



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 10, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 37



This-N-That

This past two weeks we've seen Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana, then came Hurricane Irma, in the Caribbean and hits the Bahamas and Cuba and now on it's way into Florida with gusts of 180 MPH. Hurricane Jose is following behind Hurricane Irma. So please keep all those in all the affected areas in your prayers as there has been so much destruction, damage and loss of life already.

We have posted in this newsletter some emergency alerts from Tricare on how to obtain medications, etc. please check the links and pass on what ever information you can or need to your families and friends.

We often talk about, read, and/or hear about government accountability yet we see very little actually taking place. And the most recent evidence is now the Social Security Office.

The Social Security Administration paid out nearly \$38 million in

disability insurance payments to 746 deceased Veterans, the agency's inspector general found, because the deaths had not been properly recorded in the agency's databases. Unless Social Security corrects its records, it will likely make another \$7.3 million in improper payments over the next 12 months.

Add to those numbers the billions of dollars Congress has "borrowed" from Social Security, never re-paid, and never paid interest on, and that's one healthy chunk of change which would most assuredly sustain SSI and SSDI payments for a hell of a long time.

I'd like to ask all our readers to send a message to President Trump and politely ask him to seriously look into both, the accountability of the Social Security as well as putting pressure on Congress to return all funds borrowed, PLUS interest! You can do so by clicking [HERE](#).

I know I preach a lot on our Homeless Veterans, and almost every where in the country there are "mini homes" popping up for Veterans through private donations and private groups and organizations building these mini homes.

But the VA has many facilities with empty buildings and under used buildings which both could very easily be converted to apartments for our homeless and solve two problems. One is providing homes for our Veterans, and secondly making sure they are close to a VA Hospital all at the same time.

And with that could have on-site counselors who also conduct well checks and if there are problems, they're very close to medical services.

Something else I would encourage our readers to do is send another message to President Trump and making this suggestion to him and prevent Secretary of the VA Dr. Shulkin from getting rid of property or canceling leases.

And this would also stop the need to fund private organizations who either can't or won't actually solve the problem and end up saving

billions of dollars.

I'm sure many of you noticed the mistake I made in last weeks issue, but I also hope you did receive the corrected version that was sent out within an hour.

I am human and in the process of translating notes I had made, I looked at one note that had nothing to do with the current situations and comparisons. Again, my apologies.

We continue to receive more stories, but now they are coming in way slower, but we have been blast faxing to all members of Congress since sixteen weeks ago Sunday non-stop.

It's never too late, so if you'd like to share your story and help put faces on the problems that you face in your everyday life in dealing with the VA, please send them on to my e-mail address. We need to keep this up for as long as we can, staying in their face every single day and thwart off all their lame excuses for not doing what is right, due and just!

Only rules are no last names, no social security numbers, no phone numbers, only first name, city and state. All other information would be redacted and isn't needed so we can insure the protections of everyone.

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

Hurricane Harvey Help

If you live in Texas or surrounding areas, and have been directly affected by Hurricane Harvey, call 2-1-1 or visit 211.org for information on emergency shelters, food and water. Here are agencies to give to for Hurricane Harvey relief: (1) for the Red Cross, visit redcross.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS; (2) for the United Way, visit the [United Way website](#); (3) to support The Salvation Army's Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, call 1-800-SAL-ARMY, or visit the [Salvation Army website](#).

TRICARE Extended Emergency Waiver Procedures due to Hurricane Irma

TRICARE has extended emergency referral waiver procedures for parts of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina until Sep. 30, 2017.

Read more: www.tricare.mil/Irma

Hurricane Harvey/Irma and the 'Forever GI Bill'

Dear Fellow Veterans and Colleagues,

I'd like to pass on a couple of issues. Information concerning the impact of Hurricane Harvey and the recent legislation signed by the President - the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, also referred to as the "Forever GI Bill".

First and foremost, our thoughts are with those of you who are experiencing the devastating impact of Hurricane Harvey (and perhaps Hurricane Irma). If you are attending school on the GI Bill and your school was or is temporarily closed due to Hurricane Harvey, the VA considers your attendance continuous and your payments will continue as normal.

Benefit-Specific Information

If you are using Chapter 33 (Post-9/11 GI Bill) or Chapter 35 (Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program): As long as your enrollment was submitted by your school, no further action is necessary to receive continued payment.

