



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, July 08, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 27



## **This-N-That**

As you recall I announced that the Blue Water Navy Bill had passed the house with a 382 to ZERO vote, and I had asked you all to please keep up the calls but this time to your Senators asking they vote yes and use the same bill number!

So again this week I am reminding you to please keep up those calls every week, and to back that up visit their websites and send the same message there too. And if you would please copy the information and paste into an E-Mail and send to your entire e-mail

address book and ask all your friends and family to do the same thing then forward on to their address books.

And again I know I've been preaching how to make things happen for all Veterans for a very long time now, and with the passage of HR 299 just goes to show what you can accomplish by getting involved in a particular issue and sticking with it till it happens.

So please, when I post issues that need action being taken, and there are more below, please, do go send off the pre-written e-mails, follow it up with calls to your reps in DC, we can make change happen, provided you can help too!

None of us, meaning any organization can do it alone, none and I've seen a lot of smoke being blown about how one organization or another is doing this or that, but honestly what have we really seen?

Bottom line if Veterans don't become involved in their own benefits and healthcare, simply speaking nothing will ever change.

Over the past week I've been speaking with LT Bobby Ross regarding the AFOA (Autistic Farmers of America) and looks like they will be expanding soon. He is currently looking for additional farm land to purchase and hopefully by this time next year will be

able to start selling seeds that are GMO free which is a big deal!

So if you or someone you know might be interested, please have them contact me and I will make sure the information is passed on to Bobby.

More information is coming in on Autism and those who have served both here in the US and in the UK. So hopefully soon we will begin to add more information on the website for all to access.

One thing I have noticed becoming a prominent issue in speaking with several Veterans is being "cut off" from communications with their doctors through MyHealthNet, and being cut off from receiving assistance from their Congressman's office.

And the one consistent factor is losing your temper, using abrasive or foul language, or making threats.

I know from being a military brat that temper, foul language, etc. comes with the territory and had always been acceptable, but when speaking to people regarding healthcare, benefits, or seeking assistance from your Congressman, you just can't let it happen.

I promise you if you can't maintain, be calm, level headed, direct and to the point, you WILL have doors

slammed closed in your face and once that happens, it's almost impossible to get them re-opened.

I really hate to say it this way, but you need to kiss ass to get what you want. Be kind, respectful, brief, direct and to the point, and LET IT GO.

I'm sure you've heard the saying you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar, same applies here!

This week we celebrated the 4th of July and I do hope every one was safe and sane. And now I'd like to ask everyone if you know of a Veteran who is single, living alone, to please make it a serious effort to pick up the phone and just do a buddy check on them!

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)



**Wilkie Pledges No VA Health Care  
'Privatization'**

During his nomination hearings last week, VA Secretary Nominee Robert Wilkie Pledged there would be [No 'Privatization' Of Vets Health Care](#). In addition, Wilkie said that removing the red tape roadblocks to getting veterans "through the door" to see a doctor would be his top priority if he is confirmed by the Senate. Read more about the Wilkie's [nomination hearing](#).



## Four Highlights in Veteran News this Week

There were four important news developments for military veterans in Washington DC last week, which impact; VA Leadership, VA's e-Health Records Roll-out, Benefits for Blue Water Veterans, and Access to Commissaries and Exchanges for Disabled Vets. Get the full rundown [here](#).



## Summer Travel: Getting Care While Overseas

Summer vacation is the start of travel season for many military families. TRICARE covers you when you travel on business or take a vacation with family. When traveling overseas, you should know what to do in the event of illness or other health issues.

Read the full article [here](#).



**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 **2,100** hits per day, and downloads average **1,200** per day with a total **4,173,227** 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 16,411 documents on-line (Updated: 06/08/18)
- 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 (Counselor Needed)
  - 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: 01/11/18)
- News (Articles On-Line: 7,461)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,654, Added 9 New Links

(Updated: 05/27/18)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)



**Do Not Let Congress Balance the Budget on the Backs of Retirees**

**Background:** TRICARE enrollment fees and other cost shares were recently changed. As a result, military retirees who entered the military after January 1, 2018, will generally be required to pay more for TRICARE benefits than current military retirees. Military retirees were exempt from most increases in recognition that they have kept their end of the bargain. Now, Congress would like to change the terms of its deal with military retirees by removing that exemption and significantly increasing TRICARE costs for current retirees. The VFW needs your help in defeating this harmful proposal which would require military retirees to pay more for their earned health care.

**Take Action:** Contact your Senators and Representative to demand that they reject any proposal that would result in TRICARE fee increases for current beneficiaries, and tell them that they must not balance the budget on the backs of military retirees.

