

# The Lycoming Vet

Volume 7, Issue 1

January, 2014

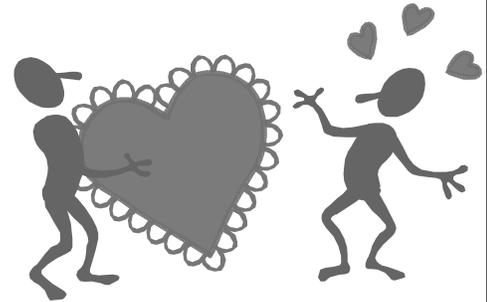
## A SNEAK PEAK AT WHAT'S INSIDE



Donate a Picture



First Veteran's Day Parade  
in Lycoming County in  
Over 10 YEARS.



Show Your  
Appreciation  
To Our Vets



Cost-Of-Living  
Increase



New Updates



Trip to France?  
Oui, Oui!

# Military Pictures Wanted.....

Willing to Donate a picture or a copy of a picture to Veterans Affairs? We are doing a bulletin board for the months of March-May in the hallway of the Executive Plaza, and are looking for pictures of those you are or were in the service.



If you would like to give us a picture (copies are fine) we would greatly appreciate it. You can drop the picture off to us at 330 Pine Street or send it to us at 48 West Third Street, Williamsport PA 17701. **Please include name, branch of service, and dates of service (if known).** Please have pictures in by the end of February. **Thank you!**

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THE LYCOMING COUNTY  
INAUGURAL VETERAN'S  
DAY PARADE



A crowd gathered on Saturday, November 9, in the City of Williamsport starting at Campbell Street down to Market Street for “The 2013 Lycoming County Inaugural Veteran’s Day Parade”. We celebrated and welcomed home those who have given so much for our great Country, and honored all deceased Lycoming County Veterans. (Lycoming County has over 20,000 Veterans buried in over 260 cemeteries, with over 2,500 Veterans buried outside Lycoming County. Deceased Veterans served in Peace Time and 15 Wars from the Indian Wars, World War I, World War II, Korean, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War, War on Terror, Iraq, and Afghanistan.) Everyone showed their appreciation to the Veterans who have so faithfully served our country here and abroad. We recognize the sacrifices of those who have carried the torch of freedom throughout our history and reflect on the contributions of our Wounded, our Missing, our Fallen and their Families. We recognize and honor the men and women in uniform that have made the commitment to protect, serve, and defend our country in times of need ensuring our safety and domestic tranquility. A special thanks to the City of Williamsport and the local businesses and organizations that made the parade possible. Also, George W. Heiges Jr. (Director of Lycoming County Veterans Affairs) would like to give a big thank you out to everyone, he was honored to be the Grand Marshal of the 2013 Veteran’s Day Parade (Chauffeured by Fred Agnoni).



Thank you Veterans!

## Valentines For Veterans



*The Valentines for Vets program during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week (Feb. 10-16) encourages Americans from all walks of life to deliver valentines to local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and visit the veterans there.*

*The week has several purposes including to increase awareness of the local VA in the community. We will be collecting Valentine's from now until February 6, 2013 to ensure delivery by February 14. This would be a great program for scouting groups, church groups and school activities to teach our young people (and of course grown-ups!) about the importance of recognizing our Veteran's throughout the year. As in past years, you may address the cards to "A Veteran", "A Hero" or leave them blank. You may also have participants sign the cards with a first name or simply sign with "A grateful American" or something similar. Store bought or homemade cards are appreciated. Your support will act as a method to inspire and encourage our Nation's heroes.*

*Last year we were able to collect over 1,000 Valentine's (probably closer to 2,000). They were sent to the Wilkes- Barre Veteran's Affairs Hospital and the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC and they have always acknowledged the contribution with appreciation via letter. Last year, we were able to donate some Valentine's to local nursing homes such as Valley View and Muncy Valley Skilled Nursing as we had such a response. We have had tremendous success the past couple of years and we are hoping to continue the tradition for 2014.*

*Thanks again for you Support!*



### Contact Information:

Sue A Jacobs, Enforcement Officer	570-327-2493 (direct line)
Lycoming County Domestic Relations	570-327-2299 (fax)
48 West Third Street Williamsport, PA 17701	

## ***New Rates for Compensation and Pension Benefits in 2014***



WASHINGTON -

Veterans, their families and survivors receiving disability compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs will receive a **1.5** percent cost-of-living increase in their monthly payments beginning **Jan. 1, 2014**.

