



AMVETS Department of Ohio



VAVS / VETERANS WELFARE

VAVS PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program offers Post members an opportunity to provide direct service to our veterans by volunteering their time and talents to our hospitalized veteran, the Forgotten Veteran.

All posts shall conduct at least two (2) Veterans Service programs and one community service program per year and said year shall coincide with the fiscal year (July 1-June 30) for the Department of Ohio. Each post shall report directly to the District Commander the activities of the Post's Veterans and Community Service Programs. Failure to comply with the programs or reporting shall be considered cause for suspension, revocation, or placement of trusteeship of the post charter.

SOURCE: Ohio AMVETS Constitution
Article IX, Local Post
Section 5, Page 14
(Constitution & By-laws section of the Guide Book)

Our VAVS Program is very important to each of us on the Post, State, and National Levels, because today we are the ones able bodied, but someday as we each grow a little older, we may become the “Forgotten Veteran”. By starting today, we will task ourselves with the job of never letting each other and the world forget what veterans have done for America. It is time for us, as veterans, to do our part by working together and let the public know that we care and we will always remember our fellow veterans.

Each VA Medical Center and Outpatient Clinic has a person in charge of volunteers. The title of this individual is usually Chief of Voluntary Service. You can contact that office through our VAVS Representatives or Deputies to help you get ideas of what is needed at these facilities. You should find out who your VAVS Representative is in your county. The names and addresses are available in this Guide Book.

Nursing Homes in your own area are a good source for your post VAVS and Veterans Welfare Committee. You can see the Administrator/Director and ask if there are veterans housed in their faculty. You can also ask if they are able to have visitors. This gives you a chance to introduce yourself as a Representative of your post and AMVETS.

The following is a list of examples:

- Go in and talk to the veteran. You may want to take a small gift or care kit just set aside some time for a visit. Get to know a little about the veteran; his/her likes, dislikes and needs, etc.
- Many times a shut-in veteran just enjoys one on one conversation. Send cards on birthdays and holidays, or just “Thinking of You”. You may even write a letter to a child, grandchild or spouse, if the family is not nearby. You may decide to offer to read a story or book to the veteran.
- If your post has a budget to allow for special items, you should check with the Director to see if the veteran has any special needs. You may wish to hold a fundraiser at your post to obtain funds for these items. Many veterans in nursing homes not only wish for companionship, but they also need to know that they are not forgotten!
- Moving into a nursing home or convalescent center is not always easy. If you are working with a local home, you could ask the home to notify you when they have a veteran arrive, and in the first few days go to visit this veteran. You could make up a “Care Kit” (also available from Department Headquarters), which may include a toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo,

comb, paper, pens, envelopes, stamps, etc. This will give you the opportunity to get to know one another.

- Remember, not all veterans are men; there are many women veterans as well. Always be prepared if you are presenting gender items.
- You might purchase a packet of greeting cards and stamps so the veterans may stay in touch with their loved ones. You may even offer to address the envelope and put on the stamp, so all they have to do choose the card and mail it.
- If the veteran is in need, you may direct the veteran to the County Veteran Service Commission. Once again, you should keep the name, address, and phone number handy at all times. Numbers for the Veterans Service Commission are located in your phone book under the county in which you reside. There is an AMVETS VSC in every county where AMVETS Posts are located.
- On the post level, you may check your shut-in list. This veteran may need transportation to the doctor or someone to pick up a prescription. They may need transportation for other errands such as grocery shopping. Sometimes a spouse may need a ride to the hospital for a short visit with the confined veteran. Here again, companionship may be all that is needed. Ask for volunteers from your post. Check with nursing home administration to make sure their insurance will cover a veteran that you may take off the premises. This is important – you and your Post do not need to take on the additional liability.
- A post could set up a fund for stranded travelers whose car may have broken down or in need of gas or food and even shelter for an evening. You have to be careful here, always ask for identification and/or a membership card. There are many people that will scam you or take advantage of your generosity. If food is needed, try to provide meals in your post or at a local restaurant. Fill their gas tank if they need gas, but NEVER HAND THEM CASH, unless you know them well.
- On a larger scale, ask the Ohio Veterans Home or VA Medical Center for a “Wish List”. Make no promises until you have checked with your post about the money to acquire such items through a possible fund raiser. Be certain to check the cost of the item and the feasibility of raising the money. Also, be sure to communicate with the facility that the need is still there and has not already been taken care of. Make them aware of your plans.

- Right now, here in Ohio, the VA is opening Community Based Outpatient Clinics in many counties (list enclosed). You may wish to check there for a “Wish List”. This is a new program and I am sure their lists will be long. It could give you many options. As it stands now, many volunteers provide coffee service for the veterans. This may be the type of service that would interest you.
- If you place a large item in any facility, ask if you can put a small notice on the item: *“Donated by AMVETS Post _____”*. Many users can appreciate these items, especially if they are members of the AMVET family. Use an AMVET logo (decals are available through Department Headquarters).
- Within the VA Facilities, you may check to see if there is a need for a subscription for the Ohio AMVET and/or the National AMVET to be placed in the waiting area.
- A Post may wish to check with the VA and Ohio Veterans Home about craft projects for the residents. Puzzles are usually a good idea, especially for those with limited mobility and cross word puzzles help with keeping the mind alert. You can provide reading material, as well as refreshments. Again, contact your AMVETS Service Officers or the County Veterans Service Commission to get information on Veterans Benefits for veterans in private nursing homes.

