



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, June 05, 2016
Volume 7, Issue 23

This-N-That

It's seems now it's "Game On" that there might be a call for privatization of the VA Healthcare System. Personally, I feel this is a very dangerous move.

I see this as a dangerous move having been digging and investigating for many years now how best to save money and put those savings into medical care and benefits and the VA has the strongest buying power over any other medical institution in the country, but, they're really not taking advantage of this.

Moving toward privatization will more than double costs, and if you recall the Choice Card, well it's still a fiasco but thousands of Veterans wanted it, and all it did was make matters worse for many. So privatizing the VA will do exactly the same thing, make matters worse, but if you don't want to believe me, that's ok, we can simply wait and see.

Three years ago when I proposed a method to not only exchange out old and outdated medical equipment and save money, and to take advantage of the buying power the VA has but doesn't use to several hundred members of Congress, I did get some really good feed back, but.. not near enough to see anyone take action.

And while I continue to work with one Senator and his staff on computerization of the Veterans Benefits Claims system, putting the two together would drastically improve over all services, provided Congress can actually produce legislation that is BULLET PROOF, meaning no loopholes on how to address the problems within the employment of staff for the VA Facilities and not wimping out should the POTUS decide to veto the bill.

Then we have Phoenix VA Director Susan Helman who managed to skate charges of tampering with Patient Wait Lists but was allowed to plea bargain down to accepting "gifts" and retain her job back in the news claiming violation of constitutional rights.

I wonder, did I miss something in school where the constitution allows or covers employment other than discrimination?

U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch said Tuesday that the law fast-tracking firings is unconstitutional because VA employees cannot appeal a final decision by an administrative judge.

Lawmakers have become increasingly frustrated with what they see as the VA's inability to fire poor managers. New legislation has been working through the House and Senate, though there is no agreement yet between the two chambers on how much power to give the department in dealing with such cases.

Might I suggest a very strongly worded, legal and binding morals clause in an employment contract? Leaving no room for doubt and all decisions final?

The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs has headed the investigation on the facility, which has been called "Candy Land" by some Veterans because doctors there were said to easily prescribe painkillers. This report is a follow up to one conducted in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, which found that over-prescribing painkillers may have led to three deaths.

Interesting though in the process of their investigation, the offenders were allowed to keep their jobs, and from inside sources many staff had been watching, monitoring and attempted to report violations and they all went ignored and this had been going on for at least the past two years.

What does it take to rid the VA of uncaring, uncompassionate staff and staff who would normally be held responsible for the death(s) of anyone?

Where is Secretary McDonald today? He couldn't come up with another off the wall comparison like he did with the VA and Disneyland?

Operation Mail Call is still in need of your help!

We desperately need cards and letters of encouragement for those who are serving on foreign soil. Many are single, have no family, or are not communicating with family and just need a little encouragement, and know that WE THE PEOPLE do care about them, appreciate them, and thank them for the job that 99.5% of Americans can't or won't do.

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'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. And we know Betty would love to have more cards and letters to put in the care packages.

On behalf of myself and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

House Votes to Let VA Doctors Recommend Marijuana

Last week, the House endorsed a proposal which would allow VA doctors to discuss the use of medical marijuana with patients. The measure by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) had been offered previously as an amendment to an annual spending bill for the VA and military construction projects without success, but this time it passed on a 233-189 vote. Currently 24 states, along with the District of Columbia, have passed laws allowing access to medical marijuana to treat conditions including anxiety and traumatic brain injury. Fourteen of those states authorize doctors to recommend medical marijuana to treat post-traumatic stress disorder. "I think it is the right thing to do for our veterans, to be able to treat them equitably, to enable them to have access to the doctor who knows them the best, giving them better treatment and saving them money," said Blumenauer.

VA and LeanIn.org Partnership Seeks to Empower Women Veterans

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Center for Women Veterans today announced a partnership with LeanIn.Org, the nonprofit organization founded by Facebook Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg, to empower women to achieve their ambitions. Building on the successful launch of [LeanIn.Org circles](#) within the Department of Defense, VA is following the same model to increase support to women Veterans.

The VA initiative is called the LeanIn.Org [Women Veterans' chapter](#). The Women Veterans Chapter is comprised of two distinct pilot programs: the Veteran-to-Veteran program, a virtual program, which allows any woman Veteran to participate, no matter where she is located; meetings will be moderated and attended by women Veterans throughout the United States. The second is a face-to-face pilot circle. The face-to-face program is created in partnership with the existing LeanIn.Org chapter in Seattle, WA. This circle is an innovative hybrid of women Veterans and non-military members providing an environment for both to learn and share leadership skills.

