



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

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, October 04, 2015**  
Volume 6, Issue 40

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

Last weekend I mentioned that the VA was throwing another \$4 Million dollars into solving the Homeless Veterans problem.

In that note I provided calculations which were incorrect as I mistakenly added a few extra zeroes.

The \$4 million dollars was to be divided between 21 agencies which would have netted each agency \$190,476.19 not \$190,476,190,476.19. A rather large mistake and I do apologize, but the point I was trying to make was that \$200,000.00 doesn't even come close to going very far when you're looking at an average of 140,000 homeless Veterans on the streets at any given time.

Further down in this newsletter is another release of information from the VA where they are granting \$12.8 million dollars to 20 agencies again to combat the homeless Veterans problem. This comes out to \$640,000.00 per agency and it still makes one wonder if they have these millions of dollars to toss away on a problem no one is really fixing why can't they toss millions of dollars into fixing the VA Healthcare System?

After all, the Aurora Colorado VAMC went \$1 billion dollars over budget when if memory serves me right that VA Hospital was originally budgeted to cost \$670 million.

I still don't see any real aggressive hiring campaign for the VA to fill the thousands of job openings for critical posts open. And Secretary McDonald's solution to the wait list back log seems to have backfired on him as he changed it from 14 days to 30 days which to me only adds to the wait time.

Then the VA comes out with their announcement that the backlog is being reduced again, but they failed to mention that of the original 900k claims in backlog more than a 1/3 were of Veterans who had passed away while waiting and not having received their benefits. Nor does it mention how many were claims ended in denials or remands.

As usual it's nothing but smoke and mirrors and a matter of which list are we moving the claim to, or worse do we shred this claim or hide that claim?

And yes folks that is still going on where claims are being thrown in trash dumpsters, shredded, "misfiled", etc., again proving the need for a fully computerized claims processing system which would save millions of dollars in salaries being paid by replacing them with a computer system that is not human, and won't make mistakes accidentally or deliberately as humans do!

Seems to me the VA can't see the sun through the clouds that the cost savings in payroll for processing claims would and could be redirected to benefits and medical care thus reducing their over all costs dramatically, not to mention the need for storage space for millions of paper claims.

We're still trying to further the cause of investigation into chemical contamination at Fort Ord, California.

We're looking for more information, documentation, photo's, anything we can get our hands on to distribute to all those who lived and served on that base along with their families.

One of our volunteers did come across about 160 documents which we hope to have on-line soon, but most don't appear to be of much value in the means of assisting Veterans with their claims, but we are still digging.

In addition we're pushing hard on Congressman Farr's office to assist and we're asking all Veterans from that base and/or their families to please call the Congressman's office at (831)-424-2229 and ask to speak to Nancy.

Tell her all you can, and ask that they please investigate and help all those who have filed claims to be addressed and processed for approval.

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](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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### ***DoD Resists Hill Push to Roll Back Drug Rules***

Thirty-one House members, most of whom, public records show, got campaign dollars from compound drug lobbyists, are pressing the Defense Department to soften rules set in May that block TRICARE coverage of compound medicines when medical efficacy is unproven or prices extreme. Defense officials say they don't intend to relax the rules created to protect TRICARE from aggressive marketing and abusive pricing that have polluted the compound drug industry. Indeed, TRICARE has had to tweak the new rules five times since May 1 just to close more loopholes that industry seemed ready to exploit, possibly sending TRICARE drug costs soaring again.

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### ***VA Announces \$12.8 Million in funding to Help the Homeless***

*Twenty Community Agencies to Benefit*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald today announced \$12.8 million in renewal funding through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program to 20 [community agencies](#) that currently provide transitional housing with supportive services for homeless Veterans under the Transition in Place (TIP) model.

As a key component of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) plan to eliminate homelessness among Veterans, VA's GPD program provides per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate supportive housing for specific homeless Veteran populations, which includes the innovative TIP approach to assist homeless Veterans transition from homelessness. TIP encourages rapid movement from transitional housing to permanent housing which enables Veterans to live as independently, as possible, while increasing housing stabilization.

Today's awards follows an announcement [last week](#) of \$4 million in renewal funding through the GPD program to 21 community agencies that currently provide enhanced services for homeless Veterans with special needs.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). Community organizations seeking details and/or more information, may contact the National Grant and Per Diem Program office at <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD.asp> or by calling 1-877-332-0334.

