



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, February 10, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 06



## **This-N-That**

I still constantly hear from Veterans across the country regarding their claims and appeals, the length of time they've been waiting, or how many times they've been denied, how some have been denied and said they just give up, "what's the point?"

Well I know it's a hard path to go down, but please don't quit, don't give up, that is precisely what the VA hopes for and expects. And why I chose to re-run an article on the VFC website just to remind you, you're not alone, the numbers are massive on both claims and appeals, and I am hoping that by re-running this

article will strike some spark in each of you to keep fighting. ([Leaked Document: Nearly One-Third Of 847,000 Vets With Pending Applications For VA Health Care Already Died](#))

This is also the reason why I constantly push for everyone, military, Veteran and civilian to call their reps in DC all the time.

No a few dozen people won't make a difference, we seriously need thousands and thousands of people regardless of whether or not you feel your rep will listen to you, make the calls, send the e-mails, share it on your social media pages, copy and paste into E-Mails and send to your entire address book and ask each of them to do the same steps, then forward on to their address book list.

Just keep it civil, no foul language, no screaming, just plain and simple requests.

The idea is, provided we can get the thousands upon thousands of people doing the same thing at the same time (and I recommend every Friday) is that it will slow down operations in their office, and in many cases prevent your Rep from doing the one and only thing they're good at, "LINING THEIR POCKETS" and will force them to take immediate, swift action to provide what we're demanding and get it to the floor for a vote and passage, just so they can get back to "lining their

and passage, just so they can get back to filling their pockets!"

Concurrent Receipt HR 333 (Retirement Pay & VA Benefits) is a huge issue going on for decades, this needs to stop and further down in this newsletter there is a piece on this issue and we all need to participate in this. And add to that a phone call to your reps asking their full support.

Keep in mind if you're a victim of "concurrent receipt" you could be losing as much as \$1,200.00 per month! Wouldn't it be nice to get that much more per month than you're getting now?

Also think about the Widows, this happens to them too! And they're losing as much as you are! So help us get this to the floor now. We can't wait another 2, 4, 6 or 20 years to resolve this.

Agent Orange is still on the top of the list too! Even though the appeals court upheld the claim that it also affects Blue Water Navy, Robert Wilkie still has a little more than two weeks to file for an appeal to the decision which would only further delay benefits and medical care being provided.

So when you make the calls regarding Concurrent Receipt, please also ask for their support on HR 299 and lets get it passed in the House again, and when

that happens need to burn up phone lines calling Senators and asking for their support and passage.

Again, we've been seeing articles pop up again on homeless Veterans. The sad part is the numbers they're quoting are not nationwide numbers only regional or state numbers, and most would look and think of the numbers as a nation wide number and would be wrong.

We have several volunteers who make calls once a month to over 350 different organizations, health and human services offices, and state and local agencies who help homeless people. And the numbers we get greatly differ from those being quoted in articles.

One quotes 31,000 and that would barely cover California and Arizona combined. The numbers we're getting are still so very close to 1.4 million nationwide.

So we're still asking that if you would like to help the Homeless Veteran (and family, sometimes) then please make donations to the DAV (Disabled American Veterans). They could use gently used clothing, furniture which could be sold to raise funds, and of course always can use cash donations, all of these items are also a tax deductible donation.

We announce last week that we've officially closed all our Face Book Pages and are now officially on MEWE.COM for everything. So if you're interested in

following us on any of the various pages, all the links further down in the newsletter will take you there.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

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



## **Alfred Procopio, Jr., v. Robert Wilkie: What Does This Mean for You?**

(Washington, D.C.)--On January 29, in a 9-2 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled in favor of the veteran in Alfred Procopio, Jr., v. Robert Wilkie, finding the intent of Congress in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 was to extend benefits to all veterans who served within the territorial waters of Vietnam, 12 nautical miles from shore.

The VA has 90 days from the Court's ruling to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court; and VA Secretary Wilkie has yet to announce how it plans to respond.

In the meantime, VVA recommends those veterans

who think they may have served on a vessel in Vietnam's territorial waters reach out to their local Veterans Service Officer to file VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim. If VVA is your representative, please go to Service Officer Locator on [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org) to find your local representative. If you do not wish to work with a service officer, you may fill out the VA Form 21-0966 form and submit it to the VA.

We recommend Blue Water Navy veterans submit the VA Form 21-0966 if they have never filed an Agent Orange claim or if they have been denied an Agent Orange claim. If you are a spouse of a Blue Water Navy veteran who died from an Agent Orange-related illness, we recommend you also file a VA Form 21-0966.

By submitting VA Form 21-0966, you preserve your effective date. You have one year from the day you submitted your VA Form 21-0966 to submit your claim for benefits. By submitting this form, you will be putting yourself in the best possible position while waiting to see how the VA responds to the Court's decision.

To help your claim's success, we recommend you start gathering evidence such as deck logs, service records, or anything else that could help prove the location of your vessel. We will keep you updated on suggested next steps as we continue to learn more information.



