



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, January 23, 2022

Volume 13, Issue 04



## **This-N-That**

Good evening Jim,

A first of its kind is now on base at Fort Hood! The VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) opened it's post on base at Fort Hood.

I think it's great, but not really sure how well that will work out for all Veterans gaining access to them. So many base regulations have changed over the years, and I personally have not been on any base since 1996 when dad retired. But I do wish them well.

We're once again in blood crisis mode and not enough supply to meet demand. So, I ask each of you if you're able to either contact the local VA hospital or Red Cross about donating

blood today.

It's been fifteen years now since legislation was presented, passed, and signed into law regarding drinking water at Marine Base Camp LeJeune and people are still fighting to get any benefit at all.

We had a bill drafted and we didn't beat it to the punch before the other piece was submitted and passed, and the major difference was we had nearly 10k hard copy signatures to go with our bill, and ours had covered benefits and medical care and expenses and the bill accepted only covered expenses, or to the best of memory.

It's almost like Vietnam all over again but this time it's at home and not abroad.

Dad was stationed at MCAS Cherry Point so I don't think that base was involved, or as involved as LeJeune was.

And I do remember being told many times over, but never was able to get a copy, but I had been told that the CG of the Marine Corps had sent a letter to the base commander back in 1958 instructing him to notify all base residents and on base contractors of the water contamination, and it hadn't been done as ordered so people just didn't know for a long time, and by then people including children were getting sick and dying.

I honestly can't imagine how the parents felt to watch as their children were dying and no one could figure out why, and all they could do was stand back and watch as their children slipped away.

On the good side, I've heard legislation is on the table now to

automatically enroll all eligible people who either retire or leave the service with honorable papers. This is good as it will save some time as far as filing a claim would go, but I've not seen it yet, so not sure what all is in that bill, but when I find out I will be sure to pass along the information.

I only hear from Veterans, families and spouses/widows when they have an issue with the VA, but I'd really like to hear from anyone who knows of a problem that isn't properly being addressed like Veteran Homelessness, Suicide, Healthcare, claims denial, etc.

We truly don't want anyone giving up on anything needed, earned, due and just! I can't begin to make any promises or commitments, but I will do what I can to either address the issue, or provide what information I have to further assist in a claim.

I personally have stopped working on claims and appeals a few years back as it's not an easy task and for me it was literally swallowing up my life and preventing me from working on other issues and concerns properly.

We have added two new pieces of legislation to the **TAKE ACTION** list. But we still do need to continue putting the pressure on them.

I've mentioned in the past few newsletters tax season is just around the corner! If you're not sure what is and isn't deductible, here is a link to a check list to gather all the information you might need to have your income taxes prepared. So, if you click [HERE](#), you will be taken to a download screen for a tax planning guide!

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.

With an account, you will be able to access thousands more documents, be able to comment on the various articles we post and share with you, and more.

Once your account is approved, you will receive notice of approval, be sure to check your spam folder as they do end up there once in a while.

If you choose to create an account to access more information, please keep in mind not to use your E-Mail address as a user ID, and that the system is case sensitive. Neither the webmaster or myself have access to password information as it's 132-bit DoD level security encoded. But, if need be, we can change it for you.

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)



## **Leader profile: Lelia Jackson excels in service to VA**

When it comes to taking on the challenge of being a leader at VA, Lelia Jackson credits much of her success to working with and for supportive leaders. "I'm honored and humbled when I'm asked to lead major change initiatives," said Jackson, director of the Veterans Health Administration's Assault and Harassment Prevention Office. "It says [...]"

[Read More](#)



## **How a Little Weight Loss Can Boost Your Quality of Life**

Losing just a little bit of weight right now can have immediate effects on your quality of life. From less joint pain to more energy to better sleep, you can start seeing and feeling the benefits of healthy weight loss nearly right away.

[Watch Video](#)



**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. Click [HERE](#) and help a Veteran.

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



## **Is your identity at risk? Join this free virtual event Jan 25 for ways to protect yourself**

VA Privacy Service launches its first Speaker Series event of the year to recognize Data Privacy Week and Identity Theft Awareness week.

[Read More](#)



## **Back from the Brink: One Marine's Recovery from Suicidal Thoughts**

From losing all four limbs in an IED explosion in Afghanistan, to battling back from the brink of suicide, Marine Sgt. John Peck is now an author and motivational speaker who hopes to help people who may be in their own dark place.

[Read More](#)



## **Gulf Coast Veterans' Creative Arts entries place in national competition**

Two Gulf Coast Veterans' works from the July 2020 Gulf Coast Creative Arts Competition placed nationally in the 2021 Creative Arts Festival.

