



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 11, 2016
Volume 7, Issue 34

This-N-That

In 2014, the Phoenix branch of the Department of Veterans Affairs became ground zero for the national health care rationing wait list scandal that rocked the federal agency. In response, both President Obama and the department's bureaucrats pledged to implement reforms that would fix the problems that led to thousands of the nation's Veterans being denied timely medical treatment, where hundreds died waiting for appointments without ever receiving any care.

This summer, Steve Cooper, a 45 year old Veteran seeking care for Stage 4 prostate cancer, secretly recorded his encounter with VA medical staff at a recently opened regional branch of the VA in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area.

What came of that information was just astounding how crappy the care is and absolutely no improvement in the system what-so-ever!

There is a link to more news on this hospital visit, see for yourself, and if YOU are a victim of this kind of treatment and total lack of patient care, please, I urge you to write to me and tell me your story.

Since I started this campaign a while back, I've taken all the E-Mails I've received and redacted only the Veterans name, E-Mail address and any specific identifying information to protect the Veteran. Then I compile a blast fax that goes out to all 535 members of Congress every single week.

I'm staying on top of them and cramming this information down their throats the best I can so they can't sit back and claim "oh, I'm sorry, I had no idea!"

Then we have the 388-acre West Los Angeles campus and dealing with the Homeless Veterans in Los Angeles.

I and many others have written about this issue over the past few years, McDonald made a "special appearance" along with huge promises the problem would be resolved. And here we are some two plus years later and nothing.

They have historical buildings which need updating and some TLC and others still being leased out to private elitist entities of Brentwood which are supposedly coming to a resolution to get them out. But still Donna Beiter has not shown where all that revenue went.

She personally made it extremely difficult for homeless to even enter the property especially when seeking help in housing, food, medical care and more.

In my humble opinion, the director of this facility is far more evil and vile than Hillary Clinton when it comes to our nations Veterans, their care, and compassion for their needs.

And I've said for many years now, she, as well as all other old guard administrative staffs nationwide need to go. Bring in people who are truly compassionate, caring, and willing to do what ever it takes to take care of those who took care of us.

The VA's Suicide Hotline seems to still be a serious issue.

Just after the release of last weekends newsletter, I received yet another E-Mail from a Veteran I know fairly well who had made a call to the national hotline provided by the VA and told me he ended up on hold for more than fifteen minutes!

Please, if you have experienced problems when calling the VA's Crisis Hotline, write to me, tell me what happened. If you also were greeted by a foreigner, this too I would like to know.

Of all services the government provides, outsourcing the VA's Crisis Hotline is one area that should NEVER be outsourced.

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!

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

Almost a Million Expected for 'Blended' Retirement

More than 740,000 currently serving active duty members and 176,000 drilling Reserve and National Guard personnel are expected to opt in to the new BRS, or Blended Retirement System, when the choice becomes available in 2018 to military members with fewer than 12 years' service. The opt-in estimates are the product of a "dynamic retention" computer model developed by RAND Corporation and used to predict how personnel will react to a new retirement choice. The BRS was designed by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission and approved by Congress last year after lawmakers tweaked a few features. For more details, see [this Military Advantage blog post](#).

NDAAs Negotiations Yield Modest Results

Following their first meeting since returning from the summer recess, the leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees see progress toward a compromise defense policy bill, but no timeline for a final resolution.

The 'Big Four,' the chairmen and ranking committee members who met Thursday, have said they hope to finish the National Defense Authorization Act before the start of the new 2017 fiscal year on Oct. 1, but a slew of policy and funding issues still remain unresolved in reconciling the House and Senate bills."

"Negotiators are still wading through a morass of issues on the must-pass bill, including major overhauls of the Pentagon's acquisition system, command structure and military health system - all different in the House and Senate bills. Lawmakers also haven't solved the most contentious issue - whether to tap the Pentagon's war account to fund base defense priorities."

Source: NAUS



Commissary Case Lot Sales Continue

Customer Appreciation Case Lot Sales are continuing through September for stateside commissaries. Each store hosts individual two- or three-day case lot sales on one weekend between mid-August and the end of September. Commissaries in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico are also participating. These sales provide commissary shoppers up to 50 percent savings on bulk buys of cereals, breakfast bars, chips, beverages, paper goods and other items. During these "parking lot" sales, commissaries also offer seasonal fresh produce on sale and provide high-value coupons for products inside the store. Visit the [Case Lot Sales page](#) for the schedule of local case lot events.

