



# **Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, August 09, 2015**

Volume 6, Issue 32

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

For many years now help for Homeless Veterans has been almost non-existent and what was or is available is almost nothing but that provided by some small private organizations as the VA's programs haven't been working even with billions of dollars dumped into the program to end Veteran Homelessness by the end of 2015.

As many of you know in Los Angeles at the West LA VAMC it's been wrapped up for a couple of years in court thanks to the ACLU and a judge ordered that all leases of Veteran property and land were illegal. This was more than a year ago and at the time the VA had filed a counter suit under Secretary Shinseki.

Finally Secretary McDonald dropped the counter suit and agreed to return the land to the Veterans. But even today there are still several Brentwood elitist businesses still there. A car rental storage lot, hotel dry cleaners, a school bus storage lot and more. And still no one is being held accountable for the revenue from those businesses which were to go to helping our Veterans.

Then a month ago Secretary McDonald and Mayor Eric Garcetti made nice for a photo opportunity to say they were going to be breaking ground soon and we still saw no activity to meet this lofty goal.

Then in January of this year Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority found a 12% jump in the overall homeless ranks and a 6% rise among homeless Veterans. And we know this number is greatly understated since the population just a few years ago was 20,000+ so with the increase which most of us anticipated is more like 25,000+ Homeless Veterans.

With a total of 387 acres which was deeded to the Veterans back in the 1800's there is more than enough room to not only renovate the 12 vacant buildings which have been vacant for more than twenty-five years and are of historical value plus all the outer buildings it certainly would not take a ton of money to get them ready for housing.

But now after all the years people have been asking Senators Feinstein and Boxer to get involved makes me wonder that their involvement now is nothing more than another photo opportunity or a final move on both their way out of office at the end of their term to say hey Veteran we're here to help!

Where has their help been in all the years they both have been in office, where has their help been in all the years people have been asking for their help? Why now? They have nothing to gain from it as they've both promised to retire at the end of their term.

With us being in the month of August and the promise being by October, it would take millions of dollars for a rush job and more likely than not they will not even come close to the goal let alone the VA's promise to end Veteran Homelessness by the end of 2015.

Finally after two long hard months, we finally have all the missing documents from the library all back on-line with and added 966 new documents and more to come. So if you've not been to the VFC website in a while, do check us out again.

Some libraries have been merged and a couple new ones have been added and we plan an estimated additional 500+ documents to be added over the next couple of weeks.

We've also added to the FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) a few months back, so check that out, and we also have several forums but you do need to subscribe, which is 100% free in order to see and access most forums.

Average daily downloads has been in the mid 400's with over 250,000 downloads in the past two years.

We're still asking for people to write cards and letters to be included in goodie boxes being shipped out weekly to our troops on foreign soil. We're not asking for anything special, just cards and letters to include and trust me this excites them more than the goodies we send.

And if you have children, even hand made cards from the children makes their day!

The program is called OPERATION MAIL CALL.

We're still looking for those who want to send cards and letters to our troops, not spectacular, just words of encouragement, thanks and appreciation, something to put a smile on their faces, even if only for a few seconds.

More information and a link to where you can send cards and letters to be included in each week's shipments are further down in this newsletter.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder & CEO

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

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## **VA Expands Review of Chemical Exposure in Drinking Water at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune**

WASHINGTON – As part of VA's ongoing commitment to provide care to Veterans and their families, the Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that it will start the process of amending its regulations to establish presumptions of service connection for certain conditions resulting from exposure to contaminated drinking water at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

This process is in addition to the healthcare VA already provides for 15 conditions to eligible Veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987 as a result of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. VA also provides reimbursement of healthcare expenses for those 15 conditions to eligible family members who resided at Camp Lejeune during that time period.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently met with Senators Isakson, Burr and Tillis and the Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to discuss the creation of presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. The diseases that are currently being reviewed for potential presumptive service connection include kidney cancer, angiosarcoma of the liver, and acute myelogenous leukemia, which are known to be related to long-term exposure to the chemicals that were in the water at Lejeune from the 1950s through 1987. The chemicals are Benzene, Vinyl Chloride, Trichloroethylene and Perchloroethylene, which are known as volatile organic compounds, used in industrial solvents and components of fuels. ATSDR and VA representatives will meet at ATSDR offices on August 19 to begin discussions on establishing these presumptions.

