



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, December 22, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 51



This-N-That

First I'd like to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas, Vrolijk Kerstfeest, Joyeux Noël, Frohe Weihnachten, Mele Kalikimaka, Chag Molad Sameach, Gozhqq Keshmish, Niznonigo Keshmish, God Jul, Hanukkah from myself and our volunteers nationwide.

This year has been filled with many ups and downs, but the two biggest events in my opinion this year was the win for Blue Water Navy, and

the axing of the Widow Tax!

Now many Veterans who have been fighting so hard for so long, many sick and dying can now get the long needed, well earned and deserved benefits and medical care.

As many Widows will now be able to look forward to a bump in benefits by at minimum \$330.00 per month which I'm more than sure will be a welcome increase as many widows have had to change their lifestyle drastically as they couldn't afford many of the things like mortgage payments, etc.. We're so glad for you as well!

We still have a long road to travel and many of the items along the road are all the pieces of legislation listed in the "Take Action" section of the newsletter.

We have till maybe October 2020 to push and push hard to get them all to the floor, voted on and passed, then forwarded on to the Senate for passage and off to the Presidents desk for his signature.

I know how repetitive I've been on these issues, but without your help the fight will end up being over for many of the pieces of legislation as they will all die in committee, never seeing the floor, never being voted on, and never signed into law.

So I ask, please reconsider taking action today!

I'd also like to ask one more thing before I close this piece before we all begin to celebrate Christmas.

Most of you know what the missing man table is, many of you don't, but I would like ask all of you to set a missing man table for your Christmas Dinner. For those who don't know the meaning of the Missing Man Table, click [here](#) and read more.

As a reminder I was asked a few weeks ago to write a piece to be included in a publication, however due to personal health issues, changing hosting systems, etc. there simply wasn't enough time to manage that task. But I do want to move forward as there will be other publications in the future that I'd like for VFC to participate in which could help many.

The areas of interest are as follows:

- Military sexual trauma
- Anger, Social support in U.S. Veterans
- Suicide prevention in the military
- Psychometric evaluation of the Military Suicide Attitudes
- Impact of different types of trauma on suicidality in women veterans
- Suicide ideation to avoid action among psychiatrically hospitalized military personnel
- Depression and PTSD, trauma, overdose
- Prevention by Pastoral Counseling and mental health treatment.
- Confessions of a Soldier etc.

If you're interested in contributing, have a personal story to share I'd really like to hear from you, and should you decide to share please also let me know if you'd like to remain confidential so I can and will respect your wishes!

Any and all assistance would be greatly appreciated.

On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and

myself, we wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



Blue Water Navy and the VA

When: February 1, 2020

Where: Marriott Tampa Westshore

1001 N. Westshore Blvd,

Tampa Florida 33607

Hotel: Military-Veterans Advocacy has arranged for guest rooms at \$135 per night at the Marriott Tampa Westshore. Price does not include hospitality or other taxes. First come first served.

