

# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER



7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Camp Dodge – Building 3465, Johnston, IA 50131  
515-252-4698 800-838-4692 <https://va.iowa.gov>

## Fall 2015

### Greetings to the Iowa veterans community,

I want to start with a “military” hail and farewell in the Department staff. As many of you are aware, the 2015 Iowa Legislature appropriated and Governor Terry Branstad signed the budget bill that added two additional employees to the Iowa Veterans Cemetery staff. These positions have recently been filled and the new employees are well-suited to perform their new duties to fulfill the Cemetery’s mission.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Thomas White (Ret) served in the US Army and the Iowa Army National Guard. He is trained as a mechanic and was the full-time supervisor of an organizational maintenance shop. Tom is filling a Maintenance Worker II position and will be part of the Cemetery’s outdoors staff.

Master Sergeant Carolyn Rogers (Ret) is a 20-year veteran of the Iowa Army National Guard. She served in the public affairs unit as a print media specialist for 15 years. She served another five years as the senior enlisted chaplain’s assistant in the state headquarters. She performed a broad range of administrative tasks and working with families while working at a Des Moines funeral home. And, she has considerable experience in print and broadcast media advertising sales.

We welcome both of them to our Department staff. I am looking forward to working with both as we strive to serve our veterans and families. While we welcome Tom and Carolyn, we are bidding farewell to a long-time Department employee.

Jill Joseph has been the Department Outreach Coordinator for the past eight years. She recently announced her retirement. I have enjoyed working with Jill very much. She has been extremely resourceful and helpful to me personally as I came into my role as the Department’s executive director. She prepared the newsletters, supported our needs for materials for the many outreach events we are involved in; she has helped coordinate many community veteran’s events. She assumed responsibility for the event’s calendar and has done a fabulous job of keeping our veterans community aware of the events occurring in our state. Most recently, she coordinated the total revision of the Department website with outstanding results.

Needless to say, Jill has been a wonderful friend and employee in the Department and will be sorely missed by us in the office and to the Iowa veteran’s community. She understood her role and worked very hard to help us complete our mission of serving veterans and families. We wish her the very best in her retirement.

Very soon we will celebrate the day that our Nation has set aside to honor our veterans. We will officially celebrate Veterans Day on Wednesday, 11 November. On one hand though, I would say that every day is Veterans Day. The millions of men and women who have served, fought, and many who have died in order for you and me to enjoy the many rights and freedoms simply can’t be thanked enough. I’m a firm believer that had they not done what they did and continue to do, this country would be very different and might not be known as the United States of America.

*Continued on page 2*

## Iowa Veterans Cemetery

On July 18, 2015, the Department of Iowa Marine Corps League was honored to add their monument to the walkway of honor at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery.

Jerry Moorehead, member of the Iowa Marine Monument Committee reported that, "The Marine Corps brotherhood and sisterhood is a strong and permanent bond, and we are very proud to unveil a permanent symbol of that bond."



The United States Marine Corps monument is the newest addition to the Walkway of Honor at Iowa Veterans Cemetery



The Knights of Columbus recently donated 150 flags for the Avenue of Flags at IVC. Thanks for ALL of your volunteer work and donations!

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery reports that through October 21, 2015, there are:

Applications on file (still living): 7,915    Interments: 2,697

Veterans interred: 2,164    Dependents interred: 533

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Iowa Veterans Cemetery Facts:

Caskets: 798    Cremations: 1,831    In Memory of markers: 68

*Continued from page 1*

There will be many community events and celebrations on this Veterans Day. We will conduct the annual ceremony at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery at 8:00 a.m. and move to the Veterans Memorial in Des Moines for the annual 11:00 a.m. ceremony there.

I hope you will attend a ceremony in your community to show your appreciation for our veterans. If you are a veteran, I extend my personal appreciation and thanks to you for what you did to preserve and maintain the land we call our home. I also ask you to keep all of our active duty and deployed service men and women in your thoughts and prayers on Veterans Day and every day of the year.

I wish you well and thank you for all you do to pay tribute to our veterans and those serving our Nation and State.

