



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, January 20, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 03



This-N-That

With the ongoing partial Government Shutdown that began December 22nd putting 800,000 government workers on furlough stopped pay as well for the Coast Guard, which has also affected allotments used by some Veterans to help pay for their Tricare Enrollment Fees and Dental Premiums. However Tricare has stepped up and told those Veterans who receive allotments they will continue to cover them.

And the news gets worse for those who are enlisted. If you're serving over seas, and your family is relying on SNAP (aka Food Stamps) that program will end in

February due also to the shut down and funds will be exhausted.

And all this is being caused mostly by House Speaker Pelosi and Senator Schumer who have teamed up to prevent the shut down from ending all due to their demand to put forth more amnesty, and to not fund the border wall.

And also during this time more than 30 house members decided to vacation for Christmas and New Years in Puerto Rico, Pelosi Vacationed in Hawaii, and many other members went about their own personal business completely disregarding those whose lives depend on the income they were receiving, not being able to buy gifts for their families, not being able to put food on the table, and leaving Veterans on hold as they normally do.

To me, this only goes to prove just how little those serving in Congress care, and exactly why WE THE PEOPLE need to get on the ball, calling reps daily if need be, but at least every Friday and voice concerns, opinions and demands.

Then getting family, friends and acquaintances involved. Share the information on Social Media, copy and paste information into an E-Mail and send to your entire address book asking all these people to make

the calls, then forward on and share on their social media pages.

Making things go viral is how to get their attention even if you don't think your rep in DC listens to you, flooding their offices constantly prevents them from doing anything else. So please, GET INVOLVED!

Especially over issues pertaining to Veterans, and this year is the most important. So isn't it time we force change in the VA, how Veterans are treated, stopping Veteran Suicide, providing benefits and medical care to all Veterans exposed to chemicals and burn pits?

Isn't it time we stop this nightmare? We can do it, but it takes each and everyone of you to help insure it happens!

If you're an employer, willing to hire Veterans then we will list your job(s) 100% free of any fee, simply click on this [link](#) and get the information needed to be submitted to us for posting.

This month is Glaucoma Awareness month. So we'd like to remind everyone to have your eyes examined at least once a year!

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

Happy New Year!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

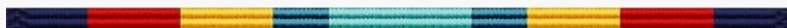
Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



Final Opt-In Rates for Blended Retirement Yield More Surprises

The Defense Department has released final numbers on military folks, by branch of service, who switched into the new Blended Retirement System (BRS) during a year-long opt-in period that ran through Dec. 31. Opt-in rate comparisons across service branches show the singular effectiveness of the [Marine Corps'](#) approach to deepening member interest in the BRS, given that it relies more on youth and vigor, and therefore has fewer careerists. Read more about the BRS results in this [article](#).



Government Shutdown: Some Allotment Payments Affected

The partial government shutdown that began Dec. 22, 2018, affected allotments used by some TRICARE patients to pay enrollment fees and dental premiums. TRICARE isn't able to process these payments made through the U.S. Coast Guard pay center. However, TRICARE will continue to cover patients.

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, whatever 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 **2,396** hits per day, and downloads average **1,486** per day with a total **4,665,717** 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 **16,843** documents online (Updated: 12/23/18)
- 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: **8,132**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **4,678**, Added 20 New Links (Updated: 01/10/19)

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



Pay Our Coast Guard

The federal government has been in a partial shutdown for more than three weeks because Congress and the administration cannot reach an agreement on border protection. The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense have full-year appropriations and are not directly impacted by the shutdown. However, the U.S. Coast Guard and more than 150,000 veterans who are federal employees are very much impacted by the shutdown. **Tell Congress and the White House to pay our Coast Guard and end this harmful shutdown.**



Veterans-For-Change Makes Social Media Change

Effective immediately, all social media pages that have

been on Face Book for many years have all been moved to MEWE.com for a number of reasons.

We know most people don't like change, however, this new Social Media Site, MEWE.COM has no advertisers, truly respects privacy and protects your security far better than Face Book ever could. They also have a fantastic customer service group who actually does respond to your messages, suggestions, ideas and more!

We hope you will join us on this new site.

VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

www.mewe.com/join/veterans-for-change

HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change

AMVETS GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/amvetgroup

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup

**{USAVET} SUPPORTING GOD & ALL WHO
SERVED OUR GREAT NATION**

www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggodallwhoserveandserve

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY

www.mewe.com/join/americansforsovereignty

NOTE: Effective 01/31/19 we will **no** longer be posting any information, news or updates on **Face Book**.



