



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 02, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 35



This-N-That

By now I'm sure you all know that Arizona Senator John McCain passed away on Saturday, August 25th from a non-curable brain cancer known as Glioblastoma. Our sincerest condolences to his family and staff.

This past week we have managed to find a couple of programming bugs on our website, and they have been repaired. So creating an account should no longer be a problem, and the few accounts that got caught in the programming issue, I will be repairing those accounts and will notify you by E-Mail you have access.

In addition there have been nearly 200 more new

documents added to the system, some are on libraries that you would need to be a subscriber to gain access to, the remaining are open to anyone. And we have approximately 74,250 more documents to be added which will take time to prep, convert to PDF's and get uploaded into the appropriate library so be sure to check back often.

And the last change that has been made to the website is how articles will appear.

We now have various topics and articles will be posted in their category, and this will also allow you to view the article headings and choose to read those that interest you most, as well as to be able to see at a glance which articles happen to be the hottest or of more importance.

We did discover though that with this new layout we do have an added step to take so for now some articles don't have ability to post comments, and some do. This will be being corrected over the next 10-30 days so please be patient.

Again I need to say thank you to Regina M., Peggy D., Bruce J., and Dennis Z. for all their contributions to the website. Some you will be able to see now, others will be placed on-line as quick as we can.

I also want to thank all those who have e-mailed comments on various issues. I've not had a chance to respond to you as of yet, but I promise I will.

As some of you know there had been a trial going on

against Monsanto, and the chemical weed killer known as Round-Up. And the case finally went to the Jury and the claimant has won, and there has been an award of \$289 million dollars.

I am not an attorney, but personally I think this is a great piece of news as now it would seem doors are now further been kicked open and it's way more public than ever before and just might help Veterans in their claims against the VA for benefits and medical care.

Evidence had been presented during the trial that was never made known before and how Monsanto had pressured and bullied their own scientists and attorney's to prevent information from getting out and in the "wrong hands!" Well I interpret this as a "GAME OVER" situation.

So keep your fingers crossed that all this new evidence will make it's way to the VA and many decisions in the past can be over-turned, and possibly new illnesses added to the "approved" list, one being Glioblastoma!

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



BWN Needs Your Help!

The United States government, through its agency the Veterans Affairs, has a DUTY to TREAT medical problems associated with military service; COMPENSATE veterans (or their families) for early death or disability associated with their service; and MONITOR and DOCUMENT the effects of government policy and MISTAKES that created a higher health risk. For 50 years, VA has FAILED to monitor and document the effects of Agent Orange on military members that served in the "Blue Water Navy" during Vietnam. Congress is attempting to "fix" this dereliction of duty - and VA Officials oppose the change. We the people support treatment and compensation for these medical issues; and believe monitoring and documenting these issues should be the responsibility of VA, not the individual veterans.

Please sign, share on your page, copy and paste web link into an e-mail and send out to your entire e-mail address book and ask all your friends and family to sign, and forward on to their entire e-mail address book too!

You don't have to be active duty military, or a veteran, civilians can sign too. 98,000 signatures are needed

Click [HERE](#)



Back to School with the GI Bill

Are you enrolled, or do you plan to enroll, in school under the Post-9/11 GI Bill this year? If so, check out your estimated monthly housing allowance using the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#). Beginning August 1, 2018, VA will calculate monthly housing payments using the zip code of the campus you physically attend for most of your classes, which may be different than the actual school location.

For more on education benefits for service members, veterans and military families, including guides to the GI Bill, visit the [Education section](#).



REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL





Legislative Wrap Up

Last week, the Senate advanced three important bills including the VFW-supported S. 899, the Veterans Providing Healthcare Transition Improvement Act, which would ensure veterans who work for VA are able to attend medical appointments for service-connected health conditions within their first year of employment, without having to take unpaid leave. The Senate also passed H.R. 2147, the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2018, which would require VA to increase the number of Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists who assist justice-involved veterans in receiving the treatment they need, instead of being incarcerated for crimes that were associated with untreated or undertreated service-connected health conditions. Both S. 899 and H.R. 2147 have passed by the House and Senate and now head to the president's desk. The Senate also advanced H.R. 6157, which would provide appropriations for the Department of Defense to carry out its mission, including an additional \$10 million to enable the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to identify the service members whose remains were recently returned by North Korea and reunite them with their loved ones — a mission the VFW fully supports.



