



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, October 28, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 42



This-N-That

It's official the DoD and VA are gearing up to head into a new Electronic Health Records system where they can share information, and that information that is classified remains classified but is supposed to help in claims filings.

I've lost track on how many ventures this now makes over the past ten years, but I know it's been a huge amount of money wasted which all began with the VA IT's staff years ago.

Hopefully this time they will get it right and be successful!

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced it

has appointed Michael S. Heimall, a former director at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, to take on new duties as director of the Washington DC VA Medical Center (DCVAMC). In that role, Heimall will oversee delivery of health care to more than 121,050 Veterans and an operating budget of \$610 million. A retired U.S. Army officer with 30 years of progressive experience in hospital and health system leadership, Heimall served as the director for Walter Reed, where he led a 240-bed facility employing 7,000 people.

We're still looking for everyone's support for HR 299 for Blue Water Navy Veterans and Agent Orange, and as we've been posting in the past few weeks, further down in this newsletter are phone numbers to call and ask your Senators to kindly support this bill when presented to the floor.

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



**VA Aid & Attendance - Determining
Eligibility - Means & Evidence**

Although VA pension benefits are “means-tested” (i.e. the applicant’s income and assets are considered in determining eligibility), there was previously no specific asset limitation, and applicants were assessed on a case-by-case basis. The new rules provide a countable asset “cap” which matches the Community Spouse Resource Allowance for Medicaid (\$123,600 for 2018). An applicant’s annual income is included in calculating their countable assets, as are the assets and income of the applicant’s spouse. To apply for Aid and Attendance applicants must complete VA form

<https://www.veteransaidbenefit.org/forms/VBA-21-527EZ.pdf>

Assets

The VA suggests that its adjudicators use a certain amount of personal judgment on this issue. But the bottom line is: does it realistically appear that the veteran or surviving spouse may outlive their assets? If so, they are likely eligible for aid and attendance. In determining assets:

Do NOT count their residence or vehicle when estimating net worth.

Do NOT count a life insurance policy (because the policy holder must be deceased in order to benefit from it).

DO count CDs, annuities, stocks, bonds, savings, checking, IRAs, Keogh, etc. DO count any assets owned by the spouse as well.

As a rule of thumb, assets should not exceed \$123,600. That amount drops depending on the age of claimant

Countable Income

Estimate total annual income for the veteran and his spouse (if any). All income must be included. This includes social security, pensions including VA's, interest income, dividends, income from rental property, etc.

Deduct from income all annual unreimbursed, recurring health care expenses. This includes:

- Assisted living cost o Nursing home cost o Home care service
- Health insurance premium o Medicare premium
- Regular unreimbursed prescriptions verifiable through a pharmacy printout The difference of the preceding is your countable income.

Claim Evidence Required

To support a claim for non service-connected pension, the evidence must show:

1. You met certain minimum requirements regarding active service during a period of war. Generally, those requirements involve:

90 days of consecutive service at least one day of which was during a period of war; OR 90 days of combined service during at least one period of war:

If your service began after September 7, 1980, additional length of service requirements may apply, typically requiring two years of continuous service or completion of active-duty obligation) OR

Any length of active service during a period of war with a discharge due to a service-connected disability

1. You are age 65 or older or are permanently and totally disabled. You are considered permanently and totally disabled if medical evidence shows you are:

A patient in a nursing home for long-term care; OR

Receiving Social Security disability benefits; OR

Unemployable due to a disability reasonably certain to continue throughout your lifetime; OR

Suffering from a disability that is reasonably certain to continue throughout your lifetime that would make it impossible for an average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation; OR

Suffering from a disease or disorder that VA determines causes persons who have that disease or disorder to be permanently and totally disabled

1. Your net worth and income do not exceed certain requirements (see above on Assets & Countable Income)

Applicant's Need for Benefit Evidence

1. To support a claim for non-increased disability pension

benefits based on the need for aid and attendance, the evidence must show:

You have corrected vision of 5/200 or less in both eyes; OR

You have contraction of the concentric visual field to 5 degrees or less; OR You are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity; OR

You require the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing yourself, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting yourself from the hazards of your daily environment; OR

You are bedridden, in that your disability requires that you remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment

1. To support your claim for increased disability pension benefits based on being housebound, the evidence must show:

You have a single permanent disability evaluated as 100 percent disabling; AND due to such disability, you are permanently and substantially confined to your immediate premises; OR

You have significant additional disability (rated 60% or higher) in addition to any disability necessary to establish pension eligibility.



Vietnam War Marine Receives Medal of Honor

President Trump presented retired Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. John L. Canley the Medal of Honor at the White House on Wednesday before a crowd of Canley's fellow Vietnam veterans and senior military and civilian officials. The Marines who fought alongside Canley in the Battle of Huế had worked for years to see him receive the award – an upgrade of the Navy Cross he was awarded in 1970. Canley, now 80, is the 300th Marine to receive the Medal of Honor. On Jan. 31, 1968, with his company commander severely wounded, then-Gunnery Sgt. Canley took control of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, as it made its way toward the besieged city of Huế in central Vietnam. For the next six days, writes [Stars and Stripes](#), Canley would organize assaults on enemy positions, killing countless enemy fighters as his team retook buildings in the city, according to award citations. Twice he would brave fire to scale a wall in “full view of the enemy to pick up wounded Marines and carry them to safety,” said the president, adding that Canley had saved at least 20 Marines' lives during the “house-to-house” fighting. [Watch recorded video of the presentation.](#)



REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL



President Wants to Cut Budgets Next Year, Including Defense and Veterans

Last week it was revealed that President Trump has instructed all of the federal departments to cut their budgets next year. Although he proposes to cut most departments by 5 percent, it appears the Defense Department's cut would be about 2.3 percent, or about \$16 billion.

