



Veterans-**For**-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 13, 2015
Volume 6, Issue 37

This-N-That

Today we remember those who lost their lives September 11, 2001 due to one of the most horrendous terrorist attacks on US Soil!

The names are far too many to list, but you can view the names [here](#) and we ask you take a moment of silence to remember them.

Sadly one of the pictures I saw today was a fire station who had fireman's turnouts lined up, one for each fireman's life lost.

I'm sure we all have read stories, have developed theories and conclusions, me personally I feel our government let WE THE PEOPLE down in the worst possible way. By ignoring the signs, and clues that this was going to happen, and by not ever making any real effort to secure our borders.

And even though I strongly feel the families should have been compensated for their loss, it does make me angry in a way as well.

The families of 9/11 were all compensated rather quickly where our Veterans suffer and languish in both physical and mental pain waiting and waiting. Some even dying before their claims and appeals are even addressed, before their file is even opened, or their claims marked closed erroneously and no one knowing till it's been months further down the road.

McDonald has been Secretary of the Veterans Administration for sometime now, and it appears all he is doing is PR work and not truly accomplishing anything.

Just a few months ago McDonald was on CNN and when asked how many were being terminated all he could say are there are 1,330 on the list to go before a Judge for "review", and why there aren't hundreds, even thousands more we'll never know.

Yet upon further investigation we find out one in four important and critical job positions in the VA are vacant, and to this day remain vacant and again we see no signs of promoting these jobs via the job market, advertising, employment agencies or job postings on bulletin boards within each VA Hospital. Why?

My personal conclusion, since Congress made it a point to PROTECT the bonuses of executive and administrative staff, they're deliberately not filling those positions to make themselves look good and guarantee a higher bonus check not having any signs of compassion or concern over Veteran health care needs.

Then a week ago another few more reports come out telling us how the backlog has yet again skyrocketed to 900k claims and of those an estimated 307k of those claims Veterans have already died waiting!

In my eyes even one life lost whether due to suicide, or illness is just too damn much, and had any of the lives lost been a family member of someone in Congress, they would be all over the place screaming and hollering and presenting legislation left and right and pushing it be passed.

So because it doesn't involve their families, is this how they show their "gratitude?"

And where are all the nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations in all this?

Granted they can't all afford to subscribe to CAPWIZ, I know we can't, but they could pool their funds to cover the costs and actually USE THEIR MEMBERSHIPS to send the E-Mails and flood their in-box and get their attention vs just using the numbers which to Congress means absolutely NOTHING.

In every single newsletter we produce at least for the past year we have provided the phone numbers, and quite often we've asked you to call, and in other cases we've provided a link so you can send off the E-Mails requesting your Reps in DC support various pieces of legislation.

And even with a distribution of over 19m people nationwide, still isn't enough, so what I would like to ask is when we post items which need action, please, either forward the newsletter and ask your Veteran Combat buddies, family members, friends, all to please help.

Send those E-mails, make those call. And at minimum, copy and paste that section into a new E-Mail and send off, and if on face book, post it on your wall.

Believe it or not, one voice can make all the difference in the world, so will your voice be the one?

Over the past two weeks now, we've added nearly 1,300 new documents. So if you've not visited the VFC website, before, give us a try, and if you have, check out the libraries again!

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

Respectfully,
Jim Davis
Founder & CEO
Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

Support Extension of Agent Orange Act (HR 3423)

Time is Running Out for Agent Orange Act

Congressman Tim Walz (MN) recently introduced the FRA-supported "Agent Orange Extension Act," (H.R. 3423) which would extend by two years the original sunset deadline of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to ensure that Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange receive just compensation and care. The Act expires on September 30, 2015 and the legislation would extend the sunset to September 30, 2017. FRA warned the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees regarding the sunset of the Act during its March 18, 2015 testimony.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 (AOA) established a presumption of service connection for diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, relieving Vietnam veterans from the burden of providing evidence that their illness was a result of military service. This law directs the the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to periodically research and review diseases that might be associated with Agent Orange exposure. The VA is required to add diseases the NAS finds to have a positive association to Agent Orange exposure to the VA's list of presumptive service connected diseases. Since the enactment of the AOA, the NAS has issued reports that have led to the presumption of service connection for diseases such as Parkinson's, B-cell leukemia and early onset peripheral neuropathy. Without these studies, thousands of Vietnam era veterans would have gone without the benefits they greatly deserve.

