



# **Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, January 25, 2015**  
**Volume 6, Issue 04**

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

This past week there has been a lot of news, mostly problems again in the VA Healthcare System, and a mistake becoming all too frequent is the VA Benefits System changing the status of a Veteran. Changing James Fales status from ALIVE to DECEASED.

They sent a letter of condolence to his wife Dee, and included information on Death Benefits, Burial Benefits, etc.

But it seems this time the VA is going to correct this relatively fast, however, they often promise many things and then drag their feet, so time will tell. But then they did send a letter of apology for the "error!"

In addition there have been several articles on different approaches to dealing with and for treating PTSD. One using a hyperbaric chamber, another using Virtual Reality systems.

But the problem still persists that VA Doctors are still prescribing very heavy narcotics, some not even paying attention to other meds the Veteran might be taking, or taking into consideration the Veterans height or weight, and often over prescribing. More often than not ending in an over-dose, and sometimes resulting in death to which the VA has been noting drug over-dose suicide, this is just not the fact of the matter.

We feel that although Secretary McDonald has said that Veterans with PTSD should be given priority, that yes this does address some of the problem, but the Old Guard mental health doctors are still doing the same old thing and bottom line they're avoiding proper treatment methods, counseling, and working the problem, not drugging it.

If you have had problems with medications, or not been given counseling, group therapy, we'd really like to hear from you.

We can use all the help we can get in this area to help provide information to members of Congress in order to get good legislation put through to force the issue to be addressed and properly.

Again we'd like to say that if your dealing with PTSD, and either can't qualify or are refused a service dog, you really don't need a specially trained dog to help you.

We strongly recommend visiting the local animal rescue shelter, you truly could be saving two lives! That of the dog, and that of your own!

Dogs are very adept at sensing their owners feelings and emotions, and will be right there by your side to help you realize that your stressed out, or frustrated, and more often than not help you to calm down, and step back into reality.

While I will agree some breeds of dog are better than others, they're all very smart and very intelligent animals, so even a small Yorkie, or a Golden Retriever, all can and will help you! So please give that some thought!

Veteran homelessness and Veteran suicides have been and remain a serious issue. With suicide rate at 22+ per day, and on any given night there are 140,000 Veterans on the streets, and on the east coast temps dip below zero many nights.

How our Country, our Congress, and President not to mention the Secretary of the VA can sleep at night is beyond me.

But they give deadlines to solve the problem, then move the goal line, or drag their feet all the while lives are being lost.

Toward the bottom of this letter are telephone numbers you can use to call your Reps in DC. I strongly urge you to make those call and tell your Reps in DC enough is enough, it's time to stand tall, and address the problems and do it now. We can no longer wait, and those in pain, or living on the streets can't wait!

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.

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)

Also be sure to visit and see the notice of updates. We will be adding another 800-1,000 new documents in the next few days. Additionally the website will be down in the early hours of Monday, January 26, 2015 for a software upgrade, and additional security.

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

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

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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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### ***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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### ***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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Wilbanks Energy Logistics is hiring Class A CDL operators for Gin, Tandem and Winch trucks. Job duties include maintaining a current Class A CDL, preferably with hazardous materials endorsement, and the knowledge and ability to secure and safely transport oversize loads.

Multiple opportunities are available in Artesia, Carlsbad and Hobbs, New Mexico, and Odessa, Texas.

Employees of Wilbanks Energy Logistics are motivated professionals who value a financially stable company that is family oriented while providing above average oil field compensation combined with opportunities for advancement with a company recognized as an industry leader

Wilbanks Energy Logistics offers exceptional oil field wages, abundant overtime opportunities, a safe operating environment, a modern well-maintained fleet, paid vacation days, paid holidays and outstanding medical, dental, vision, life and disability benefits and a company sponsored 401(k) plan.

If you are interested in working with a recognized industry leader apply at [www.wilbanksel.com/careers](http://www.wilbanksel.com/careers) or contact David Beach at (575) 746-6318 or by email at [dbeach@wilbanksel.com](mailto:dbeach@wilbanksel.com) to learn more.

