



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, December 12, 2021

Volume 12, Issue 50



This-N-That

Good evening Jim,

This is a busy time of year for everyone in preparation for Christmas. Decorating the house, tree and home with all the trimmings. Trying to decide what's the perfect gift for each person in your family and friends.



Just as a reminder while out shopping, keep your wallets in an inside pocket, and be sure to close up your purse and hold it close to you, don't leave it in the shopping cart. It only takes seconds for that one horrible person to rip you off and we don't want anyone's Christmas to be ruined.

We've added only one piece of legislation to the **TAKE**

ACTION list, and I'm asking everyone to please take the 30 minutes or so and complete each letter.

There is also a new article under "Links to Other Stories" regarding CPAP's and claims, it's probably one of the best ones I've seen so far to date.

And I'm not getting much in the way of positive information on the recall Philips has done on their Dream Station CPAP machines. Some have received a new replacement within a few months, others are being told could take as long as two years, which to me is highly unacceptable.

Thankfully my personal doctor has ordered another sleep study which will qualify me for a brand-new machine and skip the wait.

I don't know how the VA is or will handle this, but it doesn't hurt to contact your doctor to see what he/she can do for you. For many of us who use a CPAP, it's not just a matter of being able to sleep and breath, but it's a matter of life and death for those with severe cases.

If you've not visited our website, www.veterans-for-change.org or not visited in a while, please be sure to check often for updates on documents, web links, etc., we are a bit slow, but are moving as fast as we can, yet not over-loading to put more work on our Webmaster when we get to the transition into the new look.

If you choose to create an account to access more information, please keep in mind not to use your E-Mail address as a user ID, and that the system is case sensitive. Neither the webmaster or myself have access to password information as

it's 132-bit DoD level security encoded. But, if need be, we can change it for you.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



Wreaths Across America

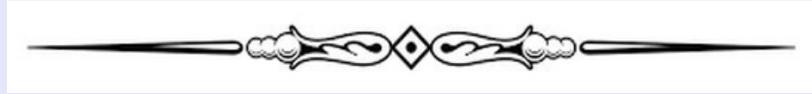
Every December, wreath-laying ceremonies organized by the nonprofit Wreaths Across America to remember and honor our fallen veterans take place at more than 2,500 locations across the United States, at sea, and abroad. You can still [register](#) for this year's event to be held at Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday, Dec. 18, National Wreaths Across America Day. [Learn more](#) to sponsor, volunteer, or donate.



South Texas VA celebrates 30th anniversary of spinal cord injury clinic

Veteran patients, staff and families gathered to celebrate 30 years of serving Veterans in the South Texas VA Spinal Cord Injury Center.

[Read More](#)



Military Veterans Advocacy



Military Veterans Advocacy is offering some free memberships for those who are struggling to get their claims through, are having financial difficulties. Annual dues are \$25.00 per year. Our organization includes special sections, Blue Water Navy, Veterans of Southeast Asia, Central Pacific Islands, Veterans of Panama Canal Zone, and Okinawa. We have gift members available which can be paid by your fellow brother or sister Veterans. Gift members are kept confidential. Click [HERE](#) and help a Veteran.

You may contact Robin Barr at robin.barr@mvadvocacy.org



America250: Marine Corps Veteran Larry E. Smedley

This week's America250 salute is Marine Corps Veteran Larry E. Smedley, who posthumously received a Medal of Honor for his actions during a battle at Da Nang.

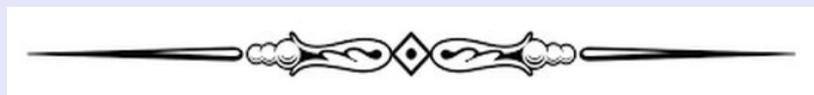
[Read More](#)

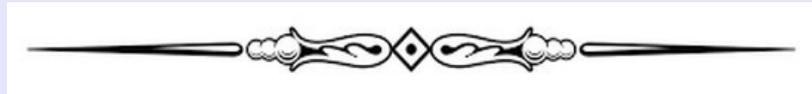


VA and The Green Chair Project provide newly housed Veterans with household necessities

The partnership between Durham VA and The Green Chair Project provides Veterans well-equipped homes that can nurture and sustain individuals,

[Read More](#)





Remembering the Military Medical Heroes of Pearl Harbor

"The ship shook and everyone ran out on deck to see what happened...I looked out the porthole in my room and saw smoke pouring out of the [USS] Arizona."

[Read More](#)





Missing Man Table

Each item on the Missing Man Table represents the emotions and feelings reserved for those who did not come home. The ceremony symbolizes that they are with us, here in spirit. All Americans should never forget the brave men and women who answered our nation's call to serve and fought for our freedom with honor.

The symbolism of the Missing Man Table: The table is round, to show our everlasting concern for our missing men.

The cloth is white, symbolizing the purity of their motives when answering the call to serve.

The single red rose; displayed in a vase, reminds us of the lives of these Americans and their loved ones and friends who keep the faith while seeking answers.

The red ribbon symbolizes our continued determination to account for our missing.

A slice of lemon reminds us of their bitter fate; captured and missing in a foreign land.

A pinch of salt symbolizes the tears of our missing and their families who long for answers after decades of uncertainty. The lighted candle reflects our hope for their return, alive or dead.

The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain us and those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God.

The glass is inverted, symbolizing their inability to share a toast.

The chair is empty, the seat that remains unclaimed at the table.



Your actions
could save a life.

Showing you care can make a big difference to someone in crisis.