[Read More](#)



# Your actions

**could save a life.**

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

VeteransCrisisLine.net





## **Amarillo VA hosts 4th Mission blood drive to aid severe supply**

As part of its support to the community during the pandemic, Amarillo VA's next 4th Mission Blood drive is scheduled for Feb. 25.

[Read More](#)



## **Blood Needed: Armed Services Blood Program Urges Donors to Step Up**

The Armed Services Blood Program says donations are down and is encouraging volunteers to step up and donate blood to replenish the supply.

[Read More](#)



## **Quilt guild donates to hospice residents and homeless Veteran's baby**

Quilt Guild in Georgia donated 12 quilts for the Veteran hospice residents over the holiday season. One extra to homeless Veteran's baby.

[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** .....



**You Asked, We Answered: What should I know about the Omicron variant and booster shots?**

You Asked, We Answered: Learn about the Omicron variant and how it differs from other strains, and the benefit of COVID-19 booster shots.

[Read More](#)



## **Six Immediate Health Benefits You Will See If You Lose a Little Weight Now**

Did you know that dropping just 10 pounds of body weight takes 40 pounds of pressure off your knees? That's equivalent to not carrying around a cinder block.

[Read More](#)



## **House Committee Discusses Toxic Exposure**

The VFW participated in a roundtable, "The True Cost of our Promise to Toxic-Exposed Veterans," hosted by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The discussion focused on [H.R.3967](#), the Honoring our PACT Act of 2021, a comprehensive plan to provide veterans with health care and benefits related to toxic exposures. VFW Legislative Director Pat Murray stated that VA's process in determining presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures should include transparency, timelines, and an independent review board. [Watch the roundtable.](#)



## ***Links to Other Stories***

- 1) [Albany Woman Charged with Burglarizing Albany VA Building](#)
- 2) [Are you eligible to file for benefits based on presumptive exposure?](#)
- 3) [Army wife uses AirTag hack to track her movers while PCSing](#)
- 4) [Business Owner Sentenced for Fraud Scheme](#)
- 5) [Copays for Veterans mental health care would be waived under new rule](#)
- 6) [Defendant Who Stole Veteran and Social Security Benefits Sentenced to Federal Prison](#)
- 7) [DOJ and Federal Way, Washington doctor settle False Claims Act allegations over drug testing](#)
- 8) [Former Biloxi VA Employee Sentenced to Prison for Stealing VA Property](#)
- 9) [Fort Hood: First VFW on a military installation dedicated to local Veteran](#)
- 10) [Four Sentenced for Bribery and Scheme to Defraud VA and SBA](#)
- 11) [Kansas Veteran family receives \\$10K from Home Depot to furnish home](#)
- 12) [Marine Vet and spouse deputies who shared infant child took their own lives, their sheriff said](#)
- 13) [Missoula vascular surgeon settles alleged health care fraud claims for \\$3.7 million](#)

- 14) [New unit formed to combat health care fraud in West Virginia](#)
- 15) [Owner of Diving School Sentenced to 27 Months in Prison for Wire Fraud](#)
- 16) [Service members and families affected by toxic water at Marine base still seeking justice decades later](#)
- 17) [Slidell Woman Sentenced to Three Years of Probation for Health Care Fraud Scheme](#)



## **Reduce your risk for cervical cancer**

Speak to your VA provider today about how to schedule a cervical cancer screening, your Pap and/or HPV test at your local VA facility.

[Read More](#)



## **New to TRICARE? Check Out TRICARE 101**

Are you a recent TRICARE enrollee? Newly eligible to enroll? Or even a seasoned user? If you have any questions about your TRICARE benefits, you should first check out the TRICARE 101 page.



[Read More](#)

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## EVEST Act Passes House

The House passed VFW-supported [H.R. 4673](#), the Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition (EVEST) Act. This bill would require VA to automatically enroll eligible veterans into its health care system upon receipt of confirmation from DOD. If passed into law, this proposal would provide a seamless transition of health care, unless transitioning service members choose to opt out of the VA health care system. Now the VFW calls upon the Senate to take up this important piece of legislation and pass this bill.





## **Get vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect each other, health care workers: SecVA**

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best way to protect others and health care workers from hospitalization and death, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said Jan. 19 at a Blue Star Families online forum.

[Read More](#)



## **Flu Shots are Available Now and Are More Important than Ever**

If you haven't gotten your flu shot, there's still time. Flu season usually peaks from December through February, but could possibly continue through May.

