



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, June 13, 2021

Volume 12, Issue 24



## ***This-N-That***

Good afternoon Jim,

First off, I do want to thank all our subscribers for being with us, many of you since day one back in 2006 and those numbers are always growing and we do appreciate every single one of you.

We have lost some here and there, some due to health issues that took them from us, some for loss of interest, and on occasion someone who didn't quite see eye to eye with me which I never expect.

Many of you know have gotten to know me pretty well, and we communicate back and forth fairly often know I am opinionated, can often be hard headed, willful, strong in my

desires and hard working at gaining all the accomplishments we're working on both in the past and now.

I do make it an effort to listen, respond, help or refer where I can, and if you correspond with me, please be patient, I make it a special effort to respond to every single person, but it seems I'm always up to my eyeballs.

Some of you have made suggestion on what's needed both on the website, and in the newsletter and I do try my best to make things happen, but it's never 100% of the time and that could be dependent on the software limitations, or something else, but we do try.

I still don't have a release date yet on the launching of the new website, hopefully I will have a date this week.

Our webmaster is located in Sweden so communications are often delayed due to time zone differences, but I personally do like him quite a bit, he's good, responsive, intelligent and very knowledgeable and the best part is he doesn't charge me an arm and a leg for the work I ask for where our prior webmaster would have bankrupted me.

As always there is a ton of information in every newsletter, I believe we've added 4 or 5 new Take Action items.

But do take the time to at least browse through you just never know when I've inserted something of interest or of value to you. Things do change almost daily.

I'd also like to encourage those interested in the Military Veterans Advocacy's Rifle Raffle to get your tickets, drawing date is coming up fast.

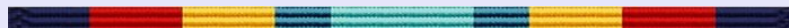
And please do join their organization so they can get nationally certified. Commander Wells has a truly awesome team put together and all work very hard at their jobs to gain the most they can for all Veterans in the way of benefits and services.

I can't remember how long I've known Commander Wells, but the friendship is something I strongly cherish and I hope lasts a long time.

If you've not visited our website, [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org) or not visited in a while, please be sure to check often for updates on documents, web links, etc., we are a bit slow, but are moving as fast as we can, yet not over-loading to put more work on our Webmaster when we get to the transition into the new look.

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

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



## ***VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE***

### Chairman's Remarks

MVA lost a good friend on May 28. Our client, Al Procopio, the veteran involved in Procopio v. Wilkie passed away from complications of Agent Orange exposure. Please remember him and his family in your prayers.

Please welcome Jackie Bloom who will be serving as Princess Susie's Deputy. Jackie has hit the ground running and is asking for more assignments. Also, welcome Zac Greenway who will be interning with MVA this summer. Zac has completed his second year of law school at LSU and is proving that he is a key member of the team.

As the pandemic lifts, our efforts are picking up with some success. For years MVA has argued for a comprehensive toxic exposure bill and it looks like that may come to fruition. Both the Senate and the House have put together omnibus bills that cover burn pits, radiation, and herbicide on Guam, American Soma and Johnston Island as well as Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. The bills are a long way from passage and as always, cost is a factor. Rumors are the bills will cost something north of eight figures. Cost should not be an issue but it always is.

I returned to Washington DC for the first time in almost a year. Although the City is beginning to open up, Congress is not. I was supposed to join Cong San Nicholas for the roll out of the Guam bill, HR 3368, but that got nixed at the last minute so I participated virtually. But along with Congressman Gus Bilirakis, the bill was introduced and we are building support.

We are getting closer to the introduction of a bill to cover the Panama Canal Zone. We are still working on the draft but tentatively we have found a Member who is interested in introducing it.

Jerry Balmes will be coming to MVA Headquarters in June to finalize our rulemaking submission. We will then begin looking for a Member of Congress to introduce a bill to cover those who served on Okinawa.

We received a disappointing decision from the Court of Appeals for the federal Circuit in Lynch v. Wilkie. MVA filed an amicus brief in support of the plaintiff, arguing that the benefit of the doubt rule applies even if the balance of evidence was not exactly equal. We are considering urging the veteran's attorney to ask for a full court or en banc review.

Meanwhile we have filed our briefs in the Guam case and the Thailand/Extend Blue Water navy case. The government has requested additional time to respond and their briefs in both cases are due in mid-July. Stay tuned - more to follow.

Facebook has been deleting our posts on the rifle raffle, however using some creative language, we have sometimes been able to get around their algorithms. We comply with all federal and state firearms laws and the Louisiana gaming laws, however the censors at Facebook continue to push back on the raffle. Now this has not been a problem for the last two years, or really for the first couple of weeks, but suddenly the censors moved in. Despite this, we have sold 240 of the 300 tickets. Tickets are \$45 a piece for a chance to win an M1A1 rifle, a Smith & Wesson 686 7 shot revolver, or \$250.00 cash. They are going fast so if you are interested, sign up quickly at <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/rifle-raffle.html>. The drawing is June 26. You do not have to be present to win.

If you are near Slidell, Louisiana on June 26, please consider buying a ticket to MVA's Breakfast with the Best. Tickets are only \$30.00 per person. The breakfast is at T Leblanc's Creole Kitchen. Warren Leblanc's French Toast casserole is by far one of the tastiest things to ever pass your lips. Have a great meal, listen to an entertaining program, and help MVA. You can make a reservation by going to <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/fundraising->

[breakfast.html](#).

I cannot say enough about our Bill of the Week program. It is being noticed in Congress but participation seems to be waning. We need everyone to sign up and participate. It only takes a minute to sign up and a few seconds to send an email to your Member of Congress and your Senators. Please support all of our bills of the week by going to our web site and send an email. <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/bill-of-the-week.html>

Of course membership is important. We still have about 350 folks who did not renew and we are forced to strike them from the rolls. If everyone renewed we would have about 1600 members. We need 2000 to qualify as a Veterans Service Organization. Members, you can also enroll your spouse and children 16 and above. Veterans get two votes at the annual meetings and other members get one. I enrolled my wife as a life member and for probably the only time in my life, I can out-vote her. Life memberships are available too. Go to the MVA website to enroll.

[https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/store/c2/yearly\\_dues](https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/store/c2/yearly_dues). Free memberships are available for widows. We also have gift memberships for those suffering from financial difficulties. Contact [robin.barr@mvadvocacy.org](mailto:robin.barr@mvadvocacy.org)

If you want MVA or Section gear, don't forget to visit the MVA Marketplace and support us.

<https://military-veterans-advocacy.square.site/>

Until next month, let me wish you all fair winds and following seas.

John B. Wells

Commander, USN (retired)  
Chairman  
Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc.



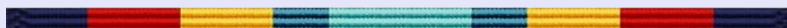
## **Military Veterans Advocacy**



Military Veterans Advocacy is offering some free memberships for those who are struggling to get their claims through, are having financial difficulties. Annual dues are \$25.00 per year. Our organization includes special sections, Blue Water Navy, Veterans of Southeast Asia, Central Pacific Islands, Veterans of Panama Canal Zone, and Okinawa. We have gift members available which can be paid by your fellow brother or sister Veterans. Gift members are kept confidential. Go to this link and help a Veteran.

[https://www.militaryVeteransadvocacy.org/.../c2/yearly\\_dues](https://www.militaryVeteransadvocacy.org/.../c2/yearly_dues)

You may contact Robin at [robin.barr@madvocacy.org](mailto:robin.barr@madvocacy.org)



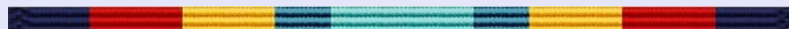
## **Bridge My Return: Veteran Voices in the Workplace**

As an employer, why does hiring Veterans matter to you?

As a Veteran, what does it mean to join an organization with an honest commitment to hiring and retaining military talent?

