

Did You Know?

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As defined by Webster, Serendipity is a propensity for making fortunate discoveries while looking for or doing something unrelated. One of the most interesting and pleasant occurrences in a Post, District or Division service officer's duties are those instances of "Serendipity" that we run into, both during and after our normal working hours. Here are just a few examples from the last year and they all **actually happened**.

1. While attending my eldest daughter's Block Party, I struck up a conversation with their mail carrier. Turns out she served in the Marine Corp and didn't have an inkling that she could file a claim for the residuals of a broken wrist. Since it happened while playing baseball after hours, she thought service-connected compensation wasn't applicable. Wrong! I filed and now she receives a small tax free VA check each month for life. As an added bonus, she was in the middle of obtaining a VA home loan. Disabled vets don't pay the funding fee and she saved \$2,500 at closing.
2. At my granddaughter's baseball game, a guy started up a conversation with me. He had noticed the Legion cap I was wearing. Turns out he just got laid off and lost his health coverage. Didn't realize that any vet who served in Vietnam was able to use the VA hospital system. He signed up and now is a regular patient. Only thing he pays is a small copayment for his medications. As an added bonus, he didn't realize Chicago veterans get one free vehicle sticker (as long as "veteran" is on their driver's license). He got his at the next renewal.
3. Our Post put a wreath on one of our deceased WWII vets last Memorial Day. A lady came up afterwards and talked. One thing led to another, she never knew that she could obtain a Bronze Medallion for her dad's private headstone. He had served in the Navy. Helped her get that. As an added bonus, she had a neighbor who didn't know what to do with the ashes of her late husband, who was also a vet. Explained that neighbor could have them interred at Abe Lincoln National Cemetery, without charge.
4. A friend of a friend referred a vet to me. She uses the VA and takes a lot of medication. The copays were killing her! Turns out, a few months ago, she was rated 50% service-connected disabled. For some reason the VA hospital never got notified. We had that corrected. Vets who are rated 50% or more are not required to make copayments for their prescriptions. As an added bonus, since that recent VA decision was effective back to June 1, 2019, she got a refund of what she had paid since then.
5. Finally, while at my dentist for my periodic cleaning, got into a conversation with a man in the waiting area. He had also noticed my Legion cap. Took a while to converse since we were both wearing masks, but found out that he was making out his final burial arrangements, never knew that his wife could also be buried with him at Abe Lincoln National Cemetery. As an added bonus, he found out he could get a burial flag, honor guard and a small burial stipend (he was 20% service-connected disabled).

Many people ask me why, after working 33 years for the VA and retired, I went back to work part-time for the Legion (14 years now). It's because I enjoy my job so much, and the above are a few examples of the Serendipity I run into periodically. As always, if you or any of your Post members have any questions, please contact me at the above telephone number or e-mail address.

Serendipity is looking in a haystack for a needle and discovering a farmer's daughter.