



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, March 27, 2016

Volume 7, Issue 13

This-N-That

It will never cease to amaze me when inside corruption is ousted but nothing ever seems to happen to those who profit from their actions.

We had hospital administrators who “lost” \$400,000.00 yet were allowed to keep their jobs, VA employees who were proven to have murdered a Veteran allowed to keep his job, and then we come across Wendy Gillis who was responsible for building a new facility in North Carolina and charged with finding a location and obtaining the property for construction.

However, there is a sweet little catch! A relative of Wendy's had the property she wanted who gave the \$4 million dollar contract to that relative. And wouldn't you know it Wendy received a “promotion” not a demotion or termination.

We already know politicians do this, and nothing happens to them either and all along I thought we had protections in place to prevent this from happening and with penalties involved. Well I guess I was wrong there!

But it still begs the question, was the sale of this property and grant of the contract and overly inflated cost? And how much? And where is the justification?

It's been in the news for several months now, but only smidgens of news pieces here and there where the VA against second amendment rights has been taking weapons from Veterans and those who refused were told not a problem lose your benefits.

Well it's back again with this time from Senator Grassley who is calling on Senate appropriators to restrict federal funds from being used by the VA to categorize individuals as mental defective without a judicial ruling that they are a danger to themselves or others.

My personal strongest suggestion, is to refer to the phone numbers further down in the newsletter and get on those phones and burn up the phone lines in DC and demand support of Senator Grassley on Second Amendment Rights for all Veterans!

And when you see news that pertains to the Veterans Affairs, staffing, facilities, please, contact the reporter if you have experienced the same issues, call your Reps in DC and voice your concerns and do it often!

If you as Veterans band together, stay on their backs, continually remind them, it still might take time, but this way they have you on their mind 24/7, not just when it's election time.

By remaining silent, you are literally accepting what is versus what should be!

The majority of our readers are Veterans, and most if not all of you have served on foreign soil at one point in your career and I'm sure that when it came time for mail call you witnessed one or more fellow soldiers in your unit whose names were never called.

Operation Mail Call is designed to address that problem and a little more!

Betty Hidalgo who is the director of VFC's Operation Mail Call Program does her level best to bring a little joy to all those on foreign soil by sending them care packages which she is working all the time to fill them with a little bit of home with cards, letters, baked goods, candies, and sometimes little gag gifts, anything she can find to bring a little joy to their daily lives where they are.

We still need lots of help with cards and letters letting them know all those here at home appreciate them, and support them.

A little further down in this newsletter there is a web link which will take you to the information on where you can send cards and letters which will be included in many of the boxes that go out weekly.

We'd appreciate anything you can do to help us bring a little joy to them, maybe even put a smile on their faces even if only for a few moments.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health and a very Happy Easter weekend!

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

Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month, a time to recognize and support the more than 5.3 million Americans who are living with traumatic brain injury-related (TBI) disabilities. Those suffering from traumatic brain injury can display a wide variety of symptoms based on the severity of the injury. Common signs and symptoms include headache or neck pain; memory loss; slowness in thinking, speaking, acting, or reading; getting lost or easily confused; fatigue and mood changes; blurred vision; and ear ringing. Signs and symptoms of TBI may be subtle and might not appear until days or weeks following the injury, while some symptoms can be missed altogether. For more information, visit the U.S. Army TBI webpage at www.army.mil/tbi/, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center website at dvbic.dcoe.mil/, the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury website at www.dcoe.mil, the Deployment Health Clinical Center website at www.pdhealth.mil/TBI.asp, and the Health.mil website at www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Conditions-and-Treatments/Physical-Disability/Traumatic-Brain-Injury?page=2.

VA Firing Top Officials at Phoenix VA Hospital

Three top officials at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona, are being targeted for removal. VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson on Tuesday identified the three as Associate Director Lance Robinson, Chief of Health Administration Service Brad Curry, and hospital Chief of Staff Dr. Darren Deering. The Phoenix VA became [ground central to the wait-times scandal](#) that eventually revealed that officials across the VA system were hiding their inability to meet appointment standards by keeping secret lists of veterans seeking care.

State of Emergency in Wisconsin due to Severe Winter Weather

March 25, 2016

The Governor of Wisconsin has declared a State of Emergency for the entire state due to severe winter weather. Emergency prescription refill procedures are in place from 03/24/2016 through 04/23/2016. Get more information [here](#).

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!

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my e-mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from the kids too!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

VA to Commemorate 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

Exemplifies a MyVA priority to Improve the Veteran Experience While Thanking Vietnam Veterans and Their Families

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced it will conduct hundreds of events in VA facilities across the nation on Mar. 29 to recognize, honor and thank U.S. Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices as part of the national Vietnam War Commemoration.

