



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 06, 2015

Volume 6, Issue 36

This-N-That

Well the VA is on a roll again! With more than 900,000 claims in backlog and an estimated 300,000 of those claims Veterans may have already died waiting!

Then add to that employees incorrectly marked unprocessed applications as completed and may have deleted as many as 10,000 applications during the past five years!

The VA system cannot discern how many records in the system are associated with actual applications for health care, and more than half the records did not contain an associated date of application.

Are we shocked? Are we amazed? Are we pissed off and mad as hell as YOU may be one of those applications incorrectly marked and/or deleted!

VA officials explained they cannot expunge deceased Veterans from its eligibility system because under department policy, only death notices from three sources — death certificates, a record of a death at a VA facility or a notification from the National Cemetery Administration — are considered sufficient verification.

But the not so funny thing about expunging deceased Veterans per policy isn't always the case as some of you know or have read! Many Veterans who are still living have received letters letting family know that the benefits will cease due to death, yet that Veteran is living, breathing and more than alive!

One whistleblower has been assigned a lesser job in a secluded office since raising the issue with Congress and the media, said Wednesday that he plans to send VA senior leaders and Congress his own set of recommendations.

My question is and remains, when are officials at the VA Healthcare going to realize they are in serious trouble, costing lives of countless Veterans, inflicting severe and emotional distress on family members by not facing the facts that they cannot fix the claims system?

When are they going to wake up and realize they need to bring in civilian software companies to bid on a fully functioning claims and benefits system which would first eliminate many wasted jobs to be handled by a computer system capable of determining claims and ratings all on it's own without human intervention with the exception of very complex claims?

Civilian Hospitals and Insurance Companies have been using these systems for well over a decade now and successfully as well I might add! In fact I know personally the first software application rolled out in 1978 and has been improved greatly over the years.

I will admit no software application is perfect, and I think we all know this, but something is far better than nothing, and a starting point none-the-less!

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has backed away from his pledge to end Veteran homelessness this year stating it might take an additional six months.

My best guess is all due to the VA and having committed to and promising to rehab the twelve buildings on the West Los Angeles VA Campus and so far not having done a darn thing, nor even begun to take action.

Adding to that they still have not evicted any of the Brentwood Elitist Businesses that by a judges ruling were illegal from the onset and being able to use those buildings either.

Even with all the hoopla made with Secretary McDonald and Mayor Garcetti in the presence of media committing to this goal, I personally feel it was just that hoopla, smoke and mirrors all to avoid dealing with the problem head on!

Betty, our Director of Operation Mail call is prepping even more packages to go out, and we need 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!

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

TRICARE Pharmacy Changes Coming October 1

Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all [TRICARE](#) beneficiaries, except active duty service members, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or from a military pharmacy. Beneficiaries who keep using a retail pharmacy for these drugs will have to pay the full cost. Maintenance drugs are those you take regularly for a long time, such as drugs to control blood pressure or cholesterol. The law does not apply to drugs you take for a short time, like antibiotics, or generic drugs. Beneficiaries living overseas, or with other prescription drug coverage, are not affected.

Free Webinar—Will VA Now Admit that You Were in Brown Water?

VA has yet to publish its official definition of *inland waterway*. However, the BVA's decision indicates that VA still refuses to accept Vietnam harbors as inland waterways, ignoring a Veterans Court order to the contrary.

In this webinar, Matthew Hill and [Commander John Wells, Esq.](#), Executive Director, Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc., will cover what has and hasn't changed in the *Brown Water/Blue Water Debate*.

Please join us on Thursday, September 10 at 3 PM EDT. [Click here](#) to register for the webinar.

TRICARE Co-Pays and Cost Shares Adding Up?