Get the answers and explore job opportunities through Bridge My Return.

[Read More](#)



## **AARP Guide to 10 military museums and historic locations across the U.S.**

AARP has developed comprehensive guides to 10 key sites of memorials, military museums and other historic locations found across the United States.



[Read More](#)



## **Building a healthy, post-COVID life: mental health**



You did it. You always wore your mask, washed your hands, socially distanced and stayed healthy. Now you're fully vaccinated and ready to hit the reset button on a challenging year. But before you head out this summer, consider checking internally for some self-care. Many may find themselves mentally changed as the world slowly reopens.

Veterans have many resources available if they need help settling into their new routine, including VA's diverse specialty clinics and apps to address specific needs.

"There are mental health providers embedded in primary care clinics that can help address short-term mental health challenges or connect you to long-term services," says Rachel Morales, a licensed clinical social worker at Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital.

[Read More](#)



## **Military-Veterans Advocacy's 3rd Annual Rifle Raffle**



Military-Veterans Advocacy's 3rd annual rifle raffle continues to be a hit, with a little over a month to

go, has sold half of the 300 tickets printed, Last year we ran out of tickets prior to the drawing and this year the tickets are going fast. Our first prize this year, the Springfield M1A1 rifle is a collector's item as well as a fully functional firearm., Many of you carried that rifle in boot camp so there is a sentimental reason for the quick pace of ticket sales. Our second prize, the Smith and Wesson Model 686 7-shot revolver is also

beautifully tooled and will be the envy of everyone at the range,  
And of course our third prize \$250. cash will always come in  
handy.

So please feel free to jump on our web site at  
<https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/rifle-raffle.html.html>  
and purchase a ticket or tickets. And while you are on the  
website, if you are not a member please consider joining.  
Membership is \$25 per year.

Life memberships are also available  
[https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/store/c2/yearly\\_dues](https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/store/c2/yearly_dues)  
s. We have gift memberships for those who are having  
financial concerns. For more information contact Robin Barr  
[robin.barr@madvocacy.org](mailto:robin.barr@madvocacy.org).

Drawing is June 26, you do not have to be present to win, but  
you must comply with all federal and state firearms laws.  
Tickets are \$45 apiece! We accept Master Card, American  
Express and Discover.

Please help our volunteer staff continue to litigate, legislate  
and educate on your behalf.

Commander J. B. Wells U. S. Navy (Retired)  
Attorney at Law  
Chairman  
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.



**Why I get my health care at VA: Navy  
Veteran Dick**

After retirement, Dick, a former Navy Chaplain, gained some weight, enough that it was restricting his activities and making him miserable. His VA doctor helped him meet his weight loss goals with a comprehensive program.

"Basically, what I learned was that everything that I had been told about gaining weight was true," says Dick. "It's just that I never paid any attention to it."

[Read More](#)



**Your actions**  
**could save a life.**

Showing you care can make a big difference to someone in crisis.

VeteransCrisisLine.net

 **Veterans  
Crisis Line**  
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**



## **Veterans can hike, bike and paddle across America with help from Warrior Expeditions**

Warrior Expeditions is a Veteran nonprofit outdoor therapy program. They help Veterans transition from their wartime experiences through long distance outdoor expeditions and offer hikes, bikes and paddles throughout the U.S.

[Read More](#)

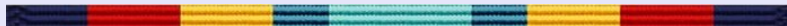


## **Transitional apartments help Vets prepare for independent living**

The Compensated Work Therapy-Transitional Residence Program was the perfect next-step for Marine Corps Veteran Rickey Ginn in his recovery. Program provides a safe, supportive therapeutic environment.



[Read More](#)



## **Monica Helms: Creator of the Transgender Flag**

Navy Veteran and Activist Monica Helms is the creator of the Transgender Flag.

[Read More](#)



## Know the Warning Signs

**It Matters.**

**Sometimes, a crisis may involve thoughts of suicide. Learn to recognize these warning signs:**

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**The presence of the following signs requires immediate attention:**

- Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
- Looking for ways to kill themselves
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse

..... Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) or text to **838255** .....



**Child Tax Credit Payments from IRS start in July**

The IRS is sending letters to families who may qualify for monthly #ChildTaxCredit payments based on their tax returns. Any family who hasn't yet filed is urged to do so soon so they may receive any advance payment they're due.

[Read More](#)



## **Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative reflects on 40 years of HIV/AIDS**

In the 40 years since, HIV and AIDS treatment and prevention has come so far. VA is currently part of the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative which aims to reduce new HIV infections by 75% by 2025.

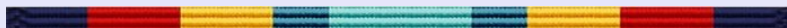
[Read More](#)



## **You Asked, We Answered: What can I do once I'm vaccinated?**

You Asked, We Answered: What can I do once I'm fully vaccinated? Find answers to this and other COVID-19-related questions.

[Read More](#)



## *Links to Other Stories*

1. [Georgia Man Sentenced to 135 Months' Imprisonment for Role in Health Care Fraud Scheme Against Tricare](#)
2. [Veterans Affairs Employee Pleads Guilty After Recording Co-Workers in Veterans Affairs Clinic Restroom](#)
3. [Wrongful billing results in \\$2.6M settlement and 10-year exclusion from federal health care programs](#)
4. [Court Orders Toledo Pharmacy and Two Pharmacists to Stop Dispensing Dangerous Doses and Combinations of Opioids and Other Controlled Substances](#)
5. [Counselor Involved in Wide-Ranging Medicaid Fraud Scheme Pleads Guilty](#)
6. [Man Indicted for Sending Threatening Text Message to Social Worker](#)
7. [Fly Infestations, Canceled Dialysis: Senators Reveal Grim Conditions at Some VA Hospitals](#)
8. [VA denies \\$22,000 medical air flight for Gulf War Veteran](#)
9. [Marketer sentenced to 11 years in federal prison for role in massive Tricare fraud scheme](#)
10. [Improve the West LA VA campus to better help homeless Veterans](#)
11. [VA Extends Life Insurance Eligibility Window Once Again](#)
12. [Transitional apartments help Vets prepare for independent living](#)
13. [Group builds specialized home for local injured Veteran](#)
14. [Veterans unemployment saw another big drop in May](#)
15. [Most VA patients, beneficiaries say they trust the department: survey](#)
16. [Bill Would Provide Better Education Benefits to Native](#)



## American Veterans

17. Military justice reform: The 'Be Careful What You Ask For' Act
18. Healthcare Practitioners to Pay over \$1 Million to Resolve False Claims Act Liability Arising from Billing of P-Stim Devices
19. Associate Medical Director of Baltimore County Pain Management Practice Pleads Guilty to Accepting Kick-Backs
20. Dominican National Sentenced for False Identity Crimes
21. Third Arkansas Physician Sentenced to Federal Prison for Prescription Fraud



## HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

On June 8, 2021, at 10:00 am, the House Veterans Affairs Committee will hold a hearing on the VA FY 2022 budget request. Chairman Takano and Ranking Member Bost will preside over the virtual hearing.

VA released the department's FY22 budget request on May 28, 2021, and are requesting a total of \$269.9 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2022 for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a 10 percent increase above fiscal 2021 enacted levels.

