

VETERANS COMPASS

★ NEWSLETTER ★

OCTOBER 2026

UNDERSTANDING VA HEALTHCARE

UNDERSTANDING VA HEALTH CARE

VA healthcare is the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' health care system for eligible military veterans. Eligibility can depend on factors such as military service history, discharge status, service-connected disabilities, income, and other circumstances. Eligible veterans may receive care through VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, and, in certain situations, community-based providers.

It is important to understand that **VA healthcare is primarily a healthcare delivery system and benefits program, rather than traditional medical insurance.** Unlike private health insurance, which generally helps pay for covered medical services from a network of doctors and hospitals, VA health care provides eligible veterans with access to care through the VA system and VA-authorized community providers.

This distinction can be especially important when veterans seek medical care outside the VA system. Community care may be available when certain requirements are met, but routine community care generally requires approval from the VA health care team beforehand.

References: VA.gov
Veterans Information Service, East Moline, IL 61244

APPOINTMENTS ENCOURAGED

Manitowoc County Veterans Service Office

EMAIL: VeteranServices@manitowoccountywi.gov

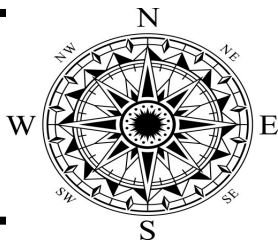
FACEBOOK: [Manitowoc County Veterans Service Office](#) | [Manitowoc](#)

[WI](#) | [Facebook](#)

Hours: MONDAY 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

TUESDAY – FRIDAY 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Office: 920-683-4055



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REMINDERS FOR VETERANS

TRICARE Open Enrollment

TRICARE Open Season begins November 9, 2026, and runs through December 8, 2026.

If you are enrolled in TRICARE, this is an opportunity to review your current health care coverage and make any eligible changes for the upcoming year.

Has It Been Years or Even Decades Since You Filed a VA Claim?

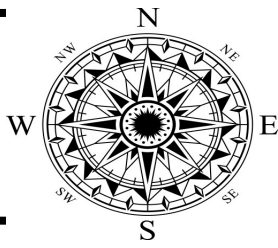
Has a service-connected condition **worsened or intensified** since you last filed a claim? If so, you may want to schedule an appointment with your **County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)** to discuss your options.

- Relevant medical records or medical opinions
- Doctors' notes documenting changes in your condition
- Supporting statements describing changes in your symptoms and daily functioning
- A personal log or journal tracking your symptoms, limitations, and how your condition affects your daily activities

Do not assume that a long-term history of treatment will automatically result in an increased rating. Even if you have been seeing a doctor for the same condition continually over the years, it is important to provide evidence demonstrating how the condition has changed or become more severe.

If you have developed a **new condition** that you believe may be related to your military service or an existing service-connected condition, you may also want to schedule an appointment with your CVSO to discuss your situation and available options.

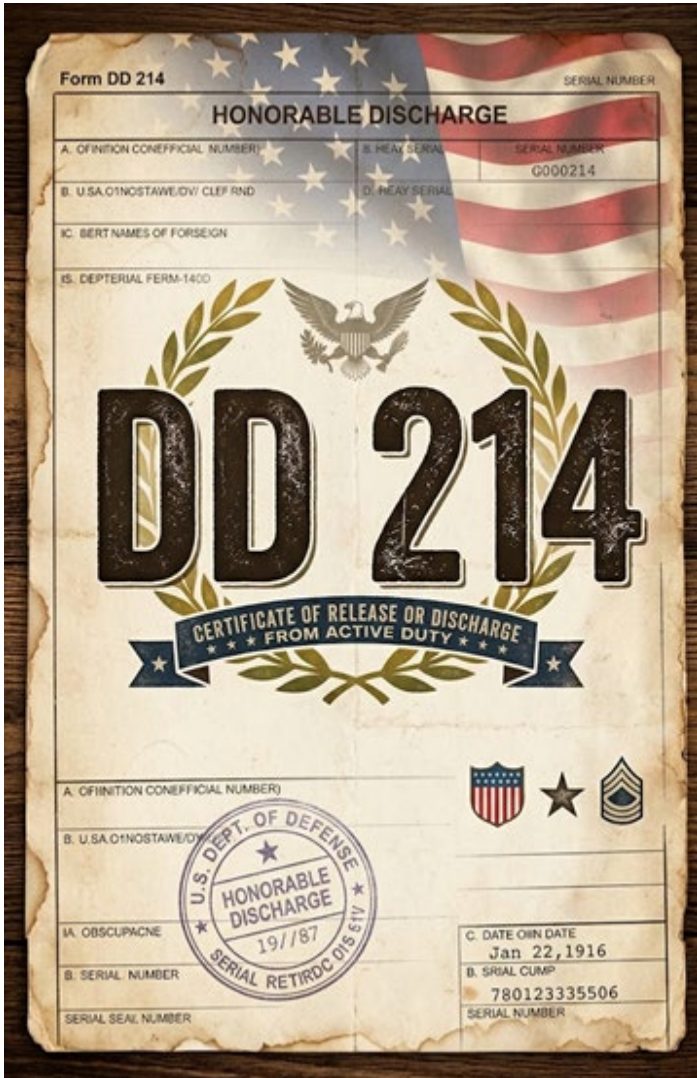
Reference: Veterans Information Service, East Moline, IL 61244



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The Benefits of Registering Your DD214

Registering your DD214 with the Clerk of Deeds can be an important step for several reasons, particularly for veterans. The DD214 is an official document that outlines your military service, including your discharge status, dates of service, and other important details. Here's why it's valuable to register it with the Clerk of Deeds:

1. Security and Preservation
2. Access for Future Use
3. Proof of Service
4. Veterans Benefits
5. No Fees for Veterans
6. Estate Planning

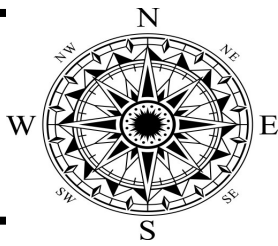
To get your DD214 registered your first stop should be at the Veterans Service Office in Manitowoc County. Once the Veterans Service Office approves, head down to the Clerk of Deeds and register your DD214.