**VA Revamp of Appeals Process
Continues**

The [Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017](#) (Appeals Modernization Act) was signed Aug. 23, 2017, aimed at transforming a complex, frustrating appeals process into one that is simple, timely and transparent. VA states that is working toward full implementation of the law, scheduled to take effect in February 2019. The new system features three differentiated lanes from which a claimant may choose in seeking review of a VA denial (or partial denial). For more information about VA's appeals modernization process, visit the VA [website](#).



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.

During the month of August 2018, we've added just under 200 new documents many in libraries you need to be a subscriber to view and download.

Additionally we're working on restructuring the NEWS

section and making various categories where all new articles will be posted to and all older articles are slowly being moved over into the new categories.

This change will make it easier for everyone to choose a category and be able to scroll through all the news pieces and see how many times each has been viewed and you can see for yourself which news pieces are hot and which aren't.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now housed 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, whatever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with for Mental Health and are currently **seeking a new Licensed Mental Health Worker**, where you can seek help or just ask questions.

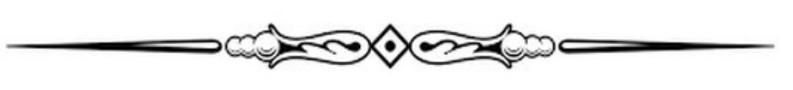
We average **3,000** hits per day, and downloads average **1,990** per day with a total **4,323,856** visitors as of Friday.

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.

- Documents Library with over **16,662** documents on-line
(Updated: 08/27/18)
- 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: **7,679**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **3,662**, Added 2 New Links
(Updated: 08/26/18)

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

Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org



Veterans Committees Pressure VA to Conduct Cannabis Research

Members of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs sent VA Secretary Robert Wilkie a letter urging him to use his current authority to conduct medical research into the safety and efficacy of medicinal cannabis. The letter highlighted conducting this research with a focus on veteran patients with post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic pain so providers can better understand the potential benefits or dangers of medicinal cannabis. The authors of the letter, Senators John Tester and Dan Sullivan, as well as Representatives Tim Walz and Phil Roe, have also introduced [H.R. 5520](#) and [S. 2796](#), the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2018, which are both supported by the VFW and would require VA to conduct such research. The letter also discusses that as more than half the country has legalized cannabis for medicinal or recreational use, veterans are legally obtaining it for medicinal purposes. "The veterans primarily get their health care from VA, but because of restrictive regulations, VA doctors are barred from recommending and, until recently, discussing, medicinal cannabis. The pervasive lack of research makes their jobs even more difficult, leaving VA clinicians flying blind, without concrete recommendations to provide veterans. VA doctors deserve to be fully informed about medicinal cannabis so that they can provide fact-based guidance to their patients." [Read the letter](#).



Guard, Reserve to Receive Expanded Transitional TRICARE Coverage

In the past, Guard troops and reservists and their families received 180 free days of TRICARE coverage only if they were activated for more than 30 days in support of a "contingency operation." Now they will qualify for that coverage regardless of the reason they were activated. For more details, see this [ARTICLE](#).



September's Featured Song

Ladder Up To Heaven

By

LT Bobby Ross

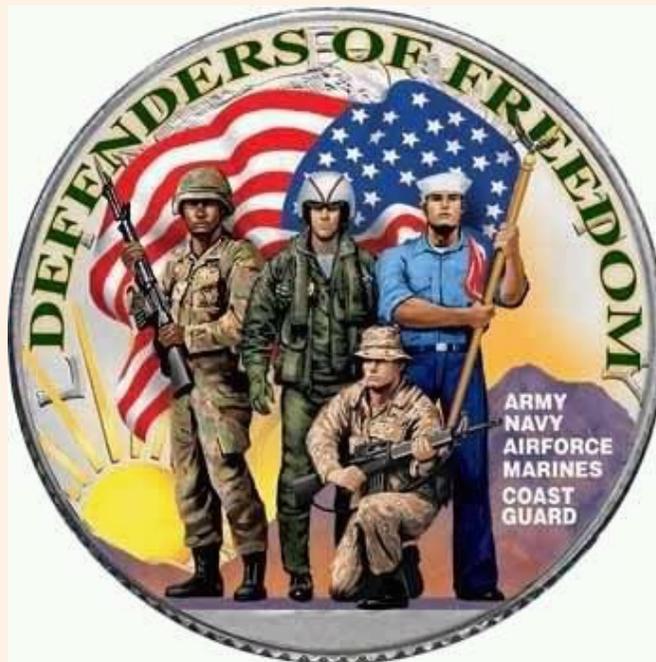
LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

Previous Featured Songs



Did VA Slow-roll Agent Orange Report?