Sincerely,  
Colonel Robert C. King (Ret)  
Executive Director

## Spirit of '45 – August 16, 2015

### Iowa Veterans Cemetery



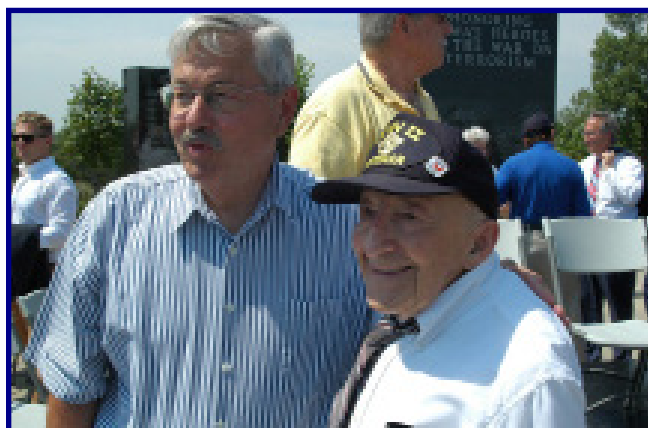
The Spirit of '45 ceremony at Iowa Veterans Cemetery was part of an international event to honor and recognize our World War II veterans and to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the "Greatest



Generation's Greatest Day: August 14, 1945 - the day World War II ended. The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs was honored to be part of the commemoration.



Spirit of '45 – 2015 Con't.



## Iowa Veterans Cemetery, Con't.

### Reflections on August 16, 2015, Iowa Veterans Cemetery - Van Meter, IA 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWII Surrender Document Signing

*I was very honored to be a small part of today's proceedings at the Veteran's Cemetery at Van Meter, IA on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the document of unconditional surrender by Japan that ended World War II.*

*Just another hot summer day in Iowa one might think - the Iowa State Fair was in the throes of the initial week-end, and it was a good day to be doing something else — barbecuing, enjoying a leisurely drive with the family, enjoying the Iowa State Fair.*

*Approximately 15 Knights of Columbus, members of Fourth Degree Assembly 3031 in West Des Moines, IA decided to place their normal weekend plans on hold to honor fellow Iowans, who 70 years ago gave up many of their weekends to ensure that our country would remain free of the Axis forces of World War II.*

*Today, we joined approximately 600 people to doff our collective hats to the precious few who remain 70 years after the end of World War II. It was a minor moment in my life, but one that I was honored to be a minuscule part in.*

*These aging veterans who were strong and bright eyed 70 years ago — did what was asked of them by their country so long ago. They left families, farms, and communities with little thought of their own safety. And today — their numbers thinned by the passage of time — they returned to pay homage to their buddies who had passed before them.*

*To those of my Brother Knights who participated or assisted today in some small fashion, I know you are filled with the awe that I feel for these priceless treasures! We can never do enough for our WWII Veterans! Thank you for stepping up!*

*God Bless America and those who have served!*

*Bob Ukena*

*On behalf of the United States Postal Service Hawkeye District, we would like to thank you for allowing us to participate in the ceremonial events held on Sunday August 16th benefiting the "Spirit of 45". What a heartwarming experience to hear and witness the generations that gathered to thank the veterans of the past and present.*

Again, we thank you.  
Dawn Cook  
Manager Consumer & Industry Contact  
Hawkeye District



Read more about U.S. vets with spirit of '45 honored Sunday at Iowa Veterans Cemetery in *The Perry News*:

<http://theperrynews.com/u-s-vets-with-spirit-of-45-honored-sunday-at-iowa-veterans-cemetery>

## USS Bullhead (SS-332)

### One of the Last U.S. Vessels Lost During World War II An Iowan was Aboard

A memorial service was conducted at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery recently to bring closure for the family of Radio Technician 3 Richard Keister of Clinton, Iowa.

The USS Bullhead was a diesel-electric Balao-class attack submarine. Its keel was laid on 21 October 1943. It was launched on 16 July 1944, commissioned on 4 December 1944, and began combat operations on 21 March 1945.