**[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION](#)**



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



Don't waste your money on rent when you can buy a home with \$0 Down. Now is the time to use your 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 \$453k. Use your VA [loan benefit](#) today.



**LT Bobby Ross**

*[Click here for more info](#)*

June's Featured Song

### **The Reunion**

I have been sending out my LRRP Newsletter each month for over 30 years. Up and to this month, I have never gone into the 'poor pitiful me mode' until now. These past few months have been rough on me. First

off, I lost my Mom. That in itself was hard. But then there were other complications. My [Survival Farming](#) operation has been seriously threatened to be closed down. And I had to bury one of my most favorite Bengal kitties. And a whole bunch of other crap. So, I am putting my "[The Reunion](#)" up this month as my "[Song of the Month](#)". I produced this one on my original "Voice of America" album in Nashville in 1987. The picture below is of two beautiful and wonderful girls in my high school back when I was an Officer Candidate in the US Army in 1966. I came back on an unexpected leave from Fort Knox, KY, to South Lake Tahoe, CA on December 15, 1966 for Christmas. I met Connie and Maria at my parent's home that night, and they both rushed into my arms. We had such a great night together with others, playing our guitars, singing songs and just having fun. The following morning, I went skiing with a couple family friends at Heavenly Valley Ski Resort, and on our way back home, we met up with the two girls who had driven up to Al Tahoe to buy me Christmas gifts. On the way back home, as we were following right behind them in our car, their car went off the road and down a steep embankment, and they were both killed. Connie was my only Baby Sister. Maria was my first fiance. This song, "[The Reunion](#)", kinda touches on that moment, and that time in general. Shortly after their funerals, I graduated from OCS and became a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army.

Not long after that, I was in Vietnam fighting for my life.



**Save Now on Your Rx  
Costs & Co-Pays with a  
TRICARE Supplement**



Get a Tricare supplement that pays your cost shares and can pay 100% of covered excess charges. [Get valuable coverage now.](#)



**VA Reexamines Suicide Statistic**

According to Stars and Stripes, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reported for years that an average of 20 veterans died by suicide every day. However, a new report says the statistic has long been misunderstood. The VA has now revealed in the new report that the average daily number of veteran suicides has always included deaths of active-duty servicemembers and members of the National Guard and Reserve, not just veterans. The new report is available on the [VA website](#).



### **DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT THE FLAG???**

The American Flag is Folded 13 Times...

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States Of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion

that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

With the final fold the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."



**CONTACT YOUR  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

**PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!**

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



The Yellow Ribbon Tuition Program: How to Use It



The Yellow Ribbon Program provides [tuition assistance](#) for an out-of-state school or a private school to eligible service members. The VA will match the contribution the school provides through the program. For more details, see this [article](#).



**10 things to do if you find a  
Veteran in crisis**

For more than a decade now, our country has been at war in two very different locations, with very different missions. In that time, more than 2.2 million troops have deployed and served in those bloody conflicts. They have endured unimaginable heat, bitter cold, and sand storms that peel the skin off your bones; they've missed births of children, weddings of friends, anniversaries of parents, and funerals of fallen brothers; they've witnessed the wholesale slaughter of innocents and savage acts of hatred and violence, as well as acts of such immense bravery, honor, and sacrifice as to change forever their version of courage.

But living through all that does something to you.

The civilian world often says with a bewildered shake of its collective heads, "We've lost so many young people during these wars." But in truth, only those who were there, or loved those who were there, have truly suffered the losses. Since only 1% of America puts on a military uniform, the rest of America has remained largely untouched. It is the 2.2 million who bear the greatest burden; most of them lost someone they knew, sometimes right before their eyes. It's also the 6,500 families who are devastated by the death of their loved one, who welcome home a flag-draped coffin, and who mourn in silence for years afterward.

Living through all that does something to you, too.

Tens of thousands of combat-weary warriors are now being discharged out of the military, often without a game plan as to what they will do next. Many of them entered the military right out of high school, so being a warrior is the only job they've ever had. And translating their specific skill set to civilian employment is tricky.

Now, after eight years of service, they take off the uniform that is their identity, turn in the weapon that they feel closer to than their own mother, leave behind a highly structured, mission-driven system with a clear chain of command, and enter into a world that looks utterly insane to them—a place where phenomenally popular “reality TV” is comic book dumb and bears no resemblance to the hard, cold reality they've lived.

Many of them are using their GI Bill and entering college, but are quickly learning that school is a different kind of battlefield, fraught with insensitive professors, clueless peers, and (thanks to getting their bell badly rung by an IED or two) new learning difficulties. Most are adapting, growing, and building new lives for themselves that make all of us proud. But some of them are really struggling.