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### ***Veteran Disability Compensation***

If you are military veteran with a service-related disability you may qualify for [over \\$3,300 in monthly benefits](#). These benefits are paid to veterans who have injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty, or were made worse by active military service.

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## 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>

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

DOD Financial Management: Continued Actions Needed to Address Congressional Committee Panel Recommendations.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-463>

Drug Compounding for Animals: FDA Could Improve Oversight with Better Information and Guidance.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-671>

Medicare Advantage: Actions Needed to Enhance CMS Oversight of Provider Network Adequacy.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-710>

Adaptive Sports Grant Program: VA Has Taken Steps toward Better Grantee Selection and Oversight, but Additional Actions Needed. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-791>

Retirement Security: Federal Action Could Help State Efforts to Expand Private Sector Coverage.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-556>

Federal Information Security: Agencies Need to Correct Weaknesses and Fully Implement Security Programs.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-714>

Disaster Contracting: FEMA Needs to Cohesively Manage Its Workforce and Fully Address Post-Katrina Reforms.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-783>

Electronic Health Records: Nonfederal Efforts to Help Achieve Health Information Interoperability.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-817>

DOD Contract Services: Improvements Made to Planning and Implementation of Fiscal Controls.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-780>

Medicare: Considerations for Expansion of the Appropriate Use Criteria Program.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-816>

Managing for Results: Implementation of GPRA Modernization Act Has Yielded Mixed Progress in Addressing Pressing Governance Challenges.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-819>

Tricare Pharmacy Pilot: Improved Monitoring Needed with Expansion of Pilot Requirements.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-768>

Hospital Value-Based Purchasing: Initial Results Show Modest Effects on Medicare Payments and No Apparent Change in Quality-of-Care Trends. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-9>

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## ***Department of Defense Identifies Navy Casualty***

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a sailor who was supporting Operation Inherent Resolve.

Seaman Philip Frazier Manes, 21, of Fairfax, Virginia, died Sept. 27, in Manama, Bahrain, of a non-combat related incident. The incident is under investigation.

He was assigned to USS Gladiator (MCM 11), forward deployed to Bahrain.



On September 16, 2015, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) journal article "Evaluation of contaminated drinking water and male breast cancer at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina: A case control study" was published (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/MaleBreastCancerStudy.html>).

The purpose of this study was to determine if Marines who were exposed in the past to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune were more likely to have male breast cancer.

This study is one of several health initiatives that ATSDR is expected to complete in the next several years. For more information about these studies, visit <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/> or call ATSDR at (800) 232-4636.

Since 1991, the Marine Corps has supported the health initiatives conducted by various scientific agencies. We are also working diligently to identify and notify individuals who, in the past, may have been exposed to the chemicals in drinking water at Camp Lejeune. For more information about these efforts or to update your contact information, please see: <http://www.marines.mil/clwater/> or contact the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Call Center at (877) 261-9782 or e-mail [clwater@usmc.mil](mailto:clwater@usmc.mil). Please share this information with anyone that may have been at Camp Lejeune in 1987 or prior and encourage them to register with us.

To contact the Department of Veterans Affairs to learn more about health care benefits, please visit <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/> or call (877) 222-8387 (Healthcare) or (800) 827-1000 (Benefits). Family members can visit <https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov> or call (866) 372-1144.

Sincerely,

The Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Program

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***Veterans United For a Better Life***

This is an organization that was formed for and is dedicated to bettering the lives of ALL Veterans anyway we can. Our goal is to obtain the resources and logistical connections to help Veterans in need with housing, food, medications, medical equipment, travel expenses, clothing and anything else needed to solve their current problems and help them improve their quality of life.

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

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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 **2,387,820** 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](http://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 (Updated 10/02/15 **63** New Jobs)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,231** 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.

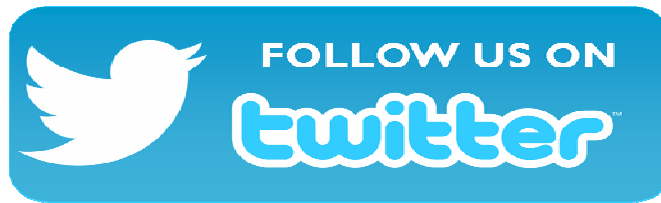
The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org))

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.

