



# Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

*Week Ending Sunday, September 04, 2016*  
Volume 7, Issue 33

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

First off I would like to wish all a very happy and safe Labor Day Weekend!

Veterans in Crisis, contemplating Suicide, or a family member trying to deal with a Veteran Spouse or parent needing to call the Crisis Hotline, would never, ever expect to be greeted by someone in a foreign country!

But it now seems that Veterans are to be considered a low priced or low value commodity not needing special attention and special care.

Rob Matthews, a disabled Veteran, called the crisis hotline to get help with a family emergency. Someone who admitted to not being an American and not being located in the continental United States greeted him on the phone.

According to Matthews, he called the crisis hotline to get help about a personal matter. He immediately noticed the person had a thick foreign accent.

After growing suspicious, given his expectation that he would be speaking to an American working for VA within the continental United States, he asked more questions.

“Are you in the United States?”

The operator responded, “No sir, I am not American and not in the US, but I am here to help you.”

How much more insanity can the VA exhibit toward our country’s Veterans? Is this one of their “cost” savings moves?

There are so many other ways to save money within the VA Healthcare System, several I have spoken of before, but to cut costs on Emergency Care such as a Suicide/Crisis hotline to a foreign country, that is as about as low as they could go.

So again I am saying Veterans-For-Change NEEDS YOU, we need your help! And I know many of you think calling on your reps in DC won’t help, won’t change things, I can assure you, if their offices are flooded with phone calls, E-Mails, and even Faxes, they will pay attention.

So before you make the excuse they never listen, never do anything, think again. Stopping their flow of cash into their pockets will get their attention, and we all know they may go into office poor, but they leave multi-millionaires.

So please, help us to help you, and those who are or may contemplate suicide, help us to force that twenty-two suicides down to ZERO by making the calls, getting on their websites and sending the same message, and if you have a fax machine, fax their DC office and send a letter to their local office demanding this be brought to an immediate halt. Help us to help save lives!

If we keep putting pressure on them, WE can all help force change!

And as always, if you have a problem with a claim, appeal, getting appointments, receiving proper, and timely delivered medical care, suffered abuse at the hands of a VA Employee, please keep writing me.

Tell me your story, and if you're able to provide VA employee names, please do. It's important we weed out the bad apples, we know there are tons of medical people out there who need jobs and are willing to do the best they can, they just need the job to do it and again WE can force change, but we need YOU to help make it happen!

On behalf of myself and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health and a happy and safe Labor Day weekend!

Respectfully,  
Jim Davis  
Founder

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

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### ***States of Emergency Declared in Florida and Hawaii***

The governors of Florida and Hawaii have declared States of Emergency due to severe weather. Emergency refill procedures are in place from August 30, 2016 through September 30, 2016. See "[Disaster Alerts](#)" on the TRICARE website for more information.

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions).

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### ***Commissary Agency Announces New Way to Determine Customer Savings***

TREA has been actively involved in the effort to save the commissary benefit ever since it has been under attack by some politicians in Congress and by bean counters within the Department of Defense itself. Because of our efforts and the efforts of our sister military and veteran organizations, we have so far defeated the efforts to gut the commissary benefit.

Late last week the Defense Commissary Agency issued the following news release. Later this week the staff in TREA's Washington Office will participate in a conference call with DoD officials regarding this new change. We will keep you updated on this issue as the situation develops further.

Here is the DoD news article:

The Defense Commissary Agency is forming a new approach to calculating customers' savings, aligning it more closely with private-sector practice, according to a Defense Department news release issued today.

This better reflects what patrons experience daily with the products they routinely buy in the geographic regions in which they routinely shop, DeCA officials said.

"We hear from our military families that they sometimes find lower prices on selected items outside the gate," said Joseph H. Jeu, DeCA's director and CEO. "For the first time through this new approach, we will compare our prices with local grocers on a more frequent basis to better inform our customers of potential cost savings over stores in their nearby community."

Source: TREA



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### ***State of Emergency Expanded to Additional Florida Counties***

The governor of Florida expanded the State of Emergency to include the following counties:

- Escambia
- Holmes
- Manatee
- Okaloosa
- Osceola
- Santa Rosa
- Sarasota
- Walton
- Washington

Emergency refill procedures are in place from August 30, 2016 to September 30, 2016. Go to the [Disaster Alerts](#) page for the full list of affected counties.

