



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, October 08, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 41



## **This-N-That**

Agent Orange has been a hot button issue for over four decades and has never once been fully addressed by our Government or the VA.

In fact the VA has more than gone out of their way to ignore all scientific and medical facts that have been proven again and again. And we still don't know all the medical issues that can and are caused by Agent Orange, or any of the other rainbow agents that were used in Vietnam and Korea, as well as stateside.

It wasn't until September 2008 that ALS (aka Lou Gherig's Disease) was added to the list, but just short of saying it was Agent Orange related.

Glioblastoma has never been added to the list, although there is a ton of medical and scientific evidence to support it being added.

We know Agent Orange is know to bring on many illnesses, many still

to this date have not been "connected", but we do know of various forms of cancer and birth defects.

We also know that AO like many other chemicals once it enters the body it alters your DNA and once altered can never be re-engineered to return to what it once was, and that it could take decades for illnesses and problems to surface as it's stored in body fat, and may never surface, or may surface in many different forms of illnesses in ten, twenty, thirty or forty plus years.

One thing our Government and the VA has never admitted is that ships carrying the rainbow agents and the 55 gallon drums leaked or had residue on the outside of the drums would be rinsed off on deck and the run off water would go into the ships water recycling plant assumed to be cleaned and was used to shower in, wash clothes in, drinking water was made from the recycled water, the same water was used to make coffee and cook with so the bottom line is there was absolutely no escape from it.

You as a Navy Man ships man were being contaminated deliberately and every single day you were on board, or handled the drums putting on boats to be delivered inland.

And other branches of service were bombarded with it when it was sprayed over head, or if you handled it like flower and doused the areas around camp and no one ever told you to wear any kind of protection.

The real bottom line is you were intentionally and deliberately contaminated, and you brought that contamination home to your family and possibly had children born with birth defects or life long illnesses all because of this.

So I am asking, no I am begging you, PLEASE send messages to your reps in DC and politely DEMAND they take immediate and swift action to approve all legislation relating to Agent Orange. To please stop playing God with your lives!

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



## **Emergency Referral Procedures Extended in parts of Florida**

Due to hurricanes, emergency referral procedures are extended in Florida for Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties through October 15, 2017. For more information, visit: [www.tricare.mil/Disaster](http://www.tricare.mil/Disaster)



## **NDAA Conference Committee Report Coming Soon**

The House and Senate have passed their versions of the FY2018 Defense Authorization bill. A conference committee will be appointed to resolve the differences between the two bills. The Senate bill provides for substantial TRICARE fee increases by repealing the so-called grandfather clause that would exclude veterans who retired before January 1, 2018 from TRICARE increases. The Senate bill also increases pharmacy co-pays, provides for a smaller active duty pay increase (2.1% vice 2.4%) and makes further cuts to Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). Once the differences between the two versions are resolved, the final bill will be submitted to both chambers of Congress. If approved, it will then be sent to President Trump to be signed into law or vetoed.

Members are strongly urged to use the online [Action Center](#) to ask your Representative to oppose these onerous Senate provisions in the final Defense Authorization bill (H.R.2810).

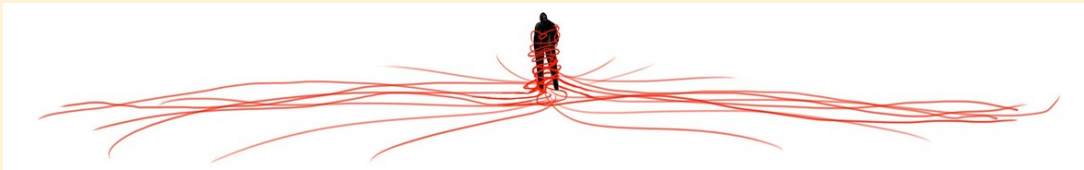
Source: NRA



**Commissaries to Start Accepting Military Star Card**

Pursuant to last year's (FY2017) National Defense Authorization Act (S.2943 - P.L.114-328) commissary consumers will soon be able to use a Military Star credit card to purchase groceries. The Military Star card is accepted at all the military exchanges and has 1.5 million cardholders. On October 3, 2017, a pilot test starts at the Fort Lee, Virginia commissary. On October 9, 2017, five more commissaries will join the pilot program: Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.; Carlisle Barracks, Penn.; Naval Air Station Oceana, Va.; Naval Air Station Key West, Fla.; and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Va. Twenty more stores-including some overseas-will join in October 16, 2017. By November 9, 2017, the remaining 212 commissary stores are expected to accept the Star card, if the pilot test is successful.

Source: NRA



**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.

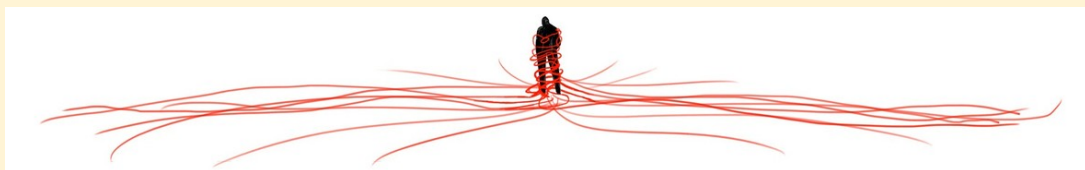
We need to take care of our widows too! Current, past and future!

**NOTE:** Widows have been being stolen from to the tune of \$1,200.00 to as much as \$1,700.00 per month for decades. Please send and resend this message weekly, and you don't have to be a Veteran, Military or family member, even our Civilian friends can help too!



## **Retirement & Disability Rates to Increase in 2018**

You should see a larger retired or VA disability increase than last year thanks to the all the hurricanes. But what do hurricanes have to do with COLA? Read the [Military Advantage Blog](#) to learn how they are connected.

