



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, October 25, 2015

Volume 6, Issue 43

This-N-That

Military Sexual Assault or MST as it's commonly referred to is still a prevalent issue that Congress is supposedly dealing with in how it's to be handled, who is to be handling it, how, and when, and the end result.

One common denominator of every war-conflict zone of the last 20 years is sexual abuse against men. And almost always goes un-reported for many reasons, guilt, shame, embarrassment, and most importantly the chain of command and how they address the issue.

But, the exact same thing can be said for women in the military and sexual abuse against them, however, seems to be worse. They're retaliated against, ostracized and made to feel like they're of no value, their claims are invalid, sometimes re-assigned, or worse yet forced to continue to work side by side with their attackers.

And as we've seen in the past, when a high ranking officer is involved, charged, tried and convicted, their CO can and most often does over-ride the Court Martial decision which they do have the power to do, and in some cases have either given a promotion, or been allowed to retire with full benefits.

No matter how it's handled it's still a slap in the face of the victims!

Over the past couple of years I've spoken to many victims of MST both men and women, the ordeals they were forced to endure, and still justice was never presented, treatment, and medical care and benefits aren't provided.

There are a few VA Medical Centers who have specialized clinics to help victims of Sexual Assault, but most are not capable of it. And those seeking benefits to help them deal with it can't get the much needed psychological help needed or monetary benefits to help them through their day to day lives because they didn't file charges, or did and some how they mysteriously vanished and nothing happened.

And as with all Veteran issues both the Congress and Veterans Affairs drag their feet, and either find ways to not adequately address the issues, or laugh them off, or just flat out ignore them as they're "not as important" as providing monetary assistance to foreign countries, or providing all the freebie programs to the illegals, Syrian refugee's, etc.

As with all issues dealing with Veteran health care, benefits, and assuring you are getting what you have more than earned, I again ask all our readers to use the phone numbers provided toward the bottom of this newsletter, call your Senators and Congressman, and demand they immediately address Veteran issues now, not tomorrow, not next year, now!

Lives are at stake! And all Veterans lives MATTER!

We're still pushing hard on Congressman Farr's office and we still seriously need all Veterans who lived on base and served at Fort Ord 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.

And should you have any documentation that help you in a claim, and would be willing to provide that to Veterans-For-Change where we can upload to the website to assist others, please contact me.

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

No Cost of Living Adjustment for 2016

The 2016 cost of living adjustment (COLA) for federal benefits will be zero for 2016. This is because the index used to determine military retirement, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability payments, and social security shows that there has been no inflation since last September. The dramatic decrease in the cost of gasoline has cancelled out all the other price increases, leaving a net negative Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). This is the third time of no increase since increases were made automatic in 1975. For more details, see [this Paycheck Chronicles post](#).

Veterans ID Card Update

As a response to an ongoing demand from veterans for a card that would simply serve as valid proof of military service, the Veterans Identification Card Act 2015 (Public Law 114-31) was enacted this past summer (July 20, 2015). According to VA sources, they have begun the process of implementation. The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has been tasked with implementing this law, which will be available nationwide.

While the law gave a deadline for implementation, the VA still must publish regulations and solicit public comment before finalizing the program. Then, the VA will be reaching out to Veterans to let them know how they can obtain the card, should they choose to request one. The cards will not be issued automatically. The law provides for the VA to charge for the cards, but at this time, the cost of the card has not been determined. As indicated in the law, these ID cards would not take the place of a VA health care enrollment card, a VA Choice Card, or any additional identification card that confers VA benefits upon the cardholder.

Military retirees and 100% T&P veterans are eligible for valid DoD identification cards, which are widely accepted as proof of military service/veteran status. The new VIC will help veterans who served less than a career and who are less than 100% disabled. However, there does not now appear to be any reason why anyone who is willing to pay the fee could not qualify for one.

Note: The card comes as a response to the request of many veterans who require proof of service to qualify for some programs and promotions from commercial enterprises, but who do not want to carry their DD-214. The DD-214 is proof of military service and has information on it which may pose a security risk if lost. Veterans Day (November 11, 2015) is coming up shortly, and there will be many restaurants (for instance) offering a free meal to veterans. However, they generally require proof of military service, which this card would satisfy. However, it is doubtful that this program will be in full swing in time for this year's holiday.