The FY 2022 budget provides robust funding for the secretary's top priorities. It includes \$117.2 billion (an increase of \$9.7 billion or 9%) in discretionary funding and resources for [health care](#), [benefits](#) and [national cemeteries](#). Additionally, there's \$152.7 billion (an increase of \$14.9 billion or 10.2%) in mandatory funding for 2021 for benefit programs inclusive of



Compensation and Pensions, Readjustment Benefits, Housing and Insurance. This budget provides robust funding for the secretary's top priorities.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/budget/products.asp>

The budget request also includes an increase of \$40.3 million and supports hiring an additional 334 FTE to process related Agent Orange claims in accordance with P.L. 116-283 of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act adding Parkinsonism, bladder cancer and hypothyroidism to the list of presumptive conditions related to exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. The VA Secretary announced on May 27, 2021, that the VA would begin implementation of the three presumptive in accordance with law.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5675>

Source:

<https://www.va.gov/budget/docs/summary/fy2022VAbudgetInBrief.pdf> see pages 28-29

## **WITNESS LIST**

### **1ST PANEL**

**The Honorable Denis McDonough**

Secretary

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Accompanied by:

**The Honorable Jon Rychalski**

Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial

Officer

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**2ND PANEL**

**Mr. Richard C. Loeb**

Senior Policy Counsel

American Federation of Government Employees

**Mr. Shane Liermann**

Deputy National Legislative Director

Disabled American Veterans

**Mr. Roscoe Butler**

Associate Legislative Director, Government Relations

Paralyzed Veterans of America

**Mr. Patrick Murray**

Director, National Legislative Service

Veterans of Foreign Wars

**Mr. Joseph Chenelly**

National Executive Director

American Veterans

This meeting will be livestreamed on [Youtube](#) and [Facebook](#) and you can find all the hearing documents on the Committee Repository [Here](#).

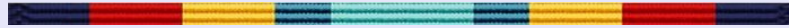
Source: <https://veterans.house.gov/>



**Borne the Battle: Josh Seefried, Repeal of  
DADT**

Air Force Veteran Josh Seefried is gay and entered the Air Force Academy under Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT). There, he was outed, blackmailed and traumatized by his superiors. Listen and hear what Seefried did to help the next generation of LGBT active-duty members serve without fear.

[Read More](#)



## **Virginia VA helps homeless program reach "Functional Zero"**

Central Virginia VA and community partners have announced a major milestone in the fight against Veteran homelessness: Functional Zero. Read about what that means and the people who made it happen.

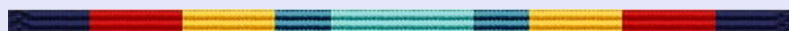
[Read More](#)



## **Why I get my health care at VA: Navy Veteran Dick**

Navy Veteran Dick got a second lease on life when his VA doctor helped him to lose almost a hundred pounds. Now, back to an active, healthy lifestyle, he credits VA with the win.

[Read More](#)



## **TRICARE Health Coverage Options for Young Adults**

Is your child graduating from college this year? Or, are they a recent graduate? This is typically a time of transitions, whether to a new job, home, or city. It's also a time for many new graduates to transition to their own independent health care coverage. If your child is one of them, TRICARE Young Adult is one of several health care coverage options that may fit their needs.



[Read More](#)



## VFW Testifies on VA Infrastructure

This week, VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on behalf of the VFW and our The Independent Budget partners, DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The hearing focused on President Biden's national infrastructure plan, which includes a proposed \$18 billion for VA capital infrastructure needs. Murray stated, "We are very appreciative of this proposal and given the gap in funding identified by VA's Strategic Capitol Investment Planning process, such an infusion is certainly justified." Murray also stressed the need to refocus hiring initiatives within VA in order to increase the capacity for critical VA construction. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at 18:15 mark.



## MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHIEF OF STAFF

This month I have to start out off subject, with a warning. PLEASE be careful when you are out and about. Getting COVID-19 isn't fun at all. No, I have not had the vaccine and won't get it, so I have to blame myself for not being careful. Luckily, I only had a minor version of it but even three weeks later, I am still having problems breathing. And by the way, a few months ago, two of my doctors told me that if I got the Covid virus, I would be DEAD. So when they told me in the hospital that I had the virus, I was scared to death. The worst part of it was telling my wife over the phone, and she became a basket case and I could not be there to help her. At least we had some good neighbors and friends that were able to help her and calm her down.

Here it is another month and we haven't even passed 1600 Members. We NEED EVERYONE to help us get New Members. Spread the word about our organization, we need new members. We all know other Veterans, we all belong to other Veterans, ships, and other types of pages. Please drop a hint on those about our group and the work we have done and are doing for Veterans.

We have a Marketplace where you can purchase hats, patches, and many other things. Please go to <https://military-veterans-advocacy.square.site/> and look to see what we have. Remember, all our dues and donations go to help all veterans.

Mike Yates  
MVA Chief of Staff



## Suicide Prevention Resources for Military and Veterans

### **Military & Veterans Crisis Line**

1-800-273-8255, Press 1  
Text 838255, 24/7

### **Vets 4 Warriors**

855-838-8255

### **InTransition**

1-800-424-7877

### **Office of Warrior Care Policy**

warriorcare.dodlive.mil/

### **Military One Source**

1-800-342-9647

### **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors [TAPS]**

1-800-959-8277



## **Program assists Veterans with visual impairment**

The Martinsburg VA Medical Center is launching virtual Visual Impairment Services Team opportunities for Veterans in keeping with the changing times due to COVID-19.

[Read More](#)



## **Live Whole Health #75: Go out and play, moving the body for fun**

On this #LiveWholeHealth exercise, we talk about playing and moving our bodies for fun. Think back to when you were a kid and you spent your days bike riding, climbing trees, playing tag, and simply running around the neighborhood with friends.

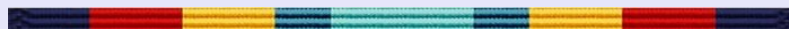
[Read More](#)



## **Need a video-capable device or internet connection for VA Telehealth?**

The numbers confirm telehealth is today's remote health care revolution. VA wants to make access possible for all Veterans. Ask your health care provider about the Digital Divide Consult.

[Read More](#)



## **VFW Testifies on VA Budget**

This week, VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on behalf of VFW and with our The Independent Budget partners, DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The hearing focused on President Biden's budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs. "While VA has received increased funding levels, a persistent lack of regular oversight and IT development continues to negatively impact access for an increasing number of veterans," said Murray. Additional hearing witnesses also called for robust oversight of critical education and employment programs within VA. [Watch the hearing.](#)



## #VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran George Dibbs

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran George Dibbs, who shot combat footage in Europe and the Pacific during World War II.

[Read More](#)



### Veterans-For-Change Website

The Veterans-For-Change website has been around since 2009, We've been around since May 2006. The looks pretty much stay the same for now, but in the background our new webmaster has been working on a whole new look and feel, a facelift so-to-speak. And we're sincerely hoping to roll out the new website sometime this coming June.

Constant improvement and change are 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 **2,489** hits per day, and downloads average **3,609** per day with a total **7,438,868** visitors as of Saturday evening.

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 us a notification to approve your account. Once received, and we approve, the system will send you an E-Mail letting you know your account has been approved. Be sure to check your junk and spam folders just in case you don't receive it in your In-Box.

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

- Documents Library with over **19,535** documents in 237+ Libraries, added 235 new documents on-line (Updated: 03/18/21)
- FAQ's on-line with **1,843** FAQs on 104 topics! (Updated 05/30/20 - 46 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: 04/23/20) (3 Added)
- News (Articles On-Line: **10,621**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **8,153**, Added 59 New Links (Updated: 05/26/21)

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



## **Retired VA nurses return as volunteers for vaccinations**

As Charleston VA began the transition to implementing a vaccination plan, the need for volunteers to assist with the effort became evident. Charlie Tupper and Mary Fraggos are two of those volunteers.

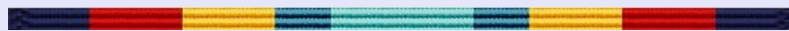
[Read More](#)



## **VA overcomes obstacles to reach millionth-claim milestone**

Despite a global pandemic, VBA has remained resilient in breaking boundaries with the completion of the one millionth claim this week. This is the second fastest rate within a fiscal year of completion in VA history with last year's date of May 26 being the fastest on record to reach one million claims completed.