VeteransCrisisLine.net

 **Veterans Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

The advertisement features two men, one with his arm around the other's shoulder. The text is in blue and black, with a white background for the text area.

Defeating the Holiday Blues

For many veterans, the holiday season intensifies feelings of stress, depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Creating a community and building connections are ways to combat the holiday blues and provide a sense of purpose. For those unable to meet in person with family and friends, you can schedule video calls, online game nights, or virtual dinners, workouts, and watch parties. You can also volunteer with local VFW posts and veteran support organizations in your area.

[Read More](#)



West Point graduate with multiple sclerosis preparing for ultra-marathon

West Point graduate Kathleen Owings has not let multiple sclerosis slow her down. Enjoys challenging herself running and uphill skiing.

[Read More](#)



Know the Warning Signs

It Matters.

Sometimes, a crisis may involve thoughts of suicide. Learn to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

The presence of the following signs requires immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
- Looking for ways to kill themselves
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse

..... Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) or text to **838255**



Veterans' Childcare Survey

VA's Office of Women's Health Services and Veterans Experience Office have released a survey to better understand the childcare needs of veterans and caretakers to facilitate medical appointments. The survey takes less than two minutes. [Take the survey.](#)



Study links statin use with diabetes progression, points to need for further research

Common statins are atorvastatin (sold as Lipitor), fluvastatin (Lescol XL), and pitavastatin (Livalo). More than 35 million Americans take the prescription drugs to help control cholesterol.

[Read More](#)



Self-Care is as Easy as Downloading an App

The phrase "self-care" – the act of taking time for oneself to do something enjoyable – has been introduced to the world, and people are starting to prioritize taking a moment for themselves to recharge.

[Read More](#)





San Antonio VA serving meals to Veterans in friendly, appetizing manner

The Audie L. Murphy VA hospital in San Antonio is modernizing its services to Veterans with a basic, yet strong comfort: home-cooked meals.

[Read More](#)



Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Cleveland Man Found Guilty of Threatening a Federal Employee](#)
- 2) [Four Men Sentenced to Prison for Roles in Construction Insurance Fraud Scheme](#)
- 3) [Congressman seeks probe of VA services after 2nd N.J. Veteran sets himself on fire](#)

- 4) [A 79-Year-Old Alleged Mobster Has Been Indicted for Defrauding Tricare, CHAMPVA](#)
- 5) [For Veterans: Disabled, retired Vets' checks will rise 5.9% in 2022 to meet inflation](#)
- 6) [Biden closes Veterans Month by signing a series of VA reform measures](#)
- 7) [Marketer gets 30 months in fraud scheme involving Tricare](#)
- 8) [Veterans Affairs bureaucrats are keeping Vets from using health care outside its troubled system](#)
- 9) [Letter: Disabled Veterans deserve better](#)
- 10) [Congress-approved commission to begin BRAC-style review of VA facilities](#)
- 11) [Veterans Group Helps Vets Fight Addiction and Suicide, even as it Helps Save Afghans](#)
- 12) [Appeals Court Upholds Sentence of Former VA Pathologist](#)
- 13) [Hundreds of Veterans, service personnel send letter to Washington on Afghan allies' behalf](#)
- 14) [VA to resume medical records overhaul in early 2022, with new leadership guiding the work](#)
- 15) [Last Remaining World War II 'Band of Brothers' Member Dies At 99](#)
- 16) [Veteran and Dad, 57, Dies After Falling Off Ladder While Decorating His Home for Christmas](#)
- 17) [VA statement on GPO printing and mailing delay](#)
- 18) [Your Sleep Apnea VA Rating — A Guide to Getting a VA Disability Rating for Sleep Apnea](#)
- 19) [Secularist group targets decades-long tradition of laying wreaths on soldiers' tombs](#)



VFW Testifies Before House Subcommittee

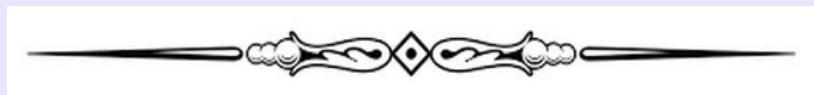
The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing on removing barriers to homeownership for veterans. VFW National Legislative Associate Director Emily DeVito testified on the need for VA to combat misconceptions about VA-guaranteed home loans that make them less competitive with other loans. "For sellers, accepting an offer with a VA-guaranteed loan may be seen as burdensome as sellers fear not meeting VA appraisal standards or the hassle of an extended timeline," said DeVito. She also stressed the need to educate buyers on all the benefits VA-guaranteed loans offer, such as the opportunity to obtain an Energy Efficient Mortgage. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).



Holiday discounts and gift-giving guide for Veterans

With the holidays upon us, the following is a list of holiday discounts and gift guide options for Veterans.

[Read More](#)



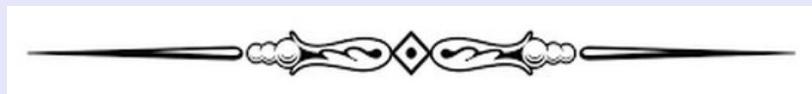


How to Choose Between TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select

TRICARE Open Season is your yearly opportunity to review your current benefits.



