



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, December 09, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 48



This-N-That

The Christmas holiday is upon us, and all of us at Veterans-For-Change would like to wish you all a very safe, happy and very Merry Christmas!

And again we'd like to ask you to kindly remember all our Homeless Veterans and for those who are struggling financially to donate \$5-10 worth of canned and dry good or a gift card to a local grocery store to DAV (Disabled American Veterans).

And for our homeless Veterans gently worn clothing, pants/slacks, shirts/blouses, shoes, winter coats,

socks and shoes, also donate these items to DAV (Disabled American Veterans).

For Christmas dinner, please set a "missing man" place setting. To remember and honor all those who never came home, and those whom we've lost. We will publish in next weeks newsletter more information on this, should some of you not know what this is or understand it.

Blue Water Navy is still fighting hard to get their long over due, well earned and continually rejected benefits and healthcare.

Many of you helped tremendously when the bill (HR 299) was on the House Floor and helped to succeed in getting it passed there, and we still need your help to get it passed in the Senate, so I am repeating the information of those to contact with phone numbers. And don't feel that they need to be your Senate Member, spend 30-45 minutes and call them all!

You don't have to have served to help, everyone, we need you to make the calls, send the e-mails and stay on their back every few days.

They say the squeaky wheel gets the grease, so we need to make a lot of noise and not only get but keep their attention and get their YES vote on the bill!

Here are some of the phone numbers to call, and if you have the time yes please do call all of them.

Senator Isakson 202-224-3643 & 770-661-0999

Senator Moran 202-224-6521

Senator Boozman 202-224-4843

Senator Rounds 202-224-5842

Senator Sullivan 202-224-3004

Senator Tillis 202-224-6342

Senator Cassidy 202-224-5824

Senator Heller 202-224-6244

Senator Tester 202-224-2644

Senator Brown 202-224-2315

Senator Sanders 202-224-5141

Senator Blumenthal 202-224-2823

Senator Murray 202-224-2621

Senator Hirono 202-224-2621

Senator Manchin 202-224-3954

Your calls are very important to thousands of Veterans, and we're asking you to make the calls immediately, then if you would, please call them every Friday, slow down their office, drive a point home that this bill must pass and quickly.

Just keep it simple, polite, and when you end your call, be sure to thank them for their time!

GI Bill payments are still up in the air or so it would

seem! Some news says all will be paid back pay, in other news says it won't happen. So again the confusion begins, and the real answers are always seeming to be buried deep within the confines of the VA Administration.

If you are experiencing difficulty with your GI Benefits, we'd seriously like to hear from you, tell us your story, and rest assured your contact information, name, anything that specifically identifies you will be redacted when we're contacting the White House, Congress and the VA Administration to help get this resolved and quickly.

We've added about 50+ new documents to the VFC Web Site Documents Library, the top ones are listed further down in this newsletter.

In addition we've added over 100 new web links most are under "Health Topics" with many more to come.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



**Join TRICARE for December 13
Webinar on Enrollment Options
After TRICARE Open Season**

Don't miss your chance to make a selection during this year's TRICARE Open Season, which ends on Dec. 10. If you do, what are your options to enroll in a TRICARE health plan after open season? Starting Jan. 1, 2019, you may only enroll in or change enrollment to TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select following a Qualifying Life Event or during the next annual open season. To learn more, join the "Enrollment Options After TRICARE Open Season" webinar on Dec. 13, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET.

Read the full article [here](#).



It's Official: Disabled Vets to See Biggest Raise Since 2012

Veterans with the highest ratings will see an almost \$100 bump in [disability pay](#) each month starting in 2019, the largest increase since 2012. That 2.8 percent cost-of-living adjustment ([COLA](#)), which kicks in Jan. 1, was made official Monday by the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#). Military retirement, other VA disability benefits, Social Security and federal civilian retirement will see that same increase. For more details, see this [Paycheck Chronicles post](#).



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 **2,540** hits per day, and downloads average **1,997** per day with a total **4,567,438** 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 **16,777** documents on-line (Updated: 12/05/18)
- 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: 10/30/18) (37 Added)
- News (Articles On-Line: 8,038)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **4,580**, Added **173** New Links (Updated: 12/06/18)

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



Veterans-For-Change Makes Social Media Change

Effective immediately, all social media pages that have been on Face Book for many years have all been moved to MEWE.com for a number of reasons.

We know most people don't like change, however, this new Social Media Site, MEWE.COM has no advertisers, truly respects privacy and protects your security far better than Face Book ever could. They also have a fantastic customer service group who actually does respond to your messages, suggestions, ideas and more!

We hope you will join us on this new site.