VA will also work with ATSDR and potentially the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate the body of scientific knowledge and research related to exposure to these chemicals and the subsequent development of other diseases. VA will carefully consider all public comments received when determining the final scope of any presumptions.

Veterans with health problems they believe are related to exposure to the water at Camp Lejeune may file a claim for disability compensation online at [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000 for assistance.

For more information, Veterans and family members should contact the nearest VA healthcare facility by calling 1–877–222–VETS (8387) or visit [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune). For further information on Camp Lejeune: VHA Office of Public Health has a Website on Camp Lejeune historical water contamination at: [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp).

The U.S. Marine Corps encourages all those who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune before 1987 to register for notifications regarding Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water at <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater>.

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### ***Veterans VA Healthcare Survey***

Veterans VA Healthcare Survey, please complete as much information as possible. Will help VFC to determine what is most important when communicating with members of Congress.

<https://www.justsurvey.me/56657a0c6579>

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### ***House Passes Benefits Legislation***

The U.S. House of Representatives has approved legislation that would increase rates of benefit compensation for veterans with disabilities caused by their military service. Cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' disability benefits must be approved by Congress each year. Another provision based from legislation authored by Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.), would require the VA to pay any accrued benefits to a deceased veteran's estate. The VA currently pays accrued benefits to a deceased veteran's family members, such as spouses or dependent children. But the VA keeps the benefit payments if the veteran dies without surviving qualifying family members.

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### ***VFC's OPERATION MAIL CALL***



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

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/4727-operation-mail-call>

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### ***DoD Issues New Rule Under Military Lending Act***

The Department of Defense recently issued the final rule of the Military Lending Act (MLA), which covers all forms of payday loans, vehicle title loans, refund anticipation loans, deposit advance loans, installment loans, unsecured open-end lines of credit and credit cards. Among other protections, the MLA caps at 36 percent the interest rate on covered loans to active-duty service members, requires disclosures to alert service members of their rights, and prohibits creditors from requiring a service member to submit to arbitration in a dispute. The latest final rule allows for industry compliance by Oct. 1, followed by a staggered implementation period.

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### ***TRICARE Tip: Answers to Your Medication Questions***

Your pharmacist should be the first resource you use to answer questions about your drugs. If you are taking over-the-counter (OTC) medications, those drugs can interfere with other medications. It is important that you tell your pharmacist about taking OTC products when you fill any prescription. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Division of Drug Information (DDI) will answer almost any drug question and is easy to reach by telephone at 1-855-543-DRUG (3784). If you get your prescriptions from [TRICARE Home Delivery](#), you still have access to a pharmacist 24/7 by calling Express Scripts, Inc., the contractor who manages the TRICARE prescription benefit, at 1-877-363-1303.

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### ***Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports***

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: Improved Data Collection and Reporting Would Enhance Oversight. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-526>

Army Reserve Components: Improvements Needed to Data Quality and Management Procedures to Better Report Soldier Availability. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-626>

Disability Insurance: Actions Needed to Help Prevent Potential Overpayments to Individuals Receiving Concurrent Federal Workers' Compensation. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-531>

DOD Financial Management: Actions Are Needed on Audit Issues Related to the Marine Corps' 2012 Schedule of Budgetary Activity. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-198>

State Revolving Funds: Improved Financial Indicators Could Strengthen EPA Oversight. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-567>

African Growth and Opportunity Act: Insights from Other Countries' Preference Programs and Participation in Trade Negotiations. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-701>

Modernizing the Nuclear Security Enterprise: NNSA Increased Its Budget Estimates, but Estimates for Key Stockpile and Infrastructure Programs Need Improvement. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-499>

Federal Real Property: GSA Needs to Determine Its Progress toward Long-term Sustainability of Its Portfolio <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-609>

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### ***If My Spouse Refuses His Benefits Can I Have Them?***

In this week's Questions and Benefits column, a reader says a friend's husband gave up his free military eye surgery so she could get it instead. Is this actually possible? To get the complete answer, as well as more on the general "transferability" of benefits, see [the Questions and Benefits post](#).

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### ***Study Looks at Vietnam Veterans***

New research has found that four decades after the Vietnam War ended, more than 270,000 veterans who served in the war zone suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The study, published online in JAMA Psychiatry, also found that at least one-third of those veterans exhibiting symptoms of PTSD suffer from major depression, as well. The study is available on the JAMA Psychiatry website at [archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2398184](http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2398184).