[Read More](#)



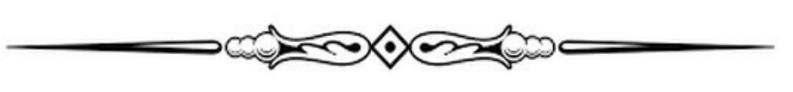
NDAA Update

Earlier this year, the House passed its version of the FY2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA-H.R.4350). The Senate has been unable to reach agreement to vote on the

NDAA. The House and Senate staff worked to create a new NDAA. The bipartisan leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees released a new NDAA (S.1605), following days of compromise negotiations that had resulted from the Senate's failure to pass its own version through the upper chamber. The new bill passed the House (363-70) and is pending in the Senate. The new FY2022 NDAA provides the following:

- No new TRICARE fee increases;
- Prohibits drastic cuts to Defense medical staff for one-year;
- Provides annual active duty pay increase (2.7 percent) that keeps pace with civilian pay;
- Eliminates provision in an earlier version to require women to register with Select Service System;
- Removes sexual assault investigations from the chain of command;
- Requires DFAS to provide 90-day notice of suspension of retirement and annuitant benefits with explanation for suspension;
- Requires DoD to test for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at U.S. bases that have had PFAS releases;
- Provides a new basic needs allowance to ensure service members do not suffer from food insecurity;
- Permits Defense and Veteran Affairs departments to share medical facilities; and
- Requires an independent review of the DoD suicide prevention program.

The bill is expected to pass the Senate no later than next week and be signed into law by President Biden. FRA is grateful for many of the above referenced provisions but is disappointed several critical issues such as concurrent receipt expansion, were not addressed in the final bill.



Suicide Prevention Resources for Military and Veterans

Military & Veterans

Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255, Press 1
Text 838255, 24/7

Vets 4 Warriors

855-838-8255

InTransition

1-800-424-7877

Office of Warrior

Care Policy

warriorcare.dodlive.mil/

Military One Source

1-800-342-9647

Tragedy Assistance

Program for Survivors

[TAPS]

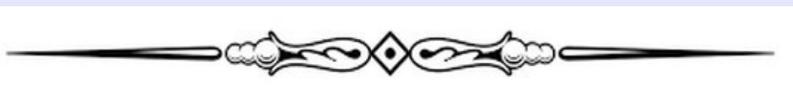
1-800-959-8277



12 ways to connect with other Veterans this holiday season

Holidays can be a difficult time for many Veterans. Connecting with former service members can alleviate some of that stress and ward off loneliness.

[Read More](#)



Commemorating a legacy of service on the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor

Today, we observe the 80th anniversary of the Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, men and women of the armed forces faced one of the most lethal threats in our country's history with astounding heroism.

[Read More](#)



Global Health Engagement

Medical support operations around the world are a vital tool for achieving U.S. strategic goals.

[Watch Video](#)





West Point graduate with multiple sclerosis prepares for ultramarathon

"Life is full of hurdles, for everyone. I want others to know that they can achieve great things and live a fulfilling life even with an MS diagnosis."

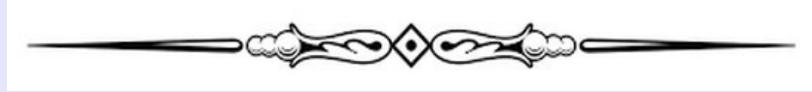
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Pearl Harbor survivor, 100, recalls tragic day 80 years later

After 80 years, the sounds are what Veteran Ken Potts recalls from Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941. "It was like the whole world was on fire."

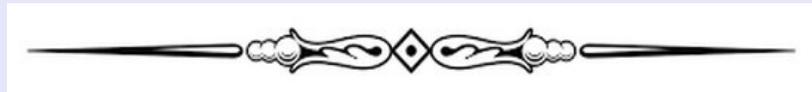
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Flu Vaccination Rates are Running High Across the Military This Year

Flu vaccination rates among service members are far higher this year compared to the same period during previous years.

[Read More](#)





Agreement on Debt Ceiling

Republicans and democrats have reportedly come to an agreement regarding the U.S. Government's debt ceiling (S.610), which also includes delaying a 10 percent Medicare reimbursement cut for doctors and hospitals until 2023, scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2022. Effective Aug. 1, 2021, the two-year suspension of the U.S. government debt limit ended. The Treasury Department was doing "extraordinary measures" to pay the government's expenses that would likely be exhausted by Dec. 15, while lawmakers worked to address the cap. The debt limit restricts how much the federal government can borrow to finance its existing obligations.



Jim, below are links to all currently active pre-written E-Mails to many pieces of legislation. We ask that you go to each one, and send the pre-written E-Mails, and to also call your Reps or Senators and ask for their support on a weekly basis!

Jim you don't need to be Active Duty or a Veteran, in fact we ask all Veteran friends to also help! (Updated 12/11/21)

Please note, we've added 1 new items to the **TAKE ACTION** list.

- 1) [HR 1014 - Furnish Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy \(HBOT\) to a Veteran who has a Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\) or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTS\)](#)
- 2) [HR 109 will establish an advisory committee on the implementation by the DVA of an electronic health record](#)
- 3) [Concurrent Receipt Legislation Introduced](#)
- 4) [Expand Concurrent Receipt](#)
- 5) [FRA and Others asks SecDef Not to Raise TRICARE Fees](#)
- 6) [H.R. 333, Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act](#)
- 7) [H.R. 344, Support the Women Veterans TRUST Act](#)
- 8) [H.R. 914, the Dental Care for Veterans Act](#)
- 9) [Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act](#)
- 10) [Oppose TRICARE fee Increases](#)
- 11) [S. 134/H.R. 637, the Veterans Economic Recovery Act of](#)

