

Advisory

Macomb County
Office of Public Affairs



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VETERANS DAY STORY IDEAS

The election is over, so it's time to focus the next important calendar item – Veterans Day.

Nov. 11 was originally set aside as Armistice Day to commemorate the truce that ended World War I. Later, the significance of the date was expanded to honor the American soldiers who served their country in all wars. Armistice Day became a holiday in 1926 and a national holiday in 1938.

The name of the holiday was changed to Veterans Day in 1954 to honor all United States veterans.

In Macomb County, every day is Veterans Day at the Department of Veterans Services. The department's goal is to help veterans obtain the federal, state or county benefits and services they need and deserve.

"For our clients, this assistance can mean the difference between moving on with their lives or falling into poverty," Richard Weaver, Veterans Services director.

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Here are several success stories:

- Marino Persichini, 81, is a disabled veteran of WWII. When he turned to the Veterans Administration for disability benefits, he didn't receive a satisfactory response. "I wasn't getting anywhere through the VA," said Persichini. "I saw an ad in the paper that said Macomb County would help veterans." Persichini said he contacted the Macomb County Veterans Services Department to see if it could help him. "They're number one in my book," Persichini said. "They helped me with my paperwork and got me a fairly good pension. I can now afford to get things done that I couldn't do myself."
- Roy Montgomery, 54, is a veteran of the Vietnam War. He spent two years in a marine rifle company before returning home. He contacted the Macomb County Veterans Services Department to seek assistance in obtaining help with diabetes and heart problems. "On a scale of one to 10, they are a 15," said Montgomery. "They were able to get me every benefit I ever thought I could get. I just can't thank them enough." With the help of the Veterans Services Department, Montgomery also was able to visit Vietnam several years ago, and now donates part of his time and money to building homes for poor and homeless Vietnamese people.
- Jacqueline Franzel, 37, is a Navy veteran who served stateside during the first Gulf War. After leaving the military, she began having personal problems. "I knew there was something wrong with me ... I needed help," said Franzel. The Macomb County Veterans Services Department helped her obtain the assistance she needed. "It means so much to have someone supporting and backing you," said Franzel. "I'm so thankful for all they've done for me."

Macomb County Veterans Services offers a wide range of services for men and women who served in the military. Veterans who served in Vietnam from January 1962 to May

1975 and who have diabetes or chronic lymphocytic leukemia should know that the department could assist in filing a benefit claim. Those who served in Korea near the demilitarized zone between April 1968 and July 1969, or in Vietnam from 1962-1975, also may qualify for benefits due to the residual effect of exposure to Agent Orange.

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners also is providing memorial flag cases for the families of Macomb County veterans who die after Jan. 1, 2004.

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Editor's Note: Richard Weaver, Marino Persichini, Roy Montgomery and Jacqueline Franzel are available for interviews. Please contact the Office of Public Affairs at the phone number or e-mail address above to coordinate.