"We are thrilled to have LeanIn.Org as our collaborative partner," said Kayla M. Williams, Director of VA's Center for Women Veterans. "For many years, women Veterans have expressed to us that they need to have a mechanism to engage with their fellow women Veterans to make a difference in their community and we believe this is the perfect match. VA is pleased to be a part of these two pilot programs."

"Women are the fastest growing population of our nation's Veterans and through this Circles program, these women will have the peer support and community they need to reach their goals," said Ashley Finch, LeanIn.Org, Head of Partnerships. "LeanIn.Org is proud to be a part of this groundbreaking and important initiative."

For more information about the LeanIn.org Women Veterans' chapter, visit [LeanIn.Org/womenvets](#) or <http://leaninseattle.org/veterans>.

Support Agent Orange Reform in House Spending Bill

The House approved an amendment to the House version of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill (H.R. 4974) that would extend presumptive service connection for conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange herbicide by Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans. The House approved the bill.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently presumes any service member who had boots on the ground or served on Vietnam's inland waterways was exposed to Agent Orange. If these veterans experience health problems related to that exposure, they are eligible for VA disability benefits. The policy, however, denies this presumption to veterans who served off the coast of the Republic of Vietnam, even though many of these so-called "Blue Water Navy" veterans are experiencing the same health problems as those who served inland.

The passage of this amendment, sponsored by Rep. Chris Gibson (NY) is a major step forward for Blue Water Navy veterans, who should be eligible for presumptive exposure to Agent Orange. The Senate has passed its version of the Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations (spending) bill, without this provision. There will be a conference committee appointed to resolve the differences between the two bills. Members are strongly urged to use the FRA Action Center to ask their Senators to support this House provision in the final version of the bill that will be voted on by both chambers and if approved sent to the President to be signed into law or vetoed.

[Take Action Now](#)

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>

Navy Vets Seek Agent Orange-related Benefits

Some Vietnam Navy veterans who never saw action on the ground say they deserve Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits for exposure to Agent Orange. Many of these veterans support the Vietnam Veterans Act, which is being pushed by a grassroots group of veteran volunteers called the Military Veterans Advocacy. The Act would compensate Navy veterans who say they were exposed as plumes of spray containing Agent Orange were washed over ships at sea. The sailors were also often given distilled seawater to bathe and drink. For more information, visit the Military Veterans Advocacy [website](#).

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 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,774,311** 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 **15,002+** documents (**Updated 06/01/16**)
- FAQ's (**1,662** on-line now) (**Updated 02/20/16**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Check Often)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,765** articles on-line)
- Polls Added **02/08/16**
- Web Links (**3,435** Active Links)(**Updated 05/21/16** added **4** 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.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications: DOD Has Taken Steps to Address Sustainment and Maintenance Challenges for Critical Satellite Systems but Could Better Identify Risks and Mitigation Actions.

http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

DOD Financial Management: Greater Visibility Needed to Better Assess Audit Readiness for Property, Plant, and Equipment. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-383>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection: Review of the Staffing Analysis Report under the Border Patrol Agent Pay Reform Act of 2014. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-606R>

Information Technology: Federal Agencies Need to Address Aging Legacy Systems.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-468>

Information Technology: Federal Agencies Need to Address Aging Legacy Systems.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-696T>

Air Force: Service Faces Challenges to Rebuilding Readiness.

http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Army: Service Faces Challenges to Rebuilding Readiness.

http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Navy and Marine Corps: Services Face Challenges to Rebuilding Readiness.

http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Border Security: DHS Surveillance Technology Unmanned Aerial Systems and Other Assets.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-671T>

Medicare Program: Continued Action Required to Address Weaknesses in Provider and Supplier Enrollment Controls.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-703T>

Medicare: Utilization and Expenditures for Complex Wheelchair Accessories.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-640R>

Housing for Special Needs: Funding for HUD's Supportive Housing Programs.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-424>

VA's Health Care Budget: In Response to a Projected Funding Gap in Fiscal Year 2015, VA Has Made Efforts to Better Manage Future Budgets. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-584>

More on the Veterans First Act

On April 28, 2016, U.S. Senators Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., chairman and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, respectively, announced the *Veterans First Act* (S.2981) to begin to change the culture at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs approved the *Veterans First Act* by unanimous vote. [Read the text of the bill](#). The bill's supporters believe that the bill would help change the culture of corruption at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The bill includes accountability measures to give the VA the tools to fire bad actors, to prohibit bonuses for employees accused of wrongdoing and to institute protections for whistleblowers.

