



# Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, January 18, 2015**  
Volume 6, Issue 03

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

Income taxes can be complicated, and even small mistakes could cost you big bucks. So should you pay for professional help?

Absolutely! But, not until you find out if you qualify for free help. Here are some resources you really need to check out:

If you made 53 grand or less than last year, you can get free tax prep from VITA: the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. These IRS-certified volunteers are available in thousands of offices nationwide.

And then, there's Tax Counseling for the Elderly, or TCE.

They also assist people nationwide, with low to moderate income, paying special attention to those aged 60 or over.

And if you're willing just to file your own taxes with online forms, you can do that and file electronically free, no matter what your income.

And then there's free help, either in-person at an IRS office or on their toll-free number.

A few things you should be prepared and have with you at your tax appointment are:

- All Income Sources (W-2's, 1099's, Stock Trades, etc.)
- If you have a business the December 31, 2014 Balance and Income Statements
- Charity Donations (both cash and non-cash)
- Education 1098-T
- Medical Co-Pays
- Mileage (esp. if you drive from one job to another)
- Mortgage Interest Statements (1098)
- Prescription Receipts (or Co-Pays)
- Property Taxes Bills (2013-2014)
- Vehicle or Boat Donations (Charity should provide you a statement of sale price, this is deductible)
- Vehicle Registrations

To help you better prepare Veterans-For-Change provides [Tax Deduction Finder & Problem Minimizer](#) you can download, print out and locate all the documents you need for tax preparation.

This week a couple of things have been brought to my attention and I felt compelled to bring to your attention as well as to ask for your input if either have been something you personally have had to deal with.

First problem deals with the medical prescription service Express Scripts. We've had one Veteran tell us of current problems in getting prescriptions re-filled, and how the system some how reverted back to older prescriptions and/or older dosage levels.

If you have experienced this problem, even called the central customer service line, and had to fight over getting your medications, proper prescription levels, please send me an e-mail and let me know, and let me know if those problems have been resolved, and how.

The second issue deal with PTSD, and some of the most potent and powerful drugs being prescribed and possible over-doses or over medicating.

Tahoma VA Medical Center has popped up into the sunshine for over medication and also for retaliatory management practices, soon to be investigated.

If you feel you're a victim of these same practices, we'd really like to hear from you as well.

Have you lost a loved one, friend, buddy who served our Country? We'd like very much to honor them by placing their picture and what ever information you'd like to have others know in our memorial pages.

Visit today <http://veterans-for-change.org/gallery3/> and do let us know how we can best honor your loved one or friend.

If you're a member on Face Book, be sure to visit our Faced Book Page for Veterans-For-Change and like us, and spread the word! If you're a fan of Twitter, be sure to visit us there and follow us!

And if you have not been to or visited our website lately, take a visit today. We've now opened up 80% of the system and you're not required to subscribe, which is and always will be 100% free. You do need to subscribe to view all the Forums, to post freely, and a few of the libraries which are restricted. Visit today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

We're still looking for someone who is talented at Microsoft Access to write a few databases for us. If you have those talents, and can volunteer some time, please E-Mail me.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Advocacy Group Members and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health and Happy New Year!

Respectfully,  
Jim Davis  
Founder & CEO  
[Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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### ***TRICARE's E-Prescribing Coming Soon***

The Military Health System has deployed electronic prescribing in military pharmacies across its system of clinics and hospitals in the United States (and in Guam and Puerto Rico). This capability will allow civilian providers to send prescriptions electronically to military pharmacies, reducing the need for handwritten prescriptions. Beneficiaries can ask their doctor to look for their local military pharmacies in the e-prescribing database/networks. Beneficiaries will still need a hand written prescription for controlled substances. To learn more about TRICARE's pharmacy benefits, visit the [TRICARE website](#).

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### ***Specially Adapted Housing for Wounded Warriors and Disabled Veterans – FYSA***

Colleagues and Fellow Veterans:

Are you a Veteran with a severe service-connected disability that affects your mobility? Do you know someone who is? The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the Specially Adapted Housing program, designed to

help severely disabled Veterans and Servicemembers purchase or construct an adapted home, or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability. Two grant programs exist: the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant and the Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant.

We want to ensure anyone who might qualify knows about this program.

The SAH grant is designed to help disabled Veterans and Servicemembers by providing a barrier-free living environment, such as a wheelchair accessible home, that affords Veterans a level of independent living they may not otherwise enjoy. Veterans and Servicemembers with specific service-connected disabilities (including loss/loss of use of both lower extremities) may be entitled to a grant for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet their adaptive needs, up to the current maximum of \$70,465.

