



# Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

## *A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, March 05, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 10

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### ***This-N-That***

On Thursday last week, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said he “believe[s] that we will see greater enforcement” of the federal laws against recreational marijuana.

While he acknowledged that the question to which he was responding was better directed to the Department of Justice, Spicer said that state legalization of recreational marijuana “is something the Department of Justice, I think, will be further looking into.”

Various states have passed legislation allowing the medical use of marijuana and a large number have passed legislation approving casual use of marijuana.

Personally I believe this is a serious mistake and NOW is the time we need everyone who reads our news letter to send President Trump a very loud and clear message and there two ways you can do this. You can send an E-Mail to: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov) and you can also visit the White House website and send a message there as well by clicking [HERE](#).

There have been numerous reports over the past decade showing the benefits of using medical marijuana to aid and assist those who have cancer and are undergoing radiation treatments to help keep food down and cut the effects of the other medical treatments, in addition it has been found to be very successful in aiding those who suffer from PTSD and TBI. In addition to these cannabis oil has been used very successfully and proven to cure various cancers yet our FDA will not even consider those reports let alone approve it.

Many of you who already use marijuana know first hand just how well it works, and believe it or not, you are living, breathing proof it is not a stair step drug to any other illicit drugs! So please, even if you don't use medical marijuana send a message to President Trump, tell your story or just support the use of both medical marijuana and cannabis oil!

Further down in this newsletter are two action items, again we encourage all our readers to please click on the links and send your message to your Reps in DC asking their full support.

One issue is the SBP/DIC concurrent pay for widows. Congress has been promising for more than a decade now to address and fix the issue, we really do need to put the pressure on Congress by flooding their offices with the message you're able to send using the link in that action alert.

Countless widows are being cheated out of benefits to the tune of \$1,000 per month or more and this needs to stop. With your help, we can make sure this happens and that it happens this year, not in another decade.

On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and myself, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

[Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)



## ***Help Blue Water Vietnam Vets Exposed to Agent Orange***

The “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act” has been introduced in both the House and Senate (H.R. 299 & S. 422 respectively). These proposals would clarify that service members serving off the coast of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict have a presumption for filing disability claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for ailments associated with exposure to the Agent Orange herbicide. FRA believes Congress should recognize that so-called “Blue water” veterans were exposed to Agent Orange herbicide and authorize presumptive status for VA disability claims associated with this exposure.

Please use the [Action Center](#) to ask your legislators to support this important legislation.

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## **CalVet Honors Women Veterans**

## 6th Annual Reception Celebrates Women's Military History Week

Sacramento – On March 8, 2017, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) recognizes two outstanding women veterans with the annual CalVet Trailblazer Award. The Award recognizes the valuable contributions by women veterans to the United States Armed Forces and veteran communities.

“Our California women veterans are part of a long and proud legacy of military service,” said Lindsey Sin, CalVet Deputy Secretary, Women Veterans Affairs. “We are proud to celebrate and honor two incredible women who exemplify outstanding military core values and dedication to our veteran communities.”

The two honorees are U.S. Army veteran Deborah Johnson of Bakersfield and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Dulce Romero of Yuba City. They will be honored by CalVet at an annual reception celebrating Women's Military History Week, recognized by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. as the third week of March. Army veteran Assemblymember Susan Eggman will serve as guest speaker for the event.

The reception will be held at Cafeteria 15L in Sacramento on March 8th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The reception, including appetizers and refreshments, is free and is open to the public thanks to the generosity of the VetFund Foundation and their corporate partners Deloitte, DLA Piper, Juniper, PG&E, USAA, and Wells Fargo.

To learn more about the honorees, please visit [www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets). Pre-registration for the reception is required. Register at [www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets) or call 916-653-1402.