## 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 **1,841** hits per day, and downloads

average **1,164** per day with a total **4,709,392** visitors as of Friday.

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

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

- Documents Library with over **16,844** 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: **8,182**)
- 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](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)



## **~Veterans-For-Change Makes Social Media Change from Face Book to MEWE~**

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](http://www.mewe.com/join/veterans-for-change)

**HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE**

[www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change](http://www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change)

**AMVETS GROUP**

[www.mewe.com/join/amvetgroup](http://www.mewe.com/join/amvetgroup)

[www.mewe.com/join/amvetsgroup](http://www.mewe.com/join/amvetsgroup)

## VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

[www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup](http://www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup)

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

[www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggodallwhoserveandserve](http://www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggodallwhoserveandserve)

## AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY

[www.mewe.com/join/americansforsovereignty](http://www.mewe.com/join/americansforsovereignty)

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



## H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act

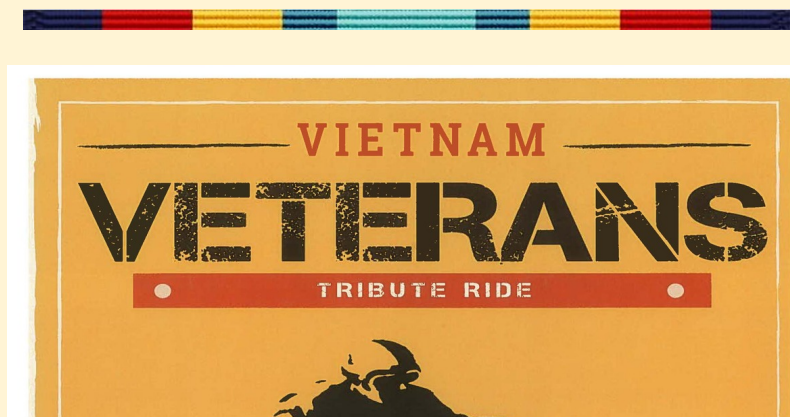
On January 8, 2019, Representative Gus Bilirakis (FL) introduced H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act. This bill would extend concurrent receipt authority to longevity retirees with service-connected disabilities rated less than 50 percent disabling. Under current law

disabled veterans with longevity retirement from active military service who are also in receipt of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability determination of 50 percent or higher may retain both military retirement pay and their compensation.

DAV strongly supports H.R. 303 as it would end the unfair policy of forcing many military longevity retirees to forfeit some of their retired pay in order to receive equal amounts of disability compensation from the VA. This legislation is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 104 and would eliminate concurrent receipt for all longevity retirees.

Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Representative to support and cosponsor H.R. 303. As always, we appreciate your support for DAV and your grassroots activism in participating in DAV CAN. Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

### **Take Action**





**Start** Malcom Randall VA Medical Center  
1601 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608  
30 MAR 2019 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



## Get Dental Coverage through TRICARE Dental Program

Are you keeping up with your and your family's dental health, and dental options? During National Children's Dental Health Month, take time to learn about the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). Whether you're eligible to enroll in the TDP depends on your status or that of your military sponsor. Not sure about your eligibility or how to enroll? Read ahead to find answers and take command of your dental health.

Read the full article [here](#)



Read the full article [HERE](#).



February's Featured Song

## **Blowing In The Wind**

By

**LT Bobby Ross**

LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

**Previous Featured Songs**

## **VFW-Supported Bills Clear House**

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass the VFW-supported [H.R. 840, Veterans' Access to Child Care Act](#). Sponsored by Congresswoman

Brownley, the bill would expand a successful child-care pilot program, which has helped tens of thousands of veterans complete their VA mental health care appointments. “Access to child care should not be a barrier for veterans who need care to cope with their mental health conditions,” said VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace. “The Senate must pass this bill immediately to show they are also serious about improving access to care for veterans and eliminating veteran suicide.” On Thursday, the House also passed [H.R. 450](#), the [Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2019](#), which would punish with up to five years imprisonment whoever defrauds veterans of their earned benefits. Stay tuned to the Action Corps Weekly for updates on these important bills.



## **Working Together to Help Veterans Exit Homelessness**

Welcome to the third edition of the VA Homeless Programs quarterly newsletter. Looking back on 2018 and ahead into 2019, we continue to work toward the day when homelessness among Veterans is rare, brief and nonrecurring. Together with our partners and stakeholders, we remain dedicated to addressing the supportive service, healthcare and other needs of Veterans who are either homeless or at-risk of

homelessness, while helping them access resources that provide affordable housing, job training and placement, household essentials, and more. In this edition, we spotlight several partnerships that help to provide many of these essential resources for homeless and at-risk Veterans.

VA programs and services contributed to a 5.4 percent decline in homelessness among Veterans between 2017 and 2018 and a 49 percent decrease since 2010. To date, [66 local communities and three states](#) have declared an effective end to Veteran homelessness. Each of those communities created an infrastructure to ensure that at-risk Veterans are prevented from becoming homeless whenever possible. If they experience homelessness in those communities, Veterans are quickly put on the pathway to permanent housing. The dramatic decline in homelessness among Veterans shows us that the evidence-based strategies we have employed to help the most vulnerable Veterans are working, but we still have more work to do to ensure all who wore our nation's uniform are stably housed.