VA Secretary Robert McDonald will host a wreath-laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial – “The Wall” to initiate VA’s contribution to the Commemoration. He will be joined by Defense Secretary Ashton Carter. “We are proud to partner with the Department of Defense in this endeavor. Secretary Carter’s Vietnam War Commemoration staff has greatly assisted us in planning this humble tribute to our Vietnam Veterans and their families.”

VA, along with more than 9,000 organizations across the country, has joined with the Department of Defense as a Commemorative Partner to help Americans honor our nation’s Vietnam Veterans.

Authorized by Congress, established under the Secretary of Defense, and launched by the President in May 2012, the Vietnam War Commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7 million living today, served during that period, and the Commemoration makes no distinction between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call of duty.

“This Commemoration has special significance for those of us at VA because of our honored mission to serve those who have “borne the battle,” said McDonald. “It’s also an opportunity to remember our VA colleagues who served in this generation of Veterans, to extend our heartfelt appreciation to them and to their families who shared the burden of their loved one’s service.”

More than 329 VA medical centers, regional benefit offices and national cemeteries will host events, many in partnership with local Veteran service organizations and volunteers.

By presidential proclamation issued on May 25, 2012, the Commemoration extends from its inaugural event on Memorial Day 2012 through Veterans Day 2025.

Commemorative Partners – local, state and national organizations, businesses, corporations and governmental agencies – have committed to publicly thank and honor Vietnam Veterans and their families on behalf of the nation and have pledged to host a minimum of two events annually.

To learn more about the Vietnam War Commemoration, go to: www.vietnamwar50th.com

VA Expands Hep-C Treatment

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it is now able to fund care for all veterans with hepatitis C for Fiscal Year 2016 regardless of the stage of the patient's liver disease. The move follows increased funding from Congress along with reduced drug prices. Treatment priority is established for the sickest patients. Also, if veterans are currently waiting on an appointment for community care through the Choice Program, they can now turn to their local VA facility for this treatment or can elect to continue to receive treatment through the Choice Program. VA expects that with the expansion, many more Veterans will be started on hepatitis C treatment every week. For more information, visit VA's [Viral Hepatitis website](#).

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

Eight Great Jobs for Veterans

Forbes Magazine and CareerCast.com recently listed the following as being great jobs for veterans: (1) financial advisor, (2) information security analyst, (3) interpreter/translator, (4) management consultant, (5) network and systems administrator, (6) physical therapist, (7) registered nurse, and (8) human resources manager. With fewer people out of work, recruiters are finding it harder to find job applicants to fill open positions. According to the Society of Human Resource Managers, 2016 will see an increase in that trend. These factors indicated that the power in the jobs market lies [with job-seekers](#), not employers.

For more veteran job listings visit the [Veterans-For-Change Jobs and Job Fairs](#) listings!

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 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,646,767** 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 **14,417+** documents
- FAQ's (**1,662** on-line now) (**Updated 02/20/16**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated **03/14/16 21** New Jobs and **1** New Job Fairs and **0** Business Opportunity)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)

- News (Updated almost daily, **5,593** articles on-line)
- Polls Added **02/08/16**
- Web Links (**3,429** Active Links)(**Updated 03/07/16** added **1** New Links)

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.

VA Identifies Additional Beneficiaries in Need of Fiduciary Assistance
*New Technologies Aid VA in Identifying 14,000 Beneficiaries Delayed for Fiduciary Appointments
 Due to Claims Processing Errors*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that an information technology system that it deployed in 2014 and enhanced in 2015, the Beneficiary Fiduciary Field System, allowed it to identify claim processing errors affecting approximately 14,000 Veterans and survivors. These Veterans' and survivors' claims were initially filed over many years, with some going back as far as 2000. The errors concern cases in which VA had proposed that due to disability or age the beneficiary was unable to manage his or her VA benefits without assistance, but did not complete the action by transferring it within VA for appointment of a fiduciary. These cases represent approximately four percent of such proposals since 2000.

VBA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) became aware of a potential problem when it received inquiries about delayed fiduciary appointments from affected beneficiaries or their families. A system-wide review by VBA using the new technology found claim processing errors that had occurred at each of its regional offices and pension management centers across the country. In these cases, one or more of the procedures for controlling and transferring the workload were not followed, resulting in the fiduciary appointment delays.

"We sincerely apologize to these Veterans and their survivors for this regrettable delay," said VA Deputy Secretary Sloan D. Gibson. "We are taking immediate action to complete these cases, initiate the fiduciary appointment process, and ensure that these errors do not happen again. We must also continue to transform the claim process for beneficiaries needing fiduciary assistance and properly resource our fiduciary program to ensure that beneficiaries have the help they need to effectively use the benefits they earned."