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### ***Securitas Critical Infrastructure Services' is Hiring***

Securitas Critical Infrastructure Services' mission is to provide innovative, cost-effective solutions to ensure the safety and security of the assets of the U.S. Government, government contractor organizations worldwide, and the Energy and Petrochemical industries. They relentlessly strive to preserve national security and improve the protection of the personnel, programs, resources, and facilities of their clients. [Learn more](#).

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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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### ***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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### ***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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### ***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 fo 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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***Post Traumatic Stress Disorder New England Journal of Medicine Vol.346, No. 2 January 10, 2002 Rachel Yehuda, Ph.D.***



We are going to spend the next few blogs discussing what the experts describe PTSD as being and the prescribed treatments therein.

Here is what the New England Journal of Medicine has to say about PTSD and its treatments. It defines PTSD as "A traumatic event which has the capacity to provoke fear, helplessness, or horror in response to the threat of injury or death." It goes on to say that PTSD can also cause somatic symptoms such as, physical illnesses, particularly hypertension, asthma, and chronic pain syndromes. I know many Veterans who have these symptoms. I even had several of these symptoms myself until I overcame the PTSD.

They say that the symptoms of PTSD can show up within the first month of the traumatic experience and that it usually starts out as "acute stress disorder" and if not properly treated initially, it can turn into PTSD.

Furthermore, the article says that PTSD can be diagnosed by your primary care physician, however unless they do not ask the appropriate questions and you do not truthfully tell the physician your symptoms the diagnosis is easily missed.

According to the article the trauma can cause "non-specific symptoms" such as palpitations, shortness of breath, tremor, nausea, insomnia, unexplained pain, and mood swings. I myself have dealt with all of these symptoms and now that I have healed they have almost completely disappeared.

The trauma can cause an individual to live in a perpetual state of fear which can overwhelm a person's coping skills and lead them to avoidance behavior. Now; however, confronting these emotions helps an individual to heal. It turns the emotionally charged memories into simply memories. I also know this to be true. I have done it and it works. It is difficult and takes effort and persistence but it will pay off in terms of your health and well being in the future.

Finally, as far as treatments are concerned, the article mentions two types... Counseling and Medication. As far as counseling is concerned it says that one of the most important things for the individual is education. Educating myself about PTSD and its symptoms has helped me immensely to positively treat it myself and without medication. Thus making me that much more healthy. In my experiences with taking medications for PTSD those medications ultimately, with long term use, caused several other health problems. In my opinion, the medication

only perpetuates an individuals avoidance techniques and do not cure the actual problem. They only mask it just like other drugs such as alcohol and other illegal substances.

They go on to mention that the only drugs approved by the FDA for PTSD treatment are Zoloft and Paxil because they are safer and better tolerated than other psychotropic medications. The article says that if there is no response to these two drugs within an eight week period then the patient should be given Serzone or Effexor and possibly a mood stabilizer such as Depakote. It finally mentions that Benzodiazepines should be avoided or used very judiciously.

In conclusion the article states, "The treatment of PTSD involves educating the patient about the nature of the disorder, providing a safe and supportive environment for discussing traumatic events and their impact, and relieving the distress associated with memories and reminders of the event."

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



### ***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!

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***Navy Launches Healthy Weight Initiative***



The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) has announced the launch of its weight management initiative as part of "Healthy Weight" month in January. The initiative encourages Sailors, Marines, their families, and health educators to access relevant healthy eating, active living, and psychological and emotional well-being resources that help achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Sailors and Marines can achieve weight management goals with the ShipShape Program. The ShipShape Program is highly recommended for active duty personnel who have failed or are at risk of failing their BCA standards. For more information and resources on weight management, visit [NMCPHC's website](#) and [the ShipShape Program webpage](#).

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

Aviation Safety: Issues Related to Domestic Certification and Foreign Approval of U.S. Aviation Products, by Gerald L. Dillingham, Ph.D., director, physical infrastructure issues, before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-327T>

VA Construction: VA's Actions to Address Cost Increases and Schedule Delays at Major Medical-Facility Projects, by David Wise, director, physical infrastructure team, before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-332T>

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

Defense Headquarters: DOD Needs to Reassess Personnel Requirements for the Office of Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, and Military Service Secretariats, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-10>

Job Corps: Assessment of Internal Guidance Could Improve Communications with Contractors <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-93>

African Growth and Opportunity Act: USAID Could Enhance Utilization by Working with More Countries to Develop Export Strategies. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-218>

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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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### ***Congress Sponsors VA Honesty Project***

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is sponsoring the VA Honesty Project. The goal of VA Honesty Project is simple: to highlight the Department of Veterans Affairs' lack of transparency with the press and the public about its operations and activities.