There was no mention if the Department of Veterans Affairs would be forced to cut the full 5 percent. If he holds to that, and if Congress goes along, the real cut would not be 5 percent, or even 2.3 percent. Inflation this year was measured at 2.8 percent. If it holds at the same rate next year, a 5 percent budget cut is actually 7.8 percent, while a 2.3 percent budget cut is actually 5.1 percent because of the effect of inflation.

The purpose of the cuts appears to be the President's concern over the growing federal debt. However, the President also promised another tax cut this week. We wonder if his plan to cut the federal budget, including the VA budget or the Defense personnel budget are so he can pay for another round of tax cuts.

Of course, Congress must pass legislation to enable any of this to happen. TREA will be watching this very closely after the first of the new year.

Source: TREA



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 for Mental Health and are currently seeking a new Licensed Mental Health Worker, where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 2,700 hits per day, and downloads average 1,908 per day with a total **4,459,541** 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

- Documents Library with over 16,662 documents on-line
(Updated: 08/27/18)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
 - o Afghanistan Veterans
 - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
 - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
 - o Iraq Veterans
 - o Korean Veterans
 - o Men Veterans Forum
 - o Mental Health for Veterans (Counselor Needed)
 - o Political Issues
 - o Suggestion Box
 - o The Mess Hall
 - o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
 - o Veteran Affairs
 - o Vietnam Veterans
 - o Welcome Mat
 - o Women Veterans Forum
 - o WW II Veterans
- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 01/11/18)
- News (Articles On-Line: 7,892)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 4,289, Added 1 New Links
(Updated: 10/22/18)

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



Head of Federal Agency Declines to Keep Watch on Payday Loan Companies

Those who have served in the military are well-aware that some of the businesses that spring up outside the gates of bases and posts are not reputable. They are there to take advantage of the innocence and naivete of many young servicemembers.

Among those types of businesses are the "payday loan" companies. These companies charge outrageous interest rates and it is not uncommon for young servicemembers who get these payday loans to quickly find themselves with an unmanageable debt that endangers or even ends their military careers.

TREA has been fighting for years to get the government to regulate these payday loan companies and we have had success in the past.

However, we are concerned by the recent decision of the current head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to stop examining financial firms for compliance with the Military Lending Act.

Acting CFPB Director Mick Mulvaney, who is also the head of the Office of Management and Budget, claims that the CFPB does not have statutory authority to enforce the Military Lending Act and argues that further legislation is needed to provide that authority.

However, roughly 30 military and veterans groups, including TREA, are opposed to the supervisory rollback. The Department of Defense says it was not consulted on the bureau's decision and remains committed to the current law, which imposes a 36% annual percentage interest rate cap for active-duty military members and their dependents.

"The Department believes that the full spectrum of tools, including supervisory examinations, contribute to effective industry education about, and compliance with, the MLA," according to Stephanie Barna, the acting assistant secretary of Defense for manpower and reserve affairs.

A Defense Department report in 2015 found that thousands of military personnel every year end up losing their security clearances because of compromised finances. High-cost credit forces thousands of service members out of the armed services, hampers recruitment, and costs the Defense Department up to \$132 million a year, the report said.

If the CFPB stops conducting oversight of the MLA through routine supervisory exams, TREA and other service member and veterans groups fear predatory lenders would go back to aggressively marketing products to the military.

The bureau would still have enforcement authority over lenders but investigations of violations can take a year or longer and typically occur after the fact based on consumer complaints.

This is an issue TREA continues to be involved with and we will keep fighting on behalf of the military members who could be affected by this decision of the CFPB.

Source: TREA



Washington Named Test Location for \$10B VA Medical Records Project

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie announced that Washington State will be a test location for a \$10 billion project to convert all VA medical records into electronic form. “Washington state has the perfect mix of active duty, technical infrastructure, rural components, and a large number of veterans,” Wilkie said during a recent visit to Fairchild Air Base in Spokane, according to The Spokesman-Review. “So what we are doing here in Washington, we are testing out the medical health records, which is the largest program the VA has ever undertaken. We are going to test it here in Spokane. That will be the template for the entire country.” [Read the article.](#)



Octobers's Featured Song

Wings Against The Moonlight

By

LT Bobby Ross

LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

Previous Featured Songs



**The Commission on Military,
National, and Public Service Seeks
Input**

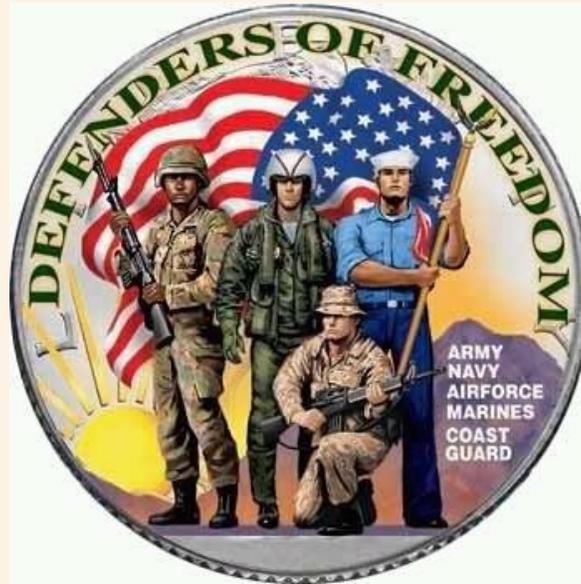
On Wednesday, the VFW attended a roundtable discussion with the Commission on Military, National, and Public Service to discuss whether women should register for the selected service and other proposals to increase the number of Americans in military and public service. The commission is charged with making recommendations to Congress on how to “inspire more Americans — specifically young people — to participate in military, national, and public service and to review the military selective service process.” Before making such recommendations, the commission is soliciting feedback from service members, veterans, and their families. Visit the commission’s [website](#) to learn more or [share your thoughts](#).