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## ***Missing Medicare Part B Enrollment Window Can Cost You – 10% For Life***

If you or anyone you know has missed their Medicare enrollment window and has been penalized as a result, please reach out to [info@treadc.org](mailto:info@treadc.org) to let TREA: The Enlisted Association's Legislative Affairs Office know about it.

Medicare Part A covers hospitalization; Part B covers doctor visits, tests and therapies. Most people do not pay a premium for Part A; part B usually carries a premium, with individuals or couples with higher incomes paying more.

While people are required to sign up for both parts at age 65, they can postpone using Part B. Some do so because they don't want to pay the premium and may have better or less expensive insurance from another source.

The bottom line, though, is most people must sign up for both parts during a specific seven-month window.

TREA: The Enlisted Association has recently heard that veterans, many of whom are using the VA for their healthcare needs, are being penalized an extra 10 percent on the standard Part B premium for every year, after age 65, that they do not enroll.

That can add up to thousands of extra dollars in Medicare fees over the decades.

Experts are suggesting that Medicare or Social Security agencies should send out detailed announcements about initial enrollment to let people know exactly what decisions they need to make and when they will be effective.

For most people, the seven-month registration window opens three months before their birth month. So, for example, if you were born April 10, you would enroll between Jan. 1 and July 31.

There can be late enrollment penalties in some cases for Part A, but these aren't for the life of the benefit, as they are for Part B.

For more information, contact Social Security at 800-325-0778 or [ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov). Medicare can be reached at 800-633-4227 or [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Source: TREA

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## ***Commissary Shoppers to Get Clearer View of Savings***

Commissary shoppers have long suspected that they save more on groceries at some bases than at others, compared to local commercial stores. Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) will soon show them how right they are. Sometime next year DeCA will begin to calculate and publish separate cost-saving averages for commissary shopping across seven newly defined regions that will encompass all of the United States.

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## **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

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### ***CalVet Disapproves GI Bill Approval for ITT Technical Institute***

Sacramento – To protect the hard-earned GI Bill Education benefits for California Veterans, the California State Approving Agency for Veteran Education (CSAAVE), a division of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), sent a "Notice of Disapproval" to all 15 California campuses owned and operated by ITT Educational Services, Inc. (ITT). CSAAVE's Disapproval is effective immediately. GI Bill benefits may be used only at approved institutions.

"CalVet takes seriously our duty to ensure California Veterans receive the education and training they are paying for with their earned GI Bill benefits," said Keith Boylan, CalVet Deputy Secretary of Veteran Services. "CalVet stands ready to assist the more than 1,300 affected Veterans and beneficiaries currently enrolled at ITT, and they are encouraged to visit our website for important information about continuing their education," added Boylan.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) regulations authorize CSAAVE to disapprove non-compliant institutions and programs in California. CSAAVE's Notice of Disapproval is based on ITT's failure to comply with federal and state regulations for approval, and precludes ITT from participating in the GI Bill education benefit program or certifying recipients for benefits.

On August 25, 2016, the [U.S. Department of Education took action](#) to ban ITT from enrolling new students using federal financial aid funds. On August 26, 2016, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education issued an [Emergency Decision](#) requiring ITT to stop accepting new students at all 15 California locations.

For additional information, CalVet encourages Veterans and beneficiaries using the GI Bill at a California ITT campus to visit CalVet's website:

[www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/GI-Bill-Suspension-Information.aspx](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/GI-Bill-Suspension-Information.aspx).

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### ***VA Provides Service Dog Benefits***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it is piloting a protocol to implement veterinary health benefits for mobility service dogs approved for Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with mental health disorders. Service dogs are distinguished from pets and comfort animals because they are specially trained to perform tasks or work for a specific individual with a disability. To be eligible for the veterinary health benefit, the service dog must be trained by an organization accredited

by Assistance Dogs International in accordance with VA regulations. More information about VA's service dog program is available on the VA Guide and Service Dogs [webpage](#).

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## ***Operation Mail Call***



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

Our men and women in uniform often go months without hugging their children, walking through the park with a significant other or enjoying Mom's home-cooked Sunday dinners.

Ask them where they'd go if they had a free plane ticket anywhere in the world, and the overwhelming majority would say, "home."