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

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>

Support Extension of Agent Orange Act (HR 3423) Time is Running Out for Agent Orange Act

Congressman Tim Walz (MN) recently introduced the FRA-supported "Agent Orange Extension Act," (H.R. 3423) which would extend by two years the original sunset deadline of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to ensure that Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange receive just compensation and care. The Act expires on September 30, 2015 and the legislation would extend the sunset to September 30, 2017. FRA warned the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees regarding the sunset of the Act during its March 18, 2015 testimony.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 (AOA) established a presumption of service connection for diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, relieving Vietnam veterans from the burden of providing evidence that their illness was a result of military service. This law directs the the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to periodically research and review diseases that might be associated with Agent Orange exposure. The VA is required to add diseases the NAS finds to have a positive association to Agent Orange exposure to the VA's list of presumptive service connected diseases. Since the enactment of the AOA, the NAS has issued reports that have led to the presumption of service connection for diseases such as Parkinson's, B-cell leukemia and early onset peripheral neuropathy. Without these studies, thousands of Vietnam era veterans would have gone without the benefits they greatly deserve.

If the AOA expires before the final report is issued, the VA would no longer be obligated to review the NAS report or add any new diseases to the presumption of service list, in the process denying thousands of veterans their right to compensation.

[Take Action!](#)

Proposed Rulemaking for State Veteran Cemeteries Spousal and Dependent Fees and Fees for Disinterment (Amend CCR §461 and Adopt CCR §463 and §464) (Corrected Version of CalVet 15-086, Dated August 20, 2015)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) amended the Notice of Public Rulemaking by placing the correct document of proposed rules on CalVet's website. Further, the 45-day Written Comment period was reset, and it begins today.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any interested person, or his or her duly authorized representative, may submit written comments relevant to the proposed regulatory action to:

California Department of Veterans Affairs
Northern California Veterans Cemetery
Attention: Mark George
11800 Gas Point Road
Igo, CA 96047
Telephone: 530-396-2429
Fax: 530-396-2523

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail to mark.george@calvet.ca.gov. The written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on October 19, 2015. CalVet will only consider comments received at CalVet offices by that time. The Public Notice and proposed rulemaking package are available for viewing in CalVet's lobby at 1227 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, or on our web site at: <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/NPRM-MVC-461-463-464.pdf>

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Federal Low-Income Programs: Multiple Programs Target Diverse Populations and Needs. GAO-15-516
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-516>

Military Personnel: Additional Steps Are Needed to Strengthen DOD's Oversight of Ethics and Professionalism Issues.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-711>

Capitol Power Plant: Architect of the Capitol Should Update Its Long-term Energy Plan before Committing to Major Energy Projects. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-436>

401(K) Plans: Clearer Regulations Could Help Plan Sponsors Choose Investments for Participants, GAO-15-578
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-578>

Troubled Asset Relief Program: Status of GAO Recommendations. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-813>

Navy Suicide Prevention Campaign

September is Suicide Prevention Month. This year, the U.S. Navy is focusing on a new message with its *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign, "1 Small ACT." The message promotes simple, everyday actions that can ultimately save lives, using Navy's "ACT" (Ask Care Treat) bystander intervention model. The Navy Suicide Prevention office released a [toolkit](#) that contains educational resources and ideas for action. For more information, see this Navy news release: www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=90797. Help is always available. Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (press 1), text 838255 or visit www.militarycrisisline.net for confidential, free support, 24/7.

Vets: Help Determine West LA VA Campus's Future

Vets Advocacy has created a website, www.vatherightway.org, where veterans can find out about the history of the West LA VA campus, see the schedule of local town hall events, watch video testimonials of other vets, and — most importantly — take the survey regarding how the campus should be modified to better serve patients and the veteran community at large. For more details, see [this article](#).

New IRS Forms for TRICARE

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), all military members and their eligible family members must have health care coverage that meets minimum essential coverage or pay a fee. TRICARE coverage meets the minimum essential coverage requirement under the ACA. Beginning in January 2016, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will provide the appropriate IRS Form 1095 to all troops, annuitants, former spouses and all other individuals having TRICARE coverage during all or any portion of tax year 2015. The IRS Form 1095 is proof people have the minimum essential coverage. People with a myPay account at mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx should logon and ensure their email

address is current as well as make an IRS Form 1095 delivery method election. For more information on the ACA, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov/Affordable-Care-Act.

