



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, November 18, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 45



This-N-That

We hope everyone had a good weekend last weekend and all those who attended the Marine Corps Birthday Ball events enjoyed themselves too!

In a recent rating of Veterans Nursing Homes 92 out of 132 homes have failing grades which isn't saying a whole lot about administration or human resources, especially when caring for those who have served our country.

With 46,000 Veterans living in VA Nursing homes, this means that 32,200 are receiving inadequate to extremely poor healthcare.

But VA Healthcare all across the board from VA Medical Centers to Nursing homes has been less than stellar for many years, and it would seem that every appointed Secretary of the VA has had their own agenda vs. following protocols and regulations which in my personal opinion has only served to tear down the worlds largest healthcare system.

They even battle against sound and proven medical research siding on the side of old, outdated and just plain bad science, which is the current case with Agent Orange again!

We've been pushing for many weeks now for HR 299 which as you recall passed the House 382 to Zero and got bogged down in the Senate because the VA Administration is fighting tooth and nail to provide the earned, much needed medical care and benefits and from what we've seen is all based on outdated and bad science all to save a buck, but to save a buck at the cost of human lives.

So again, we're asking everyone, including our civilian readers to please call the following people and ask that they bring HR 299 to the floor and vote to pass it in the Senate.

Senator Isakson 202-224-3643 & 770-661-0999

Senator Moran 202-224-6521

Senator Boozman 202-224-4843

Senator Rounds 202-224-5842

Senator Sullivan 202-224-3004

Senator Tillis 202-224-6342
Senator Cassidy 202-224-5824
Senator Heller 202-224-6244
Senator Tester 202-224-2644
Senator Brown 202-224-2315
Senator Sanders 202-224-5141
Senator Blumenthal 202-224-2823
Senator Murray 202-224-2621
Senator Hirono 202-224-2621
Senator Manchin 202-224-3954

Your calls are very important to thousands of Veterans, and we're asking you to make the calls immediately, then if you would, please call them every Friday, slow down their office, drive a point home that this bill must pass and quickly.

Just keep it simple, polite, and when you end your call, be sure to thank them for their time!

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



Off-Base testing for Agent Orange begins

Brian Moyer and Commander John Wells participated in a conference call with Guam EPA prior to start of testing. The GAO report should be due Thursday afternoon, We need to cover the Guam Veteran as well as Samoa, the Marianas and Johnston Island in addition to Blue Water Navy.

To learn more, click [HERE](#).

John Wells, Cmdr. US Navy (Retired)
Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc.



TFL, Premium-Based Plans: What to Do During Open Season

TRICARE Open Season is happening now. If you want to enroll in or change your TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select plan for 2019, you have until Dec. 10, 2018 to make an enrollment choice. If you have TRICARE For Life or a premium-based plan and want to stay in your current plan, TRICARE Open Season doesn't apply to you. You'll stay in your current plan for 2019 or as long as you're eligible.

Read the full article [here](#).



VA Rates 70 Percent of its Nursing Homes as Failures

In a joint release, the national commanders of the VFW and American Legion are demanding that VA Secretary Robert Wilkie bring immediate attention to his nursing home program that currently has 70 percent of its 132 homes receiving failing grades by the VA's own rating system. The call by VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence and Legion National Commander Brett Reistad is in response to a [series of scathing articles](#) by two USA Today and Boston Globe reporters who documented substandard and negligent care at the VA nursing home in Brockton, Mass., which is one of 45 nursing homes that received the VA's lowest rating of one star. Forty-seven homes received two stars, 16 homes three stars, and 15 homes four stars. Only nine nursing homes received the VA's top five-star rating. "While much of the media's attention has been on the proper implementation of VA health care legislation, we cannot forget about 46,000 mostly senior veterans who reside in these nursing homes," said the two national commanders, who collectively speak for more than 4.6 million members and their auxiliaries. [Read the joint release 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 **2,230** hits per day, and downloads average **1,907** per day with a total **4,513,135** visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE of charge!** You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **16,729** documents on-line

(Updated: 10/30/18)

- 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: 10/30/18) (37 Added)
 - News (Articles On-Line: **7,980**)
 - Polls
 - Web Links, more than **4,407**, Added 119 New Links
- (Updated: 10/30/18)

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



Military Members, DoD Civilians Are Eligible for Free TSA Precheck

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is reminding all service members and DOD civilians that they are eligible to use the TSA Precheck program and skip some of the hassle when going through airport security. For more details, see this [article](#).



