



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, February 16, 2020

Volume 11, Issue 07



This-N-That

There are a few things currently going on that have me more than just a little aggravated with the VA Healthcare System, but what has come to the forefront are the increase in Veteran Suicides in the parking lots of VA Medical Centers across the country, and the VA is "shocked!"

When you have a Veteran crying out for help, landing on the VA Medical Centers Emergency Room, they face rejection by uncaring, non-compassionate licensed healthcare professionals who took an oak,

and part of that oath is "first, do no harm!"

Rejecting a Veteran in need, begging for help is certainly DOING HARM!

Just because they've not strictly adhered to the "procedures" of filing a claim with the VA, getting approved there should be a simple work around for this!

In my eyes, that work around is giving them the help they need, connecting them with an advocate who can complete the necessary paperwork and helping to push it through to get approved all the while giving the proper and much needed medical care and mental health attention they desperately need!

But no, they can't bend the rules one bit, pretty much kicking the Veteran crying for help to the curb and frankly not giving a damn that they just might go out to the parking lot and blow their brains out or do something else causing their death.

Seriously, how many more lives will it cost until Secretary Wilkie imposes changes to wake up his medical staff to address this problem quickly, efficiently, effectively and prevent another loss of life?

In my eyes Wilkie and his entire licensed medical staff

have blood on their hands! A lot of blood on their hands! And they just don't seem to care one ounce!

Then we have Veterans who are accustomed to going on base for medical care being forced off base to private care providers.

If it's a matter of insufficient staff, then isn't that a clue to hire more? Especially when they're claiming to be cutting costs, well sending to private providers is actually increasing costs as most private care providers negotiate fees and there simply is no way that anyone can convince me they're saving money as private care providers have to pay property taxes, higher wages, higher insurance premiums, higher supply costs, it goes on and on.

Again this move makes absolutely no sense at all, but hey, who cares, you're just a Veteran who wrote a check to the United States Government for an amount up to and including your life, so why should they care?

President Trump signed a budget which gets the VA an increase of \$22.6 billion dollars with a chunk of that going to cover wages and salaries for licensed medical staff, and with a projected increase of 33,000 plus Veterans enrolling into the VA Healthcare System.

Of that \$22.6 billion Blue Water Veteran Claims have a

budget of only \$137 million which to me knowing what all has been going on, the number of BWN Veterans out there tells me we headed for an onslaught of claim denials all due to a limited budget.

I could be wrong, but I think it's the VA's Modus operandi to deny claims based on amount of budgeted money available. Otherwise why would so many claims be denied, and some repeatedly denied, other than the illness isn't covered?

I would still like to hear Veterans stories on the following:

- Claim Denials (any reason)
- MST (Military Sexual Trauma)
- Service at local VAMC (Good, bad and ugly)
- Specific

Illness
denied
based
on
coverage

If you choose to tell me your story, any contact or identifying information will be redacted and protected.

Your stories are needed to attention to various problems, comments on service, can be addressed with Congress in the hopes we can all work together to make change!

Our web master has been working on the site for a couple of weeks now, seems we had some upgrades in the backside which would not be noticeable to you, but it did affect operation of the site and most if not all of those have been corrected.

Two items have been corrected or changed one I did test last night and it does have a hiccup and is being worked on, that's the "Contact Us" page. And I anticipate this will be in working order with a few days.

Polls have been upgraded and repaired, but I've not had a chance to test as of yet, the old polls are there now and in full color and they can be viewed. Some will be reactivated, old polls not needed will be removed and some new ones added, so do check that

from time to time, you will be able to see the difference.

If you subscribe, you will receive an authentication E-Mail with a link which will finalize your subscription, this is a security measure, so if it doesn't come into your IN box with a couple of minutes, please be sure to look in your spam or junk folder for it. It is time sensitive.

Should you not authenticate, don't worry, I do check every couple of days and I manually approve accounts and will send you a "Welcome E-Mail."

Remember as of 03/01/20 some libraries will be restricted to subscribers only, and the downloads will be stream lined as well.

