



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, August 26, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 34



## **This-N-That**

Nothing new when it comes to VA Claims, and MST is no different and it appears that the VA and OIG are finding more and more claims for MST have been denied recently over the past few years leading us to believe there are more like thousands that have been denied and many leading to PTSD as well.

This means also that these thousands of women (and men too!) are without benefits and proper medical care to address the problems of both MST and PTSD, but hopefully when all the "investigations" are done and again hopefully soon, many of these claims will be reviewed and corrected.

Something else that seems to be cropping up more and more almost weekly are cases of fraud against the VA and Veterans.

We've posted several articles to the VFC website over the past couple of weeks, and most likely will be seeing even more pop to the surface, all are amounting to millions of dollars and potentially breaking a few billion dollars in total.

My question is where are the audits on all these outside doctors, clinics, not to mention inside each of the VA facilities?

VFC has been asking for many years that the budgets and expenses from all VA medical centers and clinics be posted to the VA Website so that everyone can see exactly where money is being spent and we can question why on many of the "expenses" as well as justification!

Maybe we as outsiders can see things, question them, and possibly end up saving millions if not billions of dollars which all could be easily re-directed to handle Veterans Claims and benefits.

Maybe it's a pipe dream, but in reality having only a small handful of auditors, there is just no way they can catch all of the problems. Mostly only the problems that are glaring problems.

I think that most of us know that the unions within the VA healthcare system have not been looking out for the welfare and care of Veterans, but only themselves any why

for so long that many VA employees have been protected against termination when in deed they should have been terminated.

Then the rules were changed by Congress making it a great deal easier to get rid of the dead wood, and hire those who are truly caring and compassionate and really do want to provide top notch medical care.

Wilkie rescinded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that VA entered into in 2010 with National Nurses United, Service Employees International Union, National Federation of Federal Employees, and National Association of Government Employees on VA's application of 38 U.S.C. § 7422.

The VA announced last month that it had begun implementing one of President Trump's executive orders outlining new guidelines for how union officials use official time when representing federal employees. The revocation of the MOU is the latest step forward in the process of restricting union activity within the agency.

According to the VA, the executive order affects about 1,700 VA employees using taxpayer-funded union time – including two doctors, 65 nurses and 405 other employees who spent 100% of their taxpayer-funded time working on nothing but union business.

What I'd like to know or hear from Veterans on a national level, is what do you think about the unions in the VA healthcare system.

Do you think it helps or hinders good medical care and treatments, and are you being treated with dignity and respect?

Please send all comments (confidentiality will be protected) to me via my E-Mail address below.

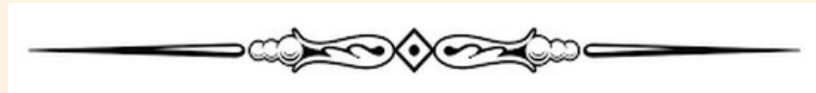
On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and myself, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

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



**BWN Needs Your Help!**

The United States government, through its agency the Veterans Affairs, has a DUTY to TREAT medical problems associated with military service; COMPENSATE veterans (or their families) for early death or disability associated with their service; and MONITOR and DOCUMENT the effects of government policy and MISTAKES that created a higher health risk. For 50 years, VA has FAILED to monitor and document the effects of Agent Orange on military members that served in the "Blue Water Navy" during Vietnam. Congress is attempting to "fix" this dereliction of duty - and VA Officials oppose the change. We the people support treatment and compensation for these medical issues; and believe monitoring and documenting these issues should be the responsibility of VA, not the individual veterans.

Please sign, share on your page, copy and paste web link into an e-mail and send out to your entire e-mail address book and ask all your friends and family to sign, and forward on to their entire e-mail address book too!

You don't have to be active duty military, or a veteran, civilians can sign too. 98,000 signatures are needed

Click [HERE](#)



**2019 Military Pay Raise and More: Now  
Law**

President Donald J. Trump signed the \$717 billion Fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. The Act authorizes a [2.6 percent military pay raise](#) and increases the active duty forces by 15,600 servicemembers. The act funds 77 [F-35 joint strike fighters](#) at \$7.6 billion. The budget also fully funds development of the B-21 bomber. The act authorizes \$24.1 billion for shipbuilding to fully fund 13 new battle force ships and accelerate funding for several future ships. This includes three [Arleigh Burke-class destroyers](#) and two [Virginia-class submarines](#). There is \$5.2 billion in the budget for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund.



## **Claims of Outsider Influence on VA Cause Alarm**

According to a report in the latest Military Update, former VA Secretary Anthony Principi "found it astounding" that three wealthy friends of President Trump, members of his Mar-a-Lago country club in Palm Beach, Fla., may have impacted executive hiring at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and might have influenced VA policy. Read the full [article](#).







## TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin #464

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:

- Natural Disaster Preparedness
- Child Dental Care
- Nurse Advice Line Overseas Accessibility

Visit the TRICARE Media Center for this and previous podcasts at [www.tricare.mil/podcasts](http://www.tricare.mil/podcasts).



### **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 **3,000** hits per day, and downloads average **1,990** per day with a total **4,312,561** 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 **16,562** documents on-line (**Updated: 08/21/18**)
- 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: **7,635**)
  - 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](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

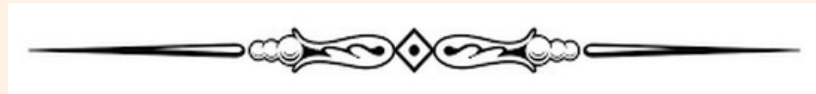




## **TRICARE Access during an Evacuation or Natural Disaster**

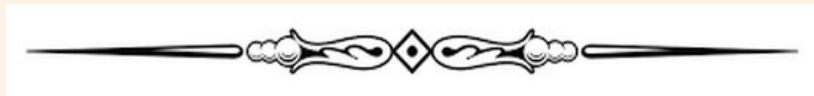
With wildfire and hurricane season underway, have a disaster preparedness plan for you and your family. Access to your TRICARE benefit, prescriptions, and medical resources may change during a disaster. Be informed and learn the best way to keep you and your family safe.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **AAFES Warns About Exchange Scams**

The [Army & Air Force Exchange Service](#) is warning military shoppers about scammers offering to broker the sale of used cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats and boat engines through the Department of Defense retailer using the name "Exchange Inc.", using the Exchange's trademarked logo and name without permission. The Exchange operates solely on military installations and via [ShopMyExchange.com](#). The Exchange does not act as a broker in private transactions and does not advertise in classified advertisement or resale websites. To verify any suspicious payment method requests, military shoppers can call Exchange Customer Service at 800-527-2345. Shoppers who believe that they may have been taken advantage of can file a complaint through the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).



## August's Featured Song

### Back to Blue Jeans Again

By

**LT Bobby Ross**

LT Bobby Ross - The Voice of America  
Previous Featured Songs

We are living in trying times. Our nation seems to be dividing more and more each day. American [hunters](#) and [fishermen](#) make up a large part of my 30 year old LRRP Network. It is my duty to make my AFOA a stunning example of how Veterans and [autistic folks](#) can work together to keep our American farms safe and secure, and support those who believe in our 2nd Amendment. For those of you interested, please feel free to contact me at this E-Mail Address: [ltbobbyr3@gmail.com](mailto:ltbobbyr3@gmail.com)



## **Senate Works to Finish Defense Funding Bill for FY2019**

The Senate is voting this week on amendments to the Defense and Labor-HHS-Education bill as it works in a bipartisan fashion to pass fiscal 2019 spending bills.

Senators have introduced a number of amendments to the

Defense bill, which leaders have paired with the Labor-HHS-Education measures for its latest "minibus" appropriations package.

The Defense bill alone comprises 49 percent of all discretionary spending of the government of the United States of America. Accompanying it is the bill on health and education, which is the second largest appropriation bill, so these two bills together are a massive government expenditure that would fund almost 70 percent of the federal discretionary programs for fiscal 2019.

Senators are hoping for a final vote on the measure this week but before they can declare victory, they'll need to also get President Donald Trump and House lawmakers on board. Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) said he hopes the Senate can pass a package by the end of the week that includes the defense (S.3159) and Labor-HHS-Education (S.3158) spending bills. However, he hasn't gotten any promises from the White House about Trump signing the package into law.

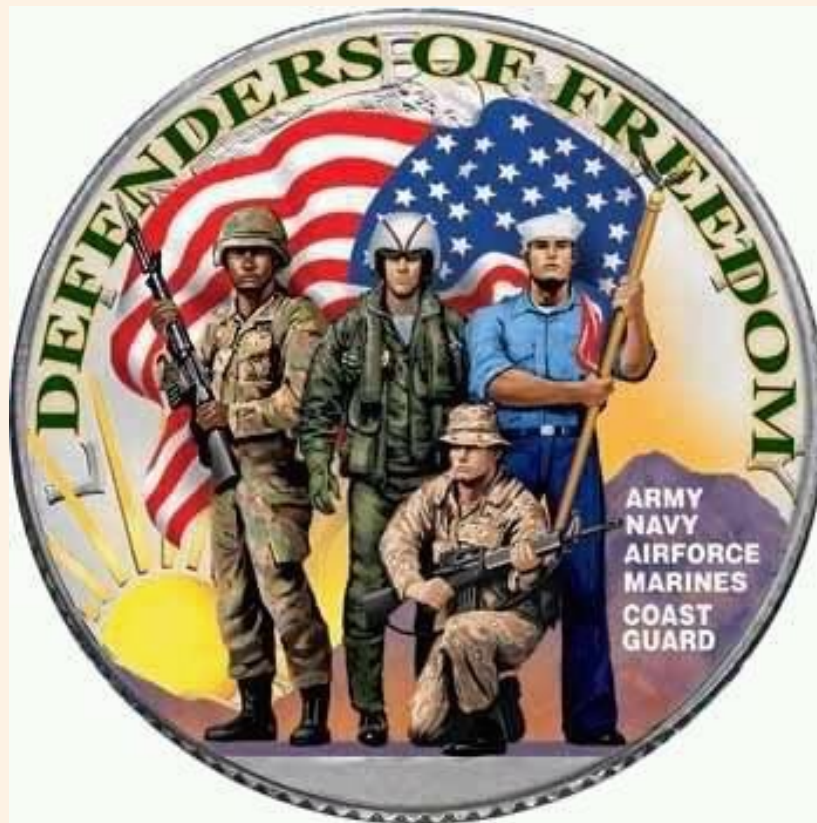
"I would assume if the bills are overwhelmingly backed and they're solid, that the president would sign them," Shelby told reporters last week.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has spoken to Trump about appropriations, and told Shelby earlier this month that Trump didn't specifically object to pairing the two largest spending bills together, Shelby said.