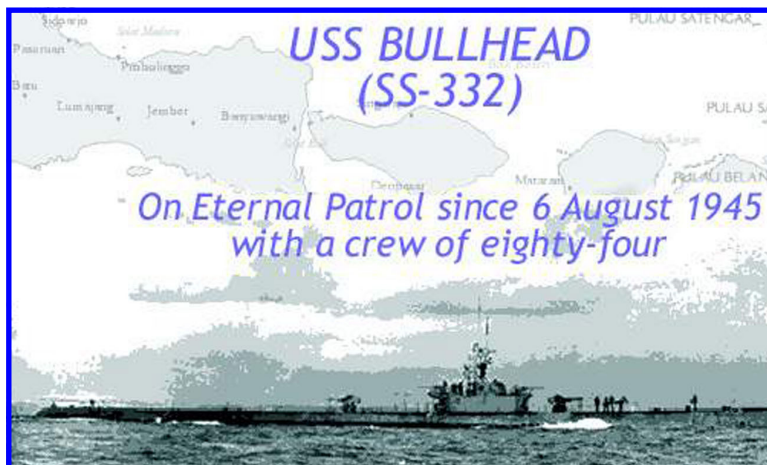
It conducted only three patrols that proved costly to the Japanese and, ultimately, to itself. The USS Bullhead rescued three downed B-29 crew members and bombarded a Japanese radio installation on its first combat patrol. On its second combat patrol it sank two freighters, a schooner, a sub-chaser, and significantly damaged two other sub-chasers and a freighter.

On 31 July 1945 Bullhead left Fremantle to commence her third war patrol. Her orders were to patrol in a "wolf-pack" with Capitaine (SS-336) and Puffer (SS-268) in the Java Sea until 5 September and then head for Subic Bay in the Philippines.

Bullhead reported on 6 August that she had passed through Lombok Strait. That was the last word received from Bullhead. On 12 August, Capitaine, planning to arrive on 13 August, ordered Bullhead to take position the following day in a scouting line with Capitaine and Puffer. Receiving no reply, Capitaine reported on 15 August, "Have been unable to contact Bullhead by any means since arriving in area."

Since the British submarines HMS Taciturn and Thorough, were in the same general area as Bullhead, and Cod (SS-224) and Chub (SS-329) passed through in transit at various times, it is difficult to determine precisely which of the many Japanese anti-submarine attacks was the one that sank Bullhead. However, one occurred on 6 August 1945, when an Imperial Japanese Army Air Force 73Fcs's Mitsubishi Ki-51 attacked with depth charges. It claimed two direct hits, and for ten minutes thereafter, there was a great amount of gushing oil and air bubbles rising in the water. Since the position given is very near the Bali coast, it is presumed that the proximity of mountain peaks shortened Bullhead's radar range and prevented her receiving a warning of the plane's approach. 84 submariners, including Iowa's RT3 Richard Keister were lost while serving on USS Bullhead during her service. The boat and its crew are in their final resting place at the bottom of the Lombok Strait near Java south of Indonesia.

A memorial service was held in the committal shelter at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery with family members attending. Terry Wilkinson, Assistant Chaplain, US



Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center - Des Moines, officiated the service. Full military honors were provided by the Honors Team, Headquarters, Iowa Army National Guard. A headstone will be erected in his honor in the Cemetery's Memorial Garden.



## Iowa State Fair — Veterans Day 2015



**Iowa State Fair — Veterans Day 2015 Con't.**





## Iowa Veteran News

### New Law Provides \$2.5 Million Annually in Lottery Proceeds to Iowa Veterans Trust fund

On July 1, 2015 a change in state law took effect designed to stabilize the amount in lottery proceeds dedicated annually to the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund. The Iowa Lottery requested the change, which was approved this session by the Iowa Legislature before being signed into law March 31 by Gov. Terry Branstad.

“We’re honored to have the opportunity to support those who have given so much for our country,” Iowa Lottery CEO Terry Rich said. “This change will help us continue to provide a stable, ongoing source of revenues to help Iowa veterans and their families through the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund.”

The Iowa Lottery has raised proceeds for the IVTF since 2008, and through May of this year, it had provided a total of nearly \$17.4 million to this worthy cause.

However, lottery proceeds to the IVTF have been on the decline in the past couple years. In FY 2014, for the first time since it began raising money for the cause, the lottery did not reach its publicly stated goal of providing between \$2 million and \$3 million for the IVTF. The annual total raised by the lottery for the Trust Fund in FY 2014 was \$1.8 million. The lottery believes there is one main reason for the recent decline.

While overall lottery sales and proceeds in recent years have been strong and repeatedly exceeded budget projections, the lottery has seen a long-term decline in the sale of its pull-tab games, which have the oldest play style among the lottery’s products. Pull-tabs have been closely tied to the lottery’s efforts to benefit the Veterans Trust Fund, as 50 percent of the games dedicated to the Trust Fund each year have been pull-tabs. A continued sales decline of pull-tab games would negatively impact the lottery’s ability to support the IVTF.