Cost: Attorneys - \$150.00

MVA: Members - \$35.00

Others: - \$75.00

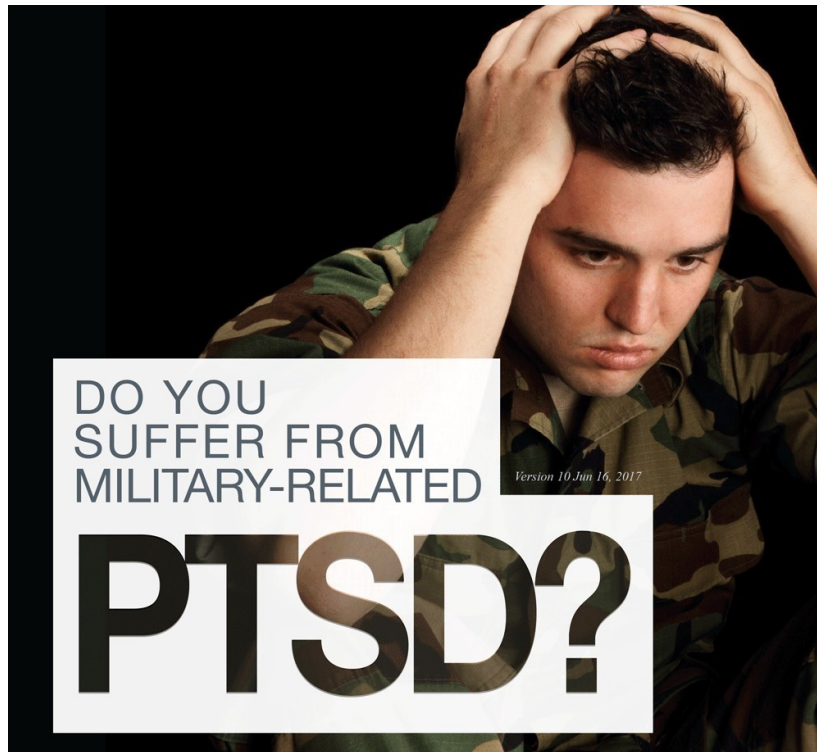
MVA has requested 3.0 hours of Continuing Legal Education credit from the State of Louisiana. For more information please contact John Wells, Director of Litigation at 985-641-1855 or John.Wells@mvadvocacy.org. To register go to <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/reception.html>



Sneezings Greetings? Call MHS Nurse Advice Line

During the holidays, you expect delicious meals and family gatherings. You don't expect to get ill or injured. Whether you sprain your ankle on a ski trip, have a stomach concern, or awake to your child's cold-like symptoms in the middle of the night, TRICARE resources can help. One resource is the Military Health System (MHS) Nurse Advice Line—available 24/7 and at no cost.

To learn more, [read the full article](#).



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



**VFW Hosts Wounded Warriors
Dinner**

Last Friday, the VFW hosted 60 wounded warriors, their families and caregivers and staff from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at The Capitol Hill Club for the yearly Aleethia Foundation's Friday Night Dinner. The VFW-hosted event gives VFW members an opportunity to connect with service members and help the healing process of service members who are receiving treatment at Walter Reed. "This is an event that I truly look forward to and cannot miss," said VFW Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence. "The bonds built – the conversations shared – nothing beats the feeling you receive when you dine with these patriots and their families." [Read more.](#)



Veterans-For-Change Web Site

The Veterans-For-Change website has been around since 2009. 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 **3,246** hits per day, and downloads average **5,703** per day with a total **5,646,321** 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 **18,126** documents in 149+ Libraries, added **55** documents on-line (Updated: **12/19/19**)
- FAQ's on-line with **1,790** FAQ's on 101 topics! (Updated 08/29/19 - 128 NEW)
- 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: **9,259**)
 - Polls
 - Web Links, more than **5,741**, Added **124** New Links (Updated: **12/16/19**)

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



Here's the Guest Policy for Newly Eligible Commissary and Exchange Shoppers

Veterans and caregivers with new commissary and exchange access next year can bring a guest while shopping, a Department of Defense spokeswoman confirmed last week in an email. While base entry for the newly eligible veterans on Jan. 1 is limited to those with a Department of Veterans' health insurance identification card or to caregivers with a VA letter, guests will be able to accompany them on base as long as they have official identification. Read more [here](#).



Below are links to all currently active pre-written E-Mails to many pieces of legislation. We ask that you go to each one, and send the pre-written E-Mails, and to also call your Reps or Senators and ask for their support on a weekly basis!

You don't need to be Active Duty or a Veteran, in fact we ask all Veteran friends to also help!

1. Allow Active Duty to Sue Military for Medical Malpractice (H.R. 2422)
2. H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act
3. H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act
4. H.R. 2359, the Whole Veteran Act
5. S. 514, the Deborah Sampson Act to Improve VA Services for Women Veterans
6. H.R. 445, Help Hire Our Heroes Act
7. S. 2022, Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019
8. H.R. 96, to Provide Dental Care for All Veterans Enrolled in Veterans Health Care
9. S. 555 and H.R. 1377, Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act
10. H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act
11. S. 179/H.R. 712, Legislation Calling for Clinical Trials to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Medical Cannabis for Chronic Pain and PTSD
12. S. 980, the Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2019
13. H.R. 2201, Include Military Installations in Thailand as exposed to Agent Orange
14. H.R. 444, Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All Ages Act of 2019

