



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, March 01, 2020

Volume 11, Issue 09



This-N-That

It never amazes me how almost every Secretary of the VA has done their level best to deny medical care and treatment, not to mention benefits to those who have served.

Robert Wilkie is no different in that aspect, he's [denying scientific evidence](#) that has been around for a very long time to refuse adding several illnesses to the presumptive list.

Robert Wilkie never had boots on the ground, never served in a combat zone, was never exposed to herbicides and chemicals or burn pits, so what makes him the ultimate source to make decision on what is and what is not valid science?

It's no wonder Robert Wilkie doesn't have time to

.....

investigate serious problems all within the VA Medical Center Walls, his administration, he's been too busy trying to dig up dirt on a Hill Staffer who has filed claim of sexual abuse.

Since when is this his job? And why would he go against a GAO investigation proving the allegations were in fact true?

Which leads me to the ultimate question, why has he not been terminated?

Finally the House passed a bill which would allow the VA to fund Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD, frankly this is long over due and about darn time, and I do anticipate the Senate to follow order and pass it as well!

Again, I have posted a few more articles on those who have committed theft against the VA, tried and convicted and I still have to ask, where is the accountability? Who is being held responsible for allowing this to happen not just once but over and over?

And does this further go to prove my theory that all these funds that have been stolen eventually trickle down and come out of funds that would or should be paid to Veterans to cover benefits earned and due and this is why many claims get left on desks, file cabinets, tucked away out of mind and out of sight or simply denied!

Then add to that the further and continued delays on the activating the Electronic Health Records System.

One of the biggest problems and few people know about, and those who do won't speak out for fear of loss of job, and to further protect their bosses (ie. VA Medical Center Directors) is that each VA Medical Center has their own IT department, and each one can and has re-written code into their facilities software further allowing the cooking of the books on appointments, allowing medical records to be altered, medical notes being changed, and it all goes on and on.

Several years ago the main IT Department in DC was fully staffed by family members of the Director of the IT Department and those who were not trained and educated were sent to college using VA funds, and back then Shenseki literally trashed millions of dollars in programming because it didn't work and stopped more money being flushed down the toilet on useless programs.

Man years ago I used what was breaking technology in a hospital here in Southern California and it was fantastic. If you made a medical note and didn't matter who you were, if you were a doctor, clinician, nurse those notes and comments could not be altered and not one in the hospital had the ability to alter code. This forced you to make an addendum note where you had to explain the error in the initial note and give the proper information.

So if you accidentally posted a note meant for another patient, you had to explain that error, and were forced to post the note to the proper record, and there was an audit trail.

Well that program is still in use today, has grown, expanded and is in almost all hospitals in Southern California and I have no clue how many other hospitals nationwide. But I do know it all ties in to electronic medical equipment so it's all recorded on that patients records.

Any medications pulled for that patient had to be noted in the pharmacy computer on each floors nursing station, verified by another nurse and this too was electronically recorded.

And if you went to another hospital, they would have immediate access to those prior records, you didn't need to request copies, your doctor didn't need to request copies, voila, all problems were addressed and solved.

And over the past five years it's also been tied into insurance claims systems, and within minutes in most cases, claims were approved. Complex cases were handed off for human intervention, now think about all the costs savings this has produced! And this begs the question why the VA has never considered this program?

It seems so easy for the VA to outsource medical care for Veterans, does it not make better since to actually outsource a medical records system that could be easily programmed to handle not only medical diagnosis, but also handle claims and be approved within minutes?

All I can do is imagine how many millions if not billions that could be saved and not just in manpower, and be

far more accurate than a human!

Over the past week we've added over 100 memorials to the Memorial Pages, and there will be more to come now that the page has been repaired.

In addition 97 more web links have been added, and 50 more new documents have been added, all these will be being added to again this coming week. So do check often, and the new documents added have a flag that says "new" to quickly identify them.

We have also manually approved 50+ new subscribers, so that still hasn't been fully repaired, but it is coming, until then we will manually approve and send an E-Mail to let you know.