Veterans-For-Change

www.mewe.com/join/veterans-for-change

Homeless Heroes Program of Veterans-For-Change

www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofvetera

[ns-for-change](#)

AMVETS Group

www.mewe.com/join/amvetsgroup

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup

**{USAVET} SUPPORTING GOD & ALL WHO
SERVED OUR GREAT NATION**

www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggodallwhoserveandserve

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY

www.mewe.com/join/americansforsovereignty



**VA Responsibility for Making
Student Veterans Whole**

The [VA](#) released a [statement](#) this week regarding the implementation of Forever GI Bill changes that were supposed to have been enacted this past August. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie has now directed the Veterans

Benefits Administration to cease attempting to implement the changes and instead reset the entire effort in order to get the job done correctly. The reset begins this Saturday, with the full implementation date now shifting to December 2019. VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence said “The VFW was disappointed to learn about the 12-month delay in implementing this amazing benefit, but we recognize why hitting the reset button was necessary in order for the VA to get this right.” The Forever GI Bill changed student housing allowances to reflect the ZIP codes where students attend the majority of their classes. This change was required to go into effect on Aug. 1, 2018, but the VA admits that its antiquated computer system was unable to simultaneously handle individual ZIP code changes and the influx of students registering for the fall semester. “Shifting the implementation deadline a year isn’t a free pass for the VA to arbitrarily pay student veterans less than they are due simply because it was unable to correct internal problems in time,” said Lawrence in a [press release](#). “I appreciated hearing the VBA undersecretary in testimony address the need to make student veterans whole, and I pledge that the VFW will continue to push for the proper implementation of the Forever GI Bill so that all student veterans receive the prompt and full benefits they earned and deserve.”



VA Announces GI Bill Processing Changes

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced key changes in the processing of GI Bill benefits payments under the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Forever GI Bill). Because of continued information technology difficulties with implementing sections 107 and 501 of the law, both of which change the way monthly housing allowance payments are calculated, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) will reset its implementation efforts to give the department the time necessary to develop the capability to process Spring 2020 enrollments. If students require assistance with their GI Bill benefit or experience a financial hardship due to a delay in payment, they should contact the Education Call Center at 888-442-4551. Students can keep in contact with VA on [Facebook](#) and on Twitter at [VAVetBenefits](#).



December's Featured Song

Prayer For A Soldier

By

LT Bobby Ross

LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

[Previous Featured Songs](#)



Newly Uploaded Documents to Veterans-For-Change Web Site

1. 45 Bases Contaminated Docs-10-2017
2. AGENT ORANGE During the VIETNAM WAR-THE LINGERING ISSUES-06-2018
3. Agent Orange Newsletter-Summer 2017
4. Agent Orange Use in Vietnam and Alleged Health Impacts-Review-10-2017
5. Agent Orange VHI-06-2008
6. AO Newsletter-Summer 2017
7. AO-Actions Needed to Improve Accuracy of Comm and Testing-11-2018
8. Chemicals Used In Military Operations During The Vietnam War
9. Decision Issued on Herbicide Exposure at Fort Drum (09-20-2018)
10. Dewayne-Johnson Lawsuit-2018
11. House of Lies-Agent Orange and the Government's Policy of Cover-up
12. Operation Ranch Hand - Important INFO
13. The Forgotten Victims of Agent Orange (Hughes)

14. The Herbicidal Warfare Program in Vietnam-1961-1971
15. The Secret Nemesis of Sick Vets
16. This Massive Veteran Health Project Just Became The Largest DNA Database In The World
17. US Military Bases Known To Be Contaminated
18. USAF Ranch Hand Herbicides-03-1998
19. VA Agent Orange Claim Submission
20. VA Agent Orange Newsletter-Summer 2016
21. VA Delays Key Agent Orange Decisions - ProPublica
22. Veterans and Agent Orange - Update 2018
23. Veterans and Agent Orange-Update 2014
24. Vietnam Veterans Male Exposure and Birth Defects-2017
25. Vietnam's Lingering War - Agent Orange

(Copy the file name, go to the VFC Website, www.veterans-for-change.org, click on Documents Library, then Search, then paste document name and hit enter).

File name will appear, then click on the file name.



MILITARY STAR Card Launches New App

The military exchange store credit card has rolled out a mobile app, MILITARY STAR Mobile, that will allow shoppers to make payments, sign up for push notifications and view account information, including all transactions and past billing statements. Biometric security features ensure that all account information stays safe. App users can track rewards points and see how close they are to their next \$20 rewards card, which cardholders automatically earn every 2,000 points. For more details, see this [Paycheck Chronicles post](#).





Blue Water Navy Bill - Alive but on Life Support

Congress is very close to passing H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018, which would end the injustice of denying Vietnam, Korean DMZ, and Thailand veterans who suffer from life-threatening health conditions the care and benefits they deserve.

Unfortunately, because of the limited time left for Congressional action this year as explained above, this important bill is now in jeopardy. Make sure your Senators support its immediate passage and encourage their colleagues to do the same.

It is especially important for veterans in Utah to contact Senator Mike Lee. His phone number is 202-224-5444. He is apparently the only Senator now holding up passage of the bill in the Senate.

Even if you don't live in Utah call your own senators and urge them to support immediate passage of H.R. 299. The Senate cannot continue to delay passage of this important bill while Blue Water Navy veterans sicken and die from diseases related to exposure to Agent Orange. If it does not pass this year we have to start all over again next year.