Some don't know how to handle the disorienting re-entry, not to mention the bad memories that sometimes

run in their heads like horror movies they can't turn off. So they drink, they drug, and they isolate themselves, partly because they are trying to achieve some inner quiet, and partly out of fear that one day they might completely lose control.

If that sad day comes, and the rage gets away from them, they usually rage against the people they love, often because even in their presence, the combat veteran feels misunderstood and very alone.

Sometimes they aim their rage at themselves and put a 9mm in their mouths, wanting just to ease the crushing guilt they feel over having survived when their brothers didn't.

But either way, when a battle-hardened combat veteran is involved, these won't be your typical 911 calls. These men and women are not only trained to kill, they're desensitized to the sights, sounds, and sensations of killing; the usual hesitation in pulling the trigger has been trained out of them. Imagine your SWAT team being called out twice a day for 365 days in a row. Tactically, that's the amount of experience you could be up against when you encounter a combat veteran.

These situations will require heightened awareness and additional skills to bring the incident to a positive

resolution. The following are guidelines to help you navigate your way through the situation and reach the other side safely.

1. Look for clues that your subject is a veteran.

Optimally, your dispatcher should routinely ask callers if they know whether the subject is a veteran. That will give you a leg up. The next obvious cues are things like dog tags, a military tattoo, combat uniform, desert boots, or a distinct military bearing. Also listen to what the subject says. Use of military words or phrases (e.g., “weapon” for gun, “squared away” for things being OK, “Groundhog’s Day” for the sameness of every day, etc.) are hard to stop saying after eight years. If the situation allows you to actually talk with the subject, ask him/her directly, “Have you ever served in the military?” If yes, see if you can get any additional information from him/her without escalating him/her, such as which branch he/she served in, where he/she deployed to, and how long ago he/she got home. The more information you obtain, the more leverage you’ll have to work with.

2. Once you’ve determined the subject is a combat veteran, take extra safety precautions. Most veterans I know carry a weapon on them all the time—usually a knife, sometimes a Ka-Bar. But some of them will also have a firearm in a gym bag or in their vehicle somewhere. Remember: their M4 was their guardian

angel for many years. They feel tremendously vulnerable without something to replace it. If you've been called to a veteran's home for a fight, domestic situation, or suicidal gesture, assume there are weapons and ammo in the house.

3. When a veteran decompensates, the situation can become violent very quickly. If at all possible, establish some distance between the subject and everyone else around him/her. Phrases such as, "Hey, let's give him/her some breathing room, folks, give the guy/gal some air," can clear some people away without insulting the veteran. This type of non-confrontational response will also decrease the veteran's sense of threat, which is crucial in helping the veteran to feel safe.

4. Keep in mind that the veteran's actions may be somewhat or completely out of his/her conscious control at that moment. He's/she's probably in nine kinds of pain and probably hasn't gotten the help he/she deserves. So if it is at all appropriate and feasible, thank him/her for his/her service. Even if you have to take him/her down and handcuff him/her, try to be as respectful as possible. Do what you can to help the veteran save face. Obviously, in a foot chase, you're not stopping to make nice. If the guy/gal is threatening you, you're not thanking him/her for his/her sacrifice. But if, for instance, it's a suicide gesture or the guy/gal is in an argument with someone, thanking

him/her changes the tone of the encounter and builds rapport, which is key to de-escalation and resolution.

5. Combat veterans can have some pretty dramatic responses to being startled. My advice: minimize the surprises. You can't control noises on the street or what other people do, but if, for instance, you need to pull out a pad and pen, don't just suddenly reach into your pocket—his/her warrior brain may kick in and think you're attacking him/her. Cue him/her into what you're doing by saying, "I'm just going to take some notes."

6. A corollary to that is to do things that will calm him/her. For instance, maintain an exterior that looks relaxed and confident. Use supportive language. Control your own voice; he'll/she'll sense anger or disgust in your tone, which he'll/she'll interpret as being disrespectful. If one of his/her kids is crying or his/her girlfriend/boyfriend is screaming at him/her, find a way of separating him/her from that. Neurologically, he's/she's torqued up, and additional stressors like that can escalate things unnecessarily.

7. If you have any ties to the military yourself, or if your family member served in Iraq or Afghanistan, mention it. If you have any ties to New York City, tell him/her something like, "I personally appreciated you going over there and kicking the crap out of Bin Laden." The more real you can be with him/her, the less likely his/her subconscious is to view you as an enemy when

it comes time for you to take action and the more likely he/she is to drop his/her defensive posture.