VBA has set up a dedicated team to immediately review the cases, notify beneficiaries, complete the claim processing steps, and appoint a fiduciary as quickly as possible. Because the law requires VA to check the qualifications of the fiduciaries it appoints, including conducting a face-to-face interview, VA anticipates that it may take as much as six months or more to complete the fiduciary appointment process for these beneficiaries. However, the beneficiaries will continue to receive their monthly benefits as VA works to appoint a fiduciary to assist them.

Additionally, VBA has already modified its systems to better track this workload and plans to remove manual transfer processes that are prone to error through enhancements to its automated claims processing system, the Veterans Benefits Management System.

For more information, Veterans can contact (1-888-407-0144).

From March 11 to April 7, authorized Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAES) shoppers can [enter to win a \\$500 Exchange gift card](#) as part of the NCAA March Madness 2016 Unilever Sweepstakes. Thirty lucky winners will be chosen by random drawing on or about April 11. Authorized shoppers 18 and older may enter at the [ShopMyExchange.com website](#). No purchase is necessary.



<http://veterans-for-change.org/>

Military ID with Felony Conviction?

In this week's Questions and Benefits column, a reader who is about to become a military spouse asks if it is possible to get a military ID if one has had a felony conviction. For the answer the question, see the [Questions and Benefits post](#).

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Veteran-Owned Small Businesses: VA Improved Its Verification Program but Lacks an Effective Operational Plan for Ongoing Efforts. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-129>

Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request: U.S. Government Accountability Office. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-533T>

Small Employer Health Tax Credit: Limited Use Continues Due to Multiple Reasons. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-491T>

Administrative Leave: Evaluation of DHS's New Policy Can Help Identify Progress toward Reducing Leave Use. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-342>

Healthcare.gov: Actions Needed to Enhance Information Security and Privacy Controls. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-265>

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter: Preliminary Observations on Program Progress. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-489T>

Federal Air Marshal Service: Actions Needed to Better Incorporate Risk in Deployment Strategy. http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Healthcare.gov: Actions Needed to Enhance Information Security and Privacy Controls. http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Federal Protective Service: Enhancements to Performance Measures and Data Quality Processes Could Improve Human Capital Planning. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-384>

IRS Referral Programs: Opportunities Exist to Strengthen Controls and Increase Coordination across Overlapping Programs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-155>

AGENT ORANGE RELEASE BY IOM ---- ANOTHER 2/94TH MEMBER LOST

Hi to All,

For the Battalion fellows we lost another member to AO (Herbicides plural).

SGT Stephen R. Thorn of A Battery 67-68 was lost on March 5 2016 to Prostate Cancer, Bone Cancer, Liver Cancer.

We thank Stephen for serving this nation when so many would not serve. With the gratitude of this Battalion, the Army, and this Nation....REST IN PEACE.

Thorn, Stephen R. - SGT 67-68 Passed Away on Mar 5 2016 from AO Cancers - Prostate, Liver, Bone 'REST IN PEACE'

Received this from Stephens's Brother.

My brother Steve served with " A " Battery at Camp Carroll from approx. November 23, 1967 to August 30, 1968. It would be wonderful to hear from any of his surviving fellow gun crew members who may have known and served with Steve, or who may possibly have some group photos that include Steve and the other " A " Battery crew members taken during this time period. In this regard I can be contacted via my email address at: jthorn25@comcast.net
Thank you in advance for any assistance you may be able to lend in this regard.

Jack Thorn

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Close call: VA worker reinstated with back pay after missing time due to being in prison for armed robbery](#)
- 2) [Congressmen acknowledge lingering problems, promise more attention to Veterans issues](#)
- 3) [GOP targets Veterans gun ban](#)
- 4) [Grassley Calls For Funding Restrictions to Stop VA From Stripping Veterans of Second Amendment Rights](#)
- 5) [Grassley Stands Up for Veterans' Second Amendment Rights](#)
- 6) [Legion to Congress: VA must develop patient-centered care strategies](#)
- 7) [VA Boss Promoted After Steering \\$4M Contract To Relative](#)
- 8) [Vet Goes on Hunger Strike After Kansas Took His Kids for Legally Using Cannabis to Treat PTSD](#)
- 9) [Veteran dies after setting himself on fire outside New Jersey VA clinic](#)

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



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 03/27/16 by 6pm PST

No Co-Pay Rx with the MBA TRICARE Supplement

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

WWII Museum Restoration Nears Completion

The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana has launched a Kickstarter Campaign to raise \$100,000 to complete its restoration of the PT-305 boat. The museum hopes to have the boat sailing Louisiana's Lake Pontchartrain by early next year. The battle-hardened WWII boat conducted more than 77 offensive patrols and operations, fought in 11 separate actions and sank three German ships during its 14-month deployment. The funds raised will cover all of the costs that are needed to transport the boat to the water and cover all the testing and certifications so the boat is ready to operate. For more information, visit the Launch PT-305! [Kickstarter webpage](#).

