

# BURLESON COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE NEWS

Volume 1 / Issue 1

## DID YOU KNOW?

There will be a Veterans  
Benefit Fair in Waco on  
Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup>!

**Saturday, July 15, 2017 –  
WACO**

**10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Waco VA Hospital  
Stracke Auditorium,  
Building 6  
4800 Memorial Drive  
Waco, TX 76711**

## FROM THE JUDGE

Welcome to the first edition of the Burleson County Veterans News. The purpose of this newsletter is to better inform the veterans of Burleson County about veteran benefits. Veteran benefits come from two different levels of our governments. The federal level, the Veterans Administration, and the state level administered through the General Land Office.

Franklin Karasek is the Burleson County Veteran Service Officer. He is charged with keeping up with application processes and the ever-changing rules that are inherent to these agencies. This newsletter will be one of the tools we use to inform you of not only the benefits to which you are entitled for your service to the United States of America but also to offer individual customer service in obtaining and maintaining those benefits.

I also am a veteran, USN, 1974-77 and understand the complexity of the paperwork needed to apply and use of these benefits. We are here to serve you. I look forward to working with each of you and especially want to thank you for your service to our great nation and your continued service in our community.

Mike Sutherland  
Burleson County Judge

## FROM THE VETERAN SERVICE OFFICER

I would like to thank Burleson County Judge Mike Sutherland and the County Commissioners for promoting this newsletter to communicate veteran's issues to our county veterans. Burleson County has approximately 1300 veterans in the county, with about 300 who are members of our local organizations. As the Service Officer of the county, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4458, American Legion Post 451, and Disabled Veterans Chapter 86, I get to visit with a portion of our local veterans at the meetings, to inform them of their benefits earned as being members of the armed forces. Due to the Privacy Act, I cannot use an organization membership list for this mailing. With this newsletter, hopefully I can pass on some information to all our veterans and with your help, please inform family, friends, and neighbors who are veterans of this communication. I can add them to our list. My office phone number is (979)567-6360, if I do not answer, please leave a message



and I will return your call.

After being in this position for almost six years, I see approximately 50 vets and families a year. The biggest request is for "finding a copy of the veterans discharge papers". Once a veteran leaves the service he or she is informed to have their discharge papers recorded at their local county clerk's office, this is done for free for veterans. Some veterans discharge papers have been lost in fires, stolen, misplaced, etc. All veteran's benefits revolve around this form, such as health, school, applications, etc. Your spouse or family will need this form when doing military funeral services or applying for benefits. Be sure to keep them in a safe place. If you need assistance with getting yours, or need more information on benefits please give me a call or stop by my office at the Burleson County Courthouse, Thursday or Friday mornings, 9am to noon.

Franklin Karasek, Jr.  
Burleson County Veterans Service Officer

## **VETERAN CLUBS CORNER**

**VFW Post 4458-** VFW Post 4458 meetings are the second Thursday at 7pm.

**American Legion Post 451-**As out-going commander of American Legion Post 451, I would first like to thank the officers and members for the support that they have given to me in my terms as commander. Participation has been lacking but we have persevered. If you are reading this you likely to be eligible for membership in American Legion if you aren't already. Our veterans organizations protect the rights of every one of our military veterans on a local, state and national level. If you are a member please attend and participate. If you are not, please join and support them as they fight for the rights of all of those who have served or are now in military service. Every citizen has a responsibility to protect the liberty and freedom that we enjoy each and every day. Veterans even more so, we fought for OUR COUNTRY, OUR FLAG and our way of life. History has shown that complacency only serves to aid those who would seek to destroy us. We honor and salute those who have sacrificed their lives in conflicts of the past and those who continue to serve around the world in our military. American Legion Post 451 meets quarterly on the first Monday, at the VFW, 7pm, watch the local paper for more information.

Donny Wood, Commander  
American Legion Post 451

**American Legion Post 455 in Somerville-** American Legion Post Somerville meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm.

**DAV-** Greeting from the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 86 Caldwell, Texas. As the newly elected Commander I would like to invite current members who may or may not attend our meetings and those disabled veterans who are not members to attend a meeting and see exactly what we do and share some time with fellow veterans. At the Caldwell Chapter we service a wide area including Caldwell, Snook, Cameron, Milano, Rockdale, Dimebox, Giddings, Lexington and more. We are here to help fellow disabled veterans and their families receive the services and benefits they are entitled to. We have a highly qualified Chapter Service Office who can assist disabled veterans in filing forms with the Veterans Administration for benefits. Currently we see an increasing need to help those new veterans who had service in Iraq and Afghanistan. If you are a veteran of these conflicts let me extend a special invitation to come to one of our meetings and see how we can help you or your family. If you have any questions or would like to know about meeting times and location, you can contact myself, William Moore at 979-272-3176 or Robert (Red) Altman at 352-400-2036.

Disabled Veterans Chapter 86 meetings are the third Thursday at 7pm at the First Baptist Family Center.

## State of Texas Benefits- Benefits & Services for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors

**Property Tax Exemption-** Disabled Veterans, their surviving spouses and the spouses and minor children of a person who dies on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for property tax exemptions on the appraised value of their property. The VA rating in effect on January 1 of each year determines the exemption for that entire year. Veterans who are rated 100% due to service connected disability or in receipt of 100% compensation due to a grant of individual unemployability are entitled to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of the Veteran's residence homestead. Adjustments to an exemption for ad valorem taxation of the residence homesteads of certain totally disabled Veterans and to the amount from ad valorem taxation to which a disabled veteran is entitled are based on the disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or a branch of the Armed Forces. Eligible Veterans must have a minimum 10% serviceconnected disability rating. Veterans with a rating of 0% are not entitled to a property tax exemption.

<i>Disability Rating</i>		<i>Tax Exemption</i>
<i>At least</i>	<i>but less than</i>	
10%	30%	First \$5,000 of appraised value
30%	50%	First \$7,500 of appraised value
50%	70%	First \$10,000 of appraised value
70%	100%	First \$12,000 of appraised value
100%		100% of appraised value

A Veteran who has a disability rating between 10% and 90% and who is 65 years or older is entitled to a tax exemption for the first \$12,000 of the property's appraised value. The surviving spouse of a person who dies on active duty is entitled to exemption of the first \$5,000 of the appraised value of the spouse's property. A surviving child of a person who dies on active duty is exempt on the first \$5,000 of appraised value of the property, as long as the child is unmarried and under 21 years of age. The surviving spouse of a deceased veteran, who at the time of death had a compensable disability and was entitled to an exemption, is also entitled to that exemption if the surviving spouse is unmarried but currently NOT at 100% of the appraised value.

In May 2011, the Legislature unanimously passed measures that, if approved by Texas voters on November 8, 2011, will extend the 100% property tax exemption to totally disabled or unemployable Veterans to their surviving spouses. If approved by voters, the legislation would entitle the surviving spouse to the 100% property tax exemption if:

- The property was the surviving spouse's homestead when the Veteran died;
- The property remains the surviving spouse's homestead, and
- The surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the disabled Veteran.

The spouse is not obligated to remain in the original home so long as the new home is designated a homestead and the spouse does not remarry. If passed by the Texas voters, the new exemption would take effect on January 1, 2012.

In these cases the Tax Exemption caps at the 70% to 100% of the first \$12,000 of appraised value. Applications for the exemption must be completed between January 1 and April 30. To apply, obtain an application from the local appraisal district office for your county.

*~Texas Veterans Commission*