Also remember come March 1st, many of the document libraries will be limited to subscribers only again. We've had them open to anyone for over eight months to allow everyone to see what types of information we're providing and show how hard we work at trying to obtain more and more information to pass on to you to save time from doing your own research which often times can take months to find.

Now it's time to return the library to a limited one for non-subscribers and open to everything for subscribers.

Again the polls are 100% fully functional again after a long time of not working properly, so please visit the polls section, and participate.

The final three repairs that are being worked on is our "Contact Us" page, the "forums" and new subscriber

"authentication.

Once those are completed we will begin working on modifying the web site to give it a face lift since it's been years of looking the same.

I do want to thank everyone who has been sending me E-Mails telling me of their particular stories, I've been able to answer many, but I still have many more to answer so please be patient, and if you've not told me your story, and choose to, there is still time.

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

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



Concurrent Receipt Bill Introduced in the House

Today, Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) introduced a VFW-championed bill, H.R.5995, the Major Richard Star Act which would expand concurrent receipt eligibility to service members who were medically

discharged. The Major Richard Star Act would provide total offset relief for certain Veterans. The VFW would like to thank Rep. Bilirakis for his leadership on this issue and his continued commitment to America's military and Veterans.



Here's the List of Military Clinics That Will No Longer Serve Retirees, Families

Pentagon officials on Feb. 19 released a list of military treatment facilities and clinics that will no longer provide care to military retirees and active-duty families as part of a shift in focus to supporting active-duty readiness. The list is included in a 61-page report to Congress delivered Feb. 19. The report lays out the process through which officials selected the locations slated for changes. Read more [here](#).



Links to Other Stories

1. [Clinical Decision Unit opens at Dallas VA Medical Center](#)
2. [Discover the total rewards](#)

of
a
career
caring
for
Veterans

3. Research improves tele-eye screening for Veterans
4. VA medical center reveals new Whole Health web page
5. SecVA: Veterans to see continued improvements in 2020
6. Veterans receive help through clergy training program
7. Veterans and .

caregivers
turn
to
free
CaringBridge
sites
for
support

8. VA

encourages
women
Veterans
to
take
control
of
their
heart
health

9. Trump
Offers
1
Percent
Raise,
Seeks
Benefit
Cuts

10. Having
a
VA
Disability
Rating
Doesn't
Prevent
You
from
Serving
in
the
Military

- ivintary
11. An indicted Ukrainian businessman was poised to partner with the VA on medical marijuana research
 12. Navy Veteran's 'Trump 2020' flag stolen from his Florida home: 'I felt violated'
 13. VA Disability Ratings for Back Pain and Spinal Arthritis
 14. VA disagrees with

with
scientists'
findings
linking
4
more
diseases
to
Agent
Orange
exposure

15. VA
Secretary
Looked
for
Dirt
on
a
House
Staffer
Who
Reported
Sexual
Assault
in
a
VA
Hospital,
Complaint
Says

16. Local
group
focused
on
helping
homeless
Veterans
in
Maine

17. House

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

18. 'I
Am
Not
Invisible':
VA
photographer
looking
for
women
Veterans
to
sit
for
campaign
in
Lincoln

19. New
effort
to
help
homeless
Veterans:
'Now
it
is
our
turn
to

...
answer
their
call'