15. S. 2216, Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act
16. H.R. 2200, the Keeping Our Promises Act
17. H.R. 553, Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act
18. Senate Bill Introduced to Protect Active Duty from Medical Malpractice
19. H.R. 1182, Veterans' Access to Acupuncture Services
20. S. 374/H.R. 1092, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019
21. H.R. 2568, the Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act
22. Urge Congress to Pass the Retired Pay Restoration Act
23. Protect Bankrupt Disabled Veterans from Losing Benefits
24. S. 318, the VA Newborn Emergency Treatment Act
25. S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act
26. H.R. 713, Provide Beneficiary Travel Funds to Veterans Seeking Specialized Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma
27. Urgent Action Needed to End "Widow's Tax"

28. S. 154, VA CLEAR Act of 2019
29. H.R. 663/S. 191, Burn Pits Accountability Act
30. S. 1392, the Support for Suicide Prevention Coordinators Act
31. S. 1881 and H.R. 3356, Veterans Expedited TSA Screening Safe Travel Act
32. H.R. 1963, Expanding Care for Veterans Act
33. NDAA and Spending Bills
34. H.R. 4137, Healthcare for Open Air Burn Pit Exposure Act
35. H.R. 2982, Women Veterans Health Care Accountability Act
36. H.R. 4451, Support Our Services (SOS) to Veterans Caregivers Act
37. H.R. 3036, Breaking Barriers for Women Veterans Act
38. S. 2950, the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2019
39. H.R. 2200, Keeping Our Promises Act
40. HR 5028, Protect Individual Unemployability for Disabled Veterans



**These Are Your 2020 Retiree and
Survivor Pay Dates**

Pentagon officials have released a schedule of retiree and annuitant pay dates for 2020. This information may help to avoid any confusion as to when you should expect to see the payment deposited to your account. Read more [here](#).



Congress Passes NDAA Conference Agreement

This week Congress passed the finalized version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (NDAA). The Conference Report includes a 3.1 percent pay raise for troops and improving occupational license portability for relocated military spouses. Other important VFW-supported provisions include expanding Arlington National Cemetery, granting full military honors for Medal of Honor and Prisoner-of-War Medal recipients, directing DOD to conduct post-deployment medical assessments for burn pits, toxic airborne chemicals, and other airborne contaminants, and incorporating blast exposure history into service members' medical records. The bill now goes to the president's desk, who has indicated he will sign it. [Read the summary of the bill.](#)



~ Follow us on MEWE ~

Follow us on MEWE! The support staff at MEWE is responsive, open to suggestions and works very hard to protect your personal information.

We hope you will join us on this new site.

VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

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

AMVETS GROUP

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

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

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY





Links to Other Stories

1. [Tricare Costs Changing in 2020](#)
2. [Buttigieg lands backing of an influential progressive Veterans group](#)
3. [VA inspires communities to support hospitalized Veterans throughout the holidays](#)
4. [VA launches Solid Start to ensure Veterans are contacted during initial transition](#)
5. [Most Americans think US military should 'defend freedom abroad,' survey says](#)
6. [VA Prepping for Go-Live of Health Records System in March](#)

7. Veterans Targeted in Benefits Scams
8. Essential Guide to Acid Attacks
9. Veterans Homes of California-Ventura will Fete Decade of Serving Veterans, Spouses
10. Gaining insight into Parkinson's disease
11. Veterans need VHIC for in-person Commissary, Military Exchange, MWR access
12. K9s for Warriors provides service dogs for Post-9/11 Veterans
13. VA MISSION Act: Answers to questions about VA's urgent care benefit
14. Veterans Compensation Benefits Rate Tables - Effective 12/1/19
15. Veterans are sick and dying': Group looks for way to help Vets with Agent Orange exposure
16. 2020 VA Disability Payment Schedule
17. Tricare Contractor Pledges Help in Wake of Massive Billing Glitch
18. How to file a VA disability claim
19. Can I Donate Blood

Check us out today: www.Veterans-for-change.org



Search Jobs at SEL - It's Not Just a Job, It's a Future

Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories is hiring veterans. Explore how your MOS can get you ahead and get hired. [Search jobs now.](#)



Congress Axed the Widow's Tax

On Tuesday, the Senate joined the House in voting to pass the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, which included the elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset. The VFW would like to thank Congress and all the individual advocates who joined the Axe the Widow's Tax movement and worked vigorously to terminate the unjust Survivors Benefits Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset.