[Read More](#)



## **COVID-19 Booster is Critical**

As we approach the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and with rapidly increasing cases of the Omicron variant, CDC vaccine guidelines include receiving a vaccine booster. Data has shown those who are fully vaccinated and have received a booster shot are less likely to be contagious and require hospitalization. Veterans, caregivers, and spouses may receive the COVID-19 vaccine and vaccine booster by checking with their [local VA facility](#) for vaccine clinic times.

[Learn More](#)



## **VA employee revolutionizes ridesharing for Veterans**

Innovation Revolutionary: VA employee Charles Franklin revolutionizes ridesharing to tackle health care inequality for Veterans.

[Read More](#)



## **New MHS Video Connect Increases Convenient Access to Care for Patients**

Here's a first-person account from Air Force Lt. Col. John A. DaLomba, MHS GENESIS Patient Portal and MHS Video Connect solution owner at the Defense Health Agency Health Informatics Branch.

[Watch Video](#)



## **House Passes Reserve Component GI Bill Equity Bill**

The House passed the FRA-supported Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act (H.R.1836), sponsored by Rep. Mike Levin (Calif.), which would expand the types of duty National Guard and Reserve members can use to earn eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. This bill ensures Reserve Component increasingly frequent activations count as time toward this education benefit, regardless of the length of time of the activation. The bill now goes to the Senate for further consideration.



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 01/22/21)

Please note, we've added 2 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) [H.R. 855, the Veterans Expedited TSA Screening \(VETS\) Safe Travel Act](#)
- 18) [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.

- 19) Support Repeal of TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee
- 20) HR 1585 & S 565- Provide for the treatment of Vets who participated in the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as Radiation Exposed
- 21) Please Support S. 344, the Major Richard Star Act
- 22) Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act
- 23) S. 810 & H.R. 1972, the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021
- 24) HR 109 Establish an Advisory Committee on Implementation by the DVA of an electronic health record
- 25) HR 2372 and S 952 will Provide for Presumption of Service Connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to toxins
- 26) Please Ask you Senator to support S.952 the Warfighters Act
- 27) Support Improving VA Homelessness Program
- 28) S. 976, Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
- 29) H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act
- 30) H.R. 912, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans Mental Health Act
- 31) S. 976, the Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
- 32) HR 2269 and S 657 cover herbicide exposure in Thailand
- 33) Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Help Military Survivors
- 34) Legislation asks for Study of Involuntary Discharges for Women
- 35) H.R. 2436, the Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act
- 36) H.R. 958—the Protecting Moms Who Served Act
- 37) HR 2127 and S 927, the TEAM bills Veterans Exposed to Toxic Substances
- 38) Ask your Senator to Support S.1520 Military Justice

## Improvement Act

- 39) Ask your member to support S.810 and H.R. 1972 The Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2021
- 40) 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
- 41) Ask your Senator to Support S.1520 Military Justice Improvement Act
- 42) HR 855, VETS Safe Travel Act
- 43) HR 3368, the Guam, American Samoa, and Johnston Island bill
- 44) H.R. 2521, Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access (DOULA) for Veterans Affairs Act of 2021
- 45) H.R. 1273, the Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act
- 46) H.R. 2968, the Military and Veteran Student Loan Relief Act
- 47) H.R. 845, the VA Billing Accountability Act
- 48) Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Bill Introduced in House
- 49) Action Alert: Tell Congress to Support the COST of War Act and the Honoring our PACT Act!
- 50) HR 303 and S 1147 The Retired Pay Restoration Act
- 51) Ask Your Legislators to Support Concurrent Receipt Reform HR-1282
- 52) HR 1656 TREAT PTSD Act
- 53) S. 1664, the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Processing Claims Improvement
- 54) H.R. 2724 — VA Peer Support Enhancement for MST Survivors Act
- 55) Please Support H.R. 3452 —Veterans Preventative Health Coverage Fairness Act
- 56) HR 2192, The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2021