20. Attorney
General
James
Announces
Sentencing
Of
Man
Who
Stole
Money
Intended
For
Veterans

21. U.
S.
Settles
False
Claims
Act
Allegations
Against
Southeastern
Retina
Associates

22. VA
delays
launch
of
new
electronic
health
records
system

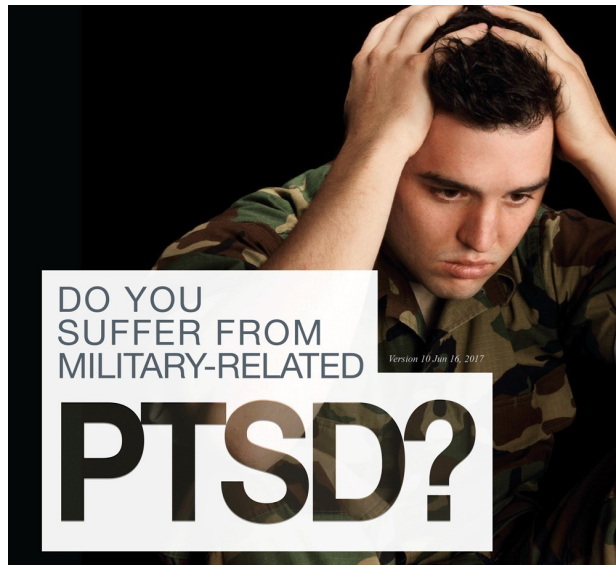
23. Complaint
accuses
VA
secretary

secretary
of
working
to
discredit
Hill
staffer
who
reported
sexual
assault

24. The
VA
is
ramping
up
mental
health
funding
after
a
rash
of
parking
lot
suicides
25. Agent
Orange
decision
delay
draws
criticism
26. Fibromyalgia
VA
Ratings
and
Gulf
War
Vets
27. VA

improperly
paid
out
more
than
\$300,000
in
disability
claims

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

VA Update on Caregivers and Agent Orange

On Thursday, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to discuss the fiscal year 2021 budget

request for VA. Committee members asked Wilkie when VA will expand the caregiver program and whether it will add bladder cancer, parkinsonism, hypertension, and hyperthyroidism to the list of conditions presumed to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange. Wilkie indicated that VA would release its plan to expand the caregiver program next week and indicated that his father is impacted by Agent Orange exposure so he is working hard to make it right. VFW National Legislative Service Director Carlos Fuentes testified alongside the VFW's Independent Budget (IB) partners DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and Paralyzed Veterans of America. The IB's budget recommendation is more than \$4 billion higher than the Administration's request. [Read the testimony.](#) [Watch the hearing.](#)



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 our new webmaster has been making repairs to things that haven't worked properly in over a year.

There are still repairs being made, but the polls are now working 100% and there are five polls open to all to take.

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 **4,746** hits per day, and downloads average **6,909** per day with a total **5,919,891** 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 **18,560** documents in 171+ Libraries, added **41** 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: 02/26/18) (**115 Added**)
- News (Articles On-Line: **9,522**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **7,406**, Added **97** New Links (Updated: 02/27/20)

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



Dental Care Tips for Kids Using TRICARE Dental Program

From babies to teenagers, practicing good dental hygiene is important for children of all ages. Parents play a critical role in developing these positive, healthy behaviors at a young age. Because February is National Children's Dental Health Month, here are

some tips to help keep your child's teeth healthy and strong through the years.

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



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



Joint Hearing for DAV at House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees

This afternoon, I had the privilege of delivering DAV's legislative program to a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees.

To view video of the hearing, please [click here](#).

To read my full written statement, please [click here](#).

I look forward to continuing this work throughout the coming months. As always, thank you for your interest in the legislative work of the DAV.

Stephen Whitehead
DAV National Commander



Expansion of SCRA

The House this week approved the "Gold Star Spouses and Spouses of Injured Servicemembers Leasing Relief Expansion Act" (H.R. 2227), sponsored by Representative Cheri Bustos (IL) and Brad Wenstrup (OH). The bill would extend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, allowing spouses of catastrophically injured service members to terminate property leases and automobile leases and Gold Star spouses to terminate automobile leases.

In December 2018, President Trump signed into law the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act (H.R.5882) allowing surviving spouses of service members killed in the line of duty to terminate residential leases at the time of the service member's death without penalty.

The provision of the current law does not include leases on automobiles nor the spouses of catastrophically disabled service members. Spouses of catastrophically disabled service members often require special housing or automobile accommodations for the service member. The requirement to break a lease is once again on the table with severe financial penalties. Representatives Cheri Bustos (IL) introduced an expansion of the 2018 law that would eliminate this loophole and alleviate potential financial burdens for service members and their families.

The bill now goes to the Senate for further consideration.



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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.