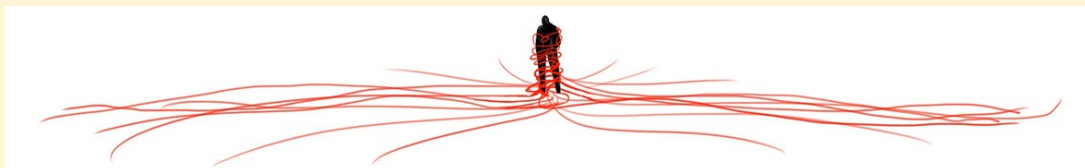


## **FRA Discusses Legislative Process with Marines**

Assistant Director Veterans Program (ADVP) Brian Condon recently presented a legislative process brief to a class of Staff Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCO) attending the Marine Corps University at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. The brief included information about the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), its history, mission and its legislative priorities, as well as the member benefits. FRA presents this brief approximately three times each year to classes of Marine Staff Sergeants (E-6) enrolled in the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy, which is a prerequisite for promotion to GySgt (E-7). For many of the class of 94 Staff Sergeants, it was the first time they heard of FRA. Some of them were aware of some issues facing the service members, such as BAH cuts, adequate annual pay raises and sequestration, they were not fully aware of how these issues get resolved. ADVP Condon encouraged them to become involved with FRA and to remain knowledgeable of what Congress is doing so they can better inform their junior Marines about issues that directly affect their careers.

The following day, FRA sponsored a Capitol building tour for these Marines. They came from all across the country and even overseas to attend the class. This was the first time many of these Marines toured the building. For some of them, it was their first time in Washington D.C. Some of the highlights of the tour included the Dome Rotunda, the old Senate chamber and the Capitol visitor center. They all were able to see the recent extensive renovation of the Dome.

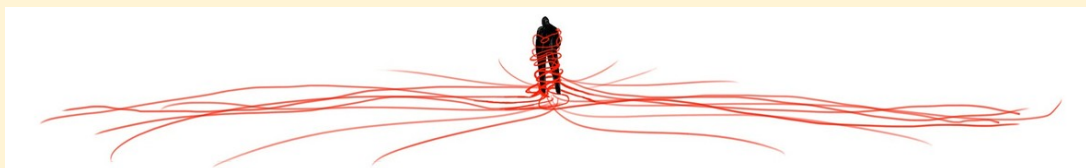
Source: NRA



**Take Command: Register to Learn About  
Upcoming Changes to TRICARE**

The Military Health System is modernizing TRICARE to better serve you and respond to changes in law and policy. Join us for our next webinar on Thursday, Oct. 5, from 1 to 2 p.m. (EDT) to learn how TRICARE is changing and how to prepare for these changes. Registration is limited.

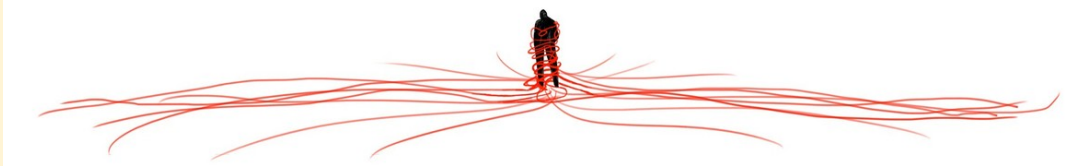
Read the full [article](#) here.



**Many Tricare Users Will Face Higher Out of Pocket Costs in 2018**



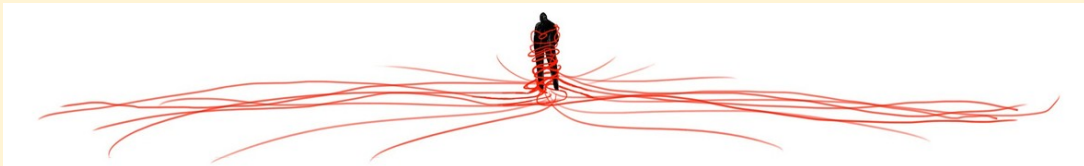
Tricare Standard users will likely face higher out of pocket costs for some primary and specialty care thanks to a change in how Tricare calculates patient fees. Rather than calculating through a percentage system, Tricare is moving to a dollar amount plan. For more details, see this [article](#).



## **Be There, Be Aware: Help Prevent Suicide**

When we focus on our health, it's easy to pay attention to physical health versus mental well-being. Ignoring mental health concerns like anxiety and depression can lead to worsening symptoms and more serious issues. For some people, these issues may include an increased risk of suicide.

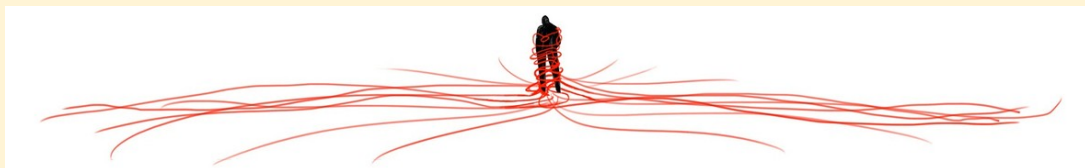
Read the full [article](#) here.





## **Push to Improve Military Kids' Health Care**

The Defense Health Agency says it has embraced and begun to adopt a host of recommendations to improve health care services for military children. The recommendations come from independent medical experts on the Defense Health Board (DHB), a federal advisory panel serving the Secretary of Defense. Read the full [article](#).



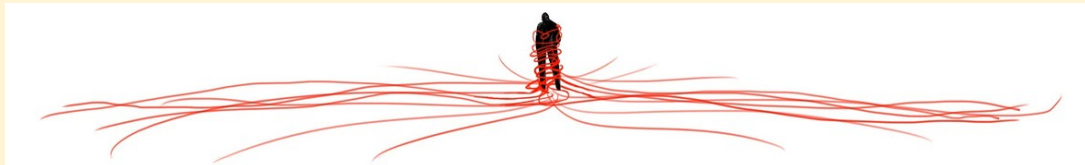
## **Research on OEF/OIF Veterans**

Did you serve in the military, specifically Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)? If so, please participate in my research study. My name is Jazmin Burns. I am a doctoral student at Alliant International University, Sacramento. I am inviting veterans to participate in this important study about the skills and strengths learned in the military and how veterans transfer those skills and strengths in order to successfully reintegrate back into civilian life. The survey will be asking questions regarding your separation from the military. If you would like to participate in this 15-30 minute questionnaire packet, click on this link: [CLICK HERE](#) .

