



Est. 2006

Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, July 22, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 29



This-N-That

Almost daily I get E-Mails from all across the country from Veterans regarding healthcare in their facilities ranging from extremely bad to excellent. But the complaints about bad care far out weigh the commendations Veterans make.

And although I'm far from surprised, the changes (an in some cases improvements) since 2009 are still far and few between.

Last week I provided the most accurate stats on homeless Veterans nationwide and it comes no where near what the VA touts, and even though the number could never be 100% accurate, the VA has very few on the streets trying to find Homeless Veterans, no making any real attempt to resolving the problem.

The next problem with the VA Healthcare System is no where near enough licensed mental healthcare employees.

Here are the facts as presented by the VA:

VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM STATS AS OF 03/31/18	
Healthcare Facilities	1,242
VA Medical Centers	171
Outpatient Clinics	1,062
Physician Employees	25,894
Nursing Employees	97,911
Psychologists	789
Nurses	11,346
Physicians	2,686
Psychiatrists	189
As of March 31, 2018 Appointments	5,000,000
Medical Appointments Completed within 30 days	96.04%
Medical Appointments Completed within 7 days	84.31%
Medical Appointments Completed Same Day	20.63%
Average Wait time in Days - Primary Care	4.42
Average Wait time in Days - Specialty Care	7.16
Average Wait time in Days - Mental Health	3.32
Total Patients 2017	727,000

It would also to me still look like VA Directors are still cooking the books to keep their stats looking good so they can still hang on to those wonderful annual bonuses which I still firmly believe should be stopped.

When you're working with those who wrote a check to the United States of America for an amount up to and including their life, then their duty is to provide the best possible care in the world to them, not to cook the books and make things look great when in fact they're not any where near being great.

I will agree there are some facilities that are truly awesome, people (medical staff) do care, do provide the best possible

care, are concerned and will go out of their way to take care of all those who served.

But there are still far more facilities where staff are their only for the paycheck and nothing more, could care less about you than the paint on the walls. And the few in those facilities who really do care are scared to death to blow the whistle on co-workers knowing full well they're truly not protected when blowing the whistle.

So I am going to ask again for Veterans to send me their story good, bad or indifferent about the care you receive, time it takes to get appointments, wait time in lobby's when you've arrived early or on time and still had to wait to be seen.

We would like to make sure Congress knows all the horror stories, as well as commend those who have provided the best of care and your stories will help us in that effort.

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



Congress Urged to Reject TRICARE Fee Increases

A consortium of almost three dozen associations and veteran groups, known as the Military Coalition, is urging House-Senate conferees to reject the Senate-passed language that would impose higher TRICARE enrollment fees and deductibles on more than a million retirees under age 65. Read more about this important legislation [HERE](#).



Is the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act Working?

In response to a nationwide crisis in access to care, which engulfed the entire VA, the VFW-championed Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 was signed in to law. This important law was intended to ensure VA employees who endanger the lives of veterans are held quickly accountable and to protect whistleblowers who expose fraud, waste, and abuse within VA. The VFW needs your help to better inform Congress and VA about the situation on the ground at VA facilities around the country. Please take the VFW [Accountability and Whistleblower Survey](#).



REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL



4 Ways to Make The Most of Your Time at the Doctor

It is tempting to say what you think the doctor wants to hear, for example, that you smoke less or eat a more balanced diet than you really do. While this is natural, it's not in your best interest. Your doctor can suggest the best treatment only if you say what is really going on.

1. Decide What Questions Are Most Important

Pick three or four questions or concerns that you most want to talk about with the doctor. You can tell him or her what they are at the beginning of the appointment, and then discuss each in turn.

2. Stick to the Point

Although your doctor might like to talk with you at length, each patient is given a limited amount of time. To make the

best use of your time, stick to the point. For instance, give the doctor a brief description of the symptom, when it started, how often it happens, and if it is getting worse or better.

3. Share Your Point of View About the Visit

Tell the doctor if you feel rushed, worried, or uncomfortable. If necessary, you can offer to return for a second visit to discuss your concerns. For example, you could say something like: "I know you have many patients to see, but I'm really worried about this. I'd feel much better if we could talk about it a little more."

4. Remember, the Doctor May Not Be Able to Answer All Your Questions

Even the best doctor may be unable to answer some questions. Most doctors will tell you when they don't have answers. They also may help you find the information you need or refer you to a specialist. If a doctor regularly brushes off your questions or symptoms as simply a part of aging, [think about looking for another doctor](#).