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



**Join Feb. 27 TRICARE Webinar on
TRICARE For Life**

Do you have questions about TRICARE For Life (TFL)? Not sure if you're eligible for TFL, or how TFL coverage works? Join the "What is TRICARE For Life?" webinar on Feb. 27, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET to get your TFL questions answered. The webinar will discuss TFL eligibility, when to sign up for Medicare, how to get care, and much more.

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



Links to Other Stories

1. [Marine Veteran who died after battle with brain cancer celebrated with Honor Walk in Dallas](#)
2. ["Life](#)

is
rough
—
especially
in
the
cold,”
homeless
Veteran
grateful
for
Salvation
Army

3. House
passes
bill
to
allow
VA
to
fund
service
dogs
for
Veterans
with
PTSD

4. A
powerful
new
Air
Force
video

pays
tribute
to
Brig.
Gen.
Charles
McGee
and
the
Tuskegee
Airmen

5. Woman
pleads
guilty
to
defrauding
VA
out
of
nearly
\$1.8
million
in
Veteran
benefits

6. Veterans
Healing
Veterans
scholarship
provides
medical
education
for

Veterans

7. Army Finalizes Incentive Plan for Companies to Fix Base Housing Problems
8. VA Secretary Looked for Dirt on a House Staffer Who Reported Sexual Assault in a VA Hospital, Complaint Says
9. Doris Miller:

What
to
know
about
the
African
American
Pearl
Harbor
hero
honored
by
US
Navy

10. VA
benefits
for
spouses,
dependents,
survivors,
and
family
caregivers

11. Veterans
May
Qualify
for
Fringe
Benefits

12. VA
MISSION
Act
Making

A
Difference
for
Veterans

13. Combat
Veteran
uses
Float
therapy
to
treat
PTSD
14. Veteran
claims
he
was
kicked
out
of
McDonald's
for
wearing
blade
around
his
neck
15. VA
leader
must
demonstrate
commitment
to
ending

harassment

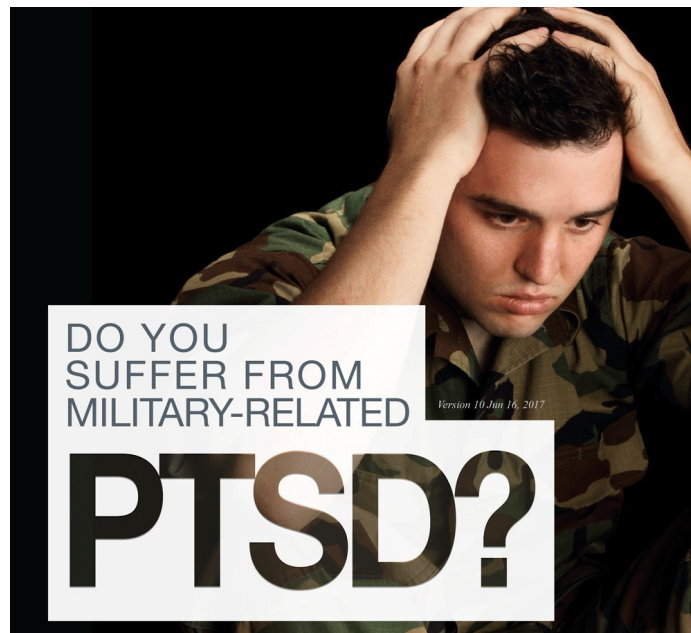
16. Veteran
suicide
rates
remain
alarming
high
despite
years
of
reform

17. \$1B
in
technical
debt
driving
VA's
massive
IT
modernization
efforts

18. Here's
why
some
bases
aren't
allowing
spouses
to
accompany
their
newly
eligible

Veteran
to
shop
19. How
VA
TBI
Ratings
Are
Evaluated
for
Compensation

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



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



TRICARE Dental Coverage Options Keep Your Smile Healthy

Let's kickoff National Children's Dental Health Month by looking at how you can keep your and your family's smile healthy with TRICARE dental options. If you're new to TRICARE dental or need a refresher, there are three dental options. These options are separate from TRICARE health care options.

