

You Don't Always Need An Appointment

Our office assists veterans and their families with applying for a wide array of federal benefits and services including service connection compensation, pension, discharge upgrades, burial benefits, and more. While we prefer veterans to schedule appointments with our office to review these processes, there are other services we provide which do not require an appointment. At the front desk, office personnel can assist with submitting forms to obtain military documents such as a DD-214, NGB22 or NGB 23. Forms to apply for veteran related license plates, veteran designation on a driver's license, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources Hunting and/or Fishing licenses are also available at the front desk. A copy of the veteran's DD-214 is required to submit most forms, but certain forms may require additional documentation.

More information can be found on our website at www.pottcounty-ia.gov/veterans_service_office/county_and_state_services/.



Thank you for your service

Joshua Howell is an Air Force veteran, born and raised in Council Bluffs. He served as a Fuel Systems Mechanic from 2005-2009. In Korea, he worked on A-10 Thunderbolt II fighter jets, as well as F-16 Fighting Falcons on Osan, AFB. While in Korea, he also served as the Enlisted Liaison to the Base Commander where he spoke on behalf of all enlisted Airmen on base to relay their needs and concerns to command. This was just the beginning of his career serving his fellow brothers and sisters in uniform. In the United Kingdom, he worked on F-15E Strike Eagles and HH-60G Pave Hawk Helicopters on Lakenheath, AFB with temporary assignments in Italy and Germany.

While he enjoyed learning how to fix jets, Joshua didn't feel as though that was his calling. He went to school to get his Bachelor's in legal studies while serving as the youngest staff member of the Douglas County Juvenile Court. There he launched a book program for youth and mentored kids in and out of the court system. Later, he worked in Lincoln for three Nebraska State Senators, where he wrote policy and served constituents. One of his crowning achievements during that time was partnering with the VFW and American Legion to write and pass LB 1087 in 2014 which granted property tax exemption to all 100% disabled Veterans in Nebraska.

Instead of pursuing a law degree, Joshua decided to go into marketing. He was a people person and had a talent for writing and graphic design. Over the past decade, he has worked in Marketing Director or Outreach roles for nonprofits that serve Veterans through Equine Therapy, Hospice, Senior Living, and other medical fields. He currently serves as the Veteran and Military Outreach Manager for Valley Hope.

Valley Hope operates in six states helping Veterans and Military get Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment for Alcohol, Drug, and Opioid addictions. Joshua has lost veterans that he served with to addiction and suicide, and felt compelled to help as many struggling veterans, military members, and families that he can.

Joshua is driven toward connecting Veterans with the resources and benefits that they deserve. He's a proud Life Member of the VFW and American Legion. He also serves on several Veteran groups and committees in the area. In Council Bluffs, he is the Mentor Coordinator for Veteran Treatment Court which covers several counties in Western Iowa. He's also a certified Rally Point mentor in Nebraska.

When he's not at work, Joshua is usually on the road selling his fiction novels and graphic novels. He's published a science fiction trilogy and comic, a fantasy novel, and is about to publish his new horror novel as well. He has been featured at local, regional, and national conventions to include an annual appearance at New York Comic Con for the past ten years.



Upcoming Events*

***Keep checking our website for a new event coming April 2025**

- Jan 1 - office closed for New Year's Day
- Jan 8 - Caseworker in Carter Lake
- Jan 15 - Caseworker in Avoca
- Jan 20 - Office closed for Martin Luther King Day
- Jan 22 - Caseworker in Carter Lake
- Feb 5 - Caseworker in Avoca
- Feb 12 - Caseworker in Carter Lake
- Feb 19 - Caseworker in Avoca
- Feb 26 - Caseworker in Carter Lake
- March 5 - Caseworker in Avoca
- March 12 - Caseworker in Carter Lake
- March 19 - Caseworker in Avoca
- March 26 - Caseworker in Carter Lake

Commissioners and Staff Spotlight - Jim Murray

"I am currently serving my second term on the Pottawattamie County Board of Commissioners for Veterans Affairs after filling in for a vacant position in 2022. My current three year term just started. I have lived in Pottawattamie County for the past 45 years residing in Treynor the entire time. I have 4 children, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

The position of Commissioner can be challenging. However, with the strong support of the Board of Supervisors, the VSO Administrator and her dedicated staff, along with my fellow Commissioners, it is certainly gratifying work.