CalVet and Habitat for Humanity San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys present 28 Santa Clarita Veterans with Keys to their New Homes

Santa Clarita – On Saturday, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and Habitat for Humanity, San Fernando / Santa Clarita Valleys (SF/SCV) hold a public ceremony and present 28 Veterans and their families with keys to their new homes.

“I believe in the American Dream, and owning a home is part of that dream for Veterans,” said CalVet Secretary Dr. Vito Imbasciani. “CalVet and Habitat for Humanity provide the opportunity for our Veterans to make this dream come true.”

“Our Veterans understand the meaning of leadership, dedication, and service, plus they bring these important skills to our community. They are truly an asset,” said Donna E. Deutchman, Chief Executive Officer, Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV.

The CalVet REN (Residential Enriched Neighborhood) Program offers permanent, affordable home ownership with manageable loan payments and family enrichment services to low income Veterans and their families.

CalVet continues working with Habitat for Humanity, SF/SCV on three Veterans housing projects. The CalVet REN projects include 12 homes in Sylmar, 56 homes in Palmdale, and 78 homes in Santa Clarita. The key ceremony begins at 10 a.m. at 21550 Center Pointe Parkway, Santa Clarita, CA 91350.

The event is free and open to the public. There will be a Veteran art show at the development. The theme of the artwork highlights the emotions that our military families experience during, before, and after their service.

Contacts: CalVet, Thora Chaves, Thora.Chaves@CalVet.ca.gov 916-651-2147

Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV, Stacey Chiang, SChiang@humanityca.org 818-884-8808

Exchange Sponsors Sweepstakes

From now to Sept. 29, authorized shoppers worldwide can enter the Rockstar Polaris RZR sweepstakes on the Army and Air Force Exchange Service [website](#). One lucky winner will receive a Polaris RZR XP 4 1000 off-road vehicle valued at \$22,299. The Rockstar Polaris RZR sweepstakes is open to authorized shoppers 18 and older. No purchase is necessary to enter or win. A winner will be drawn on or about Oct. 7.

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

Free Counseling at Vet Centers

Did you know that you may be able to receive free community-based counseling at one of 300 VA Vet Centers across the country — even if you are not enrolled in VA health care? Vet Centers provide individual and group counseling, and outreach and referral services to veterans and active duty service members who served in any combat zone, area of hostility, experienced a military sexual trauma, or served as part of a drone crew. Vet Centers are staffed primarily by veterans, many of them combat veterans. To learn more about Vet Centers and to find out which VA benefits you may be eligible for, visit [explore.VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/explore). [Watch the video](#) to see how Vet Centers have changed the lives of other veterans.

Battle Tested Veterans Offers Podcasts

Battle Tested Veterans is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to changing the national veteran narrative through the use of data and first-person stories. The organization is built around TED Talk-style events and podcasts that feature veterans from all walks of life opening up about their lives. Civilians often don't know the questions to ask or how to make a connection with a veteran. Program can help veterans open up in real and honest ways that will build a common ground for them and their civilian counter parts. To learn more and listen to the podcasts, visit the Battle Tested Veterans [website](#).

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>

Government Accountability Reports

Medicaid: Key Policy and Data Considerations for Designing a Per Capita Cap on Federal Funding.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-726>

401(K) PLANS: DOL Could Improve Use of Lifetime Income Options.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-433>

Defense Infrastructure: Actions Needed to Enhance Oversight of Construction Projects Supporting Military Contingency Operations. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-406>

Department of Energy: Actions Needed to Strengthen Acquisition Planning for Management and Operating Contracts. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-529>

DOD Renewable Energy Projects: Improved Guidance Needed for Analyzing and Documenting Costs and Benefits. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-487>

Environmental Satellites: NOAA Needs to Ensure Its Timelines Are Accurate, Clear, and Fully Documented. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-767>

Foreign Assistance: Actions Needed to Improve Transparency and Quality of Data on ForeignAssistance.gov. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-768>

Freedom of Information Act: Litigation Costs For Justice and Agencies Could Not Be Fully Determined. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-667>

Information Technology: Better Management of Interdependencies between Programs Supporting 2020 Census Is Needed. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-623>

Aviation Security: TSA Should Ensure Testing Data Are Complete and Fully Used to Improve Screener Training and Operations. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-704>

Foster Care: Most Tribes Do Not Anticipate Challenges with Case Goal Changes, but HHS Could Further Promote Guardianship Assistance. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-625>

Military Readiness: DOD's Readiness Rebuilding Efforts May Be at Risk without a Comprehensive Plan. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-841>

HUBZone Program: Opportunities Exist to Further Improve Oversight. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-866T>