Korea Update

On Thursday, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the United Nations Command announced that as a part of a compromise reached in September, troops and weapons have been removed from the Joint Security Area near the village of Panmunjom. This disarmament was one of the many conditions agreed to last month during a summit between the defense ministers of the two Koreas and the U.N. Command. Additional provisions include creating buffer zones, land and sea boundaries, establishing a no-fly zone above the border, removing some of their front-line guard posts and opening the Joint Security Area up to tourists. Earlier this month North and South Korea began a separate demining operation near Hill 281, also known as Arrowhead Hill. Once demining operations have been completed, joint operations will begin in order to recover the remains of more than 300 sets of U.S., Korean and U.N. allies believed to be buried there. General Vincent Brooks, commander for U.S. Forces Korea and U.N. Command, applauded the action stating that, "The area around this hill contains the fallen from several countries, and returning them to their countries and families is a top priority for me."





S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017

Last year Senator Jon Tester, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017, which would:

Correct the disparity between Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rates for veterans' survivors and the rates provided to federal civilian employees' survivors, by

increasing the base rate equal to 55 percent of the rate of compensation paid to a totally disabled veteran.

Replace, with a graduated scale, the current rule that states certain survivors are only eligible for DIC when the veteran's service-connected disability had been rated as totally disabling for at least 10 years immediately before death. This bill would change that rule so that if a veteran is rated as totally disabled for five years and dies, a survivor would be eligible for 50 percent of the total DIC benefits increasing until the 10-year threshold and the maximum DIC amount is awarded.

Make the DIC program consistent with other federal survivor benefit programs by reducing the age allowed for a surviving spouse to remarry and maintain their benefits from 57 to 55.

If enacted, this bill would fulfill one of DAV's legislative goals in accordance with Resolution No. 036, approved by our members during our most recent National Convention.

As the end of the 115th Congress rapidly approaches, we urge you to take part in this final push to pass this legislation using the prepared e-mail to request that your Senators support S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017.

Thank you for all you do for ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors.

[Take Action](#)



DOD Sending Active Duty Forces to U.S. Border

On Thursday, the Associated Press reported that President Trump directed the Secretary of Defense to deploy 800 active duty soldiers to the U.S./Mexico border. Currently, there are approximately 2,000 National Guard soldiers supporting the U.S. Border Patrol with logistics, communications, and administrative support. However, it is unclear what role the active duty forces will play in the overall border security operation since federal law prohibits them from conducting law enforcement activities inside the U.S. unless specifically authorized by Congress.



Penalties for Congress if They Don't Do Their Jobs?

This article is not strictly about military issues but the way Congress does or does not do its job affects military people.

Although there is much talk now about the possibility of a change of control in Congress, and especially in the House of Representatives, it is still true that the majority of members of the House represent safe seats. In other words, the majority of them are in districts that are all but guaranteed to re-elect the current Representative.

Since those members are re-elected time after time, they gain seniority, and that means they eventually become leaders both in their respective parties and in Congress.

Even though Congress is currently out of session, those who are certain to be returned are already making plans for the next Congress. Among some the most interesting plans are those being considered by the leaders of the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform.

While most Congressional committees have one Chair who is from the majority party and one Ranking Member who is the senior member of the minority party, joint committees have co-chairs, although the majority party still has the most members on the committee.

Representatives Steve Womack (R-Ark.) and Nita Lowey

(D-N.Y.) are the co-chairs of the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform and they have announced they are considering some significant changes in the way Congress now operates which they believe might help Congress do its job better.

Among the things they are considering penalties is legislation that would include some sort of punitive measure if Congress fails to pass enough spending bills, relating to "the time they spend in Washington," Womack said.

"There were some very strong feelings expressed by the members of the committee to build consequences into our proposal so that Congress would be basically forced to do its work," Womack said. "It's too easy right now not to."

Although they didn't say what kind of penalties they have in mind, and no one should think that the penalties would be very harsh, nonetheless, it would be nice to see at least some attempt to force lawmakers to do their jobs instead of the endless partisan fighting we now see.

Source: TREA



**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



AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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