Once it passes the Senate it will have to go to a conference

committee with the House, which has passed a defense bill, but one which did not include as part of it the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations.

Source: TREA



**How Does the 2019 Defense Act Impact You?**



Now that the 2019 defense budget and the 2.6 percent pay raise have been locked down, you may find there are hidden elements and overlooked parts of the law that will affect you, in ways you may not have expected. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about what is hidden deep in the 2019 defense bill that affects you.



## **Proposed Rules on Predatory Payday Lenders Questioned**

Democrats in the Senate and two Independents have called on the Trump administration to drop proposed changes that they argue would ease oversight of predatory payday lenders. In a letter last week, the senators, including the ranking members of the Banking, Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committees, said that gutting provisions of the Military Lending Act of 2006 could limit reviews of a lender's qualifications and expose troops to exorbitant interest rates. For more details, see this [article](#).



## **Bipartisan Senate Bill Would Assist Veterans**

U.S. Senators Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), John Tester (D-Mont.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), John Cornyn (R-Texas), Dean Heller (R-Nev.), and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) have introduced the Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act - S. 2884. This legislation would address issues with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) debt collection procedures and provide veterans needed information about potential debts.

**"Many of our nation's veterans and their families are accidentally overpaid by the VA, only to later find they owe money back. Our bill would help veterans navigate the complicated VA bureaucracy in these confusing cases, and take steps to address the issue of overpayments in the first place. This is common sense bill our veterans need, and it has support from both sides of the aisle," said Senator Fischer.**

Under the Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act, the VA would partner with Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to create a new notice of indebtedness letter that explains why an individual owes alleged debts. The letter would also include steps the veteran can take to challenge or mitigate the debt. In addition, the VA would be directed to create a method to notify individuals of their debt electronically.

Furthermore, this bill would direct the VA, and Department of the Treasury where applicable, to study and report to Congress on administrative issues leading to VA overpayments, and long-term solutions to provide more useful and timely information to veterans.

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)**



## **New Defense Authorization Law Includes Several Victories for Veterans**

### **The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of 2019**

On August 13, 2018, the president signed the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) into law. Although the NDAA is primarily a legislative vehicle for the Department of Defense (DoD), it contains several provisions that pertain to service disabled veterans and their families, including several that address DAV policy priorities, such as:

- **Space-available travel on DoD aircraft for veterans with service-connected disabilities rated as permanent and total.** Veterans who are service-connected permanent and total are eligible to fly on military aircraft, space permitting. This provision can be found under Section 624 of the NDAA and is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 274.
- **Extension of certain morale, welfare, and recreation privileges to certain veterans and their caregivers.** Beginning in January 2020, service-connected disabled veterans and their caregivers will be eligible to use base commissary stores and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities. This provision can be located under section 621 and is in agreement with DAV Resolution No. 270.

- **Improvements to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP).** TAP prepares transitioning service members for civilian life. This provision includes mandatory instruction on preparation for civilian employment, VA benefits, and transition assistance. It also allows for transitioning service members to elect two days of specific training of their choice. These improvements are in agreement with DAV Resolution No. 304 and can be found in the NDAA under section 552.

- **Study on availability of long-term care options for veterans from VA.** The study will focus on long-term care options from the VA for veterans with combat related disabilities. This provision can be found in the NDAA under section 738 and is aligned with DAV Resolution No. 085.

These policy changes have been important priorities for our members for many years. For veterans whose ability to work is impacted by a service-connected disability, the cost savings associated with access to base commissary and exchanges and Space-A flights will be a significant benefit. To view the full text of the "John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of 2019" click [here](#).