To accomplish the audacious goal of ending homelessness among Veterans, collaboration is essential. Strategic partnerships and relationships increase our efforts by not only reaching every Veteran who is homeless but also by allowing each partner to



focus on what they do best. That's why VA staff members are encouraged to spread the word about the continued need for partner organizations so we can work to drastically decrease and one day end Veteran homelessness in all communities.

For those wanting to get involved or learn more about how housing, employment, and community collaborations can help end Veteran homelessness, send an email to [HomelessVets@va.gov](mailto:HomelessVets@va.gov) or visit VA's Homeless Veterans [website](#).



**House Appropriations Hearing on**

## Quality of Life in the Military

On Thursday, the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a hearing on quality of life in the military. The hearing focused on accountability and oversight measures each breach of service has been taking to improve the quality of life for service members. The three main areas of focuses are infrastructure – privatized base housing, family-based programs, and childcare. Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz expressed serious concern over conditions at privatized housing throughout the military, citing that families living on Ft. Bragg signed a petition demanding improvements to their on-base homes. Rep. Will Hurd and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ronald L. Green voiced frustration over Marine Corps families still displaced after Hurricane Florence. [Watch the hearing](#). If you are affected by military housing or other quality of life issues, [please let us know](#).



## Homeless Programs Major Updates

Anthony Love, Senior Advisor and Director of Community Engagement, VHA Homeless Programs, will be participating in the first ever [#ExploreVA](#)

Facebook Live event focused on VA's work to end homelessness among Veterans in partnership with Vietnam Veterans of America. Anthony will discuss all the resources available to Veterans who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness as well as how community partners can join efforts to end homelessness among Veterans.

o Date: February 12, 2019

o Time: 2 p.m. (ET)

o Registration Link: <https://explore.va.gov/events>



**CONTACT YOUR  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

**PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!**

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



**Appeals Court Gives Blue Water  
Vets the Win Congress Denied**

A federal court ruled Jan. 29 that Vietnam veterans who served on ships offshore during the war are eligible for benefits to treat illnesses linked to exposure to the chemical herbicide [Agent Orange](#) — a decision that has the potential to extend help to thousands of veterans. The decision could result in thousands of dollars of disability benefits each month. John Wells, one of the attorneys on the case, estimated 50,000 to 70,000 veterans could now become eligible for benefits. Read more about the decision in this [article](#).



## **Support H.R. 95, Legislation to Allow Homeless Veterans to Stay with Their Children While Receiving Services**

On the first day of Congress, the new Chair of the Health Subcommittee of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Rep. Julia Brownley, introduced H.R. 95 to modify the calculation of per diem payments the

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes to homeless grant providers to include partial payment for each of a homeless veteran's minor dependents. This would better insure that a homeless veteran does not have to choose between treatment and keeping her or his family together.

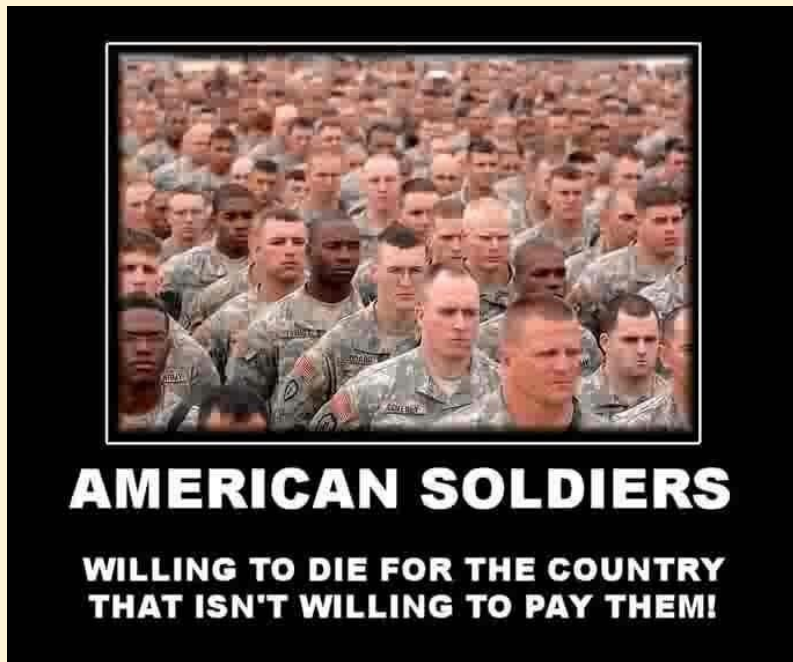
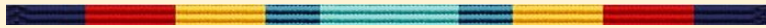
VA's Homeless Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program has long been an important source of transitional housing for homeless veterans. Generally operated by community providers who receive grant funding from VA, in 2017, these programs offered the homeless veteran population 12,500 beds devoted to providing supportive housing and/or supportive services.