If the AOA expires the VA would no longer be obligated to review the NAS report or add any new diseases to the presumption of service list, in the process denying thousands of veterans their right to compensation. Members are urged to use the Action Center to ask their Representative to support this important legislation.

[Take Action!](#)

GAO Report: DoD Broke the Law

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has weighed in on the prisoner exchange involving Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, and believes that the Defense Department broke the law.

According to the GAO 7-page report, the DoD violated section 8111 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2014 when they used taxpayer money to transfer prisoners detained at Guantanamo Bay without giving Congress at least 30 days notice.

The transfer of the 5 prisoners from Guantanamo in exchange for Sgt. Bergdahl was made on May 31, with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel sending notices to Congress on May 31-June 2.

In addition, the ruling says that the Department of Defense violated the Antideficiency Act, which prohibits federal agencies from taking on financial obligations that exceed an amount approved by Congress in a specific appropriation.

The Army investigation into the details of Sgt. Bergdahl's disappearance and capture is still underway, and is expected to be done in or around September.

VFC's OPERATION MAIL CALL



Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/4727-operation-mail-call>

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Pay for Success: Collaboration among Federal Agencies Would be Helpful as Governments Explore New Financing Mechanisms. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-646>

Defense Infrastructure: In-Kind Construction and Renovation Projects Initiated by DOD during Fiscal Year 2013. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-649>

GPS: Actions Needed to Address Ground System Development Problems and User Equipment Production Readiness. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-657>

Private Health Insurance: The Range of Premiums and Plan Availability for Individuals in 2014 and 2015. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-687>

Military Compensation: DOD Needs More Complete and Consistent Data to Assess the Costs and Policies of Relocating Personnel. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-713>

Senate Gift Shop Revolving Fund: Audit of Fiscal Year 2014 Cash Receipts and Disbursements. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-786R>

International Food Assistance: USAID Should Systematically Assess the Effectiveness of Key Conditional Food Aid Activities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-732>

IRS Case Selection: Automated Collection System Lacks Key Internal Controls Needed to Ensure the Program Fulfills Its Mission. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-744>

Defense Health Care Reform: Actions Needed to Help Ensure Defense Health Agency Maintains Implementation Progress. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-759>

Emergency Management: FEMA Collaborates Effectively with Logistics Partners but Could Strengthen Implementation of Its Capabilities Assessment Tool. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-781>

Managing for Results: Greater Transparency Needed in Public Reporting on the Quality of Performance Information for Selected Agencies' Priority Goals. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-788>

Technology Assessment: Water in the energy sector: Reducing freshwater use in hydraulic fracturing and thermoelectric power plant cooling. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-545>

Preventing Suicide

Suicide can be prevented. Each year, more than 41,000 Americans take their own lives and more than 494,000 Americans receive medical care for self-inflicted injuries. September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day, and the entire month is dedicated to suicide prevention awareness in the United States. Help prevent suicide in your community by knowing the facts, warning signs, and where to get help.

Suicide is a serious public health problem that affects people of all ages. It is the tenth leading cause of death for Americans. The top three methods used in suicides include firearms (51.5%), suffocation (24.5%), and poisoning (16.1%).

Deaths from suicide are only part of the problem. Many more people survive suicide attempts than actually die. In 2013, nearly half a million people (494,169) received medical care for self-inflicted injuries at emergency departments across the United States. More than one million adults self-reported a suicide attempt, and 9.3 million adults self-reported serious thoughts of suicide.

Suicide is often the result of multiple risk factors. Having these risk factors, however, does not mean that suicide will occur. Some of the risk factors researchers identified include the following:

- History of previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- History of depression or other mental illness
- History of alcohol or drug abuse
- Stressful life event or loss (e.g., job, financial, relationship)
- Easy access to lethal methods
- History of interpersonal violence
- Stigma associated with mental illness and help-seeking

Protective factors buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior. Some of the protective factors researchers identified are listed below.

- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- Easy access to various clinical interventions and support

- Family and community support (connectedness)
- Cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support seeking help

Many people are uncomfortable with the topic of suicide. Too often, victims are blamed and their families and friends are left stigmatized. As a result, people rarely communicate openly about suicide. Thus, an important public health problem is left hidden in secrecy, which hinders effective prevention.

Know the Warning Signs and Get Help

There are warning signs for suicide. Research has uncovered a wealth of information about the causes of suicide and prevention strategies. For more information, visit American Association of Suicidology. Additionally, CDC is working to monitor the problem, develop and evaluate prevention strategies, and to disseminate information to prevent suicidal behavior.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)** or visit [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](http://www.suicidology.org).

