

## Warren County Veterans Service Officer's Report for June 2013

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**MILITARY LEAVE:** I will be out of the office from **June 1<sup>st</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>**, for Annual National Guard Training. If you have an immediate need with any VA benefit listed below, please contact them directly. Otherwise, this office will be open Monday-Thursday 11am-5p and Fridays from 1p-5p to assist in anyway possible.

- **Check status of already submitted VA Claims:** US Dept. of VA at 1-800/827-1000
- **New submission of VA Claims to include GI Bill Education:** Harry Candee, NYSDVA State Counselor located at SUNY Adirondack 518/832-7744
- **VA Medical:** VA Primary Clinic on 84 Broad Street, Glens Falls NY 518/798-6066
- **Homeless Veterans:** Tara Brennan, VA Outreach Worker at 518/593-0323 or National Call Center at 1-877/424-3838
- **Employment:** Warren County One Stop Center at 518/743-0925 x8884 or x8893

**The mission of the New York State Division of Consumer Protection** is to provide all New Yorkers with information to make informed decisions and to prevent them from falling victim to various scams. Identity theft is a major threat to veterans and deceased service members. The Division has outlined several important steps families can take to prevent identity theft and protect your fallen hero.

**Criminals often look for personal details** in the obituaries, in stolen death certificates, and from websites that offer the Social Security Death Index file to enable them to commit fraud. It is hard to believe, but in some cases, the identity thief may even target military personnel.

**A fallen hero is vulnerable to identity theft victimization** because their death and surrounding information, such as mother's maiden name, is often made very public. Unless the thief seeks to use the information to access health care or other military benefits, families likely won't notice the service member's identity was stolen until tax time, if ever.

**When a veteran passes away**, it is natural to delay dealing with notification and personal administrative matters due to the volume of paperwork required. However, any delay increases the risk that your loved one could become a victim of identity theft as fraudulent credit card accounts are opened and purchases made in his/her name.

**While it is unlikely that you or the estate would be held liable** for these fraudulent activities, you would be forced to invest substantial time and expense to restore your deceased loved one's reputation. You can avoid this problem by acting promptly and following several easy steps.

### **Who to Contact**

**Notify the Social Security Administration (SSA) immediately by telephone:**

- 1-800-772-1213
- 1-800-325-0778 (for hearing-impaired)

**Order multiple certified copies of the death certificate (DD Form 1300) with and without the cause of death:** Order at least 10 copies of the official death certificate or DD Form 1300 for your communications with various companies. Your Casualty Assistance Officer should be able to assist you in obtaining these documents.

**Contact each of the 3 credit reporting agencies (Experian, TransUnion and Equifax) and alert them of the death. Request that a "deceased Alert" be placed on all accounts.**

**Equifax:** P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374, 1-800-525-6285

**Experian:** P.O. Box 2002, Allen, TX 75013, 1-888-397-3742

**TransUnion:** P.O. Box 1000, Chester, PA 19022, 1-800-680-7289

**Send a written notice to all financial institutions (including any life insurance, pension, real property, automobile ownership and veterans' benefits accounts) instructing them to close all individual accounts and remove the deceased's name from joint accounts.**