



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, May 13, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 19



## **This-N-That**

Over the past few months I've been talking to people, reading more, and doing more research on Autism and Asperger syndrome which is the higher functioning end of Autism.

Although I don't know a lot as of yet, I do know a few people who have served in the military and even admitted upfront they were diagnosed with one or the other and were still accepted into the military, and in the past few weeks I've wondered as was posed to me, how many had one or the other who "slipped" through

the cracks and were able to serve.

Made me really think about it, and one movie came to mind and made me wonder was the intent to show that those with Autism or Asperger could serve, that was Forest Gump. Another movie was suggested which I've not had a chance to get a copy of yet, but that there was a soldier who although again it was not specifically mentioned for either Autism or Asperger was Full Metal Jacket.

I have a close friend who was in the Army who has Asperger Syndrome and did serve for several years before he was "disarmed" while over seas pending being sent home for discharge. And from what I learned it only happened because one of the medic's or doctors knew the signs and reported him, and although it was made known at enlistment time he was deemed a danger, returned home and discharged.

Makes me wonder more than I had before, how many have served, how many retired from service and it was never known or never discovered, or just simply overlooked/ignored? On top of that how many have served and had children born with Autism or Asperger Syndrome and maybe was due to chemical exposure either from service over seas, or many of the chemical contaminants on base.

I have been talking for a few months now with Lt Bobby Ross, and we're joining forces to bring his organization Autistic Farmers of America which can provide a safe, healthy environment in which to live and learn how to farm.

If you or someone you know has or is serving who is affected by Autism or Asperger Syndrome, or you have a child with either of these illnesses, please, send me your story.

Now on a huge bright note I offer my most sincerest of **CONGRATULATIONS** to both **Commander John Wells**, and all his **Blue Water Navy** members!

The bill they had worked on for so long and so very hard finally passed the mark-up stage and will hopefully go to the House Floor very soon for a Vote.

The fight is not over yet, and we so desperately need everyone's help to please call your Congressman's office and kindly ask for their YES vote on H.R. 299.

The fact that after all these years a bill has made it through committee, made it through mark-up and is now ready to go to the floor proves beyond any doubt that when you speak out in unison that **VETERANS** can accomplish anything!

Again, Congratulations Commander Wells, and all Blue Water Navy Vets who all together made it happen! And much more success in the coming future!

On a sadder note, last week I brought to your attention our Director of Operation Mail Call became really sick a couple of months ago.

Sadly, the news as each day passes gets worse and worse!

The doctors caring for Betty Hidalgo-Rabuse have brought in additional cancer specialists, and more tests were run, more CT Scans, more PET Scans, more X-Rays, etc have only proven to produce more bad news. And in this last round of tests, not only did they confirm the cancer is in her bones, but also her cervix and now pancreas.

Betty is stage 4 Cancer, and the prediction for her life expectancy has been greatly reduced and is now between 3 months and maybe a year.

I'm constantly on the phone with her husband James Rabuse this has truly been a very difficult journey for them both as they were just married in May 2017.

The plan is to transport Betty from the hospital in San Francisco to a local hospital near their home in Merced

where she will under go six weeks of chemo therapy, and once that is completed she will then be transported to Hospice where she will remain.

Betty as I said before did so much for our troops sending out care packages every single week and we gathered cards and letters to include in the packages.

James is still asking for assistance, but now is looking to raise funds to help with after life costs for memorial services and cremation. So if you're able to, I'm sure he would be extremely grateful for what you can do.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

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



## **House Committee Passes VA Mission Act**

On Tuesday, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs passed H.R. 5674, the VA Mission Act of 2018. The bill will now move to the House floor for a vote before it can go to the Senate. This bill would consolidate all VA community care programs, improve administrative issues with the current Choice Program, invest in crucially needed improvements for VA health care and expand VA's caregiver program to veterans of all eras. The VFW urges its members and supporters to contact their members of Congress and tell them to vote YES on H.R. 5674 and pass this legislation before Memorial Day. Read a [summary](#) and urge your representatives to [support this bill](#).



## **We Need Your Help to Pass Caregiver Legislation**

Please Help Us Pass Critical Legislation to Expand Caregiver Benefits and Strengthen Veterans Health Care

Next week the House of Representatives is expected to vote on legislation that would expand caregiver

benefits to pre-9/11 veterans as well as begin a major reform to strengthen the VA health care system. The legislation, H.R. 5674, the VA MISSION Act of 2018, was developed in collaboration with DAV and other VSOs; has strong bipartisan support in the House and Senate; and just passed the House Veterans' Affairs Committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 20 to 2. This bill is supported by virtually every major veterans organization, including DAV, VFW and The American Legion. Now we need to ensure that every Member of Congress understands how important this legislation is to DAV members, their families and caregivers.

As you know, DAV has long advocated for extending comprehensive caregiver benefits to veterans injured and ill prior to September 11, 2001. Thanks to all of your efforts supporting our Unsung Heroes Initiative over the past year, this legislation would take major strides to provide equity to thousands of family caregivers currently ineligible for that benefit because they served prior to 9/11. This will be the most important vote for caregivers in almost a decade and we must be certain that Congress hears our voices.

The legislation would also consolidate VA's community care programs and develop integrated networks of VA and community providers to supplement, not supplant VA health care, so that all enrolled veterans have

timely access to quality medical care. In addition, it would provide VA with new tools to hire and retain quality health care professionals to expand VA's internal capacity. Finally, the bill would require the development of a long-term plan to realign and modernize VA's health care infrastructure so that its hospitals and clinics are located where veterans will need them in the future.

Please use the prepared electronic letter, or draft your own, to urge your Member of Congress to support and vote for H.R. 5674, the VA MISSION Act.

Thanks for your continuing support of America's injured and ill veterans, their families and caregivers.

[Take Action](#)



REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL



## **Items Sought for Veterans Time Capsule at County Veterans Park**

LA QUINTA – Supervisor V. Manuel Perez invites veterans, veterans organizations, military service and support organizations, and community members to place items into a special veterans time capsule that will be part of Lake Cahuilla Veterans Regional Park.

Items are needed by Tuesday, May 22.