If you are using Chapters 30 or 1606 (Montgomery GI Bill) or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP): Continue to verify your attendance until further notice as if your school did not close. This ensures continuation of your payments. Students may verify attendance using the [WAVE website](#) or by calling 1-877-VACERT.

If your school is open but you are unable to attend due to this event (e.g., displaced from your home), please contact your School Certifying Official as soon as possible to prevent possible overpayments.

Please contact our Education Call Center at 1-888-442-4551 (Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. CST) for any questions about your GI Bill benefits. If you are unable to contact us by phone, you can send us a secure inquiry on our [website](#) using the “Submit a Question” button.

BREAK

As you know, a few weeks ago the President signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, also referred to as the “Forever GI Bill”. This new law will implement sweeping changes to the GI Bill benefit programs that will enhance education benefits for Servicemembers, Veterans and their families. This legislation contains several new provisions, the vast majority of which will enhance or expand education benefits for Veterans, Servicemembers, Families and Survivors. I briefly discussed some of these changes in an email that I sent to you on August 17th, and shared that we have more work to do to determine how these provisions impact our beneficiaries.

As we move forward with implementation, we anticipate there will inevitably be questions from Veterans, dependents and stakeholders. As such, we have created a way for you to contact us regarding this

new law. If you have questions regarding the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Assistance Act of 2017, please send us an email at forevergibill.vbavaco@va.gov. Finally, please know and understand the size and scope of this bill (there are 34 distinct sections) will require significant resources and Information Technology (IT) changes/updates. We don't have all the answers just yet but are working feverously to lay out a schedule and plan.

Again, please pass this information on to those who may be affected but unable to access email.

As always, thank you for your service.

Regards,

Curtis L. Coy
Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity
Veterans Benefits Administration
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420



Abilities Job Fair

For veterans and individuals with disabilities
Tuesday, September 12th 10AM - 1PM
War Memorial Building

Come in professional attire
and bring your resume!

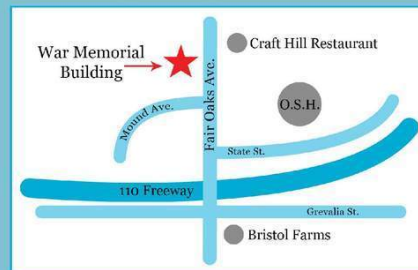
Accommodations for job seekers available - contact
Nita Davis at ndavis@almansor.org

Employers - contact Lupe Vasquez at
gvasquez@almansor.org or 626-755-4382

www.redesignlearning.org

**435 Fair Oaks Avenue
South Pasadena, CA 91030**

*Just north of the 110 freeway,
across from Craft Hill Restaurant.*



Sponsored By:



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!

Please, even if you have already sent this pre-written E-Mail, do it again, and forward the link to your friends, family, etc via an E-Mail and ask them too, to please sign and forward on to their address book.

We need to take care of our widows too! Current, past and future!

State of Emergency Declared in Washington due to Wildfires

The governor of Washington has declared a State of Emergency due to Wildfires. Emergency refill procedures are in place from September 5, 2017 through September 15, 2017.

[Read more here.](#)

All of These Military ID Cards Expired September 3

September 3, 2013 was a big day for many military spouses. The policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" had been repealed, and thanks to a Supreme Court ruling, their marriages were now legally recognized. After months of waiting for the policy, the spouses who had been living in secret could finally be "real" in the eyes of the military benefits system. But that was four years ago. For more details, see this [Spousebuzz post](#).



FREE RESUME REVIEWS For VETERANS

September 10, 2017 only by

Appelbaum's Resume Professionals, Inc.

At the War Memorial Center

Doris Appelbaum

Founder and President of Appelbaum's Resume Professionals, Inc.

(414) 352-5994

<http://www.appelbaumresumes.com>.



New to the VA World? Here's What You Need to Know

If you're transitioning out of the military, your family will likely soon embark on a new journey with a completely different government agency — the Department of Veterans Affairs. While there are some things on which the Defense Department and the VA work together, for the most part they are two totally separate systems. So what do you need to know about going through the VA process? [Here are some basics.](#)



As Florida is bracing for hurricane Irma and Texas is recovering from hurricane Harvey, and the west part of the country is experiencing large wild fires it is important to prepare ahead of time for any disaster or emergency that may be forecasted in your local area. Below are resources that are available to Veterans and their caregivers.