Visit our website for more strategies to help you [communicate with your doctor](#).



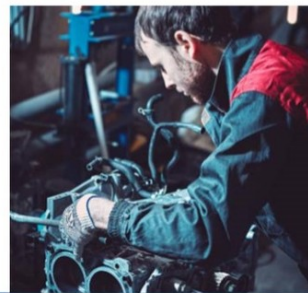
HIRING EVENT

AUGUST 5 - 6 | AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

WANTED FOR IMMEDIATE HIRE:

Diesel Technicians
Generator Service Technicians
Transmission Technician
Bumper to Bumper

*Industry Experience or Military Equivalent



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INVITATION ONLY

To be considered email resume to
Eden at ebroggi@whallsgroup.com



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 **1,450** per day with a total **4,210,164** 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 **16,411** documents on-line
(Updated: 06/08/18)
- 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 (Counselor Needed)
 - 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: 01/11/18)
- News (Articles On-Line: **7,504**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **3,660**, Added 6 New Links
(Updated: 07/14/18)

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



TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin #459

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:



FEDVIP



Ask TRICARE Webinar



Managing Insomnia

Visit the TRICARE Media Center for this and previous podcasts at www.tricare.mil/podcasts.



DOD Changes Rules for Transferring GI Bill Benefits

Last week, DOD announced it will limit transferability of GI Bill benefits to service members with less than 16 years of service. This change is meant to re-define the benefit as a reenlistment tool as it was originally designed to be when the Post-9/11 GI Bill was signed into law. The new policy regarding transfers will go into effect in one year, so impacted service members still have time to decide whether to transfer their benefits to their dependents. The amount of eligibility that is transferred to each dependent can be changed until the benefit is fully expended, so the VFW recommends service members who are unsure of how they would like to utilize their GI Bill benefits to transfer one month of eligibility to their dependents now to ensure they fully utilize their benefit. [Read more about the recent changes.](#)



JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD JOB FAIR



120+
JOB OFFERS
EXPECTED!



AMERICAN LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER

Thursday, July 26, 2018

11:00 am – 3:00 pm

8085 NCO Beach Road

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433

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NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS, VETERANS AND SPOUSES

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LT Bobby Ross

July's Featured Song

->[The Reunion](#)<-

I have been sending out my LRRP Newsletter each month for over 30 years. Up and to this month, I have never gone into the 'poor pitiful me mode' until now. These past few months have been rough on me. First off, I lost my Mom. That in itself was hard. But then there were other complications. My [Survival Farming](#) operation has been seriously threatend to be closed down. And I had to bury one of my most favorite Bengal kitties. And a whole bunch of other crap. So, I am putting my "[The Reunion](#)" up this month as my "[Song of the Month](#)". I produced this one on my original "Voice of America" album in Nashville in 1987. The picture below is of two beautiful and wonderful girls in my high school back when I was an Officer Candidate in the US Army in 1966. I came back on an unexpected leave

from Fort Knox, KY, to South Lake Tahoe, CA on December 15, 1966 for Christmas. I met Connie and Maria at my parent's home that night, and they both rushed into my arms. We had such a great night together with others, playing our guitars, singing songs and just having fun. The following morning, I went skiing with a couple family friends at Heavenly Valley Ski Resort, and on our way back home, we met up with the two girls who had driven up to Al Tahoe to buy me Christmas gifts. On the way back home, as we were following right behind them in our car, their car went off the road and down a steep embankment, and they were both killed. Connie was my only Baby Sister. Maria was my first fiance. This song, "[The Reunion](#)", kinda touches on that moment, and that time in general. Shortly after their funerals, I graduated from OCS and became a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army. Not long after that, I was in Vietnam fighting for my life.



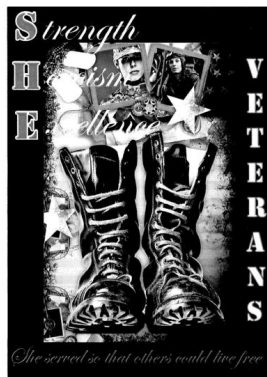
FEDVIP is Coming: Get to Know Dental and Vision Plans Today

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) ends on Dec. 31, 2018. Beginning in 2019, dental and vision plans will be available through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). Now is a good time to become familiar with FEDVIP options. FEDVIP 2019 plans and rates will be online in the fall. But you can look at 2018 plans and rates now.