TRICARE: Prior Authorization

Sometimes certain types of specialty care and prescription drugs require special review called prior authorization to make sure they are right for the patient. Prior authorization is a standard process throughout the health industry. If a procedure or drug requires prior authorization, it may be because there is an equally effective treatment or therapy available at a lower cost. Prior authorization applies to more than 80 drugs under the pharmacy benefit and some [compound drugs](#). TRICARE requires you to use the generic version of the drug, but prior authorization lets your doctor provide evidence to

show that the brand name works better for you. For more information, visit [TRICARE's prior authorization webpage](#). You can check the status of your request for prior authorization on the [Express Scripts' website](#).

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Post-9/11 GI Bill: Additional Actions Needed to Help Reduce Overpayments and Increase Collections. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-42>

Drug Control: Additional Performance Information Is Needed to Oversee the National Guard's State Counterdrug Program. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-133>

Indian Energy Development: Actions Needed to Address BIA Management Challenges, by Frank Rusco, director, natural resources and environment, before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-171T>

VA Primary Care: Improved Oversight Needed to Better Ensure Timely Access and Efficient Delivery of Care <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-83>

Emergency Management: FEMA Has Made Progress since Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, but Challenges Remain <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-90T>

Medicaid: Additional Federal Controls Needed to Improve Accuracy of Eligibility Determinations and for Coordination with Exchanges <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-157T>

VA Primary Care: Improved Oversight Needed to Better Ensure Timely Access and Efficient Delivery of Care <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-114T>

National Institutes Of Health: Better Oversight Needed to Help Ensure Continued Progress Including Women in Health Research. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-13>

Medicaid: Additional Efforts Needed to Ensure that State Spending is Appropriately Matched with Federal Funds. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-53>

Medicaid and Insurance Exchanges: Additional Federal Controls Needed to Minimize Potential for Gaps and Duplication in Coverage. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-73>

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Preliminary Results of Undercover Testing of the Federal Marketplace and Selected State Marketplaces for Coverage Year 2015, by Seto Bagdoyan, director, forensic audits and investigative service, before the Subcommittee on Health, House Committee on Energy and Commerce. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-159T>

Medicaid: Additional Federal Controls Needed to Improve Accuracy of Eligibility Determinations and for Coordination with Exchanges, by Carolyn L. Yocom, director, health care, before the Subcommittee on Health, House Committee on Energy and Commerce. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-157T>

Study Looks at Women Veterans

A new study has found that up to one in five women who served in the U.S. Military during the 1960s and 1970s experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at some point in their lives and many are still living with the condition. Most of the study participants who served in Vietnam and the U.S. were members of the Army. More than half of the women in all categories were nurses during the war. About 20 percent of the women who served in Vietnam met the criteria for PTSD at some point in their lives, and about 16 percent of women who served in Vietnam still met the criteria for PTSD. An abstract of the study is available on the [JAMA Psychiatry website](#).

Help for Homeless Veterans

Nearly 50,000 veterans in the United States are in search of a place to sleep every night. They are homeless and have little food to eat. That's why the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has a hotline for anyone in need or at risk of being in need. The hotline number is 1(877) 4AID-VET. Learn more on the [Birmingham, Alabama VA Medical Center website](#). There is safe housing available, as well as employment opportunities and health and mental health services.

TRICARE Doesn't Cover All Costs: Get Covered

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](#).

Grants for Driver Training for Vets

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) today announced nearly \$2.3 million in grants, double the amount provided in 2014, to 13 technical and community colleges across the country to help train veterans and their families for jobs as commercial bus and truck drivers. A list of the community colleges receiving the grants is available on the [Transportation.gov website](#). Also, the [Military Skills Test Waiver Program](#) has been expanded to include all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Under this program, state licensing agencies have authority to waive the skills test portion of the CDL application for active duty or recently separated veterans who possess at least two years of safe driving experience operating a military truck or bus. For more information, visit the [Department of Transportation website](#), the FMCSA [website](#), and the FMCSA [Military webpage](#).

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 **2,416,950** 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
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now) (**Updated 04/05/15**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 10/23/15 **45** New Jobs and **1** New Job Fair)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,281** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,588** Active Links)(**Updated 10/23/15**)

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.

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

AF Wounded Warrior Program

The Air Force Wounded Warrior program includes service members seriously wounded in combat, with major illnesses such as cancer, or severe injuries from accidents on- or off-duty. There are about 40 recovery care coordinators in the Air Force Wounded Warrior program. This job is to be up-close-and-personal, dedicated advocates and problem-solvers for Airmen, including Reserve and Guard. The recovery care coordinator works up a Comprehensive Recovery Plan for the Airman based on his or her goals. The Air Force Wounded Warrior program proactively identifies qualifying Airmen from daily medical status reports sent to all major commands, but encourages self-referrals from anyone who may qualify. For more information about this and other programs for wounded, ill or injured Airmen, visit the [Air Force Wounded Warrior website](#).