The SHA grant can be used to increase the mobility of eligible Veteran and Servicemembers throughout their residences. Veterans and Servicemembers with specific service-connected disabilities (including severe visual impairment or loss/loss of use of both hands) may be entitled to this type of grant, up to the current maximum of \$14,093.

For those who do not yet own a home, a temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans and Servicemembers who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member. The maximum amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is \$30,934 and for the SHA grant is \$5,523.

VA has staff located nationwide to assist individuals in applying for and receiving these grants. You can find more detailed information about qualifying disabilities here: <http://benefits.va.gov/homeloans/adaptedhousing.asp>, and you can find contact information for an SAH Agent in your area here: [http://www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/contact\\_agents.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/contact_agents.asp).

Each Veteran's housing/living needs are as unique as their physical disabilities. The Specially Adapted Housing program provides hands-on, personalized, customized service to severely disabled Veterans seeking home adaptations.

Other quick reference information can be found on our SAH graphic at: [http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/infographics/special\\_adaptive\\_housing.html#sthash.fO5MRI0b.dpbs](http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/infographics/special_adaptive_housing.html#sthash.fO5MRI0b.dpbs). Please feel free to use this in your newsletters, community spaces or publications.

If you have any questions, please email [sahinfo.vbaco@va.gov](mailto:sahinfo.vbaco@va.gov).

V/R

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

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### ***Building Homes for Heroes***

Building Homes for Heroes(R) is committed to rebuilding lives and supporting the men and women who were injured while serving the country during the time of the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. The organization builds or modifies homes, and gifts them, mortgage-free, to veterans and their families. To further assist veterans, the organization has added programs, including financial planning services, family funding, and emergency support. For more information, visit the Building Homes for Heroes website at [buildinghomesforheroes.org](http://buildinghomesforheroes.org).

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### ***Retirees: Eliminate Out of Pocket Costs with MBA Tricare Supplement***

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

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## ***Tax Credit in New York***

Under a new law in the State of New York businesses can receive a tax credit for hiring and employing a qualified veteran. The credit is equal to 10 percent of the total amount of wages paid to the qualified veteran during their first full year of employment. If the veteran is disabled, the credit amount is increased to 15 percent. The law was created to encourage more New York businesses to hire veterans. For more details, see [this article](#).

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## ***Gone, but Not Forgotten***

Please take a moment to remember these women who served and have passed on.

1863: Emily, 19, disguised as a man, killed by minie ball in her side, CIVIL WAR  
1964: CIVILIAN Regina "Reggie" Williams, USN, VIETNAM  
1971: CIVILIAN Betty Gebhardt, CIA, VIETNAM  
1982: USN LTCDR Barbara Allen Rainey, 34, plane accident in FL  
1 Jan 2011: USAR Tamara Henderson, 25, murdered by husband in CA  
2 Jan 2004: USA CPT Kimberly N. Hampton, 27, IRAQ  
2 Jan 2006: USA SPC Bobbie J Gonzales, 23, drowned in Texas attempting to save her brother while home on leave from IRAQ  
3 Jan 1966: CIVILIAN Marguerite (Higgins) Hall, journalist, VIETNAM  
3 Jan 2005: CIVILIAN Tracy Hushin, 34, USAID, IRAQ  
7 Jan 1991: USA SSG Tatiana Khaghani Dees, DESERT STORM  
7 Jan 2006: AKARNG 1LT Jaime Lynn (Krausse) Campbell, 25, IRAQ  
7 Jan 2007: USAF Sr Airman Elizabeth A Loncki, 23, IRAQ  
7 Jan 2009: CIVILIAN Paula Loyd, 36, AFGHANISTAN, died at BAMC burns  
9 Jan 2002: USMC SGT Jeannette L. Winters, 25, AFGHANISTAN  
10 Jan 2006: USN ENS Elizabeth Bonn, 23, plane crash in Georgia  
10 Jan 2012: USA SPC Brandy Fonteneaux, 28, murdered at Fort Carson, CO  
14 Jan 2004: USA SGT Keicia M. (Coleman) Hines, 27, IRAQ  
14 Jan 2013: USAF SSG Emily E Clayburn, 29, industrial accident, MacDill AFB, FL  
16 Jan 2007: USN MA1 Jennifer A (Young) Valdivia, 27, non-combat incident, Bahrain  
17 Jan 2007: CIVILIAN Andrea "Andi" Parhamovich, 28, IRAQ  
18 Jan 2006: USA SPC Katherine Singleton, 25, suicide, Ft Bragg, NC  
18 Jan 2011: USN OS2 Dominique Cruz, 26, overboard from USS Halsey, Gulf of Oman  
19 Jan 1987: USA Brenda C Pott, 21, suicide, Ft Carson  
20 Jan 1863: CIVILIAN Hannah A Ropes, 54, Typhoid Pneumonia, Washington, DC  
20 Jan 2007: IAARNG CSM Marilyn L (Van Cannon) Gabbard, 46, IRAQ  
21 Jan 2007: USA PFC Valerie R Gamboa, 29, murdered in Germany  
25 Jan 1945: USA ANC LT Thelma LaFave, MIA onboard C-46 plane between Pelellu Island and Leyte Island  
25 Jan 2005: USA PFC Megan E Adelman-Tenney, 19, parachute accident, Ft Benning, GA  
25 Jan 2008: USA SGT Tracy R Birkman, 41, IRAQ  
26 Jan 2007: USN LT (jg) Laura J Mankey, West Hills, CA, helicopter crash in Pacific  
28 Jan 2007: USAR SPC Carla J Stewart, 37, IRAQ  
29 Jan 2005: CIVILIAN Barbara (Geis) Heald, 60, DA, IRAQ  
31 Jan 2004: USA PFC Holly Jeanne McGeogh, 19, IRAQ