Read the full article [here](#).



Women **VETERANS** RESOURCE FAIR



July 21, 2018
10:00 am to 2:00 pm



American Legion Post 221
427 Lincoln Way East | Massillon 44646

Giveaways | Information | Connections | Refreshments





HURRICANE IRMA RELIEF FUNDS

Florida State Council continues to stand by to assist members that suffered losses from Hurricane Irma.

If you are aware of any member that has suffered losses or needs help because of Irma, have them contact me (Contact Info Below).

Mike Bousher, President

Vietnam Veterans of America

Florida State Council

Email president@vafsc.org

Telephone (813) 917-2688



MILITARY, VETERAN, AND SPOUSES CAREER FAIR



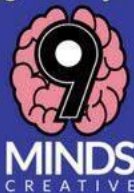
JULY 24TH, 2018
3:00 - 6:00 PM

OMNI HOTEL
AUSTIN AT
SOUTHPARK

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AUSTIN, TX 78744

MUST REGISTER ON EVENTBRITE:
SEARCH "9 MINDS CAREER FAIR" ON
EVENTBRITE OR USE LINK BELOW
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/YC6DFB3](https://tinyurl.com/YC6DFB3)

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Rock Springs

There's hope. There's help.



VA Launches VEText Appointment System

VA has launched VEText, a text messaging system that reminds veterans of upcoming health care appointments and allows them to confirm or cancel via phone. There are currently 138 VA facilities using the automated system. Veterans who have previously used the VA health care system with a cell phone number listed in their electronic health records are automatically enrolled in VEText. Learn more about [VEText](#).



  **How to Apply for Federal Government Employment**

RESUME

summary job search
vision interview
company offer experience
position network employers
history advancement salary
references objective past

**Ten Steps to a Federal Job
for
Military and Spouses**

Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH)
29401 SW 125th Ave, Bldg. 600
Homestead ARB, FL 33039
Date: Wednesday, 25 July 2018
Time: 9am to 12pm
Spouses are Cordially Invited to Attend

To Register Contact: Tynisa S. Eleby, MBA, MS
Phone: 786.415.2040


Joe Pagan, CWDP, MCT, FCC, CFJST

The process for applying for federal employment involves many stages that consist of knowing how to develop an effective plan in order to increase the possibilities to successfully compete. The "Ten Steps to a Federal Job for Military and Spouses" is intended to provide an overview on how to pursue this goal!


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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



**New tech increases ease of contacting
Veterans Crisis Line**

Call the Veterans Crisis Line.”

VA is excited to announce that service members and Veterans can connect to the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) using these simple words. The Siri function on Apple’s iPhone and the Google Assistant function on Android phones now automatically dial the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline which also serves the Veterans Crisis Line, even if the number (1-800-273-8255) is not saved in the phone’s contact list. **Callers will need to Press 1 in order to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.**

“Suicide prevention is VA’s top clinical priority, and we are

working to reach Veterans where they are to help save lives,” said Dr. Keita Franklin. “The new feature on Apple and Android devices enables service members, Veterans, and their families to get quicker access to our network of certified crisis responders.”

Responders at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans when mental health or related issues — such as chronic pain, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, anger, and homelessness — reach a crisis point.

“Since its launch in 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered over 3.5 million calls and initiated the dispatch of emergency services to callers in imminent crisis nearly 93,000 times,” said Dr. Matt Miller, director of the Veterans Crisis Line. “Since launching chat in 2009 and text services in November 2011, the VCL has answered over 397,000 and nearly 92,000 requests for chat and text services respectively.”

According to Miller, the ease of connecting to the Veterans Crisis Line is the technology’s biggest benefit.

“The ability to for Veterans to connect to the Veterans Crisis Line using just four simple words, and through a technology that so many people are familiar with already, is truly remarkable,” Miller said. “While some suicidal crises last a long time, most last minutes to hours. The quicker we can get Veterans connected to care, the more likely they are to survive.”

While recognizing the need for crisis access and rapid care, VA continues to build and emphasize sustained access to care for Veterans to receive ongoing treatment as appropriate.

“VA is working to improve its services by providing evidence-based mental health care across a full spectrum of interventional services,” said Franklin. “We are anticipating and responding to Veterans’ needs and supporting returning service members as they rejoin their communities.”