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***Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our veterans!***

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### ***New Resource Service in Chicago***

The city of Chicago has enhanced its 311 intake assessment and training process to better identify military veterans and active duty service members so they can be more easily connected to existing services and resources. Chicago residents who call 311 to request a range of services, including homeless prevention, employment services, senior well-being checks, emergency food, and crisis referral services, will be asked by a 311 operator if they are a veteran or active duty service member so they may be connected to existing resources and programs available to veterans and current military service members. The City's enhanced 311 process will be able to track and report on the level and type of needs of services requested. For more information, dial 311 in Chicago.

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### ***VFC Website Update***

In April 2015 we went through a major upgrade in our web site software and the transition was fairly smooth with a few kinks which most have been corrected. But in the process we did end up losing about 4,000 documents off the site due to corruption, not to panic though we are in the process now of re-installing them and most if not all plus an added 1,000+ more will be added at the same time.

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,800 and 5,000 visitors per day and have had **2,300,840** visitors to date.

Visit today and subscribe, it's 100% **FREE** of charge to all! Just be sure to use a valid E-Mail address so the system can send you an authentication E-Mail. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 11,000 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

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

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **12,953+** documents (**966** total New Docs)
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 08/04/15 –51 **NEW** Listings)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,090** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,583** Active Links)(**Updated 08/04/15**)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 50 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked to use by women only. Another for Men Veterans which is also locked to men only.

In the documents and forums we provide information pertaining to women and the ability speak freely in the forums to other women about the same issues and problems you face.

The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org))

You also have the ability to comment and rate all NEWS articles which would be very helpful for us so we know the types of information you'd like to see on our website.

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### ***Beware of DEA Extortion Scheme***

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is warning the general public about criminals posing as DEA (or other law enforcement) agents, who are part of an international money-laundering scheme. The criminals call the victims and identify themselves as DEA or other agents. The impersonators inform their victims that purchasing drugs over the Internet or by telephone is illegal and instruct their victims to pay the fine via wire transfer to a designated location. Anyone receiving a telephone call from a person purporting to be a DEA special agent or other law enforcement official seeking money should refuse the demand and report the threat at the [DEA Office of Division Control website](#) — click the 'extortion scam online reporting' link.



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

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

For a couple of weeks now we did a separate posting of jobs available, and now we've made a library on the Veterans-For-Change web site just for that purpose.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: [JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG](mailto:JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG) there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

***Updated 08/04/15 – 51 New jobs***

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***Links to other Stories***

- 1) *Ailing U.S. Veteran wins payout over Agent Orange exposure in Okinawa*
- 2) *Approach to homeless Veterans care changing*
- 3) *Boxer, Feinstein back plan to move homeless Vets to VA campus*
- 4) *Controversial Exposure Therapy for PTSD Challenged*
- 5) *Could Pot Help Veterans With PTSD?*
- 6) *Detroit VA Hospital 'Like A Third World Country' Claim Protesting Workers*
- 7) *DoD Awards Contract for Electronic Health Records*
- 8) *External Health Insurance Must Be Divulged, Official Says*
- 9) *Fast-tracking VA firings makes for bad policy*
- 10) *Hundreds rally for VA health care reform at Hopkinton State Fair Grounds*
- 11) *Lawsuit: Poor hospital care left Veteran in vegetative state*
- 12) *McCain bill would let all Veterans seek care outside VA*
- 13) *Medical innovators of the battlefield*
- 14) *New Veterans Choice Program Rules*
- 15) *Senate votes to end hide-the-food-stamps-game stateside*
- 16) *Surprise, Surprise. The VA is Understaffed*
- 17) *Thompson's bill to aid Veterans passes*
- 18) *VA awards \$12M contract for Pahrump clinic*
- 19) *VA Central Western Massachusetts director says 'modest improvements' made in wait times for primary care appointments*
- 20) *VA claims Veteran health-care system in Phoenix is improving*
- 21) *VA Kept Veterans Waiting More Than 100 Days For Care*
- 22) *VA may pay disability for some illnesses linked to Lejeune*
- 23) *VA Medical Center strives to improve Veterans access to care*
- 24) *VA San Diego Cuts Backlog by 82%*
- 25) *Veterans Facing Homelessness Grill VA Officials with Tough Questions at Conference*
- 26) *Veterans learn VA hospital dumped patient records with Social Security, personal info*
- 27) *Was VA OIG Shamed In Tomah VA Drug Bust?*

You can help Veterans-For-Change by reading the articles posted, and comment at the bottom and rank the article. If you don't have an account, sign-up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings help us to better determine the type of information you'd like most to see.

