

This Day in History... July 21, 1930

Creation of the Veterans Administration

On July 21, 1930, President Hoover signed legislation forming the Veterans Administration, often simply called the VA.

Since the time of the Revolutionary War, America's government has sought to protect its veterans. In 1776, the Continental Congress tried to encourage enlistments by offering pensions to disabled soldiers. In the years after the war, states and communities provided their veterans with medical and hospital care.

The federal government approved the first home and medical facility for veterans in 1811, though it didn't open until 1834. In the coming years, assistance programs, benefits, and pensions were provided for veterans as well as their widows and dependents.



Issued on the 50th anniversary of the VA.



Stamp issued in Hoover's hometown of West Branch, Iowa.

There was a significant increase in veterans' homes following the Civil War. All of their injuries and diseases were covered, whether they stemmed from their military service or not. These homes would go on to provide care to the veterans of the Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, and the Mexican Border War.

Then as America entered World War I in 1917, Congress created a new system for veterans' benefits. This system included programs for disability compensation, insurance, and vocational rehabilitation. These benefits were controlled by three different federal agencies: the Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions of the Interior Department, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

Eventually, President Herbert Hoover decided to consolidate all of these programs into one federal administration. So on July 21, 1930, he signed Executive Order 5398, which created the Veterans Administration to "consolidate and coordinate Government activities affecting

war veterans." The existing agencies then became bureaus within the VA.



2001 stamp honoring the ongoing service of our veterans



Stamp from the WWII - 1945: Victory at Last sheet honoring hometown celebrations for returning veterans

As World War II broke out and progressed, many new veteran benefits were enacted. The most significant of these was the 1944 GI Bill. Some have said the GI Bill affected the American way of life more than any other law since the Homestead Act of 1862.

The VA reached cabinet-level status in 1989.

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