Shutdown Not Affecting TRICARE Despite Missed Payments


This week the Defense Health Agency (DHA) stated that as a result of the partial government shutdown, allotments used by some TRICARE patients to pay enrollment fees and dental premiums had not been processed through the U.S. Coast Guard pay center. DHA has since released guidance to members of the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, family members, and survivors assuring them that any beneficiary who falls into the aforementioned categories that pays through allotment won't be disenrolled for nonpayment, and that no action is required at this time. TRICARE is not impacted by the shutdown and will continue to process claims. Learn more [here](#).



VIETNAM

VETERANS

• **TRIBUTE RIDE** •



Start **Malcom Randall VA Medical Center**
30 MAR 2019 1601 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608
Meet 8:30am then Kickstands up at 9:30am

Veterans Memorial Park **Finish**
7400 SW 41st Pl, Gainesville, FL 32608

To Register | Contact: **Cherie Korn**
EMAIL: CKORN@ALACHUACOUNTY.US

• <https://www.vietnamveterantribute.org/> •

Event sponsored by: NF/SG Veterans Health System and Alachua County Veteran Services



VA Secretary: 'Insulting' to Suggest Shutdown Could Cause Veteran Suicides

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie called on a federal union Monday to apologize for a chapter president's suggestion that veterans affected by the partial government shutdown might resort to suicide. "The notion that most veterans are so fragile from their service that the slightest hint of hardship can push them to the brink of mental breakdown or even self-harm is preposterous," Wilkie said in his letter to J. David Cox, president of the American Federation of Government Employees. For more details, see this [article](#).



January's Featured Song

Voice of America

By

LT Bobby Ross

LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

Previous Featured Songs



**CBO suggests raising Tricare fees, cutting
veteran benefits to slash deficit**

With the federal deficit expected to top \$1 trillion this year, the Congressional Budget Office in December published a list of options for reducing the imbalance over the next 10 years, including three suggestions on Tricare and six that address veterans benefits. In its *Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2019 to 2028*, the CBO laid out 121 opportunities for curtailing spending and raising revenue. These include raising Tricare enrollment fees for military retirees, instituting enrollment fees for Tricare for Life and reducing veterans benefits. The publication marks the fourth time in five years that the CBO has suggested raising Tricare enrollment fees for working-age retirees and introducing minimum out-of-pocket expenses for those using Tricare for Life. [READ MORE](#)



**There are those who hate this flag,
we would die for it!**

Get a FREE Resume Assessment

Perfect your resume to present your best self. Get a [free resume assessment](#) now.



**Emergency vs. Urgent Care: Do You Know
the Difference?**

You feel lousy and know you need medical care. But you aren't sure if your symptoms require urgent or emergency care. Sometime it's difficult to know what level of care you need. Especially when you're hurt or sick. Learn the difference between emergency and urgent care, and the rules for your TRICARE plan now. That way, you'll be able to make informed decisions should the need arise.

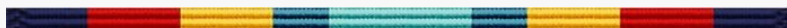
Read the full article [here](#).



Could Your Family Survive if Something Happened to You?

Could your family survive without you? Because tomorrow is never guaranteed, protect your family's future now. Get up to \$1 million life insurance coverage from just \$41 a month.

Click [HERE](#).