Whistleblower Protection: DOD Has Improved Oversight for Reprisal Investigations but Can Take Additional Actions to Standardize Process and Reporting. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-860T>

Community Development Block Grants: Sources of Data on Community Income Are Limited. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-734>

Defense Civil Support: DOD Needs to Identify National Guard's Cyber Capabilities and Address Challenges in Its Exercises. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-574>

Private Health Insurance: In Most States and New Exchanges, Enrollees Continued to be Concentrated among Few Issuers in 2014. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-724>

Regulatory Guidance Processes: Treasury and OMB Need to Reevaluate Long-standing Exemptions of Tax Regulations and Guidance. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-720>

Troubled Asset Relief Program: Status of Prior GAO Recommendations. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-831>

Reimbursement Policy Changes

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Exams Reimbursement Program will no longer physically process any paper-based reimbursement mail received after Oct. 1. The policy change includes reimbursement of test fees for the following exams: (1) GED (beginning October), (2) GMAT, (3) GRE General and GRE Subject, (4) Praxis Core and Praxis Subject Assessment, and (5) ACT and SAT. Service members will now use the online Electronic Reimbursement Request on the DANTES [website](#) to receive reimbursement. Members should select "Examinations and Reimbursement Eligibility" to get started. A valid common access card (CAC) is required.

Defense Bill Considered Again

For the third time Senate Democrats again blocked the Pentagon spending bill from advancing to the floor.

You may recall that Senate Democrats back in July voted twice to block floor consideration of the annual Pentagon spending bill. The Senate returned from recess Tuesday, and Democrats once again blocked a procedural motion to advance the measure ([HR 5293](#)).

There is plenty of blame on both sides of the aisle as the majority continues to offer the bill with non-germane additions which they know Democrats will not support such as cutting more funding from Planned Parenthood.

According to Democrats, the vote, 55-43, is not a reflection of opposition to the bill's contents so much as a tactical gambit. Holding defense spending hostage gives leverage, they say, in negotiations to secure as much domestic spending as possible in a fiscal 2017 appropriations package. Tuesday's blockade of the defense measure is the latest sign that new fiscal 2017 spending initiatives are not likely to move forward before the November elections.

Source: NAUS



How to Transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits

In the current episode of FYI, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Holly Roberts-Davis discusses how to transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to dependents. Watch the current episode on the [U.S. Air Force website](#). Be sure to check out future episodes of FYI to keep current on policies and changes happening in your Air Force.

Stop Paying for Co-Pays 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](#).

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

Hearing Held on Commission on Care Recommendations

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee held hearing on Wednesday to examine The Commission on Care and the Future of the VA Healthcare System.

Nancy Schlichting, chair and Dr. Delos (Toby) M. Cosgrove, vice chair for the VA Commission on Care testified that their report calls for creation of a "fully integrated care system," which would leverage private sector care providers who fully understand the needs and experiences of veterans would be able to provide care in a system that integrates that care with that provided by VHA providers.

They also recommended the VA transform its internal processes, including information technology, supply chains, and personnel management. In addition, the commission recommended eliminating the geographic and wait time constraints on veterans obtaining care in the private sector.

Source: NAUS

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 **2,977,400** 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

- 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: **5,987**)
- 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

VA Awards Grants for Low-income Vets

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded approximately \$300 million more in grants under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program to help thousands of very low-income Veteran families around the nation who are permanently housed or transitioning to permanent housing. The SSVF grant program also provides access to crucial services to prevent homelessness for Veterans and their families. The grants have been awarded to 275 non-profit organizations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A list of SSVF grantees is available on the VA Homeless Veterans [webpage](#).



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

9/11 Anniversary

On Sunday, President Obama will preside at a memorial service at the Pentagon in remembering all who died, 15 years ago, during the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Reforms Failing at the VA](#)
- 2) [The VA and the neighbors in West L.A. have started helping homeless Vets; when will Congress do its part?](#)
- 3) [Veterans take complaints to VA officials](#)
- 4) [Vets poisoned at Camp Lejeune inch closer to VA 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



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

Welcome to MyVA Program

Nearly 400,000 veterans have been contacted since the pilot Welcome to MyVa (W2MyVA) program started in April, 2014. The W2MyVA phone call is made in conjunction with the introductory letter and personalized handbook each veteran receives upon enrollment. Veterans or their family members can also contact a VA representative regarding VA health care services and other VA benefits by calling toll-free 1-877-222-8387 or send a secure message through VA's [Inquiry Routing & Information System \(IRIS\)](#) or by visiting the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Benefits [webpage](#) and connecting through online chat.



