

Did You Know?

(By: Raymond P. Toczek Legion Service Officer)
312-980-4264 or Raymond.Toczek@va.gov

That when I was in High School in the late 60's if I needed to write a term paper I would have to take the bus downtown to the main Chicago Public Library to do my research. I would first look up articles in the Periodic Index, write down the reference numbers, give them to the librarian and wait for these large volumes of back issues of magazines to be located and brought to the reading room. Needless to say a simple term paper would take the better part of a day to complete.

Computers and the Internet have certainly made our lives easier, especially when you need to find information. As an accredited Service Officer we are no exception and use the Internet daily to assist in VA claims processing. Here are just some of the sites we use and they are free to the public!

GOOGLE

www.google.com

Haven't had contact with a Post member in several years and want to check out if they passed away. Enter the member's name, followed by obit and their last know state. 50% of the time you'll locate their obituary. Or want to see if your old Army unit is having a reunion. Type in your outfit and find out. Tons of other uses.

GOVERNMENT FORMS

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

Often times we get calls from clients asking for a particular form. We can certainly send it by "snail mail" and they will get it in 3-4 days or they can go to the above site, download the form and they are good to go. This site not only has all VA forms but also includes Department of Defense (DOD), Standard Forms (SF) and General Service Administration (GSA) forms. All are just a click away.

TELEPHONE BOOKS

www.whitepages.com

We use this one a lot. It has a database drawn from all the telephone directories published in the United States. You can search for a person using their name only, or add a state search or localize it to a particular town. Especially useful in trying to track down old military buddies to get affidavits for VA claims. This site also includes reverse look up. If the number is unlisted, you can pay a small fee and still get the number.

NATIONAL GRAVESITE LOCATOR
<https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/index.html>

Your family wants to visit the gravesite of your favorite uncle or aunt who served during the Korean Conflict. This site can often times help locate where they are buried and will include the veteran's branch of service, date of birth and date of death.

PERSONAL VA ACCOUNTS (updated)
(BENEFITS) www.ebenefits.va.gov

This site lets you set up your own account so you can file and track your claim or appeal anytime. Need a certificate of eligibility for a VA loan, change your direct deposit info, a civil service preference letter or proof of service? It now links you to your VA hospital account, among other changes.

PERSONAL VA ACCOUNTS
(HOSPITAL) <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home>

This site is used to check your upcoming hospital appointments, schedule one, contact your VA provider and review your medical tests.

CONTACT US AT THE CHICAGO VA&R OFFICE
VAVBACH1.AML@va.gov

When Post members have a VA benefit question and prefer to e-mail us rather than call. Our questions run the gamut from how to obtain a replacement military discharge to how to file a claim for service-connected disabled compensation or Non-Service Connected pension. We monitor this site daily and one can expect a return reply from one of our Service Officers within 1-2 days.

OUR NO COST POST ACCIDENTAL LIFE INSURANCE
<https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare>

With your membership comes a free \$1,000 accidental death insurance policy. It's \$5,000 if traveling on official American Legion business. Be sure yours is current. If your dues lapsed even for a few weeks it was inactivated and you have to activate it again.

VA WEBSITE (NEW AND REVISED)
<https://www.va.gov/>

At this site you can check out hospital, education, disability, records and many more. It has been recently revised and is very user friendly. The search part is especially useful, for instance, type in Thailand Agent Orange and you'll get a ton of info.

FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

Here you can see a brief summary of all Veterans Administration benefits, common acronyms and all Veterans Administration facilities (hospitals, clinics, Regional Offices, cemeteries and vet centers.) **The 2020 edition doesn't seem to be available yet, probably due to COVID.**

And yes, in case you're wondering, I checked each site to be sure they haven't moved. They are current as of this article. See you next month along with the vaccine?