“We’re pleased there will be another cost-of-living increase for Veterans, their families and their survivors,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The increase expresses in a tangible way our Nation’s gratitude for the sacrifices made by our service-disabled and wartime Veterans.”

For the first time, payments will not be rounded down to the nearest dollar. Until this year, that was required by law. Veterans and survivors will see additional cents included in their monthly compensation benefit payment.

For Veterans without dependents, the new compensation rates will range from **\$130.94** monthly for a disability rated at **10** percent to **\$2,858.24** monthly for **100** percent. The full rates are available on the Internet at [www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp).

The COLA increase also applies to disability and death pension recipients, survivors receiving dependency and indemnity compensation, disabled Veterans receiving automobile and clothing allowances, and other benefits.

Under federal law, cost-of-living adjustments for VA’s compensation and pension must match those for Social Security benefits. The last adjustment was in January 2013 when the Social Security benefits rate increased **1.7** percent.

In fiscal year 2013, VA provided over **\$59 billion** in compensation benefits to nearly **4 million** Veterans and survivors, and over **\$5 billion** in pension benefits to more than **515,000** Veterans and survivors.

For Veterans and separating Service members who plan to file an electronic disability claim, VA urges them to use the joint DoD/VA online portal, *eBenefits*. Registered *eBenefits* users with a premium account can file a claim online, track the status, and access a variety of other benefits, including pension, education, health care, home loan eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

**For more information about VA benefits, visit**

**[www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov),  
or call 1-800-827-1000.**

## News From the VA:

- ⇒ **Claims Inventory** VA's goal is to process all disability claims within 125 days, at a 98 percent accuracy level, and eliminate the claims backlog in 2015. We have made great strides, but we realize much work remains to be done; too many Veterans still wait too long. That's unacceptable, and that is why VA has begun implementing a paperless, digital disability claims system— a lasting solution that will transform how we operate and eliminate the claims backlog to more efficiently and better support the needs of Veterans, Service members, their families and survivors.
- ⇒ **Claims Transformation Quick Facts** Every year since 2009, VA has completed a record breaking 1 million claims representing over \$59 billion in payments to Veterans and their families. VA is building a strong foundation for a paperless, digital disability claims system. By the end of 2012, this technology had already been deployed to 18 Regional Office locations. It will reach all 56 VA Regional Offices by the end of 2013. In pilot programs, the new system has cut the time to process claims nearly in half.

WASHINGTON –The Department of Veterans Affairs has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of disability compensation claims – from 611,000 to 400,835 or 34 percent -- since peaking in March. Concurrently, VA improved the accuracy of disability ratings, and provided hundreds of thousands of claims decisions to Veterans who have waited the longest.

“Veterans shouldn’t have to wait for the benefits they’ve earned,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. “This has never been acceptable, but we are executing our plans and moving in the right direction to meet our 2015 goal of eliminating the backlog. We still have more work to do, but we are making clear progress and no one is more committed than our VBA employees, more than half of whom are Veterans themselves.”

Since the VA launched the initiative to eliminate the oldest claims first, claims processors at the 56 regional offices of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) have been focused on claims that had been waiting longer than one year. As of November 4, VBA has completed 93 percent of these older claims, resulting in over 476,000 decisions for Veterans since the initiative began on April 19. The proportion of claims decisions that resulted in benefits being granted remained on par with historical averages—between 65 and 70 percent.

At the same time, the accuracy of rating decisions has improved. The three-month average for decision accuracy when evaluating a complete claim file is 90 percent -- a 5 percentage point improvement since 2011, and a 7 percentage point improvement since 2010. The three-month average accuracy for rating individual medical conditions inside each claim has climbed three points to 96.7 percent since December 2012.