Please email me at [jsheppard@alliant.edu](mailto:jsheppard@alliant.edu) for more information. If you wish, you could provide your email address for a chance to win one of three \$50 gift cards upon completion of the questionnaire. If you know other veterans who served in OEF or OIF, please feel free to pass this link along to them.

Thank you!

Jazmin Sheppard



**GAO**

**U.S. Government Accountability  
Office Reports**

- 1) Coast Guard: Status of Polar Icebreaking Fleet Capability and Recapitalization Plan
- 2) Navy and Marine Corps Training: Further Planning Needed for Amphibious Operations Training
- 3) VA Health Care Quality: VA Should Improve the Information It Publicly Reports on the Quality of Care at Its Medical Facilities
- 4) VA Health Care: Opportunities Exist for Improving Implementation and Oversight of Enrollment Processes for Veterans
- 5) Veterans Affairs: Management and Oversight of Mail Operations Could Be Improved
- 6) Veterans Benefits: GAO's Proposed Role in Reviewing Efforts to Protect Veterans from Financial Exploitation
- 7) Veterans Health Care: Additional Actions Could Further Improve Policy Management



## **TREA Meets with Senate Offices in Fight to Protect Servicemembers' Rights**

In our last update we reported on a battle in Congress going on right now regarding the rights that Congress supposedly has already given servicemembers.

To briefly recap, there is a law known as SCRA - Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act. This law provides certain protections from civil actions against servicemembers who are called to Active Duty. It restricts or limits actions against these personnel in the areas of financial management, such as rental agreements, security deposits, evictions, installment contracts, credit card interest rates, mortgages, civil judicial proceedings, income tax payments, and more.

However, more and more, forced arbitration clauses are buried in the fine print of nonnegotiable financial agreements utilized by most major banks; they are not utilized by community banks or credit unions.

These clauses apply to everything from credit cards and checking accounts to prepaid cards and payday loans, affecting tens of millions of consumers. With the use of forced arbitration, banks block lawsuits, including all class actions, from proceeding in court. Because forced arbitration is private, there is no public record, no meaningful appellate process, and no requirement that arbitrators enforce state and federal laws.

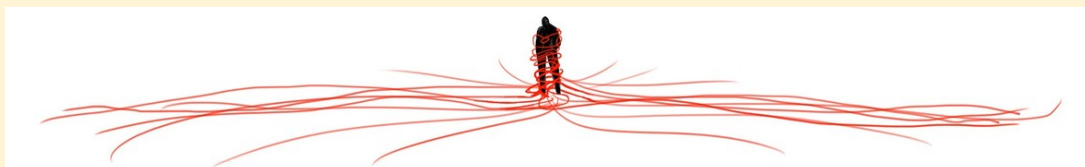
Forced arbitration is routinely used by major banks and in effect, it strips servicemembers of their rights under federal law, actively circumventing protections enacted to ensure servicemembers financial well-being while on active duty.

Last week TREA's Legislative Director Larry Madison and Deputy Legislative Director Mike Saunders went to Capitol Hill for meetings in the offices of Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) to lobby for their support to uphold a ruling by the Consumer Financial Protection Board (CFPB) against these forced arbitration clauses in contracts. The Senate has until the first week of November to vote on whether to overrule the CFPB or uphold the ruling.

TREA will keep fighting to protect the rights servicemembers that have already supposed to have been given to them in law.

See last week's update if you would like more details on the CFPB ruling and the effort in Congress to overrule it.

Source: TREA



**CONTACT YOUR  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

**To Call your Representative:**

**202-225-2305**

**To Call your Senators:**

**202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553**

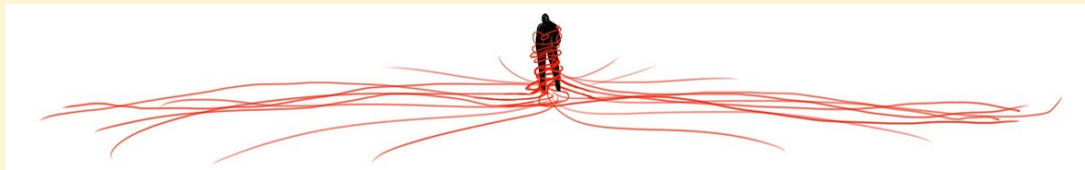
**To call Different Members of Congress:**

**202-224-3121**

**TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622**

**PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!**

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



**Base Guides – Find All Things Related to Your  
Base**

Browse Military.com Base Guides to find important [base news](#), [phone numbers](#) and more.



**A Message From House VA Chairman & the  
Ranking Member**

By Chairman Phil Roe and Ranking Member Tim Walz (a TREA: The Enlisted Association Life Member)

At the close of National Suicide Prevention Month, and as legislators and leaders of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, we have a duty to ensure veterans contemplating ending their lives have access to the tools and resources they need to know they are not alone.

Recent data released by the Department of Veterans Affairs highlighted that, after adjusting for differences in age and sex, risk for suicide is still 22 percent higher among veterans than nonveterans in the U.S. Further, after adjustments for differences in age, risk for suicide was 2.5 times higher among female veterans than nonveteran adult women and 19 percent higher among male veterans than non-veteran adult men.

The two of us have been working together for quite some time on this issue. In fact, together, we founded the bipartisan Invisible Wounds Caucus to bring awareness to the men and women who are suffering from the invisible wounds of war.

As a nation, we must do better to identify and treat mental illness, but especially within the veteran and active-duty populations which continue to have higher rates of suicide than the general population. That's why we are pleased to join VA Secretary David Shulkin to sign VA's #BeThere Suicide Prevention Declaration.

In signing this declaration, we vow to:

Teach family, friends and caregivers about their role in preventing veteran suicide.