Of course, we can't replace the hugs, the love or the secret family chili recipe – but with your help, we can provide them a connection to their fellow Americans who are grateful for their service.

Now, we're hoping you'll take your support to the next level by sending more cards and letters. Hand made cards by your children, or class mates are a terrific means of putting smiles on their faces even if only for a moment.

Cards and Letters of encouragement to help boost moral and let them know we sincerely appreciate the job they are doing and look forward to they day they are all brought home. Your card or letter will show your appreciation and help thousands more American heroes feel connected to the people they love and the country they serve.

Please help us to make a powerful expression of how much their fellow Americans care about them.

Thank you so much for all you're doing to show our service men and women they are appreciated missed and loved.

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

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

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### ***Government Accountability Reports***

Export-Import Bank: Status of Dual-Use Exports as of August 2016.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-844R>

Medicare: 2016 Payment Rates for Complex Wheelchair Accessories.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-840R>

Physician-administered Drugs: Comparison of Payer Payment Methodologies.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-780R>

Federal Real Property: Public-Private Partnerships Have a Limited Role in Disposal and Management of Unneeded Property. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-776R>

Performance.gov: Long-Term Strategy Needed to Improve Website Usability.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-693>

Federal Hiring: OPM Needs to Improve Management and Oversight of Hiring Authorities.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-521>

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### ***Save on Out-of-Pocket Costs Left Behind by TRICARE***

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](#).

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### ***How to Transfer College Credits***

The Joint Services Transcript (JST) provides a detailed assessment of your professional military education, training and occupation experiences and puts them on an official document. The American Council on Education gives instruction on how to apply for and [receive a JST](#) and is a resource for those looking to align their military experience and convert that into college credits. Be certain that you retain any documentation that might assist in your credit development, including commendations, sample work, training certificates, recommendations and evaluations.

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***YOU HAVE TO READ THIS  
IF YOU NEED TO ASK FOR HELP OR HAVE ASKED FOR HELP FOR ISSUES CONCERNING VA  
HEALTH CARE***

For now I am the only one in the country and with the American Legion the only VSO organization offering representation using the VA legal system to fight back when denied medical care. Jim has been handing out my email address to people. So they can contact me and no one is following through to get help.

For now you have to take action if you want to solve your issues with the VA. Otherwise you are going to keep getting screwed and some of you will die because of lack of proper care. I'AM GOING TO BE BLUNT. GET OF YOUR BUTTS AND CONTACT ME.

Hopefully soon we will be replaced by attorneys being provided by the American Bar Association. Who have just committed to providing legal representation for free. With their new Pro-Bono Veterans initiative. I am in contact with them to pick this issue up as their first type of legal service they will offer.

For now here is info on our program. Follow the instructions on how to get a hold of me and what to put in it. WE WILL FIGHT TO GET YOUR DENIED MEDICAL BENEFITS AND OR DISABILITY CLAIMS RECTIFIED. YOU AS VETERANS DESERVE PROPER CARE,AND QUESTIONS ANSWERED. CONTACT OUR GROUP. WE SPECIALIZE IN ASSISTING VETERANS.

Greetings,

I'm Brian Sinykin and I will be representing Veterans in from the beginning of filing a Notice of Disagreement to the Department in the VA hospital that denied you medical benefits through to the Board Of Veterans Appeals. I am associated with the National American Legion who is the only organizations that is representing veterans besides myself. Who are denied a medical benefit, medical care, and assist you with claims.

If this has happened to any of you, or any of your comrades we are worldwide. You must email me at [mnvag@comcast.net](mailto:mnvag@comcast.net) with your name, phone#, and the reason you are contacting me.

In a page or less, give me a brief description of what happened and the name/s of who denied you and what department denied you.



Also tell us if you received denial verbally or in writing. If in writing send a copy to us. I will forward those cases I feel are better handled by the Legion to Rosco Butler The American Legion Headquarters. Mr. Butler is Deputy Director for Healthcare Veterans Affairs & Rehab.

You can now fight back legally to get the healthcare you need.

If you feel that you are being overlooked, or misrepresented, please contact me so that we can move forward.. Disability cases you feel are being ignored or taking to long contact us immediately. Especially PTSD cases.