**AMERICAN SOLDIERS**

**WILLING TO DIE FOR THE COUNTRY  
THAT ISN'T WILLING TO PAY THEM!**



## **Army & Air Force Exchange Service Warns Shoppers About 'Exchange, Inc.' Scams**

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is warning military shoppers about scammers offering to broker the sale of used cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats and boat engines through the Department of Defense retailer using the name "Exchange Inc."

"This has been an ongoing issue for several years now, and it has surfaced again where someone is using the Exchange's trademarked logo and name without permission to purportedly handle transactions in the United States on behalf of private sellers," said Air Force Chief Luis Reyes, Exchange senior enlisted advisor.

Unauthorized sources have solicited military shoppers in the past to purchase motor vehicles. (The Exchange does not have the authority to sell vehicles in the continental United States,) More recently, these scammers have attempted to sell boat engines.

Those who are responsible for these fraudulent sales attempts have left consumers with the impression they are doing business with the DoD's oldest exchange service.

The scammers typically direct potential buyers to use multiple third-party gift cards to pay for purchases. Most recently, scammers required payment using Google Play gift cards. To verify any suspicious payment method requests, military shoppers can call Exchange Customer Service at 800-527-2345.

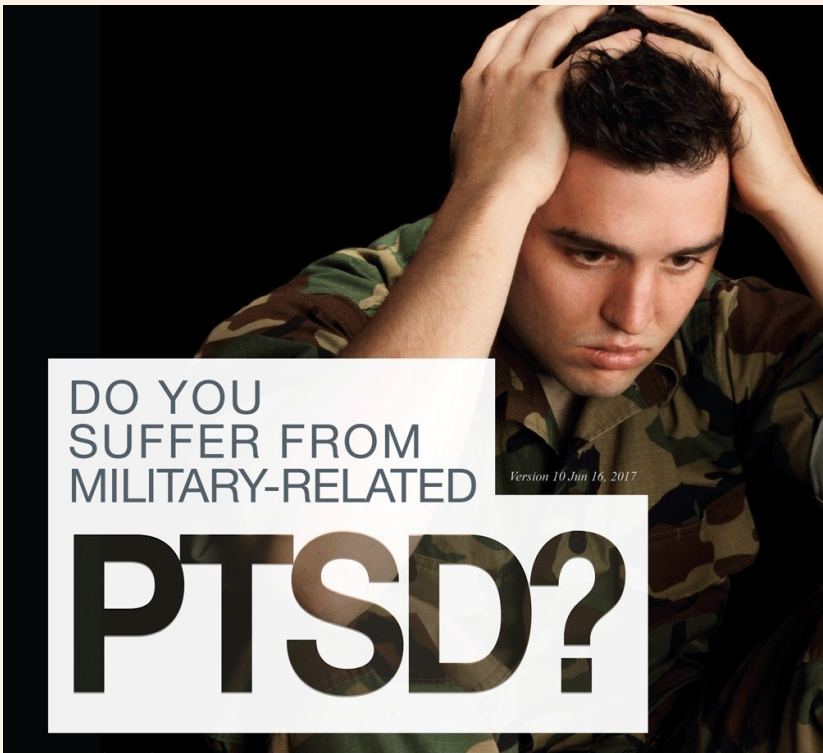
"Often, the perpetrator cannot be identified because the methods they use are not traceable back to any individual," Reyes said.

The Exchange operates solely on military installations and via ShopMyExchange.com. The Exchange does not act as a broker in private transactions and does not advertise in classified advertisement or resale websites.

Shoppers who believe that they may have been taken advantage of can file a complaint through the Internet Crime Complaint Center at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).

Source: TREA





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



# Emergency Prescription Procedures in Hawaiian Islands

Due to Hurricane Lane, emergency prescription procedures are in place until September 4th, 2018 in the Hawaiian Islands. For more information, visit:

[TRICARE Disaster Alerts](#)



## VA, Walgreens Collaborate to Improve Care Coordination for Veterans

As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to improve care coordination for Veterans, the department is working with pharmacy services provider Walgreens to coordinate patient and pharmaceutical care for VA-enrolled patients.

With the click of a button, VA providers will be able to see the entire medication and immunization history of VA-enrolled patients who receive their prescription and immunization needs at Walgreens.

"This arrangement is the first of its kind and it's a strong collaboration," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

"Partnerships like this will help VA continue to improve the way we care for Veterans.

As it expands its community care program, VA actively refines its ability to track medication prescribed by

community providers. Prior to the arrangement, VA providers would ask patients to inform them about medications filled at Walgreens. With the VA-Walgreens exchange, VA providers can now easily view medications directly that are prescribed to VA-enrolled patients by community providers and filled at Walgreens pharmacies.

For the past five years, VA and Walgreens have partnered to provide flu shots at no cost for enrolled Veterans, improving vaccination rates and access to immunizations.