- 57) HR 5026, The Panama Canal Zone Veterans Act of 2021
- 58) HR 3368, HR 5026, HR 2269, S 657 are all Toxic Exposure Bills that need special attention and more pressure to get passed!
- 59) H.R. 4627, Veterans' Culturally Competent Care Act of 2021
- 60) S. 2172, Building Solutions for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness
- 61) H.R. 4571, the SERVICE Act of 2021
- 62) H.R. 4732, Protect Individual Unemployability Benefit for All Disabled
- 63) S. 1937, the Delivering Optimally Urgent Labor Access (DOULA) for Veterans Act of 2021
- 64) S. 2283 and H.R. 5073—the Crisis Hotline REACH for Veterans Act
- 65) HR 852 and S 221, United States - Israel PTSD Collaborative Research Act
- 66) Ask Congress to Preserve Arlington National Cemetery
- 67) HR 4949 and S 692, the Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2021
- 68) HR 2963, the VOW to Hire Heroes Extension Act of 2021
- 69) S 1970, The Clean Water for Military Families Act
- 70) Support S. 1198/H.R. 2819—the Solid Start Act of 2021
- 71) H.R. 3402/S. 976—Caring for Survivors Act of 2021
- 72) HR 3537 and S 1813, Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Act
- 73) S. 2386/H.R. 4575, the Veteran Peer Specialist Act
- 74) H.R. 5721—the VIPER Act
- 75) H.R. 5607, Justice for ALS Veterans Act
- 76) HR 2601 and S 1188, SFC Heath Robinson Burn Pit Transparency Act
- 77) S. 3017, Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act

- 78) H.R. 4794 and S. 2533, the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options (MAMMO) for Veterans Act
- 79) HR 1361 and S 444, AUTO for Veterans Act
- 80) H.R. 4880 and S. 2720, the Veterans' Prostate Cancer Treatment and Research Act
- 81) HR 2800, the WINGMAN Act
- 82) H.R. 5944, Veterans Administration Backlog Accountability Act of 2021
- 83) HR 3400, VA Emergency Transportation Act
- 84) HR 2992, TBI and PTSD Law Enforcement Training Act
- 85) HR 6260, the Casualty Assistance Reform Act of 2021
- 86) H.R. 6064, VA Compensation and Pension exams for claims related to military sexual trauma
- 87) H.R. 5819, Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act
- 88) HR 3596, the Lawrence J. Hackett, Jr. Vietnam Veterans Agent Orange Fairness Act



## **Protect yourself, your family and your data from vaccination card scams**

Forging or faking a vaccination card is punishable with up to five years in prison. Here's what you need to know to guard against scams.

[Read More](#)



## **CORRECTION: Can a Veteran Work While Receiving VA Service-Connected Compensation?**

Providing Veterans with accurate and transparent benefits information is of the utmost importance. This update removes any confusion from a recent episode titled, "Can Veterans Work While Receiving VA Disability."

[Watch](#)



## **HAC-Def Holds Hearing on Impact of CR Spending on Defense**

The House Appropriations, Defense Subcommittee held a hearing on the impact of funding the Department of Defense (DoD) with Continuing Resolutions (CR). The CR that funds the government at last year's funding level expires Feb. 18, and lawmakers lack an agreement or outline for the FY2022 spending bills. At the hearing, military officials raised alarm that recruitment, bonuses, changes of station, development of hypersonic weapons, and missile defense would suffer under a year-long funding stopgap CR while House Democrats and Republicans argue over which party is responsible for the spending stalemate. DoD Comptroller Mike McCord told lawmakers that the agency would lose at least \$24 billion of buying power under a year-long CR. According to GAO testimony, the DoD has been funded by CRs (temporary appropriations) during the Fall in all but one year since 2010. The exception was in 2019, when Congress approved regular appropriations by Sept. 30, which is the end of the federal fiscal year.

The FRA signed onto a letter with other members of The Military Coalition (TMC), that was sent to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer (N.Y.), Senate Minority leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) and House Minority leader Kevin McCarthy (Calif.) urging them to pass the Fiscal Year (FY2022) Defense Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bills before funding expires on Feb. 18. As noted in the letter: "A CR damages the uniformed services' ability to equip and train the total force. The services would be prevented from starting new programs that commanders need and instead, devote funds to lower priorities. During CRs resources tighten, procurement programs languish, and taxpayer dollars are spent ineffectively. Casualties of an additional CR could include mission-critical training (inclusive of vital reserve component training) and required maintenance. Military families could suffer from inadequate maintenance and upgrades to military installations, and significant delays in household moves. They deserve better, and their care is crucial to the readiness and retention of service members."



# 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



## Post-9/11 students at VA Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) now required to verify enrollment monthly

Are you a Post-9/11 GI Bill® student who relies on your Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments while enrolled in school? If so, are you aware of the new monthly Enrollment Verification requirement for the 2021-2022 school year?

[Read More](#)



## Blood Donations Needed to Ease National Shortage



The Red Cross continues to confront challenges caused by COVID-19, including an estimated 10% overall decline in the number of people donating blood as well as ongoing blood drive cancellations and staffing limitations.