I view service to the veteran community as both a moral obligation and as fulfillment of a contract. When a veteran signs a contract with our great nation it states when the veteran commits to military service the country will then fund the veteran's post-service education, or if the veteran sustains an injury or disability while in service we follow through on that contract by providing care.

That's where the challenge comes in. Many veterans are not aware of the benefits they have earned or the programs available to them. Veterans are by nature very giving individuals and reluctant to accept help. They are under the misconception that if they receive assistance or services then it is at the expense of other veterans. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you are aware of any veteran or veterans family member that would like to come in and talk, send them our way. Thanks for listening."



VSO Services Note

Our department will host our first annual Open House in April 2025. This event will feature a wealth of resources for veterans and will include veteran owned businesses, games, a raffle, live music, and more. Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for more information.

Contacts

Transportation to Omaha VA Med Center -
402-995-2100

Jordan Bierce (402-995-4458) or jordan.bierce@va.gov
www.vetride.va.gov

Veteran Owned Business Highlight - Council Bluffs Veterinary Clinic

Steven D. Michael, DVM - 712-323-2147

michael.dvm@cbvetclinic.com

www.cbvetclinic.com

1229 S Third Street,

Council Bluffs



Resources

Veteran Health Identification Cards can be obtained or renewed online at your nearest VA medical center. An enrollment coordinator can help you arrange for processing. Visit www.va.gov/find-locations/ to find a VA location.

Cards can also be renewed online at login.gov, myhealth.va.gov, or id.me.

Cards cannot be obtained or renewed at the Pottawattamie County VSO.

History and Trivia - War of 1812



Thomas Tingey
Constitution
Bladensburg
Washington D.C.
Treaty of Ghent
Impressment
Madison
Tippecanoe Lake
Erie Thames
Chesapeake Bay
Plattsburgh Fort
McHenry New
Orleans Peacock

War of 1812
 (1812-1815)

286,730
 Total US Servicemembers

2,260 Battle Deaths

4,505 Non-mortal
 Woundings

Visit
Battlefields.org for more
 information about the War
 of 1812

Commodore Thomas Tingey had the Washington Navy yard burned to prevent it falling into enemy hands.

US frigate Constitution defeated HMS Guerrriere & earned the nickname "Old Ironsides".

At Bladensburg, 500 sailors and Marines resisted enemy forces near Benedict, Maryland.

British forces burned Washington DC and the Capitol in Aug 1814.

Treaty of Ghent, signed Feb 1815, ended the war.

The Royal Navy's practice of impressment was one of the causes of the war.

President James Madison signed the declaration of war on June 18, 1812.

Battle of Tippecanoe was fought on Nov 7, 1811; it is considered one of the primary events leading to the war.

Battle of Lake Erie, Sept 1813, US naval victory.

Battle of the Thames, US victory forcing British and Native American forces back.

The Chesapeake Bay Campaign of 1813 saw the landing of British troops on American soil.

Battle of Plattsburgh in Sept 1814 stopped the British offensive and started a retreat of British land forces.

The British defeat at Fort McHenry inspired Francis Scott Key to write the lyrics to the Star-Spangled Banner.

US victory at New Orleans led to the end of the war and Major General Andrew Jackson winning the Presidency in 1828.

In the final engagement of the war, US sloop Peacock captured East India Co brig Nautilus before they could assure Captain Warrington that the peace treaty had been signed.

**To sign up for the Pottawattamie County quarterly newsletter,
email veterans@pottcounty-ia.gov or scan the qr code below.**