VA exchanges standards-based medical information securely and electronically with participating community health care partners, such as Walgreens, to ensure the best possible care coordination and medication management. Currently, VA exchanges health information with over 170 community health care partners, representing 1,288 hospitals, 537 Federally Qualified Health Centers, 261 nursing homes, 8,649 pharmacies (including over 8,000 Walgreens pharmacies) and over 22,431 clinics.

Additional information about the VA Health Information Exchange Program can be found online at [www.va.gov/vler](http://www.va.gov/vler).

Source: TREA





**Our values  
match yours.**



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



## **Update Your VA Data Online**

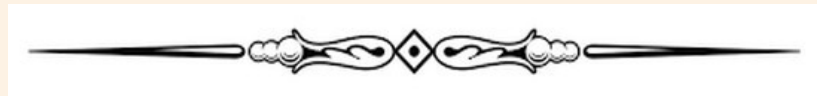
Veterans can now update online their contact information with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). To update your information in some of the VA databases: (1) login to [Vets.gov](http://Vets.gov); (2) click on your name at the top right; (3) select profile; (4) click on edit for anything you wish to change; and (5) make your edits, and click update. However, these procedures will not work yet with all VA databases. To update: (1) education benefits, call 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551); (2) home loan benefits, call 1-877-827-3702; (3) Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance, call 1-800-669-8477; (4) prescriptions, call your health care team or your nearest VA medical center. For more information, read the VA Vantage [Point Blog](#).



## **Report Finds Veterans Improperly Denied MST-related PTSD Claims**

VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report on Tuesday that investigated denied disability claims for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to military sexual trauma (MST). The findings concluded that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) processed approximately 12,000 claims annually over the past three years for PTSD related to MST. In FY2017, VBA denied about 5,500 of those claims. The OIG review team sampled 169 denied claims and discovered 82 were incorrectly processed, which indicates an overall adjudication error rate of 49 percent. The incorrectly processed denial error projections were mostly found to be due to evidence submitted, VA not requesting adequate evidence, veterans submitting claims not being contacted by VA's MST coordinators, and insufficient medical opinions. "The Inspector General's report is very troubling," said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence in a [press statement](#). "The VA's own statistics show that suicide rates among military sexual assault victims are a growing problem, yet here we have VBA — which is the key to all things VA — incorrectly processing almost a quarter of all claims. That's failing our veterans." Veterans who submitted claims for PTSD related to MST and feel their claims were improperly denied may [contact the VFW](#) for claims assistance. Read the [report](#).





## **4 Quick Tips to Effectively Present your Military Skills**

How can you best show off your military skills on your resume to land civilian interviews and then a job? Try these [tips](#).



## **New Security Clearance Guidelines Coming**

The Department of Defense will begin monitoring the financial statuses of individuals with security clearances on a continuous basis instead of periodic 5-10 year checkups. The change will help facilitate real-time accuracy of the individuals' financial situations. This move means that those with a security clearance will need to watch their credit reports and stay on top of their bills more stringently than they might have in the past. The new monitoring could affect service members who have clearances because if irregularities on credit reports surface, they could be deemed "non-deployable." It is always important to maintain a close watch of your finances, but for individuals with security clearances it could be much more important now. Read a [report](#) from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.





# **CalVet Seeks Events for Our 2018 Veterans Day Online Calendar**

Sacramento – In our ongoing efforts to serve California’s Veterans and their families, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) seeks 2018 Veterans Day events for our online calendar. Calendar listings are free and viewable by anyone who visits our CalVet website.

To submit your Veterans Day event, or any other veteran related event for consideration, please e-mail the following information to [PAO@calvet.ca.gov](mailto:PAO@calvet.ca.gov):

Event date

Event start and end times

Name of event (ceremony, parade, memorial, etc.)

Name of sponsoring organization

Venue name

Venue address

Provide parade route details as applicable

Contact person name, telephone number, and e-mail

Cost of admission, if any

If pre-registration is required, provide link and registration deadline

Provide a flyer or other image (pdf, jpg, png)

Request CalVet representative:

- Speaker (usually reading of Governor’s Veterans Day proclamation)

- Participant in parade or otherwise

Indicate Northern or Southern California

Follow CalVet on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



**Never forget our fallen!**



**Beware of Mosquitos**

Disease epidemics from mosquito-borne viruses are on the rise. Here are several safety tips: (1) Malaria; If traveling to Central America, South America, East or West Africa, or South Asia, talk to your doctor about medications to prevent malaria; (2) **Yellow fever**. There is currently a yellow fever outbreak in Brazil. If you must travel to South America or Africa, consider getting **vaccinated**; (3) Zika. If you are pregnant, consider postponing travel to areas where the virus is active. Check the [world map of areas with risk of Zika](#) for the latest information. (4) Within the U.S., West Nile is most common in Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Mississippi, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota. For more information, visit the [Military Health System website](#).