VA Honesty Project documents nearly 70 recent instances in which VA has failed to respond to reporters' requests for information or refused to answer specific questions. VA Honesty Project will be continually updated with new examples of VA refusing to respond to the press as they arise.

Is VA stonewalling the media? Let the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs know what you think by posting on the Committee's VA Honesty Project page on [Facebook](#). For more information, visit the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs [website](#).

Source: NAUS

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### ***Martin Luther King Day Message***

Colleagues and Fellow Veterans:

I've sent this note out every year for the past several years and do so again because it is timeless. Perhaps it is my advanced years (sic) but every year I am struck by the fact that many folks may not appreciate the significance of this particular holiday – or perhaps are not old enough to have lived through these times. Please take a minute to read this over and pass it on if you like.

I've sent this note out every year for the past several years and do so again because it is timeless. Perhaps it is my advanced years (sic) but every year I am struck by the fact that many folks may not appreciate the significance of this particular holiday – or perhaps are not old enough to have lived through these times. Please take a minute to read this over and pass it on if you like.

As we prepare to take off for a long weekend, it might be appropriate to take just a moment to think about why we aren't coming to work Monday ... Martin Luther King Day – for his commitment to equal rights, non-violence, and social change. The inspiration of Dr. King and the civil rights movement led our nation and the Federal government to a new standard of equality and inclusion, which was Dr. King's purpose. He wanted to challenge our country to be a better place, where every person is valued and respected.

Dr. King challenged us to overcome oppression and violence. He urged us to reject revenge, aggression, and retaliation. His vision that "no individual be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," set in motion changes that led to the passage of civil rights and voting laws. In honor and respect for his contribution to the improvement of our national attitudes, policies, and laws, the Federal government celebrates Dr. King.

Over the years, there has been some speculation on what Dr. King could have accomplished if his life had not been so tragically cut short. He was only 28 years old when he was elected the first President of the Southern Christian Leadership Council. He had already graduated from college at 19 and graduated from Divinity school at 22. By the time Dr. King was 29, he had published his first book, "Stride Toward Freedom." In 1964, he gave his famous "I Have A Dream" speech to 250,000 people who marched on Washington in support of pending civil rights legislation. In the same year, he was successful in getting the legislation passed and he won the Nobel Peace Prize. A lot of accomplishments for a man who was only 35 years old.



Dr. Martin Luther King believed in our country and its potential for greatness. He also believed that each one of us is essential to achieving its full potential. Although Dr. King's primary efforts focused on equality for African-Americans, his ultimate goal was the equality and inclusion of every individual. As Dr. King said "There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society protect that society. But when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it."

This weekend gives us all another opportunity to reaffirm and reflect on our appreciation for the uniqueness that each individual brings to their community. Have a good and safe long weekend with friends and family.

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

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

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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](#).

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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 **1,993,615** 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, **4,160** 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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### ***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. For more details, see [this Military.com article](#).

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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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## **Travel Cards Receive Chip and PIN Upgrade**

Citibank is issuing chip and PIN-enabled government travel cards (GTC) to new card applicants, individuals whose cards will expire in 2015 and individuals who have reported lost or stolen cards. This is the first phase in a multi-phased rollout. The new cards are embedded with a microchip that provides for transaction encryption and an elevated level of authentication. All cardholders should log into [CitiManager](#) and review mailing and email addresses and contact information under "My Card Account/Card Maintenance." For more information about chip and PIN cards, contact local APCs.