The time capsule will be placed in the tribute site at Lake Cahuilla Veterans Regional Park, which will be dedicated at 7 p.m. May 25.

“Lake Cahuilla Veterans Regional Park is the first park

in our county park system named in honor of veterans, and I'm very proud that veterans have had a major part in its design and features," said Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. "The veterans time capsule was one of the suggestions that was brought forth by local veterans that we are incorporating. We want as many veterans and organizations to take part in this historic occasion."

Supervisor Perez engaged the Palm Springs Air Museum for professional assistance in curating items for the time capsule. Frank Castner, the museum's volunteer librarian and archivist, volunteered to assist the county in this effort. The gifted items will be processed, recorded, assigned archive numbers and placed in protective materials to preserve them 40 years from now, when the time capsule will be unearthed and opened.

more

Everyone is invited to submit an item into the time capsule.

Items should be small, thin and veteran-centric. They can include individual keepsakes such as photographs, medals and family letters, membership rosters, newspaper articles, or resolutions from organizations, federal and state representatives, cities and special districts.

Approximately 50 letters to veterans written by students from Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in La Quinta will be included in the time capsule.

To donate an item for the veterans time capsule, bring it to the Palm Springs Air Museum Library, located in Palm Springs, 745 N. Gene Autry Trail. Deliveries should be made between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday or Friday.



## **Widows Still Irked by SBP Offset**

The RAND Corporation recently released a report on the military's [Survivor Benefit Plan](#). The Congressionally mandated report concludes that the SBP is “well-structured to provide survivor benefits” and the benefits “compare well with those of public and private plans.” However, the 64,000 surviving spouses who continue to see their SBP cut or eliminated due to an offset of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) may not agree with the glowing report. Read this week's Military Update to get the complete story of how the [SBP-DIC Offset impacts surviving family members](#).



## **Veterans-For-Change Web Site**

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly “One-Stop-Shop” website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 2,100 hits per day, and downloads average 1,200 per day with a total **4,064,690** visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE of charge!** You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

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

- Documents Library with over 16,387 documents on-line (Updated: 02/20/18)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
  - o Afghanistan Veterans
  - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
  - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
  - o Iraq Veterans
  - o Korean Veterans
  - o Men Veterans Forum
  - o Mental Health for Veterans (Counselor Needed)
  - o Political Issues
  - o Suggestion Box
  - o The Mess Hall
  - o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
  - o Veteran Affairs
  - o Vietnam Veterans
  - o Welcome Mat
  - o Women Veterans Forum
  - o WW II Veterans

- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 01/11/18)
- News (Articles On-Line: 7,350)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,645, Added 12 New Links (Updated: 04/24/18)

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



## **Suspending Your Social Security Benefit**

**QUESTION:** I am age 67 and began collecting Social Security a couple of years ago. However, I am planning to return to work with a significant salary. Can I suspend my Social Security benefit for now?

**ANSWER:** Since you have reached your full retirement age for Social Security (66 years, 2 months), you are allowed to suspend your benefit until age 70. For each month that your benefit is suspended, you will earn a delayed retirement credit which should increase the benefit you claim when you cancel the suspension OR reach the age 70, whichever occurs first. Social Security will automatically reinstate your benefit at age 70 if you don't reinstate it yourself before then.

If you plan to return to work with a significant salary that requires Social Security withholding, the primary insurance amount used to compute your benefit will also most likely increase. Keep in mind, once your benefit is suspended, any benefits payable to current family members based on your Social Security work record would also be suspended until you reinstate your benefit.





**Vietnam  
Veteran's wife  
Diagnosed with  
Stage 4 Cancer  
Needs help!**

Hello my name is James Rabuse. I am a Vietnam Era Veteran. I am retired on SSI and Disability. I come to you with some bad news and just ask for prayers and help as my wife Betty is going through a lot of pain

Betty and I were married on May 27, 2017. About a month ago Betty took seriously ill, and was transferred from Atwater, CA to a Hospital in San Francisco, CA where they diagnosed her with stage 4 cancer. As you know travel, gas to and from the hospital, room and, board, and parking fees gets costly. In order for my wife to get the best possible care while she is still here, this treatment needs to get done.

Betty has been a very active Veteran volunteer being director of Operation Mail Call for Veterans-For-Change after losing her son's father in the Vietnam War, then she also lost her oldest grandson to the Afghanistan War.

She tirelessly with her own time and money supported

our troops over seas with care packages being sent out every week for almost six and a half years using her own money, donated socks, t-shirts, personal care items, DVD's, gag gifts, plus cards and letters you all have provided.

Betty did this with her love for all our servicemen in the military for many years. It is time we give back to Betty for all that she done for our troops!

Any **donation** will be appreciated and help towards traveling from Atwater, CA to San Francisco, CA and other expenses. At this time the date for her to return home is undetermined.

We Thank you in advanced for any donations made, and god bless you.

James Rabuse



## **House Veterans' Affairs Committee Passes Choice Program Overhaul**

Yesterday the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) passed, on a 20-2 vote, H.R. 5520, the Veterans Affairs Maintaining Internal Systems and

Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act, which expands veterans access to private sector health care.

The bill got a huge boost from a letter signed by TREA: The Enlisted Association and 36 other veteran service organizations (VSOs) and other stakeholders sent a letter to Congress urging lawmakers to support it. We believe that HR 5520 represents 'a balanced approach to ensuring timely access to care while continuing to strengthen the VA health care system.'

Just two Democrats on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee voted against the consolidation of the VA's community care programs into one, one of which was HVAC Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-MN), who is a Life Member of TREA: The Enlisted Association.

Ranking Member Walz said "he supported 95 percent of the measure, but had concerns about how its provisions would unfold in future years." The VA MISSION Act, for example, would fund the new private sector health care program through the regular discretionary budgeting process. While Walz supported that funding stream, he issued an amendment to shield it from potential cuts when budget caps are reinstated. All three Walz amendments were voted down by the full committee.