GI Bill Oversight Hearing Held

This week, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing on the delayed payments of GI Bill benefits to student veterans. This summer, VA was supposed to implement technology upgrades to accommodate changes to the GI Bill. VA failed to implement the changes which led to tens of thousands of student veterans receiving delayed Basic Allowance for Housing payments. The VFW called on Congress to hold an oversight hearing to get to the bottom of the problem and what steps VA has taken to avoid this problem in the upcoming spring semester. The VFW appreciates Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member O'Rourke's attention to this issue which is affecting the lives of tens of thousands of student veterans. [Watch the hearing](#).



This month's featured song:

Goodbye To West Virginia

November's featured song was written by Sgt George Jeffrey

This song was performed and produced by:

LT Bobby Ross

Featured videos of other songs by LT



Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance Increase Announced

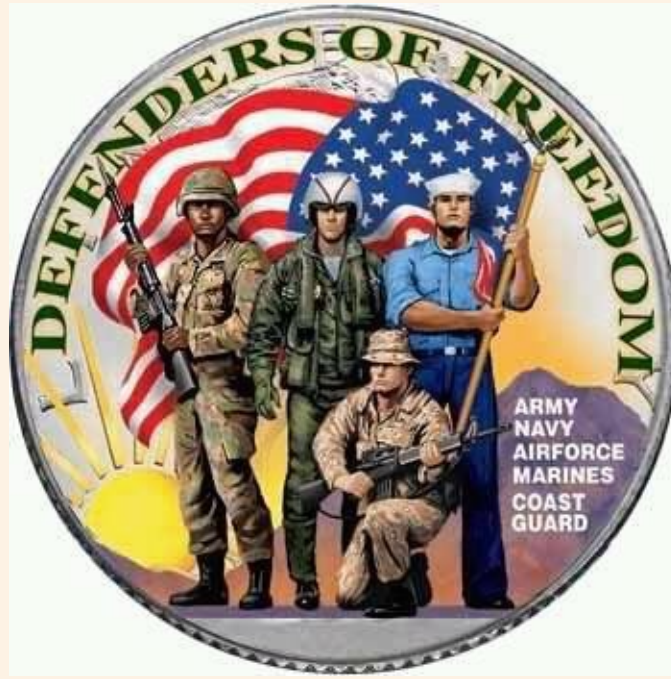
The Department of Defense has announced that the maximum amount payable under the [Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance](#) (SSIA) program will increase on Jan. 1, 2019. Beginning in 2019, survivors who are eligible for the SSIA will see the maximum benefit increase to \$318. For more details, see this [article](#).



Hearing on VA's Oversight of Contract Disability Examinations

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing Thursday on VA's oversight of contract disability examinations. Over the last 20 years, VA has more frequently contracted with private health care providers to conduct disability examinations in order to provide veterans with timely, accurate, and objective evaluations of their medical conditions. While the VFW supports VA's efforts to provide veterans with contract disability examinations, since 2016 when VA executed its latest contract for disability examinations, there have been new problems which prompted the VFW and other veterans service organizations to call for a hearing to better assess the situation. The VFW submitted testimony detailing problems such as late notification of exam appointments, difficulty in rescheduling examinations, unreasonable distance of examinations from the veteran's home, and inadequate time with the health care provider. The VFW appreciates Ranking Member Esty highlighting our concerns and bringing attention to this issue. [Watch the hearing.](#)





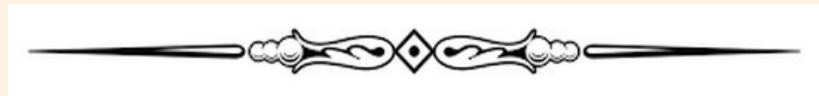
How Military Service Impacts Student Loan Repayment Options

If you're a veteran with student debt, you have repayment rights unique to military service members that can keep you on track and out of default. Typically, federal student loan default occurs after nine months without a payment. For more details, see this [article](#).



