

December 16, 2016

Veterans Service Update

Department Veterans Service Office January Business Hours: The department service office will be closed for the New Year Holiday on, Monday, January 2nd, and for Martin Luther King Day on Monday, January 16th. This office will otherwise be open each Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM until 4:00 PM during the month of January. Appointments are necessary for client visits. You may contact the department service office by calling our direct number of 317-916-3605; calling a long distance toll free number of 1-888-723-7999, extension 1; faxing us at 317-916-3406; or by using the following e-mail address: al.vbaind@va.gov.

Local Veterans Service Issues:

Post Service Officers Training Seminar, Attention: Post Service Officers and Post Commanders:

Place and Time: During the Mid-Winter Conference, Saturday, January 14th, from 8:00 AM until Noon, Salon A, Marriott Hotel, 7202 East 21st Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Topics: Post service officers' duties and responsibilities; ethics; the rehab program; homeless veterans program; Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA); claims representation; veterans service and membership; avoiding common mistakes; replacing the DD Form 214; helping veterans find supporting evidence; veterans employment issues; other resource for veterans; state veterans benefits; overview of VA compensation, pension and medical benefits; the National Personnel Records Center; and, time permitting, an open panel discussion session with department service officers.

Added Resources: Service officers may also find our post service officers' online home study course by opening the Department website at:

<https://www.indianalegion.org/>, clicking "Services" then "Department Service Office," and then clicking "Service Officer Training Manual." Service officers may then also complete the Service Officer Workbook and Test and receive a Certificate of Completion signed by the Department Commander

Why and How: This seminar will help American Legion posts assist its members with veterans benefit issues, and improve membership through services. Pre-registration is not required. All post service officers, especially new post service officers, are encouraged to attend. The training session is free, but attendees will likely incur costs associated with travel and lodging. Active post service officers volunteer much of their time while assisting post members. Post may now help their service officers by sponsoring their attendance at this training session, and then reap the benefit of their service officer's increased knowledge.

Department Service Officer David Wilson Retires Following More than 21 Years of Service:

David walked into the American Legion Department of Indiana Veterans Service Office as a Department Service Officer for the first time on August 7, 1995. He will leave that office for retirement more than 21 years later after serving his last day on Tuesday, January 3, 2017. Dave has seen many changes over the years: from typewriters, metal desks, cardboard office dividers, and hard copy VA claim files, to state-of-the-art computer equipment, modern office furniture, electronic file storage and claims filing systems, and, best of all, a reputation for providing exceptional veterans' services. Just for fun, we tried to calculate (very rough estimate) a few things David has done over the years. He has:

- Answered 32,990 phone calls,

- Conducted 3,480 interviews,
- Written 790 formal appeal statements,
- Conducted 480 per-hearing conferences,
- Conducted 440 hearings,
- Received and answered 1,620 e-mails,
- Received and answered 18,410 letters,
- Conducted 60 Veterans Benefit seminars,
and
- Reviewed 35,000 VA rating decisions.

David will be missed. Please drop by the American Veterans Service Office in Room 325 of the Federal Building sometime on Tuesday, January 3, 2017 to wish David the best in his retirement.