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



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, whatever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with for Mental Health and are currently seeking a new Licensed Mental Health Worker, where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average **3,839** hits per day, and downloads average **7,005** per day with a total **5,859,399** 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 **18,475** documents in 171+ Libraries, added 51 documents on-line (Updated: 02/03/20)
- 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: **9,441**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **6,903**, Added 198 New Links (Updated: 01/31/20)

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



**CaVet to Assist Veterans with Pathway
to Citizenship**

1. **WHO:**

The
California
Department
of
Veterans
Affairs
(CalVet)
with
community
partner
California
Human
Development
and
the
Modesto
Library.

2. **WHAT:**

Veterans
of
the
U.S.
Armed
Forces
may
be
eligible
for
expedited
citizenship
due

to
their
military
service.
This
event
will
assist
each
veteran
and
their
family
members
individually
with
the
process
of
citizenship
or
naturalization.

3. **WHEN:**
Thursday,
February
13,
2020,
10
a.m.
—
1
p.m.
4. **WHERE:**

Modesto
Library,
1500
I
Street,
Modesto,
CA
95240

5. **EVENT:**
CalVet
has
partnered
with
the
non-
profit
California
Human
Development
and
the
Modesto
Library
to
provide
legal
assistance
and
instruction
to
veterans
seeking
citizenship

and/or
naturalization
services.
Veterans
will
also
have
the
opportunity
to
learn
about
additional
state
and
federal
benefits
they
have
earned
through
their
military
service.

6. **BACKGROUND:**

In
2018,
CalVet's
Minority
Veterans
Affairs
launched
the

Pathway
to
Citizenship
program
in
partnership
with
the
Governor's
Office
and
community
immigration
services
throughout
California.

For more information, visit the Minority Veterans Affairs web page at <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/MinorityVets>.



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. Urge
Congress
to
Pass
the
Retired
Pay
Restoration
Act
3. Protect
Bankrupt
Disabled
Veterans
from
Losing
Benefits

4. S.
2966,
the
Rural
Veterans
Travel
Enhancement
Act
of
2019

5. S.
1003,
VET
OPP
Act
to
Reform
VA
Employment
Programs

6. H.R.
4574
-
Pass
the
Veterans'
Right
to
Breathe
Act
Now!

7. S.
2810,

the
Veterans
Hearing
Benefits
Act
of
2019

8. Support
H.R.4985,
the
Veterans
Residential
Care
Choice
Act



Special Extra Earnings for Military Service

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1940 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. Special extra earnings are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Social Security cannot add these extra credits to your record until you file for Social Security benefits. (Note: Special extra earnings are not granted for inactive duty training.)

How You Get Credit For Special Extra Earnings
The information that follows applies only to active duty military service earnings from 1940 through 2001. Here's how the special extra earnings are credited:

Service In 1978 through 2001

For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.

Service In 1957 Through 1977

You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

Service In 1940 Through 1956

If you were in the military during this period, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, your Social Security record may be credited with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940, through December 31, 1956, under the following

circumstances:

You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or You are still on active duty; or

You are applying for survivors benefits and the veteran died while on active duty.

You cannot receive credit for these special extra earnings if you are already receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service. There is one exception: If you were on active duty after 1956, you can still get the special earnings for 1951 through 1956, even if you're receiving a military retirement based on service during that period.

Source: Steve Burns



Some Retirees Have Already Been Pushed to Off-Base Providers in Tricare Shift

Military retirees receiving care on bases nationwide are being quietly shifted to off-base civilian providers in a transition that has been taking place since at least 2018, Military.com has learned. That's independent of

a plan outlined in a recently obtained memo that would close 38 treatment facilities to all but active-duty patients. Read more [here](#).



~~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](#)





What's at the Heart of TRICARE Coverage? Keeping Yours Healthy

It's the season for cupid, chocolates, and roses. Around Valentine's Day, people focus on pledging their hearts to loved ones. It's also an ideal time to pledge to take care of your heart health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in every four American deaths is due to heart disease. Fortunately, heart disease is often preventable. Making lifestyle changes and using your TRICARE benefit can help prevent heart disease and keep you healthy.