Why a VSO Should Review Your DD214

Taking your **DD214** to a **Veterans Service Officer (VSO)** is an important step for a few key reasons. A VSO can provide valuable assistance in navigating the often-complex world of veterans' benefits and support services. Here's why it's beneficial to bring your DD214 to a VSO:

- A. Free and Expert Guidance
- B. Time-Saving
- C. Filing Claims for Benefits
- D. Navigating Complex VA Systems
- E. Disability Ratings and Appeals
- F. Maximizing Benefits
- G. Veterans' Advocacy and Community Resources

By taking your DD214 to a VSO, you're setting yourself up for a smoother, more successful journey through the VA benefits process, maximizing the support and services you've earned during your time in service.



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BEFORE WINTER ARRIVES, ASK YOURSELF: IF MY VEHICLE STOPPED RUNNING TODAY, WOULD I HAVE WHAT I NEED TO STAY SAFE?

When temperatures begin to fall, many people start pulling out their winter coats and boots. But there is one other thing that deserves attention before the cold weather arrives — your vehicle.

A breakdown in freezing temperatures can turn an ordinary drive into an uncomfortable and potentially dangerous experience. Taking a few minutes to prepare now may save you trouble when winter weather hits.

One of the easiest steps is to put together a winter emergency bag and keep it in your vehicle. Include a warm blanket, extra gloves and socks, a flashlight, a phone charger, snacks, water, and a first-aid kit. A small shovel, ice scraper, jumper cables, and sand for extra tire traction can also come in handy if you find yourself stuck or dealing with a dead battery.

It is also a good time to check your tires, battery, antifreeze, and windshield washer fluid. Make sure your lights work properly and keep your fuel tank at least half full whenever possible. If you do get stranded, contact roadside assistance and stay with your vehicle if it is safe. Never run the engine without checking that the exhaust pipe is clear of snow, as dangerous carbon monoxide can build up. Winter weather doesn't always give much warning. A little preparation before the first bitterly cold morning can help you travel with greater confidence and be better prepared for the unexpected.

Works Cited

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Winter Weather Driving Tips." *NHTSA*, <https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-tips>. Accessed 13 Oct. 2026.

Ready Wisconsin. "Vehicle Emergency Kit." *Wisconsin Emergency Management*, <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov/vehicle-emergency-kit/>. Accessed 13 Oct. 2026.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation. "Prepare Your Vehicle for Winter Driving." *Wisconsin Department of Transportation*, <https://www.wisconsin.gov/Pages/safety/education/winter-driv/vehicle.aspx>. Accessed 13 Oct. 2026.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2026

WDVA WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of VETERANS AFFAIRS



Save the Date

MANITOWOC COUNTY

VETERANS

BANQUET

Saturday | NOVEMBER 14, 2026

at

SEVEN LAKES GOLF

IN REEDSVILLE



SOCIAL STARTS
AT 5:00PM



PROGRAM STARTS
AT 6:00PM

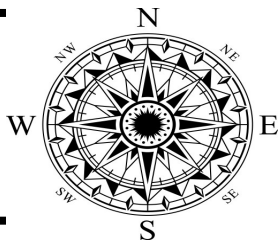


DINNER STARTS
AT 6:30PM



Honoring All Who Served





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SEPTEMBER 2026

HELPFUL INTERNET LINKS

Army Retirement Services <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Navy Retirement Services <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/SupportServices/Culture-Resilience/Retired-Activities/>

Coast Guard Retirement Services <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/ppc/ras/gp/#guides>

Air Forces Retirement Services <https://www.retirees.af.mil/>

Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) - (DFAS)
<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/disability/crsc>.

html Concurrent Retired Disability Pay (CRDP) - (DFAS)
<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/disability/crdp>.

html Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) www.benefeds.com

Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) www.dfas.mil

Express Scripts (Mail Order Pharmacy) www.express-scripts.com

RAPIDS Site Locator (DEERS Enrollment & ID Card Issuing Facilities)
idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/

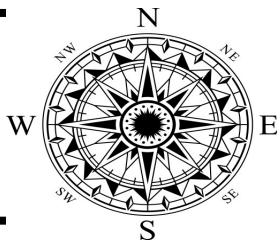
Social Security Administration (SSA) www.ssa.gov

Space Available Travel (Space-A) www.amc.af.mil/AMC-Travel-Site/

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) www.tsp.gov

TRICARE tricare.mil

Military Service and Social Security (Social Security Administration)
<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10017.pdf>



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**Military
Crisis Line**



1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to **838255**

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



Suicide & Crisis Hotline

Call 988 or Text 988



Línea de Prevención del Suicidio y Crisis

1-888-628-9454

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Call 800-799-SAFE (7233)

Trained expert advocates are available 24/7 to provide confidential support to anyone experiencing domestic violence or seeking resources and information. Help is available in Spanish and other languages.

Lifeline Options For Deaf + Hard of Hearing For TTY Users

Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.

National Sexual Assault Hotline

Call 800-656-HOPE (4673)

Connect with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area that offers access to a range of free services. Crisis chat support is available at Online Hotline. Free help, 24/7.



Appointments Highly Encouraged

Manitowoc County Veterans Services Office

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Facebook: Manitowoc County Veterans Services

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