[Read More](#)



## VA to Help with Digital Divide

Veterans who may not have a video-capable device or broadband connection for telehealth appointments can contact the [VA Digital Divide Consult](#) for assistance. Through this program, a social worker will help determine if the veteran is eligible for either VA's Connected Devices Program, Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Lifeline program, Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program, or a local ATLAS site. Telehealth allows for a continuum of care between a veteran and health care provider, eliminates extensive travel and wait times, and permits the veteran to choose a safe space for their appointment. [Learn more.](#)



**Jim**, 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!

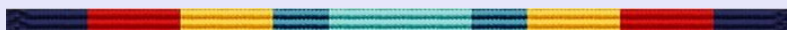
**Jim** you don't need to be Active Duty or a Veteran, in fact we ask all Veteran friends to also help! (Updated **06/12/21**)

Please note, we've added **4** new items to the **TAKE ACTION** list.

1. [HR 1014 - Furnish Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy \(HBOT\) to a Veteran who has a Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\) or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTS\)](#)
2. [HR 109 will establish an advisory committee on the implementation by the DVA of an electronic health record](#)
3. [Concurrent Receipt Legislation Introduced](#)
4. [Expand Concurrent Receipt](#)
5. [FRA and Others asks SecDef Not to Raise TRICARE Fees](#)
6. [H.R. 333, Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act](#)
7. [H.R. 344, Support the Women Veterans TRUST Act](#)
8. [H.R. 914, the Dental Care for Veterans Act](#)
9. [Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act](#)
10. [Oppose TRICARE fee Increases](#)
11. [S. 134/H.R. 637, the Veterans Economic Recovery Act of 2021](#)
12. [S. 437, Take Action for Veterans Exposed to Burn Pits](#)
13. [S. 89, Ensuring Survivors Benefits during COVID-19 Act of 2021](#)
14. [STOP TRICARE Fee Increases](#)
15. [Support Bills to Expand Coverage for ChampVA and TRICARE Young Adults](#)
16. [Veterans Economic Recovery Act Introduced](#)
17. [Support Bipartisan Bill to Expanding COVID-19 Vaccine Access for Veterans and Families](#)

18. H.R. 855, the Veterans Expedited TSA Screening (VETS) Safe Travel Act
19. HR 1355 and S 454. These companion bills will provide health care and benefits to Veterans who were exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces at Karshi Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan.
20. Support Repeal of TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee
21. HR 1585 & S 565- Provide for the treatment of Vets who participated in the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as Radiation Exposed
22. Please Support S. 344, the Major Richard Star Act
23. Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act
24. S. 810 & H.R. 1972, the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021
25. HR 109 Establish an Advisory Committee on Implementation by the DVA of an electronic health record
26. HR 2372 and S 952 will Provide for Presumption of Service Connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to toxins
27. Please Ask you Senator to support S.952 the Warfighters Act
28. Support Improving VA Homelessness Program
29. S. 976, Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
30. H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act
31. H.R. 912, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans Mental Health Act
32. S. 976, the Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
33. HR 2269 and S 657 cover herbicide exposure in Thailand
34. Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Help Military Survivors
35. Legislation asks for Study of Involuntary Discharges for Women
36. H.R. 2436, the Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act

37. H.R. 958—the Protecting Moms Who Served Act
38. HR 2127 and S 927, the TEAM bills Veterans Exposed to Toxic Substances
39. Ask your Senator to Support S.1520 Military Justice Improvement Act
40. Ask your member to support S.810 and H.R. 1972 The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021
41. Ask your member and senator to support HR 2580 and S 1151 to provide for a presumption of service connected disability for certain Veterans who served in Palomares, Spain, and for other purposes
42. "Bold New Plan" for Veterans Toxic Exposure (S. 927/H.R. 2127)
43. Ask your Senator to Support S.1520 Military Justice Improvement Act
44. HR 855, VETS Safe Travel Act
45. HR 3368, the Guam, American Samoa, and Johnston Island bill
46. H.R. 2521, Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access (DOULA) for Veterans Affairs Act of 2021
47. H.R. 1273, the Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act
48. H.R. 2968, the Military and Veteran Student Loan Relief Act
49. H.R. 845, the VA Billing Accountability Act
50. HR 2441 and S 1468, Sgt. Ketchum Rural Veterans Mental Health Act of 2021
51. Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Bill Introduced in House



# Boundary-breaking Extended Reality Network grows and spreads new opportunities

Developing and spreading XR health care tools for Veterans is actively being integrated into the fabric of VHA through the extended reality network.

[Read More](#)



## SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

### TALK:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain



### BEHAVIOR:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from people
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

### MOOD:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement



## VA, VSOs create expedited decision review process

VA has launched a pilot program that allows accredited representatives to request an expeditious review and determination of disability claims decisions.

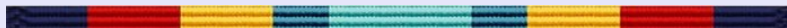
[Read More](#)



## **Live Whole Health Episode #74: Improving your life with gratitude**

Gratitude is a quality, attitude, or expression of thankful appreciation, and it's a positive emotion that can serve a biological purpose: Scientists have measured positive effects on the body and mind from a gratitude practice. Often, the negative situations in our daily lives get most of our attention and lead to increased worry, stress and anxiety, distracting us from the positive or good things in our lives.

[Read More](#)



## **Future of medicine is in your genes – we need your help**

VA's Million Veteran Program is one of the largest genetics research programs in the world. In a new video, Women Veterans invite women to enroll to make the future of medicine better for women.

[Read More](#)





## Direct Child Tax Credit to Begin in July

Part of the American Rescue Plan Act provides for an enhanced 2021 child tax credit. Many veteran households with children under 18 years old will soon be eligible for direct monthly payments per month from July to December 2021. Eligible households will receive \$300 per child 5 years old and under, and \$250 per child 6-17 years old. It is also possible to qualify for a one-time \$500 payment for children who are between 19-24 years old and full-time college students. These direct payments should help with the issue of hunger in the veteran community as veteran groups have found nearly 40 percent of American military families have been in need of food during the pandemic to include 1 in 4 Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans. [Learn more.](#)



## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Robin Barr, John Wells, and I are working on a list of bills that we support. That list is growing. We are sending support letters to the sponsor of each bill, as well as to every Congressman and Senator that we are meeting with virtually. Out of 61 new Congressmen, we have met virtually with all except 2, one of which we have confirmed for this week. On the senate side, we have 2 left, one of which is confirmed this week. Next group is all members of the SVAC.

Senator Tester will be moving a toxic exposure bill forward soon. His plans are to take the best parts of the three major bills into one strong one. Right now, it is in the beginning stages of development.

Bills that were introduced under the previous session are now

being reintroduced.

Some of those bills are:

Note: Numbers in parenthesis are the number of cosponsors. We are very close to getting a Panama Bill introduced. Tune in next month; I am sure I will be updating that bill.

**HR 3368** is the new Guam bill introduced by Rep San Nicolas and Rep Bilirakis. It is called the Lonnie Kilpatrick Central Pacific Relief Act (36)

**S 657** Senator Boozman's Thailand Bill (14); **HR 2269** Rep Westerman companion bill (44)

**S 454** Senator Blumenthal's K2 Bill (6); **HR 1355** Rep Lynch companion bill (72)

**S 952** Senator Gillibrand's Warfighter's Bill (1); **HR 2372** Rep Ruiz companion bill (21)

**S 927** Senator Tillis' TEAMS Act (9); **HR 2127** Rep Bost companion bill (32)

**HR 855** Rep Gosar TSA Bill (28)

**HR 1014** Rep Murphy HBOT (8)

**HR 1022** Dog Bill (28) and HR 1448 Dog Bill this bill passed the house.

**HR 109** Rep Hudson Electronic Health Records (2)

The Bill of the Week certainly helps in asking Congressman to co-sponsor. If anyone wants to do additional work, let me know on Facebook.