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



It's Official: Troops Get Another Big Pay Raise in 2021 Budget Request

The proposed military pay raise for fiscal 2021 in the Defense Department's budget request, released Monday, is 3%, the second-highest pay raise for troops since 2010. The 3% raise, following 2020's 3.1% bump, ensures that the troops will be "well compensated" and underlines DoD's recognition that military and civilian personnel "are our most valuable resource" in carrying out the 2018 National Defense Strategy to counter China and Russia, according to the Pentagon's budget overview. The total Pentagon budget request for fiscal 2021 totals \$705.4 billion, part of a defense spending package with a \$740 billion topline. Read more [here](#).





VA Gets Big Budget Boost, DoD Gets Small Increase

FRA Director of Legislative Programs John Davis and Assistant Director of Legislative Programs Theo Lawson attended the Department of Veterans Affairs budget briefing on the agency's proposed FY2021 budget. It includes a \$22.6 billion increase (10.2 percent) from the current budget. The proposed budget provides for 14,000 more employees, of which 7,000 are medical staff. The VA anticipates more than 33,000 veterans to enroll in VA healthcare.

The VA budget also provides for \$1.2 billion increase (\$485 million more than 2020) for the Caregiver program, which includes the expansion of the FRA supported program. The budget also includes \$137 million to support the processing of Blue Water Navy disability claims. Since the first week of January, the VA has received 14,000 BWN claims and has paid \$7.5 million in retroactive benefit payments to 218 veterans and their survivors. The VA expects a total of 70,000 BWN claims. The proposed budget provides \$2.6 billion to modernize the electronic health records (EHR). The process will provide a seamless transition to the VA for injured or wounded service members.

The DoD budget request for FY21 is consistent with

the bipartisan budget agreement Congress passed in 2019. The agency's resources are essentially unchanged from last year's amounts. To compensate, Secretary Esper and our military leaders are implementing reforms and repurposing resources from lower priority functions to programs essential to the National Defense Strategy. The DoD has again requested a 18,000-billet cut in military medical staff.



Veterans: Explore Career Opportunities at Hubbell Incorporated

Hubbell proudly hires those who serve. Hubbell values the experience and sacrifices made by military veterans and their families. We know that veterans bring valuable experience, leadership, work ethic, and dedication to our company. [View jobs.](#)



**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



VFW Commander Visits Tampa VA

On Thursday, VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz visited the [James A. Haley VA Hospital](#) to continue the important conversation about the significance of traumatic brain injury in our military. He met with several top medical professionals and observed hands-on treatment measures that our veterans and active duty Special Operators intensely experience at the facility. “VFW applauds the Tampa VA’s Polytrauma unit, during this visit I witnessed a remarkable level of professionalism and care provided to American’s veterans,” Schmitz said. His goal is to request more funding, research and personnel from Congress during his special joint hearing dedicated to this “hidden wound.”



Office of Inspector General

1. Defense
Health
Care:
Plans
Needed
to
Ensure
Implementation
of
Required
Elements
for
TRICARE's
Managed
Care
Support
Contracts
2. 340B
Drug
Discount
Program:
Oversight
of
the
Intersection
with
the
Medicaid
Drug
Rebate

Program
Needs
Improvement

3. Artificial
Intelligence
in
Health
Care:
Benefits
and
Challenges
of
Machine
Learning
in
Drug
Development
4. Drug
Development:
FDA's
Priority
Review
Voucher
Programs
5. Medicaid:
States'
Changes
to
Payment
Rates
for
Substance
Use

Disorder
Services

6. Opioid
Use
Disorder:
Barriers
to
Medicaid
Beneficiaries'
Access
to
Treatment
Medications



Death Certificates Required to Schedule Double Interments in National Cemeteries

The National Cemetery Scheduling Office (NCSO) requests the assistance of funeral homes to alleviate an on-going issue with the scheduling of double interments of Veterans with their spouses in VA national cemeteries.