**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



**Marine Corps veteran readies for 7,000-
mile hike**

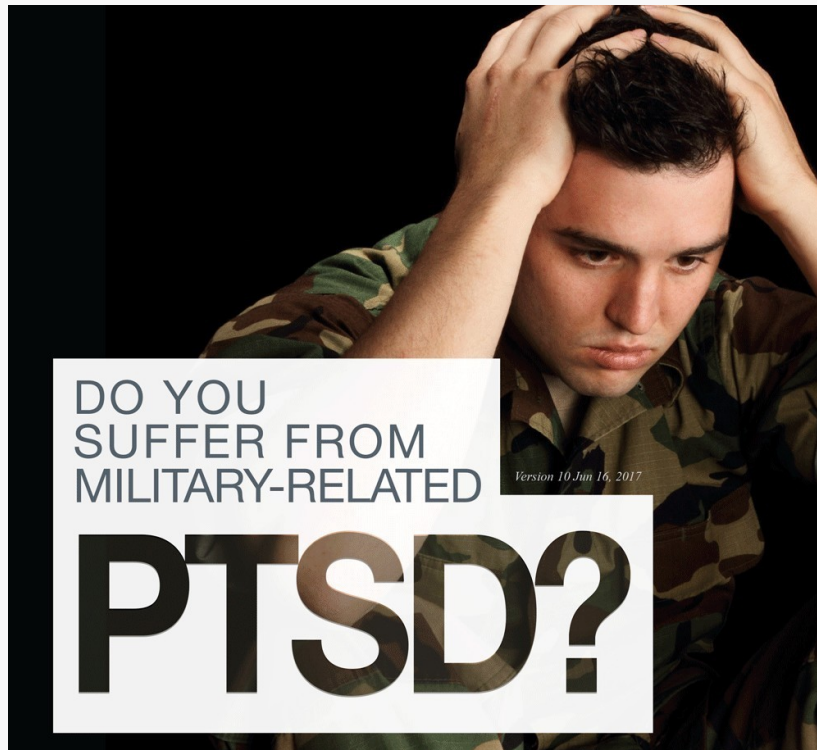
It will take Marine Corps veteran Steven Lesage of Plainfield about 18 months to hike The American Discovery Trail. Organized as a system of recreational trails and roads that collectively form a coast-to-coast hiking route, the American Discovery Trail extends 6,800 miles, through 15 different states, from California to Delaware. His cross-country hike is more than time on the trail or finding internal peace. It's a chance to spread the word of veterans' organizations across the country while also raising awareness about mental health, veteran suicide prevention and post-traumatic stress disorder — causes Lesage said are immensely important to him after he served in the Marines Corps for a decade. [READ MORE](#)



Independent Budget Releases VA Roadmap for 116th Congress

The VFW yesterday, along with coauthors Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America, released [The Independent Budget Veterans Agenda for the 116th Congress](#), which contains policy recommendations to ensure that VA remains fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families both now and in the future. The Independent Budget is a roadmap for Congress, VA and the Administration to navigate critical veteran issues in the areas of benefits, health care, infrastructure, education, employment, training and memorial concerns facing veterans and their families. The three partnering organizations have coauthored The Independent Budget for more than 30 years. “Ensuring veterans are able to achieve their post-military educational goals has never been more important, so the Independent Budget VSOs will hold VA and Congress accountable for the proper implementation of the Forever GI Bill,” said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. The Independent Budget is being delivered to congressional leaders and VA, and is now available for the public to [read online](#).





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



Mil Money: Here's how you can get the most out of the new military retirement system

For service members who are in the new Blended Retirement System, the Defense Department will contribute up to 5 percent to your retirement account, assuming you contribute 5 percent of your basic pay. And the bottom line is you don't want to leave that money on the table. In 2018, the first year of the BRS, DoD contributed more than \$300 million in matching and automatic contributions to service members' retirement accounts, said Air Force Lt. Col. Carla Gleason, a DoD spokeswoman. [READ MORE](#)



VA Partners With Fund to Aid Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and The Independence Fund is reuniting Veterans who have experienced some of the toughest combat conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan to engage in dialogue in ways that empower them to improve their overall well-being. The goal of the pilot program, Operation Resiliency, is to use the common bonds of Veterans who served together to facilitate a collective effort to address personal post-military difficulties, and address any lingering effects of trauma before Veterans find themselves in crisis. The first reunion will be in 2019. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



Burn Pit Legislation Introduced

This week Representatives Tulsi Gabbard and Brian Mast, along with Senators Amy Klobuchar and Dan Sullivan, introduced the VFW-supported Burn Pit Accountability Act to help add service members and veterans to the burn pit registry. The bipartisan bill would improve how DOD and VA track, treat, and prevent the harmful impacts of burn pits. [Learn more about the bill.](#)

Find Your VA Benefits

Are you interested in finding out which VA benefits you may qualify for? Start with the VA Benefits Navigator tool. By answering a series of questions related to your service, you'll learn which VA benefits you may be eligible to receive. It takes less than 20 minutes and all information you enter is secure. VA benefits may help you buy a [home](#), earn a [degree](#), start a [career](#), stay [healthy](#) and do so much more. Visit [Explore.VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/explore) and click the red 'Get Started' button to begin.