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## ***Congressman Seeks Pay and Compensation Reforms***

Third-term Republican congressman from Nevada Joe Heck vows to take a "practical, non-parochial" approach in tackling two far different yet still critical priorities for the military while serving as the new chairman of the House armed services' personnel subcommittee. One will be to review, perhaps reshape, and then shepherd into law long-awaited recommendations of the [Military Compensation and Retirement Reform Commission](#), which is to deliver its report by Feb. 1. The other will be to find ways to improve DoD efficiency before considering more proposals to cap

annual pay raises, dampen housing allowances or boost patient out-of-pocket costs under TRICARE, the health insurance program for military families and retirees. Read this week's [Military Update](#) for the full article.

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## ***VA Care for C-123 Crews Due to AO Exposure***

Retired Air Force Reserve Maj. Wes Carter almost didn't travel to Washington D.C. last week where, to his surprise, he heard an independent panel of scientists verify what he had dogged the Air Force and Department of Veterans Affairs about for almost four years. The Institute of Medicine said Carter and up to 2100 other former reserve air crewmen and maintainers of C-123 aircraft, flown for a decade after the Vietnam War, were indeed exposed to toxic residue from Agent Orange herbicide sprayed from some of the same aircraft during the war.

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## ***FROM MILITARY-VETERANS ADVOCACY***

OK here is the update in the waning days of the 113th Congress. The news is not good. Across the board, there were significant losses, especially in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

First of all, HR 543 will die despite having 258 co-sponsors. We will reintroduce next year and will attempt to submit the bill with a large number of returning sponsors. So please CALL or write your member of Congress, ask them to contact Congressman Chris Gibson (R-NY19) and sign on the new Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. We will be taking a more proactive role to craft a Congressional Budget Office score and identify offsets to get this bill moving.

Two of our HR 543 sponsors have been elected to the Senate. We are hoping that one or both of them, (Senators-Elect Steve Daines R-MT and Shelley Moore Capito R WV) and perhaps several others will join with Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) to introduce a companion bill. We also hope that the new Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Senator Johnny Isakson R-GA will help move this bill forward. We don't know the ranking member yet but it might be Sen Jon Tester D-MT who has been a friend to us in the past.

Our ship count provision was struck from the NDAA on the insistence of the Senate. Based on the fact that 308 ships have been identified in inland waters, we think we can move past this by doing our own analysis. Anyone with deck logs showing service in the rivers or tied to a pier, whose ship has not made the VA. list, please contact John Rossie via [www.bluewaternavy.org](http://www.bluewaternavy.org)

The religious freedom provisions of the House version of the NDAA were struck at the insistence of the Senate.

Tricare co-pay increases and housing allowance reductions were included in the final version at the insistence of the Senate. The House did minimize some of these increases over what the Senate bill originally called for. On a positive note, the provision that would have tightened judicial review of correction board issues was not enacted.

We had a hearing on the VA's Motion to Dismiss the Blue Water Navy court suit, Being honest it was a tough hearing. The Judge has taken the matter under advisement. I will let you know what happened when we get the decision. Thanks to all that attended.

Being a perennial New Orleans Saints fan, I've learned to adopt the old saying "Wait 'til next year." We did not win the Super Bowl this time but WE WILL BE BACK!

Commander J. B. Wells U. S. Navy (Retired)  
Attorney at Law  
Executive Director  
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.

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***A discussion on what the Mayo Clinic describes PTSD as, symptoms and treatments***



This article was written by Mayo Clinic Staff on 4/15/2014. They define PTSD as, “A mental health condition that’s triggered by a terrifying event-either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.”

