



Veterans Service Office - October 2024

"Your Gateway to Veteran Services"

623 6th Ave, Council Bluffs, IA, 51501

(712) 328-5797 Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm

www.pottcounty-ia.gov/departments/veteran_service_office/

 facebook.com/pottcova

 instagram.com/veteransserviceofficepottco/

 x.com/PottCoVA



The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) took up the Operation Green Light initiative in 2022 with more than 300 counties nationwide participating. This year, the NACVSO is once again using Operation Green Light to show support for our nation's veterans, and to raise awareness of the county, state, and federal resources available to veterans and their families.



From November 4-11, 2024, counties are encouraged to shine green lights from government buildings and local landmarks. Residents can change a light bulb on the exterior of their home or on an interior light for people passing by to see. Visit www.naco.org/program/operation-green-light-veterans for more information on Operation Green Light and ways to show our veterans appreciation and gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

photo: Pottawattamie county employees who are veterans gathered for a photo in 2023 to support Operation Green Light.

Thank you for your service

Russell Buzalko enlisted in the Air Force at 17 after graduating high school in Schuylkill Haven, PA. He spent 20 years in the US Air Force, first as a communications computer-system operator with four of those years in the White House Situation Room as communications support staff to the National Security Council. During his time at the White House, he traveled with two US Presidents and two National Security Advisors while keeping them in direct contact with agencies in Washington DC, the Pentagon, and world leaders across the globe.

For his service to the President, he wears an individually numbered Presidential Service Badge. After nine years of enlisted service, he was promoted to Second Lieutenant. He retired in 2007 at the rank of Major at Offutt AFB with more than 2,000 hours navigating military aircraft. Major Buzalko served during the Cold War and later deployed to Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Diego Garcia, Turkey, England, and multiple countries in Africa in support of combat operations over Afghanistan (Enduring Freedom) and the Balkan Peninsula (Kosovo Campaign). Other military operations included Northern Watch, Southern Watch, and the Global War on Terrorism. After retiring, Buzalko and his husband built a house together in Pottawattamie, finally putting down roots in Iowa. He has held jobs as the Director of Quality Assurance at two companies and has also worked as a defense contractor at USSTRATCOM. The military is credited with allowing Buzalko to achieve

degrees in various fields including a PhD. He has taught at NE Wesleyan University, Clarkson College, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Currently, he utilizes his PhD in Education as the Director of Academics and Continuing Education at Children's Nebraska, Omaha, and retains an Adjunct Associate Professor in Pediatrics at UNMC. While the military was often challenging, he appreciates the opportunities afforded him in those 20 years and is now enjoying life in Iowa.



VSO Service Notes

Are you a veteran that has residential property under your name and are currently living in the home? Our caseworkers can assist in filling out an Iowa Military Service Property Tax Exemption form. Bring in your DD214 and we can send both forms over to the assessors office for approval. Applications must be completed and sent in by June 30th.

Upcoming Events

- October 2 - VSO in Avoca
- October 9 - VSO in Carter Lake
- October 16 - VSO in Avoca
- October 23 - VSO in Carter Lake
- November 6 - VSO in Avoca
- November 10 - office closed in observance of Veterans Day
- November 13 - VSO in Carter Lake
- November 20 - VSO in Avoca
- November 23-24 - office closed in observance of Thanksgiving
- November 27 - VSO in Carter Lake
- December 4 - VSO in Avoca
- December 11 - VSO in Carter Lake
- December 18 - VSO in Avoca
- December 25 - office closed in observance of Christmas Day

Commissioners and Staff Spotlight - David Hazlewood

David Hazlewood, a 24 year resident of Pottawattamie county, was first selected as an Ex-Officio Commissioner in 2021. He was appointed to serve as a Commissioner the following year and was re-appointed for another term in 2024. David proudly represents the United States Marine Corps on our Board. He served from 1988 to 1994 as a Combat Engineer and obtained the rank of Sergeant. His tours of duty include the 1st Combat Engineering Battalion at Camp Pendleton, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the 15th MEU again, and finally The Basic School Combat Engineer Training Command at Quantico. Service responsibilities included involvement as a Combat Engineer (Sapper) conducting engineer recon, emplacing obstacle systems, conducting breaching operations to reduce explosive hazards and mine/countermine operations, employing demolitions and military explosives, conducting urban breaching and route clearance, and providing assault bridging and tactical bridging. Most importantly, though, was his responsibility of making sure that all of his fellow Marines were brought safely home.



In his spare time, David enjoys spending time with his family, golfing, and creating essential housing options for the community as the CEO of NeighborWorks Home Solutions. The Hazlewood family includes David's wife Paula, son Jeffery Hazlewood, daughter-in-law Caitlyn, granddaughter Georgia, and grand-puppy Cooper. David's brother, Billy Hazlewood, Jr, is a veteran of the US Navy. His father, Billy Hazlewood, served in the US Air Force during Korea and Vietnam. Woodrow Hazlewood, David's grandfather, served during World War II.



Honor Rewards Program

The Honor Rewards program was set up to connect veterans with discounts offered by local businesses. Any veteran who has had their DD214 recorded with the county can sign up at honorrewards.com. They will receive a membership card that can be presented at participating businesses. For more information on recording your DD214, please visit pottcounty-ia.gov/departments/recorder/

Contacts

VA Billing Statement Payment - 888-827-4817 or pay.gov

DAV transportation to and from Omaha VA hospital - 800-451-5796 or visit www.vetride.va.gov/app/home

Business Highlight - Arc Fiber Solutions

Owned and operated by veteran Nick Jedlicka. Fiber optics services include splicing, new construction, home/business installs, emergency repairs, and more.

Cell: 712-310-1234

Email: nickj@arcfibersolutions.com



Did you know?

As of 2021, 749 counties in the US have accredited county veteran service officers.

Resources

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

- TAPS is a nonprofit organization that provides free resources to family and friends grieving the death of a veteran loved one. Their 24/7 hotline is 800-959-8277. Additional resources including seminars, counseling opportunities, support groups and more can be found at taps.org.

The Paper Safe

Offered by the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, the Paper Safe is a booklet which allows families to keep end-of-life decisions, documents, and information together in one place. Copies can be downloaded for free at www.avva.org/papersafe.html or ordered at www.avva.org/papersafeform.html.

History and Trivia

Veterans Day November 11, 2024



While the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, WWI officially ended November 11, 1918. President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day in 1919.

[Click for a video of the WWI Armistice Day celebrations](#)



On November 11, 1921, the remains of an unidentified WWI soldier were buried at Arlington National Cemetery. The tomb has been guarded night and day since 1937.

[Click for a video of the 2021 Centennial Commemoration](#)



In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed a law returning Veterans Day to November 11th.

[Click for a video of the history of Veterans Day](#)



According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 41,892,128 military service members served during wartime from 1775-1991.

[Click for the Dept of Veterans Affairs America's Wars Factsheet](#)



According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, there were approximately 17.9 million veterans in the US as of September 2024.

[Click for information on America's missing service members](#)



According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Iowa has over 181,600 veterans with over 139,900 having served during wartime.

[Click for information on resources for Iowa's veterans](#)

To sign up for the Pottawattamie County quarterly newsletter,

email veterans@pottcounty-ia.gov or scan the qr code below.