VA shuns medical marijuana, leaving veterans to improvise

A recent survey suggests that nearly 1 million veterans may be using medical marijuana to treat pain, anxiety and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. But with the Department of Veterans Affairs steadfast in its opposition to medical marijuana, doctors in the veterans' health system say the department's lack of research has left them without much good advice to give veterans. "We have a disconnect in care," said Marcel Bonn-Miller, a psychologist who worked for years at the veterans' hospital in Palo Alto, California, and now teaches at the University of Pennsylvania medical school. "The VA has funded lots of marijuana studies, but not of therapeutic potential. All the work has been related to problems of use." [READ MORE](#)



Career Fair in Texas

The American Legion is sponsoring a career fair for veterans, active duty, National Guard, reservists and military spouses in conjunction with the American Legion's Mid-Winter Conference. The event will take place Jan. 23 at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark, 4140 Governors Row, Austin, Texas. Admission is free for veterans, active duty, National Guard, reservists and military spouses. Over 60 employers, including state agencies, are expected for the career fair, which is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Also, a veterans resume workshop will begin at 8:30 a.m., again at 10:30 a.m. and at 12:30 p.m. For more information and to register, visit this [site](#).



This doctor is getting great results treating PTSD with lasers

Dr. Robert Kraft and his staff in California have pressed an experimental treatment, transcranial laser treatments, into tackling post-traumatic stress disorder and TBI, and they're already getting great results with veterans and victims of sexual trauma. Now, they want to spread the word and hopefully get the treatment adopted across a wider area, allowing more vets and PTSD sufferers to benefit. As Kraft explains in so many words, the light from high-dose lasers hits the nerves, the nerves use that energy to release chemicals that help brain cells heal and regrow, and the brain can actually repair some damage to itself, whether the original trauma was emotional or physical. It could help heal damage from both PTSD and TBI.

[READ MORE](#)



American Legion Offers Resource Guide

The American Legion has a one-page guide that highlights the organization's [primary website](#) and provides links to other online digital resources. These links include direct access to The American Legion's membership, centennial and memorial database web page, e-newsletters, social media channels, brochures, smartphone apps, videos and more. Download The American Legion's digital media resource guide from the American Legion [website](#).



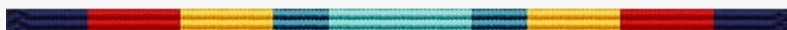
**Women and minority veterans are thriving
in the civilian workforce**

Bureau of Labor Statistics figures show the annual unemployment rate for women veterans was 3 percent last year — the lowest unemployment rate on record for this group in the 21st century — while male veterans had an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent. Among post-9/11 veterans in particular, women again outshined men with a 3.5 percent unemployment rate, compared to 3.9. Breakdowns by race and ethnicity showed similar trends. [READ MORE](#)



Tricare Emergency in Florida

If you have been evacuated from certain counties in Florida, 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 the following counties: Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Jackson, Liberty, and Washington Counties until January 31, 2019. To obtain care, (1) Find a Tricare-authorized provider in the area where you are evacuated to schedule an appointment. and (2) contact the military hospital or clinic by phone to ensure it is open before you travel to the facility.



Links to Other Stories

1. Department of Veterans Affairs could let Vets see private doctors
2. Disabled Vets Can Now Fly Space-A. Here's What You Need To Know
3. Glaucoma – Why Veterans need regular eye exams
4. I'm Enjoying My Journey Despite Parkinson's Interference
5. Privatizing VA health services a bad idea
6. Soldier Uses Ballpoint Pen, Football Sweatshirt To Save Man's Life After Car Accident
7. Takano takes helm of VA committee, inspired by 'positive force' of incoming House members
8. The Trump Administration Is Launching Stealth Attacks on Veterans
9. The West LA VA Is Trying To Evict A Jewish Veterans Group
10. Vet unemployment hit an all-time low in 2018. Mission accomplished?

