



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, January 27, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 04



This-N-That

The CBO report is now out, CBO Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2019 to 2028 and no surprise, Veterans again are going to be the short end of the stick!

Between now and 2028 there will be a reduction in benefits "unrelated to Military Service" illness/injuries and all new applicants will be dwindled down to ZERO benefits on unrelated Military Service illness/injuries.

It's been bad enough Veterans have had to fight tooth and nail for a mere pittance of benefits, and in many cases moderate to poor quality medical care.

Now the VA and CBO are literally slapping you in the face and saying you weren't worth the expense, but when you were needed you weren't given that option to say no, the fight's not worth it.

What doesn't make sense, if they're trying to cut the budget, then why not begin with government jobs, all the duplicative and wasteful jobs are estimated to be about 42,000 jobs and if those jobs were done away with that would be an estimated savings of \$2,100,000,000.00 annually and makes far more sense than the penalize Veterans.

The following illnesses being considered as non qualifying are Arteriosclerotic heart disease, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Crohn's disease, Hemorrhoids, Multiple sclerosis, Osteoarthritis and Uterine fibroids.

If taken those benefits would begin reduction or flat out removal in January 2020 and total savings from 2020-2028 would be a mere \$4 billion dollars, nowhere near the savings we would realize if all wasteful and duplicative jobs in government were

terminated.

Then you're looking at losing Individual Unemployability at full retirement age. This would for you into social security only.

The link for this information can be found further down in this newsletter under Other Links and is well worth the time to read, then click on the link at the bottom of the article and read the full report.

Congressman Gus Bilirakis and Senator Jon Tester reintroduced Retired Pay Restoration Act, to ensure full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation and this would also apply to widows receiving DIC (Disability Indemnity Compensation) and their spouses retirement benefits.

But unless Veterans get busy making calls to their Reps in DC and asking for their full support and passage, then in all reality we will be looking at another year this doesn't succeed and it's been going on almost annually for over ten years.

Same with H.R. 553, full support of Veterans, Spouses, Widows even all our civilian friends, call your reps and request that they support and vote

yes on this bill! Lets put an end to the cycle of lip service in Congress and make this bill pass!

According to several sources, it's being reported that "Comparison of Wait Times for New Patients Between the Private Sector and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers" found VA wait times significantly reduced for primary care and three other specialty services between 2014 and 2017.

Although we've heard from many Veterans this is fact, we've not heard from sufficient enough Veterans to know this is indeed real. As we all know all VA Hospitals operate differently, mostly based on the Directors discretion, so whether indeed wait time are or have improved is still in question, at least in our mind. So if you have experience wait times improving, stayed the same or declined, we'd really like to hear from you, no identifying information will be shared with anyone. Only whether improvement, remains same or decline in wait times information would be.

We'd also like to hear from Veterans who are participating in the Blended Retirement System, how good, bad or indifferent it's working for you and your family.

We're not able to chime in with Congress on this if we have little to no information. So if you would please send me an E-Mail and tell me how it's working for you.

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

Many of you use the Social Media Outlet Face Book, and I'm sure at one time or another you've had a bad experience on their site. Well we have too, but way more than what has felt as normal.

Finally there is an alternative Social Media site that offer many of the same features as Face Book does, or did, but doesn't require a ton of private information, nor does it share, sell or trade your information. This new site is call MeWe.com.

VFC has been on their site now for almost three months, transferred all our pages there, so if you have followed us on Face Book, come follow us on MeWe, all the links to the various pages are down further in this newsletter.

Effective **January 31, 2019** we will close all pages on Face Book and rely solely on MeWe.

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



NEW VA POLICY INHIBITS LEGAL RIGHTS OF VETERANS, ADVOCATES SAY

Military-Veterans Advocacy, a Louisiana-based veterans advocacy organization, has decried the final rule issued last Friday (Jan. 18) by the Department of Veterans Affairs implementing the Appeals Modernization Act. The Act was passed by Congress and signed by President Trump in August of 2017. Military-Veterans Advocacy unsuccessfully opposed the legislation in Congress.

"This new regulation strips due process rights from veterans during the appeal process," said Cdr. John B Wells, (USN, Ret.), executive director of Military-Veterans Advocacy. "The VA's duty to

assist the veteran now ends when the appellant document, known as the 'notice of disagreement,' is filed. This leaves the veteran and his or her representative at a definite disadvantage when it comes to accessing pertinent records."