VA is leveraging a public health approach to suicide prevention that addresses multiple risk factors for suicide to stage interventions before suicidal thoughts and behaviors occur. While VA has made great strides in crisis intervention, the public health approach uses the best evidence available to guide the development of innovative new strategies to serve all Veterans.

No one organization can tackle suicide prevention alone. To save lives, VA is using prevention strategies that reach beyond health care settings to involve peers, family members, and community members in order to reach Veterans where they are.

“Every day people across the nation reach out for support and are able to live healthy, productive lives. But VA alone can’t prevent Veteran suicide,” Franklin said. “To end Veteran suicide, we need support across sectors, and this type of technology is another step in the right direction. The

quicker we can get service members and Veterans connected to care, the better.”

If you or someone you know is in crisis, support is available 24/7. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available to all at 1-800-273-8255. Veterans, service members, and their families and friends can call the Veterans and Military Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255** and Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or text to 838255.



FORT HOOD JOB FAIR



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Club Hood

Thursday, July 26, 2018

11:00am – 3:00pm

24th St. and Wainwright Dr.

Fort Hood, TX 76544

120+
JOB OFFERS
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FOR VETERANS, TRANSITIONING MILITARY PERSONNEL,
NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS, RESERVE MEMBERS AND SPOUSES

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For more details, visit RecruitMilitary.com/FortHood



**VA Seeks WWII Veterans Exposed to
Mustard Gas**

VA is reviewing previously denied claims from World War II veterans who participated in full-body testing for mustard gas or lewisite in the 1940s. VA has contacted identifiable World War II veterans with a previously-denied claim for exposure to mustard gas or lewisite to readjudicate those claims. World War II veterans who were previously denied benefits for mustard gas or lewisite exposure and have not been contacted by VA, should [contact a VFW-accredited Service Officer](#) or call VA at 800-827-1000 to request that their claim be reviewed. Read about [benefits related to exposure to mustard gas or lewisite](#).





MILITARY SKILLED TRADES

Career Fairs and Resume Database

Seeking: Transitioning Military, National Guard/Reservists
Veterans, Military Spouses

With experience in: Welding - Fabrication - Coating/Painting - Electrical
Maintenance - HVAC - Manufacturing - Plumbing
Pipe fitting - Construction - Rigging - Telecommunication - Truck driving -
Industrial Machinery

Monday, July 23, 2018

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Anchors Catering and Conference Center

**2375 Recreation Way, Bldg. 3210
San Diego, CA 92136**

Questions? Email skilledtrades@TheValueOfaVeteran.com

You Must Create a Profile to

Pre-Register OR for Virtual

Consideration. Direct Link:

[MilitarySkilledTrades.com/registration.](http://MilitarySkilledTrades.com/registration)

These events and resume database are offered by a commercial vendor and are not sponsored or endorsed by the Department of Defense or the Service Branches.