NY State Vet License Fees to be Refunded

New York State veterans who paid a fee to receive a distinguishing mark on their driver's license or ID after October, 2012 will now be eligible for a reimbursement. Last year, a bill was signed into law suspending the fee for veterans who are eligible to receive a special indicator on their Department of Motor Vehicles documents, but many veterans had been paying the fee since October 2012. The retroactive measure was signed into law in August, 2015. Each eligible veteran will receive a letter and a refund check from the state automatically. For more information, visit the New York Department of Motor Vehicles website at dmv.ny.gov/more-info/veteran-status-designation-photo-document.

TRICARE Fraud Warning

TRICARE is warning of mailings by a bogus organization identifying themselves as TRICARE SURVEY INC. The mailings have been sent to TRICARE beneficiaries across the country and are attempting to solicit beneficiary to be "Secret Shoppers" for TRICARE. TRICARE does not employ "Secret Shoppers". Enclosed in the mailing is a form letter, a counterfeit TRICARE WPS check for \$3,775.00, and an instruction/survey form. Should you the receive a letter, do not contact the company or attempt to cash the counterfeit check. Also, submit a Fraudline report to the Defense Health Agency, Office of Program Integrity (DHA PI) by clicking the "Report Health Care Fraud" button at the Health.mil webpage at www.health.mil/fraud.

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

VFC Website Update

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 **2,349,088** 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 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

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 09/04/15 –36 **NEW** Jobs & 1 **NEW** Job Fair)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,163** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,586** Active Links)(**Updated 08/16/15**)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 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)

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.

Military Commissary and Exchange Privileges for Disabled Veterans

On March 4, 2015, Representative Jeff Fortenberry (NE) introduced H.R. 1292, a bill that would authorize compensably disabled service-connected veterans and their dependents access to Department of Defense exchange and commissary facilities. Their access to these facilities would be on the same basis as if they were members or dependents of the armed forces entitled to retired or retainer pay.

This bill is in alignment with longstanding DAV Resolution 095, which calls for legislation to extend commissary and exchange privileges to service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents.

Please write your Representative to urge support and passage of this important legislation, a longstanding priority of DAV for its members and disabled veterans everywhere.

As always, thank you for your grassroots support and advocacy to enable us to move beneficial legislation through Congress.

Click the link below to log in and send your message:

https://www.votervoice.net/BroadcastLinks/xa6B8m_DsoholtV5lpu91g

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Agent Orange Alphabetized Ships List Updated as of 09/01/15

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/send/225-blue-water-navy/37225-agent-orange-alphabetized-ships-list>



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.

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 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.

36 New Job Postings and 1 New Job Fair

Links to other Stories

- 1) [307,000 Veterans May Have Died While Waiting for VA benefits. The VA Status Quo Must Change.](#)
- 2) [Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center monitors medical threats to service members](#)
- 3) [Brain trauma experts talk impact, emerging care options](#)
- 4) [Changes coming to TRICARE Pharmacy benefit](#)
- 5) [Charity hopes to create home for Veterans in Phillipsburg](#)
- 6) [Connecticut ends chronic homelessness among Veterans](#)
- 7) [Garcetti backs away from goal to end L.A. Veterans homelessness in 2015](#)
- 8) [Home of the Brave plans new women's facility](#)
- 9) [Inmates spruce up Veterans' cemetery](#)
- 10) [Lancaster County now has 'zero' homeless Veterans](#)
- 11) [Military medical examiners: 'We seek the truth'](#)
- 12) [More Evidence Agent Orange Causes Cancer](#)
- 13) [National Museum of Health and Medicine joins Defense Health Agency](#)
- 14) [New Affordable Housing Apartments Opens its Doors to Veterans and Homeless](#)
- 15) [Noise pollution and hearing loss](#)
- 16) [OROP row: Veterans accuse Govt of 'shifting goalpost'](#)
- 17) [Report: VA lost 10,000 applications for health care](#)
- 18) [Service members discharged for misconduct have much higher rates of homelessness, study says](#)
- 19) [TRICARE Beneficiaries Being Targeted by Fraudulent Secret Shopper Offer](#)
- 20) [USNS Mercy medical personnel conduct restorative medicine summit](#)
- 21) [Veterans Affairs Continues to Struggle 1 in 3 Important Jobs Remain Unfilled at VA hospitals](#)
- 22) [Vets groups upset with Carson's plan to eliminate VA](#)
- 23) [Virtual reality machine helps break down PTSD/TBI issues](#)
- 24) [Vision care coordinator improves eye care for injured service members](#)
- 25) [Watchdog: 900,000 Vets Awaiting Care, 300,000 May Already Have Died](#)