Soldier Missing From Korean War Accounted For

The Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

U.S. Army Cpl. Robert E. Meyers of Greencastle, Pennsylvania, will be buried Oct. 26, in Arlington National Cemetery. Meyers, assigned to Company A, 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, was declared missing in action, Dec. 1, 1950, after his unit was involved in combat operations in the vicinity of Sonchu, North Korea. The U.S. Army declared Meyers deceased March 2, 1954.

In 1954, United Nations and communist forces exchanged the remains of war dead in what came to be called "Operation Glory." All remains recovered in Operation Glory were turned over to the Army's Central Identification Unit for analysis. The remains they were unable to identify were interred as unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii, known as the "Punchbowl."

In 2012, due to advances in technology, the Department of Defense began to re-examine records and concluded that the possibility of identification for some of these unknowns now existed.

To identify Meyers' remains, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used circumstantial evidence, dental analysis, and chest radiographs, which matched Meyers' records.

Today, more than 7,800 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. Using advances in technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously returned by North Korean officials or recovered by American teams.

Armed Service Chairmen say: Reforms Ahead for Benefits and Compensation

Following a recent event at the Brookings Institution, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, told reporters “TRICARE reform is going to be a key focus because access to care is not what it should be.” Thornberry said work on healthcare reform will begin in the coming weeks. “There are a number of areas where we ask: ‘Are we best positioned to recruit and retain top quality people in today’s work environment?’

As you know, the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) recommended a complete overhaul of the military health system, to include dumping TRICARE, realigning medical commands and better integrating Defense Department care with Veterans Affairs medical offerings.

At this time, it is unknown how the MCRMC recommendations may influence next year’s focus on healthcare reform. However, if the MCRMC proposal on retirement is an indicator, be prepared to get out-front of the discussion. As you know, the Commission’s plan to establish a blended retirement system to replace the traditional 20-year system formed the basis of reform detailed in the recently approved National Defense Authorization Act.

Source: NAUS

Veterans and the Great Outdoors

The nonprofit organization Veterans and Sportsmen United in Michigan aims to bring military veterans together in fellowship through the great outdoors. Activities for the group include weekend-long hunting trips with 13 to 15 attendees and day hikes with smaller groups. Veterans get to take part in outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, bush-craft survival and other outdoor activities. The group invites veterans to reach out if they are interested in joining the organization. For more information, visit the [Veterans and Sportsmen United website](#) or e-mail info@veteransandsportsmen.org. Follow Veterans and Sportsmen United on [Facebook](#).

Lawmakers Set Focus on Medicare Premium Fix

Congressional efforts to block a looming premium spike for millions of Medicare beneficiaries could add upwards of \$10 billion to the cost of a budget deal but also provide powerful incentives for lawmakers to throw their weight behind an agreement.

An estimated 16.5 million seniors, or 30 percent of enrollees in Medicare Part B, are expected to see their monthly premiums for doctors’ visits and outpatient services rise by at least \$54 in 2016. The remainder are protected by a “hold harmless” provision preventing Part B premiums from rising more than their Social Security paychecks.

Here’s the problem: By law, Social Security beneficiaries whose Medicare premium is automatically deducted from their Social Security benefits are held harmless from Medicare premium increases if there is no COLA, which occurred this year. While this greatly assists the 70 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who are protected in this way from a reduction in their monthly Social Security benefit, it results in a disproportionate increase in premiums for the 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who are obligated by law to pay for the increases that are not passed onto Social Security beneficiaries. Those held-harmless beneficiaries’ monthly premium will stay at \$104.90, whereas the unprotected Medicare beneficiaries will face a 52 percent increase to \$159.30 each month.

A number of House and Senate lawmakers have readied legislation to forestall the increase (S. 2148, H.R. 3696), freeze premiums for all beneficiaries, and limit other out-of-pocket costs. NAUS supports urging lawmakers to sort out this matter and fix the issue.

Source: NAUS

VA Offers Help for Domestic Abuse Victims

One-third of all female veterans report experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetimes, and every single day in the United States, approximately three women are killed by an intimate partner. VA wants to assist veterans affected by Domestic Violence (DV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). If you are a female veteran and need information or resources about intimate partner violence or help with any other issue, visit www.womenshealth.va.gov or call 855.VA.WOMEN.



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.