Source: TREA



Reduce Your 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.](#)





**US-Russia Joint Commission on
POW/MIAs**

Representing the interests of the veterans' community, VFW Washington Office Executive Director Bob Wallace attended the 22nd meeting of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs here in Washington, D.C., this week. It was his second consecutive appearance, having traveled to Moscow to attend last year's conference. The Joint Commission was established in 1992 by Presidents George H.W. Bush and Boris Yeltsin as a forum through which both nations seek to determine the fates of their missing service personnel. Since then, U.S. analysts have had access to many important Russian governmental archives for research on past conflicts ranging from the Korean and Vietnam Wars to the Cold War, as well as World War II losses during lend-lease operations. With international tensions high due to Russia's four-year involvement in the Ukraine, it is hoped that the humanitarian aspect of the Joint Commission will be able to keep some diplomatic doors open between our two countries. Leading the U.S. side of the commission is retired Air Force Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, a member of VFW Post 4725 in Red Lodge, Mont. [Learn more.](#)



VA Seeks Input On Caregiver Benefits

The VA is looking for feedback on how to improve its [caregiver assistance program](#), including comment on who should qualify and the best way to define "necessary care" for veterans, after a law passed early this year ordered the program expanded to more users. For more details, see this [article](#).



**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



**President Signs Coast Guard
FY2019 Authorization Bill**

Because the Coast Guard is under the Department of Homeland Security during peacetime, each year it has authorization and appropriations bills that have to be passed because they are not included in the Defense Department legislation.

Today (Tuesday) the President signed the recently passed Coast Guard authorization bill ([S. 140](#)). The House passed the bill last week, which would reauthorize the U.S. Coast Guard and make several changes to federal maritime policy.

Source: TREA



Still Time to Use Your 2018 \$0 Down VA Loan

There is still time to use your VA loan this year. You don't need a large down payment, sometimes even \$0. VA loan rates are competitive and you will never have to waste money on mortgage insurance. [Use your VA loan benefit today.](#)



AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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



**VA Cost-of-Living Adjustment
(COLA) and 2019 Compensation
Rates**

VA adjusts monthly compensation amounts based on the yearly change in the cost of living as determined by the Social Security Administration (SSA). These periodic changes made to VA compensation rates allow for VA benefit amounts to increase with the rate of inflation. The SSA bases COLA rates off of the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earning and Clerical Workers from the third quarter (i.e. July, August, September) of the previous year to the third quarter of the current year. The 2019 COLA is set for a 2.8 percent increase, which will be the largest COLA increase since 2011 when it was 3.6 percent. For 2019, VA compensation rates are scheduled to go into effect on December 1, 2018 and will be reflected in veterans' benefit checks starting December 31, 2018.

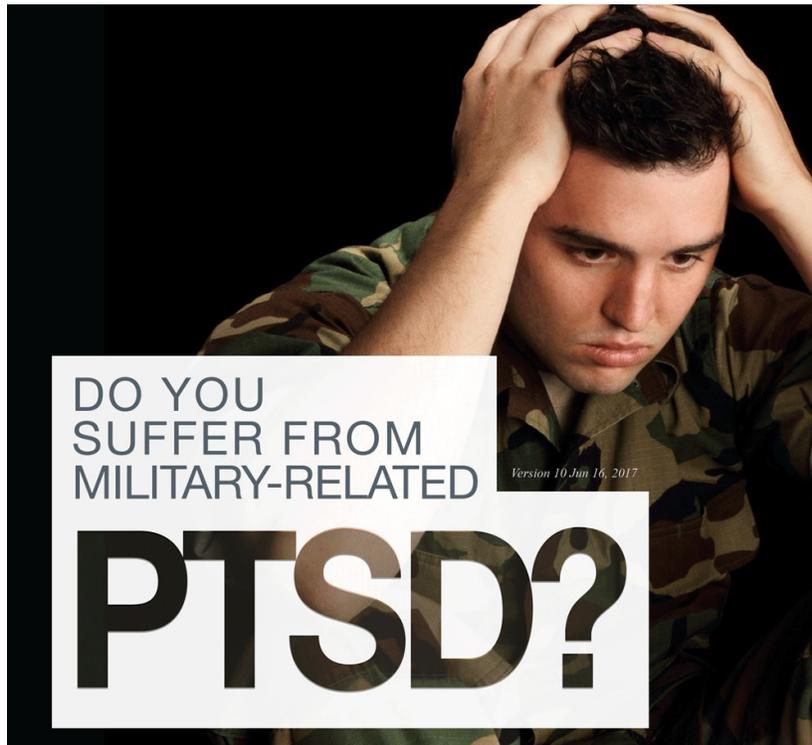
To learn more, visit our blog, [“VA Cost-of-Living Adjustment \(COLA\) and 2019 Compensation Rates”](#).



**Blended Retirement Enrollment
for Sailors Ending**

The U.S. Navy has issued a reminder to Sailors eligible to opt-in to the Blended Retirement System (BRS) that the BRS enrollment period ends Dec. 31. Sailors can enroll in BRS via [MyPay](#). Opt-in eligible Sailors who decide not to enroll in BRS will remain in the current 'legacy' retirement system. Command leaders are responsible for ensuring opt-in eligible service members are prepared to make an informed financial decision prior to the closure of the opt-in window. Once a Sailor elects to enroll in BRS, that decision is permanent. Sailors can find complete BRS information on the Department of Defense BRS [webpage](#).