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

Update on GI Bill In-State Tuition; Section 702 of the Choice Act

Colleagues and Fellow Veterans,

We'd like to update you on the tremendous progress implementing our piece of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 ("the Choice Act") – specifically, the provision affecting students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill® and Montgomery GI Bill.

Section 702 of the Choice Act requires VA to disapprove programs at public colleges for Post-9/11 GI Bill and MGIB benefits that don't provide the resident-rate tuition and fee charges to *covered individuals*. The disapproval applies to any terms beginning after July 1, 2015. This change affects thousands of Post-9/11 GI Bill and MGIB – AD students. To remain approved for VA's GI Bill programs, schools must charge in-state tuition and fee amounts to those covered by this law.

When we last wrote about this in [May](#), we indicated that Secretary McDonald decided to exercise his waiver authority and grant more time for states and territories to comply.

Today we're pleased to report that 45 states and several territories comply with the law and have begun charging *covered individuals* up to the resident-rate for tuition and fees at public schools.

This means that nearly 5,000 public schools, covering nearly 93% of the GI Bill student population, are participating. Now, that doesn't mean that all of their students will qualify; the school still has to verify that someone is a covered individual. But it does demonstrate the breadth and depth of the progress we've made thanks to your support.

This effort took energy and support from so many people and organizations, and I'm proud of how we worked together for the greater good of the Veteran community. I especially want to thank our SAA colleagues for ensuring their respective legislative bodies or education commissions took the necessary steps to comply.

Other states have delegated the compliance decision to their respective schools ...you can see which ones at the link below.

The remaining few non-compliant states and territories have until December 31, 2015, to comply, thanks to the Secretary's waiver. All of them have indicated they intend to comply.

Our work isn't done yet, but we are so close. We won't stop until every state and territory complies, and we'll continue to update you on our progress.

You can read more about the resident-rate requirements of the Choice Act by visiting our website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/702.asp>. There you can also track the latest compliance status by state, territory, and school on our map.

As always, we thank you for all you do every day to assist this deserving community.

V/R

Curtis L. Coy
Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity
Veterans Benefits Administration
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



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

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

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!

Minnesota, Wisconsin Vets Get Hit With Copays

Minnesota's congressional delegation, led by Rep. John Kline, is fighting a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) directive that found veterans suddenly being billed for co-payments that were as much as five years old. Recently, the VA discovered unbilled copay amounts for inpatient care provided to veterans over a five-year period. Veterans were going to be assessed copays ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 because the VA erred in not charging the veterans at the time of the care. Veterans in Minnesota and Wisconsin were to be affected, prompting members of Minnesota's and Wisconsin's congressional delegation to sign a letter to VA Secretary Bob McDonald. McDonald said every affected vet would be personally contacted about setting up a payment plan or applying for a waiver. The incident affected only vets served by the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and amounted to \$549,198. For more information, visit [Rep. John Kline's website](#).

Tax Relief in Vets in Illinois

A new law in Illinois is increasing relief of property tax for disabled Illinois military veterans. The law expands eligibility for the Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption for United States Department of Veterans Affairs certified service-connected disabilities of 30 percent or more. Under the new law, veterans with disabilities between 30 to 49 percent will be entitled to a \$2,500 annual exemption; those with disabilities between 50 and 69 percent will be eligible for a \$5,000 annual exemption; and those who are 70 percent disabled or more will be exempt from paying property taxes. Disabled veterans will see these savings when they pay their property taxes in 2016. For more information, visit the [Illinois Revenue Property Tax--Exemptions webpage](http://tax.illinois.gov/LocalGovernment/PropertyTax/taxrelief.htm) at <http://tax.illinois.gov/LocalGovernment/PropertyTax/taxrelief.htm> in the Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption section.

