



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, October 14, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 40



## **This-N-That**

Finally, after years of disappointment military personnel who served in the Guard Reserves for twenty years plus and did not serve a consecutive 179 days on active duty grants Veteran status for National Guard soldiers and airmen and reservists from all branches of service.

Earlier this month, the 114th Congress approved legislation to expand the legal definition of a Veteran for guardsmen and reservists who honorably serve or had served in the military for 20 years but were never called up for federal active duty for an extended period of time.

This month is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and we'd

like to remind all our women Veterans that it is important to be checked at least once yearly. Early detection can save your life!

Further down in the Links to other stories section, there is an article on Breast Cancer, please take the time to read it. And on the Veterans-For-Change website under web links, then under Health Topics, there are some links regarding breast cancer which might also be informative. Then under Documents Library, click on SEARCH, and in the box type Breast Cancer and hit enter, it will populate in seconds with over 100 documents.

If you're a subscriber to the web site (which is **FREE**), then you can also check under Women Veterans for more information.

I know this has absolutely nothing to do with Veterans, but did you know: Children born to illegal-alien parents cost U.S. taxpayers \$2.4 billion each year according to a new report from the Center for Immigration Studies. The report concludes that of all births likely paid for by U.S. taxpayers, \$5.3 billion is spent each year on children born to illegal alien or immigrant parents.

The reason I mention this is that I know people sit on both sides of the wall on this issue, but imagine if we could do something about this, and stop it from continuing on? In my eye we'd have approximately 5.3 Billion dollars available and a huge chunk of that could be seriously dedicated to Veterans, Benefits, Healthcare and more. And would

provide no excuses to Congress they can't find the money!

If you have been a victim of shoddy medical care, treated poorly, refused medical care at any VA Medical Center or Clinic then I urge you to please contact Donovan Slack at USA Today and tell him your story! He can be contacted via E-Mail at: [dslack@usatoday.com](mailto:dslack@usatoday.com) and right now is one of the very FEW reporters who actually does report the REAL news, the truth, and does a lot of reports on Veterans.

If more Veterans would come forward, tell their story to reputable and reliable news sources not only would civilians be educated, but it just might be the one thing that would help all Veterans received better and more timely care.

We are still experiencing a program glitch when it comes to subscribing, so I am checking new subscriptions often and making what ever repair is needed and will notify you by E-Mail. Please keep in mind our system security is case sensitive, so be sure to use the Log-In ID exactly as you created it as well as your passwords.

Next weekend, there might not be a newsletter, and if there is will be a short one as I am due to close down the office on Friday early afternoon so I can take a much needed rest and will be gone till the night of Sunday the 20th. And hopefully be able to secure a sponsor for the newsletter for a year.

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)



## **Senator Pushes for 'Blue Water' Relief**

Veterans have reason to be uncertain over what Congress plans for “[Blue Water Navy](#)” Vietnam War veterans who have [Agent Orange-related ailments](#). Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, insisted throughout a hearing last week that he and VA Secretary Robert Wilkie will deliver a solution to extend VA disability benefits and health care to veterans who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam. Check out this [article](#) for the complete story.



## **VA Marks Gold Star Remembrance Week**



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently commemorated [Gold Star Families Remembrance Week](#), which was designated to honor families affected by the loss of a servicemember who died while serving in the U.S. Armed forces. Over the coming months, commemoration plaques to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives and the families they left behind are being placed at VA national cemeteries across the country. Visitors to national cemeteries and other VA facilities may also find other tributes to Gold Star Families. The term Gold Star Family references the service flag, first flown by families during World War I. For more information, visit the U.S. Army [website](#).



REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL



## Quit Smoking with the Help of Freedom Quitline

If you were to change anything about your lifestyle, what would it be? Most of us have things about our lives that we would like to change. For some, it's giving up smoking cigarettes. The counselors at the Freedom Quitline can help you stay focused on your goal of being tobacco free.

Read the full article [here](#).





## **Take Command: First Annual TRICARE Open Season Begins Nov. 12**

Do you want to make enrollment changes to your or to a family member's TRICARE health plan for 2019? Your chance is around the corner during TRICARE Open Season. However, if you want to keep your current health plan, you don't need to do anything during TRICARE Open Season. Your current health care coverage will continue automatically as long as you remain eligible.

Read the full article [here](#).





## 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 for Mental Health and are currently seeking a new Licensed Mental Health Worker, where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average **2,900** hits per day, and downloads average **1,894** per day with a total **4,424,334** 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 **16,662** documents on-line  
(Updated: 08/27/18)
- 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: 7,843)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **4,288**, Added 268 New Links  
(Updated: 10/01/18)

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



## **Congress is Half There**

The House of Representatives is in recess until after the November elections. The Senate, however, is still in session and apparently will be for a couple more weeks.

In any event, passage of any more legislation during this Congress (which will end whenever they officially adjourn sometime in December) that pertains to military people is highly unlikely, with the possible exception of one thing: the Blue Water Navy presumption bill.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (HR 299) would extend Agent Orange disability benefits and health care to between 70,000 and 90,000 veterans who served aboard ships in territorial waters off Vietnam during the war, and today suffer ailments associated with herbicides sprayed across its jungles for years.