Blue Water Navy Bill Continues to be Stalled in the Senate

In July, the House of Representatives unanimously passed H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018, to end the injustice of denying Vietnam, Korean DMZ, and Thailand veterans who suffer from life-threatening health conditions related to exposure to Agent Orange the care and benefits they deserve. This important bill continues to be stalled in the Senate and the VFW needs your help to make sure this bill is passed before the end of the year. Contact your senators to demand that the Senate passes H.R. 299. [Contact your senators by email](#) or call (202) 224-3121 and ask to be transferred to your senators' offices.



MILITARY STAR Card Discounts This Week

MILITARY STAR is offering 10 cents off every gallon of gas, double points, 15 percent off Exchange restaurant purchases and more on Nov. 12 to celebrate Veterans Day. Other benefits of the MILITARY STAR card include: (1) the lowest flat-rate APR (12.24 percent) among store cards; (2) no annual, late or over-limit fees; (3) 10 percent discount on first day of use; and (4) reduced interest deployment plan with no payments required for eligible customers. For more information, visit MyECP.com.



Nationwide Part Time Jobs: Get Extra Cash Before the Holidays

Find part time jobs nationwide. Retail, restaurants and more. [Just in time for the holidays.](#)



**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



**Reduce Out of Pocket Costs with a
TRICARE Supplement**

Tired of paying out of pocket costs with TRICARE? Get a TRICARE supplement that pays your cost shares and can pay 100% of covered excess charges. [Get valuable coverage now.](#)



**First Female Completes Special
Forces Assessment and Selection
Course**

This past week, the United States Army Special Operations Command announced that a female soldier has successfully completed the grueling 24-day Special Forces Assessment and Selection course at Ft. Bragg, N.C. The soldier, whose name was not released, will now attend the Special Forces Qualification Course (Q Course) which consists of four phases and can last from a year to two years, depending on the soldier's specialty and language training. Upon successful completion of the Q course, soldiers are awarded the green beret and assigned to a Special Forces operational detachment. Since the Department of the Army lifted its ban on women holding military occupational specialties specific to special operations and combat arms in 2016, several women have attempted to complete the course, but were unsuccessful. Despite this, hundreds of women are now serving in infantry, armor, and fire support units, to include the 75th Ranger Regiment, and more than a dozen women have earned the Ranger tab.





AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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



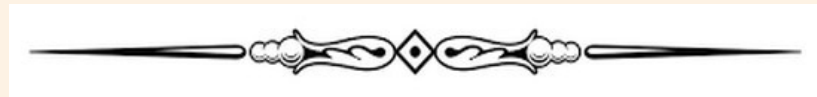
This Military Spouse Scholarship Is Now Available All Year Long