'Widow's Tax' to Be Eliminated by 2023 in Proposed Defense Budget

The final version of the fiscal 2020 defense budget would phase out the so-called "widow's tax" over three years if passed. For decades, military families have tried to change a policy that has kept about 65,000 surviving military spouses nationwide from receiving their full survivor benefits. The National Defense Authorization Act proposal would eliminate, over the course of three years, a system by which survivor compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs is deducted from annuities provided by the Defense Department-funded Survivor Benefit Plan. Read more [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



VA National Cemeteries & National Cemetery Scheduling Office: Open on December 24th

On December 17, 2019, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order on “Providing for the Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on December 24, 2019.” While many federal government offices will be closed, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries and the National Cemetery Scheduling Office will conduct burial and committal services on that day.

VA’s National Cemetery Scheduling Office and the national cemeteries will schedule services for December 24th through the close of business (6:30 PM Central Time) on Friday, December 20th. After December 20th, no further services will be added to the scheduled for December 24th. Cemetery staffing on December 24th will be limited to supporting scheduled services and may vary by cemetery. However, all VA national cemeteries will remain open for visitation.

Veterans, their family members and funeral homes can schedule burial and committal services at VA national cemeteries by calling toll free 1-800-535-1117 and faxing supporting documentation to 1-866-900-6417.



Congress Strikes Budget Deal, Avoids Shutdown

This week, Congress reached an agreement to fund the federal government for Fiscal Year 2020. [H.R. 1865](#), which passed the House on Tuesday and the Senate on Thursday, is a bipartisan agreement that provides \$91.9 billion in discretionary funding for VA. It would provide \$153.6 million for VA for implementation of the VFW-championed Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, increase VA medical care funding to implement the VFW-supported VA MISSION Act of 2018, fund additional oversight and management of privatized housing contractors, and support disaster relief efforts in response to recent natural disasters. H.R. 1865 would also eliminate the Kiddie Tax, which would reduce the tax burden on surviving children of service members, first responders, and Native Americans. [H.R. 1158](#), which also passed the House and Senate this week, appropriates funds for a 3.1 percent pay increase for service members. If signed by the president, the two bills would avoid a government shutdown that was set to begin on Nov. 20, 2019. [Read more.](#)





Listen to New TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin Podcast #532

Listen to this latest podcast to hear about:

- TRICARE expanding breast cancer screening options
- Reporting TRICARE fraud
- Making enrollment changes outside of TRICARE Open Season

Visit the [Multimedia Center](#) for this podcast and previous podcasts.



The VA Extends Benefits to Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Jan. 1st

The Department of Veterans Affairs begins deciding Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 claims, Jan. 1, 2020. This extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, that includes toxins such as Agent Orange, for Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. This change was required by FRA-supported legislation, and federal court mandate (*Procopio v. Wilkie*). Prior to these measures, only Vietnam War Veterans who served on the ground or within Vietnam's inland waterways were eligible to receive disability compensation and other benefits based on a presumption of herbicide exposure.

Signed into law June 25, the law specifically affects Blue Water Navy Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles offshore of Vietnam between Jan. 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975. The law also applies to veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Jan. 1, 1967 and Aug. 31, 1971. These veterans can apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed one of 14 conditions that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange. Veterans no

longer need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides. The specific conditions can be found by searching for "Agent Orange" [online](#).

Survivors of veterans can file claims for benefits, based on the veteran's service, if the veteran died from at least one of the presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida, if their parent is or was a veteran with certain verified service in Thailand during a specific period. The Blue Water Navy Act also includes provisions affecting the VA Home Loan Program. The law creates more access for veterans to obtain no-down-payment home loans, regardless of the loan amount. Also, the home loan funding fee is reduced for eligible Reservists and National Guard first-time borrowers who use their home loan benefit. Certain Purple Heart recipients do not pay any funding fee. The VA's website describes these and other benefits.