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***Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter***



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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### **2016 Veterans Reunion at Ft. Ord**

This organization will be holding a reunion at Ft. Ord from Oct. 14-16 2016. Although it is being held at Ft. Ord it will be open to all Veterans. There will be events and ceremonies on Ft. Ord itself and the surrounding local area. It will be a chance to re-connect with old friends, re-live some old memories, and see a beautiful part of our country. To be added to the reunion group and get more information please friend Larry Lee Bruce or Jim Handy on Facebook

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### **CalVet Launches LGBT Veteran Outreach**

Sacramento – Tomorrow, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) announces a new outreach effort to inform the more than 136,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Veterans living in California about the availability of federal and state benefits.

“CalVet is committed to ensuring all Veterans are treated with dignity and respect and are provided equal access to earned benefits,” said Mirtha Villarreal-Younger, CalVet Deputy Secretary of Minority Veterans Affairs. “Today, CalVet is taking a positive step towards embracing the true diversity of our Veterans and encouraging LGBT Veterans to seek out assistance to obtain benefits,” she added.

Prior to 2011, LGBT Americans could not serve openly and at times suffered harassment and persecution. In California all LGBT military families now have access to the full federal and state Veterans benefits they’ve earned. CalVet encourages LGBT Veterans to sign up for *myCalVet*. Veterans should also visit a local County Veterans Service Office [www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/CVSO-Locations.aspx](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/CVSO-Locations.aspx).

**Event:** Post LGBT Veterans Leadership Forum: *Informational Session*  
**When:** **Wednesday, September 30, 2015 – 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Where:** State Capitol, Room 4202, Sacramento, CA 95814

In September 2014, CalVet hosted a two-day California LGBT Veterans Leadership Forum, the first in the nation, to identify needs, gaps and exclusions in housing, employment, healthcare, education, and legal affairs. Based on the Forum, the California Research Bureau prepared White Papers to be shared at this event with legislators, stakeholders, and LGBT Veteran advocates. CalVet and subject matter experts plan to discuss the findings raised in the California Research Bureau (CRB) White Papers. Outreach and networking with LGBT Veterans, and organizations supporting LGBT Veterans will also be available. To preview the CRB report, "Better Serving those who Serve: California's LGBT Veterans Speak Out," please visit [www.library.ca.gov/crb/CRBreports.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/CRBreports.html).

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### **Guard and Reserve Survey Deadline Extended**

The cutoff date has been extended for Guard and Reserve Soldiers to complete a survey on gender relations in the workplace. The new deadline for mailing surveys is Oct. 13, and Soldiers have until Oct. 19 to complete the online "2015 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Reserve Component Members" (2015 WGRR). The survey went out to 487,300 members of the Reserve components, Aug. 7. Soldiers can see if they have been selected as part of the

scientific sample to complete the survey by visiting the Defense Manpower Data Center website at [www.dodsurveys.mil](http://www.dodsurveys.mil). They should select the button "Am I in the WGRR Sample?" and enter "DOD ID Number" from the back of their Common Access Card. Anyone wishing to verify the survey's legitimacy can call DSN 372-1034 or 1-571-372-1034.



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](mailto: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.

**Updated 10/02/15 with 63 New Job Postings**

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### **Links to other Stories**

- 1) [Air Force senior leaders host suicide prevention summit](#)
- 2) [Army to enlist robots to pull Soldiers off battlefield](#)
- 3) [Casualty care: every second counts](#)
- 4) [Cognitive assessments playing an important role in DoD concussion care](#)
- 5) [Female Soldier-Only Transition Workshop Focuses on Gender Differences](#)
- 6) [Former Operation Warfighter intern thrives in rewarding career](#)
- 7) [Four Key Factors Veterans Need To Know About Alzheimer's](#)
- 8) [Grandmother's influence helped preserve Military Health System leader's Hispanic heritage](#)
- 9) [Group Blasts Marines Over Study of Women in Combat](#)
- 10) [Investigation Into Paratrooper's Death Leads to Airborne Changes](#)
- 11) [Joe Nose Stress: Hospital employee takes "paws" to identify people in need](#)
- 12) [Preventing trench mouth](#)
- 13) [Report Alleges Army Surgeon General Tried to Cover Up Concussion Data](#)
- 14) [Report: VA Execs Abused System, Collected \\$400K](#)
- 15) [Senate Democrats block VA budget bill](#)
- 16) [UCLA, VA team up to improve cancer care for Veterans](#)
- 17) [VA apologizes for 'ill-advised' ban on Veterans' cellphones](#)
- 18) [VA art budget comes under fire in Congress](#)
- 19) [VA pursues expansion of its outpatient care clinic in Portland](#)
- 20) [VA urged to favor Veterans on toxic exposure claims](#)