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



Mare Island Legislation Reintroduced

This week, Congressman Mike Thompson and Senator Dianne Feinstein reintroduced VFW-supported legislation to transfer ownership and maintenance of the Mare Island Naval Cemetery in Vallejo, Calif., to VA. The final resting place for more than 800 veterans, including three Medal of Honor recipients, has fallen into disrepair after the Mare Island Navy Shipyard was closed. The VFW-supported legislation would ensure Mare Island Naval Cemetery is restored and maintained as a national shrine. [Learn more about Mare Island.](#)



VA Offers New Ultrasound Device

Clinicians who are experts in Point of Care Ultrasonography (POCUS) are in awe of a new ultra-portable ultrasound device, the Butterfly IQ. The Butterfly's first use in the United States was at VA NY Harbor Healthcare System and at NYU Langone. It is a very lightweight probe that looks like a sleek black electric razor. It plugs into an iPhone. The device screens heart, lungs, veins of the legs and other parts of the body. The remaining hurdle for the widespread utilization of POCUS is lack of physician training in this powerful technology. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER !



Veterans claiming illness from burn pits lose court fight

A decade-long fight ended at the Supreme Court when justices refused to hear an appeal by veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who say that toxic smoke from burn pits made them sick. Hundreds of those veterans had sued the military contracting giant KBR, Inc., but lost first in U.S. district court and then again last year in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit. The 4th Circuit said KBR was under U.S. military direction when it burned tires and medical waste next to soldiers' barracks, and can't be held liable. "America has turned its back on its war heroes. It's disgusting," said Rosie Torres, whose husband Leroy was a plaintiff in the case. [READ MORE](#)



Website Honors Native Americans Who Served

In commemoration of the centennial of the First World War, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Sequoyah National Research Center (SNRC) has published the website '[American Indians in World War I](#)' in partnership with the United States World War I Centennial Commission. The website was created to commemorate the service of 12,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives who served in the war, mostly as volunteers. The website contains a special essay on Code Talkers. For more information, visit the [WWI Centennial Commission website](#).





*** Women Veterans * Women Spouses ***
Global Corporations Hiring Locally & Nationally

FRIDAY 12 APRIL
Four Seasons Hotel Seattle

SEATTLE



Meet with Recruiters from these Companies

Accenture, Alaska Airlines, Amazon, AWS, Bechtel, Boeing, Booz Allen Hamilton, Cortac Group, Cummins, Deloitte, Edward Jones, EY, GE, GM, Intel Corp., Johnson Controls, Johnson & Johnson, JPMorgan Chase, Kellogg, Koch, Merck, Micron, Microsoft, Northrop Grumman, Pacific NW Laboratory, PNC, PWC, Rollins, Schneider Electric, Shell, Stryker, T-Mobile, Travelers, University of Washington, U.S. CBP, U.S. Secret Service, Verizon, Walmart, Zillow Group *(more to come...)*

REGISTRATION INCLUDES

- Individual Resume Review
- Focused Career Consult
- Corporate Hosted Sessions
- Professional Head Shot
- Interviews as Scheduled by Employers
- Women Veterans Roundtable
- Informal Q&A w/ Employer Panel
- Welcome Reception w/ Employers
- Breakfast & Lunch

Women Veterans Roundtable & Luncheon
Hosted by Women Leadership at Amazon

Informal Q&A with Panel of Employers
Talk with Recruiters - Prep for Job Fair

Power Breakfast w/ Microsoft
Hosted by Microsoft Military Leadership

Free Professional Headshots
Upload on Your Social Media Profile

*** NETWORKING RECEPTION ***
Meet with Corporate Recruiters in Relaxed Setting


*** CAREER FAIR & INTERVIEWS ***

[REGISTER HERE](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

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Save Money at the Pharmacy: Understanding TRICARE Prescription Drug Types

The TRICARE Pharmacy Program provides you the same prescription drug coverage with most TRICARE health plans. Prescription drugs fall into four tiers: generic formulary drugs, brand-name formulary drugs, non-formulary drugs, and non-covered drugs. Your costs will vary depending on your drug category.

Read the full article [here](#).




Get Flu Shots for Free

Did you get your flu shot? If not, it is not too late. You and your family can get the [flu shot](#) at no cost at a [military hospital or clinic](#), a [participating network pharmacy](#), or from a [Tricare-authorized provider](#). The flu vaccine, when given by a pharmacist at a network pharmacy, is covered by the [pharmacy benefit](#) for free. You can still go to your primary care manager or Tricare provider for the flu shot if the pharmacy has restrictions or the shot is not available. The flu shot will be free, but you may have to pay copayments or cost-shares for the office visit. When in doubt, be sure to follow your plan's rules for [getting care](#). For more on free flu shots, read this [article](#).

