



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, March 26, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 13

This-N-That

Here we go all over again with the Veterans Crisis Lines failing to do what they were meant to do, take your calls, listen to you, and help with your problems and guide you through the system to get the much needed help you're asking for.

Calls going into a call queue and being left there, or being placed on hold for in excess of 30 minutes and worse.

I've asked for an explanation of how this can happen, but of course I was placed on hold, transferred several times and after almost 2 hours I finally hung up and immediately sent a fax blast to every member of Congress.

Between those who work for the VA and Congress they are the ones with the blood on their hands and are fully responsible for the twenty two Veterans plus per day who commit suicide. Yet those in management seem not to care, or realize the duties they are charged with.

I talk to and communicate via E-Mail with many of you, some on a regular basis and I still wonder with all that is going on, claim denials, delays, appeals, hearings and the back logs on all of those areas, what does it take

to get Veterans involved?

Do you even know that with the number of living Veterans we have in our country today we could literally bring every member of Congress's office to a screeching halt! Prevent them from conducting any business at all including lining their own pockets if every Veteran, family member and friends to Veterans called, E-Mailed and DEMANDED their immediate attention and actions?

I still get more excuses than there are tubes of hemorrhoid cream in the United States why people won't call. And the truth of the matter is if only a few call, it does nothing, doesn't get their attention, doesn't get the needed action taken.

BUT, if millions of Veterans, family members and friends of Veterans were all to call, then go to their reps websites and send messages there, then VETERANS would be taken care of and a hell of a lot faster than you have seen in decades!

And if you stop and think about it, those who just can't be bothered, have an excuse not to be all equally responsible and guilty by simply not doing anything!

All through this newsletter there are several "ACTION" items where we need you to click on the link and send off the pre-written E-Mail asking for support on various bills. Again WE NEED YOU to help ALL Veterans!

And again we'd like to ask that you either forward this newsletter to friends and family or copy and paste the action items into a E-Mail and ask all of them to please help by sending off the prewritten E-Mails as well, and maybe if they would also do the same and forward to their address book as well.

This is how we make things go viral, and get many others to help in the fight for better care, better and more benefits for ALL Veterans!

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



Help Blue Water Vietnam Vets Exposed to Agent Orange

The “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act” has been introduced in both the House and Senate (H.R. 299 & S. 422 respectively). These proposals would clarify that service members serving off the coast of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict have a presumption for filing disability claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for ailments associated with exposure to the Agent Orange herbicide. FRA believes Congress should recognize that so-called “Blue water” veterans were exposed to Agent Orange herbicide and authorize presumptive status for VA disability claims associated with this exposure.

Please use the [Action Center](#) to ask your legislators to support this important legislation.

VA Processes 5 Millionth e-Claim

In February, VA's Veterans Benefits Management System ([VBMS](#)) completed a key milestone, electronically processing its 5-millionth claim. VBA processes nearly 100 percent of disability compensation claims electronically through VBMS. The system allows claims processors and power of attorney designees, nationwide, the ability to instantly review close to 3 billion images related to veterans claims. In the near future, VBA plans to expand its electronic claims processing capabilities to include automation and digital VA appeal processing. For more information, read the VA Vantage Point [Blog](#).

VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune

VA to provide disability benefits for related diseases

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C. are effective as of today.

“Establishing these presumptions is a demonstration of our commitment to care for those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dr. David J. Shulkin. “The Camp Lejeune presumptions will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Parkinson’s disease

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

This presumption complements the health care already provided for 15 illnesses or conditions as part of the Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. The Camp Lejeune Act requires VA to provide health care to Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune, and to reimburse family members, or pay providers, for medical expenses for those who resided there for not fewer than 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987.

[Camp+Lejeune+Fact+Sheet++3.14.2017.docx](#)



VA Now Paying Compensation To Victims of Contaminated Lejeune Water

Last week the VA began providing disability benefits to veterans, Reservists, and National Guard members affected by the contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, NC. VA has established a rule stating that those who were stationed at Camp Lejeune, MCAS New River, including all satellite camps and housing areas from August 1, 1953 through December 31, 1987 who later developed some specific diseases, can receive payment. For more details, see this [article](#).



Support SBP/DIC Offset Repeal Legislation

Senator Nelson (FL) has introduced legislation (S. 339) and Congressman Joe Wilson (SC) has introduced identical legislation in the house (HR 846) that repeals the SBP/DIC offset for survivors, sometimes referred to as the "Military Widows Tax.". Please use this action center contact your legislators to ask them to support this important legislation.

[Take Action!](#)

States of Emergency Declared in CT, MD, NJ, NY, and VA due to Winter Storm Stella

The governors of CT, MD, NJ, NY, and VA have declared States of Emergency due to Winter Storm Stella. Go to the [Disaster Information](#) page on TRICARE.mil for details.

Blended Retirement: Government Contributions to TSP

Would you like to have government money in your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) accounts? You may, if you are in the group who is eligible to opt-in to the military's new Blended Retirement System (BRS.) For more details, see this Paycheck Chronicles [article](#).