“Many people who go through traumatic events have difficulty adjusting and coping for a while, but they don’t have PTSD-with time and good self-care, they usually bet better. But if the symptoms get worse or last for months or even years and interfere with your functioning, you may have PTSD.”

They say that the symptoms of PTSD may show up within three months of the trauma and sometimes they don’t show up for years later. This is an interesting distinction between this article and the previous article I discussed from the New England Journal of Medicine whom stated that the symptoms can show up as soon as a month after experiencing the traumatic event.

The Mayo Clinic Staff states that the symptoms of PTSD are Intrusive Memories, Avoidance, and changes in emotional reactions. It also says that the intensity of the symptoms can vary in their intensity over time and you may experience more symptoms at certain times than others.

The staff goes on to say that the Doctors are uncertain why some people get PTSD and that it is most likely caused by a complex mix of variables and genetics. One of the distinctions they make is that “the way your brain regulates the chemicals and hormones your body releases in response to stress.” This is interesting to me because if you can do things yourself to help regulate these chemicals and hormones in your body then you can help yourself heal the symptoms from PTSD. For instance, PTSD causes your body to release cortisol which can cause several other health problems. However, you can do healthy, natural things to reduce the cortisol in your body such as, drinking black tea and ingesting Omega 3 fish oil. We will discuss this more in future blogs.

As far as treatments are concerned, they say that there are two methods, Psychotherapy and Medications. For Psychotherapy treatments they list cognitive, exposure and EMDR therapy. The types of medications they list are, antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications and Prazosin. They say, like the New England Journal of Medicine, that Zoloft and Paxil are the only two drugs approved by the FDA for the treatment of PTSD and they say that the anti-anxiety meds have the potential for abuse and are not usually taken long term.

Finally they mention that an individual can also take these actions in order to help themselves when dealing with PTSD. They are, Learn about PTSD, Take care of yourself, Don’t self-medicate, break the cycle, talk to someone and Consider a support group.

In my opinion, the best thing you can do to help yourself is education. Educate yourselves about PTSD and you can help yourself. That’s what I did. As with anything in life, one of the biggest keys to success is education. It is the best way to limit risk and cut your losses. In fact, every successful person in history I have read about, and there is a lot of them, stated that the number one key to their success was “education” and to never stop learning.

The original article can be found at [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

Happy health!  
Robert Serocki, Jr.  
23rd Veteran  
[www.robertserocki.com](http://www.robertserocki.com)

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

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

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

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

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

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

If interested, check out our page on Yahoo Groups:

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

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

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

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

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



## ***~ ALL HANDS ON DECK ~***

We have an immediate need for your help! Time is running short!

We need to get as many Valentine's Day Cards and hard candy as we can get to send to our troops on foreign soil!

We want to send them a little something “from home” to let them know we support them and their actions 100% and we're behind them all the way, and that we have not, nor will we ever forget them!

Help us to brighten their day, put a smile on their faces, something I'm sure we all know they have little of!

Also if you have information on a Platoon who needs TLC, and you can provide an address of the Postal Officer, we can use those too.

Deadline to receive cards and candies is January 25, 2015!

To send the cards & candy send to:

BNH  
Operation Mail Call  
832 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Ste #4  
San Jose, CA 95122

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

Commercial Aviation: Raising Passenger Facility Charges Would Increase Airport Funding, but Other Effects Less Certain. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-107>

Federal Facility Cybersecurity: DHS and GSA Should Address Cyber Risk to Building and Access Control Systems. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-6>

Nutrition Assistance: Additional Guidance Could Assist States in Reducing Risk of Online Sale of Infant Formula. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-94>

Iranian Commercial Activities Update: Foreign Firms Reported to Have Engaged in Iran's Energy or Communications Sectors. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-258R>

Environmental Litigation: Impact of Deadline Suits on EPA's Rulemaking Is Limited. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-34>

Polar Weather Satellites: NOAA Needs To Prepare for Near-term Data Gaps. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-47>

Geostationary Weather Satellites: Launch Date Nears, but Remaining Schedule Risks Need to be Addressed. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-60>

Surface Transportation: DOT Is Progressing toward a Performance-Based Approach, but States and Grantees Report Potential Implementation Challenges. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-217>

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#### ***The Workplace Ca***

1850 E. 17<sup>th</sup>. St., #106,  
Santa Ana, Ca 92705  
714/972-2605  
FAX 714/972-3003

[www.TheWorkPlaceCa.com](http://www.TheWorkPlaceCa.com)

[TheWorkPlaceCa@yahoo.com](mailto:TheWorkPlaceCa@yahoo.com)

#### **We need to HIRE a RECRUITER**

Someone who can connect with non-profits and other organizations serving people on disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) and ENCOURAGE them to activate their 'Ticket to Work' by assigning their 'Ticket' to an Employment Network – such as The Workplace Ca – and thereby increase their income by work and make their life HAPPIER.