I plan to continue to work on bills to increase the number of co-sponsors.

Susie Belanger

Legislative Director

Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc.



**CONTACT YOUR  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

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

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



**Building a healthy, post-COVID life: mental health**

Before you head out safely this summer, consider checking inside for some self-care. Many may find themselves mentally changed as the world slowly reopens. Isolation has really impacted some people.

[Read More](#)



**Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS) News [May 2021]**

Get the Recruitment & Retention, Employment & Integration, Well Being & Treatment, Servicewomen in the News, Women Veterans, and Upcoming Events DACOWITS news from May 2021.

[Read More](#)



## **Telehealth speeds access to physical therapy**

A new telehealth physical therapy (PT) clinic at the VA Phoenix Medical Center lets Veterans begin VA outpatient PT at home after total knee replacements.

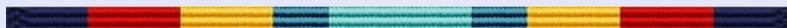
[Read More](#)



## **LGBT health care for the Veteran you are**

LGBT Veterans choose to receive health care through VA because they find inclusive and affirming quality care from supportive providers. Every facility has an LGBT Veteran care coordinator.

[Read More](#)



## **And The Wind Blew©**

In each and every man, still remains the little boy, he once was.

A boy who wishes to be free to fly, the wind blowing on his  
face.

His kite climbing ever higher to the heavens above.

To sit upon a horse's back, or the fender of a tractor.

To feel the exhilaration of God's breath upon his face.

His pulse is quickened, to an ever faster pace.

He lay in field or meadow, as clouds begin, to build and billow.

With gales and gusts, trees swaying, flowers bending.

The earth below, lovingly provides his pillow.

He dreams and yearns to fly away,

to the home he no longer quite remembers.

The home he came from so long ago.

Back then, where angels were his friends

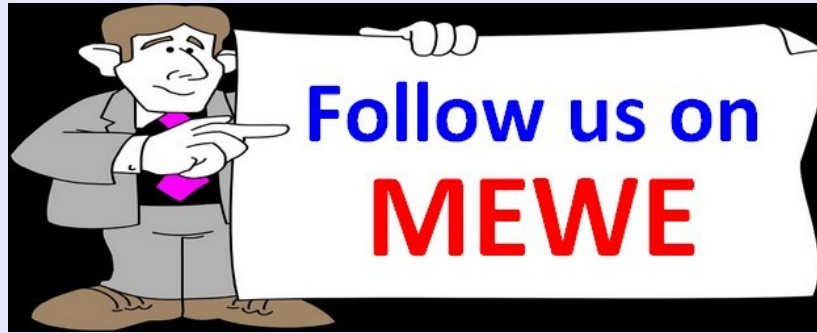
and flew together, when all was right.

And the wind blew and took that man, that little boy.

Back Home, from whence he came.

Richard G. Shuster





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](#)

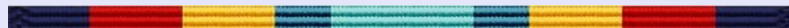
[HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE](#)

[AMVETS GROUP](#)

[VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP](#)

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

[AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY](#)



**Live Whole Health #75: Go out and play,  
moving the body for fun**

On this #LiveWholeHealth exercise, we talk about playing and moving our bodies for fun. Think back to when you were a kid and you spent your days bike riding, climbing trees, playing tag, and simply running around the neighborhood with friends. Try to imagine what it felt like to use your body in all these ways. Can you recall climbing into bed after a long day of swimming? Remember that feeling of pure exhaustion?

Why do we stop using our bodies for fun? When did we decide that moving our bodies was too much work, too painful, or a waste of time?

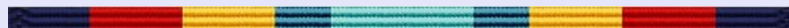
[Read More](#)



## **Live Whole Health #75: Go out and play, moving the body for fun**

On this #LiveWholeHealth exercise, we talk about playing and moving our bodies for fun. Think back to when you were a kid and you spent your days bike riding, climbing trees, playing tag, and simply running around the neighborhood with friends.

[Read More](#)



## **How to Get a Virtual Appeal Hearing**

Veterans can appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) without leaving home! Just like a virtual doctor appointment, all you need is Wi-Fi and a phone, laptop, or tablet. By meeting virtually, BVA can be more efficient and increase the number of hearings available.

[Read More](#)



**BLUE WATER NAVY ASSOCIATION**



I am finally back working on Deck Logs. For the last 6 weeks, I have had a problem with Food Poisoning that lasted over a week, followed by getting the Covid Virus. So, this week I am finally feeling well enough to start working on more Deck Logs.

I am seeing that the National Archives is putting more and more Deck Logs back online. The problem is that in some cases, you have to really do some searching for them. Not only am I seeing a lot of Deck Logs with errors in it, out of over 300 entries for the ship I am working on, I have 6 positions showing that the ship was on land. Also, on this group of Deck Logs, it will be hard for me to do Dead Reckoning since the way they entered the Speed Changes was in RPMs.

I really would like to see our BWN Members try and go out and recruit more to join us. We really need to get more Members. We really need to get a seat at the table so that we can try even harder to get the Agent Orange zone all the way back to what it was in 1991 with the Agent Orange Act of 1991. Public Law 102-4 was passed. It is going to take time and small steps, but as long as we are moving forward, we will make progress.

Mike Yates  
Director, Blue Water Navy  
Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc.



**Office of Inspector General**

1. VA Real Property: Preliminary Observations on Challenges Limiting VA's Ability to Effectively Manage Its Assets
2. VA Health Care: Additional Data Needed to Inform the COVID- 19 Response in Community Living Centers



## **Home-based care expands for vulnerable Veterans in Southern Colorado**

Southern Colorado home-based primary care team sees patients in their homes. "We see them so often they don't have to go to the hospital or the emergency room. We're able to keep them in their home."

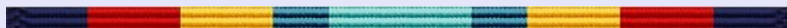
[Read More](#)



## **For women, battlefield airmen jobs remain a distant target five years after integration**

Five years after the Defense Department lifted its ban on women in ground combat roles, the Air Force hasn't made much progress on getting women into the all-male career fields. The Air Force says a lack of interest is to blame for the holdup in getting women into those jobs.

[Read More](#)



## **Homeowner's Guide to Hurricane Season**

Do you know how to protect your home during hurricane season? Find out how to get help if you have a VA-backed home loan or VA housing grant and your house is damaged by a hurricane, flood, or another natural disaster.

[Read More](#)



## **AGENT ORANGE SURVIVORS OF GUAM**

### GUAM BILL INTRODUCED

Cong Mike San Nicholas (Guam) and Gus Bilirakis (FL) re-introduced the Lonnie Kilpatrick Central Pacific Island Relief Act. The bill will cover veterans for herbicide benefits, who served on Guam, American Samoa, and Johnston Island from January 1962 through 1980. We have asked the sponsors to modify the start date to August 15, 1958 in consonance with evidence showing that earlier spraying. Please use the MVA Bill of the Week action center to ask your Member of Congress/Senators to support this bill.

Military Veterans Advocacy, Inc.





1. FDA's Decision to Approve New Treatment for Alzheimer's Disease
2. FDA approves therapy for pediatric patients with serious rare blood disease
3. FDA Grants Accelerated Approval for Alzheimer's Drug
4. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: June 4, 2021
5. Medical Device Shortages During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency
6. Stop Using Innova SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Qualitative Test: FDA Safety Communication
7. COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
8. FDA Drug Shortages
9. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: June 8, 2021
10. Tulkoff Food Products, Inc. Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared (Soy and Wheat) in Kimchi Aioli
11. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: June 11, 2021
12. FDA Takes Steps to Increase Availability of COVID-19 Vaccine



**Sick Marine Corps Veteran evacuated from Caribbean island**

Marine Corps Veteran Donald Germann survived a hurricane with 180 to 190 mph winds, but his chronic medical issues needed immediate care. Here's how a VA partnership got him to safety.