Since 2016, the U.S. government has had in its possession a report that suggests that as many as four new conditions — bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension — could be added to its list of 14 illnesses VA presumes have been caused by exposure to herbicides the U.S. military sprayed during the Vietnam War. But to this point, nothing has been done with these findings. For more details on the issue, see this [ARTICLE](#).



Army Secretary: Clean Up Lead-tainted Base Homes

Army Secretary Mark Esper said last week that the Army needs to eliminate chipping and peeling lead paint in roughly 40,000 base homes. The service launched an "immediate action plan" after a Reuters investigation revealed that more than 1,000 small children on bases had tested "high for lead" levels. For more details, see this [article](#).



TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin #465

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:

- Retiring From Active Duty
- Child Dental Care
- Grilling Safety

Visit the TRICARE Media Center for this and previous podcasts at www.tricare.mil/podcasts.



VA Awards \$200M in Veteran Homelessness Assistance

Thursday, VA announced plans to provide \$200 million in funding for the Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD) which supports homeless veterans. The funding is expected to support more than 13,000 beds for veterans in need across the country. Within the provided funding, \$2.7 million will be awarded to 12 special need-based grants that support homeless veterans with chronic mental illness, women veterans, and veterans taking care of minor dependents. The GPD program was established in 1994 to provide support and services to programs across the country taking care of homeless veterans in need of housing stability. Read the [article](#) or learn more about [VA's homeless programs](#).



Navy Launches Career Center

The new 24/7 MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) contact center will launch Sept. 24. The Contact center will support a multi-tiered customer service delivery model. Tier Zero is the servicemember's self-service through [MyNavy Portal](#). Tier One is communication with one of our contact center agents by phone, email or chat. Finally, if a Sailor's inquiry or transaction request cannot be handled by a customer service agent, they will be escalated to Tier Two, provided a service ticket number, and a subject matter expert will reach out to them. For more information, read the brochure on the U.S. Navy's [website](#).



**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



**Vets, Don't Waste Your VA Loan
Benefit: \$0 Down + No PMI**

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.**





Emergency Prescription Procedures in Wisconsin

Due to flooding, emergency prescription procedures are in place until September 10th, 2018 in the state of Wisconsin. For more information, visit:

[TRICARE Disaster Alerts](#)



AMERICAN SOLDIERS

**WILLING TO DIE FOR THE COUNTRY
THAT ISN'T WILLING TO PAY THEM!**



Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program to Expand

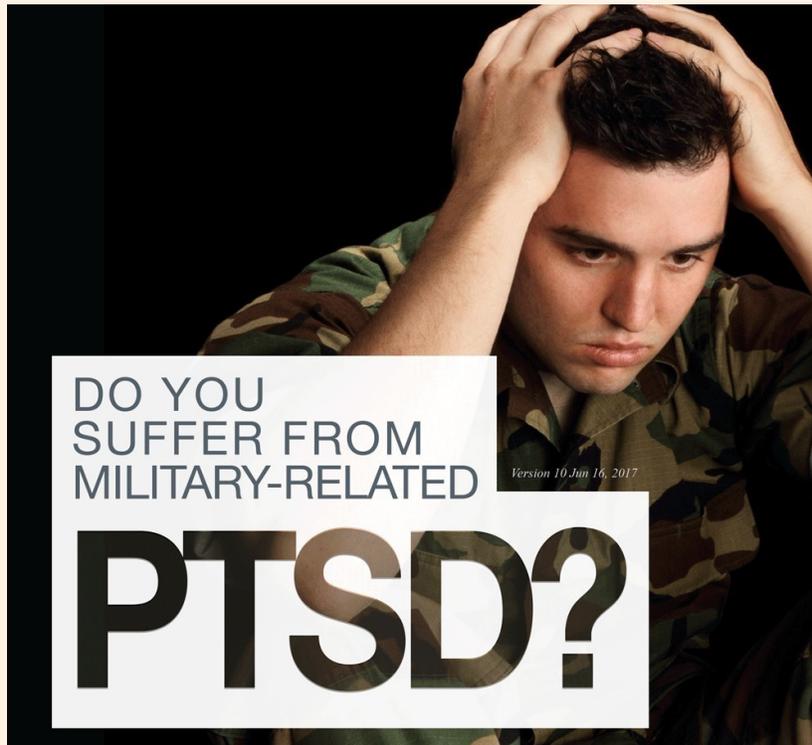
VA is beginning the process of hiring more Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) counselors to help reduce the backlog of claims and wait times for users of this program. VR&E counselors are supposed to have a 1 to 125 counselor-to-case ratio, but the current ratio is much higher. The increased workload for counselors has led to delays in processing of VR&E claims and payments for the past few years. The VFW has long advocated for more money and more counselors in the VR&E system, and at the 119th VFW National Convention, VA Under Secretary for Benefits Dr. Paul Lawrence stated Vocational Rehabilitation would be one of his top priorities. The VFW is glad to see VA is finally addressing these concerns. This program currently has more than 120,000 participants, and hopefully the additional counselors will help veterans utilize this incredibly valuable program more effectively. Learn more about [VR&E and eligibility](#).