- Veterans from storm-affected areas who require immediate assistance may contact:

Health Resource Center Disaster Hotline: **1-800-507-4571**

- VA's Vantage Point blog has the latest information on [Hurricane Harvey](#) and [Hurricane Irma](#) impact to VA facilities and services.
- The Caregiver Support Website had an [Emergency Preparedness](#) document for caregivers and Veterans to download under Tips and Tools to assist you in preparing for emergency situations.

The CSL social workers are ready and available to be of assistance to caregivers and Veterans as needed with a listening ear and resources. The CSL has already assisted Veterans and caregivers impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

Please prepare for any emergent situation that may affect your local area and keep safety at the forefront.



GAO

U.S. Government Accountability
Office Reports

- 1) Affordable Care Act: IRS Should Mitigate Limitations of Data to Be Used for the Age and Gender Adjustment for the Tax on High-cost Health Plans
 - 2) Aviation Security: TSA Has Made Progress Implementing Requirements in the Aviation Security Act of 2016
 - 3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Use of Special Interest Projects to Fund Prevention Research Centers
 - 4) Federal Telework: Improved Guidance and Communication on Recording Telework Hours Needed at Veterans Benefits Administration
 - 5) Foreign Military Sales: Kenyan Request for Armed Aircraft
 - 6) International Mail Security: CBP and USPS Should Assess Costs and Benefits of Using Electronic Advance Data
 - 7) International Mail Security: Costs and Benefits of Using Electronic Data to Screen Mail Need to Be Assessed
 - 8) Military Training: DOD Met Annual Reporting Requirements in Its 2017 Sustainable Ranges Report
 - 9) Navy Readiness: Actions Needed to Address Persistent Maintenance, Training, and Other Challenges Facing the Fleet
 - 10) Navy Unmanned Aerial Refueling System: Acquisition Addresses Validated Requirements and Reflects a Knowledge-Based Approach
 - 11) Public Health Information Technology: HHS Has Made Little Progress toward Implementing Enhanced Situational Awareness Network Capabilities
 - 12) SSA's Compassionate Allowance Initiative: Actions Needed to Improve the Accuracy and Consistency of Expedited Processing of Disability Claims
 - 13) SSA's Compassionate Allowance Initiative: Improvements Needed to Make Expedited Processing of Disability Claims More Consistent and Accurate
 - 14) State Health-Insurance Marketplaces: Three States Used Varied Data Sources for Eligibility and Had Few Indications of Potentially Improper Enrollments
 - 15) VA Health Care: Opportunities Exist for Improving Implementation and Oversight of Enrollment Processes for Veterans
-

Call-in Day - H R. 299/ S-422 - the Blue Water Navy Vietnam

On **Monday, 11 September 2017 at 9:00 am**; call your members of Congress to support H.R. 299 and S.422 the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act!

List of telephone numbers are in the next box!

CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!

www.veterans-for-change.org

Grunt Style Donating to Texas Relief Efforts

Responding to the disaster in Texas, the veteran-owned company Grunt Style has committed supplies and search and recon resources to aid with relief efforts in Houston and the surrounding communities. Grunt Style is donating 9,000 T-shirts and 9,000 hoodies to residents of Rockport, Texas, which was devastated by the hurricane. They are producing those shirts and hoodies this week and look to ship them down to Texas by Friday. In addition they've launched a "[Bigger Than The Storm](#)" T-shirt and hoodie on their website. They will be donating \$10 for each hoodie and T-shirt purchased.

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 **2,200** hits per day, and downloads average **1,200** per day with a total **3,537,686** 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 **16,142** documents on-line (Updated: 8/12/17)
- 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: **6,734**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **3,608**, Added 17 New Links (Updated: 08/12/17)

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

Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

VA to Pay Iowa Vet \$500,000 to Settle Suit Over Treatment

The Department of Veterans Affairs is paying an Iowa veteran \$550,000 to settle his allegation that he suffered life-shortening heart damage because of a three-year delay in treatment. John Porter, 68, of Greenfield, sued last year in federal court in Des Moines after he says VA staff overlooked a test result showing his heart was failing. Porter told the Des Moines Register on Friday he was glad he lived long enough to see the case settled. For more details, see this [article](#).