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### **Interesting pending Legislation**

Members of both the House and Senate have been submitting proposed legislation for a full month. Below are several that TREA is working hard to get past and on to the President's desk. Please contact your members of Congress and urge them to support these important pieces of legislation

#### **Concurrent Receipt (and please look down to the following article)**

All these bills would end the remaining dollar for dollar offsets for military retired pay and VA service connected disability pay in slightly different ways.

#### **H.R. 303 original sponsor Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) Retired Pay Restoration Act**

"This bill: (1) allows the receipt of both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation with respect to any service-

connected disability (currently, only for a disability rated at 50% or more), and (2) repeals provisions phasing in the full concurrent receipt of such pay through December 31, 2013.

Individuals who were retired or separated from military service due to a service-connected disability shall be eligible for the full concurrent receipt of both veterans' disability compensation and either military retired pay or combat-related special pay.”

It presently has 35 current co-sponsors (25 Republicans and 10 Democrats).

**H.R. 333 original sponsor Rep Sanford Bishop (D-GA) H.R. 333  
Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act**

“This bill amends federal military retired pay provisions to: (1) permit veterans with a service-connected disability of less than 50% to concurrently receive both retired pay and disability compensation; (2) eliminate provisions requiring a phase-in between January 1, 2004, and December 31, 2013, of concurrent receipt of retired pay and disability compensation; (3) eliminate a phase-in of concurrent receipt of retired pay and disability compensation for disabled veterans determined to be individually unemployable; and (4) require a limited reduction in retired pay for qualified disability retirees with less than 20 years of retirement-creditable service.”

It presently has 28 co-sponsors (24 Democrats and 4 Republicans).

**S. 66 Original Sponsor Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) Retired Pay  
Restoration Act**

This bill allows retired members of the uniformed services who have a service connected disability to collect both their disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation.

It presently has 5 co-sponsors (4 Democrats and 1 Republican).

## **SBP/DIC Offset**

Survivors of Service members who qualify for both SBP from DoD and Dependency Indemnification Compensation (DIC) face a dollar for dollar offset as their spouse did. For years we have been fighting to end this unfair offset as well. We are starting to fight it again this year.

### **H.R. 846 Original Sponsor Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act**

“This bill: (1) repeals certain provisions that require the offset of amounts paid in dependency and indemnity compensation from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities for the surviving spouses of former military personnel who are entitled to military retired pay or who would be entitled to retired pay except for being under 60 years of age, (2) prohibits requiring repayment of certain amounts previously paid to SBP recipients in the form of a retired pay refund, and (3) requires (current law authorizes) the Secretary of the military department concerned to pay an annuity to a member's dependent children when there is no eligible surviving spouse.

The Secretary concerned shall restore annuity eligibility to a surviving spouse who earlier agreed to transfer such eligibility to the surviving child or children of a member.”

**It presently has no co-sponsors.**

### **S. 339 Original Sponsor Sen Bill Nelson (D-FL) Military Widow's Tax Elimination Act of 2017**

“This bill repeals certain provisions which require the offset of amounts paid in dependency and indemnity compensation from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities for the surviving spouses of former military personnel who are entitled to military retired pay or who would be entitled to such pay, except for being under 60 years of age.

The Department of Defense is prohibited from recouping certain amounts previously paid to SBP recipients in the form of a retired pay

refund.

The bill requires (current law authorizes) the Secretary of the military department concerned to pay an annuity to a member's dependent children when there is no eligible surviving spouse. The Secretary concerned shall restore annuity eligibility to a surviving spouse who earlier agreed to transfer such eligibility to the surviving child or children of a member.”

There is presently one co-sponsor Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

Source: TREA



## **Support SBP/DIC Offset Repeal Legislation**

Senator Nelson (FL) has introduced legislation (S. 339) and Congressman Joe Wilson (SC) has introduced identical legislation in the house (HR 846) that repeals the SBP/DIC offset for survivors, sometimes referred to as the "Military Widows Tax.". Please use this action center contact your legislators to ask them to support this important legislation.