How to Keep Up with TRICARE During Natural Disasters

Access to your TRICARE benefit, prescriptions, and medical resources may change during a disaster. To prepare, sign up for TRICARE alerts on the TRICARE [website](#). Keep your key medical information accessible. Also, the Federal Emergency Management Agency [Ready campaign](#) has tips to help you create an emergency plan. In case of a natural disaster, TRICARE will announce any emergency procedures in its [disaster alert](#). If seeking non-network care during an emergency, keep your receipts and file any claims with TRICARE as soon as possible. For more tips, visit the TRICARE [website](#).





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



Marine Corps Officially Bans Revenge Porn, White Supremacism

After Marine Corps members made headlines over the past two years for participating in white supremacist rallies and posting revenge porn, the Marine Corps has announced new rules forbidding both. For more details, see this [article](#).



Create Your Financial Plan

Do you know where you are and where you are going with your money? Here are three key elements that should be part of your financial plan: (1) conduct an insurance review. Health, life and property insurance can protect you from financial catastrophe; (2) create spending plan; Budget, spending plan, cash flow management, whatever you call it, make sure you have a game plan to save money and spend less than you earn; and (3) have short- and long-term savings and investments From building an emergency fund to creating long-term financial security, planning and executing your plan will allow you to save. For more information, read the American Legion [article](#) and visit the USAA [website](#). For more personal finance tips, from maintaining your credit to banking and saving, then read [Money section](#).



**Our values
match yours.**



www.veterans-for-change.org



Reduce Your Co Pays & Rx Costs 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.](#)



TRICARE Emergency Procedures in Hawaii

TRICARE emergency procedures are in place in all counties in Hawaii. To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.



Protect Your Dog in Autumn Weather

As vacations and summer travel come to an end, so do a lot of outdoor activities like going to the beach or lake with your dog. But with cooler weather comes new activities to enjoy with your best friend like hiking, hunting and biking.

Unfortunately, we sometimes forget that summer pests and diseases continue and may even increase through autumn and winter. [Learn more about the risks and what you can do...](#)





WWI Movie Gaining Public Attention

The movie 'Hello Girls' is moving into wider distribution across the nation. The film is embarking on whirlwind schedule of film festivals and screenings. According to the film's producer and director James Theres, Hello Girls has been accepted into the lineup of several major Film Festivals, to include the GI Film Festival in San Diego, as well as the Heartland International Film Festival in Indianapolis. For information about where the movie will be shown over the next couple of months, visit the WWI Centennial Commission website. Read this [article](#) about Hello Girls.



VA Studying "Hidden" Wounds

Combat veterans can experience long lasting emotional and spiritual pain from participating in, witnessing, or failing to prevent traumatic events that violate their core values or expectations of themselves or others. Some have described such experiences as 'a deep soul wound that pierces a person's identity' leaving veterans to question who they are and how they can relate to others. As a result, veterans may experience symptoms of PTSD, depression or substance use, or they may consider ending their own lives. Researchers at the [San Diego VA](#) are tackling these critical questions with research aimed to understand how to help veterans recover from such events and resume their meaningful, fulfilling lives. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



A Senior Cat Checkup: What to Expect

Is my cat a senior? If you're reading this article, this might be your first question. Most of us have an idea of when people are considered to be "seniors," but what about cats? A straight linear multiplier was once used to convert people years into cat years, but that is no longer the case. According to Pet Health Network's feline age chart, younger cats age, or shall we say mature, at a much faster rate. [Learn more about what is different about a senior cat's checkup and what you can expect...](#)