- 21) [Veterans Find VA 'Choice' Care Program Has Delays](#)
- 22) [VFW: VA Turned 'Blind Eye' to Insurer Profiteering Off Survivors](#)
- 23) [Webinar to discuss Women's Health](#)

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)

### ***Sound Off: Solving the 'Mystery' of Sgt. Bergdahl***

The desertion case of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl has attracted the journalists behind the popular podcast *Serial*, and it's rumored that Bergdahl will be the focus of the program's upcoming second series. Wait, what? To weigh in on this issue, visit [this Under the Radar post](#).

### ***Program for Caregivers***

The Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network (MVCN) that is offered through the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) allows caregivers to interact with one another. Caregivers, who are taking care of ill, injured or wounded veterans from an era of war, are able to reach out for help and ask for advice from others who have dealt with similar circumstances. The goal is to get peers supporting peers to reduce isolation and increase connectivity, engagement, hopefulness, knowledge and skills. For more information, visit the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network webpage at [www.taps.org/MVCN/](http://www.taps.org/MVCN/).

### ***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

### ***New TRICARE TV Episode: Suicide Prevention***

Watch [this episode](#) of TRICARE TV to find out what you can do to prevent suicide in your community. One call, one text, one conversation can save a life.

For more guides on mental health and wellness, visit the [Military.com Mental Health and Wellness section](#).

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

### ***VA to Launch Vets.gov***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will launch a new website, Vets.gov, on Veterans Day, November 11. The new website will consolidate the approximately 1,000 websites the department manages now. The portal is designed to help veterans find and apply for benefits and services on one website rather than go through the maze of VA-managed



websites that exist now. The new website will have content but not the single, secure sign-on function that veterans will need to provide access to all other departmental sites. That capability is expected to take another year. A Request for Information for technical support for the new Vets.gov website is available on the [FedBizOpps.gov website](http://FedBizOpps.gov).

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### ***Would Veterans at Commissary Cost Taxpayers More?***

If all veterans were allowed to use the commissary, wouldn't that help with the commissary's deficit? For more on this question, see the latest [Questions and Benefits column on Military.com](#).

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### ***Gold Star Fathers Act Passes House***

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. House of Representatives today joined the U.S. Senate in passing S. 136 [www.gpo.gov/fds.../pkg/BILLS-114s136rh/pdf/BILLS-114s136rh.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fds.../pkg/BILLS-114s136rh/pdf/BILLS-114s136rh.pdf), the Gold Star Fathers Act of 2015. The bill will now go to President Obama for his signature. Congressman Kevin Cramer is a co-sponsor of H.R. 1222, the companion bill in the U.S. House.

S. 136 [www.gpo.gov/fds.../pkg/BILLS-114s136rh/pdf/BILLS-114s136rh.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fds.../pkg/BILLS-114s136rh/pdf/BILLS-114s136rh.pdf) grants fathers the same status as Gold Star mothers regarding eligibility for the civil service. Fathers will now be eligible for preferential eligibility for federal employment, in addition to mothers, of individuals who either lost their life under honorable conditions while serving in the armed forces; is a service-connected permanently and totally disabled veteran; if the spouse of that parent is totally and permanently disabled; or whose parent is unmarried or, if married, legally separated from his or her spouse or widowed.

"Parents bear an incredible burden when their son or daughter is seriously injured or give their life in defense of our country," said Cramer. "Granting fathers the same benefits and recognition provided to Gold Star Mothers under federal law is the least we can do as a nation."

The term Gold Star Family (or Parents) is a modern reference from service flags or banners flown by families during World War I. The flag included a blue star for every immediate family member serving in the armed forces of the United States, during any period of war or hostilities in which the armed forces of the United States were engaged. If that loved one died, the blue star was replaced by a gold star. This allowed members of the community to know the price that the family had paid in the cause of freedom. (Source: [www.army.mil/goldstar](http://www.army.mil/goldstar)- [www.army.mil/goldstar](http://www.army.mil/goldstar))