The funding issue is a real one - Congress, especially

this one, has shown little to zero patience when government spending goes up. As we all know, healthcare costs continue to rise in the private sector. What happens in the coming years when the cost of veterans getting care in the community rises? Will Congress finally bite the bullet and open the checkbook? Or will they pull back on private healthcare for veterans while simultaneously having failed to properly invest in brick and mortar VA healthcare facilities? This legislation ensures that VA medical facilities are not neglected, but more remains to be seen.

The VA MISSION Act would provide veterans access to private sector care when the services they are seeking are not offered at VA, there is no full-service medical facility in their state, they previously were eligible for outside care under the Veterans Choice Program or VA cannot meet its own standards of care in providing care to an individual veteran. It would also allow a veteran and doctor to mutually agree that private care was in the patient's "best medical interest."

The VA provider would have to first assess the distance the veteran must go to receive care from the department's network of more than 1,200 medical facilities, the nature of the services required, the frequency of treatment, the timeliness of available

appointments and other "excessive burdens to care." The measure includes another controversial provision to put VA through a process similar to the Defense Department's Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

The measure would require the VA secretary to assess the department's current capacity to provide health care in each of its networks and ultimately recommend facilities to close, modernize or realign. The secretary would then pass those suggestions along to a presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed commission. That panel would submit its recommendations to the president, who would then have to approve of the plan in full, in part or reject it altogether. Congress would then have 45 days to vote down the plan or it would automatically go into effect.

The House committee's counterparts in the Senate helped negotiate the compromise and appear poised to also advance the measure. Congress could run into trouble as VA is currently without permanent leadership and lawmakers could therefore have concerns about how the department would implement the bill. President Trump has yet to nominate a new VA secretary since his previous pick, Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson, withdrew his name from consideration. Ranking Member Walz said he tried to contact the

administration to get its approval for his suggested changes but VA was in "chaos."

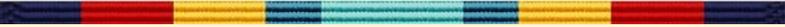
The House committee also approved 2018 VA Medicinal Cannabis Act (H.R. 5520) on Tuesday, a bill that would enable VA to research the impacts of marijuana on veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic pain. The measure would promote such research by clarifying it is "well within the authority of VA" and requiring the department to report to Congress on how it plans to exercise that authority.

Source: TREA



OUR DEBT TO THE  
HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT  
WOMEN IN THE SERVICE  
OF OUR COUNTRY CAN  
NEVER BE REPAID. THEY  
HAVE EARNED OUR  
UNDYING GRATITUDE.  
AMERICA WILL NEVER  
FORGET THEIR SACRIFICES.

PRESIDENT HARRY S TRUMAN



## **VA MISSION Act of 2018**

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee is due to mark up a comprehensive veterans bill, H.R. 5674, the "VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018," also known as the "VA MISSION Act of 2018" on Tuesday May 8, 2018.

This historic veterans' legislation would consolidate and reform VA's community care programs; extend funding for the current Veterans Choice Program for one year; strengthen VA's ability to recruit, hire and retain quality medical personnel; review, realign and modernize VA's health care infrastructure; and extend eligibility to VA's comprehensive caregiver assistance program to aging and disabled veterans injured before September 11, 2001.

DAV has joined with 37 other VSOs/MSOs to write a letter to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees offering our strong support for passage of this historic legislation aimed at improving access to care for our nation's veterans, strengthening VA's internal capacity to deliver care, optimizing and reforming VA's health care infrastructure and expanding eligibility to support services for veteran

caregivers of all eras.

Please [click here](#) to read the letter.

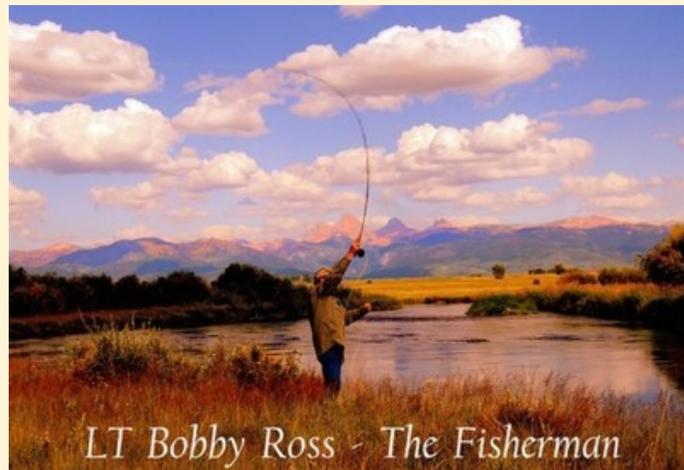


## Veteran ID Card will Finally Ship

Veteran Identification cards from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) will be in the mail, on their way to veterans starting "May 4," VA officials said — two months after they were initially scheduled to go out. Read the [full story](#).



### LT Bobby Ross



->May's Featured Song<-

->**The Fisherman**<-

LT is #1 Singer in World

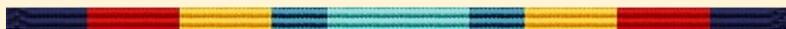
LT's #1 Song in 2017

LT's #2 Song Honoring Native Americans

Autistic Farmers Of America (AFOA)

**PATRIOTIC MUSIC**

Remember this site is an Internet Adventure. All you need do is click on the pictures and any highlighted word, and you are launched to another world in Cyberspace. Try it! So much fun!



**Know the warning signs**

Do you know the warning signs of a stroke? May is Stroke Awareness Month, a perfect time to arm yourself with [information to help prevent and detect a stroke](#)—for both you and your loved ones.

Warning signs of a stroke include:

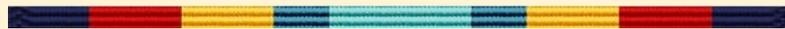
- Weakness in the face, arm, or leg
- Speech difficulty
- Vision loss
- Dizziness
- Brief loss of consciousness

Are you or a loved one at risk for a stroke? Watch our short video to [learn the risk factors for stroke](#) and see how Medicare can help.



## **VFW-supported Bill to Aid Veteran Farmers**

This week, Senators Debbie Stabenow and Pat Roberts introduced the Farmer Veteran Opportunity Act of 2018 which would expand support for veteran farmers. This bill would provide disaster relief, crop insurance, technical training and many other important benefits for farmers, ranchers and growers. The VFW is proud to support this important piece of legislation that would offer relief, assistance and empowerment for veterans across the country. We applaud Senators Stabenow and Roberts for their continuing efforts to aid veterans in their pursuit of meaningful careers in agriculture. Read a [summary of the bill](#).