Share advanced knowledge and innovation that will help prevent suicide.

Get to know veterans in our communities.

Stop and listen to challenges veterans face.

Promote safe environments for veterans and their families.

Respond immediately to help veterans in crisis.

Support those affected by veteran suicide.

We can all support and be a resource for veterans and service members who are struggling, and we are proud to be part of this important initiative.

Earlier this year, we held a hearing to address ongoing concerns with the Veterans Crisis Line, VA's first line of defense against veteran suicide. The issues with the VCL have been well-documented, and we were disappointed when a report released by the Inspector General in March found that the VCL failed to adequately respond to a veteran caller with urgent needs, that there were numerous structural deficiencies within the VCL, that staff members were not being trained appropriately and that VA had not yet implemented any suggestions made by the Government Accountability Office to improve the Veterans Crisis Line.

With that said, we were pleased to see that, over the last year and a half, VA has realigned the VCL to the Office of Member Services and fewer calls are being rolled to backup centers. Additionally, we commend VA on opening an additional call center for the VCL in Atlanta.

Thanks to the leadership of Secretary Shulkin, VA is on the right path, and we will continue oversight of the Veterans Crisis Line to ensure these kinds of improvements continue so the men and women who serve know they have a reliable support system at VA.

Secretary Shulkin has said that suicide prevention is his "top clinical priority." We thank him for his leadership on this worthy endeavor and stand ready to support the department in their efforts to address this very serious public health issue.

We also thank our Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee leaders,



Chairman Johnny Isakson and Ranking Member Jon Tester, for their hearing this week on veteran suicide. We stand with Secretary Shulkin, Senators Isakson and Tester and, most importantly, veterans and service members around this country. You are not alone.

If you or someone you know is a veteran in crisis, you can call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat) or text 838255. This confidential support is available to veterans and their loved ones 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. To learn more, visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net/BeThere](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/BeThere).

Source: TREA



## **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.

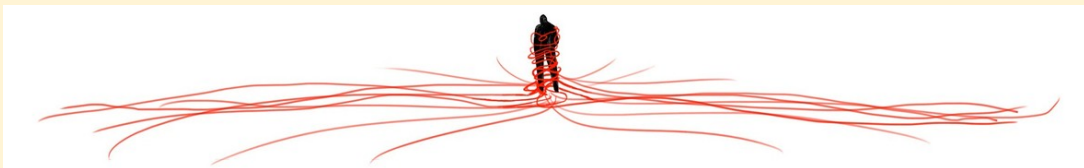
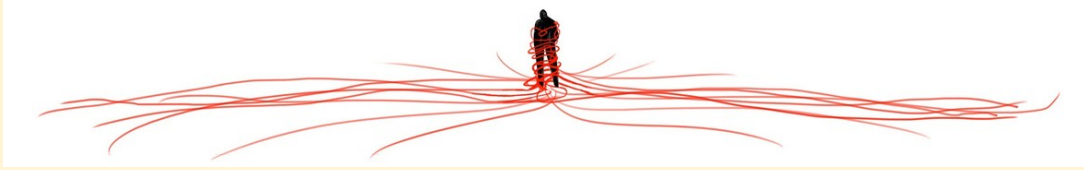
We average 2,200 hits per day, and downloads average 1,200 per day with a total 3,595,581 visitors as of Friday.

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)

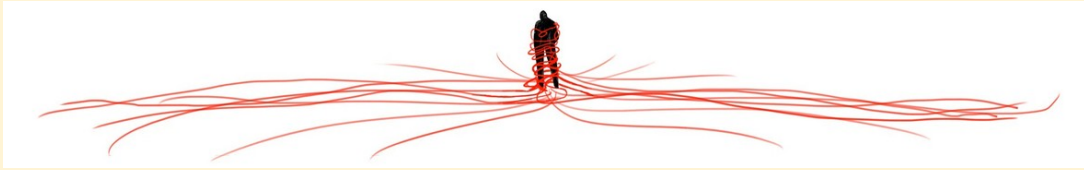
- Documents Library with over 16,142 documents on-line (Updated: 8/12/17)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
  - o Afghanistan Veterans
  - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
  - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
  - o Iraq Veterans
  - o Korean Veterans
  - o Men Veterans 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: 6,777)
- 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](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)



## **5 Tips for Planning Military Retirement**

For many, retiring from the military is the start of a brand new career. Whether you plan on starting on a business, complete retirement or starting a new career working for someone in the civilian world, learning a few things now can make your immediate future and full retirement easier. Visit [FamilyWise.com](http://FamilyWise.com) to learn the five steps to planning your military retirement.



**Legislation to Improve Access to Child Care for  
Veterans In Need of VA Mental Health Care  
Services**

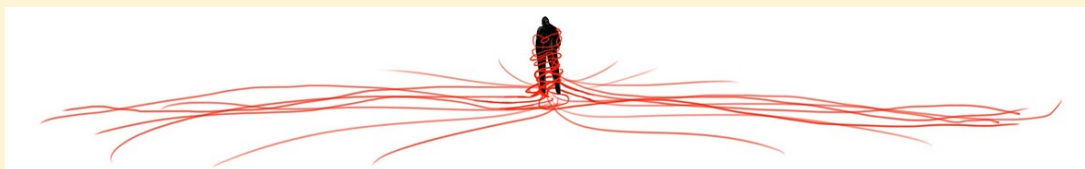
Congressman Brian Higgins (NY) introduced H.R. 3368, a bill that would improve access to child care services for veterans receiving certain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care treatments including intensive or regular mental health care services or other types of health care deemed appropriate by the Secretary.

Veterans who are the primary caretakers of their children often cite lack of child care as a significant barrier to accessing needed medical care services-especially specialized services for war-related mental health conditions. H.R. 3368 would authorize VA to provide child care at an on-site VA facility, reimburse a private licensed child care agency for such care or collaborate with other federal agencies for the service helping to remove a known barrier for ill and injured veterans with child care responsibilities to access essential VA health care services.