## **Veteran Crisis Resources**

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

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

**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans  
1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)**

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



## VA Updates Disability Rating Schedule

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has updated portions of the [VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities](#) (VASRD, or Rating Schedule) that evaluate conditions related to the skin. The VASRD is the collection of federal regulations used by claims processors to assign disability ratings. VA is in the process of updating all 15 body systems of the VASRD to reflect modern medicine more accurately and provide clearer rating decisions. No conditions were removed from the new skin rating schedule. However, several diagnostic codes were restructured or revised. The complete list of updates to the rating schedule for skin conditions is now available on the [VA website](#).



### Links to Other Stories

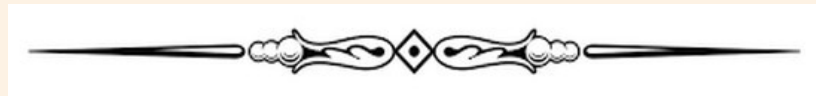
1. [3 percent retiree COLA remains elusive](#)
2. [Blood pressure medication recalled because it gives you cancer instead](#)
3. [First trial alleging Monsanto's Roundup causes cancer goes to jury](#)
4. [Former Veterans Affairs chief says it's 'astounding' that outside group is influencing VA policy](#)
5. [Is my test, item, or service covered?](#)
6. [Living community helps returning Veterans adjust to](#)

civilian life

7. Military expands OneSource benefits to separated Veterans
8. New Colorado VA hospital is state of the art, and more than \$1 billion over budget
9. Opinion: The root of the problems in the VA
10. Overcoming A Shameful Past, VA Plans Haven For Homeless Vets In West Los Angeles
11. Roundup's \$289M cancer verdict opens up floodgates for thousands of other lawsuits
12. Springfield Man Indicted for Bomb Threat at Veterans Clinic
13. Trump appeared to confuse napalm with Agent Orange — and he reportedly got the idea from an iconic movie set in the Vietnam War
14. Trump Reportedly Had a 'F\*cking Weird' Debate With Vietnam Vets Over Napalm and Agent Orange
15. VA Opens Bids on Revamping its Main Website
16. VA updates the disability rating schedule related to skin conditions
17. Veterans are missing out on benefits from the VA
18. Veterans Sue Over Reported Troika Of VA 'Shadow Rulers' From Mar-a-Lago
19. Vietnam-era Vets exposed, overlooked and suffering

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)



*CLICK HERE TO JOIN US ON TWITTER*



## **Tips on Checking Withholding with the IRS**

The IRS suggests that you do a paycheck checkup, as the new tax law has many changes. Perform a check using the IRS Withholding [Calculator](#) and, if necessary, complete a new W-4 form so your withholding is correct. For more tips, visit this [Paycheck Chronicles post](#). For more tax tips for military personnel, see the [Tax Center](#).





## **\* RED ALERT \***

**Everyone Call The Senate Committee  
On Veterans Affairs Members Ask  
Them To Support and Vote to pass  
HR 299 Blue Water Navy  
Vietnam Veterans Act Of 2018 to the  
Full Senate for a Vote!**

**Jon Tester (D - MT)202-224-2644-Tony  
Murray, Patty (WA)202-224-2621-Ryan  
Sanders, Bernie (VT)202-224-5141-Matt  
Brown, Sherrod (OH)202-224-2315-Anna  
Blumenthal, Richard (CT)202-224-2823-Ethan  
Hirono, Mazie (HI)202-224-6361-Adam  
Manchin, Joe (WV)202-224-3954-Emily**

**Please Ask everyone to Make The  
Calls and Share this with  
Everyone!**

**Thank You Michael F Kvintus  
Sr. BWNVVA  
National Vice Commander**



**VA to Send Appointment Reminder  
Texts**

Did you know that veterans enrolled in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program can now get appointment reminders via text? If interested, contact your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), and ask him or her set you up to receive text message appointment reminders on your mobile device. You can expect to receive your reminder on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Personally identifiable information (name, date of birth, SSN, disability information, etc.) will appear in your text. For more information, contact your local VRC.





## **How Does the TRICARE Catastrophic Cap Work?**

When it comes to staying healthy, some years are better than others. Perhaps you or your family faced a bumpy road this year. There may have been extensive medical tests or procedures, lengthy hospital stays, or weekly doctor visits. You may have reached or are close to reaching your catastrophic cap.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **Veterans Day Bell Tolling Proclamation in Maryland**

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan has issued a proclamation calling for bells to be tolled in Maryland on November 11, 2018 at 11:00 am in remembrance of veterans of World War I. The proclamation coincides with a call by the United States World War I Centennial Commission for all Americans to participate in a national tolling of bells. Want to know more about Bells of Peace taking place November 11, 2018? For more information, visit the WWI Centennial Commission [website](#).