Cost-of-Living Bill Introduced in the U.S. Senate

On June 3, 2015, Senator Johnny Isakson, with numerous cosponsors, introduced S. 1943, a bill that would authorize cost-of-living adjustments to the rates of compensation for veterans and survivors. The bill was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for further consideration. As in recent years, this bill does not contain any round-down provision.

Please write your Senators today to urge them to cosponsor this measure and work for its enactment prior to the end of first session of the 114th Congress.

Click the link below to log in and send your message:

https://www.votervoice.net/BroadcastLinks/ENR4g5Nat2Som_IE1wr0jw

TRICARE Pharmacy Changes Coming October 1

Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all [TRICARE](#) beneficiaries, except active duty service members, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or from a military pharmacy. Beneficiaries who keep using a retail pharmacy for these drugs will have to pay the full cost. Maintenance drugs are those you take regularly for a long time, such as drugs to control blood pressure or cholesterol. The law does not apply to drugs you take for a short time, like antibiotics, or generic drugs. Beneficiaries living overseas, or with other prescription drug coverage, are not affected.

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

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 **2,360,217** 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. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

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 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **13,451+** documents (**498** total New Docs)
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (To be Updated 09/11/15 by 7pm PST)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,172** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,586** Active Links)(**Updated 08/16/15**)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked 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)

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.

DHA Wants More TRICARE Prime Beneficiaries

According to the Military Times, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) has launched a marketing effort to draw military health beneficiaries living in major metropolitan areas back to TRICARE Prime.

The first phase of the campaign begins with the 57,000 military households in the "National Capital Region" that encompasses the District, Northern Virginia and Southern Maryland received packets from NCR Medical Director Rear Adm.

The mailings lists the locations and addresses of the facilities, features and available services, from routine care and extended pharmacy access to secure messaging with providers, wellness benefits and treatment specialties such as orthopedics, pediatrics subspecialists and an advanced cancer treatment facility.

According to DHA, attracting additional TRICARE beneficiaries to the Prime option will lower costs for the military health system and ensure that military doctors and researchers have the opportunity of seeing a range of patients.

Care provided "in house" at military treatment facilities cost \$15 billion in fiscal 2012, but 45 percent of that amount was for salaries of military doctors, nurses, staff and administrators, which the government pays regardless of how many patients are seen.

According to data provided by TRICARE, the "National Capital Region" hosts 455,000 TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries. Only about 250,000 are enrolled in Prime.

According to DHA data, some facilities in the Washington region, such as Naval Health Clinic Quantico, Virginia, have more enrollees than space, while others are functioning below expectations. The Andrew Rader Army Health Clinic at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Arlington Virginia, for example, is running at 77 percent capacity, while the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Clinic in the District of Columbia is at just 74 percent capacity.

Other facilities in the area are in high demand but still have room for more patients. According to the data, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, is at 89 percent enrollment capacity and the Dumfries and Fairfax health centers, both in Virginia, are at 89 percent.

Fort Belvoir, Virginia, tops the list for the facility with the most TRICARE Prime enrollees, 43,794; its capacity is 45,029.

Under Prime, retirees below age 65 and their family members pay enrollment fees. Retirees and their family members as well as family members of active-duty personnel pay no enrollment fees to use Standard, but they pay a portion of their visits to primary care or specialty providers.

DHA plans to roll out similar initiatives in cities with significant military populations. These areas may see similar marketing campaigns tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries and the military health system.

Source: NAUS



Are you seeking employment? Been looking forever and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working very hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job Postings available across the country.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

To be updated by 7pm PST 09/11/15

Links to other Stories

- 1) *'The VA is lying': Fla Veteran spends own money on BOLD billboards warning that VA is killing people*
- 2) *2015 DoD Health Related Behaviors Survey Launches Worldwide*
- 3) *Combat medics train as they fight*
- 4) *Extraordinary Texas widower waters grave of fallen soldier, every day, while visiting wife's plot*
- 5) *Military medicine tackles suicide with prevention tools for patients, families and providers*
- 6) *Suffolk to turn over 8 properties to house homeless Veterans*
- 7) *Suicide Prevention: How 1 Person Can Make a Difference*
- 8) *Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General Report shows that current VA system needs systematic reform*
- 9) *Veterans wave flags on Spartanburg Co. bridges to honor 9/11 victims*

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

NDAA Conference

Congress returned this week from its August recess. NAUS is informed that some of the issues holding up the NDAA have been partially resolved. Although nothing is set until the conference committee presents its final report, a key member of the House Armed Services Committee informs NAUS that the House has won its stand to strike (eliminate) the Senate's proposed cut in Dual BAH. However, a new proposal dealing with the basic allowance for housing calls for a reduced monthly amount of BAH at 1 percent per year phased in over the next five years. Also, we have heard that there is no agreement yet regarding the Senate and White House insistence to increase TRICARE prescription drug costs.