To stabilize proceeds to the Veterans Trust Fund and provide the lottery with the business flexibility it needs to maximize its overall proceeds to state causes, the lottery introduced legislation this year that would eliminate reference to a certain number of lottery games per year dedicated to the Trust Fund and instead allocate \$2.5 million in lottery proceeds annually to the IVTF. That amount is the midway point of the lottery’s publicly stated goal for this ongoing initiative and also is the yearly average of the total it has raised so far.

Under current law, the majority of lottery proceeds are dedicated each year to the state General Fund, where they help pay for all of the programs that receive money from the General Fund; while a smaller portion of lottery proceeds are dedicated to the Veterans Trust Fund. That will continue to be the case with the change in law on Wednesday; it’s just that the method by which the lottery raises money for the Veterans Trust Fund will change to \$2.5 million in lottery proceeds being dedicated to the IVTF each year.

Moving ahead, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of all lottery games will be dedicated to the Veterans Trust Fund.

The games that the lottery introduced in January that feature the IVTF logo and provide 100 percent of their proceeds to the Trust Fund are the last in that series that the lottery will release.

The lottery plans to continue to spread the word about the Veterans Trust Fund and the help it can provide to Iowa veterans and their families by including that information in the proceeds advertising it conducts each year and through public events highlighting the total it has raised for the IVTF. The lottery also will continue to occasionally offer patriotic-themed games. It offered those even before it began providing proceeds to the IVTF and those games have been very popular through the years.

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## Iowa Veteran News Con't.

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*Continued from page 9*

“This change allows us to continue to make veterans a priority every day,” Rich said. “We see this as a great way to use the proceeds from lottery tickets.”

The Iowa Veterans Trust Fund was created to assist qualified veterans in paying for expenses such as:

- unemployment or underemployment assistance due to service-related causes
- assistance with vision, hearing, or dental care
- durable medical equipment and prescription drugs
- counseling and substance abuse services
- emergency housing repair and transitional housing in an emergency.

Since the lottery's start in 1985, its players have won more than \$3.4 billion in prizes while the lottery has raised more than \$1.6 billion for the state programs that benefit all Iowans.

Today, lottery proceeds in Iowa have three main purposes: They provide support for veterans and their families through the Veterans Trust Fund; help for a variety of significant projects through the state General Fund; and backing for the Vision Iowa program, which was implemented to create tourism destinations and community attractions in the state and build and repair schools. To learn more about the Veterans Trust Fund, visit <https://va.iowa.gov>.

### The Role of the Education in Rural Veterans' Health and Well-Being

The latest issue of *The Rural Connection* highlights some of the many efforts underway to increase access to education for rural communities – and ultimately the veterans who reside there. This issue is the last in a four-part series on the impact that the social determinants of health have on veterans in rural communities. In case you missed it, last quarter's issue featured the impact of care and services on health and well-being.

In this issue ([www.ruralhealth.va.gov/news](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/news)):

- Veterans Choice Program Legislation Expands Health Care Access for Veterans
- New Pilot Readies Communities to Serve Nebraska Rural Veterans
- Summer of Service Rallies Volunteers for Veterans across the Nation
- Providing Care on Campus for Illinois Student Veterans
- ORH Project Evaluates Impact of Agriculture on Rural Veterans
- Simulation in Health Care Training: the Future of Healing
- There's a Click for That: Long Distance Learning for Rural Community Providers
- Geriatric Scholars Program Uses Education to Integrate Geriatrics into Primary Care
- Educational Tools for Rural Professionals Who Serve Veterans and Caregivers
- Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Support Program Serves Veterans and Caregivers
- Texas Vet Center Van Provides Veterans the Information they Deserve

As you will read throughout these articles, the Office of Rural Health and its partners are committed to ensuring rural Veterans and their health care professionals are able to easily access the education needed to best serve the health care needs of rural Veterans. Their ultimate goal remains the improvement of the health and well-being of rural Veterans by increasing access to care and services. As the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) lead proponent for rural health, the Office of Rural Health (ORH) works to see that America's Veterans thrive in rural communities. To accomplish this, ORH collaborates to increase rural Veterans' access to care and services. Through its 614 projects in fiscal year 2014, ORH served nearly 650,000 Veterans and helped address medical provider shortages and critical training needs. Learn more at [www.ruralhealth.va.gov](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov).