# **Military-Veterans Advocacy Statement on Favorable Reporting of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017 By the United States House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee**

After seven long years of advocacy., Military-Veterans Advocacy is pleased and proud to report that today the House Veterans Affairs Committee sent HR 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017, to the floor with a favorable report. The bill will grant the presumption of Agent Orange exposure to 90,000 veterans who served on ships in the bays, harbors and territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam. The bill was sponsored by Congressman David Valadao, R-CA.

“We began fighting for this bill in 2011 in the 112th Congress,” said Cdr. John B. Wells, (USN, Ret.), executive director of Military-Veterans Advocacy, who was the author of the bill. “It has been a long slog. I have personally visited every office on both the House and Senate side over these years.”

As Wells’ efforts continued, support for the bill grew. Currently, there are 329 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives and 50 co-sponsors of a companion

bill in the Senate.

“We first had to deal with an education problem,” Wells said. “To my surprise, few congressional offices had heard of the bill or the problem until we visited them. As we briefed more and more Senators and Members of Congress, support for the bill expanded.”

The cost of the bill has been the stumbling block in previous Congresses.

“Originally, the bill was scored by the non-partisan Congressional Budget office at \$2.74 billion over 10 years,” Wells noted. “After I met with them in 2015, the score was reduced to \$1.104 billion. More recently, the estimate has fallen to less than \$1 billion. Still, it was hard to find an offset as required by the Pay As You Go Act of 2010.”

An attempt to move the bill forward in November of 2017 failed when Congressman Tim Walz, D-MN, objected to financing the bill by reducing annual veterans compensation increases to the nearest dollar. Committee Chair Congressman Phil Roe, R-TN, then tabled the bill but negotiated an agreement to fund it with a slight increase to VA home loan funding fees for non-disabled veterans. Roe also expanded the bill to cover tens of thousands of Korea veterans as well as the children of other veterans who have developed

spina bifida.

“We owe Chairman Roe a lot,” said Wells. “He has shown strong leadership and a caring heart for veterans. He has worked behind the scenes to garner support among various factions in Congress. Without his leadership, this bill would still be stuck in Committee.”

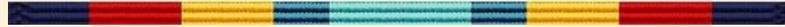
Wells called on Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy R-CA to schedule an early floor vote. “The Senate is ready to take quick action on this bill,” Wells noted. “We along, with Chairman Roe, want to see it on the President’s desk before Memorial Day.

“But this is not the end or even the beginning of the end,” Wells continued. “We estimate that there 4.5 million veterans who are the victims of toxic exposure. We must obtain benefits for these folks as well.”

Military-Veterans Advocacy is a Slidell, Louisiana based non-profit dedicated to protecting the rights of members of the military and veterans through litigation, legislation and education. For more information or to make a tax free donation go to [www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org](http://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org) or follow them on Facebook.

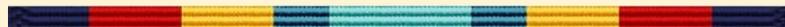
Commander J. B. Wells U. S. Navy (Retired)

Attorney at Law  
Executive Director  
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.



## Hearing on Better Budget and Appropriations Processes

The Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform, which was established as part of the recent budget deal, met on Wednesday to hear from organizations and individuals who are recommending changes to current methods. The VFW has been working with a broad spectrum of organizations through the Convergence Building a Better Budget Process (B3P) to propose improved methods to end harmful budget actions like continuing resolutions, and sees the joint select committee as the way to end sequestration and its harmful effects on the military. Watch the [hearing](#) or read the [B3P proposal](#).



## AAFES Employment for Over 6,000 Military Spouses

For the more than 6,000 military spouses employed by the Army & Air Force Exchange Service, changing duty stations does not have to mean giving up a career. Exchange associates who are military spouses can usually be transferred to an equivalent job near their spouse's new duty station. If there is a break in service of no more than six months, they may be eligible for reinstatement of their benefits. Returning associates may also receive special considerations for their starting salary upon reemployment. To explore career opportunities with the Exchange, visit the Exchange [website](#).



**CONTACT YOUR  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

**To Call your Representative:**

**202-225-2305**

**To Call your Senators:**

**202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553**

**To call Different Members of Congress:**

**202-224-3121**

**TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622**

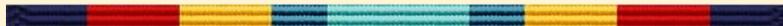
**PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!**

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



## VA Health Care Rated Same or Better than Private Sector

The RAND Corporation recently published the results of a study that found VA either performs to the same standard or outperforms the private sector a majority of the time. The study compared each VA facility to three non-VA facilities with similar geographic settings, size and complexity of care, and based analysis on safety, effectiveness and patient-centered care. VA inpatient care performed the same or significantly better than private sector inpatient care centers on 21 of 26 measures. VA also performed significantly better than commercial and Medicaid Health Maintenance Organizations on 28 of 30 measures. The study also found that while there is a wide variation in performance from one VA facility to another, variation is even wider within the private sector. [Learn more about the study.](#)





LA Union Station • Historic Ticketing Hall • 800 N Alameda St • Los Angeles, CA 90012

## Veterans Summer Slam Employment Fair

Friday, June 29, 2018 • 9am – 2pm

LinkedIn Tips for Professional Networking • Job Fair



# H.R. 4898, Keeping Our Commitment to Ending Veteran Homelessness Act of 2018

This legislation, H.R. 4898, focused on ending homelessness among our nation's veterans, would extend current authorities that assist veterans and their families with preventing or overcoming issues that may lead to homelessness.

Specifically, the bill would extend existing provisions to ensure:

- \* homeless veterans' reintegration programs provided by the Department of Labor are available, including child care services that allow veterans responsible for caring for minor dependents to participate.
- \* referral and counseling services for certain veterans at risk of homelessness;
- \* treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans;
- \* housing assistance for homeless veterans;
- \* financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing;
- \* continuation of the grant program for homeless veterans with special needs; and
- \* continued authority for the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans.