The bill was introduced on January 8, 2015, and was referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. On May 11, 2015, the bill was passed in the Senate by unanimous consent and was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Very Respectfully,  
Ms. Adrian Melissa Balbo  
Support Coordinator  
Contractor, Strategy and Management Services, INC  
Army Reserve Survivor Outreach Services  
311th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)  
1250 Federal Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90025  
Office: 310.235.4289  
[adrian.m.balbo.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:adrian.m.balbo.ctr@mail.mil)

If you need assistance after hours, please contact the Army Reserve Family Programs Fort Family Support and Outreach Center - 1-866-345-8248. Serving Soldiers and Families 24/7/365

Like us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/ArmyReserveFamilyPrograms?ref=hl>

Or follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FamilyPrograms>

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### ***President Vows to Veto NDAA***

President Obama vowed Wednesday to veto the annual defense policy bill demanding an increase in non-defense spending and escalating a clash over mandatory spending caps. The President objects to the use of OCO funds to end-run spending limits under sequestration caps.

NAUS, too, supports ending sequestration. It is a blunt, irrational way to bring runaway federal spending under control.

However, NAUS agrees with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who said, "I never understood why (the president) threatened a veto to start with. To not have this defense authorization can really damage our ability to defend the nation."

NAUS further agrees that now is the absolute wrong time to block progress on assuring national security budget. The Russians have invaded Ukraine and increased aggressiveness in the Middle East. ISIS is spreading. Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons. North Korea is pursuing a submarine launched ballistic missile to go with their nuclear program. Our military just returned from fighting Ebola in Africa and is supporting the fight against Boko Haram. China is growing more belligerent and threatening our friends and allies in Asia.

Our military has already faced drastic cuts. The Air Force is the smallest it has ever been. The Army is on a path to being the smallest since 1940. And the Navy will soon be the smallest since 1915 and the Marine Corps is dropping end-strength dangerously low.

For all these reasons, Congress and the Administration simply must make defense a priority. It cannot cut national security spending right now. NAUS urges Congress to fully fund our national security budget, passing a complete NDAA and defense appropriations bill.

Source: NAUS

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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.

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](mailto: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.*

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### ***Additional VA Benefits Bill Signed***

Also on September 30, the House passed and the President signed S. 2062, **the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2015**. This legislation amends title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. The health care provisions extended through fiscal year 2016. Some of these include:

- Authority for collection of copayments for hospital care and nursing home care,
- Authorization of appropriations for assistance and support services for caregivers,
- Authority for recovery from third parties of the cost of care and services furnished to veterans with health-plan contracts for non-service-connected disability,
- Authority for the pilot program on assistance for child care for certain veterans receiving health care,
- Authority to make grants to veterans service organizations for transportation of highly rural veterans,
- Authority for Department of Defense (DOD)-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, and
- Authority for the pilot program on counseling in retreat settings for women veterans newly separated from service.

The legislation also extends through Dec. 31, 2016, the requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities and extends through fiscal year 2017 authority for the Joint DOD-VA Demonstration Fund.

This bill additionally authorizes \$1.675 billion for the completion of the VA Medical Center in Denver. At a meeting NAUS attended on Wednesday, with the Majority Staff of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, it was disclosed that when the building in Denver was finally finished it would additionally take over \$300 million for medical equipment, furniture and IT. It appears the final bill for this one VA Medical Center, which the construction of has been taken over by the Army Corps of Engineers, will cost over \$2 billion dollars.

Source: NAUS

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## ***Proposed Rulemaking for State Veteran Cemeteries Monuments and Memorials (Adopt CCR §462)***

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) proposes to adopt regulations described in the Notice of Public Rulemaking available on the CalVet website at the link below. This notice is to make known that documents referenced in the proposed regulations have now been posted on the CalVet website at the link below and CalVet is accepting public comments.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any interested person, or his or her duly authorized representative, may submit written comments relevant to the proposed regulatory action to:

California Department of Veterans Affairs  
Northern California Veterans Cemetery  
Attention: Mark George  
11800 Gas Point Road  
Igo, CA 96047  
Telephone: (530) 396-2429  
Fax: (530) 396-2523

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail to [mark.george@calvet.ca.gov](mailto:mark.george@calvet.ca.gov).

Comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on October 15, 2015. CalVet will only consider comments received at the CalVet offices by that time.

The Public Notice and proposed rulemaking package are also available for viewing in the California Department of Veterans Affairs lobby at 1227 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 and online with the at <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/Proposed-Rulemaking.aspx>.