Updated with 45 NEW Job Postings and 1 New Job Fair

Border Jobs for Vets Act Would Bring Jobs

The [Border Jobs for Veterans Act](#), which has already passed both houses of Congress, aims to connect veterans with hundreds of open positions with Customs and Border Protection. The bill would put veterans working at ports of entry across the country. People are encouraged to apply year-round for jobs with Customs and Border Protection because the application process can be lengthy. Hiring veterans could speed up that process, according to some of the bill's co-sponsors like Arizona Senators John McCain and Jeff Flake. The belief is that the returning veteran would still have some form of clearance, so background checks and other tests could be much quicker. The bill is awaiting President Obama's signature. For more information on applying for jobs, visit the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection website](#).

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Agency fields Army's most advanced CT scanner](#)
- 2) [Army Family Programs On the Chopping Block](#)
- 3) [Deputy loses job in fight for custody of dog](#)
- 4) [Ending Veteran Homelessness](#)
- 5) [First Military Pit Bull Comes Home ... To A Cage And Muzzle](#)
- 6) [From Washington NEWS for the ENLISTED](#)
- 7) [How to help improve care for our Veterans](#)
- 8) [Interim director of Tomah V.A. will keep position through 2015](#)
- 9) [Navy Medicine leaders urge readiness for flu season](#)
- 10) [New Court Ruling Finds Blue Water Veteran's Regulation: "Irrational"](#)
- 11) [No COLA for 2016](#)

- 12) [November Paychecks for Some Could be Delayed if Debt Ceiling Increase is Not Approved](#)
- 13) [Pittsburgh VA appoints third interim director in a year](#)
- 14) [Saving lives on future Navy platforms](#)
- 15) [Service members use brain games for memory, attention issues](#)
- 16) [Soldiers building homes for homeless Vets](#)
- 17) [Study: Wind blew deadly gas to U.S. troops in Gulf War](#)
- 18) [The Top Ten Congressional Districts With the Largest Numbers of Veterans](#)
- 19) [U.S. Sailors train British expeditionary medics during Operation Integrated Serpent](#)
- 20) [University of Phoenix Kicked Off of DOD Facilities](#)
- 21) [Vets dismayed by VA payback rules on separation pay](#)
- 22) [Why Was Allison Hickey Covering For Rubens, Graves?](#)
- 23) [Wilford Hall EMS first AFMS team to use infusion pumps](#)
- 24) [Women to be Subject to Draft Registration Says Secretary of the Army](#)

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

VA Million Veteran Program Hits Milestone

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Million Veteran Program (MVP) has enrolled its 400,000th veteran volunteer, squarely putting it on track to become one of the world's largest medical databases, linking genetic, clinical, lifestyle and military-exposure information, with the goal of learning more about the role of genes in health and disease. Veterans who volunteer for the program donate blood, from which DNA is extracted, and periodically fill out surveys about their health, health-related behaviors and military experiences. They also consent to having authorized researchers access the information in their VA electronic health record, and to being re-contacted for future research opportunities. All information is kept secure and de-identified. For more information about MVP and VA research in general, visit the [VA Office of Research and Development website](#) and the [VA Million Veteran Program \(MVP\) webpage](#).

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

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Grants

The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) helps homeless veterans find housing. Through the VASH program, homeless veterans are provided a special class of Section 8 vouchers that they use at approved agencies to obtain housing. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, provides supportive services to very low-income veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Eligible veteran families are provided case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, which includes time-limited payments to third parties (such as landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. For more information, visit the [VA Homeless Veterans webpage](#), the [HUD-VASH Vouchers webpage](#), and the [VA Homeless Veterans SSVF webpage](#).

Veterans still facing major medical delays at VA hospitals

CNN reports appointment wait times at the Department of Veterans Affairs are not getting better.

Despite billions of extra dollars poured into the agency in the last year and numerous reforms intended to improve veterans' access to care, whistleblowers and internal documents obtained by CNN reveal some VA facilities continue to grapple with appointment wait times of months or more.

Even at the Phoenix VA medical center, where VA managers devised "secret" appointment lists hiding how veterans were dying waiting for care, CNN sources say complicated wait-time calculations continue to obscure ongoing appointment delays.

"The reality is veterans are waiting months -- three, six months at a time, sometimes more -- for care at the Phoenix VA," said one source in Phoenix who agreed to speak to CNN anonymously because of fears of retaliation. Click [here](#) for full report.