2021

- 12) S. 437, Take Action for Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits
- 13) S. 89, Ensuring Survivors Benefits during COVID-19 Act of 2021
- 14) STOP TRICARE Fee Increases
- 15) Support Bills to Expand Coverage for ChampVA and TRICARE Young Adults
- 16) Veterans Economic Recovery Act Introduced
- 17) H.R. 855, the Veterans Expedited TSA Screening (VETS) Safe Travel Act
- 18) HR 1355 and S 454. These companion bills will provide health care and benefits to Veterans who were exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces at Karshi Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan.
- 19) Support Repeal of TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee
- 20) HR 1585 & S 565- Provide for the treatment of Vets who participated in the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as Radiation Exposed
- 21) Please Support S. 344, the Major Richard Star Act
- 22) Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act
- 23) S. 810 & H.R. 1972, the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021
- 24) HR 109 Establish an Advisory Committee on Implementation by the DVA of an electronic health record
- 25) HR 2372 and S 952 will Provide for Presumption of Service Connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to toxins
- 26) Please Ask you Senator to support S.952 the Warfighters Act
- 27) Support Improving VA Homelessness Program
- 28) S. 976, Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
- 29) H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act
- 30) H.R. 912, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans

Mental Health Act

- 31) S. 976, the Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
- 32) HR 2269 and S 657 cover herbicide exposure in Thailand
- 33) Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Help Military Survivors
- 34) Legislation asks for Study of Involuntary Discharges for Women
- 35) H.R. 2436, the Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act
- 36) H.R. 958—the Protecting Moms Who Served Act
- 37) HR 2127 and S 927, the TEAM bills Veterans Exposed to Toxic Substances
- 38) Ask your Senator to Support S.1520 Military Justice Improvement Act
- 39) Ask your member to support S.810 and H.R. 1972 The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021
- 40) Ask your member and senator to support HR 2580 and S 1151 to provide for a presumption of service connected disability for certain Veterans who served in Palomares, Spain, and for other purposes
- 41) Ask your Senator to Support S.1520 Military Justice Improvement Act
- 42) HR 855, VETS Safe Travel Act
- 43) HR 3368, the Guam, American Samoa, and Johnston Island bill
- 44) H.R. 2521, Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access (DOULA) for Veterans Affairs Act of 2021
- 45) H.R. 1273, the Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act
- 46) H.R. 2968, the Military and Veteran Student Loan Relief Act
- 47) H.R. 845, the VA Billing Accountability Act
- 48) Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Bill Introduced in House
- 49) Action Alert: Tell Congress to Support the COST of War

Act and the Honoring our PACT Act!

50) HR 303 and S 1147 The Retired Pay Restoration Act

51) Ask Your Legislators to Support Concurrent Receipt Reform HR-1282

52) HR 1656 TREAT PTSD Act

53) S. 1664, the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Processing Claims Improvement

54) H.R. 2724 — VA Peer Support Enhancement for MST Survivors Act

55) Please Support H.R. 3452 —Veterans Preventative Health Coverage Fairness Act

56) HR 2192, The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2021

57) HR 5026, The Panama Canal Zone Veterans Act of 2021

58) HR 3368, HR 5026, HR 2269, S 657 are all Toxic Exposure Bills that need special attention and more pressure to get passed!

59) H.R. 4627, Veterans' Culturally Competent Care Act of 2021

60) S. 2172, Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

61) H.R. 4571, the SERVICE Act of 2021

62) H.R. 4732, Protect Individual Unemployability Benefit for All Disabled

63) S. 1937, the Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access (DOULA) for Veterans Act of 2021

64) S. 2283 and H.R. 5073—the Crisis Hotline REACH for Veterans Act

65) HR 852 and S 221, United States - Israel PTSD Collaborative Research Act

66) Ask Congress to Preserve Arlington National Cemetery

67) HR 4949 and S 692, the Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2021

68) HR 2963, the VOW to Hire Heroes Extension Act of 2021

- 69) S 1970, The Clean Water for Military Families Act
- 70) Support S. 1198/H.R. 2819—the Solid Start Act of 2021
- 71) H.R. 3402/S. 976—Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
- 72) HR 3537 and S 1813, Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Act
- 73) S. 2386/H.R. 4575, the Veteran Peer Specialist Act
- 74) H.R. 5721—the VIPER Act
- 75) H.R. 5607, Justice for ALS Veterans Act
- 76) HR 2601 and S 1188, SFC Heath Robinson Burn Pit Transparency Act
- 77) S. 3017, Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act
- 78) H.R. 4794 and S. 2533, the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options (MAMMO) for Veterans Act
- 79) HR 1361 and S 444, AUTO for Veterans Act
- 80) H.R. 4880 and S. 2720, the Veterans' Prostate Cancer Treatment and Research Act



Neurosurgeons perform first 'awake' brain surgery at Houston VA

A Marine Corps Veteran talked about his service in the Persian Gulf while doctors performed an awake craniotomy to remove his brain tumor.

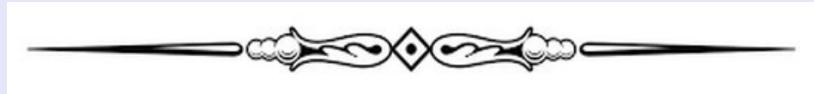
[Read More](#)



Solid Start program has helped over 157,000 Veterans in just two years

VA celebrates the second anniversary of the VA Solid Start program, an innovative outreach campaign that is focused on connecting with recently separated Veterans, regardless of their character of discharge, during the critical first year after release from active duty.

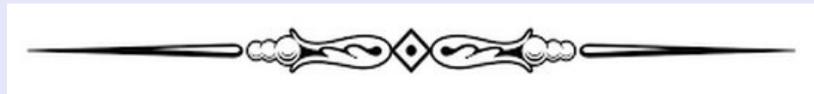
[Read More](#)



Why Less Sunlight in the Wintertime Can Put You at Risk for Depression

Seasonal Affective Disorder is the medical term for a mood disorder that is triggered by a change in seasonal weather patterns such as shorter days, gray skies, and rain.