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

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### ***E*Mentor Program**

A new web-based mentoring program called the eMentor Program helps the job-seeking military member, veteran or spouse work with a mentor online. Mentors and protégés start by completing an online profile. From there, protégés can search for and select a mentor. When the mentor accepts the protégé's invitation, the relationship begins. The mentoring pair then works together to establish goals and develop a plan of action. The program is also volunteer career mentors. Visit the eMentor Program website at [ementorprogram.org/about](http://ementorprogram.org/about) and select one of the "Join Now" buttons to get started as a mentor or protégé. The program is free.

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### ***Fort Rucker Opens Housing to Military Retirees***

Fort Rucker and Corvias Military Living have announced that military retirees and federal civilians are now eligible to live on post at Fort Rucker, Ala. The community offers two-, three- and four-bedroom homes with various floor plans. The homes include ample amounts of storage, a covered patio with ceiling fan, fenced yards and modern appliances. Most utilities are included in the rent. Children of federal civilians that live on post will be able to attend the installation's Department of Defense Schools. Applications may be completed in person by visiting the Corvias Military Living Leasing Center located in Bldg. 5700, online at the Corvias Military Living website at [www.Rucker.CorviasMilitaryLiving.com](http://www.Rucker.CorviasMilitaryLiving.com), via email at [FortRucker.RelocationOffice@corvias.com](mailto:FortRucker.RelocationOffice@corvias.com) or by mail. For more information, call 334-503-3644.



### ***America's Veterans United***

Is an advocacy group on Yahoo Groups developed to fight for the benefits, care, facilities, caring and compassionate fully licensed medical professionals, updated and properly operated VA Medical Facilities.

Are you sick and tired of the "business as usual" attitude, or the "delay, deny, until they die" attitude?

Are you able to give 30-60 minutes of your time per month to help develop and send letters to all 535 members of Congress each month in an attempt to force Congress into getting off their seats and actually doing something for Veterans vs. their usual lip service?

And are you sick and tired of all the other organizations who say they are fighting for you, but have shown decades of really not doing much for you?

Then join us, we do more than use membership numbers to fight, we actually have you working with us in the fight. Take control of your health and medical care and help us fight for you.

If interested, check out our page on Yahoo Groups:

[https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas\\_Veterans\\_United/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas_Veterans_United/info)

If you're not a member of any Yahoo Group, and not familiar with the system but want to join in the fight, you can do so via E-Mail as well:

[americas\\_veterans\\_united-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:americas_veterans_united-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

One really good thing about America's Veterans United, it won't cost you one thin dime, no membership dues, no postage costs, just your time and your computer.

Help us to help you and your fellow Veterans in the fight!

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

To Call your Representative:	202-225-2305
To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121
Toll <b>FREE</b> Number:	866-272-6622

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### ***Nevada Seeks Volunteers to Help Vets***

There are some 300,000 veterans living in Nevada, but many of them do not use their benefits because they do not know about them. The Nevada Department of Veterans Services is seeking more qualified volunteers to learn about all the programs, services and benefits available to those who are active military or former military. They will also learn about benefits that can help military spouses, children and survivors. These Veterans Advocates will then educate other veterans on the resources that are available. You can become certified as a Veterans Advocate by taking the

Department's online course on the Nevada Department of Veterans' Services website at [www.veterans.nv.gov/page/veterans-advocacy](http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/veterans-advocacy). The course is free.