[Take Action!](#)

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## **Franchise Opportunities for Veterans**

Have you thought about having your own business? Owning a franchise is a great opportunity, especially for Veterans.

Franchisors are actively seeking Veterans for Franchisees. In fact, multiple Franchisors provide substantial discounts on their Franchise Fee. Why? Veterans are disciplined and know how to follow a process. That is exactly what they are looking for – plus, they are grateful for your service to our country.

If you have interest, how do you know where do you start?

1. Start thinking about what kind of business you'd like to run. Where are your interests? What do you enjoy doing?
2. Financing – do you have money that you can put down on your business? If not, we can help you with multiple resources for grants and loans.
3. Learn about the process to buy a Franchise.

If you would like to learn more about looking at your own franchise, please give us a call. We do not charge for our services and are here to help you find the best franchise for you!

Janice Charles  
Your Franchise Source  
[yrfransource@gmail.com](mailto:yrfransource@gmail.com)  
303-319-5186  
[www.yourfranchisesource.com](http://www.yourfranchisesource.com)



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## **Liver Fluke: Update on a Cancer-causing Parasite**

(Adapted from an article by Claudia Gary in the January/February 2017 edition of The VVA Veteran magazine)

One of the most insidious (of parasites) is the liver fluke -- *Opisthorchis viverrini* or *Clonochis sinensis* -- a freshwater-fish-borne flatworm that causes cholangiocarcinoma (cancer of the bile duct).

Cholangiocarcinoma is widespread in areas of Southeast Asia due to the popularity of traditional dishes in which fish is either raw or insufficiently cooked to kill the parasite. Many veterans who served in or near Vietnam acquired the parasite.

What makes liver fluke infection especially ominous is the parasite can live and reproduce in the bile duct for thirty years or longer. This causes chronic inflammation that eventually creates cancerous cells before producing noticeable symptoms. Although detection and elimination of the parasite are easy at an early stage, all too often the infection is not discovered until a patient has Stage IV cancer. Typically, the first visible signs include jaundice resulting from a blocked bile duct. At this stage, the prognosis is dismal and the same cancerous blockage that causes jaundice also locks in a still-thriving colony of liver flukes, preventing their detection in stool samples.

Liver flukes often cannot be detected by the usual method because they are sealed into the bile duct. A non-invasive test is being developed that would detect liver fluke infection by determining species-specific antigens in the urine. This is described in a 2016 article from Thailand published in the journal "PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases."

All in-country Vietnam veterans are encouraged to get tested for liver flukes before cancer symptoms appear. In the worst cases, the test would provide survivors with the information to help prove service connection when applying for VA benefits. Unfortunately, lack of information and the resultant confusion about this cancer have continued to obstruct such claims, making them more difficult for veterans and their families.

Recent studies have focused on increased awareness, education, cancer treatment and early diagnostic methods. Today, the evidence and explanation are clearer and widely available. See also

[vaveteran.org/34-2/34-2\\_parasites.html](http://vaveteran.org/34-2/34-2_parasites.html) for additional information.

For anyone who has traveled to Southeast Asia and eaten local food but has no symptoms, testing is worth-while and simple. It can be done through the VA or a private physician. If liver fluke infection is detected, it is easily treated using the following guidelines from CDC.

[www.cdc.gov/dpdx/opisthorchiasis/tx.html](http://www.cdc.gov/dpdx/opisthorchiasis/tx.html).

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## **To Contact your Members of Congress**

**To Call your Representative: 202-225-2305**

**To call your Senator: 202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553**

**To call different members of Congress: 202-224-3121**

**Toll FREE Number: 866-272-6622**



**S. 423, CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act**

On February 16, 2017, Senator Jon Tester introduced S. 423, which would extend the eligibility of children under the CHAMPVA program.

Under the Affordable Care Act, Congress and the Administration made a decision to cover every adult child on their parents' policies until they reach age 26, except for those who could be covered under CHAMPVA. This situation is unfair and unacceptable.