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



S. 681, the Deborah Sampson Act to Improve VA Services for Women Veterans

On March 21, the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, Senator Jon Tester, introduced S. 681, the Deborah Sampson Act. This comprehensive measure addresses gender disparities and would improve and expand programs and services for women veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The bill would establish a pilot program for peer-to-peer counseling and authorizes group retreat counseling for women veterans recently separated from military service. It would expand the capabilities within the VA Women Veterans Call Center and extend the number of days, from seven to 14, VA can cover the cost of care for newborns of women veterans and authorize medically-necessary transportation for newborns.

The legislation aims to eliminate barriers to care by ensuring every VA medical facility has at least one full-time or part-time women's health provider, as well as a Women Veterans Program Manager and a Women Veteran Program Ombudsman. Additional resources are authorized for mini-residency training in women's health for clinicians, and retrofitting VA facilities to enhance privacy, safety and improve the overall environment of care for women veterans.

S. 681 would provide support services for women veterans seeking legal assistance and authorizes additional grants for organizations supporting women veterans and their families. Finally, The Deborah Sampson Act would require data collection and reporting on all VA programs serving veterans, by gender and minority status, including a report on the availability of prosthetics for women veterans and would better coordinate outreach by centralizing all information for women veterans in one easily

accessible place on VA's website.

DAV's 2014 report, *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home* identified many of these gaps in VA programs for women and has long advocated for a more comprehensive provision of VA women's health services that appropriately recognizes and honors their service and sacrifice.

Please contact your elected representatives to urge co-sponsorship and passage of S. 681. A letter has been prepared for this purpose or you may write your own to express your personal views. Click the link below to log in and send your message:

As always, thank you for your support.

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

Recent Retirees May Need Waiver for DoD Jobs

Military retirees seeking to enter civil service in the Department of Defense (DoD) now require a waiver if they are within 180 days following their official date of retirement. However, personnel who fall under a special salary rate table are exempt. This policy applies to all non-appropriated and appropriated fund civilian positions in the competitive and excepted service, senior executive service and senior level positions, and scientific and professional positions. The policy also includes all permanent, temporary, term, part-time, flexible and intermittent positions. For more information, select 'Any' from the dropdown menu on [myPers](#) and search '180 day.'

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, click [HERE](#).

AF Society Continues to Offer Assistance

At 75 years of age, the Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) continues its tradition of Airmen helping Airmen, and educating America's future leaders. When unexpected emergencies arise, there is a financial need and help is needed, AFAS provides no-interest loans and grants to Airmen to help meet immediate needs. Also, dependent children and spouses of active duty and retired Airmen can work towards a college degree with AFAS education grants, loans and scholarships. The AFAS also offers targeted community programs for Airmen and their families. For more information, visit the [Air Force Aid Society website](#) and read about the AFAS' 75 years of helping Airmen on the AFAS [website](#).

The American Legion Offers Financial Assistance

American Legion [service officers](#) today are helping more than 700,000 veterans and their families, free of charge, file disability claims, benefits applications and other forms of assistance. Meanwhile, military and veteran families with minor children at home, when struck with unexpected costs that leave them unable to pay for basic household needs, receive more than \$500,000 in emergency funding a year from The American Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program. Both programs depend on charitable contributions to offer the free assistance. For more information, or to make a contribution by phone, call 1-800-433-3318.



Coping with PTSD Through Surfing

Founded in 2015 in Folly Beach, SC by combat veterans and surfers, the Warrior Surf Foundation works to help veterans address post-combat mental health issues such as PTSD, Moral Injury, and Survivor's Guilt as well as provide rehabilitation for combat-related injuries. Marine Corps veteran Andrew Manzi and Army veteran Tyler Crowder collaborated to begin the foundation after finding that surfing was helping both of them cope with their wartime experiences and adjust to civilian life. For more details on the foundation, see this [article](#).



- 1) Department Of Justice: Continued Actions Needed to Enhance Program Efficiency and Resource Management.
 - 2) Grants Management: Monitoring Efforts by Corporation for National and Community Service Could Be Improved.
 - 3) Veterans Health Administration: Actions Needed to Better Recruit and Retain Clinical and Administrative Staff.
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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

VA to Provide Care to Vets with OTH Discharges

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary, while testifying in a House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing, recently announced his intention to expand provisions for urgent mental health care needs to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges. As part of the proposal, former OTH servicemembers would be able to seek treatment at a VA emergency department, Vet Center or contact the Veterans Crisis Line. Witness statements, documents and a link a recorded webcast of the hearing are available on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs [website](#). If you are a veteran in crisis, or know someone who is, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1), or text 838255.

VA Resources for Aging Veterans

Please take the five-minute video tour of the of the VA Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) [website](#). This tour provides a practical overview of what the website offers aging Veterans, their families, and the clinicians and staff who serve them. Some of the more important topics covered include shared decision making; long term services and supports; advance care planning; home and community based services; and nursing homes. For more information, read the VA Vantage Point [Blog](#).