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*~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~*

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***This month please remember these women who died during August while serving our country in or during war times***

2 Aug 2008: USA PFC Jennifer L Cole, 34, IRAQ  
3 Aug 2013: USA Lilli Anna (Moore) Panttila, 25, possible suicide, IL  
4 Aug 1943: WASP Kathryn Barbara Lawrence, WW II  
5 Aug 1984: USN Pamela Cahanes, 25, found murdered in Sanford, FL two days after graduating from Orlando Navy Training Center  
5 Aug 2010: Civilian Cheryl Beckett, 32, murdered by Taliban, IRAQ  
7 Aug 1998: USAF SrMSGT Sherry Lynn Olds, 40, Military Assistance Office in US Embassy bombing in NAIROBI, KENYA, Africa  
7 Aug 1998: CIVILIAN Jean Dalizu, Defense Attache's Office, in US Embassy bombing in NAIROBI, KENYA, AFRICA  
7 Aug 1998: CIVILIAN Molly Hardy, Administrative Office in US Embassy bombing in NAIROBI, KENYA, AFRICA  
7 Aug 1998: CIVILIAN Arlene Kirk, Military Assistance Office in US Embassy bombing in NAIROBI, KENYA, AFRICA  
7 Aug 1998: CIVILIAN Michelle O'Connor, General Services Office in US Embassy bombing in NAIROBI, KENYA, AFRICA  
7 Aug 2007: USAF Airman Basic Paige R Villers, 19, boot camp flu, Lackland AFB  
7 Aug 2010: USA SPC Faith R Hinkley, 23, RPG attack, IRAQ  
8 Aug 2009: USA SSG Tara J Smith, 33, non-combat health, Bagram AFGHANISTAN  
9 Aug 2007: USA SSG Alicia A (Finklea) Birchett, 29, non-combat vehicle accident, IRAQ  
10 Aug 2006: PAARNG SPC Kirsten Fike, 36, died in AZ watching the Mexican border  
13 Aug 2008: USAF SrAirman Sabrina Autrey, 23, unknown Bolling AFB  
13 Aug 2008: CIVILIAN Nicole Dial, 30, shot during ambush in AFGHANISTAN  
14 Aug 1944: WASP Mary E. Hartson, WW II  
14 Aug 1968: USA ANC LTC Annie Ruth Graham, 52, VIETNAM  
14 Aug 2005: USA SPC Toccara R. Green, 23, IRAQ  
14 Aug 2008: USA PVT Janelle F King, 23, IRAQ  
15 Aug 2006: USMC LCPL Amanda Carrithers, 19, murdered in NC  
15 Aug 2007: USA SGT Princess C Samuels, 22, mortars, IRAQ  
15 Aug 2007: USA SPC Zandra T (Worthy) Walker, 28, mortars, IRAQ  
16 Aug 1967: CIVILIAN Marilyn L. Allan, USAID nurse, VIETNAM  
16 Aug 1970: CIVILIAN Virginia E. Kirsch, American Red Cross, VIETNAM  
16 Aug 2007: USA SPC Kamisha J Block, 20, non-combat murdered by US soldier, IRAQ  
16 Aug 2008: USA SGT Kendale B Carney, died of natural causes while home on leave, Hamlet, NC  
17 Aug 2006: USCG LT Jessica Hill, 31, drowned in training off Barrows, AK  
18 Aug 2005: USA 1LT Laura M. Walker, 24, AFGHANISTAN  
19 Aug 2006: USA SGT Wakkuna A Jackson, 21, AFGHANISTAN  
23 Aug 1943: WASP Mabel Virginia Rawlinson, WW II  
24 Aug 2012: USA PFC Patricia L Horne, 20, AFGHANISTAN  
25 Aug 1950: USN NNC LT Wilma Ledbetter, drowned when USS Benevolence sank after colliding with the SS Mary Luckenback near the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, CA  
25 Aug 2013: USA WO1 Anisha Phillips, 30, motorcycle accident, Florence, SC  
25 Aug 2014: USA SFC Paula Walker, 33. suicide, Ft Lee, VA  
27 Aug 2012: MEARNG SSG Jessica M. Wing, 42, non-combat, KUWAIT  
30 Aug 1943: WASP Margaret "Peggy" June Seip, WW II  
30 Aug 1943: WASP Helen Jo Anderson Severson, WW II

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## **VA Launches New No-Cost Training Programs**

*Programs Designed to Help Transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans Develop New Skills and Credentials*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today launched two new no-cost training programs, Accelerated Learning Programs (ALPs) and VA Learning Hubs, to help transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans from all eras learn skills, earn credentials, and advance in civilian careers following separation from service.