To address this inequity, National Convention delegates representing the 1.3 million members of the DAV endorsed national resolution 128 supporting legislation to extend the eligibility of a qualifying veteran's child for CHAMPVA coverage to age 26 under the same conditions of adult children covered by private health plans.

DAV believes dependents of severely disabled veterans and survivors of veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation should not be penalized or otherwise not allowed to enjoy the same rights and privileges as other citizens of a grateful nation.

Please use the prepared e-mail, or draft your own message, to request that your Senators support this important bill and ask that it be brought to the floor for a vote and passed as soon as possible.

Click [HERE](#) and send your message.

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**Blue Water Navy**

Another long term fight has been to have veterans who fought in the Vietnam War in the blue water (the territorial waters) to qualify for the Vietnam presumptive ailments. This is moving very well in the House with 195 co-sponsors, 99 Democrats and 96 Republicans.

**H.R. 299 Original Sponsor Rep. David Valadao (R-CA) Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017**

“This bill includes as part of the Republic of Vietnam its territorial seas for purposes of the presumption of service connection for diseases associated with exposure by veterans to certain herbicide agents while in Vietnam.”

Last week Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), along with Senators Mark Warner (D-VA) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) introduced companion legislation in the Senate. There is no bill number yet. That effort has 25 additional bipartisan co-sponsors, for a total of 28 out of only 100 US Senators, which is in itself a fantastic start. We'll keep you posted on any progress.

Source: TREA

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**California Veterans Homes Improve CMS Quality Ratings**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) notified the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) yesterday that CMS ratings for California Veterans Homes in Chula Vista and Yountville will increase to four stars, placing them among the highest performing facilities throughout the state.

CMS developed the star rating system to help consumers identify high-performing skilled nursing facilities based on a number of clinical factors, including compliance with Medicare health and safety standards, quality measures, and staffing. The rating for a facility is determined through health inspections and on-site surveys.

“CMS’ star rating system is an essential measure of how well we are serving the veterans who entrust us with their healthcare,” said CalVet Secretary Dr. Vito Imbasciani. “These increased ratings reflect a systematic effort by CalVet to recruit quality leadership in our veterans homes, provide clinicians with the support and resources necessary to succeed, and identify and standardize best practices throughout the system.”

This is the second consecutive year of star rating improvements for both facilities and is the latest in an upward trend of clinical performance for CalVet. Last year, the Redding Veterans Home received five-stars – the highest possible rating – despite being a brand new facility. In addition, the Fresno Veterans Home received initial CMS certification with a near-perfect survey and anticipates a similarly high score in its first rating.

“We are proud of our staff’s commitment to quality care across our system of veterans homes and we look forward to more great results from them over the coming year,” Imbasciani said.

CalVet operates eight veterans homes throughout the state. Learn more about benefits and services for California veterans at [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov).

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## Operation Mail Call

**Never Forgotten**



**Never Enough Thanks for Your  
Sacrifices**

Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Our men and women in uniform often go months without hugging their children, walking through the park with a significant other or enjoying Mom's home-cooked Sunday dinners.

Ask them where they'd go if they had a free plane ticket anywhere in the world, and the overwhelming majority would say, "home."

Of course, we can't replace the hugs, the love or the secret family chili recipe – but with your help, we can provide them a connection to their fellow Americans who are grateful for their service.

Now, we're hoping you'll take your support to the next level by sending more cards and letters. Hand made cards by your children, or class mates are a terrific means of putting smiles on their faces even if only for a moment.

Cards and Letters of encouragement to help boost moral and let them know we sincerely appreciate the job they are doing and look forward to they day they are all brought home. Your card or letter will show your appreciation and help thousands more American heroes feel connected to the people they love and the country they serve.

Please help us to make a powerful expression of how much their fellow Americans care about them.

Thank you so much for all you're doing to show our service men and women they are appreciated missed and loved.