The House passed the bill back in June and we all thought it would go through the Senate reasonably quickly. But then at the end of July the Department of Veterans Affairs testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and told them the VA opposes the bill. Since then, the bill has been stuck and although there is still a chance the Senate could pass the bill, most people are very doubtful that will

happen.

Both the House and Senate must come back to finish their work after the elections because about a third of the government is funded for fy 2019 only until December 7. Just what they will work on when they return besides funding legislation is unclear, and could be determined by the results of the elections.

TREA supports the bill and has lobbied in favor of it but we are troubled by the way the House chose to pay for it - by forcing other veterans to pay more for their benefits and using that money to pay for HR 299. We are opposed in principle to cutting some veterans' benefits in order to pay for other veterans' benefits.

If HR 299 does not pass this year we will have to start over next year and, hopefully, we can find a different way to pay for the measure.

New veterans bills continue to be introduced in Congress but they will all be dead at the end of the year. That's because any bill that does not get passed during the current session of Congress automatically dies and must be reintroduced next year in the new Congress.

Source: TREA



# Employers Fighting to Hire Veterans

The improving job market for veterans and transitioning service members has set off a competition among employers for those with skills that easily translate into the private sector, according to a military-to-civilian recruiting firm. Read the full article [here](#).



**Octobers's Featured Song**

**[Wings Against The Moonlight](#)**

By

[LT Bobby Ross](#)

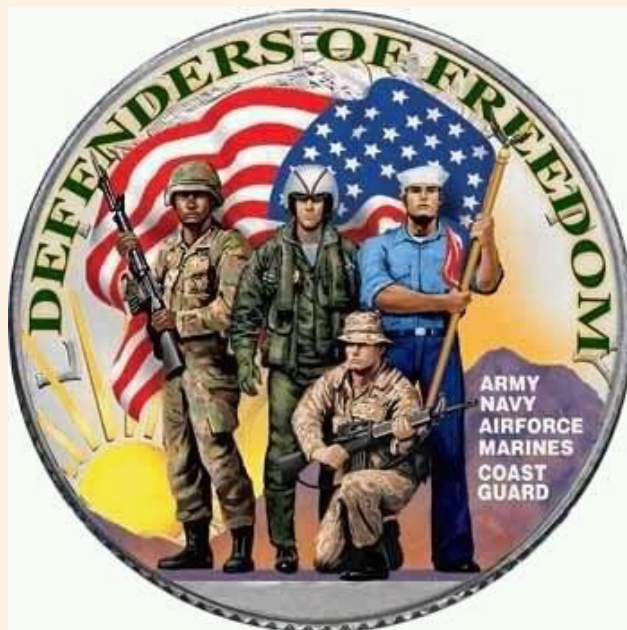
[LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America](#)

**[Previous Featured Songs](#)**

---

## Free Flu Shots at Walgreens

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) and Walgreens are providing free standard (Quadrivalent) flu shots to enrolled Veterans of the VA health care system. During the program, which runs through March 31, 2019, enrolled Veteran patients nationwide have the option of getting their flu shot at any of Walgreens' 8,200 locations in addition to their local VA healthcare facilities. No appointment is required. Simply go to any Walgreens, tell the pharmacist you receive care at a VA facility and show your Veterans Health Identification Card and another form of photo ID. For more information, read this [article](#).





## **VA Struggles to Clear GI Bill Backlog**

As of Friday, September 28, 2018, there were over 226,000 veterans and their family members awaiting payments and decisions on their [GI Bill](#) claims. This represents a 56.5% increase in pending workload as compared to this time last year. VA says that original GI Bill claims are taking more than a month to process, 35.9 days. Supplemental claims are taking 17.6 days. Read the full article [here](#).



## **Defense Healthcare Transition Begins**

The Defense Health Agency assumed responsibility for the administration and management of healthcare at all military medical treatment facilities through a phased approach starting Oct. 1, 2018. The transition is mandated by 2017 National Defense Authorization Act to improve access to quality care for beneficiaries. Phase 1 of the transition calls for the DHA to assume direct management and administration over several hospitals and clinics. In the absence of published DHA issuances, current department policies and procedures will remain in effect until superseded by the DHA published policies. For more information on the National Defense Authorization Act, visit [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov).







## TRICARE Dental Plan Changes Soon

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) will end on Dec. 31, 2018. New dental plan options for those enrolled in TRDP will be available through the [Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program \(FEDVIP\)](#). FEDVIP vision coverage will also be available for the first time for both retirees and active duty families. For [2019 dental coverage](#), retirees and their family members must take action to enroll in a FEDVIP plan. Visit the [FEDVIP website](#) for dental plan options. If you are eligible, your first chance to enroll in FEDVIP is during the [2018 Federal Benefits Open Season](#), which runs from Nov. 12 through Dec. 10, 2018. Your coverage will then start Jan. 1, 2019.