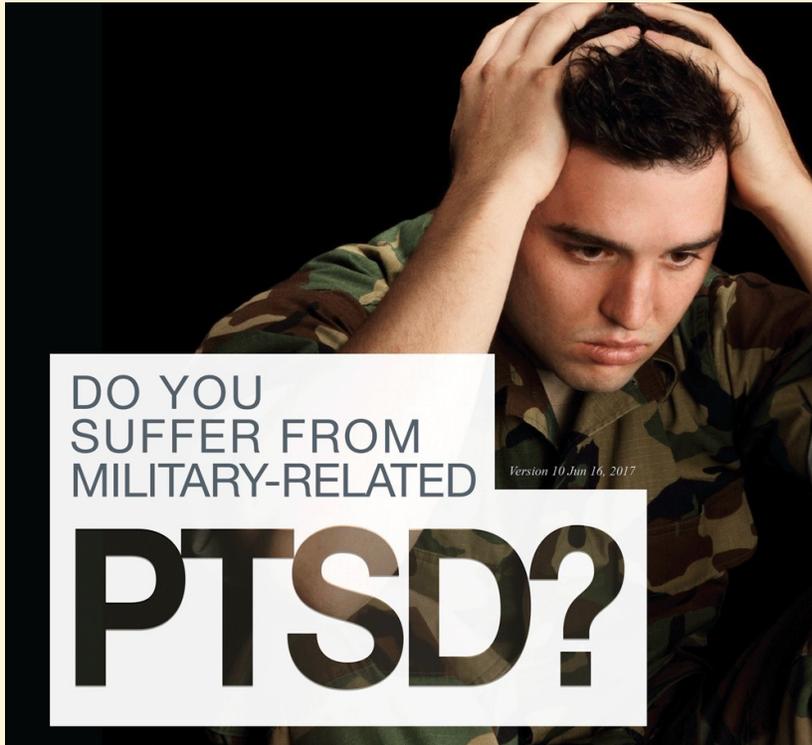
DAV supports this bill in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 239, which calls for Congress to support sustained sufficient funding to improve services for homeless veterans. VA has made remarkable progress in reducing homelessness among veterans between 2009 and 2016; however, indicators show that homelessness in the veteran population is on the rise again in certain major metropolitan areas.

Please help ensure that effective programs for homeless veterans continue by writing to your Representative and asking them to cosponsor and pass, H.R. 4898, the Keeping Our Commitment to Ending Veteran Homelessness Act of 2018.

Thank you for your support of the nation's ill and injured veterans.

[Take Action](#)





DO YOU  
SUFFER FROM  
MILITARY-RELATED

Version 10 Jun 16, 2017

**PTSD?**

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



**US Army Twilight Tattoo**

On Wednesday, VFW National Security and Foreign Affairs Director John Towles joined leaders from the U.S. Army Recruiting Command and the U.S. Army Soldier for Life program at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Washington, D.C., for this year's second Twilight Tattoo performance. The Twilight Tattoo is a time-honored tradition that blends the precision and discipline of various units within the U.S. Army Military District of Washington with the orchestral sounds of the U.S. Army Band, "Pershing's Own." Performances include members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), the Old Guard Caisson Platoon, the Continental Color Guard, the Presidential Salute Battery, the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, the U.S. Army Drill Team and many others. The 2018 Twilight Tattoo showcase will run through August 8, every Wednesday with the exception of July 4 and 11. The event is free and open to the public. [Read more details.](#)



## **Some Veterans Wrongly Billed for Purple Heart License Plates**

Washington state has admitted that some veterans have been wrongly charged \$30 for Purple Heart license plates, which are a special designation for veterans who were wounded during service. For more details, see this [article](#).



**Our values  
match yours.**

Veterans For Change  
Est. 2006

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**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY**



On behalf of Veterans-For-Change and all our volunteers we'd like to wish all mothers a very Happy & Special mother's day!



## **TRICARE Provider Types: Understanding Your Options**

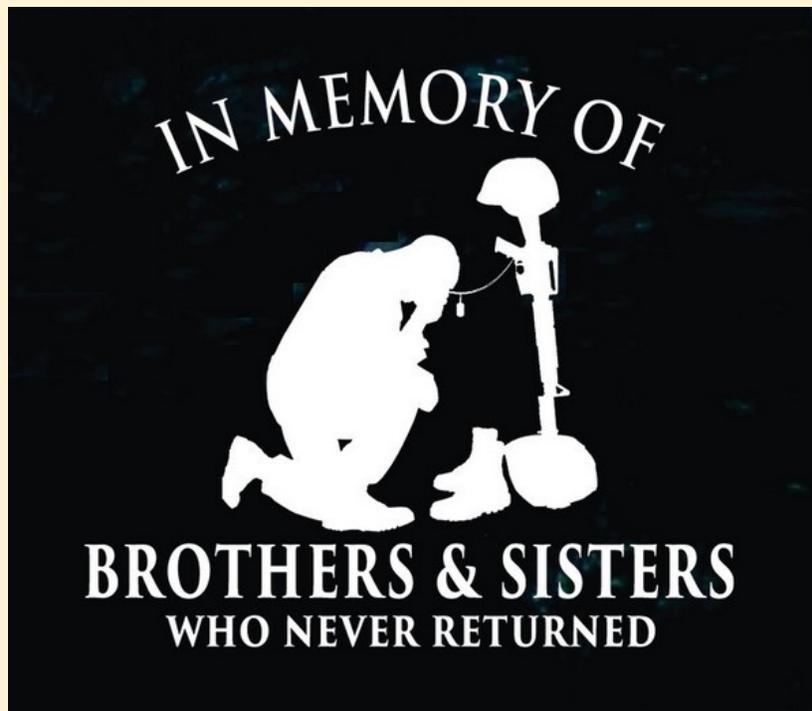
You can visit several types of providers when you need care, regardless of your TRICARE plan. It's important to understand your provider options because who you see impacts your out-of-pocket costs and filing a claim. Take command of your health and your TRICARE health care benefit by learning about your provider options.

Read the full [article here](#).