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my E-Mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from kids too!

For more information, click [HERE](#).

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**Vets Don't Need 20% Down with the VA Loan**

Veterans don't need to pay PMI or have 20% down with the VA Loan Benefit. Qualified borrowers can buy or refi with as little as \$0 down, and have no PMI payments with great rates and financing up to \$424,000. Use your [VA Loan Benefit](#) today.

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## **Courts Nix VA's Slow Roll on Emergency Care Claims**

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims rejected a motion from the Department of Veterans Affairs asking that it be allowed to stop taking steps toward reimbursing hundreds of thousands of veterans for non-VA emergency care costs until higher courts rule on VA's appeal. The latest ruling ensures VA will start the process required to begin paying veterans' emergency room bills. Read story [HERE](#).

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## **More on Concurrent Receipt and the CBO Report**

Last week we devoted our entire update to a discussion about Concurrent Receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability pay

and a report that was issued by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) that has upset many military retirees. As we explained, that CBO report was just that – a report. It was not a proposal and no such proposal exists in Congress.

**We want to thank all those who responded to the article.** In fact, there were too many for us to answer individually, but we want to assure you that we read them all.

Although there is no proposal to take away concurrent receipt from those who now receive it, one of our ongoing concerns is those retirees who have a VA disability rating of less than 50 percent and those who are Chapter 61 retirees (who were medically retired from military service because of an injury or disability that was not combat-related). They still do not receive both their military retired pay and their VA disability pay.

As there has been every year since 2004, (when TREA helped win concurrent receipt for those with disability ratings of 50 percent and above, which we had worked on for years) there is legislation in Congress to give all retirees full concurrent receipt. In the House the bills are HR 303 and HR 333. In the Senate the bill is S 66. And as in every year since 2004, those bills or ones just like them have been sent to the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate, where they have remained. They have never been able to make it out of committee.

The reason is the cost of the legislation. There are about 450,000 military retirees who still do not receive both their retired pay and their disability pay. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that to extend benefits to all veterans who would be eligible for both disability benefits and military retired pay would cost \$30 billion from 2015-2024. And so far, the members of the Armed Services Committees have not come up with that money because they want to spend it on weapons systems instead because that brings jobs to their districts and states.

Having said that, Congress is able to come up with money for the things they really want to do. If you want them to find the money to pay

for the legislation so that those bills can get out of committee and go to the floors of the House and Senate for a vote, you must contact your Senators and your Representative and politely but firmly tell them you want them to vote for those bills.

“The squeaking wheel gets the grease” is an old cliché but it’s absolutely true. You, the voters, must put constant pressure on your own members of Congress if you want them to act. The reason Congress has not yet passed concurrent receipt legislation is because members of Congress don’t believe they’ll pay a political price by not passing it. Only you can put the kind of pressure on them to cause them to finally act.

We at TREA will keep you posted on what’s happening with the legislation, but you have to call or write your own members of Congress and start putting pressure on them.

Source: TREA



**U.S. Government Accountability Office Reports**

- 1) Border Security: DHS Has Made Progress in Planning for a Biometric Air Exit System and Reporting Overstays, but Challenges Remain.
  - 2) Electricity: Federal Efforts to Enhance Grid Resilience.
  - 3) Electronic Health Records: HHS Needs to Improve Planning and Evaluation of Its Efforts to Increase Information Exchange in Post-Acute Care Settings.
  - 4) Electronic Health Records: HHS Needs to Improve Planning and Evaluation of Its Efforts to Increase Information Exchange in Post-Acute Care Settings.
  - 5) Environmental Litigation: Information on Endangered Species Act Deadline Suits.
  - 6) Joint Exercise Program: DOD Needs to Take Steps to Improve the Quality of Funding Data.
  - 7) Low-Income Housing Tax Credit: The Role of Syndicators.
  - 8) Navy Shipbuilding: Need to Document Rationale for the Use of Fixed-Price Incentive Contracts and Study Effectiveness of Added Incentives.
  - 9) Revenue Collections and Payments: Treasury Has Used Financial Agents in Evolving Ways but Could Improve Transparency.
  - 10) Sexual Assault: Better Resource Management Needed to Improve Prevention and Response in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.
  - 11) VA Health Care: Actions Needed to Ensure Medical Facilities' Controlled Substance Programs Meet Requirements.
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## **Veteran Crisis Resources**

**Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**

**Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**

**1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)**

**VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274**

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### **TRICARE Supplement: \$0 Out of Pocket & Rx Costs**

Doctor and hospital bills are expensive even when you're covered by TRICARE. Help minimize or even eliminate out-of-pocket expenses with the [TRICARE](#) Insurance Supplement Plan.

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### **Patriot Assistance Dogs**

Patriot Assistance Dogs (PAD) trains dogs to assist veterans who have been diagnosed with PTSD, traumatic brain injury or a related psychiatric issue. Founded by trainer Linda Wiedewitsch, PAD has paired up around 100 service dogs with veterans since its founding in 2011. The goal of Patriot Assistance Dogs is to place these dogs with the veterans and at no charge to the veterans. For more information, visit the Patriot Assistance Dogs [website](#) and follow PAD on [Facebook](#).

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# Veterans-For-Change Web Site

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly “One-Stop-Shop” website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 1,700 hits per day, and downloads average 1,000 per day with a total 3,193,851 visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's FREE of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

- Documents Library with over 15,905 documents on-line (Updated: 12/12/16)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
  - o Afghanistan Veterans
  - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program

- o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
- o Iraq Veterans
- o Korean Veterans
- o Men Veterans Forum
- o Mental Health for Veterans
- o Political Issues
- o Suggestion Box
- o The Mess Hall
- o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
- o Veteran Affairs
- o Vietnam Veterans
- o Welcome Mat
- o Women Veterans Forum
- o WW II Veterans
- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 10/10/16)
- News (Articles On-Line: 6,361)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,542, Added 1 New Links (Updated: 03/01/17)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail:

[Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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## **Military Allowances and School Lunches**

In this week's [Paycheck Chronicles mailbag](#), we address the sometimes confusing issues that swirl around military allowances and school lunches.

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<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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### **Links to Other Stories**

- 1) [Bureaucrats have the upper hand and veterans are the ones who continue to lose](#)
- 2) [Can yoga ease your PTSD? VA wants to find out](#)
- 3) [Judicial Watch to Represent Veteran Prosecuted for 'Posting' American Flag on Veteran's Affairs Center Fence on Memorial Day](#)
- 4) [Statement of Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin on Acting Deputy Secretary](#)
- 5) [Statement of Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin on Senior Personnel](#)
- 6) [Tester Gets VA to Cover Fertility Assistance for Disabled Veterans](#)
- 7) [Tester Introduces Bill to Extend Health Coverage for Children of Disabled Veterans](#)
- 8) [Tester Meets with VA Secretary Shulkin to Outline Agenda](#)
- 9) [Tester, Daines Introduce Bill to Approve Expansion of Missoula VA Clinic](#)
- 10) [Veterans beating a silent killer](#)

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

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## Getting Life Insurance Before Leaving the Military

It's recommended that you secure civilian life insurance well before you leave the military. There are two main reasons for this. First, military out-processing and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability process may turn up medical surprises. These may make it expensive or impossible for you obtain civilian insurance. Second, if you are retiring, you'll need to choose whether to purchase the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP.) You can't make a smart SBP decision if you don't know how much civilian life insurance will cost. For more details and tips, visit this Paycheck Chronicles [article](#).

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## VA to Begin Accepting Claims for Camp Lejeune Water Exposure

On March 14th the Department of Veterans' Affairs will begin processing new compensation claims totaling more than \$2.2 billion from veterans exposed to toxic water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

After years of lawsuits and appeals, acts of Congress and amendments since the contaminated water was confirmed in the 1980s, the VA will begin accepting claims March 14 for disabilities stemming from eight presumptive conditions. Those conditions are:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

For more information, click [HERE](#).