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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) [\*American Legion Commander Salutes DoD's Latest Move to Open Bases for VSO Support\*](#)
- 2) [\*Army squelching report on Bergdahl 'desertion' to avoid embarrassing Obama, Judge Nap says\*](#)
- 3) [\*Disability appeals process forces some Vets to wait years\*](#)
- 4) [\*Downtown Neighborhood Association discusses homelessness at meeting\*](#)
- 5) [\*Former soldiers blast their treatment by Veterans Affairs\*](#)
- 6) [\*Hidden brain damage seen in Veterans with blast injuries\*](#)
- 7) [\*Jubilee House cooperating with state probe, assisting homeless Veterans, founder says\*](#)
- 8) [\*K9s For Warriors Asks: Can We Stop 22 Veterans From Committing Suicide Today?\*](#)
- 9) [\*Obama urged to address Veteran suicides in State of the Union\*](#)
- 10) [\*Operation Orange Heart\*](#)
- 11) [\*Paralyzed Veterans of America Responds to President's State of the Union Address\*](#)
- 12) [\*Savannah's homeless population bursting at the seams\*](#)
- 13) [\*Senate to conduct more on-the-ground oversight of VA\*](#)
- 14) [\*Senate Veterans Committee Votes for Clay Hunt Suicide Bill\*](#)
- 15) [\*State Veterans program comes to Flint\*](#)
- 16) [\*Suit alleges VA sided with stalker, firing the victim\*](#)
- 17) [\*The Value of Hiring Veterans\*](#)
- 18) [\*Tricare Users Must Self Identify on 2014 Tax Forms\*](#)
- 19) [\*Troubled Veterans feel at peace working with rescue dogs\*](#)
- 20) [\*VA Admits Costly Failures with Colorado Hospital Project\*](#)
- 21) [\*VA Settles More Retaliation Complaints by Whistleblowers\*](#)
- 22) [\*VA whistleblower says Vets with addiction problems slipping through the cracks\*](#)
- 23) [\*VA's letter offers sympathies for death of Veteran who's very much alive\*](#)
- 24) [\*Veterans Crowd the Capitol\*](#)
- 25) [\*Veterans not notified about Legionnaires' disease at Brockton VA facility\*](#)
- 26) [\*Veterans relief shifted to cemeteries\*](#)
- 27) [\*Vets Test Virtual Reality to Conquer PTSD\*](#)

[28\) Virginia Lawmaker Pushes for Problem-Solving Veterans Courts](#)

[29\) Volunteers to count homeless in San Diego](#)

[30\) Wounds of war that never heal](#)

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

March 7, 2015  
Davenport, Iowa  
Time to be updated  
Rogalski Center  
St. Ambrose University Campus  
518 W Locust St, Room 211  
Davenport, IA 52803  
(Lombard Street. Proceed to an alleyway for Visitor Parking Lot 7)  
Contact: Greg Pauline  
563-650-3055

March 24, 2015  
Florida Highlands County  
VVA Chapter 1097  
More Details Upcoming  
Contact : Rod Phillips 386-690-9553  
Marvin Desselle 863-214-0601

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### **Tax Assistance for Military Active Duty and Retirees**

Richard Keeling, in the VA electronic magazine *Vantage Point*, reports that earlier this week, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) started accepting electronically filed tax returns as well as paper returns. The IRS reminds taxpayers that filing electronically is the most accurate and safest way to file a tax return, as well as the fastest way to get a refund.

The following links to free tax preparation services will ensure current and former members of the military and their families have access to free tax preparation and electronic filing services to keep more of their hard earned money.

IRS' [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance](#) (VITA) and [Tax Counseling for the Elderly](#) (TCE) programs are available to taxpayers that earned less than \$53,000 in 2014. Over 3.5 million tax returns were prepared using these services in 2014. All tax returns completed through these programs are prepared by IRS certified volunteers so you can feel confident your tax return is accurate. There are over 12,000 locations where you can utilize these services. To find the closest location near you, simply enter your zip code into the easy-to-use [VITA/TCE Locator](#).

[MyFreeTaxes](#), operating the only free online tax preparation and filing assistance platform available in all 50 states and Washington D.C., allows qualified Veterans, active-duty military, their families and all other qualifying taxpayers who earned \$60,000 or less in 2014 to file both a federal and state tax return no matter where they live. In addition to e-filing, MyFreeTaxes also provides in-person help to individuals and families earning \$60,000 or less in 2014. For more information, please visit this [website](#). The MyFreeTaxes initiative is delivered in partnership by three nationally recognized nonprofits – Goodwill Industries International, National Disability Institute and United Way – and is sponsored by the Wal-Mart Foundation.