Another part of the VAVS/Veterans Welfare Committee that is important is our active duty personnel. You could send them cards on special days, send them your post newsletter, have your post members write a short message to the active duty personnel. Encourage them to write to your post and share with you and your members what is taking place where they are. These return letters could be published in your post newsletter.

- Telephone cards can be purchased from the National Service Foundation and handed out at the Ohio Veterans Homes or VA Medical Centers. This will give the veteran a few minutes to get in touch with family or friends. This could brighten anyone’s day.

AMVETS, remember that some of these projects you choose to do for the VAVS and your community may be subject for help from your State and National Service Foundations. Check in your Guidebook for more information about which projects are available and for the applications and instructions for applying. Also keep in mind our “Thank-A-Vet” Program: fundraising efforts for the Thank-A-Vet Program would qualify for one of your Post Veterans Service Programs.

CHIEF VOLUNTARY SERVICES CONTACTS

BRECKSVILLE VA

Harold Glen, CTRS
VAMC (135)
10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, Ohio 44141
(440) 526-3030, ext. 6713

CHILLICOTHE VA

Gayle Isan, Chief of Voluntary Services
VAMC
17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601
(740) 773-1141, ext. 7420

CINCINNATI VA

Tracy Butts
Chief of Voluntary Services
3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
(513) 475-4957

COLUMBUS VA

Anthony Stevens, Chief Voluntary Services
Columbus OPC
543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43203
(614) 257-5469

DAYTON VA

Sharon Croteau
Chief of Voluntary Services / Rec. Therapy (135)
4100 West Third Street
Dayton, Ohio 45428
(937) 262-2162

DO NOT INCLUDE THIS DOCUMENT IN A PATIENT'S MEDICAL RECORD

SPONSORED ACTIVITY DATA

VOLUNTEERS: PLEASE print the required information below. It is imperative that the necessary information be complete so that we may accurately recognize your organization's contribution. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the secretary Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

ACTIVITY DATE: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

YOUR NAME: _____ DAYTIME PHONE: _____

YOUR ADDRESS: _____
STREET CITY STATE ZIP

SPONSORED ACTIVITY AND AREA: _____

PLEASE ENTER THE ~TOTAL~ ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT FOR EACH RELEVANT CATEGORY. (IF ANY CATEGORY BELOW DOES NOT PERTAIN TO YOUR ACTIVITY, PLEASE LEAVE BLANK.)

PRIZES: \$ _____ REFRESHMENTS: \$ _____ COMMUNITY FEES: \$ _____

By signing below, these Occasional Volunteers agree, for an indefinite period, with the following statement: I hereby waive all claims to monetary benefits for services rendered as a volunteer worker on a "without compassion basis." I understand that this waiver applies only to compensation for other services or benefits of which I may be entitled. (NOTE: VA has been entered into this agreement by the authority of 38 USC, Section 513. This agreement may be canceled by either party upon written notification.)

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	NUMBER OF HOURS

(AMIS ____ TYL ____) Therapist _____ EXT: _____



THANK A VET



Mission Statement

Working together with AMVETS Posts throughout Ohio to create community awareness of the opportunities for Veterans by being a member of AMVETS, Sons of AMVETS, or AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary, with a strong emphasis on Veterans' benefits and the financial support that is needed by the Veterans hospitals and Veterans' homes in order to better serve our Veterans.

What is Thank A Vet

The Thank A Vet program was founded in 1996 at Post 95, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, as a means of raising funds for the local Veterans' Benefit Fund and to assist the members of Post 95 and all veterans of Knox County, Ohio, when in need. It is a not for profit foundation with "100%" of all funds going for veterans' benefits. In July 1996, AMVETS Department of Ohio adopted the Thank A Vet program.

How We Do It

The Thank A Vet program raises funds through the AMVETS Posts throughout Ohio in a number of different ways. There are raffles, fish fries, breakfast, and auctions to raise funds. Funds are also raised by selling t-shirts, caps, belt buckles, and lighters using the Thank A Vet logo. Money is also raised from individuals and organizations making donations to the fund. The community response and acceptance has been overwhelming.

The AMVETS Goals & Objectives With The Help of All AMVETS Posts in Ohio

The goal is to build total funds in excess of \$200,000.00, to have these funds invested, and to use only the income from these funds to purchase what is needed to support our Veterans' hospitals and Veterans' homes in Ohio. This can be done only with the participation of all AMVETS Posts in Ohio.

If every AMVETS member, Sons of AMVETS member, or AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary member in the State of Ohio will participate, we can accomplish our goals and while doing this, we will be creating community awareness, boosting membership and providing the assistance needed and deserved by all Veterans.

Yes, I would like to donate to the Thank-A-Vet Program!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER (_____) _____

Please find enclosed my donation of \$ _____, check # _____

Annual VAVS Programs...

- ? *There should be an annual donation of 200 handheld computer games to be divided equally among the five VA Facilities. The Service Foundation should consider this as an item at their annual budget meeting.*
- ? *The Department of Ohio will initiate a training program for VAVS Representatives and Deputies.*
- ? *AMVETS has adopted a Thank-A-Vet Program, using 250 veterans from Veterans Hall at the Ohio Veterans Home.*
- ? *At least once a year, the posts will have a one-on-one visit at a VA Facility or Nursing Home in their community, instead of a party.*

If your posts would like to suggest any other VAVS Programs, please fill out the form below and return to Department Headquarters. Thank you!



VAVS Program Suggestion

Post #: _____ Post Commander: _____

Suggestion for VAVS Program: _____

Please return no later than July 1, 2009 for submission into the 2009-2010 Guide Book