VBA also directed 20 hours of mandatory overtime per month for claims processors, and worked with the Veterans Health Administration to place VA physicians in regional offices to review medical evidence to help speed decisions. Mandatory overtime was halted during the government shutdown in October, but has been re-established and will continue through November 23. VBA anticipates mandatory overtime to continue in 2014, based on available funding. Optional overtime for claims processors will remain in effect.

In the coming months, VBA will continue its effort on further reducing the backlog, focusing on those claims that have been pending the longest. VBA will also continue to prioritize disability claims for homeless Veterans, those experiencing extreme financial hardship, the terminally ill, former Prisoners of War, Medal of Honor recipients, and Veterans filing Fully Developed Claims (FDC). Filing an electronic FDC is the quickest way for Veterans to receive a decision on their compensation claim (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/>).

# Bon Voyage



Looking for a trip that will  
be unforgettable?

Join Susquehanna Trailways  
on a Moving Tour to mark the  
70th Anniversary of the Epic  
D-Day Landings, in  
**FRANCE.**



This tour will include a viewing of Paris through the eyes of those who served its occupation and liberation. The Normandy coast a chance to visit Rommel's Castle headquarters and the Cean Memorial Peace Museum. Time will be set aside for the exploration of the landmarks of D-Day, including the Point Du Hoc Ranger Memorial and the parachute-shaped airborne museum in the town of St. Mere Eglise.

Look out over the beaches whose code names echo through history— Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha, and Utah. Discover the culture of Northern France and Chartres and come to know the stories of the men and women who gave so much in the name of freedom.

July 10-19, 2014  
10 Days, 13 Meals

This tour requires  
a Valid  
US Passport

Forms also located at Lycoming County Veterans Affairs

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- ◆ Paris
- ◆ Vel d'Hiv Memorial
- ◆ Eiffel Tower Dinner
- ◆ Normandy
- ◆ Memorial Peace Museum
- ◆ D-Day Landing Beaches
- ◆ St. Mere Eglise
- ◆ Bayeux Tapestry
- ◆ Le Mont St. Michel
- ◆ Chartres Cathedral

**For more information  
contact Susquehanna  
Trailways at  
1-800-692-6314.  
Call early, as only a  
limited amount of  
seats are reserved for  
this tour!**

# AMERICAN LEGIONS, VFW's & OTHER COUNTY VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS



## **American Legion Post 1-**

Garrett Cochran  
10 E. 3rd St., Williamsport, PA 17701  
Phone: 570-323-9409

## **Veterans of the Vietnam War – Post PA 51**

P.O. Box 23, Hughesville, PA 17737  
Phone: 570-547-2814

## **American Legion Post 35-**

Glenn Sharrow  
78 N. Main St., Hughesville, PA 17737  
Phone: 570-584-2123

## **VFW Post 3428-**

Edward J. Smith Post  
12 N Market St., Muncy, PA 17756  
Phone: 570-546-3820

## **American Legion Post 36 -**

George Webster Pepperman  
P.O. Box 211, Jersey Shore, PA 17740  
Phone: 570-398-4174

## **VFW Post 5859-**

Billy O. Brandt Post  
201 N. Lincoln Ave., Jersey Shore, PA 17740  
Phone: 570-398-2801

## **American Legion Post 104 -**

Eugene Grafius  
1312 Broad St., Montoursville, PA 17754  
Phone: 570-368-9000

## **VFW Post 7863-**

Le Roy O. Buck Post  
150 Shaffer St., South Williamsport, PA 17702  
Phone: 570-323-1579

## **American Legion Post 251 -**

Bower Decker  
185 Broad St., Montgomery, PA 17752  
Phone: 570-547-2039

## **VFW POST 844-**

Howard W. Kahler Post  
1260 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Williamsport, PA 17701  
Phone: 570-326-2752