Please use the letter below to urge your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 3368-legislation to improve access to child care for veterans in need of VA mental health or other critical medical care services.

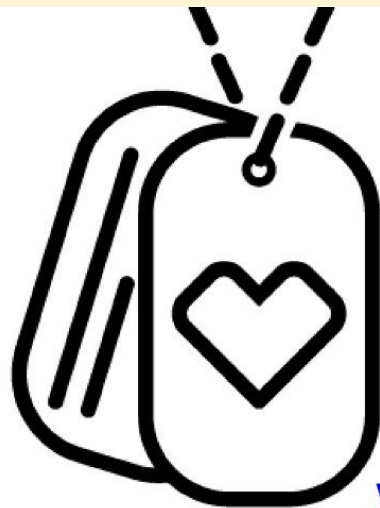
Thank you for your efforts and continued support of the Commander's Action Network.

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



**Eligible For More Benefits?**

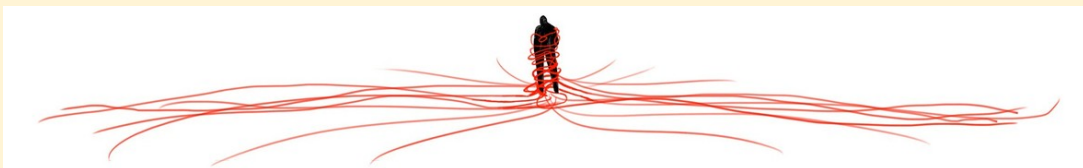
The additional benefits that open up from a given situation are called by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 'derivative' benefits. To better explain this, and to ease the understanding between a primary benefit and its derivative benefit(s), VA built a [Derivative-Benefits Eligibility Matrix](#). On this webpage, there are three matrices and, depending on which one you click, will lead you to a table where you identify your situation. The three matrices are very basic: Service-Connected, Non-Service Connected and Circumstance.



**Our values  
match yours.**

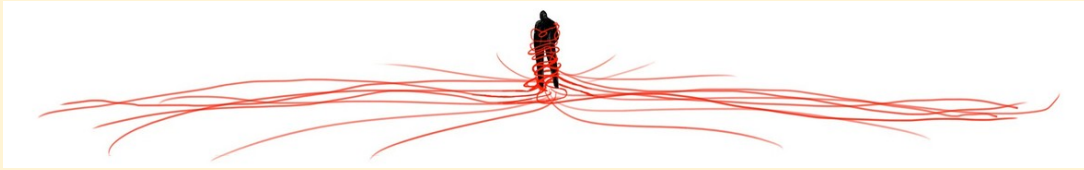


[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)



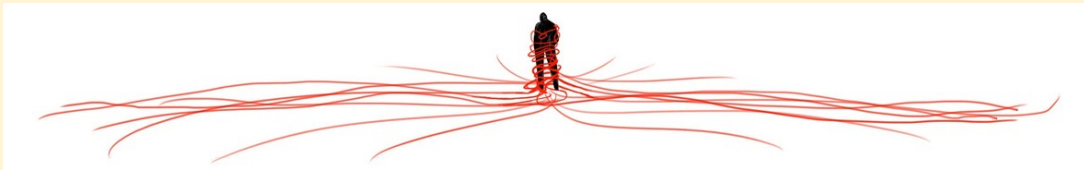
## **Find Your Career Path with Personality Assessment**

[Military Skills Translator + Personality Assessment](#) is a unique career exploration tool for veterans & service members that combines job search technology and vocational personality types.



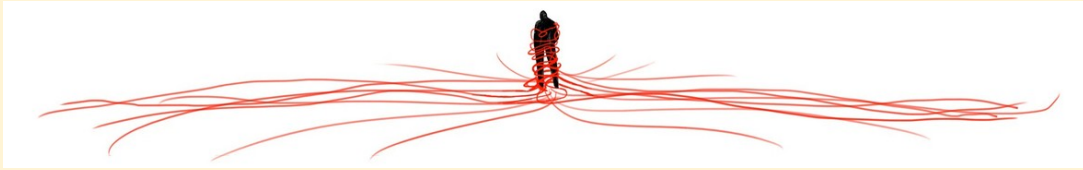
## VA Resources During an Emergency

During an emergency, veterans enrolled in My HealtheVet can access their medication refills, health records and other valuable tools when medical centers and other facilities are inaccessible. If the weather forces you to evacuate to another area, your VA medical records travel with you in your My HealtheVet account. To access more features, it is important that you upgrade your My HealtheVet account to Premium level. You can start the upgrade process on the [MyHealtheVet website](#). A Premium account ensures you have access to your medical information and health care teams. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



**As you breathe right now, another  
person takes his last for  
your freedom!**





## **Rat and Frog Carcasses Discovered by Water Safety Inspectors at Camp Pendleton**

Camp Pendleton officials say that despite water safety inspectors finding a dead rat rotting on a reservoir gate, a dead frog clinging to a ladder, and a rodent carcass floating in treated water the water is safe, and that there is no need to boil water or take other precautions.

"Simply put, the water is and has been safe to drink," base spokesman Carl Redding told the San Diego Union-Tribune. "Camp Pendleton is committed to providing safe and compliant drinking water. This is a duty and responsibility that we take very seriously."

However, according to the Military Times, state and federal investigators found "significant deficiencies" in the systems comprising the base's water treatment program. According to the Environmental Protection Agency report, Camp Pendleton "lacked adequate supervision and qualified operators for treatment and distribution."

The base failed the June inspections and subsequently the "USMC removed the animal remains and cleaned, refilled, and tested the reservoirs for total coliform and chlorine." Additional testing to ensure the water is safe to drink will be conducted, according to the EPA release.