Produced by



**Register to attend
Career Fairs at**

JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK

Ft Rucker, AL

Ft. Huachuca, AZ

Camp Pendleton, CA

Ft Irwin, CA

Naval Station San Diego, CA

NAS Jacksonville, FL

NAS Pensacola, FL

Ft Benning, GA

Ft Stewart, GA

Moody AFB, GA

Hickam AFB, HI

MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI

Schofield Barracks, HI

Camp LeJeune, NC

Ft. Bragg, NC

Holloman AFB, NM

Ft. Bliss, TX

Ft. Hood, TX

Sheppard AFB, TX

Ft Eustis, VA

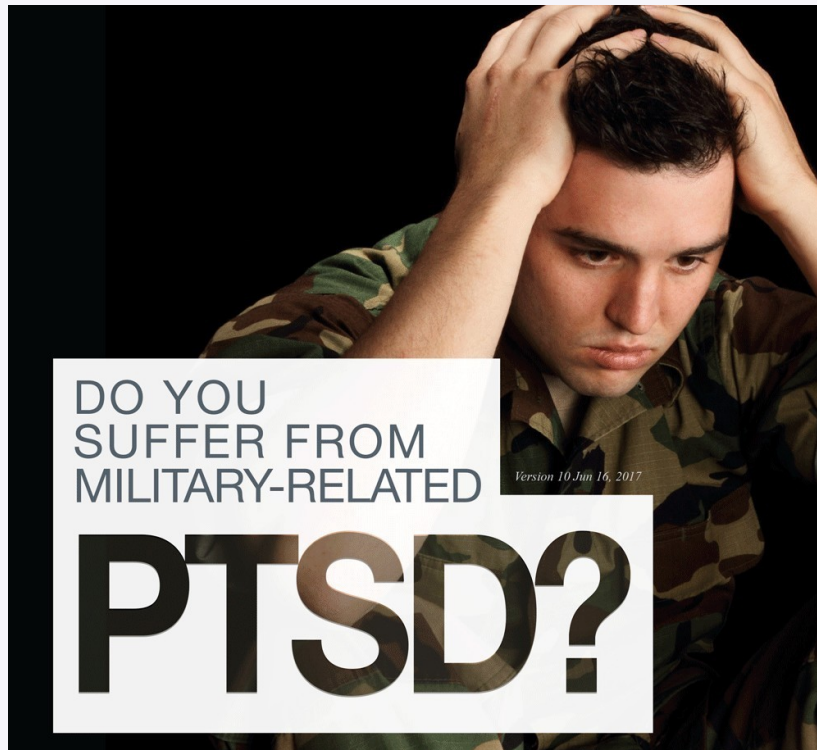
NAS Oceana, VA

Naval Station Norfolk, VA

JB Lewis-McChord, WA

Naval Station Everett, WA





DO YOU
SUFFER FROM
MILITARY-RELATED

PTSD?

Version 10, Jun 16, 2017

**Veterans Crisis Line:
1-800-273-8255 & Press 1
Ntl Call Center for Homeless Vets
1-877-424-3838**



**DD 214 Form Request: Order a Copy of
Your Dd214 Form On-Line**

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes.

NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files." Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester 'will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mail room and processing time. Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.

Click [HERE](#) or [HERE](#).

Source: Tom Lasser



House Passes Veterans Medical Leave Bill

On Monday, the House passed the VFW-supported S. 899, which was introduced by Senator Hirono and would ensure veterans who work for VA are not required to take unpaid leave when attending medical appointments for service-connected conditions. The bill awaits Senate passage because of minor technical changes. The VFW calls on the Senate to swiftly considered and pass this important bill.



Learn What Service Members Can Expect from inTransition Cold Calls

Leah Freeman, PHCoE Public Affairs

InTransition is a free, voluntary program that assists military members in finding a new mental health provider any time they need one and provides a warm hand-off during times of transition (discharge, retirement, deployment, return from deployment, permanent change of station, etc.).

Service members and veterans may receive a “cold call” from an inTransition health resource consultant (HRC) to learn about the program and potentially enroll. Learn more about these calls below so you can help prepare your patients or answer their questions.

Q. What qualifies a service member or veteran to be cold called?

A. All service members who have been through or are going through some sort of transition (retirement, expiration of term of service, discharge, chaptered, Post-Deployment Health Reassessment, permanent change of station, etc.) and have accessed behavioral health services, or have been referred to behavioral health services, one year prior to separation or transfer are required to be called. The requirement is part of an executive action(link is external) signed on Aug. 26, 2014, by then President Barack Obama.

Read the full Clinician's Corner blog [HERE](#).



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



www.veterans-for-change.org





Watch out for Medicare Scams

Medicare will never call you uninvited and ask you to give us personal or private information to get your new Medicare Number and card.

Scam artists may try to get personal information (like your current Medicare Number) by contacting you about your new card.

If someone asks you for your information, for money, or threatens to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your personal information, hang up and call us at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

3 things to know

Your new card will automatically come to you. You don't need to do anything as long as your address is up to date. If you need to update your address, visit your [My Social Security account](#).

Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away.

Your new Medicare Number is a unique combination of numbers and letters. Your new number uses numbers 0 thru 9. The letters S, L, O, I, B, and Z are never used.



H.R. 5671, the Burn Pits Accountability Act

On May 1, 2018, Representative Tulsi Gabbard (HI) introduced H.R. 5671, the Burn Pits Accountability Act.

Since the Persian Gulf War, a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside the United States was the use of burn pits. Smoke from these pits contained toxic substances that may have short- and long-term health effects, especially for those who were exposed for longer periods. Many service members reported acute symptoms of respiratory or eye irritation, gastrointestinal distress, or rashes during or shortly after exposure, but the research thus far has been inconclusive about whether there are longer lasting consequences to these exposures, as many veterans still struggling with conditions that arose during or after military service believe.