Exchange Sponsors Scholarships

Military students can earn cash for college in a scholarship contest sponsored by the Army & Air Force Exchange Service and Unilever. Four winners of the [Rewards of Caring scholarship contest](#) will each receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Military students can enter the essay contest from Aug. 31 to Sept. 27. To enter, authorized Exchange shoppers in grades six through 12 with a grade-point average of 2.5 or higher must submit an entry form and an essay in English of 500 words or less explaining why their community and involvement in community service projects are important to them. Entry forms can be obtained at the Sweepstakes webpage at ShopMyExchange.com/sweepstakes. For more information, see this [Paycheck Chronicles post](#).



Retiring from Active Duty? Take Action, Make an Enrollment Choice

When you retire from active duty, your TRICARE plan options will change. Retiring from active duty is a Qualifying Life Event (QLE). A QLE allows you to enroll in a new TRICARE plan or change your coverage options within 90 days of the live event. As a retiree, you'll need to take action to enroll in a TRICARE plan if you want to continue to receive coverage for civilian care.

Read the full article [here](#).



Never forget our fallen!



Army to Screen 40,000 Homes for Lead

Following a Reuters report last week that found children living in Army housing faced a substantial risk of lead exposure, the Army announced this week that it will be conducting a review of approximately 40,000 on-post residences. The report highlighted medical findings showing that 31 children living in communities at Ft. Benning, Ga., suffered lead poisoning after being exposed to lead-based paint. The report also stated that in addition to homes at Ft. Benning, homes at Ft. Polk, Ft. Hood, Ft. Knox, Ft. Riley, and the United States Military Academy also tested dangerously high for lead. Additionally, between 2011 and 2016, more than 1,000 children living on post tested above the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's lead threshold level. At a press conference on Tuesday, Secretary of Defense James Mattis stated, "...this is a moral obligation we have to the families to provide safe lodging, obviously, for them. And it's something we take very, very seriously." [Read the report.](#)



Toxins to Watch Out For This Fall

As autumn approaches, so do new potential dangers that pose a threat to your dog and cat. Here are the top 5 fall toxins to be on the lookout for as summer ends. [Keep your pet safe by keeping these out of reach...](#)



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



Farm Loans for Veterans

Are you interested in a career in agriculture? Whether you want to run your own farm or work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are programs, support and resources available to get you started. For more information, visit the USDA [website](#).



Air Force Posts Episode on Medal of Honor Recipient

In the current edition of Around the Air Force, Medal of Honor recipient Tech. Sgt. John Chapman's name is unveiled at the Air Force Memorial, Gen. Timothy Ray takes command of Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Forces Cyber joins Air Combat Command. Watch the current episode on the [U.S. Air Force website](#). For more on John Chapman's life and how he came to receive the Medal of Honor, see this [article](#).



Links to Other Stories

1. [A cites slow-rolled Agent Orange report to oppose spina bifida bill](#)
2. [A Vet's Suicide Pushes The VA To Do Better](#)
3. [Air Force Veteran looks to inspire others as wheelchair basketball official](#)
4. [Appeals Modernization: VA's Progress One Year Since Enactment of the Historic Law](#)
5. [At White House, VA Secretary underscores low unemployment for Veterans under President Trump](#)
6. [At White House, VA Secretary underscores low unemployment for Veterans under President Trump](#)
7. [Bad Moon Rising – Louisiana Navy Veteran Sues Regional VA Director](#)
8. [Des Moines doctor says VA made him a 'scapegoat' and fired him because of political pressure](#)

9. Doctor Sentenced For Participating In \$30 Million Scheme To Defraud Medicare And Medicaid
10. Effective Date Fiasco – Intent To File Claims Rob \$72 Million From Vets
11. Veterans Legacy Program: Rear Adm. Alene Bertha Duerk, Navy's first female admiral
12. Genesee County Physician and Two Others Charged with Health Care Fraud
13. GoFundMe Marine Veteran is homeless (again), claiming couple won't give him his money
14. Google volunteers and Veterans meet at Palo Alto VA to improve job seeking skills
15. The VA may have wrongly denied 1,300 US Veterans' claims of sexual abuse
16. Hearing Loss Services for Enrolled Veterans – No Referral Needed
17. Homeless Veteran who helped stranded woman takes legal action against couple: report
18. HOPE Clinic Nurse Practitioner Pleads Guilty
19. How Do I Know if an Aging Friend or Relative Needs Help?
20. Vietnam: \$289M Verdict Against Monsanto Sets Precedent
21. Iraq Veteran finds out VA has declared her dead
22. Morris resignation could signal trouble with VA EHR plans
23. National Guard senior leaders honor World War I battle anniversary
24. National guardsman's widow speaks out
25. National guardsman's widow speaks out
26. Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs hired nurse