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



VA Presumptive AO Diseases Update - Hypertension Recommended

New research linking veterans' high blood pressure with wartime exposure to chemical defoliants could

dramatically expand federal disability benefits for tens of thousands of Vietnam-era troops. The findings, from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, conclude that “sufficient evidence” exists linking hypertension and related illnesses in veterans to Agent Orange and other defoliants used in Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s. They recommend adding the condition to the list of 14 presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, a group that includes Hodgkin’s Disease, prostate cancer and Parkinson’s Disease. That’s an upgrade from past research that showed a possible but not conclusive link between the toxic exposures and high blood pressure problems later in life.

If Veterans Affairs officials follow through with the recommendation, it could open up new or additional disability benefits to thousands of aging veterans who served in those areas and who are now struggling with heart problems. Veterans who struggle with high blood pressure issues are eligible for health care at VA facilities. But the illness is eligible for disability benefits in only select cases. Adding an illness to VA’s presumptive list means that veterans applying for disability benefits need not prove that their sickness is directly connected to their time in service. Instead, they only need show that they served in areas where the defoliant was used and that they now suffer from the

diseases.

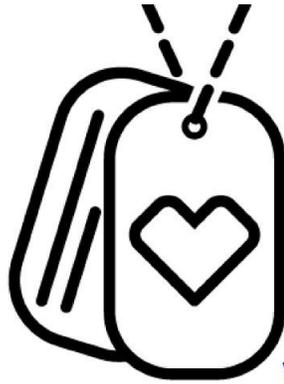
That's a significant difference, since proving direct exposure and clear health links can be nearly impossible for ailing veterans searching for decades-old paper records.

A change in the designation of hypertension by VA could also add significant new costs to the department's disability payout expenses. In 2010, when then Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki expanded the list of presumptive illnesses for Agent Orange exposure to include ischemic heart disease and Parkinson's, the department estimated additional costs of more than \$42 billion over a decade. It's unclear how many veterans suffer from high blood pressure and would be eligible for disability payments if the change is made. In a statement, VA spokesman Curt Cashour said the department "is in the process of evaluating this report and appreciates the work" of the group.

Regardless the cost, officials from the Veterans of Foreign Wars are already calling for VA officials to move ahead with adding hypertension to the list. "There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Agent Orange made veterans sick, it made their children sick, and it brought pain and suffering and premature death to many," VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence said

in a statement. “Even though it’s been a half century since they were exposed, the results of that exposure is something they continue to live with daily.” The new study is available at the National Academies Press website.





**Our values
match yours.**



www.veterans-for-change.org



Air Reserve Revises Medical Waiver Process

The Surgeon General's Office of the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) is revitalizing the medical waiver adjudication process from the top down. The office recently tested a new process where wing commanders have the authority to allow members to continue serving, in a full or limited range, while his or her waiver is being adjudicated at headquarters. The commander will review the member's records and make the decision in conjunction with a local medical provider's recommendation. Tests are being completed and evaluated and will be discussed by AFRC leadership as to whether the process should be rolled out command wide or if more information is needed.



**VA Holding Facebook Live Event
on Health Care Enrollment**

Join representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Team Red, White & Blue for a Facebook Live event on December 11 at 3 p.m. EST as they discuss VA's online and mobile tools and how to enroll in VA health care. Learn how you can communicate securely with your VA health care team, easily refill prescriptions, keep track of appointments and discover other virtual offerings. Representatives will answer questions and provide resources in the comments section following the video. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).





Enroll Before TRICARE, FEDVIP Open Season Closes Dec. 10

Open season closes on Dec. 10, 2018. Do you want to make changes to your TRICARE health plan, or enroll in a dental or vision plan with the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program? Then you must act now. Your coverage will start on Jan. 1, 2019.

Read the [full article here](#).



How Exchange Shoppers Can Give Back

For the third time this year, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service is giving shoppers [an opportunity to help Soldiers, Airmen and military families in need](#). Until Dec. 5, Exchange shoppers can make at-the-register donations to [Army Emergency Relief \(AER\)](#) and [Air Force Assistance Fund \(AFAF\)](#) and receive a coupon for \$5 off a \$25 Exchange purchase for every \$5 donated. The coupons are valid Dec. 6 to Dec. 12. There is no limit to the number of coupons shoppers can earn, and the coupons can be redeemed in stores or online at ShopMyExchange.com.





Air Force Update on Hurricane Michael Recovery

A letter from the Tyndall Air Force Base commander is updating personnel on base recovery efforts following Hurricane Michael. Read the letter on the U.S. Air Force [website](#).



Helping Airmen With Holiday Stress

The holidays may create stressors that are unique to this time of year. Major life challenges, such as marital problems, loneliness and mental health issues can make the holidays a time of unhappiness rather than one of enjoyment. Promoting Comprehensive Airmen Fitness (CAF) and ensuring a culture of wingmanship are fundamental concepts that are especially important during the holidays. Participating in activities that are related to CAF is one reason that the holiday season can be so memorable. If you or a wingman is in need of support, the Air Force has many helping agencies to utilize, such as Mental Health, Psychiatric Health, employee assistance programs, military & family life consultant and your local chapel.