Since we were founded in 1986, in Santa Ana, we have always believed that 'WORK IS LIFE'



We also believe that 'WORK IS DIGNITY' and that while disability benefits are a blessing, when you have no other choice, disability benefits will never get you to Hawaii or on other interesting life tracks.

Who should the RECRUITER be?

Someone also on SSI or SSDI benefits (and/or VA disability benefits).

Someone comfortable on the phone and able to visit organizations in their home offices here in So Cal, (in a wheelchair, or otherwise physically limited, is no problem and may be a positive).

Following success with recruitment, we will train on how to deliver job placement and job retention services to some of our new clients and that will also be very satisfying.

PLEASE CALL US, if interested. 714/972-2605

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### ***Transferring VA Education Benefits***

Education benefits may be transferred with the Post-9/11 GI Bill under certain criteria. If you have at least 90 days of aggregate active duty service after Sept. 10, 2001, and are still on active duty, or if you are an honorably discharged veteran or were discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days, you may be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The transferability option under the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows servicemembers to transfer all or some unused benefits to their spouse or dependent children. Family members must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System and be eligible for benefits at the time of transfer to receive the education benefits. For more information, visit the [Military.com website](http://Military.com).

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### ***Members of Congress Introducing Many Bills***

As can be expected Members of Congress in both chambers are not wasting any time and are introducing bills at a steady rate.

Two of the bills NAUS members are interested in are the reintroduction of H.R. 303 by Rep. Gus (R-FL) which aims to *permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation*. HR 303 is the same bill that Rep. Bilirakis's father Mike, introduced for many years.

Additionally H.R. 333 introduced again by Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA) would *permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service*. HR 333 adds Chapter 61 retirees.

NAUS supports both bills in hope that one will make it through the tedious approval process and finally allow all disabled retirees to receive their total earned compensation.

We are looking at all the bills as they are introduced and will have our Bills List ready to go for the next issue of the *Guardian*.

Source: NAUS

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### ***Exchanges Sponsor Sweepstakes***

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is encouraging military shoppers to sign up to receive electronic statements from the Exchange Credit Program. During the "[Going Paperless Pays](#)" sweepstakes, cardholders who switch from traditional paper statements to electronic versions from Jan. 1 to Jan. 31 will be automatically entered

to win a \$50 credit on their bill. Eligible lines of credit include the MILITARY STAR(R) Gold card, Military Clothing plan and TAKE IT HOME TODAY(TM). Throughout the sweepstakes period, 100 account holders will receive the credit. Cardholders can register for electronic statements by logging into their account at [MyECP.com](http://MyECP.com) and selecting "Yes, please email" under "Update Contact Information" located on the "Tools" menu.

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### ***Free Tax Preparation***

The Defense Department, through [Military OneSource](http://MilitaryOneSource), is teaming up again this year with H&R Block to offer no-cost tax preparation to the military community with a promise of guaranteed accuracy. Military OneSource offers no-cost tax consultation and no-cost tax preparation and filing to service and family members, as well as to reservists regardless of activation status, survivors, and separated servicemembers until 180 days after their retirement, discharge or end-of-tour date. Since it is online, the service is available to eligible tax-filers regardless of where they are. For more information, visit the Military OneSource website at [www.militaryonesource.mil/taxes](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/taxes) or call toll-free 800-342-9647.

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

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### ***Wounded Warrior Project – From Paul Sutton***

I recently pointed out in an article that I thought it was obscene that the executive director of Wounded Warriors is paid well over \$300,000-a-year. I also wondered how the group could afford to advertise as extensively as it does on Fox News.

But, I recently received an email from Dr. Richard Stiso that exposed exactly how the charity spends the money it receives from patriotic Americans. According to Guidestar, a group that investigates charities, the Wounded Warrior Project might as well be run by the Mafia. In 2012, the WWP received an astronomical \$154,958,901, with a measly \$4,857,084 going out in grants to veterans' organizations and \$671,194 to individuals. That means that the group only used 3.5% of the money it received for the purpose intended.

In the meantime, the Officers, Directors and Trustees hauled in \$15,415,666 million, with Employee Benefits (\$2,226,457), Office Expenses (\$12,451,303), Travel (\$4,086,509), Promotional Items (\$4,055, 567) and something called Outside Services (\$20,915,404) accounting for roughly 50% of what's listed as "Overhead Expenses."