The new regulation requires veterans to ascertain, at the early stages of the appeal, whether or not they want a hearing or to submit additional evidence or allow the appeal to be decided on the existing record. Veterans are precluded by law from retaining an attorney until the initial claim is denied.

"Veterans or their attorneys have to quickly make a decision on the type of appeal they want to pursue," Wells said. "Often this decision must be made quickly before all records are obtained.

"The VA will takes months or years to make decisions," Wells noted, "but they will strictly enforce all deadlines. This regulation is designed by the VA, for the VA, to make it easier to deny meritorious appeals."

The new regulation will become effective on Feb. 19, 2019. Military-Veterans Advocacy is considering court action to challenge the rule.



CBO Suggests Raising Tricare Fees, Cutting Vet Benefits

With the federal deficit expected to top \$984 billion 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](#). These include raising [Tricare](#) enrollment fees for military retirees, instituting enrollment fees for [Tricare for Life](#) and reducing veterans benefits. CBO analysts say their options only "reflect a range of possibilities" and are not recommendations or a ranking of priorities. Read more in this [article](#).



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 **2,092** hits per day, and downloads average **1,466** per day with a total **4,6681,167** 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.

- Documents Library with over **16,844** documents on-line (Updated: 01/21/19)
- 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: **8,154**)
- 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



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](#).





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.

IMAGINE A SOCIAL NETWORK WITH ALL THE FEATURES YOU LOVE AND NONE OF THE BS.

Where you are the customer to serve and not data to sell.

Where you share your real life and celebrate, not censor, diversity.

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/amvetsgroup

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup

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

www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggoddallwhoserveandserve

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**.



Supreme Court Rejects Appeal over Military Burn Pits


The Supreme Court is rejecting appeals from military veterans who claim they suffer health problems because of open burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan. The justices on Jan. 14 left in place a federal appeals court ruling that more than 60 lawsuits over the burn pits could not go forward. Read more in this [article](#).



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/SC Veterans Health System and Alachua County Veteran Services



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](#).





January's Featured Song

Voice of America

By

LT Bobby Ross

LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

Previous Featured Songs



**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](#).



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](#).



**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

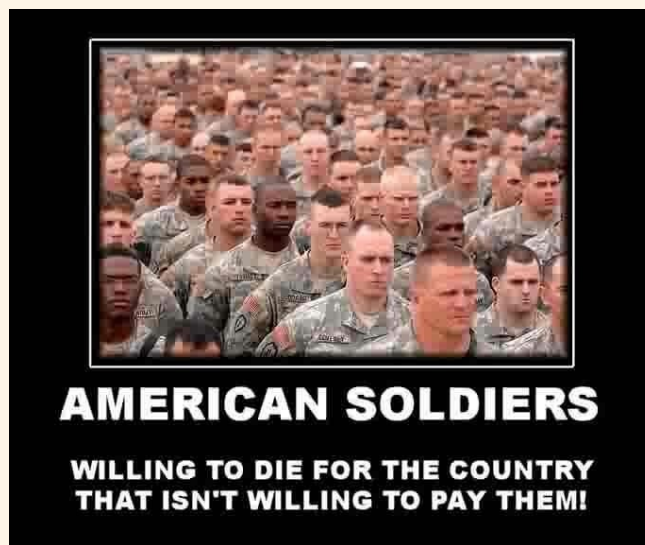
PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!

www.veterans-for-change.org



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](#).



Pitch Your Business Idea at Air Force Pitch Day

The Air Force is calling for submissions from start-ups and small businesses as it seeks to rapidly invest up to \$40 million at the Air Force Pitch Day as part of a larger rapid contracting effort. Air Force Pitch Day is designed as a fast track program to put companies on one-page contracts and same-day awards. The chance offers small businesses access to the military market. Submissions are open to ideas furthering national security in air, space and cyberspace with a special emphasis on three areas: (1) command, control, communications, intelligence and network technologies; (2) battlefield air operations family of systems technologies; and (3) digital technologies. Proposals and pitch decks will be accepted from January 8 to February 6. For more information, visit the [Air Force Pitch Day webpage](#).



VA to implement appeals modernization in February

Act will simplify process for how Veterans make appeals

The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) published in the Federal Register on January 18, 2019, regulations accompanying the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (AMA), which will help Veterans experience a more transparent claims decision-review process. The new law is effective February 19, 2019, and will:

- Modernize the current claims and appeals process;

- Include three review options for disagreements with decisions;

- Require improved notification of VA decisions;

- Provide earlier claim resolution; and

- Ensure veterans receive the earliest effective date possible.