Veterans may enter these programs to address their medical and behavioral health issues, learn or re-learn independent living and vocational skills and seek services and benefits that help them recover from homelessness. Most veterans stay in transitional housing for about 6 months. VA states that in 2017-14,500 veterans exited GPD for permanent housing.

This bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 291, urging congress to continue to authorize and appropriate funds for competitive grants to community-based and public organizations including the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide health and supportive services to homeless veterans placed in permanent housing.

Please support H.R. 95 to assist our homeless veterans and their families. Please use the prepared letter to urge your Representative in Congress to support this critical legislation.

[Take Action](#)



## **Senate Appropriations Hearing on Electronic Health Care Record Modernization**


On Tuesday, the Senate Committee on Appropriations

On Tuesday, the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a hearing on the implementation of VA's electronic health record modernization (EHRM) efforts. The hearing focused on how the VA plans to stay on track during the estimated 10-year transition to the EHRM. Members of the subcommittee expressed concerns over VA's lack of transparency with Congress over the projected \$16.1 billion it will spend for the EHRM. [Watch the hearing](#), which starts at the 16-minute mark.

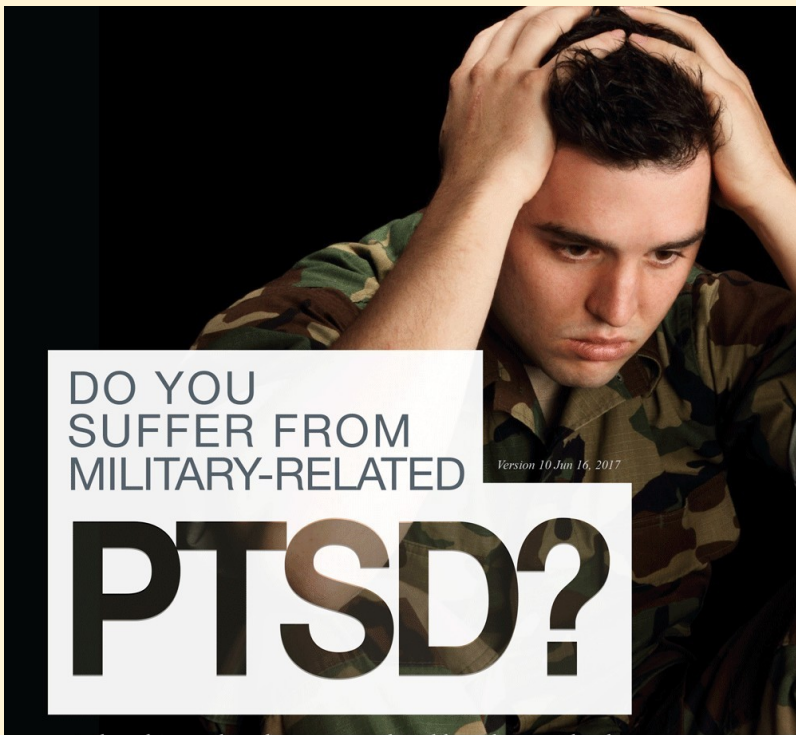


## Communicate with Us

Solving homelessness among Veterans requires a collaborative approach with input and efforts from stakeholders at all levels. Knowing that, we want to hear your thoughts, ideas and feedback about VA's available programs and services supporting homeless and at-risk Veterans. We value your input and feedback as we know we cannot do this alone. Please share your thoughts with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or by using the "Contact Us" button on our [homeless website](#).







DO YOU  
SUFFER FROM  
MILITARY-RELATED

Version 10-Jan 16, 2017

**PTSD?**

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



**Tax Refund for Service in Sinai**



## Tax Refund for Service in Sinai Peninsula

According to an article in Military Times, if you were one of more than 2,000 troops who served in the Sinai Peninsula going back to June 9, 2015, you may be due a tax refund. The tax reform signed into law in December 2017 designated service in the Sinai Peninsula as being eligible for a combat zone tax exemption. The law also applied it retroactively, so those who received imminent danger pay or hostile fire pay while serving in the Sinai qualify for the refund. Imminent danger and/or hostile pay are also eligibility qualifiers for VFW membership. To get refunds for the two years before the law was enacted and implemented, you must file an amended tax return. Taxpayers generally have up to three years to file an amended return, so those service members who served in the Sinai in 2015 — and who filed their 2015 taxes in 2016 — would still be eligible to file an amended return, but it has to be done this year.

[Read more here.](#)



## Appeals Modernization Act Goes into Effect in February

The Veterans Appeals Improvement and

Modernization Act of 2017 is effective February 19, 2019. Under the new law, any Veteran who receives an initial VA claim decision after February 2019 can choose from three, easy-to-understand review choices. All three choices provide Veterans with faster resolution of disagreements with VA decisions.