8. Let him/her talk, as long as it is helping him/her wind down. Validate how tough his/her situation is (whatever that may be). If he's/she's ranting about something going on in his/her life, don't argue with him, just nod your head and say something non-committal like, "Yeah, that sounds like a tough situation." Time is your friend in these cases. Sometimes, the guy/gal just needs to have a reason (jail) to regain control.

9. Think of the subject's behavior as symptoms of an injury, not as a mental illness. I've never understood how a soldier witnessing his/her best friend or battle buddy getting blown apart makes him/her disordered. Far more empowering (and accurate) is that the soldier has been injured by the experience. An injury requires some care and some time, maybe even some adjustments afterwards, but doesn't label the person as "broken." If you approach the subject with the understanding that he/she is injured vs. emotionally disturbed, he'll/she'll be far more likely to trust and connect with you.

10. If at any point the subject begins saying things that make no sense or are incongruous to the time and place, call the paramedics immediately and clear the area. If he/she starts shouting something like, "We're three clicks away and under fire!" or if he/she starts calling out names of people who are not present,

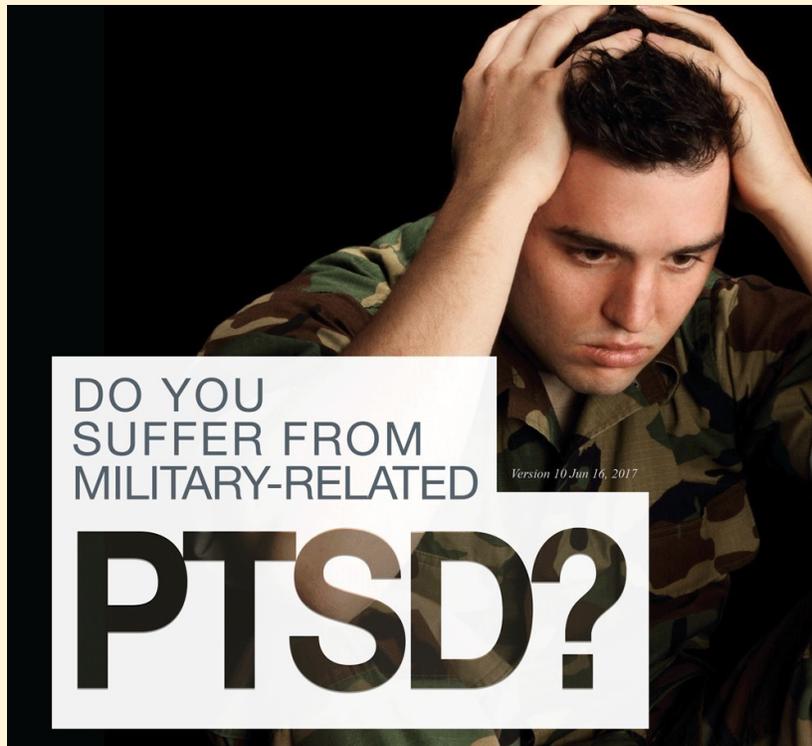
he/she is most likely experiencing a flashback and is living out a memory. That means he's/she's unpredictable. He/she may look straight at your uniform with the U.S. flag on it and, in his state, be absolutely convinced you are a suicide bomber about to detonate. He/she has no control over this behavior and cannot be "talked out of it," and attempting to do so may agitate him/her further. If he/she appears to be living out a battle scene, create as large of a perimeter for him/her as possible, let him/her know that the "medics" are on their way "to help with the wounded" and alert EMS to the situation when they arrive. And remember, be respectful. These are symptoms of a significant injury.

Given what they've been through, our veterans deserve our most profound compassion and assistance. Special veteran courts are being established nationwide and are allowing many veterans to receive clinical care instead of getting lost in the legal system. They can, and will, heal, if we as a nation become savvy enough to work toward giving them a leg up instead of a hand out.

Alison Lighthall, RN, BSN, MSN, FIAS is the editor of The American Institute of Stress's Combat Stress e-magazine. She is also president of Hand2Hand Contact, a veteran-owned and operated training and consulting company that helps civilian organizations to

better understand, work with, and care for veterans. She served as a captain in the Army Nurse Corps from 2004–2007, and is a member of the ILEETA trainers organization.

