

Tax Benefit to Military Retirees and 4th of July

At the June American Legion meeting, I was asked about a recently passed legislative action on military retirees tax benefit. So, I contact my friend State Representative Ben Lien and he provided me with the following statement. This is good news for those who served and retired from the military. I understand it takes effect for tax year 2016.

"Repealing the state income tax on military pensions has been discussed by the Legislature for many years. It was included in the Supplemental Budget bill, which became law this year. The exemption will provide thousands of Minnesota veterans with tax cuts after they gave so much for this country. With a budget surplus, the time was right to take this action."

4th of July events are happening in our community and we'd like you to join us. First, the Vietnam Veterans of America are sponsoring a 5K/10K run at Bonanzaville in West Fargo. The race starts at 7:30 am. Check out their website for more information and registration - <http://vva941.org/VVARUN.html> Bonanzaville opens for its traditional 4th of July celebration at 10:00 am. The Bonanzaville celebration is an old-fashioned family celebration including a parade, train rides, barbecue picnic and many other events. There's always the historical town to tour. After hours at Bonanzaville, stop by the VFW club in Dilworth for bingo and have a brat prepared by the VFW Auxiliary. Finish the day at MSUM for the Moorhead Business Association sponsored 4th of July fireworks and entertainment. Gates will open at 8pm and Post Traumatic Funk Syndrome will start playing at 9pm, leading up to fireworks at 10:30pm.

Now for a bit of history. On 22 June 1944, President Roosevelt sign into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, later known as the GI Bill. Benefits included low-cost mortgages, low-interest loans to start a business, cash payments of tuition and living expenses to attend university, high school or vocational education, as well as one year of unemployment compensation. It was available to veterans who had been on active duty during the war years for at least one-hundred twenty days and had not been dishonorably discharged; combat was not required. American Legion past national commander and VVI Veteran Harry Colmery has been called the architect of the GI Bill. On 22 June 2016 there will be a dedication of Harry Colmery Memorial Park in Topeka, KS where he lived and served Veterans for most of his life. Personally, I used all 36 months of my GI Bill earning a Masters degree. I also served as the GI Bill coordinator at MSUM for 36 years. The highest number of Veterans enrolled at MSUM was 1973-74 with 587. Happy birthday to the GI Bill. And on 4th of July, happy birthday to the USA!