Never forget our fallen!



Generational Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War

This week, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine published a new report entitled [Gulf War and Health, Volume 11: Generational Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War](#). The report is a review of more than 4,000 scientific studies on how toxins that Gulf War veterans, including post-9/11 veterans, have been exposed to impact their reproductive health and the health of their descendants. The report found that several toxins and diseases prevalent in Iraq and Afghanistan have reproductive effects on exposed veterans and birth defects in their children. The report also makes suggestions on how to improve research and health care. Read a [summary of the report](#) or [the full report](#).



**Military Retirees May Be Eligible
for Federal Dental Coverage**

Open Season for the [Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program \(FEDVIP\)](#) ends Dec. 10, 2018. If you are a retired service member or their family, and you were eligible for the [TRICARE Retiree Dental Program](#), you may be eligible for FEDVIP dental coverage. Also, you may be eligible for FEDVIP vision coverage if you are enrolled in a TRICARE health plan. Are you a family member of an active duty service member? If so, you may be eligible for FEDVIP vision coverage if you are enrolled in a TRICARE health plan. Use the [FEDVIP Eligibility Tool](#) if you are not sure if you are eligible for FEDVIP. For more information, visit the Open Season [page](#).



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



VA Realigns Health Programs

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plans to realign several programs within its Veterans Health Administration (VHA) into four offices. A requirement of [Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch](#), the realignment, which began Nov. 25, is designed to enhance quality care for Veterans by improving coordination of services in the areas of population health; education and training of health care professionals; research, academic affiliations; engineering services; and human resources (HR). Population Health will consolidate six programs into one new office. HR will merge four headquarters-based HR groups with similar functions into one office.



Navy Lodges Offer Discounts

Navy Lodges are offering discounts this holiday season. Guests who reserve a room from Nov. 22, 2018 – Jan. 2, 2019, at select locations will receive 20 percent off their stay. Reservations need to be made online at navy-lodge.com or dodlodging.com to receive the discount. Navy Lodges participating in the holiday promotion include Annapolis, Bethesda and Patuxent River, Md.; Fort Worth and Corpus Christi, Texas; Lemoore, El Centro, Port Hueneme, Moffett Field and Monterey, Calif.; Great Lakes, Ill.; Fallon, Nev.; Memphis, Tenn.; Gulfport, Miss.; Washington, D.C.; New London, Conn.; New York, N.Y.; Newport, R.I.; Everett and Whidbey Island, Wash.; Pensacola, Mayport and Jacksonville, Fla.; Kings Bay, Ga.; and Norfolk and Little Creek-Fort Story, Va. For more information, visit the [Navy Lodge website](#).



Links to Other Stories

1. [Connecticut VA Opens Its Doors To 'Bad Paper'](#)

Veterans

2. Drug Dealer Who Sold Fentanyl That Killed Marine Vet With PTSD Gets Life In Prison
3. Government Contractors Found Guilty in \$11 Million Veteran Set-Aside Fraud Scheme
4. H.R. 299, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain Veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes
5. Huntington Man Pleads Guilty to Embezzling Brother's Veteran's Benefits
6. Man Pleads Guilty To Defrauding Disabled Veteran In VA Fiduciary
7. Orange Juice Tests High for Toxic Glyphosate
8. Trump VA report finds Manchester charges groundless
9. VA announces fully capable Tele-counseling service within its Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program
10. Veterans Affairs Dept says it won't reimburse Vets who were underpaid GI Bill benefit payments: report
11. Veterans have been deprived of their earned benefits for two decades
12. Vietnam Veteran will not be buried alone

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's **FREE**. Your

comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

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



Holiday Safety Tips

Here are several tips to keep you and your family safe during the holidays: (1) choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant; (2) keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn; (3) some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both; (4) replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect; (5) use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged; and (6) keep decorations away from windows and doors. For more information, read the brochure on the Consumer Product Safety Commission [website](#).





CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER.



What's the Difference Between TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select?

TRICARE Open Season is from Nov. 12 through Dec. 10, 2018. This is the annual period when you can enroll in or change your [TRICARE Prime](#) or [TRICARE Select](#) plan. Here is an overview of both plans.

TRICARE Prime is a managed care option, similar to a health maintenance organization program. You will be assigned a provider who is your primary care manager (PCM). TRICARE Select is a self-managed, preferred provider option. You manage your own health care without a PCM and choose which TRICARE authorized providers you see. Compare TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select using the [Compare Plans tool](#).