ALPs and Learning Hubs are part of VA's Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI), promoting education and employment opportunities for Veterans through integrated networks of support in 50 cities. VA launched the VECI program in response to President Obama's August 2014 challenge to help Veterans and families integrate with their communities and find meaningful jobs that can lead to economic success. Under VA Secretary Robert McDonald's MyVA transformation, VECI is now in place in cities across the United States.

"My message to transitioning Servicemembers is simple: Plan early and stay engaged, because transition is the mission," said McDonald. "These two new resources provide no-cost opportunities for our transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans to learn new skills and earn credentials, which can increase their competitiveness during their transition."

ALPs offer transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans the opportunity to build on their world-class training and technical skills gained through their military service, and earn certifications in high-demand fields.

VA is piloting ALPs this summer with seven courses focusing on building skills and certifications needed to advance in high-demand careers in information technology (IT), as part of the President's TechHire initiative. Each ALP course is offered at no cost and includes free referral and support services..

The first ALP cohort includes seven courses covering a range of IT-related topics, including:

- Coding/Programming Boot Camps;
- 80+ IT Certifications in Hardware, Software, Networking, Web Services, and more;
- Network Support Engineer Job Training and Certification;
- Cybersecurity Training and Certification;
- IT Help Desk Job Training; and
- IT Boot Camps for Desktop Support and Windows Expertise.

Transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans from any era are invited to apply to their choice of courses. Applications will be accepted starting August 17, 2015 – seats in the pilot cohort are limited; applicants are encouraged to apply early. ALPs do not involve use of the Post-9/11 GI Bill.. Students are able to participate in these programs while also pursuing other programs of study using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. Visit the ALP website to learn more about each program and apply.

VA is also launching Learning Hubs in 27 cities across the country this year in partnership with the American Red Cross, The Mission Continues and Coursera, an online education platform.

Transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans can take advantage of both online and in-person study. Each week, online course modules will be completed outside the classroom while class sessions, led by Learning Hub facilitators, provide opportunities to discuss course materials with peers, hear from subject matter experts, and network. Upon completion of the program, Servicemembers and Veterans may elect to receive one free verified certificate issued by Coursera.

For more information about the VECI or to learn more about VA ALPs and Learning Hubs, contact [VeteranEmployment.vbaco@va.gov](mailto:VeteranEmployment.vbaco@va.gov).

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## **Compound Drugs Fleece TRICARE, Create Budget Hole**

Dodgy companies peddling pricey compound pharmaceuticals have fleeced the TRICARE program so severely this year, before tougher screening procedures took effect May 1, that they are largely to blame for a \$2 billion defense health budget hole Congress is scrambling to fill. In fiscal 2010, military outpatient pharmacy costs totaled \$6.6 billion, with only \$23 million spent on compound drugs. By fiscal 2014, outpatient pharmacy costs had risen to \$7.7 billion but compound drugs costs soared to \$515 million. In the first nine months of fiscal 2015, compound drug costs tripled again for

TRICARE, to \$1.7 billion, or more than 20 percent of the \$8.2 billion TRICARE expects to spend on outpatient drugs the entire year.

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### ***Weapons Permits for Vets Expedited in Florida***

The State of Florida has announced that it will expedite concealed weapons permits for active duty military and veterans. A concealed weapons permit would allow a military member or veteran to carry such weapons outside of military installations in the state. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs said its goal is to issue licenses to qualified active military and veterans within 30 days, a third of the time allotted by law. For information on applying for a concealed weapons permit in the State of Florida, visit the [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website](#).

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### ***University of Phoenix Under Federal Investigation***

The University of Phoenix, one of the largest recipients of GI Bill benefits, is under federal investigation for possible deceptive or unfair business practices, its parent company has announced. Apollo Education Group which owns The University of Phoenix, as well as Western International University, Carnegie Learning, and College for Financial Planning announced the Federal Trade Commission investigation in a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange commission. According to the filing, the investigation is to "determine if certain unnamed persons, partnerships, corporations, or others have engaged or are engaging in deceptive or unfair acts or practices in or affecting commerce in the advertising, marketing, or sale of secondary or postsecondary educational products or services or educational accreditation products or services."

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*Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!*



**“A lie doesn’t become truth, wrong doesn’t become right, and evil doesn’t become good, just because it’s accepted by a majority.”**

*~author unknown~*

## ***Veterans-For-Change, Inc.***

Riverside County, CA

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