Check this out: <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2013/12/08/wounded-warriors-project-a-legal-scam/>

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

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,800 and 5,000 visitors per day and have had **1,966,712** visitors to date.

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

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 9,000 documents, various VA and DoD forms, over 1,300 articles which is updated at minimum every one to two days and more.

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

- Documents Library with over **130** different libraries and over **10,632+** documents

- FAQ's (1,362 on-line now)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Memorial Pages (Updated 12/04/14)
- News (Updated almost daily, 4,110 articles on-line)
- Polls (Updated 01/06/15) 52 New Polls Added
- Sponsors
- Web Links (1,578 Active Links)(Updated 01/08/15)

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

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

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

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

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

There is **NO charge** to use the site, or to become a member. Members have full access where non- members will have limited access approximately 45%.

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### ***Bill to Allow Taking Back VA Bonus Cash***

Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, recently introduced legislation that would give the Department of Veterans Affairs secretary the authority to recoup for cause bonuses paid to VA employees. [VA paid more than \\$380,000 in cash bonuses](#) to top executives at 38 hospitals that are under investigation for falsifying wait times for medical care. The legislation is also intended to eliminate confusion among VA officials who have made [contradictory statements](#) about the department's authority to recoup bonuses. Read the bill [online](#).

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### ***K9s for Warriors***

K9s For Warriors is dedicated to providing service dogs to warriors suffering from post-traumatic stress and/or traumatic brain injury as a result of their military service (post 9/11). Their goal is to give a new "leash" on life to both rescue dogs and to military vets who were injured -- helping them live with independence and dignity. For more information, visit the [K9s for Warriors website](#) and watch the video on the [Huffington Post website](#). Follow K9s for Warriors on [Facebook](#).

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### ***Cast your Vote in the Latest Veterans-For-Change Polls***

Tell us how you feel on several different polls posted. Votes are all anonymous! (updated 01/08/15)  
<http://veterans-for-change.org/polls>

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### ***National Blood Donor Month***

January is National Blood Donor Month, and the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) is encouraging all servicemembers to make a resolution to give blood regularly in 2015. Individuals of all blood types are needed. All blood collected by the ASBP directly supports ill or injured servicemembers, retirees and their families worldwide. For more information, visit the Armed Services Blood Program website at [www.militaryblood.dod.mil](http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil). Follow the Armed Services Blood Program on [Facebook](#).

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## Veterans-For-Change on Facebook & Twitter

You can now track us, meet fellow vets and their families and friends on our [Veterans-For-Change](#) page, come "LIKE" us!



Come join us, follow us and friends, make new friends, share useful information and more!

Follow us on Twitter too: [@Veterans4Change](#)

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### **Links to other Stories**

- 1) ['Brain zapping': Veterans say experimental PTSD treatment has changed their lives](#)
- 2) [Air Force Reservists Exposed to Agent Orange: Report](#)
- 3) [Atheist Has Veteran Memorial Removed From City Park](#)
- 4) [Canine companions help PTSD sufferers](#)
- 5) [Connecticut Professor Researches Better Treatments for Vets with PTSD](#)
- 6) [Detailed study confirms high suicide rate among recent Veterans](#)
- 7) [Editorial Three nights and thousands of homeless to be counted on L.A. County's streets](#)
- 8) [Explosive blasts leave distinct injuries in Veterans' brains, study finds](#)
- 9) [How military sex offenders fly under the radar after returning to civilian life](#)
- 10) [IBM's cognitive computer Watson could use skills to help treat Veterans with PTSD](#)
- 11) [In Remote Washington, Veterans Services Are Ferry Ride Away](#)
- 12) [Lending a hand to homeless Veterans](#)
- 13) [Louisiana inmates train service dogs to help Veterans](#)
- 14) [Marine mom works for better PTSD programs](#)
- 15) [Military lawyer is investigated after posting Facebook comment criticizing sex-assault policy](#)
- 16) [New Report from Veterans Service Organizations Calls for VA Focus on Access, Infrastructure and Caregivers](#)
- 17) [New UCLA study sheds light on why some people develop PTSD](#)
- 18) [New VA medical team to treat Veterans](#)
- 19) [NPR Exposes a Mysterious Disparity in Benefits at Scandal-Ridden VA](#)
- 20) [Opiates handed out like candy to 'doped-up' Veterans at Tomah VA](#)
- 21) [Post-traumatic stress disorder for Veterans topic of Saturday forum](#)
- 22) [SeniorLaw Center to focus on elderly Veterans](#)
- 23) [VA Data Show Disparities In Veteran Benefits Spending](#)
- 24) [VA to look into overmedication reports at Tomah center](#)
- 25) [Verizon Gives \\$50,000 to U.S.VETS for Jobs Program](#)
- 26) [Veteran Dies of Cancer After Waiting A Year For Screening](#)
- 27) [Veterans advocates push for more funding for VA](#)
- 28) [Veterans' private records exposed after mix-up](#)
- 29) [Vets with PTSD opt for new 'brain zapping' treatment: 'It saved my life'](#)
- 30) [Without Help, Navigating Benefits Can Be Overwhelming For Veterans](#)