[Learn More](#)



## Fort Gordon Issues Warning About 'Sextortion' Scam

Fort Gordon has released a scam alert after several people on base received emails threatening to blackmail them about watching online pornography. According to Fort Gordon, a "sextortion" phishing campaign is using a highly effective new email scam to trick victims into paying extortion money. The email uses an old password dump to make the victims believe the hacker was able to break into their webcam and record them while they watched online

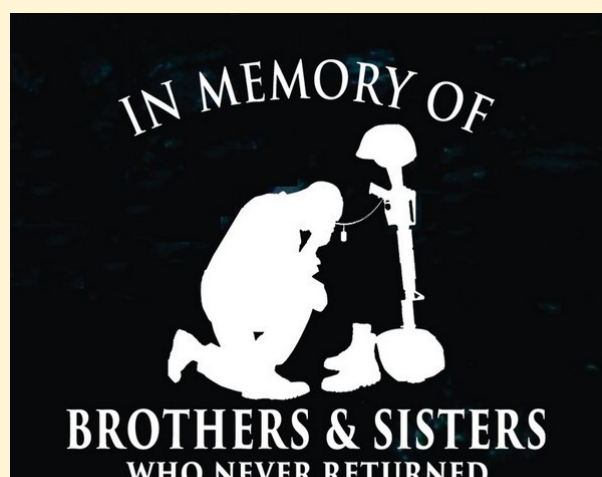
and record them while they watched online pornography. The scam is part of a new wave of financially-motivated sextortion campaign that is targeting online users and it could soon affect businesses. Read more in this [article](#).

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## Learn more about the Military to Civilian Transition

Every year, approximately 200,000 men and women leave the military to return to civilian life. This transition occurs within a dynamic network of relationships, programs, services, and benefits. VBA--and the Under Secretary for Benefits, Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D. and Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Margarita Devlin--are proud to support VBA's transition assistance services as outlined in this 2018 report.

[Learn More](#)





## **What is Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment?**

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program is available to help transitioning Service members and Veterans who have service-connected disabilities become suitably employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living. A VA vocational rehabilitation counselor will determine eligibility for services and work with you in achieving employment or independent living goals.

[Learn More](#)



## **HVAC Names Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking and Burn Pit Legislation**

On January 22, TREA members were provided full committee rosters for the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. Rep. Mark Takano (CA) was named Chairman and Rep. Phil Roe, M.D. (TN) was named Ranking Member. The Full Committee completed its organizational meeting and TREA is pleased to provide the list of Subcommittee Chairman and Ranking

Members to our membership.

Chairman Takano announced that Rep. Conor Lamb (PA) will serve as Vice Chairman.

In addition, leadership at the Subcommittee level is:

Chair: Rep. Elaine Luria (VA) Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs;

Chair: Rep. Mike Levin (CA) Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity;

Chair: Rep. Julia Brownley (CA) Subcommittee on Health;

Chair: Rep. Chris Pappas (NH) Investigations and Oversight; and

Chair: Rep. Susie Lee (NV) Subcommittee on Technology Modernization.

Ranking Member Roe announced leadership at the Subcommittee level as:

Ranking Member: Rep. Mike Bost (IL) Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs;

Ranking Member: Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL) Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity;

Ranking Member: Rep. Neal Dunn, M.D. (FL) Subcommittee on Health;

Ranking Member: Rep. Jack Bergman (MI) Investigations and Oversight; and

Ranking Member: Rep. Jim Banks (IN) Subcommittee on Technology Modernization.

## TREA Supports Burn Pit Legislation

TREA continues to support legislative proposals for veterans and service members. One proposal, The Burn Pits Accountability Act would evaluate the exposure of U.S. service members and veterans to

open burn pits and toxic airborne chemicals by:

- 1) Requiring the Secretary of Defense to record whether service members have been based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used or exposed to toxic airborne chemicals, including any information recorded as part of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, in the Periodic Health Assessment (PHAs), Separation History and Physical Examination (SHPEs), and Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHAs).
- 2) Enrolling any service member who meets the above criteria in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, unless he or she opts-out.
- 3) Requiring the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to share information relating to exposure of burn pits and toxic airborne chemicals recorded in PHAs, SHPEs, and PDHAs.

Source: TREA





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## Proposed VA Rules Would Expand Veterans' Access to Private Health Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs Jan. 30 announced [proposed rules](#) for determining which veterans would be able to seek medical care in the private sector starting this summer — their eligibility guidelines based on drive times and appointment waiting periods that could significantly expand the number of veterans seen outside the VA. Under the proposed standards, veterans would be able to see a community network provider if they drive an average of 30 minutes for primary care or mental health services at a VA health facility, or an average of 60 minutes for specialty care at the VA. Also, veterans who wait 20 days or more for a primary care or mental health appointment, or 28 days or more for specialty care, with certain exceptions, could seek care in the private-care network currently being established. Read more in [this article](#).