## Are Pentagon Disabled Adult Rules Inconsistent?

Several cases of disabled adult children have drawn attention to issues military families are facing, given the current disability system. Brooke Goldberg, director of Military Family Policy/Spouse Programs for MOAA, states that the dependency issues need attention. "Officers should be able to handle their careers and still meet the needs of their disabled children," she said. "Military families sacrifice a lot of normalcy and predictability for service. Keeping your incapacitated adult child within your family unit should not be included in those sacrifices." For more details, see this [article](#).





## Register for TRICARE Webinar on Mental Health Care Services

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and on May 17, join TRICARE for its next webinar to learn about mental health care services available to you and your family. The "TRICARE Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services" webinar on Thursday, May 17, from 1 to 2 p.m. (ET) will discuss when and how to get mental health and substance use disorder care.

Read the full [article here](#).

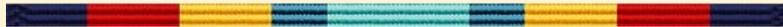
## Marine Corps Uses 3D Printer for Parts

In the last few years, the Marine Corps has increased its exploration of additive manufacturing, or 3D printing, to quickly replace parts for weapons, vehicles and equipment. Marines at the Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) and the AM Team at Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) came up with a solution to print out same-day snowshoe clips made out of strong and flexible resin at a cost of only five cents per clip. AM Marines share files using the Marine Maker website so other Marines can easily build upon their ideas. Additive manufacturing is also used to design models and prototypes.



## **Vet Groups Support New Legislation for Veterans Choice Program**

Major veterans organizations have backed the new effort by Congress to pass legislation providing \$4.2 billion to extend the Veterans Choice program. The bill would also expand the caregivers program for families of disabled vets. The American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans both endorsed the bill introduced by Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tennessee, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. The bill would also order a review of the facilities and inventory of the Department of Veterans Affairs. For more details, see this [article](#).



## **TRICARE: Manage Your Mental Health**



Major veterans organizations have backed the new effort by Congress to pass legislation providing \$4.2 billion to extend the Veterans Choice program. The bill would also expand the caregivers program for families of disabled vets. The American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans both endorsed the bill introduced by Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tennessee, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. The bill would also order a review of the facilities and inventory of the Department of Veterans Affairs. For more details, see this [article](#).



## **TRICARE: Manage Your Mental Health**

Mental health requires regular care. TRICARE provides [mental health services](#) for you and your family at all times, but especially during times of stress, depression, grief, anxiety or mental health crisis. You can learn more about covered treatments on the TRICARE [website](#). You can also download the 'Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services' fact sheet from the TRICARE Publications [webpage](#). If you or someone you know has suicidal thoughts, call the [Military Crisis Line](#) at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255, or confidentially [chat online](#) with a Military Crisis Line counselor.



## **Military Child Development Centers**

Military child development centers (CDCs) are on-post child care centers that give military parents the option of full-day, part-day and hourly care for their children. The caregivers at the centers are committed to providing children with developmental experiences in nationally accredited environments. CDC caregivers are responsible for the children's education, safety, health and development. Along with many having educational backgrounds in related fields, caregivers receive monthly early childhood training and have CPR and First Aid certifications. For more information, visit the [website](#) and contact your base child development center.



## **ITT and Corinthian Veterans Need to Know About GI Bill Restoration**

As Military Times [reported](#) yesterday, ITT Tech and Corinthian student veterans are failing to apply for restoration of their GI Bill benefits.

In the Forever GI Bill Congress restored GI Bill benefits to veterans attending ITT Tech and Corinthian colleges, which suddenly went bankrupt, leaving vets stranded. VA has been trying to alert ITT Tech and Corinthian students about their rights, but the vast majority of veterans aren't even opening the e-mails

from VA, and very few are applying.

## **PLEASE LET THEM KNOW THAT:**

Attention, veterans whose school closed: did your degree program close while you were attending school on the GI Bill? If so, you may qualify to have your GI Bill benefits restored! Congress passed a law to help veterans who were at schools like ITT Tech and Corinthian when they suddenly closed. There are some rules, such as that you didn't finish your degree or transfer the credits to a new school, but we can help you figure out if you're eligible. Learn more here:

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/fgib/restoration.asp>.

Free help figuring out if you are eligible and filling out the form is available by e-mailing

[Help@VeteransEducationSuccess.Org](mailto:Help@VeteransEducationSuccess.Org). And VA's

Education Call Center is available at 1-888-442-4551

(Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. CST)

## **PLEASE GET THE WORD OUT!**

Source: TREA



## **Veteran Crisis Resources**

**Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**

**Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**

**1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)**

**VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274**



## **Legal Resource for Veterans**

Stateside Legal, in partnership with the Yale Law School Veterans Legal Services Clinic, has released an online legal resource for veterans nationwide seeking to correct stigmatizing and harmful “less-than-honorable” discharges from the military. This new digital resource complements the VA’s recent discharge upgrade tool, provides a link to that tool for veterans wishing to learn more on topics not covered by this classroom, and connects veterans with the Veterans Consortium Discharge Upgrade Program. For more information, visit the Stateside Legal [website](#).



# Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Brooklyn Man Convicted of Stealing from a Disabled Army Veteran and the VA](#)
- 2) [Encouraging VA employees and Veterans to speak up](#)
- 3) [Food truck owner offers jobs and more to Veterans who have experienced homelessness](#)
- 4) [Fourth Round Of \\$75 Million In Vhhp Funds Now Available For Veteran Housing](#)
- 5) [House panel supports Agent Orange coverage for 'Blue Water' Navy Veterans](#)
- 6) [VA health care rated same or better than private hospitals](#)
- 7) [VA interviews Veterans across the country to improve their inpatient experience](#)
- 8) [VA offers early participation in a faster new claims decision review process](#)
- 9) [VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program now open to all appeals](#)
- 10) [Veterans benefits scam alert: Beware of scammers impersonating VA attorneys](#)
- 11) [Weedkiller products more toxic than their active ingredient, tests show](#)

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



## More Changes Coming to Commissaries

### Beer and Wine

According to a report last week, commissaries will start selling beer and wine within the next 90 days. The prices will be the same, however, as those in the stores now selling beer and wine on bases and posts.

The move comes as the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) tries to make changes to halt the slide in overall sales that has taken place each of the last several year. It also is trying to find ways to deal with the pressure from Congress and DoD to reduce the amount of tax dollars used to support the commissaries each year.

