 59)	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
Lombard	Kmart lot	345 W. Roosevelt Rd.	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
Minooka	Ace Hardware	855 S. Ridge Rd.	10-4 Daily
West Naperville	Walmart	776 S. Rte. 59	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
Plainfield	Walmart	127th St. & Rte. 59	10-4 Daily
Tinley Park	Burlington Coat Factory	159th St. (Just east of Harlem Ave.)	M-Sa. 8-5, Su 9-5
Wheeling	AMVETS Post 66	700 Mc. Henry Rd. - Drop box only	No Attendant

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AMVETS

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