- who wrote fake prescription to review medical records
27. PTSD treatment works for Vet, 48 years after 'Nam
 28. Researchers strive to make 3D-printed artificial lung to help Vets with respiratory disease
 29. Secretary Wilkie Statement on the Passing of Senator John McCain
 30. Tennessee Veterans treated to up close and personal encounter with a bald eagle
 31. The Jargon of VA Claims
 32. VA may have fumbled over 1,000 sexual trauma claims, report says
 33. VA Secretary clarifies collective bargaining authority related to professional conduct, patient care
 34. VA Secretary clarifies collective bargaining authority related to professional conduct, patient care
 35. VA Secretary Says Department Has New Mission: Customer Service
 36. VA, Walgreens collaborate to improve care coordination for Veterans
 37. VA, Walgreens collaborate to improve care coordination for Veterans
 38. VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program
 39. Veterans can now file class-action lawsuits against VA
 40. Veterans groups furious with White House over 'disrespect' following John McCain's death
 41. Veterans Legacy Program: Lt. Col. Robert Joseph Andrews, long serving pilot and Veteran of three wars
 42. Veterans Legacy Program: Rear Adm. Alene Bertha Duerk, Navy's first female admiral
 43. Vietnam demands Monsanto compensate Agent Orange victims after US cancer ruling precedent

44. [Vietnam demands Monsanto pays compensation for Agent Orange victims](#)
45. [Vietnam War memorial vandalized in San Jose](#)
46. [What happens now that Veterans can file class-action suits against VA?](#)
47. [What Nobody Tells You About Going Back to School As A Veteran](#)
48. [Women Veterans' health training on the move](#)

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



Veterans Can Tee Up at Tournament

More than 200 veterans with visual impairments, severe illness or injury are set to tee up for the 2018 National Disabled Veterans Training, Exposure and Experience (TEE) Tournament, which will take place Sept. 9-14 near Iowa City, Iowa. The six-day event is co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV). In addition to golfing at several courses in Iowa City, veterans will participate in adaptive cycling, fishing, bowling, kayaking, scuba diving, disc golf, marksmanship and rock wall climbing. More than 600 volunteers are expected to donate their time to the event. Athlete registration for the event has closed. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#) and visit the TEE Tournament [webpage](#).



CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE AND FOLLOW US ON TWITTER!



**"Customer Service" New Focus for
VA**

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie pledged Wednesday that VA will focus on "customer service" without having to resort to a "cauldron of lawyers." In an address to the American Legion, Wilkie also said he has the commitment of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to work on developing a new electronic "patient-centered health care system" to allow for smooth transitions from active-duty to veteran status. For more details, see this [article](#).



Air Force Resources for Civilian Employees

In October 2017, the Employee Assistance Program was first offered to Air Force civilians through Federal Occupational Health and Worklife4you. The EAP provides Air Force civilian employees and their families at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, with free resources, benefits and services to help them in their jobs and everyday lives. Voluntary services provided through EAP include legal counsel, financial advice, mental health resources, and counseling. The EAP is also available for supervisors of civilian employees, whether the supervisor is an Airman or civilian. For more information, read this [ARTICLE](#).



*** RED ALERT ***

**Everyone Call The Senate Committee
On Veterans Affairs Members Ask
Them To Support and Vote to pass
HR 299 Blue Water Navy
Vietnam Veterans Act Of 2018 to the
Full Senate for a Vote!**

**Jon Tester (D - MT)202-224-2644-Tony
Murray, Patty (WA)202-224-2621-Ryan
Sanders, Bernie (VT)202-224-5141-Matt
Brown, Sherrod (OH)202-224-2315-Anna
Blumenthal, Richard (CT)202-224-2823-Ethan
Hirono, Mazie (HI)202-224-6361-Adam
Manchin, Joe (WV)202-224-3954-Emily**