HHS Secretary Price declares public health emergency in Florida due to Hurricane Irma

Following the lead of President Trump's emergency declaration for Florida, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, M.D., today declared a public health emergency in the state as Hurricane Irma continues its track toward the Florida peninsula. In addition, he has taken action that gives HHS' Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) beneficiaries and their healthcare providers and suppliers greater flexibility in meeting emergency health needs.

"Hurricane Irma has proven to be highly destructive and poses a significant threat to the health and safety of all Americans in its path," said HHS Secretary Tom Price, M.D. "HHS has pre-positioned assets and personnel who can rapidly deploy to assist local responses in Florida to Hurricane Irma, and this declaration will help ensure that

access to care is maintained for those with Medicare and Medicaid.”

Secretary Price declared public health emergencies for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands due to Hurricane Irma on Wednesday. He also spoke earlier this week with Florida Governor Rick Scott, Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Roselló, and U.S. Virgin Islands Governor Kenneth Mapp to inform them about HHS’ efforts to prepare for the storm and assist their local responses if needed.

In addition to increasing the flexibility in providing services to, and assistance for, CMS beneficiaries, HHS has deployed more than 80 personnel to affected areas to help state and local authorities plan and respond to communities’ medical needs, and additional staff is on standby to assist.

Today’s declaration of a public health emergency for Florida follows similar public health emergency declarations for Texas and Louisiana that Secretary Price signed to help residents affected by Hurricane Harvey. Secretary Price acted under his authority in the Public Health Service Act and Social Security Act.

These actions and flexibilities are effective retroactively to September 4, 2017.

Public health and safety information for Hurricane Irma can be found [HERE](#).



ACLU Sues Trump Over Transgender Military Ban

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit challenging President Donald Trump's ban on transgender individuals joining the military. The federal lawsuit, *Stone v. Trump*, was filed in Maryland on Monday by the ACLU of Maryland on behalf of Petty Officer First Class Brock Stone, an 11-year Navy veteran who served in Afghanistan, and several other transgender members of the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marines. For more details, see this [article](#).



Salute to Vietnam!
October 21, 2017
Cocktails start at 5:00 pm
Dinner and Silent Auction
Live Entertainment by Phoenix Patriot Band
Come Dress in your 1970's Attire

French Valley Airport, Hangar 31
33750 Sky Canyon Drive
Murrieta, CA 92563

Purchase tickets by phone (951) 696-3901
\$65/per person or \$100/per couple



The GI Bill and Hurricane Harvey

The VA has said that veterans affected by Hurricane Harvey don't need to worry about their GI Bill benefits. In a statement on the GI Bill website, the VA says that "If your school is, or was, temporarily closed due to Hurricane Harvey, VA will consider your attendance as continuous and your payment will not be affected." Of course, there are a few fine-print details. For more, see this [article](#).



Give The Vietnam Blue Water Navy Veterans Their Presumptive Rights

(HOUSE BILL H 299 AND SENATE BILL S 422)

Whether you're a Veteran, Active Duty Military, or just a friend to Veterans, PLEASE help our Blue Water Navy Veterans who have been trying for many years, some for more than a decade to get the just benefits they have earned and are long over due along with the medical care needed by signing this petition, and forwarding on to friends and family!

Click [HERE](#) to sign the petition!



Legal Aid in California

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has announced that the state will provide legal services to deported military veterans from California, which is a huge victory for these often-overlooked veterans as they seek citizenship. California becomes the first to provide this legal help, which will be available to all deported veterans who formerly lived in California and were honorably discharged from the military. Many veterans mistakenly believed their military service automatically made them citizens. In other cases, the federal government failed to make sure these veterans followed the necessary procedures to become citizens. Read the original bill introduced by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher on the [California Legislative website](#).

Vietnamese Linguists Sought

The U.S. Navy has announced Monday that Sailors who speak Vietnamese have an opportunity to take part in a standard-setting study for the lower range Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) in the Washington D.C. area from Sept. 26-29. The Defense Language Institute (DLI) is inviting 15 linguists who have at least a level 3 in both Vietnamese and English to apply. DLI will cover TDY expenses for active duty servicemembers that participate. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Ms. Jungeun Youn at jungeun.youn@dliflc.edu. For more information on the Navy's Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture programs, visit [My Navy Portal's website](#).