■ [See more here](#) -



**Veterans Crisis Line:  
1-800-273-8255 & Press 1  
Ntl Call Center for Homeless Vets  
1-877-424-3838**



# New Navy Parental Leave Policy

The U.S. Navy has announced the establishment of the Military Parental Leave Program, which increases parental leave and combines the current family leave policies into one. The program applies to all active duty Sailors. Reserve Sailors who were performing active duties, or mobilized more than 12 continuous months, and are the parents of a qualifying birth or adoption on or after Dec. 23, 2016 are also eligible. Under the new program, the three family leave categories include: (1) Maternity Convalescent Leave for 42 days; (2) Primary Caregiver Leave for 42 days; and (3) Secondary Caregiver leave for 14 days. The new program supports **Sailor 2025**.



**TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin**  
**#457**

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:

- Preventing Firework Burns
- Natural Disasters & Food
- Traveling Overseas

Visit the TRICARE Media Center for this and previous podcasts [here](#).



## **VA's VEText Appointment Notification System**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has created VEText, an interactive mobile solution to remind veterans of upcoming appointments via text messaging. Beginning Oct. 1, veterans throughout the nation will be receiving interactive VEText appointment reminders on their mobile devices. Many are receiving reminders now. Make sure your VA medical center has your [current cell phone](#) number. For more information, read the VA [Vantage Point Blog](#).



Vintners in the Napa Valley who produce primarily Pinot Blancs and Pinot Grigios have developed a new hybrid grape, which acts as an anti-diuretic and will reduce the number of trips an older person has to make to the bathroom during the night.

They will be marketing the new wine as Pinot More.





## **H.R. 4843, to Include Military Installations in Thailand to Herbicide Exposure**

In January 2018, Representative Bruce Westerman (AR) introduced H.R. 4843, a bill that would concede herbicide exposure to all veterans who served at any military installation in Thailand during the Vietnam Era for purposes of determining their eligibility for VA benefits. This measure is a companion bill to S. 2105, introduced by Senators John Boozman (AR) and Joe

Donnelly (IN). DAV issued [an alert](#) in support of S. 2105 in December 2017.

While VA's internal manual acknowledges herbicide exposure for specific military occupational specialties on the perimeter of eight specific Thai Royal Air Force Bases, Thai statutes and regulations do not automatically recognize veteran exposure to herbicides while serving in Thailand during the Vietnam Era.

H.R. 4843 would automatically concede herbicide exposure for all veterans who served at military installations in Thailand during the Vietnam Era, regardless of the base, duty on the perimeter or military occupational specialty. As a result, the presumptive diseases currently associated with herbicide exposure, including spina bifida for children, would be applicable to all veterans who served at military installations in Thailand during the Vietnam Era.

Consistent with DAV Resolution No. 214, DAV supports the recognition of herbicide exposure to veterans who served at military installations in Thailand so that the presumption of service connection for Agent Orange related diseases would be available to service members exposed to include those who served in Thailand. Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Representative to cosponsor H.R. 4843.

Your advocacy makes DAV a highly influential and effective organization in Washington, D.C. Your voice makes a difference and we would not be as effective without you.

Thank you for standing with veterans and participating in the DAV Commander's Action Network.

[Take Action](#)



**What You Need to Know About  
PTSD**

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is caused by a traumatic event with symptoms occurring post incident. The person perceiving the traumatic incident views the event as dangerous, life threatening or shocking. Usually, initial symptoms are anger, grumpy old man syndrome, loss of sleep and nightmares. Treatments for PTSD range from individual and group therapies to thought reduction therapy and medication. Even yoga, tension and trauma release exercises fall into the spectrum of holistic PTSD treatments. Also, it is recommended that patients refrain from alcohol use while being treated for PTSD. For more information, visit the National Center for PTSD [website](#).



The other day while driving home, after being delayed at my office, I suddenly saw flashing lights in my rearview mirror.

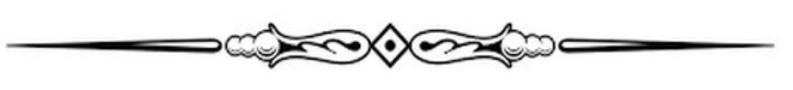
The police officer pulled me over for speeding. Hoping for a little leniency I explained to him that I was rushing home to be with my wife on our first anniversary.

But rather than letting me off with just a warning, he went ahead and wrote out the ticket, handed it to me, and said, "Congratulations! The first year is paper, right?"



## **National Native American Veterans Memorial**

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) has announced its selection of the winning design for the National Native American Veterans Memorial. Harvey P. Pratt's Warriors' Circle of Honor design was selected to be constructed next to the Smithsonian NMAI. Pratt, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, is a Southern Cheyenne chief for the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. This will be one of the 12 national memorials in Washington, D.C. The dedication of the Veterans Memorial is scheduled for Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2020. For more information, visit the National Native American Veterans Memorial [webpage](#).