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[HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE](#)

[AMVETS GROUP](#)

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[{USAVET} SUPPORTING GOD & ALL WHO SERVED OUR GREAT NATION](#)

[AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY](#)



HOME *of the* FREE
BECAUSE *of the* BRAVE

Honoring those who served



News Flash





VVA National President, testifies before House/Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

On February 26, 2020, Vietnam Veterans of America, National President, John Rowan will present VVA Legislative Priorities and Policy Initiatives for the 116th Congress, before the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. Legislative presentations will also be presented by Lt. Gen. Michael S. Linnington (Ret.) Chief Executive Officer, Wounded Warrior Project, Dr. Thomas A. Zampieri, National President, Blinded Veterans Association, John Hilgert, President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Harvey Weiner, National Commander, Jewish War Veterans, Felix Garcia III, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart and Jan Brown, National Commander, American Veterans (AMVETS).

Hearing time: 2:00pm (EST)

Where: U.S. Dirksen Senate Office Building room G-50, Washington, DC 20510

Watch the hearing on February 26, 2020 live at <https://www.Veterans.senate.gov/>

VVA testimony will be posted on our website at: <https://vva.org/category/vva-testimony/>

Click the link below to sign the petition:

<https://www.voterveice.net/BroadcastLinks/3SXPYNX5YvUgCMm4A>



Secretary of Defense Enacts Only Parts of the Tenant Bill of Rights

Privatized military housing was again highlighted this week during the House Armed Service Committee FY2021 Defense Budget hearing.

Recent news reports on privatized military housing condition paints a picture of horrific inexcusable living situations confronting military families. Although Congress took measures to rectify the situation within FY2020 NDAA (S.1790) with an addition of the tenant bill of rights, there's still much room for improvement. On February 25th, Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper, Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy, Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly and

Secretary of the Air Force Barbara M. Barrett signed the Military Housing Privatization Initiative Tenant Bill of Rights. However, the secretaries only signed 15 of the 18 stated rights as authorized by congress. The following 3 rights were excluded from the letter:

- Access to maintenance history.
- Process for dispute resolution.
- Withholding of rent until disputes are resolve.

At the hearing Representative Kendra Horn (OK) asked why the three policies were excluded from the letter, to which Secretary Esper explained, the omission is due to restraints from legal contracts with these companies which needs to be addressed. Rep. Horn noted the exclusions are the crux of accountability in the entire Tenant Bill of Rights. However, the Secretary promised to work with Congress to ensure the benefits of these rights are fully available.

Privatization of military housing began in 1996 with the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI). Since then, private companies manage, repair, renovate, construct and operate base housing. Some military families claim that there is little to no accountability or oversight of these companies. FRA is working to ensure service members and their families have safe, quality homes and communities. The Association wants to increase the accountability of privatized housing companies by putting more oversight authority in the hands of local military leaders.



Fisher House Foundation President Visits VFW to Discuss New Fisher House

On Wednesday, Fisher House Foundation, Inc. President David Coker and Fisher House Foundation, Inc. Vice President of Communications Michelle Baldanza met with VFW Director of Operations Anthony Lowe, and VFW Director of Communications and Public Affairs Terrence Hayes, to discuss the ground breaking of the Fisher House in Kansas City

ground breaking of the Fisher House in Kansas City, Missouri, in July. “The Fisher House Foundation has been, and continues to be, a vital part of military and Veteran families’ rehabilitation and recovery worldwide,” said Hayes. The home will serve as a 16-suite comfort home for military and Veteran families who stay free of charge while loved ones are in the hospital. These homes are located at military and VA medical centers around the world. [Learn more.](#)



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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
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Office of Inspector General

1. Black
Lung
Benefits
Program:
Improved
Oversight
of
Coal
Mine
Operator
Insurance

Is
Needed

2. Navy
Ship
Maintenance:
Actions
Needed
to
Address
Maintenance
Delays
for
Surface
Ships
Based
Overseas

3. Individual
Retirement
Accounts:
IRS
Could
Better
Inform
Taxpayers
about
and
Detect
Noncompliance
Related
to
Unconventional
Assets