Veterans rejected for disability benefits will have a new slate of appeals options starting next month, when federal officials will put in place an overhaul of the review process with hopes of dramatically cutting down on wait times for the complicated cases.

Under the new rules, veterans will be given three options for their benefits appeals. All three are designed to streamline the complicated existing

process for cases, which can languish for years as new evidence and arguments are introduced throughout the timeline.

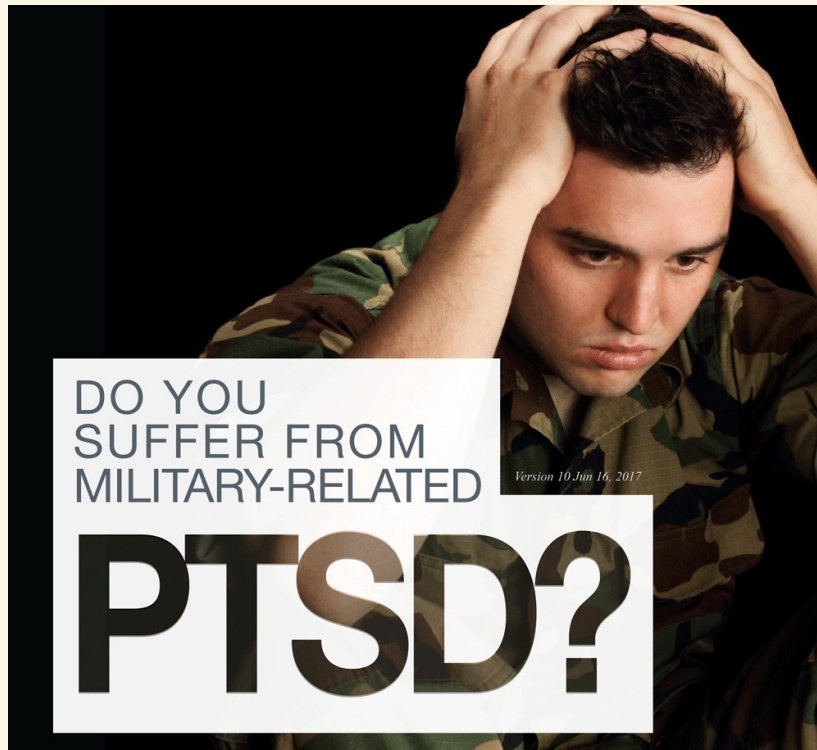
VA leaders are hoping the most difficult reviews can still be completed in under a year in the majority of cases. The target for cases which do not go before the Board of Veterans Appeals is an average of about four months for a final decision. Decisions appealed to the Board under its direct docket will average 365 days. Prior to this new process, appeal resolutions averaged three to seven years.

A successful appeal can mean potentially thousands of dollars in monthly benefits payouts for veterans who have previously been turned down for what they believe are service-connected injuries and illnesses.

TREA worked with Congress and strongly supported these changes as a long-overdue fix.

Source: TREA





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**



**The Difference Between Emergency and
Urgent Care**

You know you need medical care, but do you know if your symptoms require urgent or emergency care? An emergency threatens life, limb, or eyesight or involves maternity or psychiatric care. If you have an emergency, go to the nearest emergency room. or call 911. If overseas, call the emergency medical service for your area. **Urgent care** is care you need within 24 hours for a non-emergency illness or injury that requires treatment. If you are not sure whether to seek urgent care, emergency care, or routine care, contact the **Military Health System (MHS) Nurse Advice Line** at 1-800-Tricare (1-800-874-2273) and choose option 1. For all country specific numbers, visit the **MHS Nurse Advice Line website**.



**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](#).



Employer Spotlight: Cognosante Is Hiring Veterans

Did you serve in the United States Armed Forces?
Are you planning to transition into civilian life?
Cognosante is committed to support the veteran
community with their career search. We are here to
help. [Find jobs](#).



**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](#).



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](#).