Source: NAUS

Navy Chaplains and Sexual Assault

The Navy Chaplain Corps is a first responder in many situations that deal with the health and welfare of an individual. In addition to providing pastoral care, chaplains can provide a safe atmosphere that reduces fear and anxiety and helps the victim of sexual assault re-establish a sense of personal control and self-determination -- all with 100 percent confidentiality. Chaplains also come alongside to help survivors navigate the path to further assistance with other partners in care. Call 1-855-NAVY-311 to connect with a chaplain in your area. For more information, visit the [U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps website](#), the [DoD Self Helpline website](#), the [DoN SAPR website](#), the [U.S. Navy SAPR website](#), the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center website](#), and the [Rape Abuse and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#).

Acting for Veterans

A group of Milwaukee-area actors offer workshops in which veterans depict conflict-heavy scenes from Shakespeare's plays, aimed at helping the former service members deal with post-traumatic stress, addiction and reintegration issues, as well as mental health problems. The free program is called "Feast of Crispian." Since the weekend programs started in 2013, more than 300 veterans have taken part. This year's effort includes rehearsals and a full production of "Julius Caesar," which will be put on at a Milwaukee theater Oct. 30 through Nov. 1. For more information, visit the Shakespeare with Veterans [Feast of Crispian website](#).

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

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

IG Report: VA Officials Force Managers Out, Then Take Newly Vacant Jobs

At a House Committee hearing Wednesday, the Department of Veterans Affairs refused to allow five officials cited in a Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General [report](#) on misuse of authority and waste of government money to appear before the House Veterans Affairs Committee for questioning.

The department alleged that allowing the officials to appear could undermine internal efforts to investigate and discipline them.

But the committee's chairman, Representative Jeff Miller, who has grown increasingly critical of the pace of change at the department, shot back at the hearing, saying that the department had too often failed to hold officials accountable.

"If we do not aggressively shed light on issues we uncover," Mr. Miller said, "V.A. will just sweep them under the rug for an extended period of time and wait for public attention to go elsewhere."

Two of the officials subpoenaed were Diana Rubens and Kimberly Graves, who oversee regional benefits offices. The committee had also planned to subpoena their boss, Undersecretary of Benefits Allison A. Hickey, but she abruptly resigned last week.

With no department officials present, the committee heard testimony instead from Linda Halliday of the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General. She described an investigation by the office that found that Ms. Rubens and Ms. Graves had forced other managers out of their positions and then taken the newly vacant jobs, which came with fewer responsibilities, but kept the same pay. The moves cost the government more than \$400,000 in moving costs and relocation bonuses.

"It is clear from this report," Chairman Miller said in a statement, "that Under Secretary Hickey and others in VA leadership knew they could use fear, intimidation, and timely relocation incentives to coerce subordinates to relocate to jobs they didn't apply for at the taxpayers' expense ... it is clear from day one that VA officials were using the relocation expenses program to enrich themselves. The actions of the individuals uncovered by this report are a discredit to VA employees and veterans."

Source: NAUS

Fishing Trip for Veterans

The Freedom Alliance, a charitable organization that supports the military and their families, will host eleven wounded service veterans October 17–23 for its annual fishing trip on Oregon's Rogue River. The trip starts with a visit to Wildlife Images Rehabilitation and Education Center in Grants Pass before their 65-mile journey launches at Alameda Park in Merlin. "Recreational therapy is so important for combat veterans. This allows them to enjoy outdoor activities once again, despite their traumas," said Tom Kilgannon, President of Freedom Alliance. "After all they've sacrificed for this country, these veterans deserve an amazing experience that will also help in their continued recovery." For more details, see [this Under the Radar post](#).

Troy University Offers Literature Program for Vets

Troy University is offering a new literature program for veterans and service members in the Ft. Benning, AL area. Funded by and offered in partnership with the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a new weekly reading program: "Story Swap: Literature and the Veteran Experience" is helping reintroduce many veterans to literature and helping them recognize that each person reads literary pieces based on his or her own experiences, making the individual veteran an expert on the story that he or she has read. The Phenix City Campus of Troy University is hosting soldiers assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Benning. Each week, participants read selected literary pieces – some of which are military based – and a novel is selected for each 8 week study session.



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



Love your country. Your country is the land where your parents sleep, where is spoken that language in which the chosen of your heart, blushing, whispered the first word of love; it is the home that God has given you that by striving to perfect yourselves therein you may prepare to ascend to him.

~Giuseppe Mazzini~

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Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

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New York	102,214
Los Angeles	88,359
Boston	55,967
Veterans	18,998,068
Other Social Media:	12,352
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
	19,455,102