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## ***VA Announces Expansion of Veterans Economic Communities Initiative***

*25 Communities Added to Program that Expands Education and Employment Opportunities for Veterans*

COSTA MESA, CA – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced the expansion of a program aimed at increasing education and employment opportunities to America's Veterans to an additional to 25 new communities. The Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI) brings together local and national partners to coordinate services for Veterans, Servicemembers and military families.

Announcement of the expanded communities was made in Costa Mesa by senior VA officials to more than 500 leaders from the business, nonprofit, philanthropic and local government communities who are attending VA's two-day inaugural VECI Policy Academy, which began September 29. The Policy Academy serves as a forum for local, regional and national partner organizations to engage in honest dialog about Veteran economic issues; receive interactive training on national philanthropic and community-based best practices; and hear from leaders in the field about emerging data, trends and opportunities.

"History has shown that when you give Veterans an opportunity to succeed, they go above and beyond. And we as a nation owe them those opportunities to succeed," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "There is a

tremendous amount of goodwill from the American people towards Veterans; they want to help. Through public-private partnerships like those formed and harnessed by VA's Economic Communities Initiative, we will now be able to provide better networks and tools to Veterans in 50 communities nationwide."

Secretary McDonald [launched](#) the VECI campaign in May 2015 to promote local collaboration, dialog and partnership among organizations that serve transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans and their families. VECI is part of Secretary McDonald's department-wide transformation called MyVA, which is dedicated to putting Veterans at the center of everything VA does and enhancing strategic partnerships to extend VA's reach of services.

"We have made great strides in how Veterans and their families are being supported at the local and national level through the first 25 communities that launched this incredible initiative," said Rosye Cloud, Senior Advisor for Veteran Employment during the opening session of the Policy Academy. "It is because of the success of the partnerships formed through VECI that we are able to double the program from 25 to 50 communities participating. And we are excited that this announcement was made at our first-ever VECI Policy Academy."

As part of the VECI initiative, a VA economic liaison in each community will expand and encourage collaboration among private and public organizations that offer resources related to Veteran education, training and employment. Through strategic partnerships, and by offering Veterans innovative forms of learning and employment opportunities, these communities will help Veterans gain competitive career skills and knowledge in locally in-demand fields.

Campaign partners include the Departments of Defense and Labor, the Small Business Administration, and regional and national nonprofits, businesses and educators. All VECI communities were selected based on the size of transitioning Servicemember and Post-9/11 Veteran populations; unemployment, employment opportunity and job growth; and education spending.

The full list of VECI communities is provided below. New communities being launched in early 2016 are denoted with an asterisk, and do not yet have an economic liaison assigned to their location:

Atlanta, GA	Clarksville, TN*	El Paso, TX	Las Vegas, NV	Norfolk, VA	Sacramento, CA*
Augusta, GA	Cleveland, OH*	Fayetteville, NC*	Los Angeles, CA	Oklahoma City, OK*	San Antonio, TX
Austin, TX*	Colorado Springs, CO	Fort Walton Beach, FL	Louisville, KY	Orlando, FL*	San Diego, CA
Baltimore, MD*	Columbia, SC*	Honolulu, HI	Memphis, TN*	Philadelphia, PA*	San Francisco, CA*
Boise, ID*	Columbus, OH*	Houston, TX	Miami, FL	Phoenix, AZ	Seattle, WA
Boston, MA*	Dallas, TX	Indianapolis, IN*	Milwaukee, WI*	Pittsburgh, PA*	St. Louis, MO
Buffalo, NY	Denver, CO*	Jacksonville, FL	Minneapolis, MN*	Portland, OR*	Tampa, FL*
Charlotte, NC*	Detroit, MI*	Kansas City, MO	Nashville, TN	Richmond, VA	Washington, DC
Chicago, IL	Cincinnati, OH	Killeen, TX*	New York, NY	Riverside, CA	

Under the Veterans Economic Communities Initiative, communities will develop scalable, sustainable models in the next two years that will include:

- Developing ongoing public-private partnerships focused on employment and economic opportunities;
- Fostering employer networking and encouraging hiring commitments on the Veterans Employment Center™ ([www.ebenefits.va.gov/jobs](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/jobs));
- Supporting events such as career fairs, job and employment summits, and roundtables to boost economic competitiveness for Veterans;
- Sharing best practices and training and supporting employers who are considering hiring Veterans; and
- Facilitating the development of learning or resource hubs to help connect Veterans to economic opportunities including entrepreneurship, credentialing and skills building.



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

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

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