## **American Legion Post 268 -**

Roland Ritter  
515 Legion Rd., Muncy, PA 17756  
Phone: 570-546-5210

## **Forty & Eight Voiture 382**

345 Market Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Phone: 570-322-1670

## **American Legion Post 617 -**

Royal P. Steinbacher  
901 Market Street, South Williamsport,  
PA 17702  
Phone: 570-327-0255

## **Williamsport Detachment 388**

**Marine Corp League Inc.**  
P. O. Box 3245, Williamsport, PA 17701  
Contact Robert Mosley Phone: 570-322-4727

## **American Legion Post 999 -**

West Branch Service Post  
Phone: 570-447-1572  
2985 Four Mile Drive, Apt. 107  
Montoursville, PA 17754  
Meets at the Montoursville Presbyterian Church

## **Korean War Veterans of Lycoming County, Inc.**

P. O. Box 3232  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Contact Howard Wilt Phone: 570-745-3775  
(to arrange military funerals)

# Your Reps in Washington & Harrisburg



## U.S. Representative Thomas Marino— 10th Congressional District

**Williamsport District Office**  
**1020 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 1A**  
**Williamsport, PA 17701**  
**Phone: 570-322-3961**  
**Fax: 570-322-3965**  
**Office Hours: M-F 9-5**  
**Website: <http://marino.house.gov/>**



## PA State Senator Gene Yaw— Senate District 23

<b>330 Pine Street, Suite 204</b>	<b>One Progress Plaza, Suite 13</b>
<b>Williamsport, PA</b>	<b>Towanda, PA 18848</b>
<b>Phone: 570-322-6457</b>	<b>Phone: 570-265-7448</b>
<b>Fax: 570-327-3703</b>	<b>Fax: 570-268-4313</b>
<b>Toll-free: 1-800-443-5772</b>	
<b>Website: <a href="http://senatorgeneyaw.com/">http://senatorgeneyaw.com/</a></b>	<b>Email: <a href="mailto:gyaw@pasen.gov">gyaw@pasen.gov</a></b>



## PA State Representative Garth D. Everett— 84th Legislative District

<b>Penn Hills Plaza, Halls Station</b>	<b>Tiadaghton Valley Mall</b>
<b>21 Kristi Road, Suite 2</b>	<b>Room 105</b>
<b>Muncy, PA 17756</b>	<b>Jersey Shore, PA 17740</b>
<b>Phone: 570-546-2084</b>	<b>Phone: 570-398-4476</b>
<b>Fax: 570-546-5220</b>	<b>Fax: 570-398-5963</b>
<b>Office Hours: M-F 9-5</b>	<b>Office Hours: M-F 9-4:30</b>
<b>Website: <a href="http://www.repeverett.com/">http://www.repeverett.com/</a></b>	<b>Email: <a href="mailto:geverett@pahousegop.com">geverett@pahousegop.com</a></b>



## PA State Representative Rick Mirabito— 83rd Legislative District

**800 West Fourth Street, Suite GO2**  
**Williamsport, PA**  
**Phone: 570-321-1270**  
**Fax: 570-327-3719**  
**Office Hours: M-W-F 8-5; T-TH 8-7**  
**Website: <http://www.pahouse.com/mirabito/>**

**Not sure who your representative is? Find out at:**

**<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/countylist.cfm?CNTYLIST=LYCOMING>**

## FROM THE LYCOMING COUNTY VA OFFICE:

Would you like to have a VA Benefit Seminar at a Nursing Home, Legion, VFW, or Other Organization? Have George come and speak to the Veterans and Widows about what they could be eligible for through the VA. Call our office at 570-327-2365 to set it up.

Home Loans? Contact Bob Brown, Sr. Loan Officer at Allentown Mortgage Corp. VA Loan Specialist/ Residential Financing.

Phone: 610-883-7601 or 484-494-6593

Email: [bobbrown@worldlynx.net](mailto:bobbrown@worldlynx.net)

Web: [www.allentownmortgage.com](http://www.allentownmortgage.com)

\*Licensed by the PA Dept. of Banking\*

## FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

Are you rated 100% disabled by the VA? Then you may be eligible for real estate tax exemption and free hunting and fishing licenses. Call 570-327-2365 for more information.