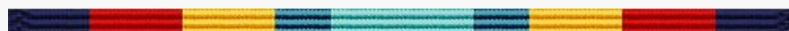


Office of Inspector General

1. [Actions Needed to Better Measure and Address Retailer Trafficking](#)
 2. [Approaches and Challenges to Electronically Matching Patients' Records across Providers](#)
 3. [Detailed Inventory of Federal Programs to Help Servicemembers Achieve Civilian Employment](#)
 4. [DOD Should Improve Its Oversight of the National Guard Counterdrug Program](#)
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VA Million Veteran Program Tops 725,000 Enrollees

The results of most nationwide opinion surveys are based on just a few thousand respondents. The VA's Million Veteran Program is different, and that's why they want to enroll 1 million veterans to help researchers understand what illnesses might be associated with where and when veterans served. The goal of the **voluntary** research program is to partner with VA-enrolled veterans to study how genes affect health by safely collecting and storing blood samples and health information. The large sample population will then allow researchers to better study diseases like diabetes and cancer, and military-related illnesses, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. [Learn more.](#)



Navy Tests Smartphone Access to Personnel Records

Navy sailors soon will be able to access their personnel records using a mobile phone or tablet without needing common access card, or CAC, authentication. The Navy is conducting a full-scale beta test of a mobile application called MyRecord App, which eventually will allow sailors to conduct all personnel transactions using a phone or tablet. Depending on how well the service's beta test of a mobile personnel application works, the other services may follow suit. Read more in this [article](#).



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



**Food stamp programs to remain available
through February for troops, Veterans**

Agriculture Department funding expired Dec. 21 with the onset of the shutdown, but officials have announced that full benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will continue through February. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said stopgap ways had been found to appropriate money for the SNAP and child nutrition programs under budgeting authorities that remained from a previous continuing resolution passed by Congress. "At President Trump's direction, we have been working with the administration on this solution. It works and is legally sound," Perdue said in a statement. [READ MORE](#)



VA Activities During the Shutdown

If you are a veteran and federal employee that is currently furloughed, here are some of the things the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is doing: (1) VA continues to pay disability compensation and pension benefits; (2) VA is processing GI Bill benefits. Anyone facing a financial hardship due to the furlough or a delayed GI Bill® payment can contact the Education Call Center at 1-888-GIBILL-1; (3) VA has encouraged loan servicers to be flexible in dealing with home loan borrowers who have lost income due to the shutdown. Veterans who have questions about their VA home loan or Specially Adapted Housing benefits can contact VA staff toll free at 877-827-3702 or visit the [VA website](#). For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#) and visit the [VA website](#).

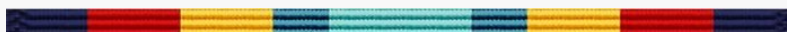


1. [Medtronic Recalls Synergy Cranial Software and Stealth Station S7 Cranial Software Due to Inaccuracies Displayed During Surgical Procedures](#)
2. [Treatment of Peripheral Arterial Disease with Paclitaxel-Coated Balloons and Paclitaxel-Eluting Stents Potentially Associated with Increased Mortality - Letter to Health Care Providers](#)



VA Announces Community Support, Caregiver Partnership

VA announced a new partnership CaringBridge this week to better connect veterans and their caregivers with their local communities. CaringBridge, a global nonprofit focused on social networking, provides personal websites that are free and secure as a platform for veterans and their families to assist in communicating with others. This platform is set up in the form of a private, online journal. CaringBridge has launched a website specific for veterans, current service members, and their families. [Learn more about CaringBridge's support for military families on health journeys.](#)



Keep Your New Year's Fitness Resolutions with These Programs

Programs are available to help you keep your New Year's health resolutions. Nutrition, sleep and physical concepts are all integral parts of the [Performance Triad program](#), which focuses on improving personal health and wellness. The [ShipShape Program](#) is the official Navy weight management program. It was designed for personnel who exceed or are at risk of exceeding Navy body composition assessment (BCA) standards. Another similar Army program, [Fit for Performance](#), was developed through collaboration from the Navy ShipShape program with the addition of sleep.