Bells Across America

On Sept. 21, Navy installations will participate in the second annual Bells Across America for Fallen Servicemembers ceremony to honor those who died while on active duty. The bells rung will not signal anyone's presence; instead they will toll in their absence. Ceremonies are held in association with Gold Star Mother's and Family Day, which is celebrated the last Sunday in September. To learn more about Bells Across America for Fallen Servicemembers ceremonies nearest you, contact your Navy Gold Star Coordinator at 888-509-8759 or follow the Navy Gold Star Program on [Facebook](#), visit their [website](#), or watch the video on [YouTube](#).

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

Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Balancing Authority And Understanding As A Young Lieutenant](#)
- 2) [DoD Clarifies Liberal Consideration for Veterans' Discharge Upgrade Requests](#)
- 3) [Doing right by our Veterans](#)
- 4) [Expo to offer array of services for Veterans](#)
- 5) [Going Back To The Slaughterhouse For Souvenirs Of The War](#)
- 6) [Keeping a promise to Veterans](#)
- 7) [Our view: Capitol Hill needs more Veterans](#)
- 8) [Ritchie: Don't close Ogdensburg Veterans' Affairs office](#)
- 9) [September Marks Suicide Prevention Month](#)
- 10) [Social Security Paid Disability Benefits to More Than 700 Deceased Veterans](#)
- 11) [SSA IG uncovers \\$37M in improper payments to deceased Veterans](#)
- 12) [The biggest barrier to opening a homeless shelter in L.A.? Location, location, location](#)
- 13) [The Suicide Contagion: How The Effort To Combat Veterans' Suicide May Be Making It Worse](#)
- 14) [Veterans Choice health-care program growing in popularity in eastern Oklahoma](#)

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

AF Changes Records Review Process

The Air Force Review Boards Agency is changing the process by which Airmen, their families and veterans submit some applications for formal correction of records board consideration. Effective immediately, those seeking to submit applications to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records, the Air Force Discharge Review Board and the DoD Physical Disability Board of Review can formally submit applications electronically via email with expanded electronic "drop box" capability expected in September 2017 and additional web-based options available in the future. For application instructions, visit the [Air Force Personnel Center website](#).



Changes Coming to TRICARE

The Military Health System (MHS) is modernizing TRICARE to better serve you and respond to changes in law and policy. Most provisions will go into effect on January 1, 2018, with full implementation occurring on January 1, 2019. You will find changes that may affect you listed on the [TRICARE website](#). TRICARE is still finalizing some policies and will update the webpage when additional details become available. For more information, read the [press release on the TRICARE website](#).

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs

VA Unveils Claims Submission Option That Promises to Complete Claims within 30 Days

WASHINGTON — Today, as part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) continued efforts to improve timeliness of services for Veterans and their families, VA unveiled the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) initiative, a disability claims submission option with accredited Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) that promises to deliver faster claims decisions to Veterans and their families.

“The DRC initiative is a collaborative effort between VA and VSOs to help Veterans receive faster decisions on disability claims,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “VA works closely with participating VSOs to make sure they are properly trained in this new process and given the tools they need to participate successfully in the program on behalf of the Veterans they serve.”

Veterans who choose to submit their claim under DRC can expect to receive a decision within 30 days from the time VA receives the claim. VSOs will ensure all supporting evidence — such as medical exams, military service records, etc. — is included with the claim submission. This advance preparation by the VSOs allows claims to be assigned immediately to claims processors for a quick decision.

DRC was first implemented May 1, 2017, at the St. Paul (Minn.) Regional Office, and is now available at all VA regional offices. While DRC is currently limited to claims for increased compensation (commonly known as claims for increase), and requires Veterans to work with VSOs, VA's goal is to expand the types of claims accepted under the initiative and allow Veterans other ways to submit their claim under DRC.

DRC is another key step in aggressively modernizing VA's benefits delivery to Veterans in a fully digital operating environment. With electronic claims processing as a foundation, VA's innovation will improve service to Veterans, their families, and survivors.