## Suicide Prevention Video Available

S.A.V.E. is an online suicide prevention training video that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched in collaboration with PsychArmor Institute. The video is narrated by Dr. Megan McCarthy, VA Deputy Director for Suicide Prevention. This training video is designed to help equip anyone who interacts with Veterans to demonstrate care, support, and compassion when talking with a Veteran who could be at risk for suicide. The video is free and can be watched in under 25 minutes and is one of PsychArmor's top 5 most-viewed courses. The S.A.V.E. Video is available on the PsychArmor Institute [website](#).



**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)**



## Recognizing Patient Centered Care Month with a Whole Health Approach

Each October, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs celebrates Patient Centered Care Month. VA's [Whole Health approach](#) emphasizes the development of a Patient Centered Care culture by inviting Veterans to take charge of their health and well-being so they can live their lives to the fullest.

VA's Whole Health System includes three core components designed to empower, equip, and treat Veterans according to their individual preferences and goals. These include the Pathway, Well-Being Programs, and Whole Health Clinical Care.

The [Veteran Experience](#) remains one of VA's highest priorities. Whole Health empowers Veterans to take action to improve their overall health and well-being. To learn more, explore these [Whole Health education materials](#) that are organized around the [Circle of Health](#).

The [Personal Health Inventory](#) is also a great tool to share with Veterans to help them identify what matters most to them. When VA care teams share this inventory with Veterans, it strengthens the partnership and can help guide Veterans on the pathway to improving their overall health and well-being.



## There's Still Time to Make Your Vote Count

Though the General Election is still a month away, it's time for military voters to start returning their absentee ballots so they arrive in time to meet state deadlines. [Learn more about voting absentee.](#)



**AMERICAN SOLDIERS**

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





## **New Dental Insurance Plans Available to See and Compare**

We are fast approaching "open season" when you have to choose new dental insurance if you want coverage next year. The start date will be November 12.

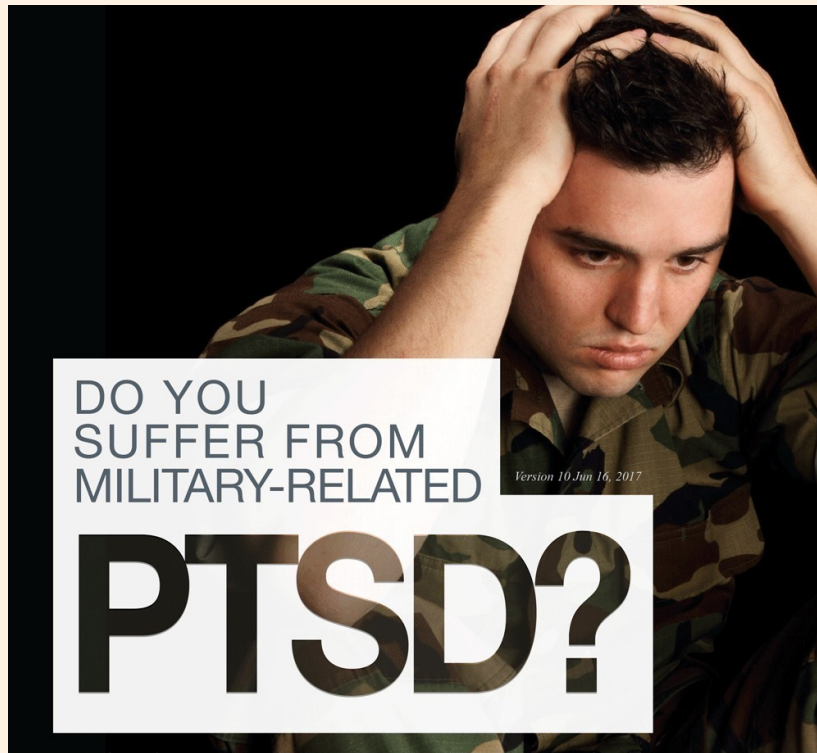
As we have been alerting you for months, the current TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan (TRDP) will end on December 31 of this year. If you want dental insurance for next year you must enroll in one of the plans offered by the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). You can view the plans now and compare what they offer by going to this [website](#).

Source: TREA



**Your TRICARE Supplement = \$0 Out  
of Pocket Costs & Cheap Rx**

Get a TRICARE supplement that pays your cost shares and can pay 100% of covered excess charges. [Get valuable coverage now.](#)



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



**MILITARY STAR's Army-Navy Game  
Sweepstakes**

Fans of the Army Black Knights and Navy Midshipmen have a chance to score seats to the 2018 Army-Navy Game with their MILITARY STAR® card. Thanks to a MILITARY STAR sweepstakes, twelve authorized shoppers will each receive two tickets to cheer on our nation's heroes at the Army-Navy Game on Dec. 8 in Philadelphia. Shoppers who use their MILITARY STAR card at any exchange location from Oct. 1 through 26 will automatically be entered to win. Qualifying purchases can be made anywhere the MILITARY STAR card is accepted, including ShopMyExchange.com. The sweepstakes winners will receive two tickets to the game. For more information, visit [MyECP.com](http://MyECP.com).