Any Veteran who feels they might be experiencing medical neglect, malpractice regarding the VA send me the information you are referring to. I have connections Certified Malpractice attorneys that goes after the VA that are located in many of the states across the US. If you are still fighting for your disability this does not interfere with that action. As a matter of fact it will help it especially when you win. No fee till they win.

"I do not charge for my services"

Brian P. Sinykin

[sknbutch@comcast.net](mailto:sknbutch@comcast.net)

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### ***Navy Adjusts Retirement Waiver Policy***

The U.S. Navy has announced an update to the policy for commanders and captains with at least 24-months time in grade (TIG) to request a waiver to retire at their current rank before completing their 36 month time-in-grade commitment. Rather than a blanket authorization, now every officer community will decide if TIG requests can be supported. Special circumstance cases may be considered on a case-by-case basis. An information spreadsheet is posted on the Naval Personnel Command [website](#); click on Force Shaping Lever Chart. TIG and NLG waiver requests for active component commanders and captains can be made by calling (901) 874-3180/3183 (DSN 882-3180). Reserve officers will submit their requests by calling (901) 874-4482/4483 (DSN 882-4483).

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### **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**

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### ***Veterans Eligible for Cybersecurity Training***

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Hire Our Heroes have teamed up to offer training for veterans in cybersecurity. DHS's Federal Virtual Training Environment (Fed VTE) offers free online, on-demand cyber security training to government employees and veterans. Veterans can sign up for an account through

the [Hire Our Heroes website](#) and follow instructions through "ID me" to verify veteran status and register for a FedVTE account. DHS also offers a [Veterans Cybersecurity Training and Education Guide](#) to help veterans assess their readiness and interest in a cyber security career.

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## Veterans-For-Change Web Site

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly "One-Stop-Shop" website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 1,700 hits per day, and downloads average 1,400 per day with a total **2,966,082** visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE** of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

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

- Documents Library with over 15,616 documents on-line (Updated: **08/02/16**)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers (Updated: **02/20/16**)
- Multiple Forums
- Job Postings (Updated: **08/20/16**)
- Memorial Pages (Updated: **01/02/16**)
- News (Articles On-Line: **5,983**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,443, Added 1 New Links (Updated: **08/22/16**)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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*Peer Support for Michigan Veterans*

The Buddy-to-Buddy Volunteer Veteran Program is the only program of its kind in Michigan. Focused on peer support, veterans help other veterans and service members. The program helps veterans and military service members open up about the problems they face. Buddy-to-Buddy is one of a suite of programs offered through M-SPAN, The University of Michigan's Military Support Programs and Networks. These programs are there for veterans, active and reserve military, and their families. For more information, visit the M-SPAN [website](#).

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<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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### ***VA to Tailor Cancer Care***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is partnering with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to tailor cancer care for patients based on the genes and proteins associated with their tumors. The new Applied Proteogenomics Organizational Learning and Outcomes consortium (APOLLO) will create the nation's first system in which cancer patients' tumors are routinely screened for gene and protein information with the goal of finding targeted therapies for each individual patient. APOLLO will initially focus on lung cancer in patients at VA and DoD medical centers with plans to eventually include other forms of cancer. VA medical centers will also expand their participation in NCI's network of clinical trial sites.

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### ***Links to Other Stories***

- 1) [\*Book Review: McNamara's Folly\*](#)
- 2) [\*Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Cover-Up Hinted In Navy Letter\*](#)
- 3) [\*Confederate Flag Banned At Veterans Cemeteries? New VA Policy Restricts Use At Federal Sites\*](#)
- 4) [\*Did Veterans Affairs Outsource Its Veterans Crisis Line To India?\*](#)
- 5) [\*Disability Compensation for Veterans with Multiple Non-Compensable Service-Connected Disabilities\*](#)
- 6) [\*Federal Agencies See No End In Sight For Veteran Homelessness\*](#)
- 7) [\*Getting the Most Out of VA Disability Claims Involving the Spine – Part 1\*](#)
- 8) [\*REPORTING DURING SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH\*](#)
- 9) [\*Sleep apnea's CPAP machine doesn't cut heart risks, study says\*](#)
- 10) [\*Some homeless Veterans are missing in action when it comes to assistance\*](#)
- 11) [\*State of Women Veterans Social Media Campaign Launched\*](#)
- 12) [\*Statement from VA Secretary Bob McDonald on President Obama's final assessment of the Commission on Care\*](#)