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

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

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### ***Navy Concludes Study***

The Naval Health Research Center recently concluded one of the largest vaccine safety studies in the command's history, contributing to the fourth and final phase of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) smallpox vaccine safety trials. Even though the smallpox vaccine is an FDA approved vaccine, many vaccines undergo this post-marketing vaccine safety study [phase four]. Military servicemembers receive the vaccine if they are deploying to an area where the threat of smallpox is present. For more information on the vaccine, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Smallpox Vaccine Overview at [www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/vaccination/facts.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/vaccination/facts.asp) and CDC's FAQ About the Smallpox Vaccine webpage at [www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/vaccination/faq.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/vaccination/faq.asp).

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### ***VFC Memorial Wall***

If you have a loved one you lost to service in the Military, and would like to have their name added, please do let us know.

And for those listed below, keep their families in your thoughts and prayers.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Branch of Service</b>	<b>Year of Passing</b>
Msgt.	David Graves	Air Force	2011
Colonel	George "Bud" Day	Marine Corps	2013
Msgt.	John Kenneth Smallwood	Army	2010
MgySgt.	Lesley Davis	Marine Corps	2006
Colonel	Melvin Killian	Air Force	1965
SPC	Michael Evans	Army	2012

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### ***Legislation to Boost Vet Employment***

Legislation to boost [veteran employment](#) and offer a financial break to small businesses will give military retirees, reservists and some disabled veterans an advantage in hiring -- against civilians and other fellow veterans. Under the [Hire More Heroes Act](#), a small business not offering a health plan could hire someone covered by [Tricare](#) or receiving care from the Department of Veterans Affairs and not have to pay the employer mandate stipulated in the Affordable Care Act.

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### ***TRICARE Helps with Resolutions***

Many people start the New Year with hope and big plans. TRICARE and Operation Live Well encourage you to make a determined approach to becoming a better you than you were last year. The American Psychological Association (APA) offers five steps to help you make lasting change: (1) start small, (2) change one behavior at a time, (3) talk about it, (4) Do not beat yourself up, and (5) ask for support. Research suggests that if a change is something you really want for yourself, if it is meaningful to you, you are more likely to stick to it. With thoughtful planning and realistic goals, you can end the year in accomplishment. For more information on living your best you and living well, visit the TRICARE Operation Live Well webpage at [www.tricare.mil/livewell](http://www.tricare.mil/livewell).

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## To Contact your Members of Congress

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

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### Communities of Interest

Colleagues, Community Leaders, and Fellow Veterans,

The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to providing Veterans every opportunity they have earned. We bolstered our efforts during the implementation of the new Transition Assistance Program. We now have permanent Benefits Advisors at 106 military installations serving over 270 disparate bases ensuring we can have a global presence in our military installations. Ensuring a positive community involvement came through in our first report on Veteran economic opportunities – that report, *The 2015 Veteran Economic Opportunity Report* (link below) brought together data sources from across the federal government focused on meaningful employment, income, accessing education, and general economic indicators. We want to raise awareness about the value Veterans bring to a community and increase the number of education and employment opportunities for Veterans. We anticipate this report will help foster a dialog in several different areas and forums.

<http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/17007/new-economic-opportunity-report-informs-myva-innovation/>

Informed by this data, the VA is implementing a key initiative in over 20 U.S. cities to provide enhanced economic opportunities for Veterans and their families. This effort, titled **Communities of Interest**, is intended to develop strategies to build sustainable models over the next two years that will include:

- Training for employers on hiring and supporting Veterans
- Employment summits to connect talented job seekers with local employers who have immediate hiring needs – focused on the industry needs of that community
- Policy academies where experts generate ideas, form partnerships, and make policy recommendations that will help lower the unemployment rate and increase economic opportunities among Veterans and their families
- Learning or resource hubs to help connect Veterans to economic opportunities including entrepreneurship, credentialing and skills building

Each community will develop a unique strategy based on their particular economic opportunities. To assist, the VA will invest in economic liaisons to collaborate with government leaders, local agencies, businesses, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations to help connect and amplify available resources and support for Veterans and their families.