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Links to other Stories

- 1) [An Investigation Into Wisconsin's VA 'Candy Land'](#)
- 2) [Don't Privatize the Veterans Health Administration](#)
- 3) [Fired Phoenix VA director scores legal win, sparks outrage](#)
- 4) [I was addicted and homeless. The VA took me in](#)
- 5) [Lawmakers furious at DOJ move that could protect fired VA official](#)
- 6) [Senate Panel Advances Whistleblower Reforms](#)
- 7) [VA Launches Veterans Legacy Program](#)
- 8) [VA Proposes to Grant Full Practice Authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses](#)
- 9) [We were guinea pigs: Documentary puts Atomic Veterans in limelight](#)

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

Psychological Health and TBI Resources

The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) offers several resources for veterans: (1) the AfterDeployment [website](#) offers a variety of wellness resources including online assessments and workshops for post-deployment challenges; (2) [Breathe2Relax](#) is a mobile application that teaches breathing exercises

to help decrease your body's fight-or-flight (stress) response; (3) [inTransition behavioral health care support](#) to servicemembers and veterans as they move between health care systems or providers; and the Real Warriors Campaign [website](#) offers information on a variety of military and mental health topics for veterans and families.



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.

Check often for Updates!

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

Senate to Tackle NDAA This Week

This week the Senate returns from its Memorial Day break and the Armed Services Committee begins deliberations on its' version of the National Defense Authorization Act.

Already SASC Chairman, Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) has made it known that he will be including an extra \$17-18 billion dollars in the basic allotment. He said the House version of the bill, which takes \$18 billion from the account for Overseas Contingency Operations is not the way to go.

The extra money will allow a full, according to present law, pay increase for those on active duty and will help cover the costs of additional equipment that the services need.

NAUS has also learned that Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is offering four separate amendments to either start movement on full Concurrent Receipt of both retired pay and VA disability pay or fully eliminate the disparity. His amendments include lowering the percentage of disability to 40%, inclusion of all who have at least 10% or more and two others, which would be greatly appreciated by those who have their disability pay taken from their retired pay.

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

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

VA Secretary Provides Relief for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald has granted equitable relief to more than 24,000 Veterans following a national review of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) medical examinations conducted in connection with disability compensation claims processed between 2007 and 2015.

This action by the Secretary allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to offer new TBI examinations to Veterans whose initial examination for TBI was not conducted by one of four designated medical specialists and provides them with the opportunity to have their claims reprocessed. Equitable relief is a unique legal remedy that allows the Secretary to correct an injustice to a claimant where VA is not otherwise authorized to do so within the scope of the law.

“Traumatic Brain Injury is a signature injury in Veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and VA is proud to be an organization that sets the bar high for supporting these, and all, Veterans,” said Secretary McDonald. “Providing support for Veterans suffering from a TBI is a priority and a privilege, and we must make certain they receive a just and fair rating for their disabilities.”

To ensure that TBI is properly evaluated for disability compensation purposes, VA developed a policy in 2007 requiring that one of four specialists – a psychiatrist, physiatrist, neurosurgeon or neurologist – complete TBI exams when VA does not have a prior diagnosis.

Since 2007, medicine around TBI has been a rapidly evolving science. VA designated particular specialists to conduct initial TBI exams because they have the most experience with the symptoms and effects of TBI. As more research became available, VA issued a number of guidance documents that may have created confusion regarding the policy. VA has confirmed that its TBI policy guidance is now clear and being followed.

“We let these Veterans down,” Secretary McDonald said. “That is why we are taking every step necessary to grant equitable relief to those affected to ensure they receive the full benefits to which they are entitled.”

VA understands the importance of an accurate exam to support Veterans’ disability claims. The Secretary’s decision to grant relief will enable VA to take action on any new examinations without requiring Veterans to submit new claims. If additional benefits are due, VA will award an effective date as early as the date of the initial TBI claim.