If you or anyone you know are interested in being trained for an Honor Guard position please contact the VA office at 570-327-2365.

## Important information to Know when Transitioning from TRICARE Prime to Standard.

- You can still see your same doctor.
- Costs for care will change.
- Your health care prior authorizations are still valid.

Be aware that your out-of-pocket costs for existing care will change from TRICARE Prime copayments to TRICARE Standard (Extra) cost-shares and deductibles on **October 1, 2013**.

If you have any other questions or concerns please contact us at 570-327-2365



# VA Outpatient Clinic



The VA Outpatient Clinic was established July 1997 on the Campus of Divine Providence Hospital in the Wenner Building, 1705 Warren Avenue, Suite 304, Williamsport, PA **Phone: 570-322-4791 Fax: 570-322-5170**  
 Open: Monday—Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Scheduled appointments only  
 ~ No Emergency Services/No walk-ins  
**Services Include:** Primary Care, Enrollment/Eligibility forms, Psychiatry, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Social Services, Counseling, Lab, Nutrition services, and Immunizations.  
**The VA Clinic has a social worker at the clinic on Tuesday and Thursday. Her name is Chris Veach; please call the clinic at (570) 322-4791 to schedule an appointment.**

## Vet Center

The Vet Center is located at Suite 104, 49 East Fourth Street, Williamsport, next to the James V. Brown Library. Phone 327-5281.

Open: Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm.  
 All services provided by the Vet Center are **FREE OF CHARGE**. These include readjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available for their family members.

These include:

- individual and group counseling: women, spouses, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, OEF/OIF, and other combat veterans.
- group counseling
- marital and family counseling
- bereavement counseling



- substance abuse information and referral
- referral in applying for VA Benefits, job counseling and educational VA benefits
- referral for homeless vets
- military sexual trauma (male and female) counseling & referral
- outreach and community education

*Pennsylvania*  
**CareerLink**  
 LYCOMING COUNTY

The PA Career Link—Lycoming County office is located at 329 Pine Street in Williamsport and is open Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays.

**Contact: Timothy French**

**E-mail: [tifrench@state.pa.us](mailto:tifrench@state.pa.us)**

**Phone: 570-601-5934**

**Online: [www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us](http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us)**



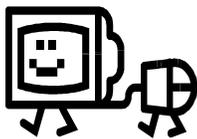
**Lycoming County Office of Veterans Affairs**

330 Pine Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Suite 104  
Executive Plaza Building  
Mailing Address:  
48 West Third Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
570-327-2365

*County Commissioners*  
*Jeff C. Wheeland,*  
*Chairman*  
*Ernest P. Larson,*  
*Vice Chairman*  
*Tony R. Mussare,*  
*Secretary*



For up-to-date  
News and  
Information  
For Veterans



***The Lycoming Vet***  
*is published*  
*by the Office of*  
*Veterans Affairs*  
*in Lycoming County, PA*

**We are here to help you . . .**

**MSGT George W. Heiges (Ret.)**

**Lycoming County Director of Veterans Affairs**

gheiges@lyco.org

- Fully accredited as a Veterans Service Officer by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- Twenty- one years USAF

**David A. Keene**

**Assistant Director of Veterans Affairs**

dkeene@lyco.org

- Fully accredited as a Veterans Service Officer by the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- Four years USMC

**To make an appointment, please contact**

**Natalie Miller at: 570-320-2101**

Office Hours

Monday through Friday 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM  
Monday–Thursday: Scheduled Appointments Only  
Friday: Walk-Ins 9:00 AM- 4:30 PM  
Closed weekends and major holidays.

**The Lycoming County VA**

**Office Will Be Closed:**

New Years Day– Wednesday, January 1, 2014  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day– Monday, January 20, 2014  
President’s Day– Monday, February 17, 2014

**Do you have announcements  
or information to share???**

The Lycoming County Office of Veterans Affairs invites you to submit articles and items of interest to be published in the next edition of *The Lycoming Vet*.

For questions or to make submissions, please contact Natalie Miller at the Veterans Affairs Office.