Source: TREA



Are you seeking employment? Been looking and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job postings available across the country.

Click [HERE](#) to see all job postings!

If you're an employer and have a job to post, send an E-Mail to:  
[Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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## **Recreation Therapy for Veterans**

February is Recreation Therapy Month, time to recognize the importance of Recreation Therapy and the Creative Arts Therapies (Art, Dance, Drama, and Music) in the rehabilitation and overall improvement of health and wellness for millions of veterans nationwide for over 150 years. Recreation was established by VA in the Rehabilitation Medicine Service Office. The complexity and interdependence of each patient's physiological, psychological and social needs were recognized. Therapists provide a holistic, person-centered-care approach that incorporates veterans' interests, family, community, and lifestyle. For more information, read the VA [VAntage Point Blog](#).

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## **VA Offers Pre-Determination of Burial Eligibility**

Many individuals would like to know, in advance, whether they are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. To assist them, the VA has created the "Pre-Need Eligibility Determination Program," specifically aimed at helping individuals with burial planning and making sure their wishes are known. The VA Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program can greatly reduce stress on surviving family members in trying times. Learn more about this [VA program](#) on Military.com.

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## **Congressional Hearing on Army Child Care**

More than 5,500 children are waiting to get into Army child care programs. The average wait time to place children into child care centers is four months, with at least five installations with wait times of five months or longer. Sgt. Major of the Army Daniel Dailey recently testified before the Senate Committee on Armed Service's personnel subcommittee. Dailey said the backlog of thousands of children is the result of several issues. The Army is in need of more child care facilities to accommodate military children, he said. Another reason he cited was the lengthy hiring process required for child care providers to be approved.

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## **AF Emails Blended Retirement Eligible Airmen**

Airmen eligible for the new Blended Retirement System (BRS) are receiving email notifications from myPers that include details of the new retirement system, a link to mandatory training about the opt-in process and how to enroll in the BRS. Only those active Airmen who, as of Dec. 31, 2017, have served fewer than 12 years, or Reserve Airmen who have accrued fewer than 4,320 retirement points, will have the option of electing BRS or remaining in the legacy retirement system. BRS information is continuously updated on [myPers](#). Click "Retirement" from any military landing page. Also, a live chat feature on BRS is available for Airmen.

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### **This Month Please Remember These Women Who Died During March While Serving Our Country In Or During War Times**

1 Mar 1991: USA MAJ Marie Therese (Rossi) Cayton, 32, helicopter crash in Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM

1 Mar 2004: USA ANC LTC Francis Liberty, Veteran of 3 wars, passed away

1 Mar 2005: USA SPC Lizbeth Robles, 31, IRAQ

1 Mar 2006: USA PFC Tina Priest, 20, non-combat gunshot, IRAQ

1 Mar 2008: USA SGT Randi Miller, 25, Iraq Vet, murdered in Seattle

1 Mar 2009: ILARNG SPC Simone A Robinson, 21, IED died at BAMC from burns

2 Mar 2008: SGT Randi Martin, 25, murdered along with her husband at Ft Lewis

3 Mar 2007: USA SGT Ashly L Moyer, 21, IRAQ

3 Mar 2009: USA PFC Jessica Y Sarandrea, 22, mortar, IRAQ

3 Mar 2012: USA SPC Shardae (Wright) Durant, murdered by husband in Clarksville, TN

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1LT Jane M Blevins, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1LT Evelyn Burton, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1 LT Catherine Marie Larkin, 30, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1LT Genevieve R Monaham, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Julia S Barnes, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Rita F Erard, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Evelyn M Gerdrum, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Lyndell A Glisson, 25, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Ethel L Harris, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Helen J Henley, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Kathryn Lucille McCarthy, 25, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Ann L Merrill, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Mayo C Onken, 25, plane crash India, WW II