[Read More](#)



## **EHR Roll Out Delayed Again**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has again delayed the continuing roll out of the new Electronic Health Record System (EHR). This time the source of the delay is the COVID-19 pandemic. The VA announced the deployment of the new system to the VA Central Ohio Healthcare System, which was supposed to take place on March 5, will instead be pushed back almost two months to April 30. The VA is worried that staff absences and attendance limitations because of the recent nationwide surge in coronavirus cases will impede training time needed before the activation of the system. In December, VA leaders announced a new deployment schedule for the system - based on the Cerner Millennium software platform, the same one being used by Department of Defense (DoD) - that would start with Ohio facilities in March.

They also unveiled a newly restructured office overseeing the work and new training plans to fix problems found with the initial deployment of the software in Washington state VA facilities in 2020. VA officials said they are hopeful that the two-month delay in the Ohio rollout will not affect the rest of the deployment schedule for the software. The VA medical center in Walla Walla, Wash., is still on track to begin later this

spring.

The house recently passed the "Electronic Health Record Transparency Act" (H.R.4591) that will require the VA to submit to Congress quarterly reports that evaluate the performance of the EHR. The association believes congressional oversight of the ongoing implementation of VA technology upgrades that will provide a joint DoD/VA EHR is vital to ensuring improvements to the system. FRA wants to ensure adequate funding for DoD and the VA health care resource sharing in delivering seamless, cost-effective, quality services to personnel wounded in combat and other veterans and their families. Some members of Congress have expressed concern about the cost and length of time to fully implement the EHR. The cost and the long time for implementation notwithstanding, FRA believes there is a tremendous opportunity with the two departments using the same EHR.



**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)**



**Tracer drug – precise cancer staging for Veteran**

Air Force Veteran participating in phase 3 clinical trial at Harry S Truman VA aimed at improving the ability to stage prostate cancer.

[Read More](#)



**VA Secretary McDonough Speaks at Blue Star  
Families Event**

During a recent Blue Star Families online forum VA Secretary Denis McDonough emphasized getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best way to protect others, including health care workers, from hospitalization and death.

[Read More](#)



## **Important Legislation Included in FY 2022 NDAA**

Attention Action Corps Members: Due to your hard work and dedicated advocacy, many provisions supporting service members, veterans, and their families were passed in the [National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) for Fiscal Year 2022](#). We want to highlight a few provisions that could affect you or many of those on whose behalf you advocate. The NDAA contains over 700 provisions, including several pieces of VFW-supported legislation added as amendments:

- **Military Pay Raise.** Service members received a 2.7 percent increase in basic pay for calendar year 2022. This raise is the product of the automatic annual statutory calculation that is aligned to the Employment Cost Index.
- **Military Justice Reform** (Subtitles D and E). Sexual assault and harassment in the military are pervasive issues affecting an alarming number of service members, past and present. Provisions within these subtitles represent substantive changes in how the military handles these cases, including sexual assault investigations that will now be fully independent of chains of command.
- **The National Global War on Terrorism Memorial** (Sec. 6605). This authorizes a Global War on Terrorism memorial to

be constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The memorial for America's longest running war will be rightly placed among the war memorials of past generations so that future generations will always remember.

- **Updates and Preservation of Memorials to Chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery** (Sec. 584). This legislation authorizes needed updates and corrections to the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplain memorials located at Arlington National Cemetery. Updates will include the addition of chaplains who have died in service to our nation as far back as World War II.

- **The Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act** (Sec. 641). This legislation will provide free lifetime access to national parks and public lands that honor service members, veterans, and Gold Star families. The National Park Service offered free access through their annual America the Beautiful pass, but this law now creates an enduring lifetime benefit.

- **Improvement of Postpartum Care for Members of the Military and Dependents** (Sec. 707). This will improve postpartum care by creating clinical practice guidelines for postpartum care in military medical treatment facilities. Pelvic health assessment and treatment, and screening for postpartum depression will be addressed.

- **Pilot Program on Assistance for Mental Health Appointment Scheduling at Military Medical Treatment Facilities** (Sec. 734). This establishes a pilot program to assist in scheduling mental health appointments to create a warm handoff and eliminate the barrier to gaps between appointments to ensure participants have continuity of mental health treatment.

- **Afghanistan War Commission Act of 2021** (Sec. 1094). This act establishes a commission charged with investigating all aspects of United States' activities in Afghanistan from June

1, 2001, through August 30, 2021. Points of emphasis will include but not be limited to United States policy objectives, efficacy of efforts, intelligence activities, and circumstances leading to the downfall of the Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces. The commission's final report will be released to the public.