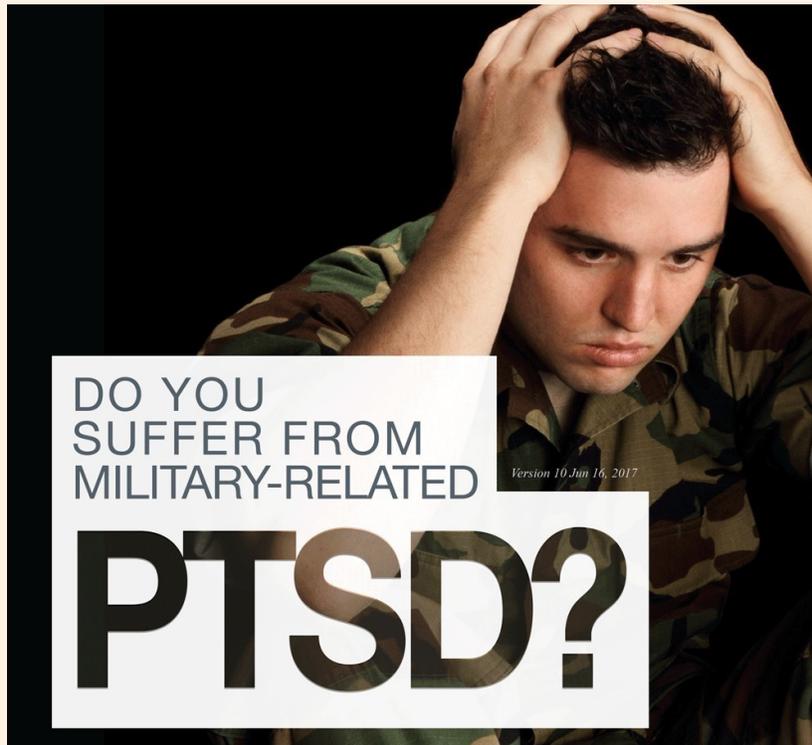


Women's Health Month: Find Your Balance

October is Women's Health Month, a time to focus on ways that women can improve their health and maintain a balanced lifestyle. The Military Health System encourages women to make themselves a priority and to be aware of specific health issues that affect their health. TRICARE covers Health Promotion and Disease Prevention exams for the purpose of a well-woman exam annually for women under age 65. There is no cost and you don't need a referral.

Read the full article [here](#).





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



UCF Veterans Legacy Program launches event to showcase veterans' research

ORLANDO, FL. (Oct. 23, 2018) – The University of Central Florida History Department and Center for Humanities and Digital Research faculty, staff and students will share research and discoveries during “Bringing their Stories to Life: The Veterans Legacy Program at St. Augustine National Cemetery.”

The event will take place Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 10 a.m. and is free and open to the public. The event will commemorate the centennial of the US role in World War I through the stories of African American soldiers buried in St. Augustine and Floridians who fought and are buried in France. We will also highlight 19th Century Wars as part of an introduction to the history of the St. Augustine National Cemetery. An interactive demonstration will also take place, allowing community members the opportunity to explore biographies of veterans buried in national cemeteries.

Launched in 2016, the National Cemetery Administration's Veterans Legacy Program aims to memorialize veterans' service to the nation. By partnering with academic communities of scholars and students to conduct research about the lives of veterans, the program is able to share their stories and service with younger students and the general public.

The National Cemetery Administration selected UCF as one of three schools awarded contracts as inaugural VLP partners in 2017. UCF is proud of its continued partnership with the NCA as it was awarded an additional contract in 2018. The History Department and the Center for Humanities and Digital Research are committed to doing publicly engaged research and this partnership builds on a number of ongoing and relevant research projects, including the UCF Community Veterans History Project and RICHES digital archive.

For more information on the Veterans Legacy Program,

visit [here](#).



**Our values
match yours.**



www.veterans-for-change.org



What is a WOTC?

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit offers a tax benefit for businesses that hire individuals, such as veterans, who are having trouble finding work. Employers should ACT TODAY and take advantage of this credit! The work opportunity credit gives employers several more years of tax incentives to hire eligible workers, including armed forces veterans.

This gives our military veterans the advantage when competing for jobs. If you are a veteran, please encourage your current or potential employer to take advantage of this credit.

Employers can get started by contacting Allure Business Consulting at info@allurebiz.com or by phone at 561-654-3141 [also visit: www.allurebiz.com/contact-us/ to learn more about this benefit].

Dan Lopez

President & Licensed Life & Health Insurance Agent

Allure Business Consulting, LLC

dlopez@allurebiz.com



VA Study Identifies Mutations

A team led by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers recently identified three genetic mutations that govern cholesterol levels, which could lead to the development of new drugs to treat cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Detailed results of the study can be found in the [Oct. 1 issue of Nature Genetics](#), a scientific journal. Using data from VA's [Million Veteran Program \(MVP\)](#), the researchers found that three genes (PDE3B, PCSK9 and ANGPTL4) could be targets for treatment of heart disease, abdominal aortic aneurysm and diabetes, respectively. To learn more about VA research, including MVP, visit the [VA Office of Research and Development website](#).



VA Provides Adoption, IVF

Veterans who lost their ability to reproduce due to a service-connected disability may be eligible for adoption expenses to be reimbursed through VA or to receive coverage for in vitro fertilization (IVF). VA also provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to veterans enrolled in VA health care — regardless of service connection. Veterans interested in infertility services should contact their VA provider or their local VA Women Veterans Program Manager. [Learn about adoption reimbursement](#) and [VA's infertility services](#).



Exchange Offers Food Recommendations and Coupons

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is helping Soldiers, Airmen and their families take the guesswork out of eating on the go at Exchange food courts worldwide. The Exchange's new [Build a Better You](#) directs diners to better-for-you-options at Exchange restaurants through videos and social media posts. Restaurant coupons, highlighting better-for-you options from Charleys, Subway, Qdoba and more, are available twice a month in the Exchange sales flyer and updated quarterly online. Shoppers can download coupons valid through Oct. 31 at [ShopMyExchange.com](#). Exchange food courts already feature signing that shoppers can easily scan to access nutritional guidelines on their smartphones.



VA achieves major milestone in effort to modernize claims processing

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently completed a significant modernization effort in which more than 7.8 million paper files were removed from 60 locations in fewer than 22 months, enabling rapid scanning into VA's electronic claims processing system by multiple third-party vendors. This will lead to faster claims decisions for Veterans.

“Improving the delivery of benefits and services to Veterans is central to our mission,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This significant effort will not only improve VA's claims process, it will also lead to quicker decisions for Veterans because millions more records will be available

electronically.”

This milestone was part of a long VA effort to improve the Veteran experience and streamline claims processes.

- In 2013, VA began removing paper records from its regional offices to save space and taxpayer money.
 - o The effort expanded in 2016 when the agency launched the [File Bank Extraction initiative](#).
 - o This initiative removed more than 1.7 million paper claims files across 59 VA locations and contributed to reduced claims processing time by establishing more electronic records.