Links to Other Stories

- [1. 2 Reasons to Collect Social Security Benefits As Soon As Possible](#)
- [2. CBO Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2019 to 2028 Published Dec 2018](#)
- [3. Former VA secretary improperly used government resources for wife: Report](#)
- [4. How to Know When to Use Your Emergency Fund](#)
- [5. Idaho man looking for owners of military burial flag](#)

6. IDVA workers got welfare benefits for needy Vets — including child care, posh couples retreat
7. My Band of Brothers Died in Vietnam. Only They Didn't Know It.
8. New House Armed Services committee sees an influx of Veterans, women
9. New to TRICARE? The basics you need to know
10. Oldest military cemetery on the West Coast could come under VA care
11. Organizing Paperwork: Tips for Caregivers
12. Suicide prevention: Eliminating the stigma
13. U.S. launches spraying of Agent Orange, Jan. 18, 1962
14. Unclaimed Veterans buried with dignity, thanks to strangers
15. VA Chief Slams Union Reps For Playing The 'Veteran As Victim' Card
16. VA continues expansion of integrated network system to enable health care staff to share best practice uses of department's 3D printing capabilities
17. VA Official: No 'Secret Plan' to Privatize Health Care Under Mission Act
18. VA Partners with CaringBridge
19. VA partners with DHS to expand Veteran suicide prevention efforts
20. VA Renews Opposition to Agent Orange

Benefits for Blue Water Navy Vets

21. VA secretary slams union comments on government shutdown as politicizing Veterans' suicide
22. VA wait times for new appointments equal to or better than those in private sector
23. VA, Health and Human Services announce Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide
24. Veterans benefit from new portable ultrasound device

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



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.



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



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](#).





*** 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](#)

MILITARYMOJO.ORG





Office of Inspector General

1. Steps Needed to Ensure Army Futures Command Fully Applies Leading Practices
2. Voluntary and Mandatory Episode-Based Payment Models and Their Participants

Lighthouse Marks Anniversary

The Pensacola Lighthouse and Museum, accessible through NAS Pensacola on Pensacola Bay, recently celebrated its 160th anniversary. The day also marked the end of a four-year multimillion dollar restoration effort. Since the lighthouse was lit in 1859, the structure has survived cannon fire, two lightning strikes and the Great Charleston earthquake of 1886. The lighthouse was automated and no longer manned by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1965. The Pensacola Lighthouse and Museum, accessible through NAS Pensacola, is a 501(c) non-profit organization. For more information, visit the [Pensacola Lighthouse and Museum website](#).



**~We Proudly Support our
Military Personnel & Families~**



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](#).



1. FDA Recall: VentStar and ID Breathing Circuits, Anesthesia Sets
2. Princeton Pharmaceutical Inc. issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Irbesartan and Irbesartan HCTZ Tablets Due to detection of a Trace Amount of Unexpected Impurity, N- nitrosodiethylamine (NDEA) in the Products
3. UPDATED: Torrent Pharmaceuticals Limited Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Losartan Potassium Tablets, USP and Losartan Potassium and Hydrochlorothiazide Tablets, USP



Learn More about Your Benefit with 2019 TRICARE Resources

It's a new year, which means it may be time to replace the old with the new. Do you have old or outdated TRICARE brochures or handbooks laying around? If so, now is a great time to check out the new 2019 TRICARE benefit resources. TRICARE publishes handbooks, newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, and more. Visit TRICARE Publications to get started.

Read the full article [here](#).



VA Wait Times Improve, Equal to or Better Than Private Sector

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association titled, “Comparison of Wait Times for New Patients Between the Private Sector and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers” found VA wait times significantly reduced for primary care and three other specialty services between 2014 and 2017. According to the study, in 2014 the average wait time for VA appointments was 22.5 days, and 18.7 days for the private sector. By 2017, the average wait time for VA was 17.7 days and 29.8 days for the private sector. [Read more](#) or access to the study.





SURVIVAL IS FUN



**VFW Presents the Independent Budget
to Congress**

This week, VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Pat Murray joined representatives from Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) to present the Independent Budget policy recommendations to dozens of Capitol Hill staff members. The Independent Budget is a collaboration between the VFW, PVA and DAV to provide independent and veteran-centric recommendations for VA policy and budget improvements. The three organizations have partnered to produce the Independent Budget for over three decades, and is a valuable tool for congressional offices to use in crafting legislation or policy proposals. [Read the Independent Budget.](#)



Expanding Military, National and Public Service Opportunities

On Wednesday, VFW National Security and Foreign Affairs Director John Towles attended an interim progress update hosted by the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service (NCOS). After a year of examination, the commission released its Interim Report regarding options it is examining to increase participation not only in military service but also in national and public service.