In addition to free tax preparation and assistance services like [VITA](#), [TCE](#) and [MyFreeTaxes](#), there are several other options qualifying Veterans and military families can utilize free of charge. However, please make note of additional eligibility requirements and be advised not all are available in your particular location. Check each for more information on eligibility and availability of services.

[IRS.gov/FreeFile](#) is the one place where taxpayers can choose from a variety of industry-leading tax software options in order to prepare and e-file their federal tax returns at absolutely no cost. If you earned \$60,000 or less last year, you are eligible to choose from among 14 software products.

If you earned more, you are still eligible for [Free File Fillable Forms](#), the electronic version of IRS paper forms. More than 70 percent of all taxpayers – 100 million people – are eligible for the software products. Each of the 14 companies has its own special offers, generally based on age, income or state residency. Taxpayers can review each company offer or they can use a “Help Me” tool that will find the software for which they are eligible. Free File offers easy-to-use products that ask questions and you supply the answers. The software will find the right forms, find the right tax credits and deductions and even do the math for you.

[TurboTax Freedom Edition](#) is available to taxpayers with income of \$31,000 or less, or Eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

[Second Story TaxAct](#) is another IRS Free File option. To qualify for free tax preparation, printing, & e-filing, your adjusted gross income must be \$52,000 or less, and you must be between the ages of 18 through 58 years old.

[H&R Block's Free File](#) offers free online assistance if you earned \$58,000 or less, and if you were 53 years old or younger as of December 31, 2014.

[Online Taxes \(OLT\)](#) offers free tax preparation if your Adjusted Gross Income is between \$13,000 and \$60,000 in 2014.

The following free online software companies are available exclusively to members of the military:

[TurboTax Military Edition](#) created a software program specifically for service members. There is currently a free version for junior enlisted and a discount version for senior enlisted and officers.

[Military OneSource](#) is once again offering a no-cost, electronic tax filing service. If you are eligible under the Military OneSource program, you can complete, save, and file your 2014 federal and up to three state returns online at no cost.

[TaxSlayer Military](#) is available to all active duty military. You can prepare both your federal and state return for free with TaxSlayer Military Edition.

If you have already filed your taxes and want to know when you will receive your refund, don't forget to download the IRS app, [IRS2Go](#)! This app is available in both English and Spanish and provides features to help taxpayers check on the status of their tax refund, obtain tax records, find free tax preparation providers and stay connected with the IRS through social media channels such as [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#).

iPhone and iTouch users can update or download the free [IRS2Go application](#) by visiting the [iTunes App Store](#). Android users can visit [Google Play](#) to download the free [IRS2Go app](#).

**DISCLAIMER: NAUS does not specifically endorse any of these products or programs.**

Source: NAUS

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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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### ***VA Issues Statement on Denver VA Replacement Medical Center***

The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to work to complete the Denver replacement VA Medical Center project without further delay while delivering the best value to taxpayers under current circumstances. The situation in Denver is unacceptable to Veterans, taxpayers and Department leadership.

Our obligation is to ensure VA doesn't allow such an outcome to occur again by learning all we can from past mistakes and put in place corrective actions to improve future performance. Veterans and taxpayers also expect a thorough review be completed and those responsible are held accountable. With these objectives in mind, the following actions are being taken:

As previously announced, VA is partnering with the Army Corps of Engineers to advise on the current construction and on the overall management of this project as part of the transition to negotiate a long-term contract and manage the project until completion.

Today, we are announcing that VA has requested that the Corps complete a detailed examination of the VA major construction program to improve management processes, structures, and controls in project oversight and delivery.

The Department is also convening an Administrative Investigation Board to review all aspects of the Denver project to determine the facts that led to the current situation and gather evidence of any misconduct or mismanagement that contributed to this unacceptable outcome.

Effective immediately, the Department's Construction and Facility Management organization will report to the Deputy Secretary through the Office of Management.

VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson was onsite at the Denver replacement project today and will continue regular visits to the site. VA senior leadership is actively engaged on the project, and the facility construction continues to progress. We are continuing to work with our partners to ensure timely completion of the project for the Veterans of the Colorado area.

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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:

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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](#) today!

*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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