## **How TRICARE Works With Other Health Insurance**

Do you have employer-sponsored health insurance? Any health insurance you have in addition to TRICARE is known as 'other health insurance' (OHI). If you have OHI, it becomes your primary insurance and pays any claims before TRICARE does. Typically, having OHI can affect you if you are a retired TRICARE beneficiary who also uses Medicare, or if you are a spouse of an active duty beneficiary who also gains coverage through their employer. OHI never applies to active duty servicemembers. If you are on active duty, then TRICARE is your only coverage. If you have OHI, you can still use a TRICARE retail network pharmacy. Learn more about how TRICARE works with OHI on the TRICARE [website](#).



## **VA Study Looks at Cancer Screenings**

Regular cancer screenings can lower the chance of death from lung cancer. But they cannot reduce the risk of developing lung cancer for people who smoke. Patients who smoke seem to be confused about the actual benefits and limitations of lung cancer screenings, according to a study by the [VA Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care](#) in Seattle. Researchers asked smokers a series of questions about smoking and lung cancer screening. Their answers showed that most patients were mistaken about the benefits of screenings and smoking in general. Patients who smoke should understand the importance of quitting rather than just relying on screenings to protect them from cancer. For more information, read the VA Vantage [Point Blog](#) and visit the Annals of the American Thoracic Society [website](#).



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## **VA VITAL Program Helps School Bound Vets**

Heading back to school can be a daunting task. Veterans face their own unique challenges when pursuing a degree. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership](#) program (VITAL) is helping Veterans face that daunting task. VITAL's mission is to aid veterans in overcoming obstacles and achieving academic success. VITAL exists to serve all student Veterans. That could be student Veterans headed back to school on the GI Bill, or those using vocational rehabilitation and other programs. For more information, visit the [VITAL website](#).



## **H.R. 5693, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act**

Congressman Clay Higgins introduced H.R. 5693, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. This bill would provide veterans who are no longer capable of living independently an alternative to nursing home care, in which the veteran would continue to receive the care that they need in an intimate home-like environment through VA's Home-Based Primary Care program, and the Medical Foster Home (MFH) attendant program. Medical Foster



Homes are a type of Community Residential Care by which veterans with serious chronic disabling conditions requiring nursing home level care and coordination of services are able to receive these services in a non-institutional setting.

Currently, the administrative costs for VA per veteran in the MFH program, including the cost of Home Based Primary Care, medications and supplies average less than \$63 per day. However, veterans who qualify for nursing home care fully paid for by the government, must pay the full cost for room, board, and personal assistance out of their own pocket, which averages to be about \$110 per day to live in a MFH.

Veterans who wish to reside in a Medical Foster Home but are unable to pay approximately \$1,500 to \$3,000 per month are not able to avail themselves of this benefit, so many are placed in nursing homes at much greater cost to VA. This measure would address this inequity by giving VA a three-year authority to pay for veterans, who would qualify for VA-paid nursing home care placement, so they can reside in a VA-approved MFH.

As the veteran population continues to age, the need for long-term care services will continue to grow. Home-based community programs like MFHs will enable VA to meet the needs of aging veterans in a manner closer to independent living than institutionalized care. With the passage of this bill, veterans would have the option of care that more closely aligns with their independence while maintaining their quality of life.

This bill is in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 085, which calls for legislation to improve the comprehensive program of long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans regardless of their disability ratings.

Please use the prepared letter to write your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 5693, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

### Take Action





## **Air Force Aid Society Education Grants**

The Air Force Aid Society will award more than \$6 million in Gen. Henry Hap Arnold education grants and AFAS merit scholarships to the dependents of active duty and retired Airmen during the 2018-2019 academic year. The education grants are awarded based on financial need. Students who apply for the education grants are also eligible to receive an additional \$1,000, no-interest AFAS supplemental education loan for the upcoming academic year to cover incidental college expenses. For more information and eligibility requirements, visit the Air Force Aid Society [website](#).



1. BioMerieux Recalls VITEK 2 Gram Positive Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AST) Cards Due to False Results for some strains of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
2. FDA alerts drug makers of a recall of porcine thyroid API from Sichuan Friendly Pharmaceutical Co., Limited, China
3. King Bio Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of It's Kids and Infant Products Due to Potential Microbial Contamination
4. Lipari Foods Issues Voluntary Recall of Premo Brand Turkey & Cheese Wedge Sandwiches Because of Possible Health Risk
5. Radagast Pet Food Voluntarily Expands Recall to Include Rad Cat Raw Diet Products With Best By Dates of 10/19/18 Through 12/3/19 Due to Potential Health Risk
6. Torrent Pharmaceuticals Limited Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Valsartan / Amlodipine / HCTZ Tablets
7. UPDATED:ADDITIONAL LOTS ADDED: Torrent Pharmaceuticals Limited Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Valsartan/Amlodipine/HCTZ, Valsartan/Amlodipine and Valsartan Tablets
8. UPDATED:ADDITIONAL LOTS ADDED: Torrent Pharmaceuticals Limited Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Valsartan/Amlodipine/HCTZ, Valsartan/Amlodipine and Valsartan Tablets