- Additionally, in Nov. 2017, VA began extracting nearly 6.1 million paper records held within the Records Control Division (RCD) of the [Records Management Center](#) (RMC) in St. Louis.
 - o VA is currently working with the General Services Administration (GSA), which owns the [Goodfellow Federal Center](#) complex that houses the RMC, to return the RCD’s leased warehouse space back to GSA. As a result, VA will save nearly \$1.8 million per year.
 - o The other areas of the RMC remain open and operational.
 - o The 6.1 million paper records extracted from the RCD are temporarily stored in a secure facility certified by the National Archives and Records Administration where they are inventoried, prioritized and sent to multiple VA vendors for rapid scanning into VA’s Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).

o Records removed during File Bank Extraction will also be scanned and uploaded to VBMS.

VA continues to take steps to operate in a digital environment and modernize the way it processes compensation and pension claims — moving from a cumbersome, paper-intensive process to an efficient, electronic process — resulting in a faster, more accurate and transparent claims process.

For more information about VA benefits, visit <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/>.



VA Pension Available for Wartime Veterans

Beyond disability compensation, health care and home loans, VA offers pensions to qualifying wartime Veterans and their families to help them deal with financial difficulties. This is a needs-based, tax-free, monetary benefit. Qualifying Veterans must have limited or no income, be 65 or older or have a permanent and total non-service-connected disability. Veterans who are housebound or require the aid of another person to perform daily activities may qualify for an increased pension rate. Filing a [Fully Developed Claim](#) (FDC) is the fastest way to receive a decision. For more information, visit the [VA Pension webpage](#). Visit [Explore.VA.gov](#) to learn about all VA benefits.



TRICARE Referral Requirement Waived

If you are being evacuated, you may not have to get a referral from your primary care manager to see a TRICARE authorized provider. This is also known as a blanket referral waiver. A list of counties affected is available on the TRICARE [website](#). To obtain care, find a TRICARE authorized provider in the area where you are evacuated to schedule an appointment. If you were displaced due to Hurricane Michael, you can change to a new primary care manager (PCM) in your local area immediately. You will need to contact Humana Military at 1-800-555-5445 to make this change.



VA Information and Support During Disaster

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to monitor the effects of Hurricane Michael. VA encourages Veterans in the Gulf Coast area to follow updates regarding VA Medical Centers operational status at the VA Hurricane Michael [webpage](#). Veterans who have questions may contact the Veterans Disaster Response Line at 1-800-507-4571 and can also download VA's Disaster Assistance [Brochure](#).



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



Student Vets Win Too as Court Unchains Obama Loan Protection

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of student veterans, despite having robust GI Bill education benefits, contend they were deceived into racking up federal loan debt through abusive practices of certain for-profit colleges. Last week these students, along with thousands of non-veterans, gained an easier path to loan forgiveness from a federal court ruling in Washington D.C. For more details, see this [article](#).



Are GI Bill Payments Taxable?

You may wonder if you have to report your GI Bill benefits as income on your taxes. For the full answers, including the word straight from the IRS, see this [article](#).



Links to Other Stories

1. [Blocking VA documents release protects 'shadow rulers' — not Vets](#)
2. [Changes for TRICARE's ECHO Program](#)
3. [Deadline approaching for change in some Veteran pensions](#)
4. [Depression awareness: Reach out for yourself, and for others](#)
5. [Despite recommendations for reinstatement, VA stands by firing of top Memphis VA chief of surgery](#)
6. [Do You Qualify For Veteran Benefits?](#)
7. [Fairport Vet admits to lying about PTSD to claim \\$92K in VA benefits](#)
8. [Fully Developed Claims](#)
9. [Head of military school fired for using marijuana extract to treat cancer](#)
10. [How to Get a Military Discount – FAQ's About Military Discounts, Eligibility, & Military and Veteran ID Cards](#)
11. [Immunotherapy drug showing promise for aggressive type of breast cancer](#)
12. [Left in cold by VA medical center, homeless Veteran](#)

finds kindness in strangers

13. Low rating force changes at Atlanta VA

14. Military Veterans sue Massachusetts over denial of Welcome Home bonus

15. Not many troops are opting into the new retirement system

16. Senior Energy Dept. aide moving to Veterans Affairs

17. Study on VA Burial and Memorial Services

18. Union demands investigation into VA official who displayed painting of KKK leader

19. US brigadier general wounded Thursday in Afghanistan attack

20. VA and DoD Joining Up for New Records System

21. VA Announces New Medical Center Director

22. VA secretary refuses to provide documents about 'Mar-a-Lago Crowd'

23. Veteran who sprayed Agent Orange on Guam dead at 69

24. Veterans Affairs Secretary tours Anchorage homeless Veterans event

25. Veterans Groups Accuse Trump Administration Of Dereliction Over Changing Va's 'Outdated And Sexist' Motto

26. Vietnam Veterans: The Sillers want you! And all Vets.

27. What Happens in a VA Rating Reduction?

28. White House rejected Democratic candidates for nonpartisan board: report

29. Why today's troops fear a new war is coming soon

30. Widow of Vietnam Veteran warns of Agent Orange symptoms

31. Widower takes ban on military injury lawsuits to

Supreme Court

32. [Wilkie Jilts Walz On Mar-A-Lago Probe, Cites Pending Lawsuit](#)
33. [Wyden cheers VA moves to stop 'pension poachers'](#)
34. [Year of the woman Veteran? Five races to watch](#)

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Check us out today: www.veterans-for-change.org



Holiday Overseas Mail Deadlines Approaching

Military and U.S. Postal Service officials have issued suggested mailing deadlines for holiday packages and letters to military locations overseas in time for Christmas. To get them there in time for Hanukkah, which starts on Dec. 2 this year, subtract 23 days from the deadlines. According to Military Times, the deadlines for various methods of shipping are the same for most APO/FPO/DPO (diplomatic post office) ZIP codes, with the exception of some mail going to APO/FPO/DPO Zip Code 093, which covers overseas contingency areas. Read the this [article](#) for suggested mailing deadlines.