### Consolidation?

The announcement came at the same time as another

announcement from the Defense Department that starting in July, a task force is expected to begin an analysis of the financial feasibility, as well as begin developing organizational and operational plans for combining the commissary system with AAFES, NEX, and the MCX.

The belief of those in the Pentagon who are pushing this effort is that consolidation would lead to lower overhead operational costs for all of the stores and therefore ensure their survival while still providing the benefit to all members of the military past and present and their families.

However, as we have stated before, TREA is very leery of this project. First of all, consolidating commissaries and exchanges could hurt both, although in different ways. Commissary sales have fallen since 2012. If combining commissaries and exchanges caused exchange sales to also fall, that could severely jeopardize MWR programs.

At the same time, the exchanges make a profit which, as indicated, supports MWR programs. Would combining the operations raise prices in commissaries and therefore, in effect, do away with the benefit? It's a great concern to us because DeCA has already told Congress that the benefit cannot be maintained without the taxpayer subsidy.

This analysis of the programs that is slated to start in July is expected to finish its work by late January of next year - not a very long time considering the size and scope of what is being discussed. We've had too many examples lately of Congress rushing to pass major legislation just to get something done without giving complete consideration to all of the ramifications.

In order to accomplish the consolidation, legislation would have to be passed by Congress and none was included in the just-passed fy2019 National Defense Authorization Act by the House Veterans Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives. Of course the Senate could still do so.

Regardless of the fact that there is no legislation, apparently if the analysis confirms the hope of DoD officials that the approach will work, the task force director will start the consolidation immediately and will perform the duties as the new "defense resale enterprise" interim, single director, until the permanent position is advertised and filled.

This seems strange to us given the fact that legislation is needed to change the system. TREA will check into this and try to find out how that is possible.

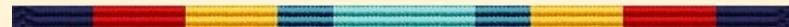
In the meantime, if you value the commissary benefit we urge you to contact your Senators and Representative and tell them you want the benefit saved and that you are concerned that consolidation may destroy it.

And finally, go shopping at your commissary.

Source: TREA

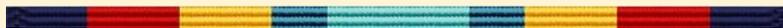


*Click Here*



## **VA Infertility Services**

If you are a Veteran with service-connected infertility, you may be eligible for treatment. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations were recently amended to offer in vitro fertilization (IVF) evaluation and treatment to Veterans with service-connected conditions that resulted in infertility, as well as to their spouses. VA also provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to all Veterans who are enrolled and eligible for VA health care, regardless of service-connection. Infertility care is available either at your local VA medical facility or through referral to health care providers in your community. For more information, visit the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#) and read the [VA Infertility Brochure](#).



# Former Congressman Leading Contender for VA Secretary Job

Former congressman Jeff Miller, who chaired the House Committee on [Veterans' Affairs](#) before retiring from Congress last year, has been said to be a leading candidate to become President Trump's next nominee for VA secretary. The Florida Republican, who spent 16 years in Congress, met last week with officials in the White House vetting office. For more details, see [this article](#).



U.S. Government Accountability  
Office Reports

- 1) [Actions Needed to Help Better Identify Agency Inventions](#)
- 2) [CMS Innovation Center: Model Implementation and Center Performance](#)
- 3) [Defense Health Care: TRICARE Select Implementation Plan Included Mandated Elements, but Access Standards Should Be Clarified](#)
- 4) [DOD Health Care: Defense Health Agency Should Improve Tracking of Serious Adverse Medical Events and Monitoring of Required Follow-up](#)
- 5) [Electronic Health Information: CMS Oversight of Medicare Beneficiary Data Security Needs Improvement](#)

- 6) Federal Health Insurance Exchange: CMS Needs to Ensure Complete Accurate Data on Terminations of Coverage for Nonpayment of Premiums
- 7) Illicit Opioids: While Greater Attention Given to Combating Synthetic Opioids, Agencies Need to Better Assess their Efforts
- 8) Medicaid: Opportunities for Improving Program Oversight [Reissued with Revisions Apr. 13, 2018]
- 9) Observations on Employment and Training Programs and Efforts to Address Program Integrity Issues
- 10) Office of Inspector General's Use of Agreements to Protect the Integrity of Federal Health Care Programs
- 11) Substance Use Disorder: Information on Recovery Housing Prevalence, Selected States' Oversight, and Funding
- 12) VA Health Care: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight of Community-Based Outpatient Clinics
- 13) VA Health Care: Improved Guidance and Oversight Needed for the Patient Advocacy Program
- 14) Veterans Health Administration: Opportunities Exist for Improving Veterans' Access to Health Care Services in the Pacific Islands



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## **New Vision and Dental Plans Coming Soon to Military Families and Retirees**

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in partnership with the Defense Health Agency (DHA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), announced the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) will be offered for the first time to TRICARE eligible retirees and their families during the 2018 Federal Benefits Open Season. Active duty family members will be eligible to enroll in FEDVIP vision insurance.

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program ends on Dec. 31, 2018. Those enrolled in TRDP must choose a dental plan through FEDVIP to have coverage in 2019. Enrollment is not automatic. Today's announcement affects 1.63 million beneficiaries enrolled in TRDP and offers a choice to an additional 1.3 million eligible retired beneficiaries not currently enrolled in TRDP.

Most beneficiaries in a TRICARE health plan may

enroll in a FEDVIP vision plan. This comprehensive vision coverage, including eyeglasses or contacts, is in addition to the routine eye examination benefit that many beneficiaries have under TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select.

The Federal Benefits Open Season enrollment period, Nov. 12, 2018 through Dec. 10, 2018, runs concurrently with the TRICARE Open Season. Coverage will be effective Jan. 1, 2019.

FEDVIP currently serves more than 3 million Federal employees, retirees and their families. FEDVIP enrollees give the program high marks for quality and value. It provides comprehensive dental and vision insurance at competitive group rates with 10 dental and four vision carriers for enrollees to choose from.