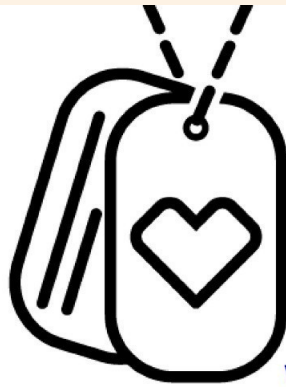
## **VA Slow in Providing Housing Benefits for Post-911 GI Bill Beneficiaries**



A recent media report from NBC News indicates that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is unable to pay housing benefits under the Post-911 GI Bill in a timely manner. Many student veterans did not get their housing stipends for September and October. The VA claims the problem currently stems from an IT problem caused by changes to the law when President Trump signed the Forever GI Act in 2017. New standards for calculating housing stipends were to be implemented on August 1, 2018, but it caused "severe critical errors" during testing that "resulted in incorrect payments," VA spokesman Terrence Hayes said in the NBC News interview.

The agency claims that in some cases a few veterans have been paid too much but most have received too little or nothing at all. The VA is as late as two months on payments, forcing potentially thousands of former service members into financial difficulty. NBC News claims they spoke to 10 veterans who had to borrow money from family and/or take out loans to make housing payments. One frustrated student veteran said "You can count on us to serve, but we can't count on the VA to make a deadline."





**Our values  
match yours.**



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



## **Babies on the Homefront**

Every military parent wants the same thing for their babies that all parents want—for their children to do well in school and in life. Life in the military can make parenting challenging, especially with family separations, frequent moves, and high operational tempo adding to the everyday stressors of family life. Today's military parents are looking for an app that makes it easier to find parenting tips specific to military life, to stay connected while away from home, and to find child development information to help the littlest ones in the family focus on what's most important during these transitions: growing, playing, and exploring the world around them. To support military families on the move, ZERO TO THREE, the leading nonprofit dedicated to ensuring babies and toddlers have a strong start in life, is launching its [Babies on the Homefront™ 2.0](#) mobile app. The app is designed to support the critical connections between babies, toddlers and their parents, no matter where their work takes them.

Funded by **USAA**, **Babies on the Homefront** is a dynamic, immersive experience that demonstrates the importance relationships have in giving infants and toddlers a strong start in life.

The App's Features Include:

- a secure, private messaging system

- a shared private media gallery where you can upload and share photos and videos to create a visual story of the important transitions in your family's life

- a space to send emojis, including kisses, hugs and high-fives to your little ones

- a "return date" countdown

- an extensive library of tips and strategies that includes information on fun activities, self-care, and child development

**We need your help** to reach military families across the country and around the world. **Babies on the Homefront** is the app military moms and dads need, and the military families in your networks would love to hear about it from you. Our [partner toolkit](#) includes everything you need to start sharing the app with the military parents in your networks, including a sample blog post, e-newsletter copy, and social media content. The free mobile app, with information in English and Spanish, is available in the iTunes and Google Play stores. Download the app today and learn more about how to support young military

families at [babiesonthefront.org](http://babiesonthefront.org).

**VA's Caregiver Support Line assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you're in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what services you may be eligible for, the caring licensed social workers who answer the support line can:**

Provide you with information about assistance available from VA.

Help you access services.

Connect you with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA Medical Center near you.

Just listen, if that's what you need right now.

If you're just getting started with VA, calling the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 is a great first step to learn more about the support that is available to you.



## **VA Extends and Expands Contract with TriWest for Community Care**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it has reached an agreement with TriWest Health Care Alliance (TriWest) on a one-year extension of its current coverage of the Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) and Veterans Choice Program (VCP).

The department also announced it has reached an

agreement with TriWest that will expand TriWest's services to all regions across the country under this program.

The expansion of TriWest's role will ensure access to community care where needed until the next generation of community care contracts are awarded and implemented.

"TriWest has worked collaboratively with the VA from the start of the Veterans Choice Program to address implementation challenges and to improve the program to better serve Veterans," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Extending the time and reach of our partnership with TriWest will ensure Veterans get the care they need while the department transitions to delivering care under the MISSION Act next year."

Separately, the department has reached an agreement with Health Net Federal Services (HNFS) on the PC3 and VCP closeout plan and associated contract modification. Under this modification, VA and HNFS will continue to partner to ensure a seamless transition of care and services, so Veterans continue to get the care they need.

Finally, the VA has extended its current dialysis contracts for six months with multiple partners, until March 31, 2019. The VA will issue a Request for Proposal in October 2018 for the replacement contracts, with ultimate contract awards anticipated in the Spring of 2019.





**Join TRICARE for October 18  
Webinar on TRICARE Open Season**

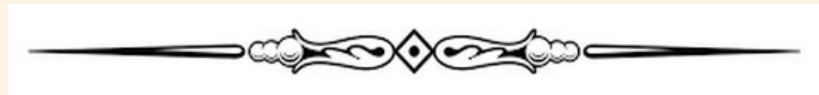
Beginning Nov. 12, TRICARE will kick off its first annual TRICARE Open Season. To learn more, join TRICARE on Oct. 18, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET, for the "Prepare for First Annual TRICARE Open Season Now" webinar. You will learn about open season, who should participate, and how to prepare. A Q&A led by the presenter will follow the presentation.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **\$0 Down, Low Rates & No PMI Payments with Your VA Loan Benefit**

Your VA Loan benefit has awesome features you shouldn't miss. You don't need a large down payment, sometimes even \$0. VA Loan rates are competitive and you will never have to waste money on mortgage insurance. [Use your VA Loan benefit today.](#)







## **President Signs COLA Bill into Law**

Yesterday President Trump signed HR 4958, the bipartisan Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018 into law.