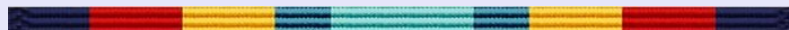
[Read More](#)



## **OP-ED: 'No! I am the Marine': The story of Marine Cpl. Jean Platania**

I am the Marine! Woman Veteran tells her story.

[Read More](#)



## **FAST Assists Fiduciaries**

VA's fiduciary program protects Veterans and other beneficiaries who, due to injury, disease, or age, are unable to manage their financial affairs. Learn how the Fiduciary Accounting Submission Tool (FAST) makes the accounting process easier for fiduciaries.

[Read More](#)



## **VETERANS OF PANAMA CANAL ZONE**

**In the news...** This is unfortunately old news -- we continue to wait for an answer from the new VA Secretary regarding our Rulemaking Request.

<https://www.militaryVeteransadvocacy.org/Vets-of->

[panama.html](#)

We have received a letter back from the VA Undersecretary. It is not a No, not a Yes, but a “we are still reviewing the evidence.” I am still hopeful that the VA Secretary will someday soon add Panama to the list of places where dioxin (TCDD) was used based on the clear evidence of the U.S. Commerce records and the testing that was done by Aberdeen for its presence.

**Wins recently for Panama CZ Veterans..**We have had a handful of Veterans win in 2020 by using these shipment records. The judge ruled in favor of the Veteran due to “overwhelming evidence” when speaking of the U.S. Census records. The shipments from 1958-1977 can be seen in the references attached to our Rulemaking Request.

**Asked for a bill to be introduced in Congress...**Our Legislative Director, Susie Belanger, scored a meeting on May 21, 2021 with a Congressional aide. Commander Wells, Susie, our Administrative Assistant Robin, and myself met electronically since DC was still on lock down mode. The aide has assured us that the Congressional Representative is on board with introducing a bill for Panama Veterans. This is Great News!

Once introduced, which the aide was hopeful by Memorial Day, we will have an H.R. Bill Number. Then we will all get busy contacting our representatives asking for their support of our bill. The Panama bill would then become one of our Bill of the Week pushes.

**Too many bills die due to lack of support...**If you haven't been participating in our Bill of the Week, we ask you for your

support to please do so. There are many Veterans bills which are very important to many of your brothers and sisters which just end up dying in Congress for lack of support. Each week the MVA puts forth a Bill of the Week and asks each of you to support. It takes just seconds and is very important to gain support in the Congress to get our voices heard.

The MVA spends a lot of money each month for your benefit to make it easier for you to support Veterans bills. Please help us help you by clicking

<https://www.militaryVeteransadvocacy.org/bill-of-the-week.html>

every Monday to support the newest bill. Pretty soon you will see a Panama bill and I would hope each of you will help get the Panama bill across the finish line and have your voices heard once it is posted. But all Veterans bills are important to someone and could use your support! We make it easy with our Bill of the Week!

**New members missing...** Thank you for your support! Some new members have not found the MVA Panama FB members only FB page. My apologies. I'm having an issue inviting people from within the Panama FB page. To get around this FB issue, I am sending you a personal email. It will come from [donna.tornoe@madvocacy.org](mailto:donna.tornoe@madvocacy.org). Please look in your junk email if you have not gotten an invite from me once you have become a member of the MVA Panama section. As well, you can go to the "joining area" on my Panama MVA members only FB page by clicking

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/846787082401500/>.

**Another way to support the MVA...** There are other ways to support us other than membership. We are a Nonprofit, a good place to make donations for tax purposes. And if you shop on Amazon, if you would just put a smile in the URL, you can pick

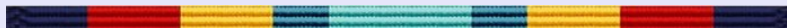
the MVA as the place Amazon will donate a small sum to. The prices are the same, but Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Military-Veterans Advocacy Inc. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3890520> and support us every time you shop.

**Lastly...**a BIG THANK YOU for your continued support in this journey. And a BIG THANK YOU to the members who have recently joined. We need membership to be heard. Together we can cross the finish line. Please ask all of your contacts to join and support and donate to help our effort.

Your support is greatly appreciated!

Donna Torno

Director, Veterans of Panama Canal Zone

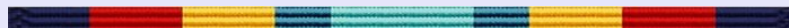


## **HVAC Discusses VA FY 2022 Budget**



The House Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing on the Biden Administration's proposed FY 2022 budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Administration has requested a 10 percent increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The budget increase focuses on suicide prevention, eliminating veteran homelessness, implementation of the Mission Act (Caregiver program and community care) and the Deborah Sampson Act (women veterans). The proposed budget increases VA staff by 429 to process claims to decrease the disability claims backlog that has been exasperated by Agent Orange Bluewater claims and the expected increase in toxic exposure claims.

It was noted that VA community care visits have increased by 31 percent and had been as high as 39 percent in March. The newly appointed VA Secretary Dennis McDonough expressed concern that adding hypertension to Agent Orange presumptions would be costly and could overwhelm the disability claims system. The budget calls for additional resources for the veteran's crisis line and it was noted that VA was overdue in providing Congress with a report on the effectiveness of the crisis line. There was also a lengthy discussion on the importance of implementing the Electronic Health Record (EHR).



**VHA IE Trailblazers: Dr. Ravi Rasalingam**

VHA IE Trailblazers are forging a new path forward for Veteran health care through their work in the VHA Innovation Ecosystem.

[Read More](#)



## **Our Protectors, Our Veterans©**

The lives of some known and many not, have touched us. There's little difference than found in any other war, with caskets holding their bodies, now come home they to rest. They were our protectors, it is their duty they have done, and they did their best, and again, lives of some known and many not, have touched us. How many times has the “story of stories” been repeated, by millions of families throughout the ages since first spoken? “He gave His only Begotten Son”, rings on and on. May that sacrifice never be forgotten. Likewise, millions of other sons and daughters have been given, as our Protectors, in their service; to God, to country, to family, to community. They, too, gave up their begotten children, their loved ones, for us, for all of us, to never be forgotten. As was His sacrifice, is theirs, our protectors, for the ever-living hope of futures bright, we join in humble gratitude, to honor and to comfort all who need. May our protectors, our veterans, never be forgotten.

In addition to the horrors and ravages of war itself, during each era of our protectors, our veterans, have had to face such issues as we have seen; issues such as radiation, psychedelics, agent orange, chemicals, biological agents and unproven experimental vaccines. It is my belief that it is our ultimate responsibility to do what we can to minimize these

types of issues that were unnecessary to have occurred in the first place. We owe our protectors this, too, for all current and future generations. If we do not protect our protectors, our veterans, who indeed, will protect them?

The health and well-being issues of our protectors, our veterans of all eras and of the reserves, guards, and active-duty military of today are real. This should be our focus, this should be our purpose, this should be our commitment, and this is what we owe to our protectors, our veterans.

If we do not protect our protectors, our veterans, who indeed will protect us?

**Richard G. Shuster**



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



**Largest genome study of depression to date  
reveals genetic risk factors**

The study involved genetic data on more than 300,000 participants of VA's Million Veteran Program (MVP), along with more than a million subjects from other biobanks, including 23andMe. With such a large participant pool, the researchers were able to spot trends in genetic risk of depression not previously known.

[Read More](#)



## **'It Opened Up My World': Kenosha Veteran On Experience In U.S. Navy**

Read LNC Lorrie McNeal Saylor's (RET) story on StoryCorps' Military Voices Initiative. Wisconsin woman Veteran tells her story.

[Read More](#)



## **VA Benefits for PTSD**

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after exposure to extreme stress, such as combat, an assault, or a disaster. If you're living with PTSD caused by military service, you may be entitled to VA disability benefits and compensation. Find out if you qualify and how to apply!