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for an herbicide-related disability can use VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits or work with

a VA-recognized Veterans Service Organization to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their state Veterans Affairs Office.

BWN veterans who previously filed a claim seeking service connection for one of the 14 presumptive conditions that was denied by VA, may provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding their claim when reapplying. To re-apply, veterans may use VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. As a result of the new law, the VA will automatically review claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal.



How, When, and Where to Get Care During the Holidays With TRICARE

Decked your halls with injury and folly? With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it's easy to get distracted and experience a mishap. Whether you burn your finger frying latkes or crash your toboggan, your TRICARE health plan rules may be hard to recall if you need care over the holidays. Do your best to stay safe this holiday season. But just in case, refresh your knowledge now on how you can get the emergency or nonemergency help you need, whenever you need it.

To learn more, [read the full article](#).



Legislation Introduced to Expand the Veterans Legacy Program

Last Thursday, Senator Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) introduced VFW-supported S. 3058, a bipartisan bill to establish a grant program to conduct cemetery research and produce educational materials for [the Veterans Legacy Program](#) (VLP). Under the current

program, the VLP awards contracts to universities, colleges, and institutions to develop educational programs to teach students and others about the veterans interred in national, state, or tribal cemeteries in their communities. Transitioning to a grant-based program would broaden the reach of the VLP beyond large universities to smaller groups that wish to engage with VA in memorializing veterans. “Perpetuating the memory and history of our dead is one of the VFW’s founding principles,” said VFW National Legislative Service Director Carlos Fuentes. “The Veterans Legacy Program ensures the memories and stories of the brave men and women who have worn our nation’s uniform are preserved in perpetuity.” The VFW thanks Sen. Tester and Sen. Rounds for their support of this important program that promotes civic engagement and fosters respect for service and sacrifice. [Learn more.](#)





**Defense Budget Would Allow
Pentagon to Pay Military Medical
Malpractice Claims**

Military families and service members won a partial victory Monday night over the "Feres Doctrine" when a proposal that would allow the Defense Department to review claims and pay compensation for military medical malpractice made it into the final version of the 2020 defense budget bill. Service members and families would still be barred from suing for military medical malpractice in federal courts by the doctrine, named for a 1950 Supreme Court case, but the secretary of Defense could permit review of claims for redress. Read more [here](#).



Three-Digit Suicide Prevention Number Approved

The Federal Communications Commission has been approved to move ahead with a new three-digit phone number, 988, that will connect callers with the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. A report released this year, showed that creating a three-digit number, similar to 911, would improve access for people in crisis. Once 988 is working, calls to 988 will be routed to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, where veterans can already call 1.800.273.TALK, and press 1 for specialized support. [Read more.](#)



Congress Has Released Its \$738 Billion Defense Budget. Here's What's Inside

House and Senate negotiators have reached a deal on a defense policy bill aimed at avoiding a government shutdown, creating a Space Force, and getting rid of the so-called "widow's tax" that has been a main goal of military families for years. A conference version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal 2020, released late Dec. 9, preserves a 3.1% pay raise for the military. The \$738 billion bill, which includes an additional \$5.3 billion earmarked for emergency disaster recovery, charts out a three-year "phased repeal" of the policy that requires VA payments to survivors of fallen troops to be deducted from Defense Department survivor payments. Read more [here](#).





Veterans Can Attend Their VA Claims Hearings at Home Starting Next Year

Veterans who appeal a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decision on their benefits claim will soon be able to make their appearance before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) from the comfort of their home. Beginning in 2020, VA will implement virtual claims appeals through the same technology they use for virtual medical appointments. The technology has been tested more than 150 times and works on both computers and cellphones. Read more [here](#).