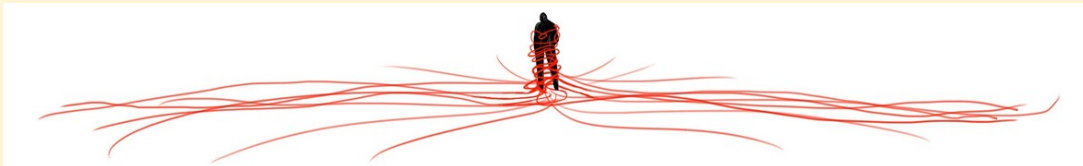
That is of little comfort to the 55,000 Marines and their dependents who live on the base.

On Sept. 28, the Marine Corps and the EPA entered into a consent decree, forcing the base to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Under the decree, the Marine Corps has 180 days to shut down, inspect, clean and sample all Camp Pendleton reservoirs.



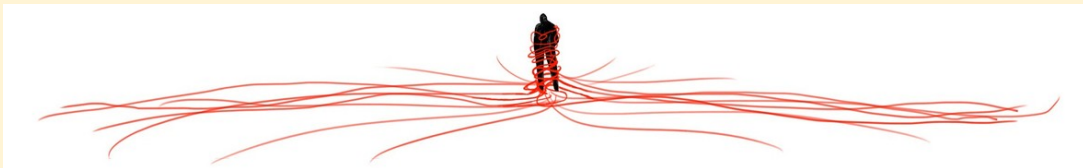
"Public water systems must meet all state and federal requirements to provide safe drinking water to their customers," said Alexis Strauss, EPA's Acting Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "Our priority is to ensure the base achieves compliance promptly, to serve those who live and work at Camp Pendleton."

Source: TREA



## **Adopting? You Now Have Extra Time to Apply for This Benefit**

A military benefit reimburses adoptive parents for some fees accrued during the adoption process. A new regulation change extends the application timeline. For more details, see this [Spousebuzz post](#).





## **Suicide Is Preventable**

We can all help someone who may be at risk for suicide through simple actions that can make a big difference. Know what resources are available to Veterans in need: (1) learn more about how you can [Be There for Veterans](#); (2) every VA Medical Center has a specially-trained [suicide prevention coordinator](#) or team; and (3) VA has also taken steps to ensure women Veterans are served. VA has free services to help Veterans recover from [Military Sexual Trauma](#) (which a higher percent of women have experienced). If you are in crisis, or know a veteran who is, call the Veterans Crisis Line toll-free at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. Or text to 838255, Or chat on the [Veterans Crisis Line site](#)



## **AF Expands Career Intermission Program**

The Air Force has changed the Career Intermission Program (CIP) to expand participation opportunities for Airmen from one application window each year to three. CIP offers Airmen the opportunity for a one-time temporary transition from active duty to the Individual Ready Reserve. Airmen with humanitarian circumstances may submit out-of-cycle CIP applications. Program participants sign an agreement that says they will return to active duty in the same component from which they separated and serve two months of active duty for every month of CIP participation. For more information, visit [myPers](#). Click the 'Career Intermission Program' link under the 'Career Management' menu from any military landing page.



## **Veteran Crisis Resources**

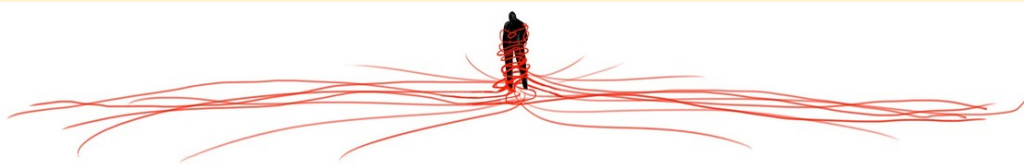
**Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**

**Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**

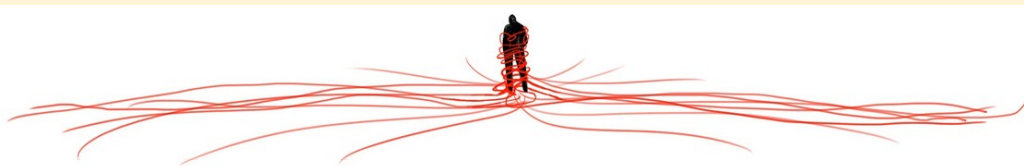
**1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)**

**VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274**



## **Army Mulls Redesigning Basic Combat Training**

The U.S. Army will take a hard look at Basic Combat Training to see if it's producing soldiers that are disciplined enough for the operational force. "In October, we are doing a complete review of the Basic Combat Training period of instruction, what we train in the 10-week red, white and blue phase," Maj. Gen. Malcolm Frost, commanding general of the U.S. Army Center of Initial Military Training, told Military.com on Thursday. For more details, see this [article](#).





**Support Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act, HR  
1279**

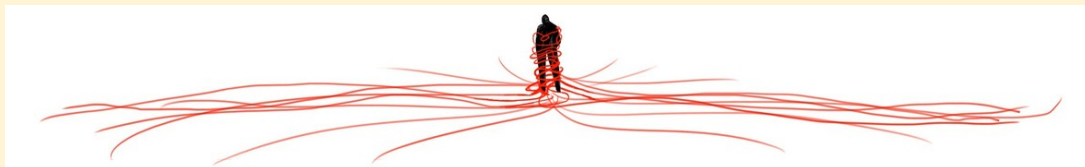
Representative Elizabeth Esty, ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Assistance, introduced H.R. 1279, the Helping Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits Act. The bill would establish a Center of Excellence in preventing, diagnosing, mitigating, treating and rehabilitating conditions related to veterans' exposure to burn pits during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. The Center would be charged with using data from the registry to study whether exposure is associated with long-term health effects in veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan in addition to improving diagnosis and treatments for those exposed.

VA's website states that exposure to toxins found in the burn pits may be associated with skin, eye, respiratory, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, or internal organ problems. Exposure to burn pits is generally associated with short-term effects, such as eye irritation, acute respiratory symptoms, and skin itching or rashes. However, according to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report, fine dust particles and pollution in Iraq and Afghanistan may actually be more responsible for respiratory illness claimed by veterans who served there.

DAV Resolution No. 237 supports improvement of care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxins and environmental hazards, including a rigorous research agenda to identify any associations between such exposures and adverse health outcomes.