H.R. 5671 will require the Secretary of Defense to ensure that periodic health assessments ascertain whether a service member has been at a location when an open burn pit was used or exposed to toxic airborne chemicals. It will

further require the Secretary of Defense to enter into an information sharing agreement with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. If a service member was exposed, the VA Secretary will enroll the member into the VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, unless the member elects not to enroll.

In agreement with DAV Resolution No. 120, DAV supports H.R. 5671-legislation that would ensure that exposure to burn pits and airborne chemicals are recognized by both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

Your commitment and advocacy helps make DAV a highly influential and effective organization in Washington. Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

Take Action





Service and Non-Service Connected Matrix

There are additional benefits that you may be eligible for that are based on a favorable decision for a VA benefit and/or based on special circumstances. These are known as derivatives.

Click [HERE](#)



Native American Veterans Memorial

Late last month the Smithsonian announced the winning design for the planned Native American Veterans Memorial will be awarded to Vietnam veteran Harvey Pratt, of Guthrie, Okla.. Mr. Pratt, who is of Cheyenne and Arapaho descent, served with the Marine Corps during Vietnam and stated that he hopes that his design will serve as a place for people to gather, instead of just a sculpture. The memorial will be installed on the National Mall adjacent to the National Museum of the American Indian, is scheduled to open in late 2020 and will pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of Native Americans who have served our country throughout history in all of our military services. Find out more about the [Native American Veterans Memorial](#).



TRICARE Dental Changes Coming Soon



Military retirees should soon find a postcard in their mailboxes reminding them that **TRICARE's** retiree **dental program will shutter later** this year. This change is due to a law passed in 2017 which allows military retirees to access the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), which also lets retirees purchase vision insurance, an option that is not otherwise available through TRICARE.



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 Improves Guard Tuition Assistance

New members of the Army [National Guard](#) will no longer have to meet a time in service benchmark before tapping into its [tuition assistance program](#) for undergraduate and graduate degrees, officials announced this week. Instead, tuition assistance (TA) use will be tied to finishing Guard training requirements. Read more about this important change to [National Guard benefits](#).



Links to Other Stories

1. [Barriers and facilitators to implementation of VA home-based primary care on American Indian reservations: a qualitative multi-case study](#)
2. [Does Glyphosate Cause CANCER? Monsanto Herbicide Trials Take Shape in US](#)
3. [IG investigating sexual misconduct among students and how DoD schools deal with it](#)
4. [Protecting yourself from identity theft](#)
5. [Research helps Veteran-actor succeed despite TBI and related growth-hormone deficiency](#)
6. [Senate plans path ahead for 'blue water Navy' benefits fix](#)
7. [Smartphone feature provides immediate access to Veterans Crisis Line](#)
8. [Transgender And Cisgender US Veterans Have Few Health Differences](#)
9. [VA admits equipment for hearing-impaired Vets sat](#)

unused until KETV investigation

10. VA Establishes Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization to Support Transition From Legacy Patient Data System
11. VA gets a new top health official, but still searches for a permanent nominee
12. VA Home Loans
13. VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals Using Innovative Tools to Make a Record Number of Decisions
14. Veterans Legacy Program: Lt. Col. Alexander Miguel Roberts, Veteran of WWI and WWII, prisoner of war, and aviation enthusiast
15. VEText system transforming VA's medical scheduling process

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Changes Coming for SGLI?

A Navy widow has fought to make changes to the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program to be friendlier to spouses and family members — and a new proposal on Capitol Hill to alter SGLI is the latest result in the ongoing battle. For more details, see this [news article](#).



MIA Update

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for six American service members who had been missing in action from Korea and WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Army Pfc. Walter W. Green, 18, of Zanesville, Ohio, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 20 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Green was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. In November 1950, his unit was involved in combat actions

against the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces in the vicinity of Unsan, North Korea. Green was reported missing in action as of Nov. 2, 1950 when he could not be accounted for by his unit. [Read about Green.](#)

Army Staff Sgt. David Rosenkrantz, 28, of Los Angeles, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried in June 20 in Riverside, Calif. Rosenkrantz was assigned to Company H, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. In September 1944, his unit participated in Operation Market Garden, a ploy by Allied planners to break German defensive lines on the western front by capturing a highway route through the Netherlands. On Sep. 28, 1944, Rosenkrantz' platoon occupied Heuvelhof, a farm located south of the town of Grosbeek, when German tanks and infantry attacked. The paratroopers hid among sparse trees and buildings. Rosenkrantz was killed by enemy gunfire when he rose from his position. Due to the proximity of the enemy, his remains could not be recovered at the time. [Read about Rosenkrantz.](#)