While Social Security benefits are automatically adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation, Congress must pass legislation every year to increase the rates of veteran disability compensation. The Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018 will increase the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities as well as the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans as of December 1, 2018, and by the same percentage as Social Security beneficiaries.

The size of the COLA has not yet been determined but will be announced soon. We expect it to be somewhere around 2.6 percent.

Source: TREA



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



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



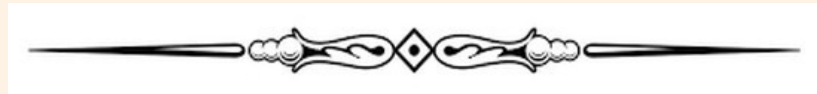
## **CFPB Provides Service Members a Website for Financial Assistance**

The Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, Office of Service Members Affairs recently launched a new website to assist service members in different financial stages. It is an interactive, story driven learning tool titled "Misadventures in Money Management." Currently the stages that one can choose from include active duty, those in the delayed entry program and those in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. CFPB is also developing story lines for service member families and civilians. These story lines will vary from something as basic as establishing a line of credit to the more extreme, being responsible for saving mankind from a zombie apocalypse based upon their characters' financial decisions. The consequences of their decisions may be exaggerated but the lessons learned can be extremely valuable. To visit the website, go [online](#).



## **VA Announces TriWest Extension**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it has reached an agreement with TriWest Health Care Alliance (TriWest) on a one-year extension of its current coverage of the Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) and Veterans Choice Program (VCP). VA has also reached an agreement with TriWest that will expand TriWest's services to all regions across the country under this program. Finally, VA has extended its current dialysis contracts with multiple partners for six months, until March 31, 2019. VA will issue a Request for Proposal for the replacement contracts in October 2018, with ultimate contract awards anticipated in spring 2019.



**Happy Birthday Navy!!!!**

October 13, 2018, marks the 243rd anniversary of the United States Navy that traces its origins to the Continental Navy, established by the Continental Congress on 13 October 1775 to fight in America's war for independence. The Continental Navy numbered some 50 ships over the course of the war, with approximately 20 warships active at its maximum strength.

The Constitution of the United States ratified in 1789, empowered Congress "to provide and maintain a navy." Acting on this authority, Congress ordered the construction and manning of six frigates in 1794, and the War Department administered naval affairs from that year until Congress established the Department of the Navy on 30 April 1798.



## **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**





## TRICARE and Mental Health

TRICARE offers mental health care services for anyone coping with mental health issues, including those who have thoughts of suicide. Treatment can help individuals to better address life's difficulties. TRICARE covers many mental health services like individual and family psychotherapy (talk therapy), substance use disorder treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, partial hospitalization programs, and inpatient treatments. You may need a referral or prior authorization for some mental health care services. If admitted to a hospital, call your primary care manager, regional contractor, or TRICARE Overseas Program Regional Call Center for help with getting continued stay authorization. For more information, visit [TRICARE's mental health care page](#).



### Links to Other Stories

- 1) [A staggering number of troops are fat and tired, report](#)



says

- 2) American Legion Dept. of AL reacts to Montgomery VA 1-star Rating
- 3) An Army Veteran Was Left To Die In A Cell While His Jailers Laughed And Took Video
- 4) Breast Cancer Treatment
- 5) Call for Action Investigation: Veteran needs to find new doctor
- 6) Cerner Picks 24 Companies To Help Convert VA From VistA In \$10 Billion Contract
- 7) Congress changes Veteran status for Guard, Reserves
- 8) Department of Veteran Affairs announces contract award for new Lubbock clinic
- 9) Federal agencies provide nearly \$783,000 to help Colorado homeless Vets
- 10) Grippled by Gout
- 11) Here are the best and worst VA medical centers
- 12) HUD, VA award \$1M to house 100 local homeless Vets
- 13) Michigan WWII Veteran who got trip of a lifetime dies of lung cancer
- 14) More than 7,000 Marines could get the boot — and maybe sooner than they expect
- 15) New VA rankings: Five hospitals get lowest one-star rating for third year
- 16) New VA rankings: Montgomery one of the nation's worst hospitals
- 17) RAMP: Supplemental Claim Lane; New and Relevant Evidence
- 18) San Diego Housing Commission receives award for housing homeless Veterans
- 19) The National Guard Officer Accused Of Taking An APC

On A Joyride Will Have His Day In Court

- 20) This program could lead to IT careers for military spouses with starting salaries of \$70K
- 21) Tomah VA whistleblower says it would be 'immoral' to support Sen. Tammy Baldwin
- 22) Tomah whistleblower, Veteran's widow disagree over Tammy Baldwin
- 23) TriWest takes over VA community care programs nationwide
- 24) Types of Evidence that can Support Your Claim
- 25) VA rips 'blue water' Agent Orange bill, urges Senate to sink it
- 26) 'We just need each other': These five charities were honored for their work to help Veterans
- 27) What It Means To Be A Veteran Without The Experience Of War
- 28) What You Need to Know About Expediting a Claim