4. Individual
Retirement
Accounts:
IRS
Could
Better
Inform
Taxpayers
about

about
and
Detect
Noncompliance
Related
to
Unconventional
Assets

5. Coast
Guard:
Actions
Needed
to
Evaluate
the
Effectiveness
of
Organizational
Changes
and
Determine
Workforce
Needs

6. Native
American
Issues:
Examples
of
Certain
Federal
Requirements
That
Apply
to
Cultural
Resources
and
Factors
That
Impact

T-15-01

Final
Consultation

7. Tax
Cuts
and
Jobs
Act:
Considerable
Progress
Made
Implementing
Business
Provisions,
but
IRS
Faces
Administrative
and
Compliance
Challenges

8. Defense
Health
Care:
DOD
Surveys
Indicate
Beneficiary
Experience
Generally
Unchanged
in
First
Year
of
TRICARE
Select

9. Private
Pensions:
IRS
and
DO

DOL
Should
Strengthen
Oversight
of
Executive
Retirement
Plans

10. Equal
Employment
Opportunity:
DHS
Could
Better
Address
Challenges
to
Ensuring
EEO
in
Its
Workforce



Phase-Out of the SBP-DIC Offset Frequently Asked Questions

As a result of the VFW's tireless advocacy, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 modified the law that requires an offset of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments for surviving spouses who are also entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under the previous law, a surviving spouse who receives DIC is subject to a dollar-for-dollar reduction of SBP payments, which can result in SBP being either partially or fully offset. The repeal will phase-in the reduction of this offset beginning on Jan.

1, 2021, and culminating with elimination of the offset in its entirety on Jan. 1, 2023. [Read frequently asked questions and answers.](#)

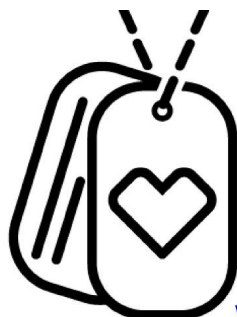


This Federal Agency Is Desperately Searching for Veterans to Hire Now

In an open letter [sent through the VA Blog](#), the U.S. Census Bureau is asking American military Veterans to step up and serve their country once again. This time, it needs Vets to take the national roll call.

Officials with the 2020 Census have had a difficult time finding the half-million or so workers they need to complete the mission of counting the number of people in the United States and gathering demographic data about where they live, what they do and how they fit into the greater American economy. Read more [here](#).





Our values
match yours.



www.veterans-for-change.org

Listen to New TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin Podcast #542

Listen to this latest podcast to hear about:

- TRICARE Publications Survey
- TRICARE For Life Webinar
- Enrolling Through milConnect

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

VA Launches Solid Start Program for Newly Transitioned Veterans

The Solid Start program is a transition program recently launched to proactively contact newly separated Veterans by phone during the critical first year of transition from military service. The goal is to provide them valuable benefits information such as

health care services, mental health services, home

loan information, and Veteran employment services. The first year of transition is critical and creates significant stress and pressures. The VA hopes the Solid Start program will ease those stressors on Veterans and families while making them aware of the benefits and services readily available to them. [Learn more.](#)



DoD Releases Fact Sheet on SBP Changes

The Department of Defense (DoD) has recently released a FAQ for recent changes to the Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) that were enacted in the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1790). This FRA-supported provision provides for the elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset for widows and widowers of service members over three years. This offset, also known as the "widow's tax," impacts approximately 65,000 widows and widowers of our Armed Forces.

Under the previous law, a surviving spouse who

Under the previous law, a surviving spouse who receives DIC is subject to a dollar-for-dollar reduction of SBP payments, which can result in SBP being either partially or fully offset. The repeal will phase-in the reduction of this offset beginning on January 1, 2021 and culminating with elimination of the offset in its entirety on January 1, 2023. For the remainder of calendar year 2020, surviving spouses remain subject to the existing dollar-for-dollar offset of SBP payments by the amount of DIC paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

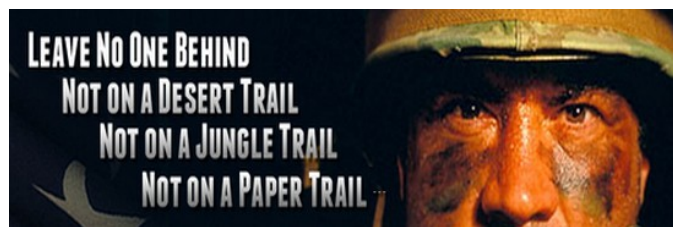
To view the DoD publication [online](#).