## Iowa Veteran News Con't.

### Home Depot Foundation Celebration of Service - Helping Veterans in Iowa

Larry Contri has lived in his house on SW 10<sup>th</sup> Place in Des Moines since the 1950s; recently, however, he's been unable to complete several projects needed to keep his older home safe and accessible as he recovers from open heart surgery.

That's when Home Depot and the Bondurant American Legion Post 396 offered to re-model his home for free. Knowing Contri was an Korean War Army veteran, more than 30 area Home Depot volunteers, along with the Bondurant American Legion Post 396 arrived at his house and created a safe and accessible patio, replaced a retaining wall, repaired a storage shed, installed a new kitchen floor and countertops, painted walls, and added a built-in desk for Contri. They also did exterior landscaping.

It's part of the store's fifth annual Celebration of Service campaign, a nationwide effort led by Team Depot - the Home Depot's associate-led volunteer force. Between now and Veterans Day, Team Depot volunteers will complete projects for veterans in communities across the nation, with a focus on senior veterans who need modifications to their home.

Legends American Grill catered lunch for the volunteers, as well, and retired Col. Bob King, Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, came by to make several remarks. (See photos on page 12.)

[Source: *WHO TV and Des Moines Register*



### Thousands of Home Depot Volunteers Mobilize for Nationwide Effort to Improve Safety and Accessibility for Veterans in Need

On September 10, 2015 The Home Depot® activated its army of associate volunteers to launch the company's fifth-annual Celebration of Service, a two-month-long campaign focused on improving the homes and lives of U.S. military veterans and their families. From September 10 through Veterans Day on November 11, 2015 Team Depot will partner with hundreds of nonprofits across the country to restore independence for veterans in every state.

More than 8.4 million veterans will be 65 or older by 2020 and more than four million veterans are living with service-related disabilities. That's why since 2011, The Home Depot Foundation has invested more than \$105 million in veteran-related efforts and, together with Team Depot, has transformed more than 22,000 veteran homes.

Team Depot, the company's associate-led volunteer force, will focus on projects related to two themes: senior veterans, who need modifications to their homes to safely age in place, and veterans with service-connected disabilities. The projects completed throughout the two-month period will address safety and accessibility needs for veterans. Over 1,000 Team Depot volunteers will be deployed in more than 30 cities across the U.S.

Since the first Home Depot store opened in 1979, giving back has been a core value for the company and a passion for its associates. Today, The Home Depot, in partnership with The Home Depot Foundation, focuses its philanthropic efforts on improving the homes and lives of U.S. military veterans and their families and aiding communities affected by natural disasters. Through Team Depot, the company's associate-led volunteer force, thousands of associates dedicate their time and talents to these efforts in the communities where they live and work.

Since 2011, The Home Depot Foundation has invested more than \$105 million to provide safe housing to veterans, and along with the help of Team Depot volunteers, has transformed more than 22,000 homes for veterans. To learn more and see Team Depot in action, visit [www.homedepot.com/teamdepot](http://www.homedepot.com/teamdepot).



## Iowa Veteran News Con't.

### Home Depot Foundation Celebration of Service



— from remarks on 24 September 2015, Robert King, Executive Director Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

*"I really want to applaud the Home Depot Foundation for bringing your Celebration of Service Project to Des Moines and, particularly, to right here at SW 10th Place...we are glad that Iowa is on the tour this year.*

*This is an outstanding example of what we can do collectively when we put our mind to reaching out and helping others. 2014 was an outstanding year for the Home Depot Foundation and the Celebration of Services' assistance to veterans across the country. Last year the Foundation assisted over 2,600 veterans across the country with their volunteer projects to help our nation's veterans. I want to reach out and applaud Home Depot for their attitude and support of our military and veterans.*

*On behalf of Governor Branstad, Lieutenant Governor Reynolds, and the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, thank you to the Home Depot Foundation Celebration of Services and Bondurant American Legion Post 396 for the great things you are doing here today for one of our finest - one of our veterans."*

## Federal News and Updates



### VA Announces Lease for Knoxville CBOC

VA is pleased to announce that on September 30, 2015, it awarded a lease contract for the 12,835 net usable square foot (nurf) Knoxville CBOC to JTW Development, for a lease term of 15 years. The CBOC will be located in a new building located on the site of Fairlane Bowl at 1607 N. Lincoln Street, Knoxville, Iowa 50138.