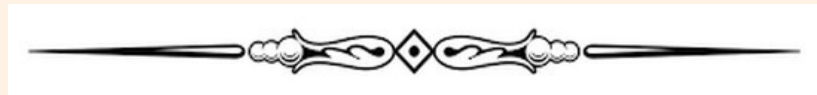
You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)



**VA Launches PTSD Project**

With research showing that Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) face significant barriers to employment, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and several state, city and nonprofit organizations recently created a first-of-its-kind 'Pay for-Success' project to improve employment outcomes for such Veterans. The Veterans Coordinated Approach to Recovery and Employment (Veterans CARE) project will serve 480 Veterans over three years in New York City; Boston and Brockton, Massachusetts; and Central and Western Massachusetts. For more information about the Veterans CARE project, including quotes from project partners and a fact sheet, visit the [Social Finance website](#).



*CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER!*



## **Afghanistan - 17 Years and Counting**

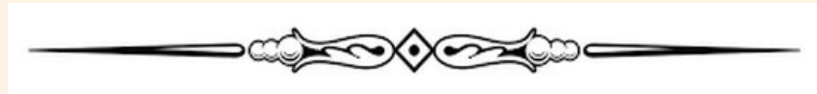
On Oct. 7, 2001, detachments of Army Special Forces soldiers dropped into Afghanistan to launch the first counterattack against terrorist forces following 9-11.

Seventeen years later we are still at war there. The U.S. has suffered about 58,000 casualties killed and wounded.

The U.S. has 180,000 soldiers deployed in 140 countries and the number shows no sign of coming down.

The most recent American casualty in Afghanistan was an Army National Guardsman from North Carolina who was killed just a few days ago.

Source: TREA



## **\* 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**





## **Make Sure Your Voice is Heard on Nov. 6**

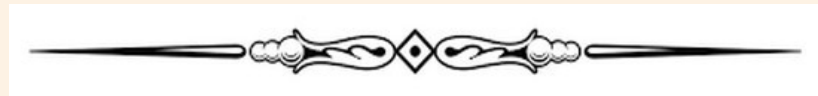
The VFW encourages all its members and supporters to get involved with the upcoming elections. With continued threat of sequestration, deficit reduction, and budget cuts that affect veterans, the military, and their families, it is important to support members of Congress who support us. Ways to get involved may include: registering to vote and encouraging others to register; setting up or volunteering at voter registration drives; hosting or attending town hall meetings or candidate forums and bringing up VFW priorities; helping the elderly and disabled get to the voting booth on Election Day; and voting on Nov. 6. Here are some useful resources: voter registration information, voter assistance for military and families, [\*\*CLICK HERE.\*\*](#)



## **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and VA is doing outreach to remind veterans, both women and men, of the importance of monthly self-checks as well as mammograms for early detection. While breast cancer typically affects women, there are cases of male breast cancer. This is particularly true for veterans who were exposed to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune from the 1950s through the 1980s for more than 30 days. For individuals who were stationed in the Camp Lejeune area and were exposed to the water between Aug. 1, 1953 and Dec. 31, 1987, presumptive service connection for veterans who developed one or more of eight diseases, including breast cancer, is available. There are also options for family member reimbursements for relatives of veterans who resided at Camp Lejeune during this time. Learn about [breast cancer early detection, water contamination at Camp Lejeune](#), or if you lived or worked at Camp Lejeune in 1987 or before, register to receive notifications regarding [Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water](#).





**Office of Inspector General**



- 1) Additional Federal Information Could Help States Serve Employers and Find Jobs for People with Disabilities
- 2) Adolescent and Young Adult Substance Use: Federal Grants for Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services and for Research
- 3) Defense Health Care: Expanded Use of Quality Measures Could Enhance Oversight of Provider Performance
- 4) Electronic Health Records: Clear Definition of the Interagency Program Office's Role in VA's New Modernization Effort Would Strengthen Accountability
- 5) Indian Health Service: Considerations Related to Providing Advance Appropriation Authority
- 6) Medicaid: CMS Needs to Better Target Risks to Improve Oversight of Expenditures
- 7) Medicare Advantage: Benefits and Challenges of Payment Adjustments Based on Beneficiaries' Ability to Perform Daily Tasks
- 8) Nursing Home Quality: Continued Improvements Needed in CMS's Data and Oversight
- 9) Rural Hospital Closures: Number and Characteristics of Affected Hospitals and Contributing Factors
- 10) VA Health Care: Improved Oversight Needed for Reusable Medical Equipment
- 11) VA Health Care: Improvements in Oversight Needed for Reusable Medical Equipment
- 12) VA Health Care: Pharmacy Inventory Management Could Benefit from System-Wide Oversight



## **Emergency Prescription Procedures Due to Hurricane Michael**

Due to Hurricane Michael, emergency prescription procedures are in place until October 18th, 2018 for parts of Florida.

For more information, visit: [TRICARE Disaster Alerts](#)



## **Take Action: Vote in the Midterm Elections**

**Take Action: These are a few ways you can get involved:**

Register to vote and encourage others to register.