Applications Closing Soon for 2020 Pat Tillman Foundation Scholarship

The Pat Tillman Foundation is accepting applications for the 2020 Tillman Military Scholarship program. The application cycle opened Feb. 1 and will close at 11:59 p.m. (PST) on Feb. 29. The scholarship will pay for both academic expenses such as tuition and fees, as well as those pesky add-on costs like living expenses and books. Tillman Scholars can expect an average award of \$11,000. Read more [here](#).



'Paint' that Purports to Regrow Wounded Troops' Bones Moving Toward FDA Testing

The latest proposed bone regenerative therapy is a paint-like substance that coats implants or other devices to promote bone regrowth. It's designed for use in treating combat injuries and lower back pain, among other issues. After about \$9 million in grants from the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, the substance, called AMP2, made by the company Theradaptive, is moving onto the next trial phase, a step ahead of testing on humans. Creator Luis Alvarez, a retired Army lieutenant colonel who served a year in Iraq, said coating an implant is much better than the

may, said coating an implant is much better than the current, more dangerous therapy for bone regrowth. Read more [here](#).

Granting VA Disability Claims by Remote Questionnaire Led to Fraud, Report Shows

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) created the questionnaires for public use a decade ago to address its claims backlog by letting Veterans undergo a private, non-VA provider examination. But several years later, over concerns of fraud raised by the IG, the VBA stopped accepting "telehealth" examinations -- health care delivered remotely via phone or internet -- by non-VA providers or contractors when determining a disability claim. But IG staff found VBA claims processors have used the telehealth questionnaires to make decisions in more than half of the claims it reviewed, adding up to about \$613,000 in payments from April 2017 through September 2018. Read more [here](#).



CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER!

Eager to learn more about your TRICARE benefit? Here are just some of the articles you can read in the latest issue of the TRICARE Health Matters Newsletter:

- TRICARE Rules for Enrolling and Disenrolling
- Your TRICARE Payment Options
- Seeking Care While on Active Duty
- Take Action to Enroll in a TRICARE Plan When You Retire
- Read TRICARE Publications and Take the Survey

Download the latest TRICARE East Region or TRICARE West Region newsletter [HERE](#).

TRICARE wants to hear your feedback. Take the [publications survey](#) and share your thoughts about the newsletter.



Legislation Introduced to Study Toxic Exposure at Karshi Khanabad

On Tuesday, Representatives Mark Green (R-Tenn.) and Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.) introduced H.R. 5957, the K2 Veterans Toxic Exposure Accountability Act of 2020. This important legislation would require DOD to conduct a study on toxic exposure at Karshi Khanabad Air Base (K2), Uzbekistan. The legislation would also establish a K2 toxic exposure registry and a framework

for providing presumptive benefits for Veterans who developed a health condition associated with toxic exposure at K2. A December 2019 McClatchy article

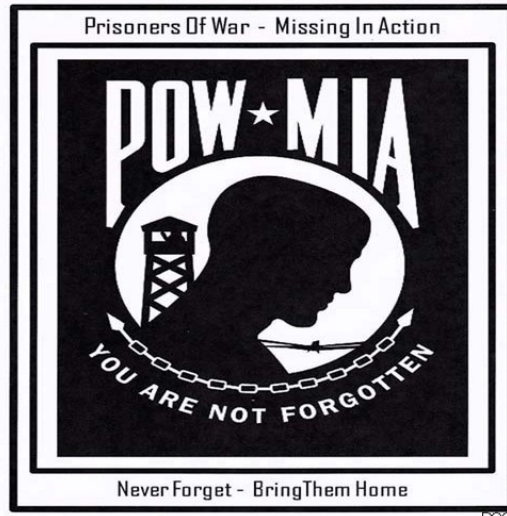
reported that K2 was contaminated with enriched uranium, radiological residue from chemical weapons, and other hazards. On Thursday, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on National Security held a hearing to discuss hazardous exposures at K2 and their effects on service members. The VFW thanks Rep. Green and Rep. Lynch for introducing this legislation and for their efforts to expand health care and disability benefits for Veterans. [Learn more](#). Read the [McClatchy article](#). [Watch the hearing](#).