Issues regarding the policy on commissaries have yet to be resolved. At this time, there is no solid agreement regarding the Commissary subsidy. However, NAUS understands that a proposal for the Secretary of Defense to submit a report, due no later than March 1, 2016, to privatize the Defense Commissary System in whole or in part may be on the table.

These issues and resolution of the Senate and White House push to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center are reported as the major sticking points in finalizing an NDAA Conference Report prior to the August recess.

Source: NAUS

Paying for College With the Military GI Bill

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is an excellent source of financial support for veterans to further their education. The bill also covers housing in addition to tuition expenses. Veterans are eligible to receive benefits under the Post 9/11 GI Bill if they have at least 90 days of aggregate service after September 10, 2001, or those who were discharged with a disability related to their military service after 30 days. The discharge must have been honorable in order for the individual to be eligible for benefits. Eligible individuals can apply for benefits to cover:

- Graduate and undergraduate degrees
- Vocational and technical training
- On-the-job training
- Flight training
- Correspondence training
- Licensing and national testing programs
- Entrepreneurship training
- Tutorial assistance

Taking effect August 1, 2009, the Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay full tuition and fees directly to the schools attended by eligible individuals. The school must be a qualifying public, in-state school. The bill also can help defer the tuition and fees for private or foreign schools. In those cases, benefits cover up to \$18,077.50 for the 2012 academic year. Note that eligible individuals attending a private school in the following states may be eligible for a higher reimbursement rate:

- Arizona
- Michigan
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Texas

The Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon Program helps reimburse the difference in benefits coverage for eligible individuals who choose to attend more expensive private schools or a public school as an out-of-state student. Not all people eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill will also qualify for the Yellow Ribbon Program, but those who do can reduce their tuition and fees further.

Monthly Housing Allowance

The Post 9/11 GI Bill also provides a monthly housing allowance (MHA) for eligible individuals attending school more than half time. The MHA covers:

The Basic Allowance for Housing (BHA) for an E-5 with dependents at the school location
An amount equal to half the national average BAH for an E-5 (with dependents) enrolled only in distance learning (this equals \$684.00 per month for the 2012 academic year)
\$1,368.00 per month for the 2012 academic year for those attending foreign schools that do not have a main campus in the U.S.

Note that active duty students and their spouses cannot receive MHA benefits at this time.

Other Benefits

The Post 9/11 GI Bill also offers eligible individuals an annual stipend of up to \$1,000 to cover books and supplies (the amount received is based on enrollment) as well as a one-time rural benefit payment for those who qualify. Some service members may be able to transfer their GI Bill benefits to their dependents.

For More Information

For more information about the Post 9/11 GI Bill, please refer to the official website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>. All information in this article is sourced directly from this official site. CollegeEducation411 wants you to have the most accurate information as possible about the GI Bill and your benefits under the bill, so please be sure to refer directly to the official site for the most authoritative and up-to-date information.

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 FREE Number:	866-272-6622

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

Bills Introduced on Military Sexual Trauma

Senator Jon Tester (MT) and Representative Chellie Pingree (ME) introduced companion bills (H.R. 1607 and S. 865) that would improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma.

The bills would add authority to presume trauma occurred on the basis of new criteria that connects sexual trauma and subsequent mental health challenges, enabling these veterans to receive appropriate benefits. These bills are important because so many survivors of military sexual trauma historically were disproportionately denied any recognition by VA of their injuries during military service. Please ask your elected officials to support and work for passage of these important measures.

As always, thank you for your grassroots support and advocacy to enable us to move helpful legislation through Congress.

Click the link below to log in and send your message:

<https://www.votervoicenet/BroadcastLinks/DSWWllcVhDofpS7iQ32hYw>

New IRS Forms for TRICARE

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), all military members and their eligible family members must have health care coverage that meets minimum essential coverage or pay a fee. TRICARE coverage meets the minimum essential coverage requirement under the ACA. Beginning in January 2016, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will provide the appropriate IRS Form 1095 to all troops, annuitants, former spouses and all other individuals having TRICARE coverage during all or any portion of tax year 2015. The IRS Form 1095 is proof people have the minimum essential coverage. People with a myPay account at mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx should logon and ensure their email address is current as well as make an IRS Form 1095 delivery method election. For more information on the ACA, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov/Affordable-Care-Act.