### **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**



## **Remembering the Great War**

Over the coming months, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps will conduct a number of observances, both here at home and in Europe, to commemorate America's involvement in World War I. The United States government has also formed a World War I Centennial Commission, with the mission of raising awareness and education across the country. The commission is engaged in a campaign to construct a National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. The United States mobilized some 4 million men and women to serve during the war, and suffered almost 300,000 casualties in the horrific fighting in Europe. For more information, visit the World War I Centennial Commission [website](#).



## Links to Other Stories

1. [Acting secretary visits Texas facilities looking for best practices that could be implemented nationwide](#)
2. [Acting VA Secretary lauds improvement of Manchester VA Medical Center](#)
3. [Agent Orange presumption policy leads to higher VA health care use](#)
4. [Army combat Veteran fights the war on opioid addiction](#)

5. Changes coming to Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program
6. Hepatitis C screening initiative tests positive for saving Veterans' lives
7. Service dog comforts Vietnam Veteran after surgery
8. Understanding the link between PTSD and substance use disorders in Veterans
9. VA now reminds Veterans of their appointments by text
10. VA Prostate Cancer Program Update - Watchful Waiting May Be Best Option
11. VA 'silent' after eBenefits account hacked; Veterans encouraged to check their accounts

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)



**Mentor a Fellow Veteran**

Here are 7 ways you can mentor a veteran (as a veteran): (1) tell them what worked and did not work for you; (2) help expand their network; (3) check in with them often; (4) meet them for coffee, lunch or breakfast; (5) invite them to events and gatherings and go with them; (6) cheer them up; and (7) keep their perspective in check. Sharing what you know with someone coming up behind you is an inherent aspect of military service, and one you can leverage in the civilian sector. For more information, read this [article](#).



I had just moved to an address between Sunrise Avenue and Sunset Blvd., one of Sacramento's major streets, and was explaining to a clerk where my home was located for billing purposes. "I live between Sunrise and Sunset," I told her.

"Oh, honey," she knowingly replied, "we all do."





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## **Report Looks at Suicide**

Suicide rates are increasing for both veterans and civilians in the US. Male veterans, when compared to civilian men, are 1.3 times more likely to kill themselves. Women veterans however die by suicide twice as often as their civilian counterparts. A new report from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released as an update to last year's report on veteran suicide now gives us a better view on veteran suicide up through 2015. The report is available on the VA Mental Health [website](#). If you or someone you know has suicidal thoughts, call the [Military Crisis Line](#) at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255, or confidentially [chat online](#) with a Military Crisis Line counselor.



## Office of Inspector General

1. [Small and Rural Practices' Experiences in Previous Programs and Expected Performance in the Merit-based Incentive Payment System](#)



**Share Your Transition Experience**

The American Legion's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) survey is an opportunity for veterans to share the effectiveness of the program and its relevance in helping active-duty military personnel transition to civilian life. The survey asks questions on the multiple TAP sessions and their usefulness, as well as the benefits of the program. Other questions focus on how well TAP prepares active duty military personnel for civilian life. Take the [31-question survey](#).



**“We Proudly Support our  
Military Personnel & Families”**



**Help Prevent TRICARE Fee  
Increases**

Congress recently increased TRICARE costs for future military retirees and their families. Current military retirees and their family members are generally exempt from these cost increases, but a proposal included in the Senate's version of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2019 (NDAA) would remove this exemption. This proposal would result in substantially higher TRICARE enrollment fees for current military retirees. The VFW needs your help in defeating this harmful proposal which would require military retirees to pay more for their earned health care.

**[Take action here!](#)**



1. Allergy Alert Issued in Midwest Whole Foods Market Stores for Undeclared Soy in Oatmeal Raisin Cookies
2. Blissful Remedies Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Certain Kratom Powder Capsule
3. Fagron Sterile Services Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Neostigmine Methylsulfate 1mg/mL, 5mg per 5mL and Neostigmine Methylsulfate 1mg/mL, 3mg per 3mL, in a 5mL syringe Due to Mislabeling
4. FDA advises health care professionals not to use MedGyn Products' Monsel's Solution
5. LL's Magnetic Clay Inc Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Allergens in Prescript-Assist Dietary Supplement
6. May Flower International Inc. Issues a Allergy Alert on Undeclared Milk Allergens in "3+2 Soda Crackers"
7. United States Bakery Issues Allergy Alert On Undeclared Milk In Naked Bread Hamburger Buns



## **Defense Health Agency Transition**

Beginning on Oct. 1, 2018, the Defense Health Agency will assume responsibility for the administration and management of health care at all military treatment facilities operating under DOD. This consolidation aims to provide a more integrated, efficient, and effective system of readiness to better support the lethality of the force by eliminating many of the redundancies that have historically plagued the military health system (MHS). The transition hopes to significantly increase our nation's ability to provide world class medical support to warfighters, their dependents, and our military retirees. Find out more about the [implementation of MHS transition](#).