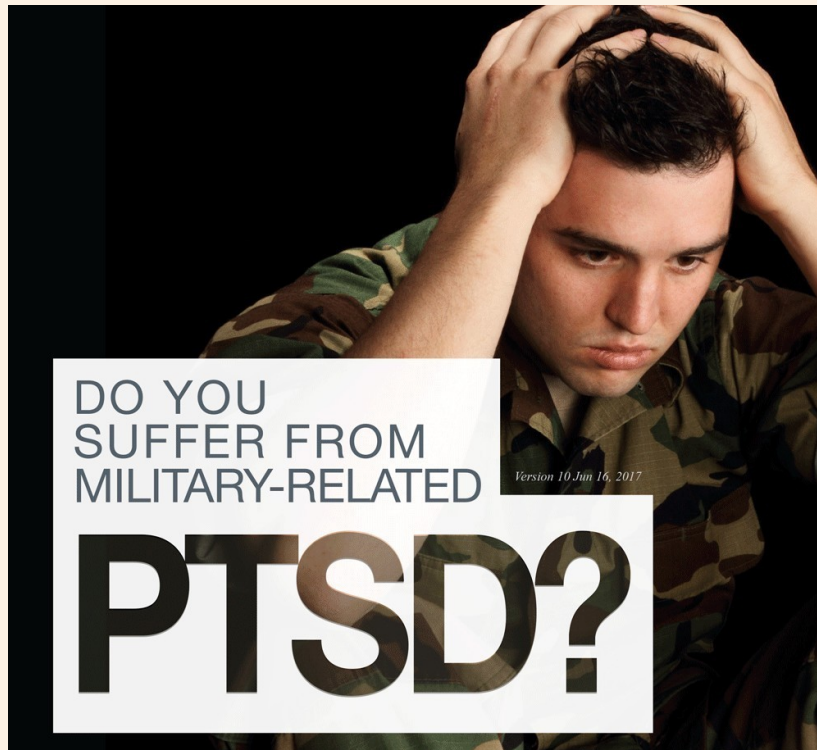
The National Military Family Association (NMFA) has announced that instead of having its annual scholarship deadline each spring, it now is deadline-free. That means military spouses can apply for the scholarship year-round. And unlike many available scholarships, NMFA's can be used on a variety of degree programs — not just associate or bachelor degrees. For more details, see this [article](#).



VA Secretary Vows to Improve Military Transition Efforts

The VFW was at the National Press Club last week to hear VA Secretary Robert Wilkie vow to increase coordination between VA and the Department of Defense to improve the transition of military personnel to veterans status, which includes educating service members on the signs of post-traumatic stress, as well as recruiting transitioning doctors and nurses to work for VA. He does not expect the upcoming change in control of the House to impact efforts to improve services for millions of veterans receiving VA health care benefits. He said his department enjoys bipartisan support that has resulted in a record-high budget and legislation that makes possible greater accountability for VA employees and management flexibility. [Read more.](#)





DO YOU
SUFFER FROM
MILITARY-RELATED

Version 10, Jun 16, 2017

PTSD?

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



**'Open Season' for Federal Health
Benefits Program Begins**

Nov. 12 marks the beginning of open season for the 2019 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, Federal Flexible Spending Accounts Program (FSAFEDS), and the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). Open season ends on Dec. 10. During the open season, employees may enroll, change health plans or options, cancel enrollment, change to Self Only, Self+1 or Self and Family and waive or begin participation in premium conversion. Also, the link for making FEHB changes is now called Government Retirement and Benefits (GRB) Platform instead of EBIS. GRB is accessed through [MyPers](#). For more information, call the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) customer service at 1-800-525-0102.



TRDP and FEDVIP Update

The current TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) will end Dec. 31, 2018, and will be replaced by the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) dental coverage options. Vision plans will also be available to eligible TRICARE beneficiaries through FEDVIP. The first opportunity to enroll in FEDVIP is during the 2018 Federal Benefits Open Season, which began on Nov. 12, 2018, and runs through Dec. 10, 2018. Coverage begins on Jan. 1, 2019. In general, retired uniformed service members and their families who were eligible for TRDP in 2018 are eligible for FEDVIP dental coverage, and if enrolled in a TRICARE health plan, FEDVIP vision coverage, beginning in 2019. Family members of active-duty uniformed service members who are enrolled in a TRICARE health plan are eligible for FEDVIP vision coverage. [Learn more.](#)