**Please Ask everyone to Make The
Calls and Share this with
Everyone!**

**Thank You Michael F Kvintus
Sr. BWNVVA
National Vice Commander**



**Report Finds Veterans Improperly
Denied MST-related PTSD Claims**

VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report that investigated denied disability claims for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to military sexual trauma (MST). The findings concluded that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) processed approximately 12,000 claims annually over the past three years for PTSD related to MST. In FY2017, VBA denied about 5,500 of those claims. The OIG review team sampled 169 denied claims and discovered 82 were incorrectly processed, which indicates an overall adjudication error rate of 49 percent. The incorrectly processed denial error projections were mostly found to be due to evidence submitted, VA not requesting adequate evidence, veterans submitting claims not being contacted by VA's MST coordinators, and insufficient medical opinions. "The Inspector General's report is very troubling," said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence in a [press statement](#). "The VA's own statistics show that suicide rates among military sexual assault victims are a growing problem, yet here we have VBA — which is the key to all things VA — incorrectly processing almost a quarter of all claims. That's failing our veterans." Veterans who submitted claims for PTSD related to MST and feel their claims were improperly denied may [contact the VFW](#) for claims assistance. [Read the report](#).





Exchange Debuts Resource Webpage

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service has debuted a [resource page](#) on ShopMyExchange.com with up-to-date information on installation-wide events and programs in their area. [The Hub](#) provides information on events and specials at local Exchanges and commissaries, Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs and Air Force Services activities in one easy-to-navigate location. The Hub is the go-to source to stay connected to Exchange events, Express specials and other happenings in the military community.



Tips for Protecting Your Identity

The Internet has made our lives easier in many ways. But, unfortunately, the Internet can sometimes be exploited by scammers and criminals. So, it is vital to [learn how to protect your identity](#). Additionally, there is helpful information from the Federal Trade Commission on how to avoid modern scams and fraud. For more information, visit the Federal Trade Commission [website](#).



U.S. Government Accountability
Office Reports

1. [Actions Needed to Address Challenges to Enumerating Hard-to-Count Groups](#)
2. [Information on the First Year of Nationwide Reduced Payment Rates for Durable Medical Equipment](#)



Explosive Souvenirs are Unsafe

Veterans sometimes unknowingly put themselves, their families, and neighbors in danger by keeping munitions as war souvenirs or keepsakes. Veterans and their families also incorrectly assume such munitions are safe because they are frequently handled or because the munitions are old. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) continues to be concerned with the type and number of military munitions they recover voluntarily each month from veterans and from the families of deceased veterans. The ATF reports about 50 recoveries every month of munitions ranging from hand grenades and smoke grenades to mortar rounds and landmines. No matter what you call them — souvenirs, war mementos, duds, or simulators — munitions are dangerous by design and should never be considered safe. This has led the Department of Defense to launch a new campaign against souvenir munitions and explosives called the 3Rs Explosives Safety Education Program, which instructs people to: **recognize** the danger souvenir munitions pose to yourself, your family and neighbors; **retreat**, do not disturb, touch, or move it; and **report**, call 911 and advise the police. [Read more about the 3Rs.](#)



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



VA Healthcare for Women

The number of women Veterans receiving health care from VA tripled from between 2000 and 2016, driving an increase in need for high-quality, gender-specific health care. As of May 2017, 26 percent of enrolled women Veterans lived in rural and highly rural areas. Since 2008, the [Women's Health Services](#) (WHS) has developed and delivered a comprehensive education and training model for clinical staff, called the Women's Health Mini-Residency, to address gaps in knowledge and skills in women's health topics. Additional training needs persist, including for staff in rural VA facilities. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



VetSuccess Aid on Campus

Recognizing that making the transition to college life can be challenging for veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers the VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program, which can help veterans and qualified dependents. The VSOC program provides a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to each VSOC school. These VRCs are called VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) Counselors. A VA Vet Center Outreach Coordinator is also provided, and co-located on many campuses, to provide peer-to-peer counseling and referral services. For more information, visit the VetSuccess on Campus [website](#).