13) *Suicide Prevention Month: #BeThere*

14) *USPS employees accused of hoarding parcels, stealing Veterans' medication*

15) *VA Awards \$300 Million More in Grants to Help End Veteran Homelessness*

16) *VA chief urges Congress to pass bill to reform agency*

17) *Veteran Kills Himself in Parking Lot of V.A. Hospital on Long Island*

18) *Veteran's Stroke Exposes Blame Game For VA Versus University Surgeons*

19) *Veterans Affairs restates policy banning Confederate flags*

20) *What Veterans with Social Security Disability Benefits Need to Know When Pursuing VA Disability Benefits*

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)



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

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

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

If you're an employer and have a job to post, send an E-Mail to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)



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## ***DoD Official: We Want You Back in our Hospitals***

According to a report in Military.com, “Shifting military family members back into military hospitals and clinics for health care is a top priority ...” for the Defense Health Agency.

For many years, military family members enrolled in Tricare Prime have been referred to civilian health care providers if they cannot receive primary health care in a military treatment facility.

That began to change in 2014 when the Army and Air Force began to move nearly 30,000 Tricare Prime beneficiaries who had been receiving care from civilian providers near their bases/posts back into the military health care system. The Air Force will now be joining in that effort.

Under the Army/Navy effort, Tricare Prime beneficiaries were either involuntarily brought back into the military system, or were “invited” back in through an advertising campaign effort. Recognizing the fact that location close to a health care provider often made the civilian provider more attractive, DoD health care has set up six areas nationally where beneficiaries can see the military health care provider closest to them, regardless of whether the provider is from their service or not.

The Defense Health Agency says it is working on the issues that are of concern to families and their ultimate goal is to have families want to receive their care from a military provider.

### **Tinnitus is Number One Disability For Veterans**

The sounds of gunfire, machinery, aircraft, and much more are part of the everyday lives of servicemembers and they can leave many Veterans with permanent hearing damage. As a result, tinnitus is the number one disability among Veterans and it affects at least one in every 10 American adults.

Some describe ringing sounds, a buzzing sound, a high-pitched whistle, or numerous other sounds. The causes and effects of tinnitus vary from individual to individual. For some people, tinnitus is just a nuisance. For others, it is a life altering condition.

Over 150,000 veterans were diagnosed with tinnitus in 2015 and nearly 1.5 million veterans are currently receiving disability benefits for it.

### **Can Tinnitus Be Cured?**

In most cases, there is no specific cure for tinnitus. For some people, tinnitus is just a nuisance. For others, it is a life altering condition. However, if your doctor finds a specific cause of your tinnitus, they may be able to eliminate it.

One of the options for treating tinnitus is wearing a hearing aid. If you experience hearing loss, a hearing aid may reduce or temporarily eliminate head noise. It is important to set the hearing aid at moderate levels, because excessively loud levels can worsen tinnitus in some cases. You should always discuss the use of a hearing aid with your VA doctor. The VA may be able to provide you with one for free.

However, if that is not an option, there is now an option for a low-cost hearing aid.

### **Big Savings on Hearing Aids Now Available**

Advances in technology now make hearing aids into high-tech medical devices. The best hearing aids ever made are now in production.

Military retirees from active duty, Guard, and Reserve units who have hearing loss and/or tinnitus are eligible to participate in this program. Retired Commissioned Officers of the US Public Health Service are also eligible for this program at military treatment facilities, under certain conditions.

Dependents of military retirees are ineligible to participate in this program throughout the US. A website with the list of participating sites can be found at the end of this article.

Retirees can obtain hearing aids at significant savings by using this program. Two hearing aids can usually be purchased for less than \$2,000. Exact costs are variable and subject to change at any time without notice. Contact your nearest audiology clinic for further details.

Note: your closest clinic could be located hundreds of miles away from your home. The costs to travel for this program need to be considered versus the availability of an audiologist in your local community to assist you with repairs, warranty repairs, re-programming, etc.

Not every medical facility is able to provide this program. Care of active duty members takes precedent at all MTFs. It is recommended that you contact the appropriate military facility before incurring significant travel expenses. Facilities may discontinue this program for any reason without notice to us.

Retirees can use any military treatment facility which will accept them; you don't need to return to your service affiliation to participate in this program.