Many Overseas Voters Having Problems Accessing State Election Websites

The folks over at the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) have reported that many overseas voters are having problems accessing their state's online voter registration and election systems. Apparently, many states are blocking web traffic from foreign countries in an effort to increase the cybersecurity of their online systems. For more details, and how to get your vote in on time, see this [article](#).



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Navy Designates Safe Haven for Hurricane Evacuees

The U.S. Navy has designated the area within 150 miles of Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida as the new remote safe haven for Naval Support Activity Panama City personnel and families who evacuated due to Hurricane Michael. The new safe haven became effective Friday, Oct. 19. This order only applies to CNIC claimancy personnel. For updates, visit the [NSA Panama City Facebook](#) page or the [Navy Region Southeast Facebook](#) page. Personnel and families needing assistance can enter a needs assessment in NFAAS, which can be assessed on the [NFAAS website](#) or by using the NFAAS cell phone app.



Veterans Outreach in Delaware and Oklahoma

The American Legion is sponsoring veterans outreach efforts on Oct. 25-26 in Yukon, Oklahoma, and on Oct. 26-27 in the Harrington, Delaware area. In Oklahoma, veterans from Caddo, Blaine, Canadian, Kingfisher, Comanche, Cotton, Grady Jefferson and Stephens counties are invited to attend the effort, which will take place at Yukon Inc. Post 160, 1010 W. Main St., Yukon, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. In Delaware, veterans from Kent and Sussex counties are invited to attend the effort, which will take place at Callaway-Kemp-Raughley-Tee Post 7, 17448 South Dupont Highway, Harrington from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Oct. 26 and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Oct. 27. At both events, a veterans service officer will be available to assist with VA-related questions and other veterans benefits issues.



*** RED ALERT ***

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

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

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

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



TRICARE Open Season Beginning

Make enrollment changes to your or to a family member's TRICARE health plan for 2019 during the upcoming TRICARE Open Season between Nov. 12 and Dec 10, 2018. During TRICARE Open Season, you may enroll in or change your [TRICARE Prime](#) or [TRICARE Select](#) health plan. Any changes you make will be effective Jan. 1, 2019. If you remain eligible and make no changes during TRICARE Open Season, then you will stay in the same plan for 2019. You may also change your type of enrollment during open season, for example switching from individual to family coverage. Sign up on the [TRICARE website](#) for updates about TRICARE Open Season. Look for more information; visit the [TRICARE Open Season webpage](#).



Sound Off: Should the VA Change Its Motto?

Inscribed on a plaque, right by the entrance to the Department of Veterans Affairs, is the VA's motto: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." Is it time to change this motto? For more, see this [Under the Radar](#) post.



VA Re-Examining Military Sexual Trauma Claims

During a live webcast on Oct. 16, VA's new Under Secretary for Benefits, Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D. said that VA will begin reviewing tens of thousands of PTSD claims filed by veterans who suffered Military Sexual Trauma (MST). For more details, see this [article](#).



Office of Inspector General

1. Opportunities Exist to Improve Monitoring and Transparency of Appeal Resolution Timeliness
2. Status of Public Health Emergency Authorities
3. Use of Intergovernmental Support Agreements Has Had Benefits, but Additional Information Would Inform Expansion
4. VA Needs to Address Implementation Challenges and Strengthen Oversight of Subcontracting Limitations



Reduce Out of Pocket Costs with a TRICARE Supplement

Tired of paying out of pocket costs with TRICARE? Get a TRICARE supplement that pays your cost shares and can pay 100% of covered excess charges. [Get valuable coverage now.](#)



Exchange Features Holiday Discounts

Army & Air Force Exchange Service shoppers can pick up extra savings before the holiday season by opening a new MILITARY STAR® card account. From Oct. 12 to 25, **new cardholders will receive 15 percent off their first day's purchases** instead of the 10 percent discount regularly offered. Also, cardholders earn two points for every dollar spent with MILITARY STAR and automatically receive a \$20 rewards card every 2,000 points. They also receive access to exclusive MILITARY STAR deals and savings throughout the year. The MILITARY STAR card is accepted at all military exchanges and commissaries. For more information, visit the [MILITARY STAR website](#).



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



Prescription Refills on the Road

Thanks to OneVA Pharmacy, VA is making prescription refills simpler for traveling Veterans. OneVA Pharmacy is available and implemented at all VA medical centers (VAMC). By simply registering at a local VAMC that uses OneVA, Veterans can forego the time-consuming and convoluted process formerly required to request a new prescription. With OneVA, patients' pharmacy information is available across VA so pharmacists can access any prescription already on file from any VAMC. Veterans on the road can easily refill their prescriptions, with the exception of controlled substance prescriptions. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



Help for Veteran Entrepreneurs

At some point, you may entertain the idea of being your own boss. Preparatory work includes conducting market research, writing a business plan, deciding on a business name and location, getting federal and state tax identification, applying for licenses and permits, and more. The SBA [Office of Veterans Business Development](#) (OVBD) offers education and training on the entrepreneurial process through several paths, two of which are Boots to Business (B2B) and [Boots to Business: Reboot](#). Boots to Business is the entrepreneurship track to business ownership within the [U.S. Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program](#) offered to transitioning servicemembers. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).