*SURVIVAL IS FUN*



## MIA Update

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for 12 American service members who had been missing in action from Korea and WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Army Cpl. Thomas W. Reagan**, 18, of Lebanon, Ind., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 6 in Pensacola, Fla. Reagan was assigned to Company A, 14th Engineer Combat Battalion, 24th Infantry Division, participating in the defense of the 24th ID's main supply route and the town of Yongsan. He was reported missing in action on

Aug. 12, 1950, as a result of fighting that occurred between his unit and enemy forces near Naktong Bulge in South Korea. [Read about Reagan.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class Elmore B. Goodwin**, 25, of Norfolk, Va., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 9 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Goodwin was a member of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. In late November 1950, Goodwin's unit engaged in combat operations against Chinese forces in the vicinity of Anju, North Korea. Goodwin was reported missing in action on Nov. 27, 1950. When no information regarding Goodwin was reported by returning American POWs, the U.S. Army declared him deceased as of Dec. 31, 1953. [Read about Goodwin.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. John W. Hall**, 23, of Jennings, La., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 6 in Houston. Hall was a member of Headquarters Battery, 503rd Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division. In late November 1950, Hall's unit received orders to move from Kunu-ri to Sunchon, North Korea, through an area known as "The Gauntlet." Hall was reported missing in action on Dec. 1, 1950, in the vicinity of Somindong, North Korea. [Read about Hall.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Sgt. Charles H. Daman**, 21, of De Smet, Idaho, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 11 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Daman was a member of the 714th Bombardment Squadron, 448th Bombardment Group, 2nd Bombardment Division. On April 4, 1945, Daman, along with more than 400 other bombers, took off to attack airbases at Parchim, Perleberg and Wesendorf, Germany, as part of an Allied attempt to cripple what was left of the German air force. Daman's aircraft, which held 10 airmen, was attacked by enemy fighter planes in the vicinity of Hamburg. [Read about Daman.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. John H. Canty**, 22, of Winsted, Conn., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 10 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Canty was a member of the 555th Bombardment Squadron, 386th Bombardment Group, IX Bomber Command based at Easton Lodge-Essex, England. On June 22, 1944, Canty's B-26 Marauder was on a nighttime bombing mission against targets near Caen, France, when his plane was shot down between the villages of Baron-sur-Odon and Gavrus, France. Canty and the seven other crewmembers were killed in the incident. [Read about Canty.](#)

-- **Army Pvt. Kenneth D. Farris**, 19, of Dodson,

Texas, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 9 in Dallas. Farris was assigned to Company B, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. On Nov. 28, 1944, Farris was wounded by artillery and left the front line for the battalion aid station. His regiment remained in combat for several more days, reaching the outskirts of Gey, Germany, before being pulled off the front line. When officers took an accounting of the surviving Company B soldiers, Farris could not be found and was declared deceased on Nov. 29, 1945. [Read about Farris.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. William W. Shank**, 24, of Harrisonburg, Va., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 14 in his hometown. Shank was a P-38 pilot assigned to the 338th Fighter Squadron, 55th Fighter Group, 66th Fighter Wing, 8th Fighter Command, 8th Air Force. On Nov. 13, 1943, Shank was killed after engaging with the enemy on a mission to Bremen, Germany. [Read about Shank.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Joseph M. Johnson**, 22, of Rushford, Minn., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 7 in his hometown. Johnson was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits,

which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. [Read about Johnson.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Leon Arickx**, 22, of Mitchell, Iowa, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 7 in Osage, Iowa. Arickx was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. [Read about Arickx.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Roger Gonzales** was a member of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. On Nov. 27, 1950, Gonzales' unit moved northwest from Hagru-ri to Fox Hill at the Toktong Pass. In the early hours of Nov. 28, the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces attacked and Gonzales' company sustained heavy casualties. Gonzales was reported to have been killed in action on Nov. 29, 1950, and was buried at the base of Fox Hill. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gonzales.](#)

-- **Army Pvt. Donald E. Brown** was a member of Company A, 745th Tank Battalion, fighting in support

of the 1st Infantry Division in the European Theater in World War II. Brown was killed in action on July 28, 1944, when his M-4 Sherman tank was destroyed by enemy fire near Camberton, France. Interment services are pending. [Read about Brown.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Raymond R. Camery** was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. Interment services are pending. [Read about Camery.](#)