[Read More](#)



## **SVAC Looks at VA Infrastructure**

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee held an oversight hearing to discuss challenges to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ability to maintain and build new infrastructure, steps to strengthen VA operations, and potential Congressional action to improve the agency's infrastructure. At the hearing, SVAC Chairman Jon Tester (Mt.) stressed that VA infrastructure improvements are a bi-partisan issue. The VA is the nation's largest healthcare system with more than 1700 healthcare facilities that average 60 years old. Witnesses included representatives from VA's Office of Asset Enterprise Management, Government Accountability Office, and Kaiser Permanente.

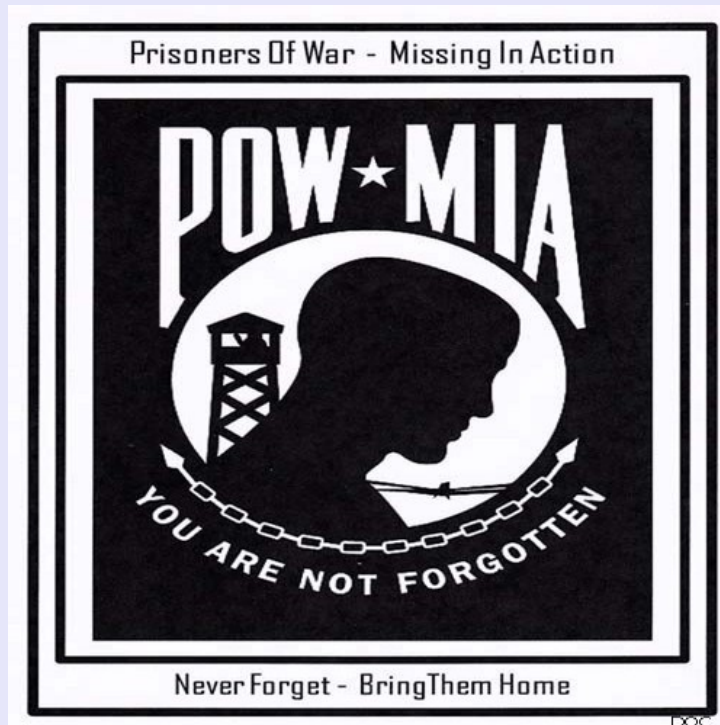


## **VBA celebrates all Veterans this Pride Month**

At VBA, we are dedicated to providing Veterans, service members, and their families with the benefits they have earned, regardless of sexual orientation.

[Read More](#)





## **Borne the Battle #245: Air Force Veteran Josh Seefried, DADT Repeal Advocate**

In this episode of Borne the Battle, Josh Seefried shares his life story, from being blackmailed and outed as gay to becoming one of the nation's foremost advocates for LGBT active-duty service members.

[Read More](#)



## **Experiencing War - Cristina A. Frisby**

Woman Veteran of the Week #LOCWVW recognized by The Library of Congress. Like many 18-year-old "plebes," Sergeant Cristina Frisby was overwhelmed by the challenges of her first year at the Naval Academy. Falling ill and behind in her coursework, she resigned—only to be confronted with an inquiry into her sexual orientation. Leaving the Academy, she felt the agony of being denied her lifelong dream of military service because of who she was, and because of her honesty in speaking about it. Her dedication to military service was so strong that she persevered, joining the California National Guard after the terrorist attacks of September 11, in the hopes that she could be of some help to her country. Deploying to Iraq in 2005, she served as a recovery driver, a tow truck driver who aided disabled vehicles (many of which had been hit by IEDs). Her oral history interview is supplemented by over 300 photographs and a handful of home movies, which offer a fascinating glimpse into her day-to-day life in Iraq.

[Read More](#)



## **Watch VA Benefits News**

Tune in to the latest episode of VA Benefits News (VBN)! Join the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Michael Frueh, to learn about initiatives and updates to benefits and services that directly impact you and your family.

[Read More](#)



## **VA Acting Undersecretary for Health Resigns**

Dr. Richard Stone (Retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen.) announced he is stepping down as Under Secretary for Health for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The commission to select the next Under Secretary for Health (VHA) met a few months ago and he was recently informed that he will not be nominated for this position. He led the VHA for nearly three years, leading, as both Executive in Charge and Acting Under Secretary. Currently a practicing dermatologist, he has several awards and honors to his credit, including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Combat Action Badge, and was a member of the Department of Defense Recovering Warrior Task Force from 2011 - 2015.



### **Reunion at Battle Creek VA "pure joy"**

"Pure joy!" A mom's description of her reunion with her Veteran daughter at the Battle Creek VA Medical Center Community Living Center. In-person family visitations for the first time since March 2020.

[Read More](#)



### **How to succeed in college or grad school #2: Preparing for academic success**



In this second guest blog post, Harvard Extension School Instructor Cynthia A. Meyersburg, Ph.D., guides student Veterans on how to prepare for and succeed when returning to an academic school. This post examines what student Vets should do to prepare for academic success.

[Read More](#)



**If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.**



*CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE VFC NEWSLETTER!*



## **Men's Health Month: Yes, you can cook it yourself**

This month is all about encouraging men to take care of their bodies by eating right, exercising, and working to prevent disease. The goal for this campaign is to heighten awareness of preventable health problems.

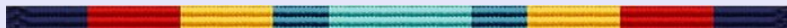
[Read More](#)



## **Founder Of Vietnam Women's Memorial Speaks On Motivation, Military Experience**

Vietnam Women's Memorial founder, Diane Carlson-Evans shares her story.

[Read More](#)



## **COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Available**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing financial assistance for coronavirus-related funeral costs incurred after Jan. 20, 2020. VA has no role in this reimbursement program. If you have had COVID-19 burial expenses, learn how to apply for FEMA aid.

[Read More](#)



## **#VeteranOfTheDay Merchant Marine Veteran William Scott Chambers**

On the Merchant Marine birthday, today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Merchant Marine Veteran William Scott Chambers, who served the war effort from 1941 to 1945.

[Read More](#)



## Finding Financial Assistance on Benefits.gov

Financial responsibilities can be difficult to manage, but depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for financial assistance to help with your needs. Benefits.gov is here to help you understand the financial assistance resources available to you, your family, and your business.

[Read More](#)



## Face of InnoVAtion: Kathryn Beckner

Face of InnoVAtion is a regular series from the VHA IE focusing on VA employees who are working to change and save Veteran lives through innovation.

[Read More](#)

**Utah National Guard Chaplain Corps commissions two officers, first female**

The Utah National Guard Chaplain Corps inducted first woman chaplain candidate in the organization. In a Ceremony on May 12th they inducted the 1st woman candidate.

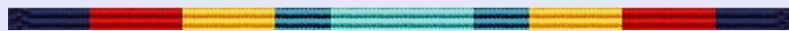
[Read More](#)



## **Hiring Platform for Veterans**

Bridge My Return (BMR) can help you leverage your military skills in the job market. The free hiring platform connects you with employers and provides the tools and coaching necessary for private-sector success. Learn more about what BMR has to offer!

[Read More](#)



## **The origin of Women Veterans Day**

Why do we need Women Veterans Day? Women Veterans Day, also referred to as Women Veterans Recognition Day and Women Veterans Appreciation Day, is the anniversary of the day the Women's Armed Services Integration Act (pub.L. 80-625, 62 Stat. 356) was signed into law by President Harry S. Truman on June 12, 1948. Prior to then, only women nurses could serve in the regular and reserve forces during peacetime.