Navy Electrician's Mate 3rd Class George H. Gibson, 20, of Winchester, Kan., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried July 21 in Inglewood, Calif. Gibson was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. [Read about Gibson.](#)

Army Cpl. Francisco Ramos-Rivera was a member of Company H, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, engaged in combat operations against North Korean forces near Taegon, South Korea. As U.S. forces regrouped after their evacuation, Ramos-Rivera could not be accounted-for and was declared missing in action on July 20, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ramos-Rivera.](#)

Army Master Sgt. Leonard K. Chinn was a member of Company D, 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, when his unit was fighting off persistent Chinese attacks in North Korea. Chinn was reportedly captured by enemy forces on Dec. 1, 1950, and was held at several temporary prisoner of war camps before being marched northwest to POW Camp 5 Complex, North Korea. Interment services are pending. [Read about Chinn.](#)

Army Pvt. Delbert J. Holliday was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 7th Cavalry Division, participating in combat actions against the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces in the vicinity of North Pyongan Province, North Korea. Holliday was killed in action on Nov. 30, 1950 and was reportedly buried in the United Nations Military Cemetery in Pyongyang. As the United Nations' situation with North Korea worsened, circumstances forced the cemetery in Pyongyang to close on Dec. 3, 1950, and buried remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Holliday.](#)



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Warrior Symposium in September

The Fifth Annual Warrior Community Integration Symposium is the industry-leading event that will bring together hundreds of veteran-serving professionals from across the nation to connect with new resources, educate on trends and best practices, advocate effectively, and collaborate for future partnerships. The Warrior Symposium will be held September 5 - 7, 2018 at the Omni Hotel Atlanta, 100 CNN Center NW, Atlanta, GA 30303. To register or become an exhibitor or sponsor, visit the [America's Warrior Partnership website](#).



Your VA Loan Benefit: Lock In Your Low Rate Today with \$0 Down

Don't waste your money on rent when you can buy a home with \$0 down. Now is the time to use your VA Loan benefit. Qualified borrowers can buy or refi with as little as \$0 down, and have no PMI payments with great rates and financing up to \$453k. [Use your VA loan benefit today](#).



VA Kicks Off 'Choose VA' Campaign

Emphasizing a multitude of benefits and services to its 9 million Veteran customers, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently kicked off its new 'ChooseVA' marketing campaign. The ChooseVA campaign encourages all stakeholders to make an ultimate decision to [ChooseVA](#). The ChooseVA campaign includes testimonials from veteran customers and employees, and will run initially on social and digital media platforms, then later on traditional media channels to include billboards and banners, as well as through broadcast media. The campaign focuses on three areas: (1) spotlighting VA's foundational services, (2) attracting future employees, and (3) retaining the 'best and brightest' employees.



Office of Inspector General

1. [Actions Needed to Better Manage Fraud Risks](#)
2. [Characteristics of Hospitals Participating and Not Participating in the 340B Program](#)
3. [Preliminary Observations on DOJ's DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Grant Program](#)



Navy Offers 'The Navy Care' App

Naval Hospital Jacksonville now offers a faster, innovative way to complete health visits without a trip to the hospital or clinic: virtual visits. The Navy Care app enables patients to have a live, virtual visit with a clinician, using a smartphone, tablet, or computer. It is private, secure, and free. Active duty, retirees and families can also use the virtual app for follow-up medical visits. The Navy Care app allows Sailors and Marines to complete their Period Health Assessment (PHA) from their unit or home. To use Navy Care, a patient needs a video-enabled device that's connected to a 3G, 4G LTE, or wireless (Wi-Fi) network. The Navy Care app launched at Naval Hospital Jacksonville in February, 2018.



VA Enhances Crisis Line

'Call the Veterans Crisis Line' — the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that servicemembers and veterans can now connect to the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) using these simple words. The Siri function on Apple's iPhone and the Google Assistant function on Android phones now automatically dial the Veterans Crisis Line, even if the number (1-800-273-8255) is not saved in the phone's contact list. However, callers will need to Press 1 in order to reach the Veterans Crisis Line. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#). If you know a veteran in crisis, call the Veterans and Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#), or text to 838255.