Recommendations will be included in the commission's final report, due March 2020.

According to Military Times, some of the options in the final report could lead to a recommendation that women ages 18 to 26 begin registering for the draft just like their male counterparts. The commission might also recommend more local volunteer opportunities while in high school, simplify the process for applying to federal jobs, better promote federal service organizations like the Peace Corps, and use the Selective Service System to better identify military recruits. The final report could also recommend that the Selective Service System be disbanded altogether. More details to come. [Learn more](#) or [read the Interim Report](#).



Tax & Credit Information



1. [2018 Tax Planning Guide](#)
2. [December 2018 Recap](#)
3. [Here's How to Find Out if Your Email Was One of the 773 Million Exposed in Massive Data Breach](#)
4. [IRS confirms tax filing season to begin January 28](#)
5. [IRS Free File opens today in advance of tax season](#)
6. [IRS waives penalty for many whose tax withholding and estimated tax payments fell short in 2018](#)
7. [Treasury, IRS issue final regulations, other guidance on new qualified business income deduction; Safe harbor enables many rental real estate owners to claim deduction](#)



VA Secretary Holds Virtual Town Hall

Last week, VA Secretary Robert Wilke, along with the leadership from all the divisions within VA, held a virtual town hall to give a status update of the state of VA and answered questions submitted by veterans. One of the main points highlighted during the briefing was the new VA Welcome Kit, which gives VA users a more streamlined and easier to understand packet of information about what the VA offers for its users. The secretary and his undersecretaries answered questions ranging from health care concerns, education benefits, and IT issues. The virtual town hall was a way to have VA leadership interact with the veterans they serve, and we look forward to more of these informative sessions. [Watch the virtual town hall.](#) [View or download the VA Welcome Kit.](#)



Repeal of SBP/DIC Offset Reintroduced

The VFW-supported H.R. 553, Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act, which would repeal the requirement for surviving spouses to offset Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) benefits with Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) was reintroduced this past week. SBP and DIC are different benefits, which are earned for different reasons. The full repeal of this unjust offset remains a top legislative priority for the VFW. [Learn more about H.R. 553.](#)



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.



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Concurrent Receipt Legislation Reintroduced

This month, Congressman Gus Bilirakis and Senator Jon Tester reintroduced the VFW-supported Retired Pay Restoration Act, to ensure full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation. Presently, concurrent receipt of these benefits applies only to those with a 50 percent VA disability rating or higher. The VFW continues to advocate for the end of this offset for all military retirees regardless of their VA disability rating. [Learn more.](#)



MIA Update

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

Mr. Edward J. Weissenback was an employee of Air America Incorporated, and a crewman aboard an Air America C-123K. On Dec. 27, 1971, his aircraft was on a routine resupply mission between Thailand and Laos when radio contact was lost northeast of Sayaboury, Laos. Search and rescue efforts continued through Dec. 31, 1971, but no

sign of the aircraft or the four crewmembers were found, including Weissenback. Interment services are pending. [Read about Weissenback.](#)

Mr. Roy F. Townley was an employee of Air America Incorporated, and a co-pilot aboard an Air America C-123K. On Dec. 27, 1971, his aircraft was on a routine resupply mission between Thailand and Laos when radio contact was lost northeast of Sayaboury, Laos. Search and rescue efforts continued through Dec. 31, 1971, but no sign of the aircraft or the four crewmembers were found, including Townley. Interment services are pending. Interment services are pending. [Read about Townley.](#)

Army Sgt. Frank J. Suliman was a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. On Dec. 1, 1950, the convoy of trucks Suliman was riding in was halted by a roadblock and the soldiers were commanded to dismount to get through the roadblock on foot. Fellow soldiers reported that Suliman was captured and taken to a prisoner of war camp at Pukchin-Tarigol, North Korea, where he reportedly died in March 1951. Interment services are pending. [Read about Suliman.](#)

Army Pvt. Floyd A. Fulmer was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 14, 1944, after fierce combat in the Raffelsbrand sector of the Hürtgen Forest, near the village of Simonskall, in Germany. Due to ongoing enemy activity in the area, his remains could not be recovered. On Nov. 15, 1945, the War Department declared him deceased. Interment services are pending. [Read about Fulmer.](#)

Baker 2nd Class David L. Kesler 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 Kesler. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kesler.](#)



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