How to Update Information in DEERS

Need to update your information in DEERS? It should be pretty easy, right? After all, you've done the hard work by registering to start with. Your kids are already registered, too. This should be simple. Or maybe not... for tips on how to update your DEERS information, visit [this SpouseBUZZ article](#).

Free Vet Small Business Program in NJ

Veterans interested in starting their own business can participate in a free program at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Raritan Valley Community College (www.raritanval.edu) in New Jersey. The first course, "The Business Plan," begins Sept. 15. Other classes run throughout the Fall. For a complete list of classes, including starting dates and times, visit the Small Business Development Center website at www.sbdcrvcc.com/courses/vecp/. Classes all meet at the RVCC at Bridgewater, New Jersey in Building B at 14 Vogt Drive. To register, contact 908-526-1200, ext. 8516, or e-mail sbdc@raritanval.edu. A copy of a veteran's DD 214 is required.

To Contact your Members of Congress

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

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

Air Force Wounded Warrior Program

The Air Force Wounded Warrior Program is often confused with the Wounded Warrior Project. AFW2 is an Air Force funded program, while WWP is a nonprofit charity organization. The mission of AFW2 is to provide personalized care, services and advocacy for seriously wounded, ill and injured members. For more information about the AFW2 program, visit the Air Force Wounded Warrior website at www.woundedwarrior.af.mil or call 800-581-9437.

Exchange Goods Too Pricey For Families They Serve?

The Navy Exchange's officially stated mission is to "provide authorized customers with quality goods and services at a savings and to support Navy quality of life programs for active duty military, retirees, reservists and their families," while AAFES' mission is "We go where you go to improve your quality of life through the goods and services we provide." But are these Exchanges following through on those stated goals? For a perspective on this issue, see [this Paycheck Chronicles post](#).

VA/DoD Online Service Tops 5 Million Users *eBenefits Growth Surpasses Goal Two Months Early*

WASHINGTON – Participation in the joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) [eBenefits](#) website topped five million users this week, two months ahead of schedule. VA established an agency priority goal of reaching five million eBenefits users by the end of fiscal year 2015. VA achieved this early milestone through aggressive outreach efforts and with the support of DoD and its Veterans Service Organization partners.

"Veterans are encouraged to enroll in eBenefits and file their claims online through this one-stop shop for benefits-related tools and information," said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey. "We have already implemented nearly 60 self-service features and we continue to expand eBenefits capabilities to give Veterans and Servicemembers greater flexibility in securing their information."

The number of eBenefits users is a key measure of VA's success in improving Veterans' access to VA benefits and services and is reported on www.performance.gov.

To enroll in *eBenefits*, Veterans and Servicemembers must obtain a DoD Self-Service Logon (DS Logon), which provides access to several Veterans and military benefits resources using a single username and password. The service is free and may be obtained online at www.ebenefits.va.gov or in person at a VA Regional Office.

"The successful collaboration of eBenefits and DS Logon is just one more example of how the DoD and VA are working together to continue bringing current and former Servicemembers secure online access to the benefits they've earned," said Mary Dixon, Director of Defense Manpower Data Center.

The rapid and continued growth in the utilization of the eBenefits website demonstrates the importance of giving Veterans greater access to information about their own benefits. In addition to filing claims online and checking the status of those claims, Veterans can also message their VA doctor, order prescription drug refills and obtain official military documents through *eBenefits*. More than 7.5 million VA letters have been generated and downloaded by Veterans that show proof of disability, income or Veterans preference used in federal or state government hiring.