"OPM is thrilled to offer a variety of quality vision and dental plans to our military retirees and their families, and for the first time, an option for vision insurance to active duty family members," said OPM Director Jeff Pon. "We look forward to providing FEDVIP to the military, their families, and retirees."

For more information, you can go online to [TRICAREbenefeds.com](https://TRICAREbenefeds.com) to sign up to receive messages, updates, and reminders on the FEDVIP throughout the rest of this year.

You don't need to take action yet. However, if you would like dental and/or vision coverage next year, effective January 1, 2019, you must select and enroll in a FEDVIP plan during the next Federal Benefits Open Season. Open season is your annual opportunity to sign up for FEDVIP, and this year it runs from November 12 through December 10, 2018. If you're currently enrolled in a TRDP plan, you will not be automatically enrolled in a FEDVIP plan for 2019. You must enroll during open season.

Unfortunately, there is no further information available from DoD on how to enroll if you do not have computer access.

Source: TREA



**U.S. FOOD & DRUG**  
ADMINISTRATION

- 1) Ampicillin and Sulbactam for Injection USP, 3 g Single-Dose Vials by AuroMedics Pharma: Recall - Presence of Red Particulate Matter
- 2) Badger Botanicals Recalls Red Suma, Green Suma, Green Hulu 2, And Red Hulu 2 Kratom Supplements Because Of Possible Salmonella Health Risk
- 3) Fabius Anesthesia Machines by Dräger Medical: Class I Recall - Due to Production Step Error
- 4) FDA Investigates Multistate Outbreak of *B. cepacia* Complex Linked to Medline Remedy Essentials No-Rinse Cleansing Foam (FDA Announcement)
- 5) Medline Remedy Essentials No-Rinse Cleansing Foam: Avoid Using - Multistate Outbreak of *Burkholderia Cepacia* Complex
- 6) Neurovascular Stents Used for Stent-Assisted Coiling (SAC): Letter to Health Care Providers - Recommendations Associated With the Use of These Devices in the Treatment of Unruptured Brain Aneurysms
- 7) Piperacillin and Tazobactam for Injection, USP 3.375 g Vials by AuroMedics Pharma: Recall - Vials Contain Particulate Matter
- 8) Vyaire Medical Recalls AirLife Resuscitation Devices and Broselow Convenience Kits Due to Risk of Malfunction Caused by Error in Product Design



# **The Enlisted Association Supports HR 3429: Repatriate Our Patriots Act**

The Enlisted Association is proud to support HR 3429, the Repatriate Our Patriots Act. This bipartisan bill (with Representatives Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX), Don Young (R-AK), and Beto O'Rourke (D-TX)) gives honorably discharged veterans who have not been convicted of voluntary manslaughter, murder, rape, sexual abuse of a minor or anything related to terrorism (or anyone convicted of child abuse or pedophilia) the right to NOT be removed from the United States, regardless of immigration status.

Immigration is an especially charged topic at this time in American history. However, there are roughly 35,000 legal permanent residents (not US citizens) who currently serve on active duty. For a variety of reasons, it is not always possible to become a naturalized US citizen while on active duty. Apparently some commanders insist that the proper time to undergo the process is after one transitions from the military. Other people are fooled by their recruiters into thinking that they automatically become a citizen at the moment of enlistment. These are patently false assertions that have led to the deportation of people with honorable service to our country.

At a recent panel discussion on the issue, TREA: The Enlisted Association Deputy Legislative Director Mike Saunders hear about one deported veteran, Specialist Hector Barajas, a paratrooper who was Honorably Discharged in October of 2001. He was separated from his family, and his testimony made it clear that this was the hardest part of the entire experience for him.

Specialist Barajas has founded the Deported Veteran Support House in Tijuana, Mexico for US veterans who are being deported to any country on earth.

If these people are willing to raise their right hands to defend us, don't we owe it to them to prevent their deportation if they aren't able to get their citizenship status squared away? TREA: The Enlisted Association thinks so.

Source: TREA





## **MIA Update**

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

Army Maj. Donald G. Carr, 32, of San Antonio, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried May 11, at San Antonio National Cemetery. Carr was assigned to Mobile Launch Team 3, 5th Special Forces Group, as an observer in an OV-10A aircraft. On July 6, 1971, his aircraft encountered bad weather. Shortly afterward, the ground team he was supporting heard an explosion to their northeast, which they believed to be that of an OV-10A. They failed to locate the crash

site, however, and Carr was declared missing in action. [Read about Carr.](#)

Army Cpl. Albert E. Quintero, 23, of Los Angeles, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried May 14 in Long Beach, Calif. Quintero was a member of Battery D, 15th Anti-aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Self-propelled Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. In late November 1950, his unit was assembled with South Korean soldiers in the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT) on the east side of the Chosin River, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by Chinese forces. Quintero was among more than 1,000 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing on Dec. 2, 1950. [Read about Quintero.](#)

Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class William G. Payne, 41, of Springfield, Mo., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried May 11 in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. Payne was a medical specialist assigned to the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. In late November 1950, Payne's unit was fighting against repeat attacks by Chinese forces in the area surrounding Yudam-ni, North Korea. Payne was killed during the fighting on Dec. 1, 1950, and was reportedly buried in a temporary cemetery at Yudam-ni. [Read](#)

[about Payne.](#)

Marine Corps Cpl. John V. McNichol, 20, of Altoona, Pa., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried May 14 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. McNichol was assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. On Nov. 20, 1943, McNichol's unit landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll against stiff Japanese resistance. Over several days of fighting, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed in the intense fighting. McNichol was killed on Nov. 21, 1943. [Read about McNichol.](#)

Navy Radioman 2nd Class Quentin J Gifford, 22, of Mankato, Minn., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried May 12 at Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Minn. Gifford was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. [Read about Gifford.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Clifford G. Goodwin, 24, of Diamond, Mo., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried May 12 in his hometown.

Goodwin was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. [Read about Goodwin.](#)

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

Navy Fireman 2nd Class George C. Ford was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ford.](#)

Navy Shipfitter 3rd Class John M. Donald was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was

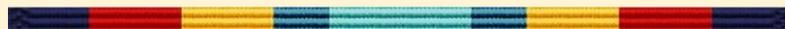
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