NCA is required to verify the marital relationship between a Veteran and spouse at the time of death.[1] This is accomplished through review of the death certificate for the pre-deceased individual.

In order to comply with the requirement, we must ask you to provide the death certificate prior to calling to schedule a double interment. The NCSO will defer scheduling either interment until the pre-deceased death certificate can be verified.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter as we continue to look for ways to improve our service to Veterans and their family members.

[1] Title 38 Burial Eligibility authorities: 38 U.S.C. § 2402(a)(5), 38 CFR 38.620(e)

Thank you,

Jay Dalrymple

Director, National Cemetery Scheduling Office

St. Louis, MO



Report Recommends Some MTFs to Be Closed to Retirees

A delayed report to Congress, mandated by the FY2017 Defense Authorization Act, recommends that 36 Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) stop seeing retirees and their dependents. FRA Director of Legislative Programs John Davis and several other TMC members met with senior Defense Health Agency officials about the report's suggestion of rightsizing

MTF utilization. The report will go to Congress next week, and at that time the specific MTFs will be released. In the FY2017 NDAA, Congress mandated a rightsizing, realignment and restructuring of the direct care system. The DoD claims these changes are needed to ensure the DHA has focus on combat readiness of the military.



VFW Attends Bill Signing Ceremony

On Tuesday, the VFW attended the White House's official [signing ceremony](#) for the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act. On hand for the signing was VFW's Executive Director B.J. Lawrence. The VFW-supported proposal assists military veterans pursuing careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematical fields. STEM degrees are the 2nd most sought after degree field for student veterans, and high proficiency in STEM fields is important for our nation's

prosperity. “We thank the president for signing this important bill which will enable America’s veterans to succeed after military service,” stated Lawrence. [Read the bill.](#)



The Newest US Coronavirus Patient Was Quarantined at Air Force Base

U.S. officials on Feb. 13 announced the country's 15th confirmed case of the new coronavirus — an evacuee from China who had been under quarantine in Texas. The patient, who had been flown to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio last week, is now in isolation at a hospital and was reported in stable condition. The infection was confirmed through a Feb. 12 lab test, making the person the first coronavirus patient in Texas. Read more [here](#).



**Our values
match yours.**



www.veterans-for-change.org



SVAC Holds Hearing

The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held an oversight hearing on the implementation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Community Care Network (CCN) program that was part of the VA MISSION Act. Senior officials of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the CEOs of both CCN providers testified at the hearing. All the witnesses claimed that the implementation of CCN is progressing smoothly. There were questions about the pace at which providers are being reimbursed as well as the backlog of provider payments on the VA's books. The VA is working on new processes to speed up the turnaround time for reimbursements. They expect to be caught up by the fall. The issue was raised that CCN contracts do not reflect MISSION Act standards for community care. The contracts were awarded prior to the MISSION Act's passage into law. The VA pledged to move toward MISSION Act standards with the program and the CEOs both testified that they will strive to meet the MISSION Act's more stringent standards for access and timeliness.



VA Ramps Up Mental Health Funding After Rash of Parking Lot Suicides

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing spending \$682 million more next fiscal year on mental health issues, and ramping up funding for suicide prevention efforts by one-third, as it faces Congressional scrutiny over a series of tragic incidents on VA premises over the past year. The VA's budget request for fiscal 2021, released Feb. 10, totals \$243.3 billion -- a dramatic 10% increase from 2020. In addition to resourcing mental health and suicide prevention, it would nearly double the amount of funding for a joint VA-Defense Department effort to create a merged electronic health records system and provide a 9% increase to the budget for women's health care. Read more [here](#).



VFW Testifies on Veterans' Data Privacy

On Wednesday, VFW Associate Director for Health Policy Ramsey Sulayman [testified](#) before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Technology Modernization. The hearing, which was attended by the chairman and ranking member of the full committee, focused on the data privacy for users of VA services, including how data is collected by apps and VA partners. The committee focused on the security of the integrated electronic health record, record sharing, and data collection and permissions from apps VA offers to veterans for use on smartphones. Sulayman stressed the need for VA to make "data security and privacy a foundational priority." [Watch the hearing.](#)



Thought I'd Share

I don't know who the author is, but I thought I would share it with you.