This program is not a TRICARE benefit.

A current list of sites which provide this program is available at <http://militaryaudiology.org/rachap-rhapp-locations/>.

Source: TREA

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

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If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.

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

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### ***DAV Priorities Wrap-Up of the 114th Congress***

When Congress returns to Washington after Labor Day, they will have less than four weeks to deal with unfinished legislative matters prior to the November elections. There may even be less time if one chamber

of Congress decides to leave earlier than currently planned.

With the number of legislative days dwindling, key legislative priorities of the DAV have yet to be passed by Congress.

Women Veterans: DAV's special report-*Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home* identified gaps in benefits and services across the federal landscape for women service members and veterans. Congress must act to improve services for women veterans and ensure their unique transition needs are met. Several bills are pending in both the House and Senate to aid women veterans.

Caregivers: Today, only veterans severely injured on or after September 11, 2001 are eligible for comprehensive VA caregiver supports and services. Congress must pass legislation to expand the eligibility for VA's Caregiver Support Program to veterans of all eras.

Appeals Reform: Because VA's inventory of appeals continues to outpace its processing capacity, passing of reform legislation is needed to correct this unacceptable situation and modernize VA's appeal process.

Several bipartisan legislative measures are awaiting Congressional consideration that would address these problems. With elected officials now back in your home state, now is the time to call your elected representatives' district and state offices.

You can find your elected officials' **district** telephone numbers by entering your zip code [here](#). Please call them with this message:

***Ask for their commitment to pass legislation: 1) to ensure VA meets the unique needs of women veterans, including H.R. 1356 and S. 471; 2) to expand access to VA's comprehensive caregiver support program, H.R. 2894 and; 3) to modernize VA's appeal process, H.R. 5620. Also, please press for passage of S. 2921, the Veterans First Act, which contains many of these same provisions.***

As always, DAV appreciates your advocacy and participation in the Commander's Action Network. Your grassroots activism makes DAV more influential in promoting policies and programs to aid injured and ill veterans.

Click [HERE](#) to send your message!

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### ***'Vet Air' Flies Veterans***

The nonprofit organization Vet Air in Holyoke, Massachusetts provides transportation to veterans utilizing general aviation aircraft. Veterans seeking transportation to medical appointments or for compassionate reasons qualify for this service. The service is provided free of charge. The organization has flown patients to destinations as far away as Florida. For more information, visit the Vet Air [website](#) and follow Vet Air on [Facebook](#).

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### ***Veterans Crisis Line***



September is suicide prevention month. The Veterans Crisis Line is a confidential service, so veterans who call do not even have to say who they are. Veterans and their loved ones can connect with VA responders 24 hours a day, seven days a week by: (1) calling the toll-free hotline (800) 273-8255, and then pressing 1; (2) texting the number 838255; or (3) or chatting online at the Veterans Crisis Line website at [www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat). Veterans and family members can visit the Veteran Crisis Line website at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) for suicide prevention resources. Also, there are suicide prevention coordinators (over 300) located at every VA medical center in the country.

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### *Website for Women Veterans*

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently revamped its Center for Women Veterans [website](#). The website now includes a list of news stories updated every business day, resources, a list of relevant upcoming events, and information about ongoing and published research. Women are also highlighted when they are featured as VA's [#VeteranOfTheDay](#).

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Please remember these women who died during September while serving our country in or during war times