We are very excited about the Communities of Interest initiative. It will engage Veterans in the community where they can become a positive economic multiplier. Using their GI Bill® and other benefits they have earned, they become students ... homeowners ... entrepreneurs ... employees ... community leaders. It reinforces Secretary McDonald's MyVA initiative to expand strategic partnerships to help us coordinate Veteran-related issue with local, state and community partners – as well as VA employees.

This not only creates economic stability and opportunity for our Veterans – it translates into millions of dollars to that community's economy for all its citizens.

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

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### ***Governor Appoints Endsley as CalVet Acting Secretary***

Sacramento – On January 9, 2015, Governor Brown appointed Debbie Endsley, of Placerville, acting secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Endsley replaces Peter J. Gravett, who announced his retirement as Secretary.

Endsley was a consultant at the California Department of Parks and Recreation in 2012, and at the CalHR Project from 2011 to 2012. Endsley was director at the California Department of Personnel Administration from 2009 to 2011, where she served in several positions from 1998 to 2011, including chief deputy director and chief of the benefits division.

Endsley was a research analyst at the California Public Employees' Retirement System from 1995 to 1998 and an associate budget analyst at the California Department of Rehabilitation from 1988 to 1995, where she was an associate personnel analyst from 1984 to 1988. Endsley is the daughter of a Veteran and the wife of a U.S. Marine.

Gravett, a retired Major General with more than 40 years of military service in the U.S. Army and the California Army National Guard, retired as CalVet Secretary after four years of outstanding service to California's nearly two million Veterans and their families. We thank him for his dedication to CalVet's mission as well as his dedication to being the Golden State's top advocate for Veterans.

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### ***TRICARE Home Delivery in San Diego***

Beginning in January 2015, the Naval Medical Center San Diego Pharmacy Department will be transitioning to the TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery program managed by Express Scripts. With the TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery program, NMCS D will now be able to offer more medications eligible for home delivery and even be able to ship outside San Diego County. Features of the TRICARE program involve a personalized online account allowing the patient to monitor their medications and read up on drug information, request refills, track shipments, make a payment, and update personal information. Patients can also download the app available on both iPhone and android devices. The program will see a 100 percent transition to the TRICARE/Express Scripts team by June 1, 2015 for all NMCS D and branch health clinic patients.

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### ***Upcoming Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings 2015***

January 24, 2015  
Martinsburg, West Virginia  
10 am-3 pm  
National Guard Armory  
2096 Kelly Island Road  
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25405  
Contact Sonya Brown: 304-620-8310

February 28, 2015  
Tucson, Arizona  
9:00am-12 pm noon  
8424 E. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85710  
For more information check:  
<http://www.tucsonnamvets.org/>

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### ***TRICARE Users Must Self Identify on 2014 Tax Forms***

TRICARE users will need to identify themselves and their families on their 2014 tax forms as having healthcare coverage, Defense Department officials said, or risk paying a fine. The Affordable Care Act requires Americans to hold what is known as "minimum essential coverage," for their healthcare, either through their employer or purchased elsewhere. Those who did not have that coverage for 2014 could be charged a series of fees. But not every TRICARE user may meet those requirements, officials warned. Some dependent parents and parents-in-law receive TRICARE as part of the TRICARE Plus program, which allows them to use some military treatment facilities. That care does not meet the minimum coverage requirements, and those users could face fines if they do not purchase additional coverage, officials said.

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## **TRICARE to End Coverage Certificates**

TRICARE will no longer send beneficiaries certificates of creditable coverage when they lose TRICARE eligibility. These certificates are no longer needed when beneficiaries transition off TRICARE. Beneficiaries will instead receive notice that their TRICARE coverage is ending. With the new Affordable Care Act (ACA), you do not need a certificate to prove you had coverage when go to a new health plan. If you are looking for other health insurance, you are encouraged to explore your options through the Market Place at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov). The current open season runs from November 15 through February 15, 2015. Beneficiaries who do not purchase TRICARE premium based plans may qualify for premium assistance or state Medicaid. Visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) or contact your state marketplace for assistance.

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If you received this Newsletter as a forward or as a Courtesy Copy and would like to continue to receive this FREE weekly newsletter, click on link below:

<https://app.expressemailmarketing.com/survey.aspx?sfid=121170>

Complete all information, and select the appropriate box at the bottom of the form. You will then receive an automated authentication E-Mail, follow the instructions and you will then be added to the weekly distribution list.

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With your help, America's Veterans United and you can make a difference!

***We Can Win!***

Better benefits, care, facilities, medical professionals and equipment!

Unite with [America's Veterans United](http://America'sVeteransUnited.com) today!

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



**This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.**

*~ Theodore Roosevelt ~*



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

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

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

*Serving those who served!*

***Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!***

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