**Our values
match yours.**

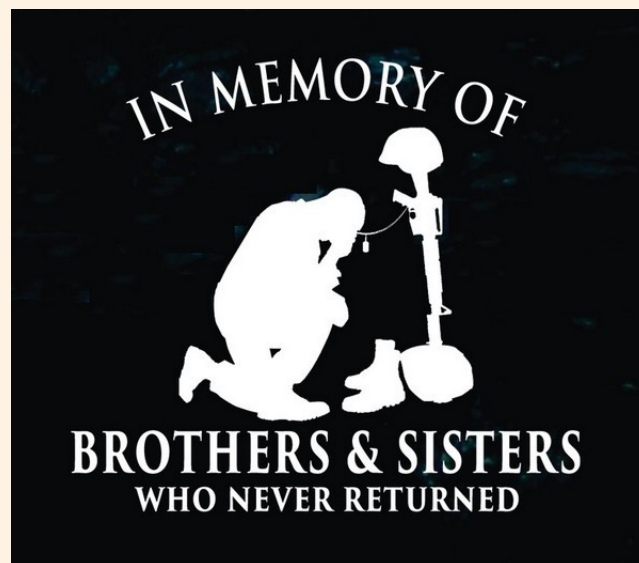


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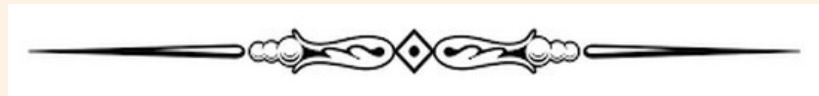
TRICARE Seeking Right Mix Of Therapies For Kids With Autism

Nearly 15,000 military children with autism receive [Applied Behavioral Analysis \(ABA\) services](#) to learn desired behaviors and douse undesirable behaviors under a demonstration program offered through TRICARE. TRICARE is funding a five-year, \$7 million research study to learn how many ABA sessions are most effective. For more details, see this [article](#).



Join the Air Force Hacker Challenge

The Air Force and HackerOne have teamed up for Hack the Air Force 3.0 (HtAF), the Air Force's most inclusive bug bounty program. HtAF allows computer experts to uncover vulnerabilities in Air Force websites, ultimately strengthening the service's cyber posture. This year's four-week-long program ends Nov. 22, and will focus on DoD applications that were recently migrated to an Air Force-owned cloud environment. The program is open to 191 countries, making it the government's largest bug bounty to date. Hack the Air Force 3.0 offers competitive bounty awards dependent on the severity of the finding. For more information, visit [HackerOne.com](https://www.hackerone.com).



**Reminder: Take Advantage of
Space-A Travel**

The Space-Available Travel program is one of the many Air Force programs available to military personnel, families, retirees and veterans with 100% disability. The program allows members to sign up for free transportation out of Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, that is not taken by the mission essential Airmen and cargo, on a base's aircraft. Passengers will need two forms of identification when checking into the terminal, which can be their Common Access Card and a driver's license. For younger children without a CAC, parents should bring a printed out Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System form with the child's DOD ID number printed on it. For more information, visit the [Air Mobility Command website](#).



Air Force Contest for Tech Solutions

The U.S. Air Force and the Wright Brothers Institute (WBI) are offering cash prizes for the creation of visualization tools, including Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality solutions, that will enhance Department of Defense (DoD) space operator understanding and awareness of satellites and other objects in Earth orbit. The Air Force Visionary Q-Prize Competition (VQ-Prize) runs from October 29 through January 15, 2019. No background in space applications is required. Up to \$100,000 in prize money will be distributed as part of this competition. Specific competition guidelines will be made available through WBI. The challenge is posted on the [WBI Tec^Edge Challenge Pavillion](#). Watch the VQ Prize Video on [YouTube](#).



Veteran Crisis Resources

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

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

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)

VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274



TRICARE Offers Change of Providers Due to Hurricane

If you were displaced due to Hurricane Michael, you can change to a new primary care manager (PCM) in your local area immediately. You will need to contact Humana Military at 1-800-444-5445 to make this change. All displaced beneficiaries, regardless of beneficiary category or anticipated length or location of displacement can change PCMs.