VA Claim Appeal Process Briefing - Intro Presentation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51rKvJdyaVs>

How to Win Your VA Compensation Claim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRH2nZ2fkHU>

Changes Coming to TRICARE Pharmacy Benefit

Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all TRICARE beneficiaries, except active duty service members, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or from a military pharmacy. Beneficiaries who keep using a retail pharmacy for these drugs will have to pay the full cost.

Maintenance drugs are those you take regularly for a long time, such as drugs to control blood pressure or cholesterol. The law does not apply to drugs you take for a short time, like antibiotics, or generic drugs. Beneficiaries living overseas, or with other prescription drug coverage, are not affected.

The TRICARE pharmacy contractor, Express Scripts, is sending a letter to beneficiaries taking an affected drug, explaining their options. Beneficiaries can contact Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 to see if they are affected.

After October 1, beneficiaries still filling an affected drug at a retail pharmacy will receive another letter informing them of the change to the benefit. After that, beneficiaries have one final "courtesy" fill at a retail pharmacy. If they fill at a retail pharmacy again, they have to pay 100 percent of the cost of their medication.

TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery is a safe, convenient and low cost option to get maintenance drugs. You can get up to a 90-day supply, as opposed to a 30-day supply from a retail pharmacy. You save up to \$176 a year for every brand name drug you switch to Home Delivery. Military pharmacies offer up to a 90-day supply of drugs at zero copay, but not all drugs are available. You can check with your [local military pharmacy](#) to see if they carry your prescription. For more information about this change to TRICARE's pharmacy benefit, visit www.tricare.mil/RxNewRules.

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

09/01/08	USA SSG Renee A Deville, 44, died at Walter Reed from injuries sustained in IRAQ
09/02/99	Army Contract Nurse Anna Campos, Typhoid Fever, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR
09/04/06	USA PFC Hannah L. (Heavrin) Gunterman McKinney, 20, non-combat vehicular homicide, IRAQ
09/05/04	ILARNG SGT Shawna M. Morrison, 26, IRAQ
09/05/12	USA CWO2 Thalia S (Ramirez) Belbeck, 28, helicopter crash, AFGHANISTAN
09/06/11	NVARNG SFC Miranda McElhiney, 31, murdered at IHOP in NV
09/07/07	USA SPC Marisol Heredia, 19, IRAQ
09/08/06	USAR SFC Merideth L Howard, 52, AFGHANISTAN
09/11/01	PAPD CPT Kathy Mazza-Delosh, 46, killed when WTC collapsed
09/11/01	EMT Yamel Merino, 24, killed when WTC collapsed
09/11/01	NYPD Officer Moira Smith, 38, killed when WTC collapsed
09/11/01	USNR LT Mari-Rae Sopper, PENTAGON on AA Flight 77
09/11/01	CIVILIAN Vicki C Yancey, 43, Navy technician, PENTAGON on AA Flight 77
09/11/01	CIVILIAN Samantha Lightbourn-Allen, 36, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON
09/11/01	USN YN3 Melissa Rose Barnes, 27, telecommunications, PENTAGON
09/11/01	CIVILIAN Carrie R Blagburn, 48, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON
09/11/01	CIVILIAN Donna Marie Bowen, 42, Army contract budgeting office, PENTAGON
09/11/01	CIVILIAN Angelene C Carter, 51, Army staff accountant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Sharon Ann Carver, 38, Army accountant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Rosa Maria (Rosemary) Chapa, 64, senior management Office of the Comptroller, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Ada Marie Davis, 57, accountant for Secretary of the Army, Resource Management, PENTAGON