[Read More](#)



SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

TALK:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain



BEHAVIOR:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from people
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

MOOD:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement



USS Arizona survivor, 100, recalls Pearl Harbor 80 years later

Eighty years later, Ken Potts can still hear the sirens wailing from Battleship Row. "All you could see was fire," he says. "It looked like the whole world was on fire."

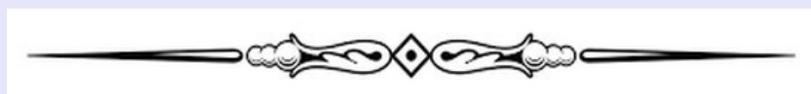
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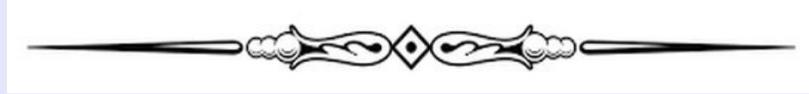
[Read More](#)



Researching Your 2022 Health Care Costs? Here Are 7 Terms You Need to Know

It's important to know the meaning of these health care terms and how they apply to your coverage and costs.

[Read More](#)



**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



**Holiday discounts and gift-giving guide for
Veterans**

The holidays are upon us and it's time for the joy of giving. Check out this list of timely gift-giving options and discounts for Veterans and their families.

[Read More](#)



Pearl Harbor attack sailors killed, interred at national cemetery

Of the 2,341 service members killed at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941, nine who died are buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minnesota.

[Read More](#)



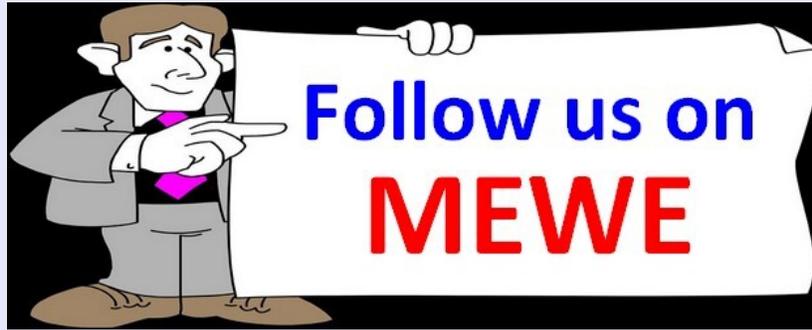
Researching Your 2022 Health Care Costs? Here Are 7 Terms to Know



Did you know that we're currently in [TRICARE Open Season](#)? This is the time when eligible TRICARE beneficiaries can change or enroll in health plans for the upcoming year. But choosing a plan often means encountering a few unfamiliar health care terms. Here are seven cost terms that you might encounter while researching your health plan for 2022.

[Read More](#)





Follow us on [MEWE](#)! The support staff at [MEWE](#) is responsive, open to suggestions and works very hard to protect your personal information.

We hope you will join us on this new site.

[VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE](#)

[HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE](#)

[AMVETS GROUP](#)

[VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP](#)

[{USAVET} SUPPORTING GOD & ALL WHO SERVED OUR GREAT NATION](#)

[AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY](#)



Transferring GI Bill to Your Children, Raising Kids Who Aren't Afraid of Eating

In this special holiday episode of VA News, Calvin Haskell, son of Navy Veteran Ron Haskell, discusses transferring your GI Bill benefits to your children and helping Veterans raise kids who aren't afraid of eating. To learn more about these topics, click the link to watch the YouTube video.

[Read More](#)



Pearl Harbor survivor recalls fateful day before passing

On Dec. 7, 1941, Willett "Will" Lehner was aboard USS Ward (DD-139), a World War I "four-stacker" patrolling the entrance to Pearl Harbor.

[Read More](#)





Act Now: TRICARE Open Season Ends Dec. 13

Did you know [TRICARE Open Season](#) ends on Monday, Dec. 13? This is your last opportunity, if you so choose, to enroll in or change your health plan. Any changes you make to your coverage during open season will take effect Jan. 1, 2022. Here are some specifics of what your options are and what you can accomplish during open season.



[Read More](#)





HOME *of the* FREE
BECAUSE *of the* BRAVE

Honoring those who served



FRA NP Participates in Pearl Harbor Attack Remembrance

FRA National President James W. Campbell from Branch 40, participated in a ceremony at the USS Arizona Mall Memorial in Tucson, Arizona on Dec. 7, 2021, which was the 80th anniversary of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The USS Arizona Mall Memorial at the University of Arizona pays tribute to those who died on the USS Arizona during or as a result of, the attack. The ship is the final resting place for 1,102 of the ship's 1,177 crew who lost their lives in 1941 - nearly half of the 2,403 service members and civilians who were killed during the attack. In all, 19 Navy ships were damaged or sunk. Other FRA branches around the country also hosted and participated in events to honor the anniversary.