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AAFES Launches Career Website

Job seekers can explore meaningful career opportunities with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service at its newly redesigned ApplyMyExchange.com employment website. The new website allows visitors to apply for positions around the world with the Department of Defense’s largest retailer. New features include specialized application pages for veterans and military spouses and videos that illustrate the Exchange’s mission. The Exchange recently reaffirmed its commitment to hire 50,000 veterans and military spouses worldwide by 2020. For more information, visit the ApplyMyExchange.com employment website.



Changes Coming to VA Spouse Education Program

Effective August 1, 2018, the entitlement available under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) program will be reduced from 45 months to 36 months, but in October, the monthly allowance for eligible recipients will increase. If you are already taking classes, or will start taking classes by July 31, 2018, you remain eligible for up to 45 months of education entitlement benefits. Beginning Oct.1, 2018, all students will see a significant increase in the monthly benefit. For questions, call 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) or TDD: federal number 711. For more information on the changes to the DEA program [read this article](#).



1. AZ Firm Issues Voluntary Product Recall Due to Undeclared Peanuts in Superfood Salad
2. FDA announces voluntary recall of several medicines containing valsartan following detection of an impurity
3. FDA Investigating Potential Connection Between Diet and Cases of Canine Heart Disease
4. H-E-B Voluntarily Issues Recall Two Variety Packs of Creamy Creations Ice Creams and Sherbets in 3-Ounce Cups Recalled due to Broken Metal in Processing Equipment
5. Portland French Bakery Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Soy in Seattle Sourdough Pub Buns and Franz Premium Pub Buns
6. Princeton Pharmaceutical Inc Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Valsartan and Valsartan HCTZ Tablets Due to Detection of a Trace Amount of Unexpected Impurity, N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) in The Products
7. Teva Pharmaceuticals USA Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Valsartan and Valsartan Hydrochlorothiazide Tablets
8. Utz Quality Foods Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Soy in Utz® Carolina Style Barbeque Potato Chips
9. Water Pik, Inc. Recalls Sonic-Fusion® Flossing Toothbrush Product for Possible Health Risk



FDA Approval and Recommendations in the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines: How Can They Differ?

Don Workman, Ph.D.

You're likely familiar with PHCoE's [Psych Health Evidence Briefs](#), which summarize available scientific evidence and clinical guidance on treatments for psychological health conditions commonly experienced by service members. Interestingly, a brief posted recently on using [vagus nerve stimulation \(VNS\) for major depressive disorder \(MDD\)](#) noted the intervention has Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for treatment-resistant depression in adults, yet the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for the Management of Major Depressive Disorder includes a "strong against" strength of recommendation for using VNS in patients with MDD. The CPG recommended against clinical use of VNS because of a lack of published evidence of efficacy for this disorder, safety concerns, and associated costs.

Another brief on the use of [topiramate for alcohol use disorder](#) (AUD) pointed out that FDA has not approved topiramate for use in the treatment of AUD, but the VA/DoD CPG for the Management of Substance Abuse Disorders gives a "strong for" strength of recommendation for use in treating patients with AUD. The drug was approved by FDA for another indication, but it has been subsequently found to be useful for the treatment of AUD. For financial reasons, the sponsor (the company making a drug or device) will likely never apply to FDA for relabeling of the drug to include an indication for this new use. In each of these cases, the FDA approval status and the CPG recommendation appear to be at odds with one another.

How can that be?

Read the full Clinician's Corner blog [HERE](#).



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SURVIVAL IS FUN



**Senate Considers Gold Medal for the
'Hello Girls'**

U.S. Senators Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.) have introduced their bipartisan [Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act](#), which will award the women of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, dubbed the Hello Girls, with the Congressional Gold Medal for their service. The bilingual Hello Girls served at military headquarters and command outposts in the field alongside the American Expeditionary Forces in France. Despite their outstanding service and the military oath they took, they were denied veteran status and benefits when they returned home.



Getting TRICARE Overseas

You should get routine and specialty care before you leave for your trip. Then, before you travel, follow these steps: (1) get prescriptions filled or refilled; (2) pack prescription medications in your carry-on luggage; (3) [find a network pharmacy](#) where you are traveling (just in case); (4) pack a list of telephone numbers; (5) review the list of overseas numbers for the [Military Health System Nurse Advice Line](#); (6) View the list of TRICARE numbers; (7) download the [TRICARE Overseas Contact Wallet Card](#); and (8) update your information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) by logging into [milConnect](#) or calling 1-800-538-9552. (TY/TDD: 1-866-363-2883).



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