U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

1. Accord Healthcare Inc. Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Hydrochlorothiazide Tablets USP 12.5 Mg Due to Labeling Mix-up
2. Alcon Announces Voluntary Global Market Withdrawal of CyPass Micro-Stent for Surgical Glaucoma
3. Compass Health Brands Recalls CPAP Mask Cushion Devices Due to Possible Air Leaks
4. Consumer Alert - Undeclared Sulfites in "Lily Bulb"
5. FDA announces voluntary recall of Montelukast tablets by Camber Pharmaceuticals due to incorrect drug in bottles
6. HELLOLIFE, Inc. Issues Voluntary Worldwide Recall of Neuroveen, Respitrol, Thyroveev and Compulsin due to Possible Microbial Contamination
7. Living Well Remedies, LLC Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Weight Away Remedy, Lot # 111417LWL614, Due To Microbial Contamination
8. Pfizer, Inc. Issues A Voluntary Nationwide Recall Of One Lot Of Children's Advil® Suspension Bubble Gum Flavored 4 FL OZ Bottle
9. Product Quest Manufacturing LLC Recalls All Nasal Products and Baby Oral Gels Manufactured at Florida Facility Due to Possible Microbial Contamination
10. SGLT2(sodium-glucose cotransporter-2) Inhibitors for Diabetes: Drug Safety Communication - Regarding Rare Occurrences of a Serious Infection of the Genital Area
11. URGENT Drug Recall for Leukotrap RC System with RC2D Filter



Soldiers' Angels Provides Food Relief to Veterans

Through a partnership with the Veterans' Administration (VA) and local food banks, Soldiers' Angels provides monthly mobile food distributions for veterans in need of hunger relief. The relief program provides up to 200 veteran families with approximately 50 pounds of food each. For more details, see this [post](#).



SURVIVAL IS FUN



How Security Clearance Affects Your Credit

Do you know how your security clearance might affect your credit rating? Are you up on the latest guidelines? The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently ran a report regarding security clearances and credit reports — for full details, see this [Paycheck Chronicles article](#).



V-J Day Commemoration

1. Following new rules for strong passwords helps preparers protect data
2. IRS launches new easy-to-use web pages to help all taxpayers understand tax reform
3. IRS to introduce new tax transcript to better protect taxpayer data
4. Tax preparers should encrypt client data
5. Taxpayers should be prepared for natural disasters
6. Treasury, IRS issue proposed regulations on charitable contributions and state and local tax credits



MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced fifteen new identifications. Returning home with full military honors are:

Navy Cmdr. James B. Mills was assigned to Fighter Squadron Twenty One, aboard the USS Coral Sea, where he served as an F-4B Radar Intercept Officer. On the night of Sept. 21, 1966, he departed on an armed reconnaissance mission over then-North Vietnam. During the mission, the other aircraft lost contact with Mills' aircraft, and his plane did not return to the ship. An extensive search was conducted with negative results. Based on this information, Mills was declared missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mills.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Staff Sgt. Richard J. Murphy was a

member of 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, which landed at Red Beach, Saipan. Reports provide little information of what happened to Murphy after landing on Saipan, and he was declared missing in action as of June 15, 1944. On May 22, 1945, his status was amended to killed in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Murphy.](#)

Navy Reserve Pharmacist's Mate 3rd Class William H. Blancheri was a member of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Blancheri died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Blancheri.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Tech Sgt. Harry A. Carlsen was a member of Company A, 2nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Carlsen died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Carlsen.](#)

Marine Corps Capt. Lester A. Schade was a member of

Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. In April 1942, he was captured by enemy forces and held as a prisoner of war in the Philippine Islands. On Jan. 9, 1945, the prisoner transport ship he was aboard was attacked by American forces. Schade was listed as missing, but presumed dead as a result of the incident. Interment services are pending. [Read about Schade.](#)

Navy Fire Controlman Edward J. Shelden was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Shelden. Interment services are pending. [Read about Shelden.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Wesley V. Jordan was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Jordan. Interment services are pending. [Read about Jordan.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Hale McKissack was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including McKissack. Interment services are pending. [Read about McKissack.](#)

Navy Fireman 2nd Class Carl D. Dorr was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl

Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Dorr. Interment services are pending. [Read about Dorr.](#)

Navy Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Archie T. Miles was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Miles. Interment services are pending. [Read about Miles.](#)

Navy Fireman 1st Class Bert E. McKeeman was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including McKeeman. Interment services are pending. [Read about McKeeman.](#)

Navy Fireman 1st Class Albert U. Kane was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Kane. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kane.](#)

Navy Radioman 3rd Class Dante S. Tini was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Tini. Interment services

are pending. [Read about Tini.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Richard L. Watson was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Watson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Watson.](#)

Navy Seaman 2nd Class Myron K. Lehman was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Lehman. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lehman.](#)



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