09/11/01 USN SK3 Jamie Lynn Fallon, 23, storekeeper in Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Support Activity, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Amelia Virginia Fields, 36, Army secretary, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Sandra Nadine Foster, 41, DIA senior management officer, Office of the Deputy Comptroller for Force Structure and Management, Office of the Comptroller, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Brenda Colbert Gibson, 59, budget analyst for Resource Services Washington in the office of the administrative assistant to the Secretary of the Army, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Diane Hale-McKinzy, 38, civil servant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Carolyn B Halmon, 49, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Sheila M S Hein, 51, Army internship studying manpower analysis, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Angela M Houtz, 27, senior analyst for the Office of Naval Intelligence, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Peggie M Hurt, 36, Army accountant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Judith L. Jones, 53, civil servant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Brenda Kegler, 49, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Shelley Ann (Farr) Marshall, 37, DIA senior management officer in the comptroller's office, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Teresa M Martin, 45, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Ada L Wilson Mason-Acker, 50, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Molly L. McKenzie, 38, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Patricia E Mickley, 41, civil servant for the Department of Defense, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Odessa V. Morris, 54, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Diana Borrero de Padro, 55, accountant for the office of the Secretary of the Army, PENTAGON

09/11/01 USA SPC Chin Sun Pak-Wells, 25, administrative assistant to the deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Deborah Ann Ramsaur, 45, secretary to the US deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Rhonda Sue Ridge Rasmussen, 44, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 USN IT1 Marsha Dianah. Ratchford, 34, Navy information technician, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Martha M Reszke, 36, Army budget office, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Cecelia E. Richard, 41, Army accounting technician, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Judy Rowlett, 44, transportation assistant with the Defense Resources Activity, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Marjorie Champion Salamone, 53, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Janice Marie Scott, 46, budget officer for Resource Services Washington, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Marian H Serva, 47, Army congressional affairs contact officer, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Antionette M Sherman, 35, worked for the Army, actually died 7 days later on 18 Sep, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Cheryle D. Sincok, 53, civil servant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Patricia J Statz, 41, worked for the Army, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Edna Lee Stephens, 53, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Sandra Carol Taylor, 50, Army civil servant, PENTAGON

09/11/01 USA SGT Tamara Thurman, 25, assistant in the office of the deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON

09/11/01 USA LTC Karen J. Wagner, 40, medical personnel officer in the office of the Army surgeon general and deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Meta L Waller, 60, special programs manager for the administrative assistant to the Army secretary, PENTAGON

09/11/01 USA SSG Maudlyn A White, 38, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Sandra Letitia (Murray) White, 44, Army budget analyst, PENTAGON