The CBOC, with 105 parking spaces, will allow VA to provide timely access to Primary Care, Audiology, Podiatry, Optometry, and Mental Health services to Veterans in Knoxville and the surrounding areas. It is anticipated that the CBOC's construction will be completed in the Spring of 2017, with doors opening to Veterans after the Summer of 2017.

The current CBOC is located at 1515 West Pleasant Street (Building 1) and offers a variety of services to local Veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Asset and Enterprise Management located in Washington, DC continues to have a lease agreement of the historical Knoxville campus with Knoxville Veterans Alliance (KVA) while they consider options to develop the land under the enhanced use lease process.

For more information, contact VA Central Iowa Health Care System Public Affairs Officer, Kristi Catrenich at [Kristi.Catrenich@va.gov](mailto:Kristi.Catrenich@va.gov).

### VA Announces \$4 Million in Funding to Help the Homeless

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced the award of \$4 million in renewal funding offered through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program to 21 community agencies that currently provide enhanced services for homeless Veterans with special needs.

"These important grant renewals will allow community agencies to continue to provide critical transitional housing services where they are needed," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "As a key component of the VA's plan to significantly reduce homelessness among Veterans, the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Special Need grants will provide funding to community agencies that provide services to homeless Veterans.

The program promotes the development and provision of supportive housing and services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and income, and obtain greater self-determination. Specifically, GPD Special Need grant funding will assist with additional operational costs that would not otherwise be incurred but for the fact that the recipient is providing transitional housing and services for the GPD "Special Need" populations, including women, chronically mentally ill, frail elderly, terminally ill, and individuals who have the care of minor dependents.

As a result of these and other efforts, Veteran homelessness is down significantly since the launch of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010. The state of Connecticut and cities of New Orleans, Houston, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City have all recently announced the achievement of significant milestones related to ending Veteran homelessness.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). Community organizations seeking details and/or more information should visit [www.va.gov/homeless/GPD.ASP](http://www.va.gov/homeless/GPD.ASP).

Camp Dodge Staff

**Robert King**  
Executive Director  
[Robert.King@iowa.gov](mailto:Robert.King@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3444

**Bob Steben**  
Executive Officer  
[Robert.Steben@iowa.gov](mailto:Robert.Steben@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3438

**John Halstead**  
Benefits Specialist  
[John.Halstead@iowa.gov](mailto:John.Halstead@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3439

**David Heim**  
Benefits Specialist  
[David.Heim@va.gov](mailto:David.Heim@va.gov)  
515-362-7350

**Jill Joseph**  
Outreach Coordinator  
[Jill.Joseph@iowa.gov](mailto:Jill.Joseph@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3442

**Missy Miller**  
Trust Fund Administrator  
[Missy.Miller@iowa.gov](mailto:Missy.Miller@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3443

**Mari Mielke**  
Secretary II  
[Mari.Mielke@iowa.gov](mailto:Mari.Mielke@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3440

**Bob Betz**  
Clerk Specialist  
[Robert.Betz@iowa.gov](mailto:Robert.Betz@iowa.gov)  
515-727-3441

Cemetery Staff

**Keith Blum**  
Cemetery Superintendent  
[Keith.Blum@iowa.gov](mailto:Keith.Blum@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Mindy McGregor**  
Cemetery Representative  
[Melinda.McGregor@iowa.gov](mailto:Melinda.McGregor@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Shane Laycock**  
Cemetery Foreman  
[Shane.Laycock@iowa.gov](mailto:Shane.Laycock@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Jeanna Hampel**  
Cemetery Representative  
[Jeanna.Hampel@iowa.gov](mailto:Jeanna.Hampel@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Carolyn Rogers**  
Cemetery Representative  
[Carolyn.Rogers@iowa.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Rogers@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Tom White**  
Cemetery Maintenance Worker II  
[Tom.White@iowa.gov](mailto:Tom.White@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Chad Cohoon**  
Cemetery Maintenance Worker II  
[Chad.Cohoon@iowa.gov](mailto:Chad.Cohoon@iowa.gov)  
515-996-9048

**Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs**  
7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Camp Dodge - Building 3465  
Johnston, IA 50131  
<https://va.iowa.gov>  
515-252-4698 Local Phone  
800-838-4692 Toll Free  
515-727-3713 Fax