I watched the flag pass by one day,
It fluttered in the breeze;
A young Marine saluted it,
And then he stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform,
So young, so tall, so proud;
With hair cut square and eyes alert,
He'd stand out in any crowd.

I thought . . . how many men like him
Had fallen through the years?
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?

How many pilots' planes shot down
How many died at sea
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves

I heard the sound of Taps one night,
When everything was still;
I listened to the bugler play,
And felt a sudden chill;

I wondered just how many times
That Taps had meant "Amen"
When a flag had draped a coffin
Of a brother or a friend;

I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands.
With interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea,
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.

No. #FreedomIsNotFree!



President Signed Bill to Enhance STEM Careers for Veterans and Military Spouses

President Trump signed into law the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act (S.153), which was sponsored by Sen. Marco Rubio (Fla). The act will


assist veterans who are re-entering the workforce by directing the National Science Foundation to encourage veterans to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The act mandates the NSF's Office of Science and Technology to establish an interagency working group to increase veteran and military spouse representation in the STEM field.



VA Doctors Using Artificial Intelligence to Diagnose Cancer

A team of researchers at the [James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital](#) in Tampa, Florida, is revolutionizing the way cancer is documented by enlisting the help of a computer to diagnose the disease in one of the largest patient populations in the nation: veterans.

Sophisticated artificial intelligence is capable of drastically altering how cancer is diagnosed and treated by learning to distinguish imagery of tissue containing cancerous cells from pictures of healthy tissue, a [recent study](#) in the Federal Practitioner journal claims. "If this helps save one veteran's life, this could be a major breakthrough for thousands of veterans and patients dealing with cancer diagnoses across the country," said VFW Director of Communications & Public Affairs Terrence Hayes. [Read more.](#)



Congress Approves VA Dental Pilot Program

On Tuesday, the Senate passed [H. J. Res. 80](#), which would provide congressional approval of the VA Innovation Center's programs to expand access to dental care through pro bono services at community dental clinics. This legislation was previously passed by the House so the project is now authorized to begin. [Learn more.](#)



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**Listen to New TRICARE Beneficiary
Bulletin Podcast #540**

Listen to this latest podcast to hear about:

- Military Health System Nurse Advice Line
- Extended Care Health Option
- US Family Health Plan

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



President Trump Signs Law to Help Veterans Find Jobs in Science and Tech

A new law, signed by President Donald Trump this month, will make veterans eligible to participate in certain programs from the National Science Foundation, a move designed to introduce more vets to jobs in science and technology. The law, known as the Supporting Veterans In STEM Careers Act, extends to veterans specific NSF scholarship and fellowship programs and different kinds of grants. It took effect February 11. Read more [here](#).





House VA Committee Examines Community Care Provider Networks

On Wednesday, a joint hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittees on Health and Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on the status of Community Care Network program provider networks. Attention was paid to the backlog of claims. 2.5 million claims out of 3.8 million are older than 30 days but VA testified that this will be remedied by the end of the fiscal year in September. [Watch the hearing.](#)

Dreaming of Product Invention? Here's How One Veteran Made it Happen

Disabled veteran Vernon Greene of Syracuse, New York, just wanted to stay upright while walking with his cane in rain and snow. One time he fell hard, injuring himself while trying to do everyday tasks. But he

couldn't find a cane like the one he imagined. So he built one himself. Getting an invention patented is a multi-step process that involves a lot of waiting and is often best done with the help of a lawyer. Hoping to make it happen for yourself? Here's a few steps. Read more [here](#).