U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

1. Hy-Vee Voluntarily Recalls Several Meat and Potato Products
2. Increased Risk of Corneal Haze Associated with the Raindrop Near Vision Inlay: FDA Safety Communication
3. Promise Pharmacy Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Prednisolone and Gatifloxacin Ophthalmic Solution 1%/0.5% Sterile Due to Small Particulate Floating in the Solution
4. Promise Pharmacy Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Prednisolone and Gatifloxacin Ophthalmic Solution 1%/0.5% Sterile Due to Small Particulate Floating in the Solution
5. Shirley's Cookie Company In. Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Peanuts in "Chocolate Whoopie Pie"
6. Sirob Imports, Inc. Issues Recall Due to Elevated Lead in Spices
7. UBC Food Distributors Recalls Hot Curry Powder and Curry Powder due to Lead
8. UPDATE: Potential Eye Damage from Alcon CyPass Micro-Stent Used to Treat Open-Angle Glaucoma: FDA Safety Communication



President Approves VA Judges

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that President Donald J. Trump recently approved the appointment of four new Veterans Law Judges to [VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals](#). "Bringing on additional judges means the Board will be better staffed to conduct hearings and decide appeals properly in a timely manner," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Combined with procedural changes under the Appeals Modernization and Improvement Act of 2017 [AMA] and the hiring of more than 200 additional Board attorneys, this translates into better and faster service for Veterans." For more information about the Board and its progress on appeals modernization, visit the [VA Board of Veterans' Appeals website](#).





SURVIVAL IS FUN



**TRICARE Emergency Procedures for
Alabama, Florida**

There are emergency procedures in place in Alabama and Florida through October 31, 2018 due to Hurricane Michael. A list of counties affected is available on the [TRICARE website](#). To obtain an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.



Medicare Open Enrollment Runs Through Dec. 7

Medicare open enrollment period for 2019 runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. During open enrollment period you can make changes to various aspects of your coverage. For more details, see this [article](#).





VA and DoD Joining Up for New Records System

The U.S. Secretaries of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense (DoD) have signed a [joint statement](#) pledging that their two departments will align their plans, strategies and structures as they roll out a new electronic health records (EHR) system that will allow VA and DoD to share patient data seamlessly. "The new EHR system will be interoperable with DoD, while also improving VA's ability to collaborate and share information with community care providers. This will ease the burden on servicemembers as they transition from military careers..." said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. For more information about the new EHR system, visit the VA's Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization [website](#).



WWI Commission Celebrates Campaign

Over the past four years, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission has run the #COUNTDOWNTOVETERANSDAY social media awareness campaign of Tweets and Posts in our Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram channels, to help shine a small light on veteran topics. This year marks the Commission's last planned #COUNTDOWNTOVETERANSDAY campaign, and it is the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice that finally ended the fighting in World War I. Read more about the 2018 Campaign and how you can be a part of it on the WWI Centennial Commission [website](#).



Tax & Credit

Information



1. [Business owners can claim a qualified business income deduction](#)
2. [IRS launches easy-to-use tax reform webpage](#)
3. [Taxpayers can follow these steps for Using the Withholding Calculator on IRS.gov](#)
4. [Tips for taxpayers who need to reconstruct records after disaster strikes](#)
5. [Webinars help employers, businesses and tax preparers understand tax reform law](#)



IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR OVERSEAS VOTERS WHO CANNOT ACCESS STATE ELECTION WEBSITES

October 18, 2018 — Alexandria, Va. — The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has become aware of reports that some overseas voters are unable to access their state's online voter registration and election systems. This is primarily due to states blocking web traffic from foreign countries in an effort to increase the cybersecurity of their online systems.

Since the General Election on Nov. 6 is less than 30 days away, FVAP encourages overseas voters to return their voted ballot now. If the state website to register to vote or access your ballot cannot be reached, contact your state's election office for help. Also, [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov) is always available

to voters regardless of global location. The FVAP.gov site includes contact information for local election officials, registration and voting deadlines for all states, as well as a list of international toll-free numbers that can be used to contact FVAP. You can also email vote@fvap.gov.

If you have already requested but have not received a state ballot or cannot access your state website to download your ballot, go to FVAP.gov and use the [Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot](#) (FWAB), which all states accept as an official backup ballot for federal offices. FVAP offers an interactive online tool that helps you fill out the FWAB. It saves time and improves accuracy by using your registration address to list all candidates for federal offices for that jurisdiction. After filling out the backup ballot, you must print, sign and send it to your election office using the instructions provided.

If you receive your state ballot after submitting the FWAB, you may vote and return the state ballot as well. The state will only count one ballot if both are received by the deadline.

FVAP is working with states to determine how to best address cybersecurity concerns while ensuring access to key election information and processes for our military, their families, and overseas citizens.



MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 10 new identifications, and the burial date and location for 8 previously identified servicemen. Returning home with full military honors are:

Army Staff Sgt. Marshall F. Kipina, 21, of Calumet, Mich., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 18 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Kipina was assigned to the 131st Aviation Company, serving as an observer aboard an OV-1C aircraft, on a night surveillance mission from Phu Bai Airfield over Attapu Province, Laos People's Democratic Republic. Radar and radio contact were lost with the aircraft which did not return as scheduled. Search efforts were initiated, but no crash site was found. [Read about Kipina.](#)

Army Lt. Col. Robert G. Nopp, 31, of Salem, Ore., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 18 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Nopp was an OV-1C pilot assigned to the 131st Aviation Company. On July 13, 1966, Nopp flew a night surveillance mission from Phu Bai Airfield over Attapu Province, Laos. Flying through heavy thunderstorms, radar and radio contact were lost with the aircraft, which was not uncommon due to the mountainous terrain in that part of Laos. When the aircraft did not return as scheduled, search efforts were initiated, but no crash site was found. [Read about Nopp.](#)