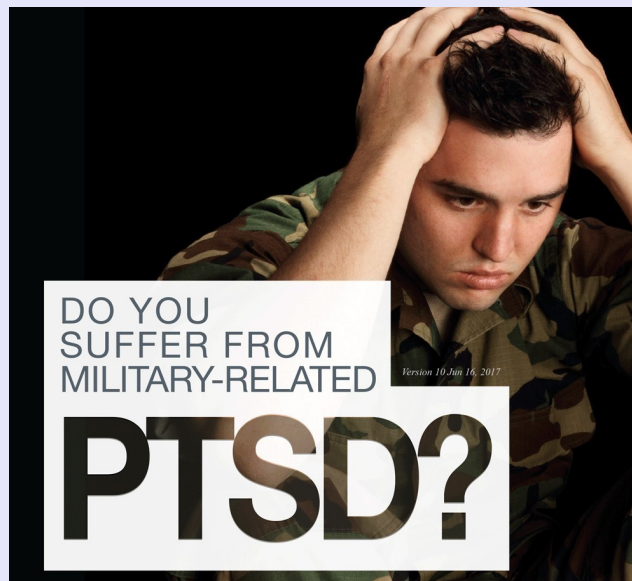
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# An Updated Guide to Benefits.gov Resources

Benefits.gov was launched by the U.S. Department of Labor in April 2002, creating the U.S. government's official benefits website. Our mission is to increase citizen access to benefit information while reducing the difficulty of interacting with the government.

[Read More](#)



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



## VA researchers trying brain stimulation to treat headaches

At VA San Diego, Dr. Albert Leung is leading a trial of repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation to treat persistent headaches. Such headaches are often seen in military personnel with concussions.

[Read More](#)



## **Live Whole Health Episode #74: Improving your life with gratitude**

Gratitude is a quality, attitude, or expression of thankful appreciation, and it's a positive emotion that can serve a biological purpose: Scientists have measured positive effects on the body and mind from a gratitude practice. Often, the negative situations in our daily lives get most of our attention and lead to increased worry, stress and anxiety, distracting us from the positive or good things in our lives.


[Read More](#)



## **Take VA's White Ribbon Pledge**

White Ribbon VA is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence across VA. Everyone can help by pledging to never commit, condone, or remain silent about all forms of violence. Please join your fellow Veterans and VA employees across the country and take the White Ribbon VA pledge.


[Read More](#)



## **Veteran eager to get back on motorcycle with new prosthesis**

It typically takes six to eight weeks to create a prosthesis for an amputee but Mechenbier received his in three thanks to the work of Pittsburgh VA orthotist/prosthetist Andrew Chambers and his team.

[Read More](#)



## **Veterans can hike, bike, paddle across America with help from Warrior Expeditions**

Air Force Veteran Emerald Ralston stepped off the southern point of the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain, Georgia, March 19. Since then, she has been hiking, connecting with nature and recovering from a difficult transition out of the military. She's on a mission to complete the 2,185-mile long trail through the help of Warrior Expeditions.

[Read More](#)



## **My Life, My Story**

Since 2013, writers from the "My Life, My Story" project have asked more than 5,000 Veterans at VA hospitals around the U.S. to tell their life stories.

With the Veteran's permission, those stories go into the Veteran's medical record so that VA health care providers can read and get to know their patients better.

This podcast will share our favorite stories from over the years.

[Read More](#)

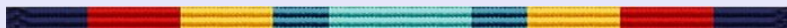


## **Mindfulness for Your Health**

The Benefits of Living Moment by Moment

Scientists are looking at how mindfulness can boost your well-being and help you build healthier habits.

[Read More](#)



**PTSD Awareness Month: Make a difference  
in the lives of Veterans in crisis**



During PTSD Awareness Month, explore rewarding VA careers that help Veterans take charge of their mental health and pursue fuller lives.

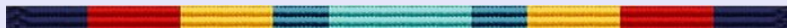
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## **LGBT Veteran care evolves, continues to improve**

Lorry Luscri is one of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Veteran Care Coordinators at each VA medical center. She has a very straightforward message for Veterans with LGBT and related identities. "You do not have to be afraid to come to the VA for care," she said. "You are and have always been welcome here and should take advantage of all the great services available through the VA for all Veterans."

[Read More](#)



## **Women Veterans – we need your help**

In honor of Women Veteran's Day this June, the women of the Million Veteran Program (MVP) invite you to join them in the program. MVP is a national research program to learn how genes, lifestyle and military exposures affect health and illness.

Women Veterans deserve a seat at the table in medical research. They want doctors who understand them better, with treatments and breakthroughs designed for their needs. By enrolling in MVP, you help ensure women aren't left out of medical research that could potentially improve or save the lives of fellow women Veterans. Enrollment is completely voluntary.

To learn more and enroll today, visit [mvp.va.gov](http://mvp.va.gov) or call 1-866-441-6075.

[Read More](#)



## **Beat the Heat**

Staying Safe in the Summertime

Going out for some fun in the sun? Find ways to protect your whole body from hot weather.

[Read More](#)



## **VHA Webinar for Gulf War Veterans**

On June 22, 2021, VA will hold a virtual class on Gulf War exposures and health concerns. Topics to be covered are potential exposures, research findings, health effects, available resources, and steps to manage symptoms. [Read more.](#)



## West Texas VA plans to "Beat the Heat" this summer

Veterans who depend on medications that don't do well in the heat are at risk of hospitalization if that medicine goes bad. West Texas VA is fixing that with a pilot program called Beat the Heat.

[Read More](#)



The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced five burial updates and four new identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

**Navy Radioman 3rd Class Earl M. Ellis, 23, of Hope,**

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 Ellis. He will be buried on Oct. 23, 2021, in Sutter Creek, California. [Read about Ellis.](#)

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Neal K. Todd**, 22, of Akeley, Minnesota, 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 Todd. He will be buried on July 10, 2021, in his hometown. [Read about Todd.](#)

**Army Sgt. Lloyd A. Alumbaugh**, 21, of Jasper, Missouri, was a member of Ambulance Company, 7th Medical Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 28, 1950, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Alumbaugh will be buried June 25, 2021, in Reeds, Missouri. [Read about Alumbaugh.](#)

**Army Pfc. John J. Sitarz**, 19, of Weirton, West Virginia, was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Germeter, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, when he was declared missing in action on Nov. 2, 1944. Sitarz could not be recovered because of the ongoing fighting, and his status was changed to killed in action on Nov. 3, 1945. Sitarz will be buried at Arlington National

Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, at a date yet to be determined.

[Read about Sitarz.](#)

**Army Staff Sgt. Raymond C. Blanton**, 19, of Richmond, Virginia, was assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Germeter, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, when he was killed in action on Oct. 14, 1944. Blanton could not be recovered because of the on-going fighting. He was declared non-recoverable in 1951. Blanton will be buried July 1, 2021, in his hometown. [Read about Blanton.](#)

**Army Cpl. Kenneth R. Foreman**, 19, was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, after his unit was attacked by enemy forces as they attempted to withdraw near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Foreman.](#)

**Army Sgt. Elwood M. Truslow**, 20, was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 12, 1950, after his unit was attacked by enemy forces as they attempted to withdraw near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Truslow.](#)

**Army 1st Lt. Myles W. Esmay**, 21, was a member of Company B, 236th Engineer Combat Battalion, reinforcing the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), also known as Merrill's Marauders. Esmay's battalion arrived at the recently captured airfield in Myitkyina, Burma, on May 28, 1944, where they were

tasked with holding the airfield and taking part in the siege of Myitkyina. On June 4, the battalion attacked Japanese forces at Namkwi village northwest of the airfield. The fighting lasted until June 7. Esmay was reported to have been killed on the last day of fighting. Interment services are pending. [Read about Esmay.](#)

**Navy Seaman 2nd Class Walter R. Pentico**, 17, 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 Pentico. Interment services are pending. [Read about Pentico.](#)



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