## **Agent Orange Reform Bill Introduced**

The Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Rep. Mark Takano (Calif.) has introduced the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (H.R.299). He has indicated that he will not have a committee vote on the bill until it has at least 218 co-sponsors. Last year's House bill had 335 co-sponsors and passed the House with a unanimous vote of 382 to 0.

The bill clarifies that service members serving off the coast of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict have a presumption for filing disability claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for ailments associated with exposure to the Agent Orange herbicide. The bill also extends the presumption of herbicide exposure for veterans who served on or near the Korean DMZ between September 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971. The legislation provides health care, vocational training, rehabilitation and monetary allowance to a child who was born with spina bifida if at least one of the child's parents served in Thailand between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 and the VA determines that at least one of the parents had been exposed to an herbicide agent during that period. The bill also now includes



agent during that period. The bill also now includes changes and improvements to the VA's home loan program.

FRA believes Congress should recognize these veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange herbicide and authorize presumptive status for VA disability claims associated with this exposure. Now is the time to contact your U.S. Representative to urge them to co-sponsor this legislation.



## Employer Spotlight: ManTech is Looking for Veterans

If you're returning to civilian life and looking to start your new career, we have opportunities that fit exceptionally well with the skills and experience you've acquired in the military. [See jobs for Veterans at ManTech](#)



## Concurrent Receipt Bills Introduced

Senator Jon Tester (Mont.) has introduced comprehensive concurrent receipt legislation, the Retired Pay Restoration Act (S.208). This legislation would authorize the immediate payment of concurrent receipt of full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis (Fla.) also introduced the Retired Pay Restoration Act (H.R.303), which would expand the eligibility of retirees with less than 50 percent disability rating to receive service-connected disability from the VA and full retirement pay for retirees eligible for Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP). Currently, only CRDP disability disabled retirees with a rating of 50 percent or more are eligible for concurrent receipt.

Rep. Sanford Bishop (Ga.) has also introduced comprehensive concurrent receipt reform (H.R.333) that includes disabled retirees with CRDP less than 50 percent and CRDP (Chapter 61) medically retired (less than 20 years of service). Rep. Sanford's bill is similar to the Senate bill and would have the same impact.

Please use the [Action Center](#) to ask your legislators to support these proposals.



## Links to Other Stories

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.**

1. [Agent Orange Activist From Andover Headed to State of the](#)

Union  
Address

2. Class

Action  
Mental  
Health  
Lawsuits  
and  
the  
VA

3. Four  
former  
VA  
Secretaries:

There's  
an  
historic  
and  
welcome  
transformation  
underway  
at  
the  
VA

4. Keep  
the  
G.I.  
Bill  
Strong

5. Leaked  
Document:  
Nearly  
One-  
Third

Third  
Of  
847,000  
Vets  
With  
Pending  
Applications  
For  
VA  
Health  
Care  
Already  
Died

6. MANA  
House  
is  
a  
place  
where  
homeless  
Veterans  
can  
find  
help

7. Medical  
Records  
and  
Your  
VA  
Disability  
Claim

8. Racine  
tiny  
homes

ottered  
as  
model  
for  
Janesville's  
homeless

9. VA  
Hiring  
Health  
Record  
Officers

10. VA  
unveils  
proposed  
rules  
extending  
more  
private  
care  
to  
Veterans

11. Veteran  
claims  
VA  
is  
doing  
little  
to  
stop  
someone  
from  
siphoning  
off  
her

benefits

## 12. Veterans

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



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## Students Design \$1.25 Piece to Help Prevent B-2 Bomber Emergencies

One of the world's most advanced bombers is flying with a plastic switch cover, designed by Missouri high school students, in its cockpit to prevent possible in-flight emergencies. The Stealth Panthers robotics team at Knob Noster High School near [Whiteman Air Force Base](#) worked with pilots and engineers last fall to create and test the 3D-printed prototype in a [B-2 Spirit](#) training simulator. The covers, which cost about \$1.25 to produce, are now installed in each operational B-2 at Whiteman and the simulator cockpits. The box prevents the inadvertent flip of a switch that is part of the Airframe Mounted Accessory Drive. Read more in

this **article.**





**\* 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..)

**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

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Upload on Your Social Media Profile

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

**\* CAREER FAIR & INTERVIEWS \***

**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

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## Reduce Your Out of Pocket 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.](#)



### Office of Inspector General

1. A  
Comprehensive  
Re-  
evaluation  
Needed  
to  
  
Better  
Promote

Future  
Retirement  
Security

2. Agency  
Efforts  
to  
Identify  
and  
Reunify  
Children  
Separated  
from  
Parents  
at  
the  
Border

3. Air  
Force  
Pilot  
Promotion  
Rates  
Have  
Increased  
but  
Oversight  
Process  
of  
Some  
Positions  
Could  
Be  
Enhanced

4. Breast  
Implant

Implant-  
Associated  
Anaplastic  
Large  
Cell  
Lymphoma  
(BIA-  
ALCL)

