



The Veteran's Voice
Newsletter
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Edition

THE VETERANS VOICE

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Car Winterizing Seven Things to Do

As the last days of summer fade — and fall begins to take center stage — it's time to prepare your car for colder, more hazardous weather. Getting a jump-start on this task can help ensure that your vehicle is in tip-top shape before winter winds howl and snow and ice start to accumulate on roadways. Following are seven simple — but often overlooked — things you should do now to make sure your ride is ready to get you through winter and into spring.

1. Have your mechanic inspect hoses, belts and fluids — Winter temperatures can be pretty brutal on your car. If you have a cracked hose or a worn belt, the frigid air just might be the final blow. The last thing you want is to be stranded on the roadside when a blizzard is raging or the temperature is south of zero. Do yourself a favor and have your favorite mechanic look over your car on a pleasant fall day. You'll thank yourself come January.

2. Repair paint blemishes — If you live in a northern clime, you know that Old Man Winter can apply a coat of rust to your shiny ride. If you hope to keep him at bay, it's crucial that you repair little scratches before winter begins.

According to the Your Mechanic website::

• Paint blemishes, if they are left unrepaired, can not only make your car appear worn and old but can rust, corrode, or spread. That means more costly repairs that must be done by specialized body shops.

• Fixing these imperfections can be easier than you think. Auto parts stores sell touch-up paint that you can use to keep rust at bay. Your Mechanic says you can find the car's paint code on the driver's door pillar information label.

3. Give your car a coat of wax — Road salt is an inevitable part of keeping roads safe for drivers throughout the winter months. But that salt can wreak havoc on your car's exterior. A good coat of wax can help protect your car. According to Turtle

Wax: Concentrate on the lower parts of your car such as behind the wheels, quarter panels, and front grille where ice, snow and salt hit hard and stay the longest.

4. Install good floor mats — Floor mats aren't typically on the radar for most drivers planning to prepare their cars for colder weather. Yet, installing the right mats can help ensure the interior of your vehicle makes it through sweater season unscathed. The Wirecutter website notes that the right floor mat "better protects your car's carpets from water, snow, muck, and other messy things that can get tracked into the vehicle or spilled onto the floor." AutoAccessoriesGarage.com has some helpful tips for choosing the right floor mats for your car.

5. Replace the wiper blades — A heavy snowfall is no time to suddenly remember that you meant to change your wiper blades back in September. It's easy to procrastinate on this task, and millions of drivers do just that. But worn wiper blades can smear snow and ice, putting your ability to see the road — and ultimately, your life — at risk. Many auto experts suggest changing your wiper blades both in the spring and the fall. And this is one repair that almost everyone can do on their own. Just stop by an auto parts store and tell the clerk the make and model of your car. Once you have the right pair of replacement blades, it takes just a few seconds to snap them into place.

6. Check your tires — all of them — Winter is the season when your tires need to be at their best. So, have them checked now — long before bad weather suddenly appears — to ensure they have the proper tread. If the tires are in good shape, make sure they are properly inflated. And that goes for all your tires, including the spare. Remember

that cold weather causes tires to lose air more quickly. So, check your pressure at least monthly. 7. Prepare an emergency kit — Ah, fall — you can sit on your deck with cup of hot cider and watch

the golden leaves glisten in the autumn sun. While enjoying this reverie, remember that it won't last. Colder days lie just ahead. So, take a moment or two to jot down a few notes about items that you might need in the event of a winter emergency. Then, purchase the items over the next several weeks and store them in your car.

The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence recommends keeping the following items on hand:

- **Extra gloves**
- **Boots and blankets**
- **Flares**
- **A small shovel and a container of sand or kitty litter**
- **Tire chains**
- **A flashlight and extra batteries**
- **A cellphone and an extra car charger**
- **“High-energy” snacks in your glove box**

[Source: MoneyTalksNews | Melissa Neiman | October 3, 2017 ++]

Submitted to us by AVVA member Elaine Strachan (Jackson)
Thank you Elaine

THE STORY OF TAPS

It began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was positioned with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his own lines. When the Captain finally reached safety, he discovered that the soldier was actually a Confederate, and he was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern. Suddenly, he caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army. The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status.

His request was partially granted. Captain Ellicombe had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. That request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. Out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him one musician. The Captain chose a bugler, and he asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of his dead son's uniform.

This music was the haunting melody we know as TAPS which is used at all military funerals. In case you're interested, these are the words to Taps.

**Day is done,
gone the sun,
from the lakes,
from the hills,
from the sky.
All is well.
Safely rest.
God is nigh.**



Article submitted by AVVA member Elaine Strachen (Jackson)
Thank you Elaine



Remember:

It is the **Soldier**, not the reporter who has given us the freedom of the press.

It is the **Soldier**, not the poet who has given us the freedom of speech.

It is the **Soldier**, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag.

Pray for our men and women currently serving our country and pray for those who gave the **ultimate sacrifice for freedom.**



TOTAL NUMBER OF VA CLAIMS LOST IN ONLINE SYSTEMS TOP 120,000

Veterans Affairs leaders acknowledged that more than 120,00 veterans who attempted to use department online platforms to file for benefits in recent years were stonewalled by technical problems, a total nearly 35% larger than previously reported.