SURVIVAL IS FUN



The trauma of war reflected inside the cars of Veterans

Photographer M L Casteel's new book "American Interiors" begins with a stark page of facts that illustrate how the United States has failed its returning veterans, whether in the low wages and poor healthcare, or the rates of homelessness and suicide. What follows are not portraits of the people he got to know over the years working in the valet parking of a Veterans Affairs hospital in North Carolina, but photographs inside their cars. In their assemblies of mundane and highly personal objects, they give a quiet insight into veterans' trauma and attempts to move forward. [READ MORE](#)



\$0 Rx Costs with a Tricare Supplement

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






VA Renews Opposition to Agent Orange Benefits for Blue Water Vets

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) shows no signs of backing off opposition to extending [Agent Orange](#) health care and benefits to "Blue Water Navy" Vietnam veterans, setting up another major battle this year with veterans groups and overwhelming majorities in the House and Senate. The VA still lacks "sufficient evidence" to prove a presumptive link between service off the coast of Vietnam and the illnesses caused by the widespread use of the defoliant Agent Orange, a VA official said. Read more in this [article](#).

NOTE: Please call your Reps in DC and ask that they please support HR 299.



Navy Names Career Submariner as Next Naval Academy Commandant

The [Navy](#) has named a career submariner currently working for the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the next commandant of midshipmen at the [Naval Academy](#). Capt. Thomas R. "TR" Buchanan is a 1992 graduate of the academy. He will replace Capt. Robert Chadwick, who has served since July 2017. The commandant is similar to the dean of students at a civilian university and is responsible for the day-to-day conduct, military training and professional development of more than 4,400 midshipmen. Read more about the new commandant in this [article](#).



Tax & Credit Information



1. [Experian Forecasts the Top 5 Data Breach Predictions for 2019](#)
2. [Tax Preparation Season: 9 Big Changes and 22 Tips](#)



Pay Our Coast Guard!

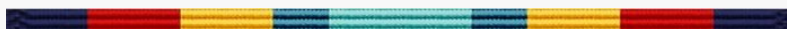
Background: The federal government has been in a partial shutdown for more than three weeks because Congress and the administration cannot reach an agreement on border protection.

The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense have full-year appropriations and are not directly impacted by the shutdown. However, the U.S. Coast Guard and more than 150,000 veterans who are federal employees are very much impacted by the shutdown.

What the Coast Guard does daily allows the rest of us to sleep easier at night. No one should ever take that for granted.

Take Action: Tell Congress and the White House to pay America's Coast Guard and end this harmful shutdown.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION](#)



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How the Government Shutdown Impacts Tricare

The partial government shutdown that began Dec. 22, 2018, affected allotments used by some Tricare patients to pay enrollment fees and dental premiums. Tricare is not able to process these payments made through the U.S. Coast Guard pay center. However, Tricare will continue to cover patients. You do not need to take action at this time. This affects [Tricare health plans](#) and [Tricare Dental Program](#) allotments made on or after Jan. 1, 2019 by: (1) retirees of the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, and commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency; and (2) their family members, survivors, and eligible former spouses. For information on how the shutdown affects dental and vision allotment payments, visit the [FEDVIP website](#).



MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced four new identifications. Returning home with full military honors are:

Naval Reserve Lt. Richard C. Lannom was a bombardier-navigator aboard an A-6A Intruder assigned to Attack Squadron Three Five, USS Enterprise. On March 1, 1968, during a night strike mission over North Vietnam, contact with Lannom's

aircraft was lost and his plane did not return to the ship. An extensive search was conducted with negative results. Based on this information, Lannom and his pilot were declared missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lannom.](#)

Army Air Forces Sgt. John Kalausich was a member of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment Group, 9th Bombardment Division, 9th Air Force. On March 21, 1945, Kalausich was aboard an A-26B when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire and went missing during a combat mission from Couvron, France, to Dülmen, Germany. Kalausich's aircraft had been participating in the interdiction campaign to obstruct German troop movements in preparation for the Allied crossing of the Rhine River on March 23, 1945. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kalausich.](#)

Army Air Forces Sgt. Vernon L. Hamilton was a member of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment Group, 9th Bombardment Division, 9th Air Force. On March 21, 1945, Hamilton was aboard an A-26B when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire and went missing during a combat mission from Couvron, France, to Dülmen, Germany. Hamilton's aircraft had been participating in the interdiction campaign to obstruct German troop movements in preparation for

the Allied crossing of the Rhine River on March 23, 1945. Interment services are pending. [Read about Hamilton.](#)

Navy Fireman 1st Class Grant C. Cook was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Cook. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cook.](#)



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