National Guard Border Duty to Count Toward GI Bill Benefits

Last week, Defense Secretary Mark Esper signed a memorandum stating that the National Guard troops who are stationed at the U.S. border will have their time there counted toward their GI Bill benefit. Currently National Guardsmen need 90 days of active-duty time to qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill at forty percent of the full benefit, and they need three years of active-duty time to qualify for the full 36-month benefit. [Read the memo.](#)

GI Bill Improvements Pass House

Two legislative proposals that would improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill and set an end date for the Montgomery GI Bill recently passed the House. The Protect the GI Bill Act (H.R.4625), sponsored by Rep. Mike Levin (Calif.), ensures that schools receiving GI Bill funding inform prospective students of the cost of attendance, how much their benefits cover, student outcomes, and more. The bill empowers State Approving Agencies (SAAs) to flag or suspend new enrollments to schools that violate these requirements. The bill also contains several other protections, including a ban on schools misrepresenting themselves while marketing, recruiting and enrolling students.

Further, the GI Bill Planning Act (H.R.4162), sponsored by Rep. Jack Bergman (Mich.), gives new enlistees six months rather than just two weeks, to decide to pay \$1200 or opt-out of their Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefit. It also ends with new enlistee enrollments in the outdated MGIB by October 2029. Both bills were approved by voice vote and have been sent to the Senate for further consideration.





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Walmart Partners with VA on Telehealth Project

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Walmart have partnered to open a telehealth center in Asheboro, North Carolina. The partnership is a further expansion of the VA's Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations (ATLAS) project, which seeks to expand telehealth and provide better health care options to more than five million veterans living in rural areas. These veterans often must drive long distances to access VA care, and other telehealth options may not be available to them. Read more [here](#).





The End of the Survivor's SBP/DIC Offset

On Tuesday, December 17, the United States Senate passed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) with a vote of 86-8. This measure contains a provision that will completely eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset by January 2023. The bill now goes to the White House where the President is expected to sign it into law.

Currently, purchased SBP annuities are offset by the amount of any benefit payable under the VA DIC program. SBP is not a government gratuity benefit; rather, it is a type of insurance purchased

out-of-pocket by military retirees for their survivors while DIC is a VA benefit intended to provide spouses of veterans who died from a service connected condition some semblance of financial security.

Upon the retiree's death, the SBP annuity is paid monthly to eligible beneficiaries; however, if a surviving spouse is also entitled to DIC, the SBP benefit is reduced by the amount of the DIC benefit. When DIC benefits are payable but the monthly rate is equal to, or greater than, the monthly SBP payment amount, beneficiaries lose the entire SBP payment. Thousands of survivors of military retirees are adversely affected by this unfair offset between SBP and DIC benefits.

The bill will remove the offset incrementally by one-third in January 2021, a second third in January 2022, and the final third in January 2023, thereby allowing surviving spouses to receive both the purchased SBP annuities and their earned DIC benefits. The law will not be retroactive- therefore, recoupment of offsets from previous years will not be provided.

DAV has worked for years to achieve this outcome, which is in accordance with a long-standing DAV Resolution (No. 010), calling for Congress to repeal the unfair offset between SBP annuities and DIC payments.

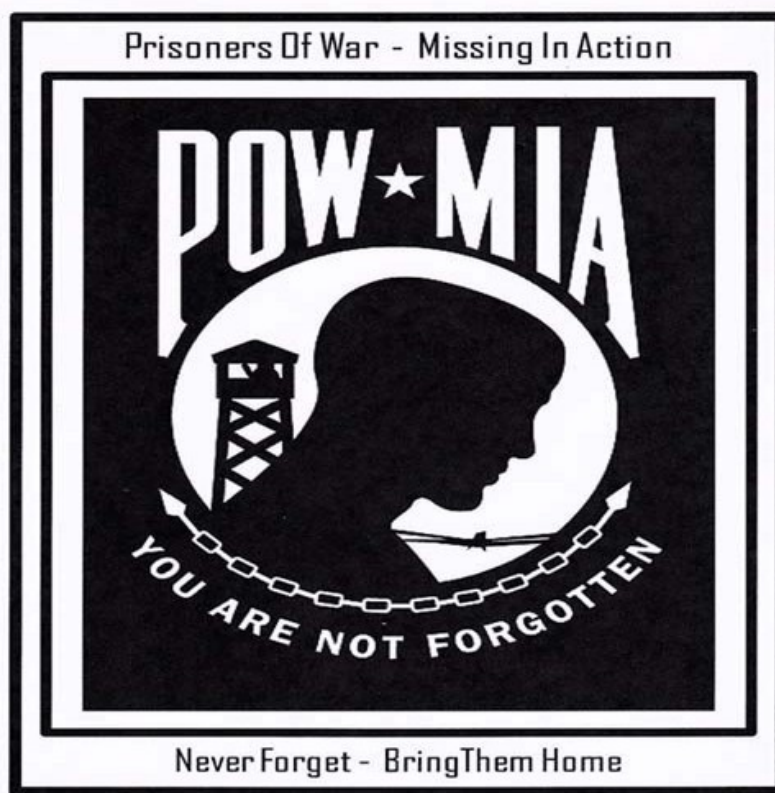
We are extremely pleased that Congress has finally passed legislation that will remove this unjust offset and we look forward to the President signing this provision into law. Thanks to your persistence and strong advocacy efforts over the years the unfair practice of SBP/DIC offsets will finally be abolished!