Please write your elected officials and urge their co-sponsorship and support for passage of H.R. 1279. Thank you for your continued efforts and participation in the DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network).

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

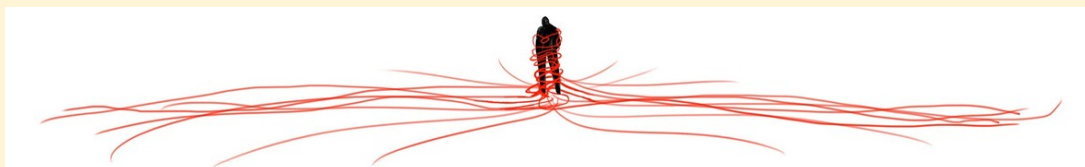


# Links to Other Stories

- 1) AGENT ORANGE
- 2) Armies, Addicts and Spooks: the CIA in Vietnam and Laos
- 3) First-Hand Stories from US Veterans on Their Heroes: The Companion and Service Animals Who Love Them
- 4) Jenna Testimonial
- 5) Newsletter on UCCS: 'Veterans should be banned from four-year universities'
- 6) VA Awards \$8M in Adaptive Sports Program Grants to Aid Disabled Veterans
- 7) VA chief took in Wimbledon, river cruise on European work trip; wife's expenses covered by taxpayers
- 8) VA Expands Transparency Efforts, Detailing Secretary's Travel
- 9) VA Removing Employee Arrested for Aggravated Assault with Deadly Weapon
- 10) VA Selects Providers for Dental Insurance Program
- 11) Veteran Owned Nine Line Apparel Partners With NFL Stars To Stand For Anthem
- 12) Vietnam War Protesters have NOTHING to Apologize For
- 13) Yes, a service dog can help save a marriage and a family

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)





## **URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO PREVENT HEALTH CARE COST INCREASES**

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) now being debated in the Senate, with voting expected to start Monday (18 September 2017), contains provisions that will hit military retirees hard.

The bill would triple TRICARE pharmacy fees over a decade and tie rates to an index expected to increase by almost 6 percent next year.

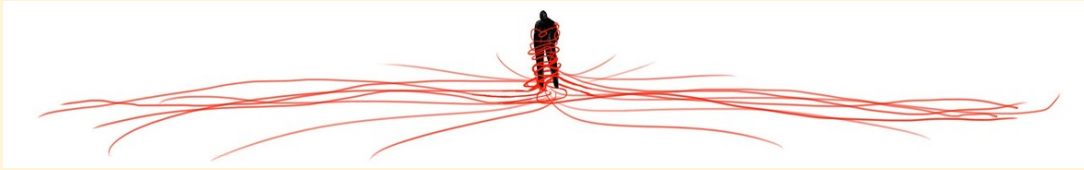
Because so many military retirees and their spouses take medications, these increases could easily wipe out whatever COLA increase is given each year - if there even is one.

It is critical that you immediately send the message below to your Senators and urge them to vote against these provisions.

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

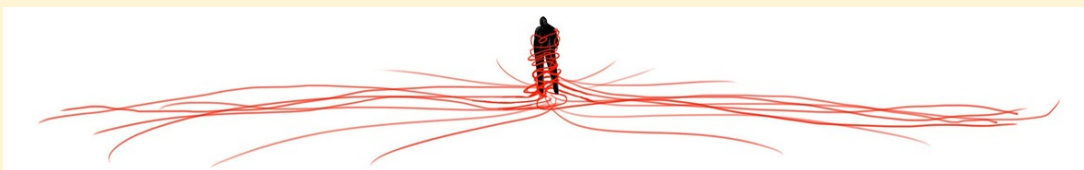






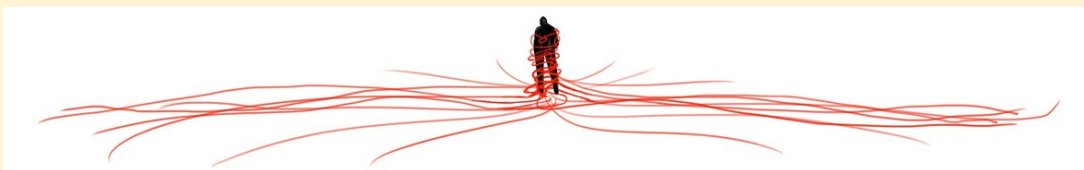
## **Funding for Veterans Choice May Run Out**

The Trump administration says the private-sector Veterans Choice health care program may need additional money as early as December to avoid a disruption of care for hundreds of thousands of veterans. The House Veterans Affairs Committee was already anticipating that the emergency funding approved in August may not last the full six months. They cited the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) past problems in estimating Choice program cost. Earlier this year, the VA began limiting referrals to outside doctors as money began to run low and veterans reported delays in care. More than 30 percent of VA appointments are made in the private sector. For more on Veterans Choice, visit this [page](#).



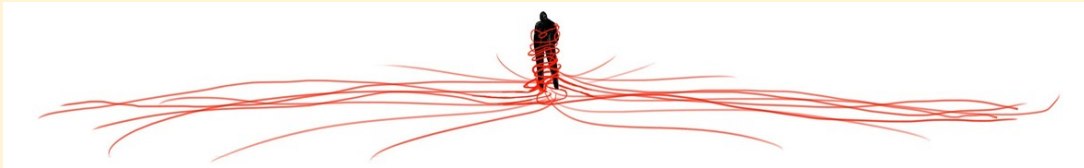
**After Her Service**

After Her Service (AHS) is a program for post-9/11 women veterans aimed at supporting their personal and professional success. AHS combines a skill-building retreat with 6 months of individual coaching focused on setting and attaining life and career goals. Developed by the University of Michigan, the program is grounded in strategies known to be effective for increasing resilience, life satisfaction, and empowerment. The After Her Service Program includes a weekend skill-building retreat and 6 months of professional coaching. For more information, visit the [MSpan website](#).