Veteran Crisis Resources	
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
Military Crisis Line	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans	1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)
VA Caregiver Support Line	1-855-260-3274

VA Call Center Helps with Adverse Credit Reporting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has established a Community Care Call Center for veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance. VA is urging veterans to continue working with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity. For more details about the Veterans Choice Program, visit the [Veterans Choice Program webpage](#). Veterans seeking to use the veterans Choice Program can call 1-866-606-8198 to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

Florida Town Offers 'Hero' Parking Spots for Vets

The city of Cocoa Beach, Florida, has found a new way to honor veterans and first responders — by designating "super hero" parking spots. In Nov. 2015, local councilman and veteran Tyler Furbish proposed the idea to fellow veteran and city manager John Titkanich. Just a few days later, three of these spots were opened at City Hall. For more details, see [this Task & Purpose article](#).

Michigan Veterans Home Dinged in Audit

A recent audit report by the Office of the Auditor General for the State of Michigan of the Grand Rapids Veterans Home has revealed quality-of-care issues like not administering pharmaceuticals correctly and abuse and neglect cases not being taken seriously. The report also revealed the home was understaffed 81 percent of the time. Two state Senate committees will hold hearings on the audit. The full audit report is available on the Office of the Auditor General, State of Michigan, [website](#).

New Veterans Memorial in Las Vegas

The Las Vegas Veterans Memorial in Las Vegas, Nevada will be dedicated May 27, seven years after it was envisioned. The memorial will feature 18 larger-than-life statues from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terrorism. The \$2.2 million project is being sponsored by the Las Vegas Veterans Memorial Foundation and American Shooters Inc., in partnership with the state. For more information, visit the [Las Vegas Veterans Memorial website](#).

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

Additional Disciplinary Actions by VA

The VA has announced actions against four leaders at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and close-out of an Administrative Investigation Board (AIB) review of the Denver Hospital Replacement project.

Based on results of investigations VA proposed three actions and issued one action. These actions include:

Danny Pummill, acting undersecretary for benefits, received a proposed 15-day suspension. This action is based on his alleged lack of oversight regarding Ms. Rubens' and Ms. Graves' actions in connection with their relocations.

Diana Rubens, director, Philadelphia Regional Office, received a reprimand and a proposed 10-percent salary reduction. This action is based on her failure to exercise sound judgment by creating the appearance of impropriety in connection with her relocation.

Kimberly Graves, director, Minneapolis/St. Paul Regional Office, received a reprimand and a proposed 10-percent salary reduction. This action is based on her failure to exercise sound judgment by creating the appearance of impropriety in connection with her relocation.

Additionally, Beth McCoy, director, Field Operations, received a reprimand, based on her failure to exercise sound judgment by creating the appearance of impropriety in connection with her involvement in vacating the position to which she was then permanently assigned.

Mr. Pummill's action, if sustained, is appealable to a third party. Ms. Rubens' and Ms. Graves' pay reductions, if sustained, may be reviewed by the VA Secretary but may not be appealed to outside third parties.

Source: NAUS

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

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:

<http://gem.godaddy.com/signups/193302/join>

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.

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

Proposed TRICARE Fee Increases

As you know DoD is once again proposing massive new fees to use TRICARE. Including an unprecedented fee for TRICARE for Life. Please go to the NAUS CapWiz area and send an email to your elected representative indicating your disapproval and condemnation of these fees for healthcare. Our brave men and women, many of whom are on fixed incomes, only want what they were promised and have earned. Go to this [website](#) and join with other NAUS members and supporters.

Source: NAUS

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.

Source: NAUS

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



America is a passionate idea or it is nothing. America is a human brotherhood or it is chaos.

~Max Lerner, *Actions and Passions*, 1949~

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:	144,459
Boston	65,787
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
Dept of VA	12,890
DoD	4,190
Face Book Pages:	3,111
Los Angeles	106,664
New York	124,785
Other Social Media:	16,498
San Francisco	63,004
Twitter:	30
U.S. House of Reps & Staff	825
U.S. Senators & Staff	92
University of So. CA	1,909
US Air Force	14,588
US Army	41,198
US Marines	20,249
US Navy	17,189
Veterans	19,044,991
Washington DC	152,874
Yahoo:	134

[PDF Version](#)