PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND TO ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS LISTED BELOW, THAT CLAIM TO NEED INFORMATION FROM YOU FOR VETERANS' BENEFITS, OR ANY OTHER SUCH CLAIM……. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, FUNDRAISERS, SECURITY ALARMS, ETC.

Keep in mind that NO GOVERNMENT ENTITY, whether Veterans', Social Security or Medicare/Medicaid makes calls to people on a random basis, nor do they call to verify information unless you have contacted them first. They also do not contact you via email. Any changes you need to be aware of are sent to you via regular mail from the government entities. Be sure not to give out your social security and bank account information to anyone, even if they say they are from a financial institution and there is something wrong with your accounts that they are trying to "correct" by verifying info over the phone. This is one of the ways scammers gain access to your money and your identification. DO NOT BE A VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT by giving out information.

Another scam is to receive a call from a person claiming to be from a security alarm company. If you answer "no" when asked if you have a home alarm system, you may have your home broken into shortly thereafter. You will be told that they will contact you to discuss installing a system, but if they are criminals, your conversation with them may lead only to loss and injury. It has happened to residents of Middleton recently.

****

The info below has been forwarded to us by our local Veterans' Agent, Ted Butler. It is his wish that we distribute the information to protect Veterans' and their families.

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is claiming to provide benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way.

Websites with the name "vaservices" immediately after the "www" ARE NOT part of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Government agency. Do not go to them or if approached or called, do not offer them any information concerning yourself or data on other veterans. Keep in mind that the real VA website ends in .gov. Also, be aware that the Department of Veterans Affairs does not randomly call veterans, nor does it ask veterans for information which it does not already have--like Social Security Numbers. In particular, if you have not dealt with the VA previously--and in person--and all of a sudden, you receive a call from someone saying they are with the VA or something similar sounding, hang up the phone. Also, do not respond to emails which suggest that they are from the VA. The VA never conducts official business nor asks for personal information by email.

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our Legal Counsel has requested that we coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr.Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty
Staff Attorney
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel (022G2)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Frauds & Schemes ~ Taken from the Middleton Police Dept. web homepage 1/8/2011

Con Games and Sweet Talk Crimes

Pigeon Drop
This scheme accounts for more than half of the confidence games reported to Police. The swindlers claim to have found a large sum of money and offer to share it with you. Your are asked to withdraw "good faith" money from your bank. The swindlers take the "good faith" money and give you a phony address where you are to collect your share of the money. You never see them again.

Bank Examiner
A phony bank examiner contacts you and asks for your help in catching a dishonest bank employee. He asks you to withdraw a specific amount of cash from your account so that he may check the serial numbers. After turning over your money to the examiner, you never hear from him/her again.

Door to Door Sales
Many door-to-door sales are not legitimate, Call the Police Department (978)774-4424 to make sure that the group has properly registered and has a valid identification in plain view. Deal with these people at the door step, do not invite them in.

Mail Fraud Schemes

Consumer frauds
Beware of contest which require you to put up money to win, even if there is a guarantee that you will be a winner.

Home improvement Offers
Beware of tempting home improvement offers, made through the mail or on-the-spot. These offers are a popular type of swindle.

Chain Referral Schemes
These schemes offer a commission for buying one item and selling additional ones to a friend. The products are usually over priced and difficult to sell.

Retirement Estates
Any retirement estate offered a conspicuously low prices to "lucky" individuals are usually fraudulent and should be avoided.

Business Opportunities
Business opportunities and work-at-home schemes which promise high profits after a substantial investment or registration fee are often fraudulent.

Medical Frauds
Fake laboratory tests, miracle cures, and mail order clinics, etc. are other ways schemed to defraud you. Legitimate doctors and hospitals do not advertise through the mail.

The Obit Column Sting
Fast-buck artists send surviving spouse bills for phony debts, purchases, etc. If you get an unfamiliar bill after the death of a loved one, check it out before you pay.

We remind you to never rush into something involving your money or property, beware of the something for nothing or the get rich schemes.

Never sign a contract until you and your lawyer, banker or other expert has thoroughly read it. NEVER TURN OVER LARGES SUMS OF MONEY, ESPECIALLY STRANGERS, NOT MATTER HOW PROMISING THE DEAL LOOKS.

Remember to report all suspicious offers to the Middleton Police immediately, before the swindler leaves town in search of other victims.

Chief James A. Digianvittorio, (978) 774-4424