- **Basic Needs Allowance for Members on Active Service in the Armed Forces** (Sec. 601). Food insecurity among military families is a critical issue impacting an estimated 160,000 troops. The newly created Basic Needs Allowance will bring relief to many active duty families by helping to ensure yearly gross household income is equivalent to 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines as set by the Department of Health and Human Services.

- **Study on Employment of Military Spouses** (Sec. 567). Gainful employment for military spouses can be challenging for a variety of reasons including frequent relocations, licensure challenges, and child care access. This study directs a thorough evaluation of barriers leading to spouse unemployment and underemployment, as well as the identification of policy solutions.

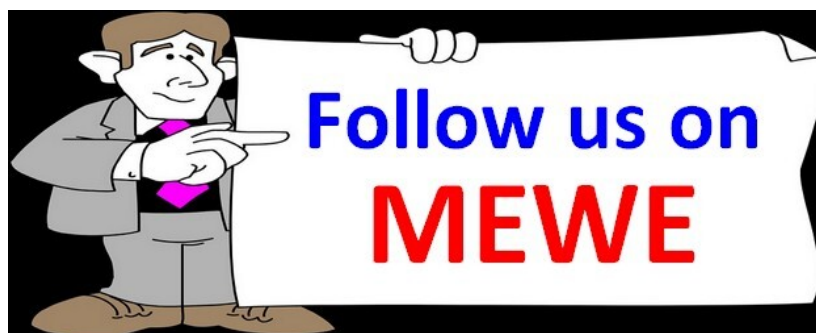
- **Equal Incentive Pay for Members of the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces** (Sec. 602). Recent wars and contingencies have highlighted disparities between the entitlements and benefits received by members of the active and reserve components. This policy change ensures incentive pay parity between members of the National Guard and Reserve, and those on active duty.

- **Standardization of Department of Defense Definitions for Terms Related to Suicide** (Sec. 726). Consistent suicide-related definitions and data collection are key to fully understanding suicide within the ranks. This provision will ensure core definitions and related data collection methods are

established and standardized across the Department of Defense (DOD).

- **GAO Biennial Study on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record Program** (Sec. 741). This legislation directs regular studies and reporting by the Government Accountability Office on the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) program. As a vital component of DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to align health care with individuals' unique exposures during service, these studies will help ensure the ILER program is functioning as intended.

- **Feasibility Study on Establishment of Housing History for Members of the Armed Forces** (Sec. 526). Veteran success after service is in part determined by having reliable housing. However, not all transitioning service members (TSMs) leave service with verifiable housing histories if they have lived only in government-provided housing. Born out of a VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow proposal, this study will determine the feasibility of providing TSMs with a housing history form that can demonstrate their reliability as tenants to prospective civilian landlords.



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## **How to make National Vietnam War Veterans Day more meaningful for Vets**

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is just over two months away, and any organization who wants a simple, free way to make the day more meaningful for Vietnam Veterans can become the Vietnam War Commemoration's "commemorative partners."

[Read More](#)





## **Organizations Can Become Commemorative Partners Honoring Vietnam War Veterans**

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is just over two months away, and any organization that wants a simple, free way to make the day more meaningful for Vietnam Veterans can become a Vietnam War Commemoration "commemorative partner."

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- 3) [Disaster Recovery: School Districts in Socially Vulnerable Communities Faced Heightened Challenges after Recent Natural Disasters](#)



**Live Whole Health #106: Muscle awareness**

Have you ever shoveled snow and woke up the next day feeling muscles that you forgot you had? That's the kind of physical muscle awareness you'll remember for days! Follow along for a more mindful approach – muscle awareness meditation.

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## **Borne the Battle: Benefits Breakdown, SSVF Program**

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) works to assist homeless Veterans and their families. Listen in to learn about SSVF, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, and other VA programs to prevent homelessness.

[Learn More](#)



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- 2) [FDA Releases CDRH Health of Women Strategic Plan to Better Inform Medical Device Research and Regulation for All Women](#)
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- 5) [FDA Drug Shortages](#)
- 6) [FDA-TRACK: What's New](#)
- 7) [Getinge USA Sales, LLC Recalls the Vaporizer Sevoflurane Maquet Filling for Flow Family Anesthesia Systems Due to a Risk of Harmful Chemical Exposure](#)
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## **VA medical centers observe MLK Day – a day of service**

MLK Day is designated as a national day of service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities.