Army Cpl. James I. Jubb, 21, of Eastport, Md., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 17 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Jubb was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. In August 1950, his unit sustained heavy losses while fighting against Korean forces in the vicinity of the Naktong River, South Korea. Jubb was declared missing in action on Aug. 10, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. [Read about Jubb.](#)

Army Pfc. Kenneth B. Williams, 38, of Akron, Ohio, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 22 in Seville, Ohio. Williams was a member of Heavy Mortar Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. In late November 1950, his unit was assembled with South Korean soldiers in the 31st Regimental Combat Team on the east side of the Chosin River, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by Chinese forces. Williams was among more than 1,000 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing Dec. 2, 1950. [Read about Williams.](#)

Army Pfc. Fred W. Ashley, 22, of Emmett, Idaho, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 20 in his hometown. Ashley was a member of Troop C, 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Group, on a reconnaissance in the town of Paseka, Czechoslovakia. On May 4, 1945, German soldiers attacked Ashley's platoon. Ashley's unit reported him missing in action. Following the war, when Ashley was not among the American prisoners liberated from German captivity, the

War Department amended his status to killed in action.

[Read about Ashley.](#)

Army Pfc. Leslie E. Shankles, 33, of Arcadia, Kan., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 24 in Fort Scott, Kan. Shankles was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, when he was killed Oct. 14, 1944, by enemy fire in the Raffelsbrand sector of the Hürtgen Forest in Germany. Shankles' name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at the Netherlands American Cemetery, along with the others missing from World War II. A rosette will now be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. [Read about Shankles.](#)

Army Pvt. John B. Cummings, 22, of Hartford, Wis., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 13 in Hazelhurst, Wis. Cummings was a member of Company A, 276th Infantry Regiment, 70th Infantry Division, along the France and Germany border. On Dec. 31, 1944, German troops crossed the Rhine River into France. As darkness fell, two members of Cummings' company passed him in a foxhole near the riverbank. U.S. troops heard German machine gun fire and maneuvered their way back to the foxhole, but were unable to locate Cummings. Despite extensive recovery efforts, Cummings' remains were unable to be located. [Read about Cummings.](#)

Navy Fireman 2nd Class George C. Ford, 25, of Lidderdale, Iowa, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 20 in Glidden, Iowa. 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. [Read about Ford.](#)

Naval Reserve Lt. Richard C. Lannom was the bombardier/navigator aboard an A-6A aircraft on a night strike mission over Quang Ninh Province, North Vietnam on March 1, 1968. The flight path to the target was over islands known to have light anti-aircraft artillery. When the aircraft failed to rendezvous with the carrier, a search and rescue effort was mounted. No evidence of the plane could be found. Lannom and his pilot were subsequently declared missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lannom.](#)

Marine Corps Pfc. Michael L. Salerno was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Salerno died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Salerno.](#)

Navy Seaman 2nd Class Charles C. Gomez 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, including Gomez. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gomez.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class John A. Karli 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, including Karli. Interment services are pending. [Read about Karli.](#)

Navy Buglemaster 2nd Class Lionel W. Lescault 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, including Lescault. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lescault.](#)

Army Master Sgt. Charles H. McDaniel, 32, of Vernon, Ind., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 27 in Greenwood, Ind. McDaniel was a medic with the 8th Cavalry Regiment Medical Company supporting the regiment's 3rd Battalion. In November 1950, his unit was engaged with enemy forces of the Chinese

People's Volunteer Forces (CPVF) southwest of the village of Unsan, and east of Hwaong-ri, North Korea. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 2, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. [Read about McDaniel.](#)

Army Sgt. James K. Park, 20, of Beaumont, Texas, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 27 in Barry, Texas. Park was a member of Company I, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division. On Nov. 23, 1944, Park was declared missing in action after being wounded while his unit was engaged in fierce fighting within the Hürtgen Forest in Germany. Soldiers from Park's company attempted to search for him, but were prevented from doing so due to sustained fighting in the area. On Nov. 24, 1945, his status was amended to deceased. [Read about Park.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Paul D. Gilman, 19, of Belen, N.M., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 26 in his hometown. Gilman was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Gilman died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. [Read about Gilman.](#)

Mr. George L. Ritter an employee of Air America Incorporated, was piloting an Air America C-123K from

Udorn Airfield, Kingdom of Thailand, headed for Xienhom District, Xaingnabouli Province, Laos. The aircraft was on a routine resupply mission for U.S. Agency for International Development and was last heard from when they were northeast of Sayaboury, Laos. Search and rescue efforts were continued through Dec. 31, 1971, but no sign of the aircraft or the four crewmembers were found. Ritter was subsequently reported missing. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ritter.](#)

Merchant Marine Wiper Elvis N. Spotts was a crew member of the SS Cape Isabel, part of a convoy of three ships including the USS Grayson and the SS Cape Fear. On Feb. 22, 1944, the ships were approximately 12 miles off the coast of Tarawa Atoll. The two Merchant Marine vessels were bringing supplies to Betio Island. Spotts was electrocuted during bilge maintenance. He was unable to be revived. Interment services are pending. [Read about Spotts.](#)

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

Navy Fireman 1st Class Angelo M. Gabriele was assigned to the battleship USS West Virginia, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS West Virginia sustained multiple torpedo hits, but timely counter-flooding measures taken by the crew prevented it from capsizing, and it came to rest on the shallow harbor floor. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 106 crewmen, including Gabriele. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gabriele.](#)

Navy Fireman 1st Class Grant C. Cook, Jr. 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, including Cook. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cook.](#)



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