Top Questions from Veterans, Answers from VA

VA has compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions from a State of VA community town hall event hosted by Secretary Robert Wilkie last September. The top questions pertained to Blue Water Navy, Agent Orange, dental care, access to medical cannabis, and non-VA health care programs such as Choice. The compiled list includes answers to these questions and links to navigate veterans for further assistance. [Read the questions and answers or watch the town hall.](#)



*** 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**



**VA Researchers Named TIME
Magazine's 50 Most Influential
People**

Two scientists conducting research with VA, Dr. Ann McKee and Dr. Tony Wyss-Coray, were named to TIME Magazine's list of the [50 most influential people in health care](#). McKee works at the VA Boston Healthcare System as chief of neuropathology and is the director of VA's brain bank. Her research is focused on identifying and understanding chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) — a degenerative condition caused by repeated brain injuries. Wyss-Coray works in Palo Alto, Calif., as a senior research scientist and associate director of the Center for Tissue Regeneration, Repair and Restoration. He is also a professor of neurology and neurological sciences at Stanford University. His research focuses on the effects of aging and immune responses on the brain and the role of Alzheimer's in brain degeneration and memory loss. [Learn more about VA Research](#).





**Veteran Town Hall Meeting
Coming to Tucson**

The American Legion invites all Tucson, Ariz., area veterans and their family members to a town hall meeting to discuss their VA care. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 10, at American Legion Post 68, Hall 4724 S 12th Ave, Tucson, Ariz. Staff from The American Legion National Headquarters, as well as representatives from VA and members of the Arizona congressional delegation, will be in attendance.



Coast Guard Needs More Icebreakers

The VFW was at the National Press Club yesterday to hear Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz say that if the United States wants to protect its national security interests in the Arctic, it needs to fund more ships for the U.S. Coast Guard, especially icebreakers. Schultz said the rise of Russian and Chinese influence in the region is troubling, given the rich natural resources like natural gas, oil, minerals and fish, as well as the two countries' accelerated building of icebreakers. China is estimated to have seven icebreakers in commission or under construction. Russia is estimated to have more than 40 in service or under construction. Canada, which is second only to Russia in landmass inside the Arctic Circle, has 17. A Department of Homeland Security analysis in 2013 concluded that the Coast Guard needs six icebreakers — three heavy and three medium ships. The U.S. Coast Guard today has only two icebreakers — one heavy and one medium. Coast Guard funding is currently in a part of the fiscal 2019 budget that has yet to be finalized. [Read more here.](#)



Office of Inspector General

1. Action Needed to Better Ensure More Effective Use and Management of Advance Contracts
2. Additional Assessments Needed to Better Ensure an Efficient Total Workforce
3. FDA Could Improve Designation Review Consistency; Rare Disease Drug Development Challenges Continue
4. Federal Agencies Met Legislative Requirements for Protecting Privacy When Sharing Threat Information
5. Implementation of New Rates May Lead to Billions in Excess Payments
6. Service Contributions Do Not Reflect Service Specific Estimated Costs and Full Effect of Proposed Legislation is Unknown



Agent Orange Case – Gray v. Wilkie Certified to Supreme Court

On Friday November 2, 2018, the Supreme Court of the United States granted certiorari in the veteran's case Gray v. Wilkie. The justices agreed to address an issue involving whether the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has jurisdiction to hear pre-enforcement litigation of VA rules set forth in its adjudication manual known as the M21-1. In February of 2016, VA published a Memorandum of Changes, announcing a change to its interpretation of the Agent Orange Act by revising the M21-1 Manual. This revision held that only veterans who set foot on Vietnam soil or served in the country's inland waterways would be presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange. Mr. Gray sought pre-enforcement review of this matter in the Federal Circuit. However, the Federal Circuit held that it lacked the jurisdiction to review VA interpretive rules if VA published them in its M21-1 Manual. The Supreme Court justices will review the lower court's ruling.

[Check out our blog, "Agent Orange Case Gray v. Wilkie Certified to Supreme Court".](#)



The Next 'Air Force One' Office Gets New Name

The Air Force office responsible for the acquisition of the VC-25B fleet (more commonly known as the next Air Force One) recently changed its name from the Presidential Airlift Recapitalization Directorate to the Presidential and Executive Airlift Directorate. The new Directorate comprises approximately 300 employees located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and Tinker AFB and is responsible for the life cycle management of the VC-25B and the VC-25A (the current Air Force One) as well as the C-12, C-21, C-32, C-37, C-40, and E-4B.0 The directorate is also working to replace the E-4B National Airborne Operations Center, the Navy's E-6B Airborne Command Post, and the C-32A executive aircraft. For more details, see this [Air Force article](#).



Last Chance: TRICARE, Federal Benefits Open Season Ends Monday

Open season ends next week. The deadline is Monday, Dec. 10, 2018 for both TRICARE Open Season and Federal Benefits Open Season. Your new enrollment or plan changes will take effect on Jan. 1, 2019. There's a separate enrollment process for each open season.

Read the full article [here](#).



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



**Connecting Veterans in Puerto
Rico with Benefits**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently hosted and participated in a series of partnership events in Puerto Rico to advance the economic success of service members, veterans and families living on the island. As a result of the economic partnership roundtable, VA is projecting the following outcomes: (1) the [Transition Assistance Program](#), administered by TED, will deliver briefings about a variety of benefits at U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Sector San Juan for USCG service members on the island; (2) the [Warrior Training Advancement Course](#) will be offered at Fort Buchanan in fiscal year 2019. Among the pool of graduates, 25 Veteran service representatives will be hired; (3) the Puerto Rico National Call Center will expand through the hiring of 15 agents; and (4) five full-time employees will be hired to work at the [San Juan Regional Office](#).