We greatly appreciate your continued dedication and support of America's disabled veterans, their families and survivors.



VA Opens Gambling Addiction Center in Sin City

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced the opening of their Las Vegas Residential Recovery and Renewal Center, which is designed to treat substance abuse and gambling addictions among veterans. The facility has 20 beds, with five of those in a separate wing just for female vets. It's only the second residential gambling addiction recovery center in the nation. Read more [here](#).



'Millions' Stolen in Decade-Long Buying Fraud at Florida VA Hospitals, Officials Say

At least 15 [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) employees and vendors in Florida were engaged in an "elaborate" fraud scheme that cost the government "millions" since 2009, two government agencies announced in a joint press conference Dec. 11. Declining to give the exact amount allegedly stolen or say what tipped them off, the U.S. Attorney General for the Southern District of Florida and the Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General said people affiliated with the Miami and West Palm Beach VA clinics were charged and arrested on charges including conspiracy to commit health care fraud, committing health care fraud and bribery. Read more [here](#).



Office of Inspector General

1. Mental Health and Substance Use: State and Federal Oversight of Compliance with Parity Requirements Varies
2. Tax Administration: Taxpayer Input Could Strengthen IRS's Online Services
3. Homeland Security Acquisitions: Outcomes Have Improved but Actions Needed to Enhance Oversight of Schedule Goals
4. Community Services Block Grant: Better Alignment of Outcome Measures with Program Goals Could Help Assess National Effectiveness



Here's What the Guard and Reserve Gets in the 2020 Defense Spending Bill

Reservists and National Guard members could soon see expanded access to Tricare for some troops, the return of some benefits after certain deployments and help for students through an annual defense spending deal brokered on Capitol Hill this month. Like active-duty troops, reservists and members of the National Guard have access to benefits set by federal law. But because most split their time between military and civilian jobs, their benefit changes have less visibility in the National Defense Authorization Act. Read more [here](#).



Military Surveys to Weed Out Bad Moving Companies Went Unsent for 6 Months

Military officials rely on experience surveys to keep bad military movers from getting repeat government business. But those surveys were not sent on time to any troops who moved over this year's peak moving season, thanks to a system glitch that went unnoticed for over six months. The survey, which is supposed to be sent by email to the service member seven days after a move is completed, is used by U.S. Transportation Command (Transcom) to rank movers' quality and determine the priority at which they are assigned future move contracts. Movers who receive very low rankings may be blocked from receiving any more Pentagon contracts. Troops are also supposed to receive survey reminder emails 14 and 30 days after the move. Read more [here](#).



Tax & Credit Information



1. Treasury, IRS issue final regulations on new international provision, the base erosion and anti-

abuse tax

2. Treasury, IRS issue final regulations on the Foreign Tax Credit
3. Cyber Monday shopping list should include safeguards against online thieves
4. National Tax Security Awareness Week begins; IRS and Security Summit partner offer Cyber Monday shopping tips to protect computers, mobile phones
5. Should You Consider Renting Before Buying In An Adult Community?
6. IRS Criminal Investigation releases Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report; celebrates 100 years
7. National Tax Security Awareness Week, Day 4: IRS, Security Summit warns business owners about being targets for identity thieves
8. Adults can pass on these tips to teach teens online safety
9. Jan. 31 filing deadline remains for employer wage statements, independent contractor forms
10. National Tax Security Awareness Week, Day 3: Creating strong passwords can protect taxpayers from identity theft
11. Here's how taxpayers can avoid the hooks of phishing scams
12. Get ready to take the guesswork out of