Office of Inspector General

- 1) COVID-19: HHS Agencies' Planned Reviews of Vaccine Distribution and Communication Efforts Should Include Stakeholder Perspectives
- 2) COVID-19: State Carried Out Historic Repatriation Effort but Should Strengthen Its Preparedness for Future Crises
- 3) Drug Development: Pathway for Approving Antibacterial and Antifungal Drugs for Patients with Limited Treatment Options is Infrequently Used
- 4) Medicare: Information on the Transition to Alternative Payment Models by Providers in Rural, Health Professional Shortage, or Underserved Areas
- 5) Social Security Administration: Actions Needed by SSA to Ensure Disability Medical Consultants Are Properly Screened and Trained
- 6) Social Security and Medicare: Improving the Timeliness of Trust Fund Reports
- 7) DOD and VA Health Care: Suicide Prevention Efforts and Recommendations for Improvement
- 8) VA Acquisition Management: Fundamental Challenges Could Hinder Supply Chain Modernization Efforts if Not Addressed
- 9) VA Real Property: Enhanced Communication and Performance Measurement Could Improve Capital Asset Management
- 10) Behavioral Health and COVID-19: Higher-Risk Populations and Related Federal Relief Funding



Practicing Mindfulness During the Holidays

The holiday season brings joy, happiness and often stress. There is no better time to practice mindfulness so that you can be present to manage the ups and downs of this busy season.

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Learn more about a nursing program structured for your success

Have you recently graduated from nursing school? Want to learn more about a nursing program that is structured for your success? VA's Registered Nurse Transition-To-Practice (RNTTP) Residency Program can help. Bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world to kickstart your nursing career with confidence. Read these frequently asked questions to learn more [...]

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#VeteranOfTheDay Air Force Veteran Jennifer Day

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Air Force Veteran Jennifer Day, who flew in Operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch and Provide Promise.

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U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

- 1) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: December 7, 2021
- 2) Beware of Vaping Products with Unproven Health Claims
- 3) SARS-CoV-2 Viral Mutations: Impact on COVID-19 Tests
- 4) FDA Drug Shortages
- 5) Outbreak Investigation of Salmonella Thompson – Seafood (October 2021)
- 6) Dakota Toms Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Egg and Milk in Chicken Salad Croissant
- 7) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: FDA Authorizes New Long-Acting Monoclonal Antibodies for Pre-exposure Prevention of COVID-19 in Certain Individuals
- 8) FDA Warns Consumers to Avoid Certain Male Enhancement and Weight Loss Products Sold Through Amazon, eBay and Other Retailers Due to Hidden, Potentially Dangerous Drug Ingredients
- 9) Edge Pharma, LLC Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of All Drug Products Due to Lack of Sterility Assurance
- 10) Teligent Pharma, Inc.'s Issues Worldwide Voluntary Recall of Lidocaine HCl Topical Solution USP 4% Due to Super Potency
- 11) Beware of Vaping Products with Unproven Health Claims
- 12) Dermal Filler Do's and Don'ts for Wrinkles, Lips and More
- 13) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: FDA Expands Eligibility for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Booster Dose to 16- and 17-Year-Olds
- 14) SARS-CoV-2 Viral Mutations: Impact on COVID-19 Tests
- 15) FDA Issues Improvement Plan Focused on Modernizing Foodborne Illness Outbreak Responses
- 16) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: December 10, 2021



My Amazon Warrior Story: Solving Some of the Globe's Toughest Problems as an AF Reservist While Grounded in Mountain Life

Are you a Warrior in Transition? See if a career at Amazon works for you.

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12 ways to create community this holiday and connect with other Veterans

Holidays can be a difficult time for many Veterans. Connecting with former service members can alleviate some of that stress and ward off loneliness.

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Health equity podcast episode 3 – Racism and its effects on health in Veterans

Explore how racism and discrimination can impact Veterans' health in this episode of Veterans equity podcast: Leave No Veteran Behind.

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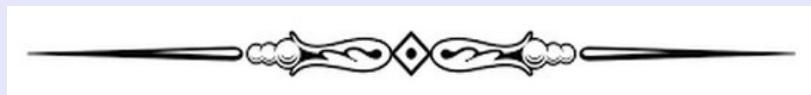
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Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS) News [November 2021]

Get the Recruitment & Retention, Employment & Integration, Well Being & Treatment, Servicewomen in the News, Women Veterans, and Upcoming Events DACOWITS news from [November 2021](#).

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In 2003, Ce-Ce Mazyck's parachute got tangled with another soldier's; today she's a voice for disabled Veterans

In 2003, Ce-Ce Mazyck's parachute got tangled with another soldier. Today, she is "living life to the fullest and not just existing."

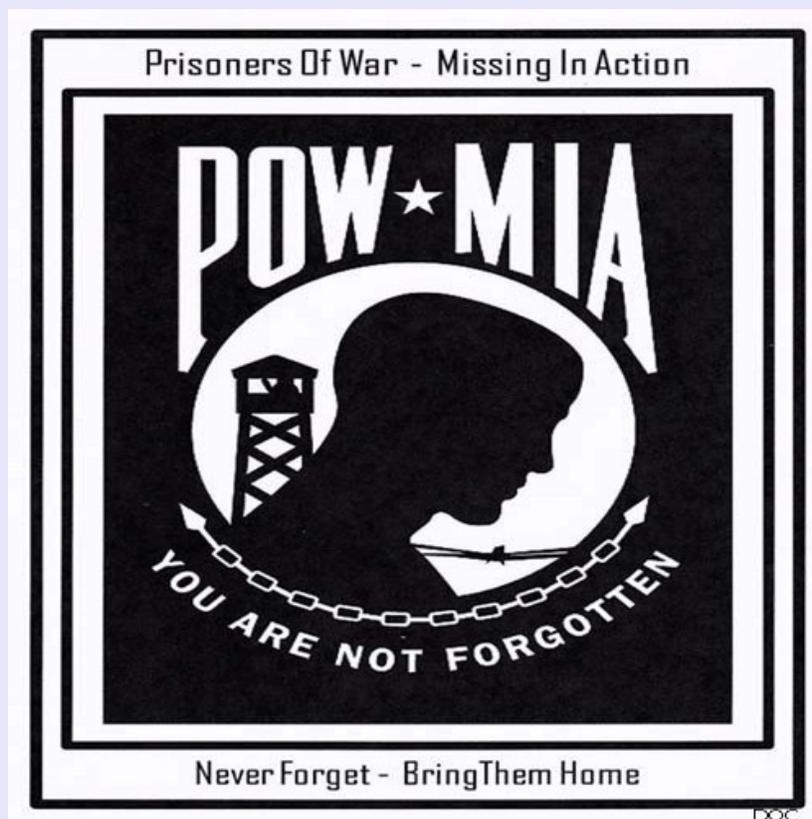
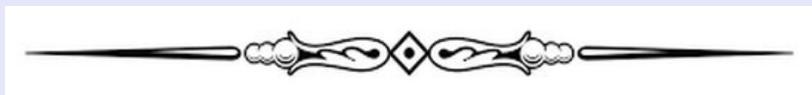
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Explore new ways to serve Veterans in telehealth positions