Officials said they are still working to correct those errors and process those claims as quickly as possible. But House lawmakers raised concerns about the scope of the problems, some of which date back more than a decade.

“Mistakes are bound to happen,” said Rep. Matt Rosendale, R-Mont., chairman of the house Veterans’ Affairs Committee’s panel on technology, during a hearing on the topic. “But it’s unacceptable that some of these error persisted for years before anyone discovered them.”

In late August, VA officials announced that roughly 32,000 disability claims had been lost in the VA.gov computer system for several months or years. Two weeks later, department leaders for 57,000 more lost cases, most involving veterans who tried to add or remove dependents on existing disability claims.

RELATED – More technical problems found with VA’s disability claims system. Nearly 90,000 cases filed through the VA.gov have been delayed because of glitches in the department’s system.

Veterans Affairs Chief Information Officer Kurt DelBene said that further reviews have found about 81,000 dependents claims misdirected within the computer system, as well as several thousand other cases in other categories. He promised fixes as quickly as possible.

“VA.gov is the digital front door, and veterans need to have confidence and trust that their benefits and services are available, accurate, and secure,” he said.

About 26,500 of the outstanding dependency cases have now been processed and completed, and 22,500 of the outstanding disability claims finished, he said.

The department's VA.gov site fields more than 14 million inquiries each month. VA staffers have blamed the past mistakes on software errors compounded by a lack of regular monitoring for potential problems.

While individuals whose cases were processed late can be eligible for retroactive payouts back to the original date they tried to file, the delay of months or years for those cases to be processed could have caused significant financial hardship for some veterans and their families.

Resendale said he intends to file new legislation forcing closer oversight of the online benefits system to avoid similar problems in the future.

"We all need to be confident that errors in VA.gov and other systems will never again be allowed to compound undetected and impact so many people," he said.

Meanwhile, DeBene said he hopes that the department will be able to process most of the remaining unaddressed cases before the end of the month.



President's Corner

Hello Everyone

Well here we are in 2024 starting a new year, a year that I am hoping will be a very active and productive for our chapter.

I would like to thank all of our members for their support and commitment during the past 12 months.

A lot has been accomplished and because of your hard work and dedication our chapter is being recognized through out the state for our accomplishments.

I would also take a moment and thank our AVVA brothers and sisters for their commitment and hard work on behalf of our chapter.

Our events chairman Jim Davis is working on events for the coming year, but he can not do it alone. We need you our members to step forward and help out where ever and when ever you can.

It can be for just a half hour or hour at a time. What ever you can offer is greatly appreciated.

REMINDER: At the January meeting and the two following it we will be taking nominations for all of our officer positions.

Please consider being nominated for one of these positions. You can nominate yourself if you would like

**Respectfully
Joseph Armstrong President**

From the Desk
Of
Conrad Letellier
1st Vice-President

Hello Brothers & Sisters;

I hope that you all had a very enjoyable Christmas. Wow here we are starting a new year, a year I am hoping will be filled with joy and happiness for us all.

As our president mentioned, we are starting nominations for the follow positions in our chapter. President, 1st vice-president, 2nd vice-president, secretary, treasurer and 5 board members.

If we are unable to fill these position at our chapter elections in April I feel that we will be forced to close our chapter for good.

I personally do not want this to happen and I don't think that you want it as well. Please consider stepping forward and running for one of the offices. Its not hard and requires very little time on your behalf.

If you would like more information on any of the positions please contact myself or our president and we can explain the job requirements for you.

Respectfully

Conrad Letellier
1st Vice-President

Membership Corner

By

Conrad Letellier Membership Chairman

We are moving ahead at a steady pace with membership. We signed on one new member last month. I can not do this without your help. If you know of a veteran that would be interested in joining please send me their name and address and I can make contact with them and send them information.

**From The Desk of the Events Coordinator
Jim Davis**



MEETING NOTICE!

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE SUNDAY 07 JANUARY 2024.
MEETING WILL START AT 1:30 PM 13:30 HRS.
THERE WILL BE A BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING PRIOR TO
OUR REGULAR MEETING. BOARD MEETING WILL START AT
12:00 PM 1200 HRS.**

Membership in VVA is the Right Choice

First I want to say "WELCOME HOME "

The goals of Vietnam Veterans of America are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans. To create a new identity for this generation of veterans and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans.

VVA is a "home of our own" - a community of fellowship with people who share our experiences, needs, and hopes for the future.

Be as active as your time, talents, and interests allow. Or, simply be a proud member of VVA, knowing that your membership helps VVA work for you and your fellow Vietnam veterans.

Membership includes a subscription to our award-winning newspaper, The VVA Veteran, bringing you updates on issues and legislation affecting veterans, as well as unique articles on the people, places, and history of the Vietnam experience.

Membership is open to U.S. armed force veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, OR in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

Our chapter is working very hard to help our brothers and sisters, their families and veterans of today.

We meet once a month at the American Legion Post 26 located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford. Meetings start at 1:30 (13:30)

If you would like further information on joining our chapter please email me your mailing address at cwomaine@metrocast.net I will send the information to you.