Pearl Harbor Day 2018

VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence and VFW Auxiliary National President Sandi Kriebel joined hundreds of veterans, active-duty military, their families and supporters at the Pearl Harbor Visitors Center to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the attack. During the ceremony, they presented a VFW wreath in memory of the 2,403 military service members and civilians who were killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and took a moment to reflect on this year's commemorative theme, "Forging the Future," which pays tribute to President Roosevelt's famous 1943 "Unconquerable Spirit" speech. [Learn more.](#)



**VA Hosting Music Therapy
Retreats**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the nonprofit organization Operation Song are offering a series of national music therapy retreats. In collaboration with VA Voluntary Services and [Veterans Canteen Service](#), the four-day songwriting retreat connects Veterans with professional songwriters and VA therapists. Music therapy is just one component of VA's Recreation Therapy programs. Veterans must be referred by their VA health care provider. No musical background is necessary. For more information, visit the VA Recreation Therapy [website](#), the VA Voluntary Services [website](#), and the Operation Song [website](#).



1. Chukar Cherries Expands Recall of Ultra Dark Chocolate Product Due to Undeclared Milk
2. Columbia River Natural Pet Foods Inc. Recalls Cow Pie Fresh Frozen Meats for Dogs and Cats Because of Possible *Listeria monocytogenes* Health Risk
3. Danone North America Issues Allergy Alert and Recall for Light & Fit Greek Crunch S'mores Flavor
4. Hiland Dairy Announces Voluntary Recall of Hiland Dairy Half-Gallon Whole Chocolate Milk
5. Kroger Louisville Division Recalls Abound Chicken and Brown Rice Dog Food because of Elevated Vitamin D Levels
6. Mylan Expands Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Valsartan Tablets
7. Tris Pharma Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Infants' Ibuprofen Concentrated Oral Suspension, USP (NSAID) 50 mg per 1.25 mL, Due to Potential Higher Concentrations of Ibuprofen





SURVIVAL IS FUN



**Agent Orange Testing and
Storage Locations: U.S.
Government Accountability Office
Releases Report**

The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report focusing on the actions needed to improve the accuracy and communication of information regarding testing and storage locations of Agent Orange outside of Vietnam. This report examines (1) information the federal government has about the procurement, distribution, use, and disposition of Agent Orange; (2) DoD and VA efforts to make information about where Agent Orange and its components were tested and stored available; and (3) challenges associated with Agent Orange testing. Overall, GAO found that DoD's official list of herbicide testing and storage locations outside of Vietnam lacks clarity in descriptive information; omits both testing and storage locations; and omits additional time periods covered by testing events. At the conclusion of its report, GAO makes six recommendations: four to the Secretary of Defense and two to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. These recommendations focus on developing a process for updating the list and communicating this information to veterans and the public, and developing criteria for what constitutes a location that should be included on the list.

[Read our blog, "Agent Orange Testing and Storage Locations: U.S. Government Accountability Office Releases Report".](#)



Navy Offers Family Support Course

Almost a decade ago, Fleet and Family Support Program started a wealth building course called the Million Dollar Sailor. The program now offers three ways to complete the course. The first way is the two-day in house training at a Fleet and Family Support Center (FSSC). The second is the new online course. The third is a combination of both where students can do the first half of the course online and can complete the second half in person. Interested parties can find the on-line course on the [JKO website](#). Once logged in, go to the courses tab and type in 'Million Dollar Sailor' to find the course.



BLUE WATER NAVY UPDATE

We went to Court of Appeal for Federal Circuit today and have an oral argument before the entire court and seem to go well. We expect to get a decision from the court in late Spring. In other news HR .2 99 still being held up by 2 Senators Enzi and Lee.

PLEASE, call these Senators daily and ask for their support!





Update on VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program has made significant improvements in disability claim processing over the past year, with most service members who submitted claims through the program receiving decisions within 30 days of discharge. BDD allows service members to file a claim for disability between 90 and 180 days prior to discharge from active duty, which provides time for paperwork review and medical exams prior to leaving. By participating in BDD, service members ensure that their disability medical exams become part of their service treatment record and that service connection for their conditions may be established as early as possible. For more information, visit the [VA Pre-Discharge Claim website](#).



Veterans Outreach Event in Oklahoma

The American Legion is sponsoring a district revitalization and veterans outreach effort in Norman, Okla. Dec. 6-7. Veterans in and around the area are invited to American Legion Post 88 to learn about American Legion programs, service to community and veterans benefits. The effort will take place at Post 88, 710 E. Main St., Norman, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. both days. A veterans' service officer will be available to assist with Department of Veterans Affairs-related questions and other veterans' benefits issues.