Set up or volunteer at voter registration drives.

Host or attend town hall meetings or candidate forums; bring up VFW priorities.

Help the elderly and disabled get to the voting booth on Election Day.

Vote on Nov. 6.





**Your actions**  
could save a life.

Showing you care can make a big difference to someone in crisis.

VeteransCrisisLine.net



Veterans  
Crisis Line  
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1



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



**Delayed Housing Payments  
Impacting up to 180,000 Student  
Veterans**

The VFW is urging tens of thousands of student veterans to immediately contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at 888-GIBILL-1 (or **888-442-4551**) if they are facing a financial hardship due to delayed VA housing payments. VA said earlier this week that as many as 180,000 student veterans housing payments were delayed this month in part due to computer updates to reflect benefit changes through the Forever GI Bill. Until the problem is fixed, VA is requiring benefits processors to work overtime and weekends, while many student veterans may be forced to raid their individual savings accounts or borrow money from their families to hopefully avoid late fees, ruined credit ratings or eviction. “The VA reports that education claims will be processed immediately, as will disbursements, but if student veterans do not achieve resolution within three business days, I urge them to contact the VFW through our [1StudentVeteran@vfw.org](mailto:1StudentVeteran@vfw.org) email address,” said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. “We will intervene directly with the VA to ensure your housing allowance is correct and paid. In the meantime, I would encourage all student veterans to contact their landlords and explain the VA’s computer processing problem, and for landlords to be patient and understanding, because they will be paid.”





## **F-35 Fleet Grounded**

On Thursday, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis ordered the grounding of all F-35s operated by the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy. Preliminary data suggests that the Sept. 28 F-35 crash in South Carolina may have been caused by a faulty fuel tube. In response, all U.S. military F-35s will be inspected as well as F-35s operated by U.S. allies. Currently, the Air Force has 156 F-35 aircraft in inventory, the Marine Corps has 61, and the Navy has 28. This grounding comes in the wake of guidance issued by the Pentagon to the Secretaries of the Navy and Air Force last month to increase the overall mission capable rates of its fighter jets to over 80% by the end of next September.





## U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

- 1) [Bazzini LLC Recalls Certain Pistachio Products Because of Possible Health Risk](#)
- 2) [Callie's Charleston Biscuits Issues Voluntary Product Recall for Country Ham Biscuits and Cocktail Ham Biscuits Produced Using Johnston County Hams](#)
- 3) [Cybersecurity Updates Affecting Medtronic Implantable Cardiac Device Programmers: FDA Safety Communication](#)
- 4) [Ladyfingers Gourmet to Go Voluntarily Recalls Signature Shaved Country Ham Rolls Due to Possible Health Risk](#)
- 5) [Liveyon, LLC Issues a Voluntary Nationwide Recall of the Regen Series ® Product, Manufactured by Genetech, Inc.](#)
- 6) [Sprayology Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Homeopathic Aqueous-Based Medicines Due to Microbial Contamination](#)
- 7) [Voluntary Recall Issued for Sweet Me Creamery Brookie Dough Ice Cream that may Contain an Undeclared Peanut Allergen](#)
- 8) [Voluntary Recall of Limited Amounts of Nuts & Vanilla Protein Plant Shake](#)
- 9) [Working Cow Homemade, Inc. Recalls Product Because of Possible Health Risk](#)



## **2019 COLA Increase Will Be Largest in 7 Years**

Military and federal retirees, veterans receiving compensation from VA, and Social Security recipients will see a 2.8% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase beginning in 2019. This is the largest COLA increase since 2011 when it was 3.6%, and a 0.8% increase from last year. Annual COLA increases are based on the Consumer Price Index, which measures the inflation during the 3rd quarter of each fiscal year (July, August, and September) and compares it to the previous 3rd quarter.







[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

## **SURVIVAL IS FUN**



## **Hurricane Michael Closes Several VA Facilities**



Hurricane Michael, which hit Florida and the southeastern coast this week, has affected several VA facilities causing some closures. Senators Marco Rubio and Bill Nelson of Florida sent a letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie urging him to ensure that veterans affected by the storm get the care they need. “As you begin to assess the damage sustained to Veterans Health System facilities in the Florida panhandle, we also urge the department to deploy VA Mobile Facilities to assist veterans in areas where clinics remained closed,” the letter said. The VFW is currently accepting donations to help veterans, service members, and military families impacted by Hurricane Michael. From hurricanes to raging wildfires, the VFW's Disaster Relief Fund provides the organization the opportunity to react quickly with immediate relief to those in the affected areas. Learn more about [VA facility closures](#) or support the [VFW Disaster Relief Fund](#).