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

Jul 1863: Frances Day, disguised as SGT Frank Mayne, CIVIL WAR

Jul 1999: USA CPT Jennifer Odom,

2 Jul 2010: USA SPC Morganne M McBeth, 19, non-combat murder, IRAQ

2 Jul 2013: USA SPC Hilda I (Ortiz) Clayton, 22, non-

combat mortar explosion, AFGHANISTAN

4 Jul 1944: WASP Susan Parker Clarke, WW II

4 Jul 2004: USAR SPC Julie Rochelle Hickey, 20,  
AFGHANISTAN

5 Jul 1950: USA ANC MAJ Genevieve Smith, C-47  
plane crash on way to her new assignment as Chief  
Nurse of the 8th US Army in the Korean Theater

5 Jul 2007: USA SPC Michelle R Ring, 26, IRAQ

6 Jul 2007: USN ABH2 Karen M Boado Tumbaga, 25,  
buried in CA

7 Jul 1944: WASP Paula Ruth Loop, WW II

8 Jul 1944: WASP Bettie Mae Scott, WW II

8 Jul 1968: USA ANC 2LT Pamela Dorothy Donovan,  
26, VIETNAM

8 Jul 2008: USA ANC 2LT Holly Wimunc, 24,  
murdered by estranged US marine husband in  
Fayetteville, NC murdered, Fayetteville, NC

8 Jul 2012: USA SPC Erica (Alecksen) Bailey, 21,  
IED, AFGHANISTAN

8 Jul 2013: USA CSM Andrea E Powell, 43, vehicle  
accident in SC

9 Jul 2003: USA SGT Melissa Valles, 26, non-combat  
gunshot, IRAQ

10 Jul 1991: USAR LT Lorraine Lawton, accident in  
Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM

10 Jul 2007: USA CPT Maria I Ortiz, 40, IRAQ

11 Jul 2004: NEARNG SFC Linda Ann Tarango-  
Griess, 33, IRAQ

13 Jul 2009: USN IS2 Amanda J Snell, 20, murdered, JB Myer-Henderson Hall, DC

14 Jul 2005: NEARNG SSG Tricia L. Jameson, 34, IRAQ

16 Jul 1943: USA WAAC PVT Angela Becker, vehicle accident, Fort Riley, KS

17 Jul 2008: USAF T/SGT Jackie L Larsen, 37, natural causes, IRAQ

17 Jul 2011: USA SGT Deirdre Aguigui, 24, murdered by soldier husband at Ft Stewart, GA

17 Jul 2012: USA SPC Krystal M Fitts, 26, indirect fire, AFGHANISTAN

18 Jul 1944: WASP Beverly Jean Moses, WW II

18 Jul 2016: USAF 1LT Anais A Tobar, 25, non-combat injury, ABU DHABI

19 Jul 2005: USA PVT Lavena L. Johnson, 19, non-combat incident gunshot and burned, IRAQ

19 Jul 2015: USA CWO3 Tania Dunbar, 40, died at a campground in NC

20 Jul 2006: USAF COL Judith (Lombeida) Backlin, 57, auto accident, buried at USAFA

20 Jul 2012: USAF Civilian Rebecca (Hernandez Wygal) Wingo, 32, shot & killed in Aurora, CO

22 Jul 2004: USA SGT Tatjana Reed, 34, IRAQ

23 Jul 1999: USA CPT Jennifer (Shafer) Odom, anti-drug mission, Columbia

23 Jul 2011: USA SSG Christina Joe, 32, died in vehicle accident near Rehoboth, NM

24 Jul 1944: ANC 2LT Catherine Price, C-54 crash during Normandy WWII

24 Jul 1945: USA ANC 2LT Nancy J Leo, 23, jeep accident in Paris, buried in Luxembourg American Cemetery

24 Jul 2004: USA SGT Erin E Edwards, 24, murdered by soldier husband, Killeen, TX

25 Jul 2008: USA SPC Seteria L. Brown, 22, AFGHANISTAN

27 Jul 1943: ANC 2LT Ruth Gardiner, C-47 plane crash near Nanek, AK

27 Jul 1944: USA PVT Marjory L Babinetz from Bairdford, PA, RA-24 plane crash over Stillwater, OK during a recruiting stunt

27 Jul 2013: USA SPC Caryn E Nouv, 29, IED and small arms fire, IRAQ

30 Jul 2015: USAR SGT Blanca Riviera, 29, shot in home by husband, El Paso, TX



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