## **Navy Begins Post-Hurricane Repairs**

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) awarded a nearly \$14.7 million task order for stabilization and repairs to multiple buildings damaged due to Hurricane Harvey at Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi, Texas. The Corpus Christi damage could be considered minor compared to the damage sustained in Houston and other Texas neighbors, but plenty of work remains including the removal of carpet, walls, windows and other unsalvageable items due to water penetration, clean-up of roofing materials and tarping of rooftops to mitigate further water intrusion. The contract also calls for facility repairs. Damage repairs at Corpus Christi are expected to be completed by September 2019.



## **Social Security Paid Out \$38 Million to Dead Veterans**

News broke last month that the Social Security Administration (SSA) has paid out nearly \$38 million in benefits to hundreds of dead veterans according to the Social Security Administration's Inspector General.

The report partially blamed the Department of Veterans Affairs for inaccurate death records. In other instances, the VA had listed people as dead who were still alive. The SSA told inspectors that the VA had also failed to share in their monthly reports the names of some people who had died.

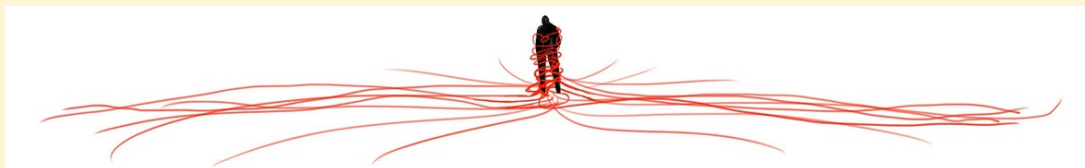
In 2016, the Inspector General's Office received 17 million death records from the VA and checked them against the Social Security Administration's database. Inspectors found 3,925 cases of people receiving Social Security payments after they were listed as dead. They estimated the amount of improper payments based on a sample of 100 of those cases.

Some of the cases of deceased veterans receiving payments involved identity theft, the inspector general's office found.

In response to the report, the Social Security Administration agreed to review the 3,925 cases that inspectors uncovered of people receiving payments after the VA listed them as dead, and identify any potential instances of fraud.

The SSA was also asked to work with the VA to exchange accurate information.

Source: TREA



**“We Proudly Support our  
Military Personnel & Families”**



### **American Legion Supports Cannabis Study**

American Legion National Commander Denise Rohan recently submitted a letter to Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin urging the secretary and his department to support an FDA-Approved Marijuana/PTSD research study taking place at the Scottsdale Research Institute in Arizona. In August, the doctor facilitating the study, Dr. Sue Sisley, asked members of the Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division to express their support for her study. The National Commander's letter is available on the [American Legion website](#). For more information on the study, visit the [MAPS website](#), the [Medical Cannabis.com website](#), and follow Dr. Sisley on [Facebook](#).



# American Public WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Vietnam War veterans who served in  
Harbors and Off-Shore Vietnam  
NO LONGER receive Health Care for  
cancers and other diseases caused by  
exposure to Agent Orange Herbicide.

**WE NEED OUR VA BENEFITS!**

Please Contact Your Senators and  
Representatives  
(Call, Write, Email, Fax, or Visit)

**ASK THEM TO PASS  
HR-299 AND S-422**



Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association  
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Navy@BlueWaterNavy.org

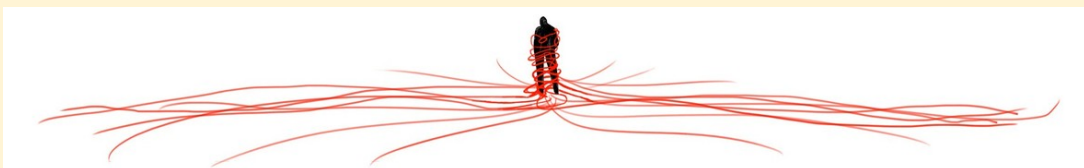


**VA Provides Post-Hurricane Support in PR**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to provide vital health care and other support to displaced veterans in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). In Puerto Rico, the San Juan VA Medical Center (VAMC) is providing primary care and mental health services for walk-in patients. Also, VA officials have been monitoring the [VA Caribbean Facebook page](#), and responding to family requests for status of both patients and staff. All community clinics and Vet Centers in Puerto Rico and USVI are closed until further notice. For assistance, call VISN 8 TelCare 24/7 hotline at 877-741-3400. Monitor operating status on the [VA Caribbean Healthcare System website](#). Follow the [VA Caribbean Facebook page](#) and monitor the [VA Blog](#) for current information on VA facilities and services impacted by the hurricanes.



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CAN MAKE  
ALL THE DIFFERENCE!**



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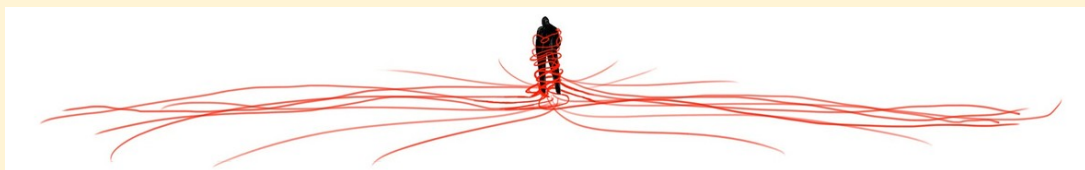
Riverside County, CA

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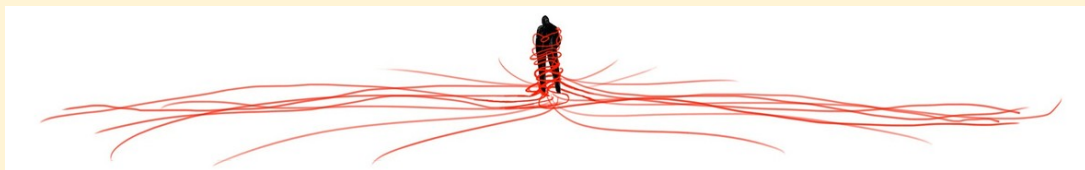
Serving those who served!

**Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family!**



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