VA will contact Veterans identified as part of this national TBI review to offer them an opportunity to receive a new examination and have their claims reprocessed. More than 13,000 of these affected Veterans are already receiving service-connected compensation benefits for TBI at a 10-percent disability evaluation or higher, which means that the diagnosis has already been established.

***Remember these women who died during June
while serving our country in or during war times***

1 Jun 2009: USAF SrAirman Jessica Tarver, 24, rare disease, Brooke Army Hospital, TX
1 Jun 2012: USMC L/CPL Hollye K Meeks, 26, died in Houston, TX
3 Jun 2005: CIVILIAN Linda Joyce (Brown) Villar, 41, DA, IRAQ
4 Jun 2008: USMC CPL Ebony P Cooper, 25, fell from hotel in Phuket, Thailand
4 Jun 2011: USA SGT Devin Snyder, 20, insurgent attack, AFGHANISTAN
5 Jun 2005: IDARNG SPC Carrie Lee French, 19, IRAQ
5 Jun 2006: USNR HM2 Class Jaime S. Jaenke, 29, IRAQ
6 Jun 2004: USA PFC Melissa J. Hobart, 22, IRAQ
7 Jun 1943: WASP Jane Dolores Champlin, WW II
8 Jun 1969: USA ANC 1LT Sharon Ann Lane, 25, VIETNAM
8 Jun 2013: USA MAJ Jaimie E Leonard, 39, AFGHANISTAN
8 Jun 2015: DoD CIVILIAN Krissie K Davis, 54, indirect fire attack, AFGHANISTAN
9 Jun 2011: USAF A1C Kelsey S Anderson, 19, possible suicide, GUAM
10 Jun 2010: USA PVT Elizabeth Lynch-Gonzalez, 19, suicide, NYC, NY
11 Jun 1944: WASP Dorothy Mae "Dottie" Nichols, WW II
11 Jun 2007: USA SPC Crystal D Bolling, 22, motor pool accident, Ft Campbell, KY
12 Jun 2002: USAF SSG Anissa A. (Shuttleworth) Shero, 31, AFGHANISTAN
13 Jun 1944: WASP Marjorie Doris Edwards, WW II
15 Jun 1999: USN PRAN Misty Dawn Warren, 24, parachute failure, China Lake, CA
18 Jun 2013: SPC Ember M. Alt, 21, AFGHANISTAN
19 Jun 2008: USA SPC Megan L Touma, 23, found in motel room murdered by US soldier, Fayetteville, NC
19 Jun 2014: USN BM SM Yeshebel Villot-Carrasco, 23, possible suicide at sea, USS James E Williams
20 Jun 1944: WASP Gleanna Roberts, WW II
21 Jun 1944: WASP Lea Ola McDonald, WW II
21 Jun 2007: USA SPC Karen N Clifton, 22, IRAQ
23 Jun 2005: USMC L/CPL Holly A. Charette, 21, IRAQ
23 Jun 2005: USMC CPL Ramona M. Valdez, 20, IRAQ
23 Jun 2005: USNR CS1 Class Regina R. Clark, 43, IRAQ
24 Jun 2008: CIVILIAN Nicole Suveges, 38, IRAQ
24 Jun 2014: SDANG COL Tamara "Tami" Mielke, 50, suicide
25 Jun 2007: USA SGT Trista L Moretti, 27, IRAQ
27 Jun 2005: CIVILIAN Deborah Klecker, 51, police liaison, IRAQ
28 Jun 2007: CIVILIAN Santa Garcia Ramirez, PAE/LM, AFGHANISTAN
29 Jun 1944: WASP Bonnie Jean Alloway Welz, WW II
29 Jun 2013: USA SSG Catherine "Cathy" Oatman (Ret), result of Agent Orange complications, Pinellas Park, FL
30 Jun 2011: USAF Airman Basic Megan J. Victory, 22, sudden illness, Lakeland AFB but died at Fort Sam Houston, TX

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://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.



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~

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!

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Face Book Pages:	3,245
Google	2,521
Los Angeles	117,574
Microsoft	3,169
New York	134,399
Other Social Media:	23,198
San Francisco	67,777
Twitter:	32
U.S. House of Reps & Staff	829
U.S. Senators & Staff	95
University of So. CA	2,415
US Air Force	29,599
US Army	40,591
US Marines	21,057
US Navy	19,014
Veterans	19,050,557
Washington DC	141,445
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	19,896,324