1 Sep 2008: USA SSG Renee A Deville, 44, died at Walter Reed from injuries sustained in IRAQ  
2 Sep 1899: Army Contract Nurse Anna Campos, Typhoid Fever, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR  
4 Sep 2006: USA PFC Hannah L. (Heavrin) Gunterman McKinney, 20, non-combat vehicular homicide, IRAQ  
5 Sep 2004: ILARNG SGT Shawna M. Morrison, 26, IRAQ  
5 Sep 2012: USA CWO2 Thalia S (Ramirez) Belbeck, 28, helicopter crash, AFGHANISTAN  
6 Sep 2011: NVARNG SFC Miranda McElhiney, 31, murdered at IHOP in NV  
7 Sep 2007: USA SPC Marisol Heredia, 19, IRAQ  
8 Sep 2006: USAR SFC Merideth L Howard, 52, AFGHANISTAN  
11 Sep 2001: PAPD CPT Kathy Mazza-Delosh, 46, killed when WTC collapsed  
11 Sep 2001: EMT Yamel Merino, 24, killed when WTC collapsed  
11 Sep 2001: NYPD Officer Moira Smith, 38, killed when WTC collapsed  
11 Sep 2001: USNR LT Mari-Rae Sopper, PENTAGON on AA Flight 77  
11 Sep 2001: USN YN3 Melissa Rose Barnes, 27, telecommunications, PENTAGON  
11 Sep 2001: USN SK3 Jamie Lynn Fallon, 23, storekeeper in Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Support Activity, PENTAGON  
11 Sep 2001: USA SPC Chin Sun Pak-Wells, 25, administrative assistant to the deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON  
11 Sep 2001: USN IT1 Marsha Dianah. Ratchford, 34, Navy information technician, PENTAGON  
11 Sep 2001: USA SGT Tamara Thurman, 25, assistant in the office of the deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON  
11 Sep 2001: USA LTC Karen J. Wagner, 40, medical personnel officer in the office of the Army surgeon general and deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON  
11 Sep 2001: USA SSG Maudlyn A White, 38, PENTAGON  
12 Sep 2006: USA 2LT Emily J T Perez, 23, IED, IRAQ  
13 Sep 1944: WASP Alice E. Lovejoy, WW II  
13 Sep 2014: USAR SSG Virginia Caballero, 41, possible blood clot while enroute home  
14 Sep 2006: USA SGT Jennifer Hartman, 21, IED, IRAQ  
14 Sep 2006: USA CPT Rebecca Ann Jarabek, 28, Medivac Pilot died in OH  
15 Sep 2003: USA SPC Alyssa Renee Peterson, 27, non-combat gunshot, IRAQ  
18 Sep 1920: USN NNC Grace Coulter, died at Marine hospital, Louisville, KY  
18 Sep 2010: USA PFC Barbara Vieyra, 22, IED/RPG attack, AFGHANISTAN  
19 Sep 1950: USN NNC ENS Eleanor Beste, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean



19 Sep 1950: USN NNC ENS Marie Boatman, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Jeanne E. Clarke, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Jane L. Eldridge, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC ENS Constance R. Esposito, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Alice S. Giroux, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Calla C. Goodwin, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Constance A. Heege, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Margaret Grace Kennedy, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC Ensign Mary E. Lijegreen, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 1950: USN NNC Ensign Edna J. Rundell, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean  
 19 Sep 2006: USA 1LT Ashley (Henderson) Huff, 23, IED, IRAQ  
 19 Sep 2006: USN LCDR Jane E (Lanham) Tafoya, 43, natural causes, Bahrain  
 19 Sep 2009: USA SSG Cynthia Meadows, 35, difficulty breathing, Ft Huachuca  
 19 Sep 2015: USAR MAJ Paula (Askins) Graham, 38, Chester, VA, suicide  
 20 Sep 2007: USA CPT (Dr) Roselle M. Hoffmaster, 32, non-combat incident, IRAQ  
 23 Sep 1943: WASP Betty Taylor Wood, WW II  
 24 Sep 2010: USA PFC Jaysmine S Petree, 19, IED, AFGHANISTAN  
 25 Sep 1898: Army Contract Nurse Irene Toland MD, Typhoid Fever, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR  
 25 Sep 2008: USA PVT Dominique Gibson-Brooks, 19, seizure in room during BCT Ft Jackson, SC  
 26 Sep 1950: USAF AFNC CPT Vera M. Brown, died at Ashiya Air Base, Japan due to plane she was assigned to crashed during a medical evacuation flight  
 28 Sep 2005: USAF A1C Elizabeth N. Jacobson, IRAQ  
 28 Sep 2007: MAARNG SPC Ciara Durkin, 29, non-combat gunshot, AFGHANISTAN  
 29 Sep 1968: CIVILIAN Betty Ann Olsen, missionary nurse, VIETNAM  
 30 Sep 1943: WAC Tech5 Edith Ballinger, air crash at Maxton Field, Laurinburg, NC  
 30 Sep 2008: USA SGT Christina Smith, 29, murdered by soldier husband at Ft Bragg, NC  
 30 Sep 2011: USA SGT Sophie Champoux, 25, suicide after being raped 3 times, Ft Stewart, GA



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