4 Mar 2005: USA SPC Adriana N. Salem, 21, IRAQ

4 Mar 2011: USA PVT Galina Klippel, 24, suicide, Hawaii

6 Mar 1944: USA ANC 2LT Gerda M Mulack, plane crash in New Guinea, WW II

7 Mar 1943: WASP Margaret C. Sanford Oldenburg, WW II

7 Mar 2004: USA CPT Gussie M. Jones, 41, IRAQ

7 Mar 2008: USAFR SrAirman Blanca Luna, murdered at Sheppard AFB, TX

7 Mar 2009: USA PFC Ashley C Barnes-Lambert, 18, murdered by her

husband at Clarksville, TN while

home on leave from AFGHANISTAN

8 Mar 1901: USA CPT Ella Gibson, served with the 1 Wisconsin Heavy Artillery during the Civil War

8 Mar 2010: USA SPC Lakeshia M Bailey, 23, rollover accident in IRAQ

10 Mar 1991: USA PFC Pamela V. Gay, 19, DESERT STORM

11 Mar 2006: USA PFC Amy A Duerkson, 19, non-combat gunshot, IRAQ

11 Mar 2009: USA CPT Agnes "Irish" Bresnahan, 58, died from Agent Orange complications following

her VA Appeals Hearing while in Washington, DC

11 Mar 2013: USA CPT Sara M Knutson, 27, helicopter crash, AFGHANISTAN

11 Mar 2013: USN LT (jg) Valerie Cappelaere Delaney, 26, died in plane crash near Spokane, WA

12 Mar 1991: USA 2LT Kathleen M Sherry, 23, DESERT STORM

13 Mar 2010: USA PFC Erin L McLyman, 26, mortar fire, IRAQ

13 Mar 2010: US Consular Employee Lesley Enriquez, 35, murdered, Juarez, Mexico

14 Mar 1991: USA PFC Cindy Deanna Jane "DJ" Bridges, 20, DESERT STORM

16 Mar 2006: USA SPC Amanda Pinson, 21, non-combat incident, IRAQ

17 Mar 2004: USA ANC CPT Chris Banigan, Vietnam Nurse, passed away suddenly

19 Mar 1991: AZARNG PVT Dorothy Fails, 25, accident in Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM

21 Mar 1943: WAFS Cornelia Fort, plane accident, WW II

21 Mar 2013: USMC L/CPL Sara Castromata, 19, murdered at Quantico, VA

23 Mar 2003: USA PFC Lori Ann Piestewa, 23, IRAQ

23 Mar 2003: USAF 1LT Tamara (Long) Archuleta, 23, AFGHANISTAN

27 Mar 1944: WASP Frances Fortune Grimes, WW II

27 Mar 2009: USN LT Florence B Choe, 35, nurse, AFGHANISTAN

28 Mar 1918: ANC Patricia Byron, died at Camp McArthur, TX

30 Mar 2015: USA SSG Michelle R Langhorst, 31, suicide in VA  
Hospital parking lot, Pittsburg, PA

31 Mar 1945: USA PFC Emma Jane (Burrows) Windham from TX, B-  
17 hit by another plane landing in England

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## **4 Things to Know: Hiring Freeze Child Care Closures**

A federal hiring freeze put in place in late January by President Donald Trump is having some surprise ramifications on a few military bases worldwide. But what do you need to know? For more details, see this [article](#).

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## **VA Mortgage Rates: Special Report**

Mortgage interest rates have steadily been on the rise — but is this advantageous for someone looking to use their VA loan? For a walk-through on how mortgage interest rates and home prices got to where they are, and how you can use your VA home loan in a practical way based on this information, see this [article](#).

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| San Francisco                | 77,341     |
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| University of So. California | 5,013      |
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| Washington DC                | 139,641    |
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