VA works to reach Veterans wherever they may be. Learn about career opportunities to specialize in telehealth positions.

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Live Whole Health #100: Mindful holiday season

The holiday season brings joy, happiness and often stress. There is no better time to practice mindfulness so that you can be present to manage the ups and downs of this busy season. Mindful awareness is at the heart of Whole Health, and it can help you to be more present to living your life more fully.

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Researchers carry out the first head-to-head comparison of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines

However, the Moderna vaccine was found to offer an increased level of protection, including a 21% lower risk of documented infection and 41% lower risk of hospitalization, according to the research team, whose findings were published on December 1, 2021, in the New England Journal of Medicine.

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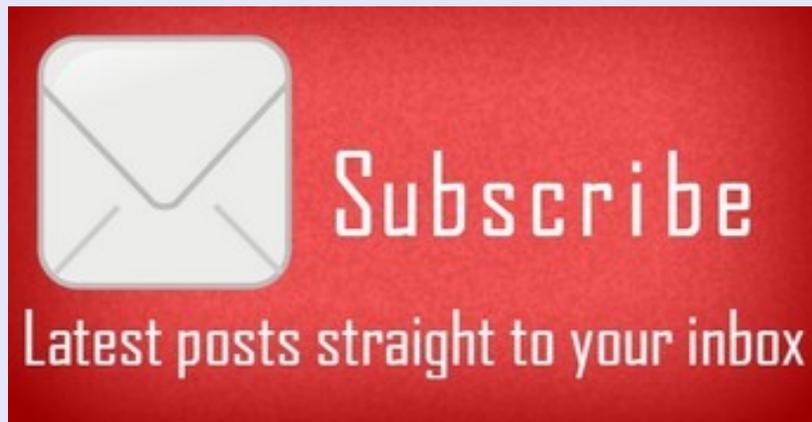
Texas VA peer support specialists share their stories to help others

Peer support specialists receive training to serve as role models to coach and mentor other Veterans through their recovery process.

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Borne the Battle #264: Veteran Roundtable – Afghanistan Withdrawal/Evacuation

Approximately four months have passed since the Afghanistan withdrawal. Since then, Veterans across the country have grappled with figuring out what it means to them. For some Veterans, these last four months could have felt like a painful slog. For others, it could have felt like a chaotic blur that whizzed right on by.

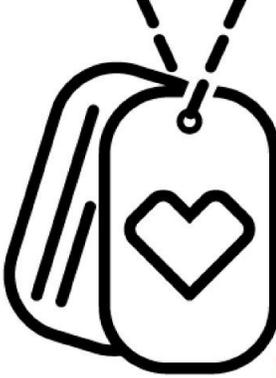
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#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran Leif Bangsboll

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran Leif Bangsboll, who was one of the first soldiers to join the U.S. special forces during WWII.

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VA's PRIDE program – this week's Veteran health equity podcast

In this episode of the health equity podcast, Dr. Tiffany Lange, a clinical psychologist and LGBTQ+ Veteran program manager at the Hampton VA Medical Center in Virginia, shares how she developed the "PRIDE in All Who Served" health education group. LGBTQ+ Veterans designed this 10-week program for other LGBTQ+ Veterans.

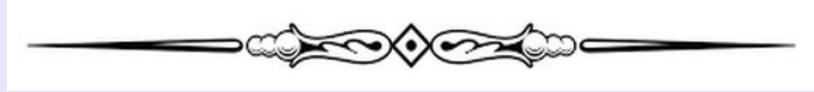
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Statement on the passing of former Senator Bob Dole

All of us at VA are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of a brave man and a patriot, Senator Bob Dole. His death is a loss for our entire country.

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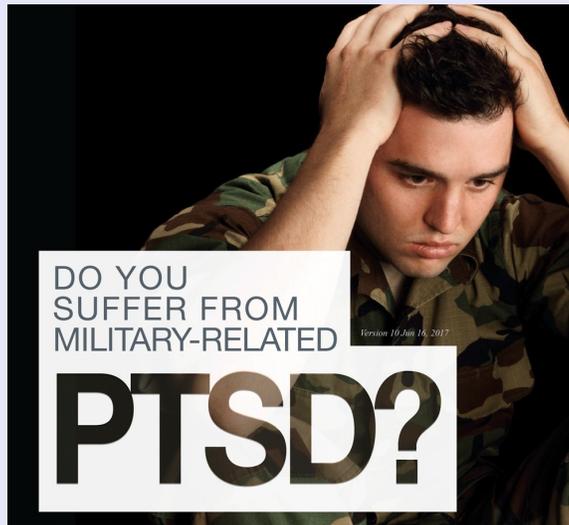


Using innovation to better serve Veterans and their families

Three VA employees who excel in work that is foundational to the VHA Innovators Network are honored for their inspiring work and dedication.