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## **Army Veteran finds stable housing, medical care**

Today, Veteran Elden Branch spends much of his time playing bass guitar and relaxing on the beach in Pensacola, Florida. Not too long ago, he was sleeping in his car or couch surfing. Then he connected with VA.

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## **Red Cross: National blood crisis may put patients at risk**

The American Red Cross is facing a national blood crisis – its worst blood shortage in more than a decade. Here's how to help.

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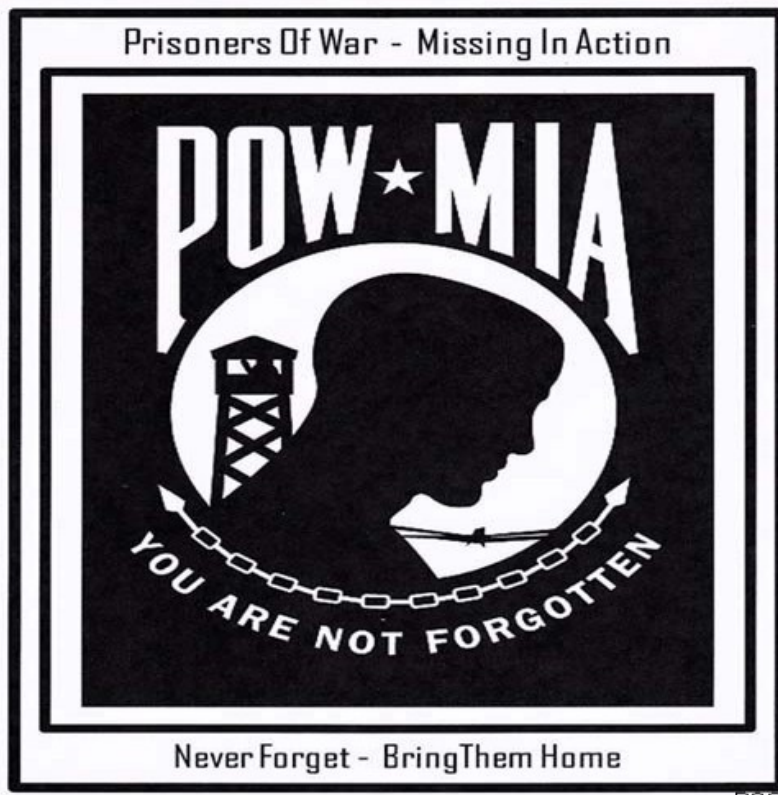


## **Protect yourself from vaccination card scams**

As we continue to live with the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers are coming up with new ways to take advantage of people or steal their information. Make sure you know how to protect yourself, your family and your vaccination data against scams.

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## **Women and Money: Taking control of your financial future**

The next free seminar in the Wellness Wednesday Financial Education series, Jan. 19, looks at women and money. There are two, hour-long sessions at noon and 3 p.m. Eastern Time (9 a.m. and noon Pacific Time).

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**Thank your body with muscle awareness**

Have you ever shoveled snow and got up the next day feeling muscles that you forgot you had? That's the kind of muscle awareness you'll remember for days! But there's a more mindful (and less painful) approach – muscle awareness meditation.

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**Enhance care for women Veterans with your VA career**

With ongoing investments in hiring and support, VA is addressing the need to better serve women Veterans head-on. Women Veterans are the fastest growing group of Veterans in the nation. Over 700,000 women have served in the military in the last two decades, joining a lineage that can be traced back to the Civil War.

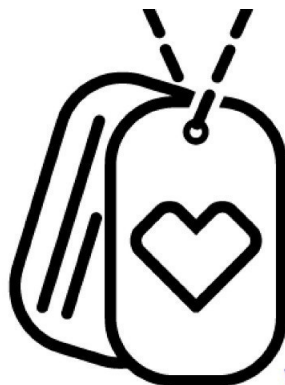
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## **You can reduce your risk of cervical cancer**

Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that is largely preventable. One form of prevention is through regular cervical cancer screenings.

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## **You'd Be Surprised How Much Eating Habits Affect You and Your Readiness**

Physical fitness is more than just a set of scores measuring your body-mass index, run times, or how many push ups you can do. Optimizing your physical fitness requires a good diet, healthy lifestyle, strength, flexibility, balance, and endurance all working together.