5. CMS  
Action  
Needed  
to  
Ensure  
Compliance  
with  
Abortion  
Coverage  
Requirements

6. DOD  
Needs  
Better  
Information  
to  
Monitor  
and  
Assess  
Review  
Process

7. Health  
Information

Technology:  
Approaches  
and  
Challenges

Challenges  
to  
Electronically  
Matching  
Patients'  
Records  
across  
Providers

8. Health  
Insurance  
Exchanges:  
Claims  
Costs  
and  
Federal  
and  
State  
Policies  
Drove  
Issuer  
Participation,  
Premiums,  
and  
Plan  
Design
9. Medicare:  
Voluntary  
and  
Mandatory  
Episode-  
Based  
Payment  
Models  
and

Their  
Participants

10. Military  
and  
Veteran  
Support:  
Detailed  
Inventory  
of  
Federal  
Programs  
to  
Help  
Servicemembers  
Achieve  
Civilian  
Employment
11. Observations  
on  
DOD's  
Approach  
to  
Developing  
Price  
and  
Availability  
Estimates  
for  
Foreign  
Customers
12. Progress  
and  
Challenges  
in

Rebuilding  
Personnel,  
Equipping,  
and  
Training

13. VA  
Real  
Property:  
Clear  
Procedures  
and  
Improved  
Data  
Collection  
Could  
Facilitate  
Property  
Disposals

14. Vetting  
of  
Individuals  
and  
Secure  
Areas  
at  
Mar-  
a-  
Lago



**Your 2019 \$0 Down VA Loan  
Benefit Is Ready to Use Now**

VA loan limits have increased to \$484k for 2019. Take advantage of this great benefit and lock in a low rate for as little as \$0 down. [Use your VA loan benefit today.](#)




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## **Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease Way Up Among Troops**

The military has experienced a 12-fold increase in the number of troops diagnosed with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, according to a new health report that found the Air Force recording the highest rates. The study marks the first time that the military's Medical Surveillance Monthly Report looked at occurrences of the disease, which is linked to obesity and can result in cirrhosis of the liver. There is no cure for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease and treatment is focused on

preventing risk factors. Keeping a healthy body weight, plant-based diets and exercise are the main modes of prevention, according to the Mayo Clinic. Read more in [this article.](#)







1. Allergy  
Alert  
Issued  
by  
Santa  
Rosa  
Whole  
Foods  
Market  
for  
Undeclared  
Walnut,  
Milk  
and  
Eggs  
in  
“Hipster  
Chipster”  
Cookies
2. Dr.  
Reddy's  
Laboratories  
Continues  
its  
Voluntary  
Nationwide  
Recall  
of  
Levetiracetam  
in  
0.54%

Sodium  
Chloride  
Injection  
1500mg/100mL

Due  
to  
Mislabeling

3. Edwards  
Lifesciences  
Recalls  
Swan-  
Ganz  
Thermodilution  
Catheter  
Due  
to  
Incorrect  
Assembly  
Causing  
Reversal  
of  
Lumens

4. FDA  
warns  
compounders  
not  
to  
use  
glutathione  
from  
Letco  
Medical  
to  
compound

Compound  
sterile  
drugs

5. Frito-  
Lay  
Issues  
Voluntary  
Allergy  
Alert  
on  
Undeclared  
Milk  
In  
Small  
Number  
of  
Stacy's  
Simply  
Naked  
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6. Increased  
Rate  
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Mortality  
in  
Patients  
Receiving  
Abiomed  
Impella  
RP  
System  
-  
Letter  
to

to  
Health  
Care  
Providers

7. Medex  
Cardio-  
Pulmonary,  
doing  
business  
as  
Smiths  
Medical,  
Recalls  
Sterile  
Saline  
and  
Sterile  
Water  
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Exposure  
to  
Infectious  
Agents  
as  
a  
Result  
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Leaking  
Containers

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## USS Thresher Memorial Approved for Arlington

The deaths of 129 men that essentially catalyzed modern submarine safety will finally be commemorated at Arlington National Cemetery, following memorial approval by the secretary of the Army. Kevin Galeaz, president of the USS Thresher ANC Memorial Foundation, announced the long-awaited recognition Jan. 28. Donations will cover the cost of the memorial and ensure that funding will be in place to replace the monument in perpetuity. Read more about the memorial in this [article](#).

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## **SURVIVAL IS FUN**



### **VA Wants Your Input on How to Implement Free Urgent Care Benefit**

The Department of Veterans Affairs is seeking public input on how best to [provide veterans with free civilian urgent care](#). The VA Mission act of 2018 directed the department to provide access to walk-in care for veterans who are eligible for VA health care. According to the law, all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system who have gotten treatment in the last 24 months will be eligible for civilian urgent care. Veterans can provide feedback by visiting the Federal Register entry. Learn more about the urgent care benefit in this [article](#).



### **Commissary Scholarship Deadline Feb. 15**

Feb. 15 is the deadline for applications for the commissary's annual scholarship for military children offered in partnership with the Fisher House

Foundation. Students can apply for one of 500 available \$2000 scholarships. The program is administered by Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to service members and their families. This year is the first in which the entire application process is online. Eligibility for the program is determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. All rules and requirements for the program, as well as links to frequently asked questions and the application are available at [MilitaryScholar.org](http://MilitaryScholar.org).