Veterans Day Parade Expands

The nation's largest Veterans Day parade in New York City — America's Parade — is making its way to the West Coast. On Nov. 11, Los Angeles will host its first America's Parade while New York City will celebrate its 97th. The Veterans Day parade on both coasts will commemorate the 15th anniversary of 9/11 with special recognition to post-9/11 veterans and first responders, and it will honor the 25th anniversary of Desert Storm. America's Parade: New York City will start at approximately 11:15 a.m. EST on Friday, Nov. 11 as more than 20,000 participants march up Fifth Avenue from 26th Street to 52nd Street. America's Parade: Los Angeles will start at 11 a.m. PST on the West L.A. Veterans Affairs Campus. For more information, visit the America's Parade: New York City [website](#).

~We Proudly Support our Military Personnel & Families~

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>

Obama Sets Troop Pay Raise at 1.6 Percent in 2017

President Barack Obama on Wednesday [set the military pay raise at 1.6 percent for next year](#). The figure is higher than the 1 percent increase he approved for civilian employees in the federal government but lower than the 2.1 percent bump service members are supposed to receive under the formula in current law. The change to monthly basic pay will take effect Jan. 1 and marks the fourth straight year troops will see their pay raise fall short of private sector-wage growth.

What does this mean for you? [See your proposed 2017 pay charts now](#).

TRICARE Policy on Appointments

A no-show occurs when a patient misses a TRICARE appointment without making any attempt to cancel or reschedule 24 hours in advance. Your provider may charge you because you did not show up for your appointment. The fee can range from \$20- \$40 and is not covered by TRICARE. It is best to keep your appointments or reschedule them at least 24 hours in advance. If you are being seen at a military hospital or clinic, you can do this through [TRICAREOnline](#), which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can use this portal to set appointment notifications and set up email and text message reminders.

VA Proposes Presumptive Diseases Connected to Camp Lejeune Water

The Federal Register issued a "public inspection document" on Thursday (which it does the day before any rule is published), which indicates VA is proposing a presumptive rule of service connection for eight conditions for those who served at Camp Lejeune for no less than 30 days from August 1, 1953 through Dec. 31, 1987.

"In addition, VA proposes to establish a presumption that these individuals were disabled during the relevant period of service, thus establishing active military service for benefit purposes. Under this proposed presumption, affected former reservists and National Guard members would have veteran status for purposes of entitlement to some VA benefits." The conditions covered include (1) kidney cancer; (2) liver cancer; (3) Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; (4) adult leukemia; (5) multiple myeloma; (6) Parkinson's disease; (7) aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes; and (8) bladder cancer. There will be a 30-day comment period. You can read the publication here: [Lejeune Federal Register Proposals](#).

Source: NAUS

VA Launches Vet Employment Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched the [Veterans Employment Pay for Success \(VEPFS\) Program](#). The grants program is designed to help Veterans with a service-connected disability such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) secure meaningful and sustained employment. Pay for Success programs are different because the payout occurs only after a rigorous evaluation determines that the pre-agreed-upon outcomes have been achieved. The VA is thus paying for what works. Pay for Success program is the first of its kind to be attempted at VA. Entities who wish to apply for a grant should visit [Grants.gov](#) and read the [Federal Register](#).

Keeping Your TRICARE Coverage at Age 65

By taking a few simple steps, retirees can make sure they have their TRICARE benefits after they turn 65. Four months before your 65th birthday, you will receive a postcard from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) with information about keeping TRICARE coverage after age 65. Be sure to sign up for Part B no later than two months before your 65th birthday. If you do not receive a postcard from DMDC, call them at 1- 800- 538-9552. You must have Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B to be eligible for TRICARE For Life. TRICARE For

Life is Medicare wrap-around coverage for TRICARE beneficiaries. For more information, visit TRICARE For Life [webpage](#). You can get information about Medicare Parts A and B on the Medicare [website](#).



Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

www.Veterans-For-Change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family

Distribution	
Express Mail	144,586
Boston	74,071
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	12,031
DoD	16,556
Face Book Pages	3,312
Google	11,797
Los Angeles	131,045
Microsoft	3,380
National Guard	2091
New York	146,636
Other Social Media	31,708
San Francisco	76,300
Twitter	34
US House of Reps & Staff	829
US Senators & Staff	99
University of So. California	4,604
US Air Force	13,095
US Army	38,757
US Marines	23,227
US Navy	15,953
Veterans	19,068,997
Washington DC	139,348

Yahoo	134
	19,962,090

Please do not reply to this E-Mail, this is an unattended E-Mail address, please send all correspondence to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org