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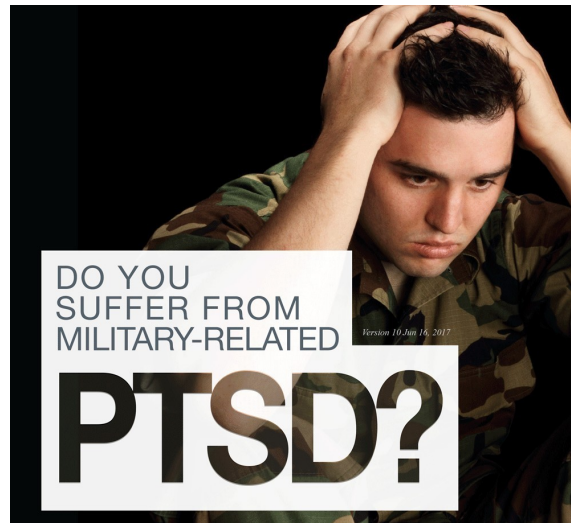


## **Fast Facts About the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)**

Curious about Section 8 housing? Below are five fast facts to better understand the Housing Choice Voucher Program to help you on your path of finding government assistance.

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



## **Long-Acting Contraceptives are a Popular Choice with Service Members**

At medical centers, hospitals and clinics around the world, the Military Health System provides education, counseling, and access to birth control.

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## **How to Get Urgent Care Under Your TRICARE Health Plan**



Do you have an injury or illness that isn't quite serious enough for a trip to the emergency room? This might be the right time to go to an urgent care center. Most TRICARE beneficiaries can go to an urgent care center whenever they need to. You just want to be sure to check out and follow the [urgent care rules](#) for your health plan.

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### **#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran Julie Butner**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran Julie Butner, who served as a commander during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Julie Butner graduated from Texas Christian University (TCU) in 1988 with a degree in nutrition. A member of the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at TCU, she received her Army Reserve Commission upon graduation and began to serve as a dietitian.

We honor your service, Julie!

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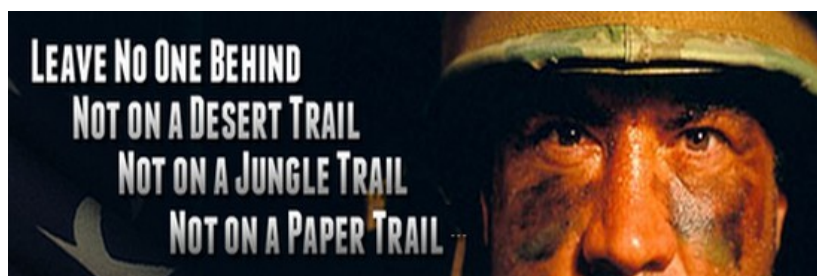


### **#VeteranOfTheDay Marine Corps Veteran Julia E. Hamblet**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Marine Corps Veteran Julia E. Hamblet, who served as the director of the Women's Reserve from 1953 to 1959. Julia E. Hamblet was born in May 1916 in Winchester, Massachusetts. After attending high school in Plainfield, New Jersey, Hamblet went to Vassar College to obtain a degree in economics.

We honor her service.

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## **Dr. King: A Leader of Nonviolent Social Transformation**

Two top health officials share their perspectives on the importance of honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr..

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## **#VeteranOfTheDay Coast Guard Veteran Dorothy Dempsey**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Coast Guard Veteran Dorothy Dempsey, who served in the Women's Reserve during World War II.

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## **#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran Wendall Robert Cram**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran Wendall Robert Cram, who served during World War II as a ski trooper from 1941 to 1945.

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## **#VeteranOfTheDay Air Force Veteran Virgil Grissom**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Air Force Veteran Virgil Grissom, who served as a fighter pilot in Korea and was one of NASA's first astronauts.

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## **Borne the Battle #265: Benefits Breakdown, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Support for Veterans Facing Homelessness**

This episode of Borne the Battle—a benefits breakdown—features Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF).

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### **#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran James Walter Hale**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran James Walter Hale, who served during World War II and the Korean War.

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## **#VeteranOfTheDay Navy Veteran Barbara June Stone**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Navy Veteran Barbara June Stone, who served in the WAVES program as a yeoman third class during World War II.

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## **Seymour Kaplan: American Hero**

Army Veteran Seymour Kaplan served as a Yiddish translator in Germany during World War II and witnessed the aftermath of the Dachau concentration camp.

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## **#VeteranOfTheDay Army Veteran Walter E. Hughes**

Today's #VeteranOfTheDay is Army Veteran Walter E. Hughes, who served as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division during World War II.

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## **America250: Army Veteran Nicky D. Bacon**

This week's America250 salute is Army Veteran Nicky D. Bacon, who was a Medal of Honor recipient during his second tour of duty in Vietnam.

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