**Army Tests New Smart Medical**



## Army Tests New Smart Medical Records Device

The Army is getting ready to field a medical communication device that aims to improve comms between the field and receiving hospital, potentially saving the lives of patients. Called the Medical Hands-free Unified Broadcast, or MEDHUB, it features smart automation technology, allowing medics to send ahead patient information on a handheld tablet, using buttons instead of typing in words and characters. According to an Army release, it increases "accuracy in completeness" by about two to three times compared with the old system using a tactical combat casualty care card. MEDHUB recently completed soldier testing at the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory ahead of an end-to-end operational test, set to take place in March, in which MEDHUB will be tested from point of injury through transit to the hospital. Read more about the new device [here](#).



## Army Helicopters Installed in New Museum

Two historic Army helicopters arrived on-site at the future National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia Jan. 31. An UH-1B Iroquois, known familiarly as the "Huey," and an R-4B

"Sikorsky" helicopter, will be featured in the future museum. The Huey, a Vietnam-era chopper, survived combat missions in Vietnam for eight years prior to its installation in the museum, according to a release. The Sikorsky modeled to be installed in the museum features the markings of an R-4B flown in April 1944 in "the China-India-Burma theater" for the first-ever helicopter combat rescue mission. The R-4B was the first helicopter in the world to be mass-produced, according to the release. The 185,000-square foot museum is set to open to the public in 2020. The Army is the only military service currently without a national museum.



## Tax & Credit Information



1. EITC  
Awareness  
Day  
reminds  
taxpayers  
to  
look  
into  
valuable  
credit

credit,  
Volunteers  
available  
to  
help

2. IRS reminds employers, other businesses of Jan. 31 filing deadline for wage statements, independent contractor forms

3. Find out how tax reform affects your businesses' bottom line at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

4. Here's

what  
taxpayers  
should  
consider  
when  
determining  
if  
they  
need  
to  
file

5. Individuals

can  
find  
answers  
to  
their  
questions  
about  
tax  
reform  
on  
[IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

6. IRS

kicks  
off  
2019  
tax-  
filing  
season  
as  
tax  
agency  
reopens;

Use  
IRS.gov  
to  
avoid  
phone  
delays

7. IRS.gov  
is  
the  
first  
place  
to  
go  
for  
tax  
help

8. IRS:  
Don't  
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'ghost'  
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9. Ten  
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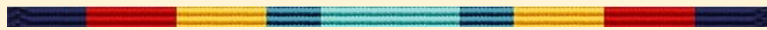
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10. Where's  
My  
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tool  
lets  
taxpayers  
check  
status  
of  
their  
refund



## Exchange Shoppers Can Win 'Captain Marvel' Premier Trip

A contest through the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), Marvel Studios, Disney and Hasbro will treat one military family to a movie premier trip. A grand-prize winner will receive a three-day, two-night trip for four to the "Captain Marvel" premiere March 4 in Hollywood, California. The trip includes airfare within the continental United States, tickets to the movie, hotel accommodations and a rental car. The approximate retail value of the prize is \$6,000. AAFES shoppers 18 and older can enter from Feb. 1 through Feb. 15 on the [Exchange website](#). The drawing will

take place on or about Feb. 18.



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## **Commissary Scholarship Contest Honors Tuskegee Airmen**

In honor of Black History Month, commissary and Exchange users can enter a social media contest sharing their military service story for a chance to win one \$5,000 or one of three \$1,000 scholarships. Sponsored by Coca-Cola, the USO and Mondelēz International, the contest honors the legacy of Tuskegee Airman Maj. Charles B. Hall. To enter, authorized commissary and exchange patrons must submit their story between Feb. 1 and 28. They can submit it in a tweet with a photo or video and the hashtag #ShareYourServiceStoryContest, or via Instagram with a photo or video (maximum two minutes telling a little of their service story or the



service story of one of your relatives with the hashtag #ShareYourServiceStoryContest.



## MIA Update

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

**Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Lynn W. Hadfield** a member of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment Group, 9th Bombardment Division, 9th Air Force. On March 21, 1945, Hadfield was piloting an A-26B when his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire and went missing during a combat mission from Couvron, France. Hadfield, and his two crewmen, Sgt. Vernon Hamilton and Sgt. John Kalausich, 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 Hadfield.](#)

**Army Pfc. Clifford M. Mills** was a member of the 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, which participated in Operation Market Garden, the invasion of the German-occupied Netherlands. On Sept. 18, 1944, Mills was reported missing in action in the vicinity of Wyler and Zyfflich,

Germany. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mills.](#)

**Marine Corps Reserve Pvt. Ted Hall** 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 Hall. Interment services are pending. [Read about Hall.](#)

**Marine Corps Pvt. Waldean Black** 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 Black. Interment services are pending. [Read about Black.](#)



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