Pentagon Awarded \$876M in Contracts Meant for Disabled Vets to Ineligible Companies: IG

Small businesses owned or run by disabled Veterans may have been cheated out of hundreds of millions of dollars in Defense Department contracts by unscrupulous firms who were ineligible for the awards, the Pentagon's Inspector General reported Feb. 20. The IG's audit found that the DoD "awarded \$876.8 million in contracts to ineligible contractors and did not implement procedures to ensure compliance with the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business

(SDVOSB) subcontracting requirements after the contracts were awarded." Read more [HERE](#).



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Tricare to Add 'Female Viagra' to Covered Drugs List

Tricare plans to expand its coverage of drugs used to treat premenopausal women with low sexual desire, a Tricare official said via email Feb. 12. Over the last five years, the Food and Drug Administration has approved two drugs to treat women with hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD): the daily pill Addyi in 2015,

and a self-administered injection, vyleesi, in 2019.
Read more [HERE](#).

House Passes Five Veterans' Bills


This week, the House passed five pieces of Veterans' legislation. They range from protecting Veteran-owned small business from losing contracts due to loopholes, to giving student Veterans more information on GI Bill-eligible schools. The bills that passed are: [H.R. 561](#), Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act, [H.R. 2227](#), Gold Star Spouses and Spouses of Injured Servicemembers Leasing Relief Expansion Act, [H.R. 3749](#), Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act, [H.R. 4613](#), VA Reporting Transparency Act, and [H.R. 4852](#) G.I. and Veterans Education Empowerment (GIVE) Act.



Know a Hero Military Dog Who Deserves an Award? Organization Seeks Nominations

Have or know a furry four-legged companion worthy of

Have or know a funny, four-legged companion worthy of the title hero? It's open nomination time for the annual American Humane Hero Dog Awards. Since 2011, Americans have cast millions of votes for thousands of dogs competing for the award. Read more [HERE](#).



Tax & Credit Information

1. Many farmers, fishermen face March 2 tax deadline; IRS encourages convenience of IRS Direct Pay
2. Many taxpayers can use IRS Free File to file their taxes at

no

cost

3. Treasury,
IRS
issue
guidance
to
farmers
on
uniform
capitalization
rules
4. Newly-
revised
IRS
publication
explains
tax
benefits
for
members
of
the
military
5. IRS
updates
guidance
on
business
expense
deductions
for
meals
and
entertainment
6. Some
popular
tax
benefits
renewed

for
2019;
IRS
Publication
17
Helps
with
2019
Taxes

7. Here
are
some
reasons
taxpayers
should
e-
file
their
taxes
8. Low
income
taxpayer
clinics
represented
19,513
taxpayers
dealing
with
an
IRS
tax
controversy;
see
the
latest
program
report
and
the
2020

LITC
grant
recipient
list

9. Here's
why
taxpayers
should
be
using
direct
deposit
for
tax
refunds

10. Password
Manager



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The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one new identification, 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:

Navy Fireman 1st Class James C. Webb, 23, of Hobart, Arkansas, 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 Webb. Interment services are pending. [Read about Webb.](#)

Army Sgt. David C. Sewell, 30, of Walker, Minnesota, was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 28, 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. Sewell will be buried in Anoka, Minnesota. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Sewell.](#)

Navv Seaman 2nd Class Everett G. Windle. 20. of

Kansas City, Missouri, 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 Windle. He will be buried in Honolulu. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Windle.](#)

Naval Reserve Machinist's Mate 1st Class Paul H. Gebser, 39, of San Diego, 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 Gebser. The date and location have yet to be determined. [Read about Gebser.](#)



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