Links to Other Stories

1. [After A Year Of Turmoil, New VA Secretary Says 'Waters Are Calmer'](#)
2. [Burn Pit Vet's Widower: Memos Show that Illness Didn't Need to Happen](#)
3. [Challenges In Veteran Mental Health Care:](#)
4. [Dioxin contamination in Da Nang more serious than expected: conference](#)
5. [Dr. Orange: The Secret Nemesis of Sick Vets](#)
6. [For today's VA, it's the best of times and the worst of times](#)
7. [NIAID-Funded Researchers Predict TB Relapse Risk](#)
8. [Off-Base testing for Agent Orange begins](#)
9. [The Children of Agent Orange](#)

10. Trump Administration announces decline in Veteran homelessness
11. VA accelerates pending Veterans benefits appeals for victims of Super Typhoon Yutu
12. VA celebrates National Family Caregivers Month
13. VA Death Panel Denies Lung Transplant To Veteran, 'Too Old'
14. VA mobilizes federal agencies to offer free legal services to help Veterans
15. VA recognizes Vietnam Veteran with first Medal of Honor Medallion during ceremony at Mississippi cemetery
16. VA returns medical professionals currently serving unions to serving Veterans
17. VA scientists elected as National Academy of Medicine members for outstanding professional achievement, commitment to service
18. VA, unions spar over move to end physicians' use of 'official time'
19. Vietnam Vet Builds Memorial in Union County
20. WHEN DO VA RATINGS BECOME PERMANENT?

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



Exchange Program Places Soldiers Abroad

The Military Exchange Program places National Guard Soldiers in units from America's allied partners, including the German Army, the British Army Reserve, the Danish Home Guard and Estonian Army. In return, these nations deploy military members to participate in a host unit two-week annual training back in New York. Each general officer command in the New York Army National Guard annually nominates Soldiers to attend. Applications for the 2019 annual training season are available through December 10, 2018. Soldiers with inquiries about the program can contact Sgt. 1st Class Paul Mulligan, the New York Army National Guard Operations and Training Branch NCOIC at (518) 786-6070.

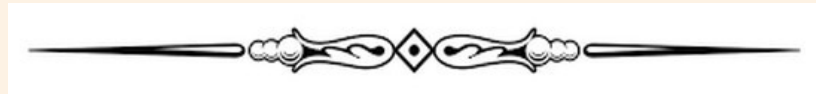


[CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER](#)



VA, Navy Announce Partnership for San Diego Healthcare

In a joint initiative to improve access to care for San Diego veterans, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton (NHCP) and the VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) are partnering to provide total joint surgeries. Surgeons from NHCP have begun seeing patients at the VA's Oceanside clinic on a weekly basis and the first surgery is scheduled to take place at NHCP later this month. A total joint surgery is a procedure in which parts of a damaged joint are removed and replaced with a prosthesis designed to function like a healthy joint. More than 1 million such total joint procedures performed each year in the U.S. Patients referred for total joint surgery will have their initial evaluation and post-surgical care by NHCP orthopedic surgeons at the VASDHS outpatient clinic in Oceanside. The surgery will be performed at NHCP.



*** 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**

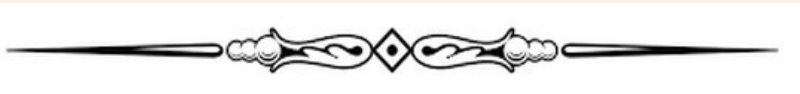
**Please Ask everyone to Make The
Calls and Share this with
Everyone!**

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



Holiday Coupons from AAFES

Exchange patrons and their families can score additional holiday savings by simply shopping with the Army & Air Force Exchange Service from Nov. 12 through 20. When military shoppers make an Exchange in-store purchase during this nine-day period, they will receive coupons to use while shopping from Nov. 16 through 20. Shoppers will save: (1) \$20 off a minimum purchase of \$100 or \$30 off when using a MILITARY STAR card; (2) \$50 off a minimum purchase of \$250 or \$60 off when using a MILITARY STAR card. The coupons are valid in-store or online at ShopMyExchange.com.



VA Celebrates Veterans Month

President Donald J. Trump has [declared November 2018 the second annual National Veterans and Military Families Month](#). In addition to the local events across the country, VA is conducting a number of national events, including: (1) the [annual wreath-laying ceremony](#) at Arlington National Cemetery; (2) White House hosting veterans state and local leadership event Nov. 15; and (3) VetTalkX events in nine locations, which are [TEDx-type](#) local activities featuring key veterans sharing their stories of post-military lives. The full list of national events for Veterans and Military Families month is available at the [VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs website](#).



