

Last week, I went to two events worth reporting; my VA hospital visit and College with the Congressman

In my continuing evaluation of the VA hospital in Fargo, here is an update. As you may remember from previous columns, I walked into the VA hospital last November with my DD2144 and asked 'what can you do for me?'. Within an hour, I had all of the application paperwork completed and received lots of information. The next week, I received an approval letter and received a phone call saying that I'd been approved and what did I want to do next. I asked for an initial medical appointment and it was scheduled for early January. The morning of my appointment, we had some bad weather and the appointment was rescheduled. Last week I had my initial appointments. First I talked with a social worker who wanted to determine if I was normal and not suicidal. It appears I'm reasonably normal! Next I met with a nurse who took information on my health, reviewed my chart information from Sanford, took some tests and entered information into their database. Following the nurse's session, I met with a doctor. She did the normal routine examinations, asked a lot of questions and made some recommendations. The doctor visit lasted nearly an hour, something I didn't expect. The wait times between the social worker and nurse and nurse and doctor were all very short. I was finished in two hours. All of the people I saw were very pleasant, professional and were all willing to answer any and all of my questions. It is up to me to decide if I want my medical care to stay with Sanford, move to the VA or to be co-managed. For the present I plan on being co-managed. We've all heard stories about problems with the VA and VA hospitals. In our region, we do not have a problem. From my initial contact to my medical appointments, I had the most wonderful caring people helping me. If you are a Veteran and need medical care, our local VA hospital is great.

Last Thursday, I attended College with the Congressman, an event at MSUM organized by a student team from the Mass Communications department. Following a welcome by President Anne Blackhurst, Representatives Collin Peterson (MN) and Kevin Cramer (ND) gave updates on issues related to service members and Veterans and then took questions from the audience. Most of the discussion was on education and educational benefits. Following the presentations, several organizations were on hand to meet with individuals and to provide support. Congratulations to the team of students for a well-planned event.

On Saturday, I did a genealogy presentation for the Celtic Festival held at the Hjemkomst Center. I had a few questions on how to obtain military records for family members. In our communities, we had great resources at the Clay and Cass county Veterans Service Office. They will help find family member service records. If you bring them your DD214, they will create a file on you and help file for any benefits you are entitled to receive. Although walk-in traffic is OK, calling ahead is a much better idea. Tell them Les sent you.