paycheck withholding

13. Interest rates remain the same for the first quarter of 2020
14. National Tax Security Awareness Week, Day 5: Tax professionals need data protection plans; must guard against identity theft
15. National Tax Security Awareness Week, Day 2: Don't take the bait: Recognize, avoid phishing scams from identity thieves
16. Using strong password is a strong defense against identity thieves
17. Get ready for taxes: Here's what to know about the amount of a tax refund
18. IRS and TTB formalize process to support processing of claims made to the IRS Whistleblower Office
19. Here's what tax preparers need to know about a data security plan
20. IRS selects new advisory council members for 2020
21. Get ready for taxes: Here's what to know about getting a tax refund
22. IRS: Recent legislation requires tax exempt organizations to e-file forms
23. Here's how people can volunteer to help other taxpayers in their communities

24. Get ready for taxes: What to do before the tax year ends Dec. 31
25. Small business owners should use the correct form to pay employment taxes
26. New downloadable assistant helps small businesses withhold the right amount of income tax
27. IRS, Treasury issue proposed regulations on compensation deductions for publicly held corporations
28. New publications help taxpayers get ready and stay ready for tax filing season
29. IRS: Make a tax payment now, avoid a tax-time surprise
30. IRS seeks applications for the Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee for 2020



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Navy Announces Blue Angels Show Schedule for 2021

The Navy announced where fans can see the Blue Angels perform in 2021 this week.

Performances in 2020 include a total of 55 demonstrations at 29 locations, and 2021 will bring 56 demonstrations at 29 locations.

Highlights include a performance over Memorial Day at the U. S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; an Independence Day performance in Kansas City, Missouri; and an August show in Ontario, Canada. [Read more at Navy.mil.](#)





The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced three new identifications, and three burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from WWII and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. George M. Johnson, 23, was a member of the 38th Bombardment Squadron, 30th Bombardment Group, stationed at Hawkins Field, Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands, when the B-24J bomber aircraft he was co-piloting crashed into Tarawa lagoon shortly after takeoff. Johnson and the nine other servicemen aboard the aircraft were killed. Interment services are pending. [Read about Johnson.](#)

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Lowell S. Twedt, 27,

Twedt was a pilot assigned to the 71st Fighter Squadron, 1st Fighter Group. On Oct. 20, 1944, he piloted a P-38J “Lightning” aircraft as part of an escort for a B-17 “Flying Fortress” bombing mission targeting oil storage tanks in Regensburg, Germany. The mission encountered enemy anti-aircraft fire around Bolzano, Italy. Three P-38Js, including Twedt’s, went down as a result. An eyewitness account saw Twedt’s aircraft falling to the ground in flames, and did not see him eject. Twedt’s remains were never recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Twedt.](#)

Army Sgt. John V. Phillips, 25, was a member of Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942. Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Phillips was among those reported captured after the surrender of Corregidor and held at the Cabanatuan POW camp. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war. Interment services are pending. [Read about Phillips.](#)

Army Cpl. Jackey D. Blosser, 21, of Randolph County, West Virginia, was a member of Dog Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action Dec. 2, 1950, in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Blosser will be buried April 24, 2020, in Grafton, West Virginia. [Read about Blosser.](#)

Army Sgt. Maximiano T. Lacsamana, 37, of Macabebe, Pampanga, Philippines, a veteran of the Philippine Scouts during World War II, was a member of Company I, 3rd Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in intense fighting with the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces near Hagaruri, North Korea. He was reported missing in action Dec. 3, 1950. Lacsamana will be buried in the spring of 2020 in the Philippines. The exact date and location have yet to be determined. [Read about Lacsamana.](#)

Army Cpl. Jerome V. Hummel, 23, of St. Louis, Missouri, was a member of Heavy Mortar

Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action Nov. 30, 1950, in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces. Hummel will be buried May 7, 2020, in his hometown. [Read about Hummel.](#)



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