

Current News

During the pandemic, several of the VA's cemeteries were closed to the public and for Veterans' burials. The National Cemetery Administration created a website called "Roll of Honor, no Veteran Ever Dies: In this time of crisis, VA Remembers those who are being interred in our National Cemeteries." The Veterans who were interred at one of the National Cemeteries without full honors are listed on the website. As the cemeteries reopen, full honors are given to each Veteran. The Ft Snelling Cemetery was closed for some of the summer and has Veterans listed on the site. The new Fargo Cemetery did not close and had full honors given during burial. Check out www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/roll-of-honor.

Early in the pandemic, Minnesota established a Disaster Relief and Special Needs Grants program for Minnesota Veterans. The project started on 6 April and has received over 4,700 applications. Eligible applicants must be 1 a Veteran or spouse of a deceased Veteran, 2 a Minnesota resident and 3 have been negatively financially impacted by COVID-19. Applicants are encouraged to work with local Veterans Service Officers with the application process.

Residents of the Minnesota Veterans Home, Minneapolis, including some WWII Veterans, were featured during the flag raising at the Minnesota Twins game on Sunday, 6 September. The Veterans were filmed earlier at the home to adhere to COVID-19 precautions. The video was shown during the National Anthem before the game.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and the VA is using this month to amplify the importance of checking in on our friends, family and community members. Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention and that sometimes is simply asking someone, "How are you, really?" and listening for their response can make all the difference in someone's life. Suicide has claimed more than 100 Minnesota Veteran lives per year during the past five years. Suicide is a national public health problem that disproportionately affects those who serve in our nation's armed forces. For Veterans, the suicide rate is 1.5 times higher and the female Veteran suicide rate is 2.2 times higher than the general population.

As I experienced in Arizona, the VA has tele-medicine options for Veterans who live far from a VA hospital. A Veteran can schedule a doctor's session via computer, smart phone or tablet. Earlier this summer, the VA expanded the remote option to virtual appeals hearings where a Veteran can schedule their hearing with a Law Judge remotely, using a computer, tablet or smart phone. The VA has also scheduled many on-line workshops on several topics during the month of September, including suicide prevention, VA services directed toward our female Veterans and how to start a business. Check out this site for a listing of all workshops – va.gov/outreach-and-events/events.