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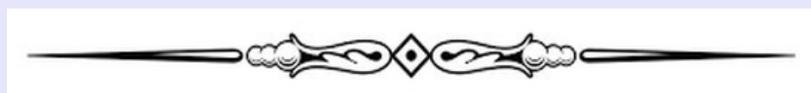
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1-800-273-8255 & Press 1
Ntl Call Center for Homeless Vets
1-877-424-3838**



VA committed to being place free of harassment, assault for all Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that Veterans are a diverse group who served and sacrificed on behalf of this great Nation. We all have a responsibility to ensure every Veteran who receives treatment, benefits, or services at a VA facility is treated with dignity and respect. VA is committed to ensuring our community is safe, welcoming, and a place that is free of harassment for all Veterans, their caregivers, volunteers, visitors, and employees.

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Robotic pets rekindle positive memories for resident Veterans

Robotic pets help patients and staff engage on a personal level. They let elderly Veterans reflect on happy life experiences.

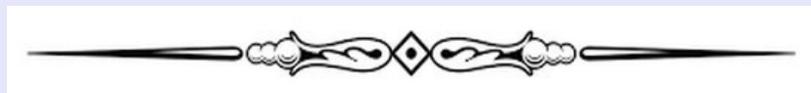
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Grape juice may have the potential to improve cognitive performance in Gulf War Veterans

Dr. Drew Helmer, an internist at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, co-authored the 2021 paper. He and his colleagues first identified whether drinking Concord grape juice is linked to increased levels of polyphenols in the blood. They then tried to learn whether these increases correlate with improved cognitive performance in 26 Veterans with Gulf War illness.

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Harvey Alter: Nobel Prize Winner

Harvey Alter served in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps; later, his research on hepatitis C virus led to a Nobel Prize.

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VA woman Veteran author: Coast Guard Veteran Hillary "Herby" Herbst

Author and Coast Guard Veteran Hillary Herbst wrote "Weight Out" about her experiences battling through challenges during her service.

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Canine comfort for Veterans, starring Aly, the diva poodle

Aly the poodle brings canine comfort to senior Veterans in the nursing home at the Reno VA.

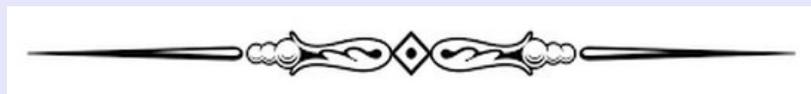
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#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran Rhona Knox Prescott

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran Rhona Knox Prescott, who served in the Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War.

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#VeteranOfTheDay Army Air Forces Veteran Josephine Bogdanich

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Air Forces Veteran Josephine Bogdanich, a 105 year old who served as a mail clerk during World War II. Josephine Bogdanich was born in Chicago, Illinois, in October 1916. She stayed in the city during her childhood and attended Visitation High School. After graduation, she worked as a switch board operator for Illinois Bell Telephone Company.

We honor your service, Josephine!

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#VeteranOfTheDay Marine Corps Veteran Alfred Bancroft

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Marine Corps Veteran Alfred Bancroft, who served three tours of duty during the Vietnam War.

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#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran Joshua G. Will

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran Joshua G. Will, who served in Afghanistan for 16 months during Operation Enduring Freedom.

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#VeteranOfTheDay Navy Veteran Isaac C. Kidd

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Navy Veteran Isaac C. Kidd, the commander of USS Arizona killed Dec. 7, 1941, during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

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#VeteranOfTheDay Air Force Veteran Cassie Barlow

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Air Force Veteran Cassie Barlow, who served as a personnel officer and commanded a mission support group.

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The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced four burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Army Pfc. Anthony F. Mendonca, 28, of Waipahu, Hawaii, was assigned to Company A, 106th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division. He was reported killed in action on June 28, 1944, when American forces participated in the battle for Saipan, part of a larger operation to secure the Mariana islands. Mendonca will be buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu on Dec. 16, 2021. [Read about Mendonca.](#)

Army Pfc. Morris E. Swackhammer, 20, of Binghamton, New York, was assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division. In August, his unit landed on the southern coast of France as part of Operation Dragoon. On Nov. 22, 1944, Swackhammer's unit engaged in a heavy firefight with enemy troops in a wooded area northwest of Fraize. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Swackhammer.](#)

Army Cpl. Benjamin R. Bazzell, 18, of Seymour, Connecticut, was assigned to Headquarters Battery, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported killed in action on Nov. 30, 1950, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Bazzell will be buried in Kent, Washington. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Bazzell.](#)

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Anel B. Shay, Jr., 26, of Seattle, was assigned to 345th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Shay was serving as a bombardier crashed as a result of enemy anti-aircraft fire. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Shay will be buried in his hometown. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Shay.](#)



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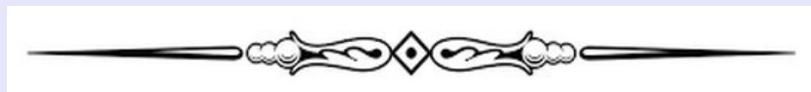
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