The logo for the Veterans-For-Change website is displayed within a rectangular frame with a light blue, textured border. The text "Veterans-For-Change Web Site" is written in a bold, blue, stylized font with a slight shadow effect.

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 1,000 per day with a total 3,219,959 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 15,905 documents on-line (Updated: 12/12/16)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
 - o Afghanistan Veterans
 - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
 - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
 - o Iraq Veterans
 - o Korean Veterans
 - o Men Veterans Forum
 - o Mental Health for Veterans
 - o Political Issues
 - o Suggestion Box
 - o The Mess Hall
 - o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
 - o Veteran Affairs
 - o Vietnam Veterans
 - o Welcome Mat
 - o Women Veterans Forum
 - o WW II Veterans
- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 10/10/16)
- News (Articles On-Line: 6,382)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,542, Added 1 New Links (Updated: 03/01/17)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail:

Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

How to Deal with GI Bill Overpayments

Over the years many veterans have found themselves in a situation in which they owe the VA for an “overpayment” of GI Bill benefits. The number of veterans experiencing indebtedness to the VA has increased since the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) went into effect. There are several situations in which you may find yourself owing the VA for GI Bill overpayments, but the most common cause of indebtedness is changing your enrollment, especially changing it after the school's drop/add deadline. For more details, and some tips on how to handle the situation, see this education [article](#).



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Need Help Making Your VA Home Loan Payments?

What if you can no longer afford the monthly payment on your VA home loan? Here are some tips: (1) make sure to call your [mortgage servicer](#) immediately and ask for assistance; (2) prepare evidence of financial distress. Be prepared to show copies of your most recent bank statements, and credit card bills; (3) try counseling. Call 877-827-3702 to find a VA counselor near you; and (4) if your lender cannot make a loan modification, consider selling your home through a short sale, or by requesting a deed in lieu of foreclosure from your lender. For more information, contact your nearest [VA Regional Loan Center](#) and read the VA Vantage Point [Blog](#).

[Links to Other Stories](#)

- 1) [A court hears Texas Veteran loud and clear, and gives another shot at benefits claim](#)
- 2) [VA Inspector General: Suicide hotline left some Veterans on hold up to 30 minutes](#)
- 3) [VA Urges 'Hiring Surge' to Reduce Veterans' Appeals Backlog](#)
- 4) [Veterans crisis hotline has a crisis of its own](#)
- 5) [Veterans up in Arms Over Medical Marijuana](#)

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



Support Caregiver Expansion

We applaud Senators Patty Murray, Susan Collins, and Representative Jim Langevin for introducing the "Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act" on March 9, 2017.

DAV has worked diligently for several years as a part of a larger coalition of veterans organizations that promoted the advent of family caregiver support services for severely injured and ill veterans. Congress finally responded by enacting Public Law 111-163, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. However, that law limited services and supports to family caregivers of veterans who were injured or became severely ill in military service only on or after September 11, 2001. That omission left thousands of veterans' families without the level of caregiver support and services they have needed because those veterans' health challenges, many from war injuries, occurred before that effective date.

If enacted, the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act would responsibly and finally address these families' needs on the same basis as those of veterans injured after September 11, 2001. Ultimately, when fully implemented, the bill would improve the lives of tens of thousands of veteran families, and will save the federal government a significant amount of resources that otherwise would need to be spent to provide institutional solutions to these veterans' health challenges and health maintenance. This bill is both beneficial to these families and a taxpayer-friendly measure.

Please write your elected representatives to urge co-sponsorship and support of passage of S. 591 and H.R. 1472. A letter has been prepared for this purpose or you may write your own to express your views. As always, thank you for your support.

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

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



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.

Click [HERE](#) to see all job postings!

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



Help for Veterans in Colorado Springs

Since 2008, the organization 'Operation TBI Freedom' in Colorado Springs, Colorado has helped 1,500 post-Sept. 11 veterans, most of whom have brain injuries as a result of combat or training. The program aims to meet unique challenges that may remain after patients receive acute medical care. For some, that means assistance with basics including food, clothing and shelter. Veterans are not charged for services and can choose their level of participation, whether it is a monthly phone call or regular visits with a case managers. All five of the group's case managers are veterans, including two former clients. For more information, visit the Operation TBI Freedom [webpage](#).

**~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>



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

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Express Mail	144,727
Boston	74,784
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	12,573
DoD	29,611
Face Book Pages	3,502
Google	28,483
Los Angeles	134,584
Microsoft	9,595
National Guard	4047
New York	152,044
Other Social Media	41,972
San Francisco	78,042
Twitter	39
US House of Reps & Staff	986
US Senators & Staff	106
University of So. California	5,106
US Air Force	25,369
US Army	65,224
US Marines	27,990
US Navy	36,991
Veterans	19,080,632
Washington DC	140,625
Yahoo	134
	20,100,666

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please send all correspondence to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

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