Office of Inspector General

1. Actions Needed to Improve Accuracy and Communication of Information on Testing and Storage Locations
2. Improved Oversight of Contracted Examiners Needed
3. Leading Practices for State Programs to Certify Peer Support Specialists
4. Opportunities Exist to Improve Oversight of State and Local Eradication Efforts
5. Results of Testing for Selected Supplements
6. VA Needs to Ensure That It Can Continue to Provide Effective School Oversight
7. VA Should Establish Goals and Measures to Enable Improved Oversight of Facilities' Conditions



TRICARE Emergency Procedures in Alabama, Florida

Emergency procedures are in place in Alabama and Florida due to Hurricane Michael. A list of counties affected is on the [TRICARE website](#). To obtain an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.



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



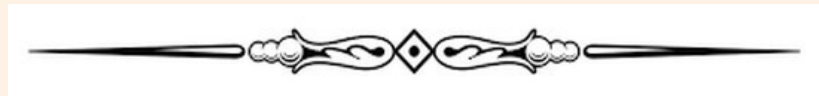
**Supreme Court to Hear Case on
Veterans Memorial**

The U.S. Supreme Court has announced that it will hear The American Legion's case regarding the Bladensburg Veterans Memorial in Prince George's County, Md. In 2015, the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland ruled the memorial was constitutional, citing the use of crosses to mark the graves of fallen American servicemen overseas. Later, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit reversed the District Court's decision, declaring the cross shape of the memorial violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The American Legion is asking the Supreme Court to reverse the Court of Appeals ruling that could lead to the bulldozing of the Bladensburg Veterans Memorial. For more information, visit the [First Liberty Institute website](#).



Navy Exchange Begins Holidays Sales and Events

The NEX 'We Believe' holiday events are in full swing at locations worldwide. Through the end of the year, NEXs will be having special events and sales for servicemembers and their families. Check with the local NEX or online at myNavyExchange.com for more event details including store participation, specific dates, times and any pre-registration requirements. In addition to the many events, the NEX will be offering several sweepstakes throughout the season. NEX customers can enter to win either online at myNavyExchange.com or in store. For more information, visit the [Navy Exchange website](#) and follow the [Navy Exchange on Facebook](#).



VA Resources for National Family Caregivers Month

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is commemorating [National Family Caregivers Month](#) this November by honoring the caregivers who care for chronically ill, injured or disabled Veterans. The recent passage of the [VA MISSION Act of 2018](#) will expand eligibility for [VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) to veterans of all eras of service. The expansion will occur in two phases, starting with eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. For more information and resources, visit the [VA Caregiver Support website](#) or call the Caregiver Support Line toll free at 855-260-3274.

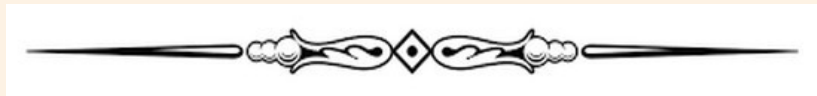


1. Alebrije Dist Wholesale Recalls Quesillo Queseria “La Milagrosa” and “Alebrije Cheese” Because of Possible Health Risk
2. GE Healthcare Recalls Millennium Nuclear Medicine Systems Due to Risk of Detector Detaching and Falling
3. Implanted Pumps: Safety Communication - Use Caution When Selecting Pain Medicine for Intrathecal Administration
4. Natural Life Pet Products Expands Recall of Dry Food Due to Elevated Levels of Vitamin D
5. Nor Cal Food Solutions, LLC ISSUES ALLERGY ALERT ON UNDECLARED Tree Nut – Walnut in The Purveyors Kitchen - Pumpkin Pesto Tapenade
6. Oscor Inc. Issues Recall Product Expansion of TB – Temporary Bipolar Pacing Lead (Unshrouded 2 mm Pins Models)
7. Recall of Bittersweet & Feve Chocolate Bars Due to High Levels of Milk Allergens
8. The Pictsweet Company Recalls 8-ounce Steam’ables Asparagus Spears due to Potential for Listeria Monocytogenes



Caregiver Support Line for Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 is just a quick phone call away. Whether you are 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: (1) provide you with information about assistance available from VA; (2) help you access services; (3) connect you with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA Medical Center near you; and (4) just listen. If you are just getting started with VA, you can also call the Caregiver Support Line to learn more about the support that is available to you.