Dole Foundation Seeks Caregivers

Applications are being sought from military caregivers for the 2018 Dole Caregiver Fellowship. Dole Caregiver Fellows are military caregivers carefully selected each year from across the country to represent the Foundation. Each class consists of approximately 50 Fellows who serve a two-year term. Our country's 5.5 million military caregivers are the spouses, parents, family members, and friends who care for America's wounded, ill, or injured veterans. For more information and to apply visit the [Elizabeth Dole Foundation website](#).

Data Suggests Vietnam Vets At Much Higher Risk Of Rare Eye Cancer Than Public

by Benjamin Krause

Records from the Department of Veterans Affairs suggest veterans are 17 times more likely to develop a rare eye cancer than the general population.

The numbers come from a Freedom of Information Act request from Mark Rutz where data from the agency showed surprisingly high rates of veteran developing Choroidal Melanoma. Rutz lost his eye from the rare cancer, which can spread quickly.

Rutz served in Vietnam in 1970-71, back when the government misled soldiers about the toxic risks associated with Agent Orange exposure, "I remember a guy going through basic in-doc in Vietnam, quacking up

a quart jar of Agent Orange and drinking from it.”

VA has now acknowledged at least some of the cancers caused by Agent Orange exposure.

As for Choroidal Melanoma, about 6 in every million people are diagnosed in the US each year or about 1,900 cases.

When that rate is compared to the veteran population, approximately 126 veterans should be diagnosed with the condition each year, but that is not what the VA data show.

Between 2008 to 2010, over 2,000 veterans each year were diagnosed with the rare eye cancer. And while it is rare for civilians, noted above, it is certainly not rare for Vietnam veterans.

Since 2010, the numbers have gradually tapered off, possibly due to increased deaths of Vietnam veterans, according to Rutz.

In response to the surprising numbers, the Blinded Veterans Association asked Congress and VA to conduct research on any possible connection between Agent Orange exposure, similar toxins, and the rare cancer.

The disease has a high mortality rate irrespective of how patients choose to treat the condition. Between 30-50% of patients die within 10 years of diagnosis and treatment. Most die from metastases after the cancer spreads to other parts of the body.

A common complication of Choroidal Melanoma is liver cancer after the disease spreads.

[Source](#)



New Law to Streamline VA Claim Appeals Eases Some Protections

Every major veteran service organization except Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) supported legislation, signed into law last week, to reform a clogged process for deciding appeals of veterans' disability claims. Even VVA concedes the new "three-lane" option for appealing claims, when implemented via regulation a year or more from now, will produce speedier appeal decisions and begin to reverse what continues to be a steadily rising backlog of appeals, soon to surpass 500,000. For more details, see this [Military Advantage blog post](#).

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

**TRICARE: State of Emergency in Texas,
Louisiana**

The governors of Louisiana and Texas have declared a State of Emergency due to severe weather. Emergency refill procedures are in place from August 23, 2017 through September 05, 2017. A list of the counties affected is available on the [TRICARE website](#). To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. If you are evacuated, you may not have to get a referral from your primary care manager to see a provider.

VA Offers TBI Clinic

The [Phoenix VA Health Care System](#) established its Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Alzheimer's Disease & Cognitive Disorders Clinic in 2014 in response to the growing need to treat Veterans' exhibiting TBI symptoms from their service in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. TBI Injuries often go unreported because brain injuries are difficult to diagnose if the military member does not lose consciousness and if there is no superficial evidence of a head wound. Also, doctors often tend to look for structural evidence of explicit brain injuries and fail to understand that TBI can have a chemical component as well. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#) and visit the [VA National Center for PTSD website](#).

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.

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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!

**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

Distribution

Express Mail	144,973
Boston	75,928
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	12,985
DoD	30,431
Face Book Pages	3,581
Google	29,079
Los Angeles	136,623
Microsoft	9,832
National Guard	4347
New York	154,330
Other Social Media	45,700
San Francisco	79,821
Twitter	45
US House of Reps & Staff	992
US Senators & Staff	110
University of So. California	5,378
US Air Force	26,714
US Army	67,956
US Marines	29,144
US Navy	38,750
Veterans	19,093,187
Washington DC	144,136
Yahoo	153
	20,137,695

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