VA More Than Triples Volunteers in Facilities Nationwide through Summer of Service

Department Welcomes New Volunteers, Strategic Partnerships to Better Serve Veterans

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that the 2015 Summer of Service initiative, which [launched in May](#), has exceeded the goals set for community volunteers serving Veterans and the development of new partnerships to reach Veterans and their family members. VA's Summer of Service mobilized approximately 300,000 citizens across the country to honor the nation's sacred commitment to caring for Veterans.

"Community by community, state by state, VA and the country came together to serve those who have served this nation. I am incredibly proud of the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who came into VA facilities to stand alongside our hard-working employees to help America's Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "At VA, we know that there is more work to do to serve America's heroes. We cannot do it alone. This summer, the American people recognized our vital role caring for those who have borne the battle and joined us in this sacred mission. Committed employees and volunteers, and strong partnerships, are the cornerstone of our efforts to transform this Department into one that Veterans and all citizens can be proud of."

The Summer of Service built upon the Department's existing partnerships to grow the number of individuals and organizations serving Veterans in their communities. VA facilities nationwide worked closely with their Congressional partners, Veterans Service Organizations, Mayors and local communities, private sector and non-profit organizations, and VA employees in unprecedented ways to support VA's commitment to care for those who "have borne the battle" and their families.

Through VA's outstanding volunteer program, the Department engaged approximately 300,000 volunteers around the country, far exceeding our goal of 100,000 volunteer connections. Through the work of Veterans Service Organizations and other community/civic groups, supplemental services and programs were made available for America's Veterans. In May, VA committed to growing our partnerships with new MOUs and expanding current agreements to reach more than 15,000 Veterans and family members. VA's new, reenergized, and expanded partnerships, with NASCAR, the United States Tennis Association, PsychArmor and many others, reached 40,683 Veterans and their family members, nearly tripling our goal.

As part of VA's Summer of Service, the Department committed to holding VA Open Houses in VA facilities across the country to spur increased local engagement and welcome members of the community interested in supporting the needs of Veterans. Over the course of the summer, VA held more than 130 open houses across the system.

This year, VA has made progress on the many challenges we face in delivering care and benefits to Veterans and their families, completing more than 61.5 million appointments between July 1, 2014 and July 31, 2015 – an increase of 2.36 million more appointments than were completed during the same time period in 2013-2014. VA created over 2.7 million authorizations for Veterans to receive care in the private sector between August 16, 2014, and August 15, 2015, a 21-percent increase in authorizations when compared to the period ranging from August 2013 to August 2014. The backlog of disability claims (claims pending more than 125 days) is 93,674 as of September 7, an 85-percent reduction from its peak of 611,000 claims in March 2013 and the lowest ever in VA's history since 2007, when VA started measuring the backlog.

In an effort to improve the Veteran's customer service experience, VA has begun the most comprehensive re-organization in its history. The initiative, [called MyVA](#), has been guided by ideas and recommendations from Veterans, employees and stakeholders.

VA takes its commitment to care for the Nation's Veterans and their families very seriously, and encourages communities to stay engaged in serving Veterans:

- Look for VA at community events and engage our employees and partners.
- Call your local facility to find out what you can do to help.
- Check out VA on [Vantage Point](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and join us in caring for America's Veterans.

To volunteer at a VA medical facility or national Cemetery, visit <http://www.volunteer.va.gov>. To join VA full-time, visit <http://mycareeratva.va.gov> or <http://www.usajobs.gov>.

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.expressemailing.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.

Or if you prefer you can sign up to the Yahoo Groups VFC-News page and receive our weekly newsletter by sending an E-Mail to: VFC-News-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.



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



We need an America with the wisdom of experience. But we must not let America grow old in spirit.

~Hubert H. Humphrey~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today
www.veterans-for-change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

Distribution	
Express Mail:	14,433
Face Book Pages:	2,941
Yahoo:	103
Twitter:	28
US Army	14,276
US Navy	3,916
US Marines	6,341
Dept of VA	5,752
Washington DC	36,430
New York	29,379
Los Angeles	20,193
Boston	17,595
Veterans	18,989,375
Other Social Media:	10,850
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
	19,155,112