SURVIVAL IS FUN



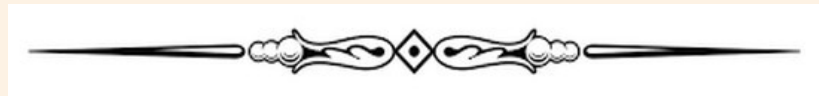
VA Looks to Improve Legal Services

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) together with representatives from the departments of Labor, Justice, Defense, Homeland Security, the U.S. Navy and others, signed a joint statement aimed at improving access to free legal services for Veterans in need. Currently, VA hosts at least 170 free legal clinics in its VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Vet Centers across the country, by partnering with external legal service providers. For information about VA's coordination of legal services for Veterans at VA facilities, visit the [VA Office of General Counsel website](#).



Veteran Homelessness on the Decline, But Help Still Available If Needed

Veteran homelessness in the U.S. continues to decline, according to a new national estimate. Local estimates of veteran homelessness are available at the [HUD Exchange](#). A map showing communities that have ended homelessness is available at the [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness website](#). More information is available on the [VA Homeless Veterans website](#) and the [HUD website](#). Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless should contact their local VA Medical Center and ask to speak to a homeless coordinator or call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).



Make 2019 Enrollment Choices Today: Open Season Underway

TRICARE Open Season and Federal Benefits Open Season are underway. You now have until Dec. 10, 2018 to enroll in a new plan or change your enrollment between plans. The choice you make will take effect Jan. 1, 2019 and will remain in effect through all off 2019.

Read the full article [here](#).



TRICARE Waives Referral Requirement in Florida

If you are evacuated, you may not have to get a referral from your primary care manager to see a TRICARE authorized provider. This is also known as a blanket referral waiver. This applies to anyone in a TRICARE Prime plan in certain counties in Florida. A list of affected counties is on the [TRICARE website](#). This waiver is good until January 15, 2019. This includes active duty servicemembers using urgent care.



Tax & Credit Information



1. For Tax Year 2017, e-file closes on Nov. 17; After that, disaster victims, others need to file on paper
2. Get Ready for Taxes: For many, time is running out to avoid a tax-time surprise; Check withholding, make estimated payments now
3. IRS Criminal Investigation releases Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report
4. Not too early: Here are steps taxpayers can take now to get ready to file their taxes in 2019
5. October 2018 Recap
6. Tax reform affects if and how taxpayers itemize their deductions
7. Taxpayers who have an ITIN set to expire should renew it ASAP



**Veterans Outreach in California,
Minnesota, New Jersey This Week**

The American Legion is sponsoring a district revitalization and veterans outreach effort Nov. 17-18 in Temple City, Calif. Veterans in and around the area are invited to Temple City American Legion Post 279 to learn about American Legion programs, service to community and veterans benefits. The effort will take place at Post 279, 9522 Las Tunas Dr., Temple City, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 17 and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Nov. 18. The Legion is also sponsoring a veterans outreach effort Nov. 15-17 in Richfield, Minn. Veterans in and around the area are invited to Richfield Post 435 to learn about American Legion programs, service to community and veterans benefits. The effort will take place at Post 435, 6501 Portland Ave, Richfield, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 15-16, and 9 a.m.-noon Nov. 17. In New Jersey, a veterans outreach effort will take place Nov. 15-17. Veterans in and around the area are invited to Neptune Township American Legion Post 346 to learn about American Legion programs, service to community and veterans benefits. The effort will take place at Post 346, 21 Gully Road, Neptune, NJ from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Nov. 15-17. At all three events, veterans service officers will be available to assist with Department of Veterans Affairs-related questions and other veterans benefits issues.



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