Tax & Credit Information



1. Don't take the bait: Here's how taxpayers can avoid getting caught by a phishing scam
2. Follow these tips to protect data when shopping online
3. Here are your new income tax brackets for 2019
4. Interest Rates Increase for the First Quarter of 2019
5. IRS launches Instagram account to help taxpayers
6. IRS reminds those with disabilities of new ABLE account benefits
7. IRS sees surge in email phishing scams; Summit Partners urge taxpayers: 'Don't Take the Bait'
8. IRS, Security Summit Partners warn public: It's shopping season for identity thieves, too; Tax Security Awareness Week offers tips
9. November 2018 Recap
10. Security Summit Partners highlight new password guidance, urge taxpayers and practitioners to protect all accounts
11. Security Summit warns employers: Be alert to identity theft and W-2 scams
12. Six tax deductions you'll lose on your 2018 return
13. Strong passwords help protect accounts against cybercriminals
14. The What, When and How of Social Security



MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 21 new identifications. Returning home with full military honors are:

Army Cpl. DeMaret M. Kirtley was a member of Battery A, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 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. Kirtley was reported missing in action on Dec. 6, 1950, when he could not be accounted for after the withdrawal. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kirtley.](#)

Marine Corps Sgt. Meredith F. Keirn was a light machine gun section leader for Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. In late November 1950, he was reported to have been killed while defending a hill overlooking the Toktong Pass, a critical main supply route between the villages of Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni, North Korea. His remains were reportedly buried at the base of “Fox Hill,” in the Toktong Pass, but they could not be recovered following the war. Interment services are pending. [Read about Keirn.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Sgt. Johnson McAfee was a member of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. In late November 1950, his unit was engaged in heavy fighting against units of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces in North Korea. McAfee was reported to have been killed in action in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. His remains were buried at the base

of “Fox Hill,” in the Toktong Pass, but they could not be recovered following the war. Interment services are pending. [Read about McAfee.](#)

Army Pvt. Floyd A. Fulmer was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. On Nov. 14, 1944, he was reported as missing in action after fierce combat in the Raffelsbrand sector of the Hürtgen Forest, near the village of Simonskall, in Germany. On Nov. 15, 1945, the War Department declared him deceased. Interment services are pending. [Read about Fulmer.](#)

Army Pvt. Harry W. Wilder was a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. On Nov. 25, 1944, his company was deployed as direct fire support for American infantrymen attacking the town of Grosshau. Two tank destroyers and six tanks, including the M10 tank destroyer Akers was on, were destroyed in the fighting. He was killed during the battle, though his status was initially listed as missing in action. On Dec. 21, 1944, his status was amended to killed in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Wilder.](#)

Army Cpl. Joseph Akers was a member of Company C, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, participating in intense fighting in the Hürtgen Forest. On Nov. 14,

1944, he was reported as missing in action after fierce combat in the Raffelsbrand sector of the Hürtgen Forest, near the village of Simonskall, in Germany. On Nov. 15, 1945, the War Department declared him deceased. Interment services are pending. [Read about Akers.](#)

Army Air Forces Capt. Lawrence E. Dickson was a pilot with the 100th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group, in the European Theater. On Dec. 23, 1944, Dickson departed Ramitelli Air Base, Italy on an aerial reconnaissance mission and sustained an engine failure during his return flight. According to witnesses, Dickson's plane had rolled over with the canopy jettisoned. He was not observed ejecting from the plane. Dickson's remains were not recovered and he was subsequently declared missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Dickson.](#)

Navy Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Charles H. Harris 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 Harris. Interment services are pending. [Read about Harris.](#)

Navy Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Marvin B. Adkins

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 Adkins. Interment services are pending. [Read about Adkins.](#)

Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Harry H. Gaver, 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 Gaver. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gaver.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Walter C. Foley

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 Foley. Interment services are pending. [Read about Foley.](#)

Navy Fireman 3rd Class Willard I. Lawson 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 Lawson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lawson.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Kenneth H. Sampson 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 Sampson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Sampson.](#)

Army Pfc. John A. Taylor was a member of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. On Aug. 11, his regiment encountered a Korean People's Army unit near the village of Haman. Taylor's company was ordered to move southwest, where they were ambushed and forced to disperse. After several days of checking adjoining units, aid stations and field hospitals, Taylor was reported as

killed in action on Aug. 12, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Taylor.](#)

Army Master Sgt. Carl H. Lindquist was a member of Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st 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. Lindquist was reported missing in action on Nov. 29, 1950, when he could not be accounted for after the withdrawal. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lindquist.](#)

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Ottaway B. Cornwell was a member of the 4th Fighter Squadron, 52nd Fighter Group, Twelfth (XII) Air Force. On Jan. 27, 1944, the Supermarine Spitfire aircraft he was piloting was shot down over Pierrefeu-du-Var, France, during a dog fight with a German Messerschmitt. After Allied forces liberated the area, they were unable to locate Cornwell's remains. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cornwell.](#)

Navy Radioman 3rd Class Jack R. Goldwater 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 Goldwater. Interment services are pending. [Read about Goldwater.](#)

Navy Fireman 1st Class Leonard R. Geller 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 Geller. Interment services are pending. [Read about Geller.](#)

Navy Reserve Musician 1st Class Henri C. Mason 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 Mason. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mason.](#)

Navy Shopfitter 3rd Class John M. Donald 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 Donald. Interment services are pending. [Read about Donald.](#)

Navy Seaman 2nd Class George A. Thompson 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 Thompson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Thompson.](#)



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