## **DPAA Accounts for 203 Missing Personnel in FY 2018**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) accounted for 203 formerly missing persons from past conflicts, the highest yearly total reached by the agency or its predecessor organizations. Also, the agency individually identified the remains of three additional personnel, who were previously accounted for as part of group burials, reaching another milestone of 206 individual identifications for the FY. Broken down by conflict, 10 were accounted for from the Vietnam War, 37 from the Korean War, and 156 were from World War II. “Science and technology have expanded exponentially in recent years, enabling identifications that even five years ago seemed impossible. We also attribute the increasing yearly trend to DPAA's expanded use of partnerships, a more precise management of disinterments, and improvements in our robust field operations,” said Rear Adm. Jon Kreitz, DPAA's Deputy Director for Operations. The agency is focused on the research, investigation, recovery and identification of approximately 34,000 (out of approximately 83,000 missing personnel) believed to be recoverable, who were lost in conflicts from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom.





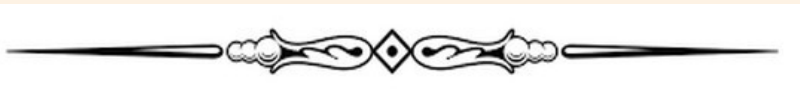
## Depression Screening Available Online

Occasional feelings of sadness are part of normal life, but when the emotions continue for extended periods of time, or are associated with feelings of hopelessness and despair, it may be depression. For veterans who are concerned that they may have depression, VA now provides an online screening test through MyHealtheVet. The 10-question test does not require an account or for anyone to log in online. The test also provides pop-up information for individuals who take the test and are at high risk of suicide. Upon taking the test, the clinical results are available with directions to print them if desired. [Take the test.](#)



## Four New Law Judges Appointed to VA's Board of Veterans Appeals

President Trump recently approved the appointment of four new Veterans Law Judges to VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals. Lauren Cryan, Evan Deichert, William Donnelly, and Cynthia Skow will assume their roles on Oct. 14, and will begin holding hearings and signing decisions for veterans and other appellants. In fiscal year 2018, the board issued a historic 85,288 decisions to veterans — 61.6 percent more than 2017. “Bringing on additional judges means the board will be better staffed to conduct hearings and decide appeals properly in a timely manner,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Combined with procedural changes under the Appeals Modernization and Improvement Act of 2017 and the hiring of more than 200 additional Board attorneys, this translates into better and faster service for Veterans.” [Learn more.](#)



- 1) [5 Wrong Ideas You Might Have About Financial Planning](#)
- 2) [Credit Repair: How to “Fix” Your Credit](#)
- 3) [Do-It-Yourself Credit Repair: Fix Bad Credit On Your Own In 6 Easy Steps](#)
- 4) [Drought-stricken farmers and ranchers have more time to replace livestock](#)
- 5) [Extension filers can still get tax help before Oct. 15 deadline](#)
- 6) [For many business taxpayers, time is running out to elect out of new 100-percent depreciation deduction for 2017](#)
- 7) [Heads up for taxpayers who requested an extension: The deadline is Oct 15](#)
- 8) [IRS issues guidance on Tax Cuts and Jobs Act changes on business expense deductions for meals, entertainment](#)
- 9) [IRS resources can help small businesses better understand how tax reform affects their bottom line](#)
- 10) [IRS to highlight tax reform changes affecting small businesses; Small business owners, self-employed should plan now for new changes](#)
- 11) [New 100-percent depreciation deduction benefits business taxpayers](#)
- 12) [September 2018 Recap](#)
- 13) [Social Security Announces 2.8 Percent Benefit Increase for 2019](#)
- 14) [Taxpayers who haven’t checked their withholding should use the Withholding Calculator ASAP](#)
- 15) [The 1-Page Financial Plan: 10 Tips for Getting What You Want From Life](#)
- 16) [When spyware goes mainstream](#)
- 17) [Why you don’t need 27 different passwords](#)



## Medicare 101: Your coverage choices

Did you know you have choices in how you get Medicare hospital, medical, and prescription drug coverage? Medicare Open Enrollment (October 15 - December 7) is your chance to think about what matters most to you, and compare coverage options for 2019.

You probably know that Original Medicare includes Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance). Original Medicare doesn't cover everything, so most people buy additional coverage like a **Medicare Part D Drug Plan** to help cover the costs of prescription drugs, or a **Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy** to help pay the remaining costs of covered supplies and services.

A growing number of people are selecting **Medicare Advantage Plans**, which cover all the same services as Original Medicare, and may include additional benefits like vision, dental, hearing, and prescription drugs.

**Answer 5 quick questions** to learn what type of Medicare coverage might fit your needs and lifestyle.

Sincerely,  
*The Medicare Team*



## MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced two new identifications, and the burial date and location for a previously identified serviceman. Returning home with full military honors are:

**Army Pvt. Delbert J. Holliday**, 22, of Minneapolis, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 15 in Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Minn. 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. [Read about Holliday.](#)

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Creighton H. Workman** 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 Workman. Interment services are pending. [Read about Workman.](#)



**Navy Chief Warrant Officer John A. Austin** 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 Austin. Interment services are pending. [Read about Austin.](#)



If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.



*CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE WEEKLY VFC NEWSLETTER!*





## Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

[www.Veterans-For-Change.org](http://www.Veterans-For-Change.org)

Serving those who served!

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



Please do not reply to this E-Mail, this is an unattended E-Mail address, please send all correspondence to:

[Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

©2018 Veterans-For-Change, Inc. | Menifee, CA 92584-8870

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by  
[GoDaddy Email Marketing](#)®