National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission Discusses GWOT Memorial

On Tuesday, VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Matt Doyle attended a meeting to discuss the placement of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) Memorial. At the meeting, the National Capitol Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC)

discussed VFW-supported H.R. 5046, the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act. This important legislation would authorize the GWOT Memorial to be placed within the Reserve, an area in Washington, D.C., that encompasses the National Mall and the Tidal Basin. Under the Commemorative Works Act, only Congress may authorize the placement of a memorial within the Reserve. The NCMAC considered whether the GWOT Memorial should be placed at any of the sites specified in the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act and the potential impact of placing additional monuments and memorials within the Reserve. Learn more about [H.R. 5046](#). Learn more about [future memorials in Washington, D.C.](#)



TRICARE Users Receive More Health Options in New Pilot

The latest TRICARE pilot program meant to provide better care and reduce costs has come to Atlanta, Georgia, as TRICARE partners with Kaiser Permanente. Nearly 1,760 [TRICARE](#) beneficiaries

signed up during open enrollment last year for the health care pilot that will be available for three years. TRICARE officials are testing partnerships like this so they can move to a value-based system instead of volume-based reimbursements. In this pilot, beneficiaries have access to more health programs such as no-cost telephone health coaching, special rates on gym memberships, and discounts on acupuncture, chiropractic, and massage therapy. [Read more.](#)



Military Still Struggles to Handle Kid-on-Kid Sexual Assaults

The U.S. Department of Defense is struggling to change how it handles the abuse of military kids, including cases involving sexual assault by other children, according to a report commissioned by Congress. The military has been slow to implement reforms that lawmakers mandated more than a year ago, said the report released Feb. 12 by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The Pentagon still doesn't know the extent of child-on-child sexual assaults, in part because some officials dismiss incidents without reporting them and the Pentagon has no one place to track all cases that have been logged. Read more [here.](#)



Participate in the Veterans History Project

The Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center collects and preserves oral histories, memoirs, and collections of original historical documents from United States military veterans from World War I to the present. The VFW encourages veterans to participate in The Veterans History Project, because it's important for future generations to understand and be able to study the experiences of veterans since WWI. Learn [how to participate](#).

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Military Health Record Milestone Delayed as VA Requests \$1 Billion Funding Increase

The Department of Veterans Affairs is delaying staff training for the new electronic health record (EHR) system this week and will announce a revised schedule in "the coming weeks," a VA spokesman said via email February 12. The move comes the same week the VA unveiled its \$243.3 billion budget proposal for fiscal year 2021, which would give the EHR office \$2.6 billion -- nearly double this year's funding -- and increase the number of staff working on the EHR project by 68%. Read more [here](#).





The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced three new identifications, and four burial update 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:

U.S. Army Pfc. James W. White, 21, was a member of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), also known as Merrill's Marauders. After taking the airfield in Myitkyina, Burma, from the Japanese on May 17, 1944, White's battalion was tasked with holding the airfield and taking part in the

siege of Myitkyina. White was reported to have been killed during fighting on July 2, 1944. Interment services are pending. [Read about White.](#)

U.S. Army Pvt. James J. Cansler, 21, was assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 8th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Vossenack, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, when he was reported as missing in action. A year later, Army officials had received no evidence he had been captured or otherwise survived combat, and so released a presumptive finding of death. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cansler.](#)

U.S. Navy Chief Fire Controlman Daniel F. Harris, 40, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Harris. Interment services are pending. [Read about Harris.](#)

U.S. Navy Seaman 1st Class Edward Wasielewski, 21, of Detroit, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl

Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Wasielewski. Interment for Wasielewski will be Feb. 21, 2020, in San Diego. [Read about Wasiclewski.](#)

U.S. Navy Fire Controlman 1st Class Robert L. Corn, 24, of Baker City, Oregon, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in Corn's death and the deaths of 429 crewmen. Corn will be buried May 1, 2020, in Honolulu, Hawaii. [Read about Corn.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Raymond Warren, 21, of Silverdale, Kansas, was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while

the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Warren died between the first and second day of battle, Nov. 20-21, 1943. Warren will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Warren.](#)

U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Thomas H. Cooper, 22, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, was a member of Company A, 2nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Cooper died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Cooper will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Cooper.](#)



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