## **SURVIVAL IS FUN**



### **Get ready, get hired: CalVet hosts women veterans employment workshop**

Monterey – Women veterans will get an opportunity to learn about employment tools and career resources on Saturday, September 22, at the Monterey County Free Libraries/Marina Branch during a workshop from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In partnership with Veterans Connect at the Libraries and the California Transition Assistance Program (CaTAP), the CalVet Women Veterans Division is hosting several employment workshops for women veterans throughout

California in 2018. These workshops highlight guest speakers, employers, and community partners who give guidance on resume writing, job searches, and interview skills. Additionally, there will be a segment for one-on-one resume reviews and an opportunity to practice interviewing skills.

The Monterey workshop will feature an engaging, dynamic presentation on “Authentic Personal Branding for Military Veterans” from Air Force veteran and award-winning author, Graciela Tiscareno-Sato. During this highly interactive workshop, veterans learn key self-marketing skills and how to draw from their military experiences to create a personal statement about themselves. Graciela also gives tips on informational interviews and developing mentor networks. For more information about Graciela, visit: <https://about.me/gracielaTSato>.

Additional workshops throughout California are scheduled for the fall of 2018. The next workshop will be held on Saturday, October 20, at the Butte County Library, Oroville Branch. For additional workshop dates and locations, please visit [www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets).

To register for the workshop in Monterey on September 22, please visit: [www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets). Lunch is provided and travel reimbursements are available for those that qualify. For more information about the workshops, please call 916-653-1402 or email [womenveterans@calvet.ca.gov](mailto:womenveterans@calvet.ca.gov).





## Disabled Vet Tournament Coming in September

More than 200 Veterans with visual impairments, severe illness or injury are set to tee up for the 2018 National Disabled Veterans Training, Exposure and Experience (TEE) Tournament, which will take place Sept. 9-14 near Iowa City, Iowa. In addition to golfing at several courses in Iowa City, Veterans will participate in adaptive cycling, fishing, bowling, kayaking, scuba diving, disc golf, marksmanship and rock wall climbing. Over 260 Veterans from around the country are scheduled to participate. For more information, read the [VA Blog](#).





1. Following new rules for strong passwords helps preparers protect data
2. IRS launches new easy-to-use web pages to help all taxpayers understand tax reform
3. IRS to introduce new tax transcript to better protect taxpayer data
4. Tax preparers should encrypt client data
5. Taxpayers should be prepared for natural disasters
6. Treasury, IRS issue proposed regulations on charitable contributions and state and local tax credits



## **MIA Update**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced five new identifications, and the burial date and location for one previously identified serviceman. Returning home with full military honors are:

Army Air Forces Sgt. Alfonso O. Duran, 22, of El Rito, N.M., whose remains were previously accounted for, will be buried Aug. 22 in Santa Fe, N.M. On Feb. 25, 1944, the final day of Operation Argument, Duran's aircraft came

under attack by German fighters and anti-aircraft fire while he was on a bombing mission targeting Regensburg, Germany. Nine of the 10 crew members were able to bail out of the aircraft before it crashed, but were later captured. Duran's remains were never found, and he was later declared deceased. [Read about Duran.](#)

Air Force Col. Richard A. Kibbey was a member of Detachment 5, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. On Feb. 6, 1967, Kibbey's rescue and recovery helicopter was hit by enemy ground fire, resulting in an internal explosion and crash. Kibbey was reported missing in action, but his status was later amended to deceased. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kibbey.](#)

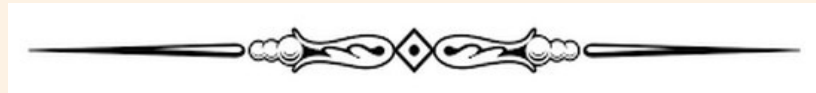
Army Pfc. Kenneth B. Williams was a member of Heavy Mortar Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. In late November 1950, his unit was assembled with South Korean soldiers in the 31st Regimental Combat Team on the east side of the Chosin River, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by Chinese forces. Williams was among more than 1,000 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing Dec. 2, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Williams.](#)

Army Pvt. William A. Boegli was a member of Company L, 332nd Infantry Regiment, 81st Infantry Division. On Sept. 30, 1944, Boegli was killed while attempting to lead a group of litter bearers to evacuate wounded servicemen. His remains were not recovered following the war. Interment

services are pending. [Read about Boegli.](#)

Army Pfc. Morris R. Worrell was a member of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment. Worrell was among those reported captured after the surrender of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942, and one of the thousands who were eventually moved to the Cabanatuan POW camp. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the remaining years of the war. Interment services are pending. [Read about Worrell.](#)

Navy Machinist's Mate 1st Class Eugene K. Eberhardt was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Eberhardt. Interment services are pending. [Read about Eberhardt.](#)



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