09/11/01 CIVILIAN Lisa L Young, 36, personnel assistant, PENTAGON

09/12/06 USA 2LT Emily J T Perez, 23, IED, IRAQ

09/13/44 WASP Alice E. Lovejoy, WW II

09/14/06 USA SGT Jennifer Hartman, 21, IED, IRAQ

09/14/06 USA CPT Rebecca Ann Jarabek, 28, Medivac Pilot died in OH

09/15/03 USA SPC Alyssa Renee Peterson, 27, non-combat gunshot, IRAQ

09/16/13 Civilian Kathy Gaarde, 62, Navy Yard shooting victim

09/16/13 Civilian Mary F Knight, 51, Navy Yard shooting victim

09/16/13 Civilian Sylvia Frasier, 53, Navy Yard shooting victim
09/17/08 CIVILIAN Susan El-Baneh, 18, terrorist bombing US Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen
09/18/20 USN NNC Grace Coulter, died at Marine hospital, Louisville, KY
09/18/10 USA PFC Barbara Vieyra, 22, IED/RPG attack, AFGHANISTAN
09/19/50 USN NNC ENS Eleanor Beste, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC ENS Marie Boatman, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC LT (jg) Jeanne E. Clarke, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC LT (jg) Jane L. Eldridge, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC ENS Constance R. Esposito, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC LT (jg) Alice S. Giroux, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC LT (jg) Calla C. Goodwin, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC LT (jg) Constance A. Heege, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC LT (jg) Margaret Grace Kennedy, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC Ensign Mary E. Lijegreen, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/19/50 USN NNC Ensign Edna J. Rundell, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean
09/16/06 USA 1LT Ashley (Henderson) Huff, 23, IED, IRAQ
09/19/06 USN LCDR Jane E (Lanham) Tafoya, 43, natural causes, Bahrain
09/19/09 USA SSG Cynthia Meadows, 35, difficulty breathing, Ft Huachuca
09/20/07 USA CPT (Dr) Roselle M. Hoffmaster, 32, non-combat incident, IRAQ
09/23/43 WASP Betty Taylor Wood, WW II
09/24/10 USA PFC Jaysmine S Petree, 19, IED, AFGHANISTAN
09/25/98 Army Contract Nurse Irene Toland MD, Typhoid Fever, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR
09/25/08 USA PVT Dominique Gibson-Brooks, 19, seizure in room during BCT Ft Jackson, SC
09/26/50 USAF AFNC CPT Vera M. Brown, died at Ashiya Air Base, Japan due to plane she was assigned to crashed during a medical evacuation flight
09/28/05 USAF A1C Elizabeth N. Jacobson, IRAQ
09/28/07 MAARNG SPC Ciara Durkin, 29, non-combat gunshot, AFGHANISTAN
09/29/68 CIVILIAN Betty Ann Olsen, missionary nurse, VIETNAM
09/30/43 WAC Tech5 Edith Ballinger, air crash at Maxton Field, Laurinburg, NC
09/30/08 USA SGT Christina Smith, 29, murdered by soldier husband at Ft Bragg, NC
09/30/11 USA SGT Sophie Champoux, 25, suicide after being raped 3 times, Ft Stewart, GA

In-State Tuition for Veterans

Thanks to a new law, veterans will not have to worry about paying out-of-state tuition at any public university. The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 expands a veteran's ability to maximize his or her Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit and use that benefit at any public school in the nation regardless of residency restrictions. The current maximum tuition benefit is just over \$20,000. Many states already offer in-state tuition to any veteran, but there are [18 states that are](#) affected by this new law. Read the text of the [Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014](#).

Space-A Eligibility Changed

Without any fanfare, on 9 June 2015, the eligibility requirements to use Space A travel within the Continental United States (CONUS) [were extended](#) to include the dependents of service members who are deployed for 30 days or longer.

This is going to be a great benefit for families who might want to travel during deployment and can use Space A to cut costs.

Many years ago, spouses and children were not able to use Space A travel benefits within CONUS except under very limited circumstances such as emergency leave and TDY for house hunting. In recent years, the rules have been revised a few times to include dependents whose service member was deployed for a specified period of time.

This recent change, to 30 days deployment for eligibility, represents the most generous CONUS Space A benefits to date.

Dependents gaining their Space-A eligibility due to service member deployment will be Category IV in priority. Those requesting travel will require a memo detailing their eligibility, and a [sample memo](#) can be found at the AMC website. This definitely requires a little pre-planning to have the eligibility memo before you start the travel process.

Unfortunately this change only applies to dependents of active duty members.

Source: NAUS

Congress Has Much to do When It Returns

Congress returns next week after a month-long recess. There are many pressing issues that need to be rapidly addressed.

Of great importance is the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Negotiations continue between the members and staff of the House and Senate Committees.

While nothing has been confirmed NAUS understands a number of issues remain unresolved including an increase in TRICARE prescription costs; the changes in BAH for married service members; some details in the blended retirement system; and Commissary support, which we hear may result in a pilot program instead of a more harmful decision. Additionally a pay raise for military members has, in effect, been decided by the President when he sent letters to Congress last Friday ordering a 1.3 percent increase for military members.

As you know there will be a vote taken on the Iran Nuclear deal which will take a minimum of several days and maybe more. Also negotiations on a Continuing Resolution (CR) is a must-pass to ensure that the government continues to run on October 1 after the 2015 fiscal year runs out. On this important bill reports suggest that there may be a year-long CR, which if is true will take much negotiations to ensure that our national security and readiness is not undercut.

NAUS encourages all members of Congress and their staffs to work hard and give the American people the best NDAA that they can. In the Constitution one of the first requirements of Congress is to provide for the "common defense." Unfortunately it sometimes appears members put more parochial issues first.

Source: NAUS

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Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.



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



We need an America with the wisdom of experience. But we must not let America grow old in spirit.

~Hubert H. Humphrey~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

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