



# **Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, February 08, 2015**  
**Volume 6, Issue 06**

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

Well it seems the DoD is still looking into Tricare, the fees and costs and still looking for ways to not only increase your costs, but cut or remove all benefits entirely, we're just not sure where they are headed.

Now they're looking at co-pays from \$10 to \$20 depending on rank, but no real specifics as of yet.

Starting this week, pharmacy co-pays increase by \$3.00 each!

As of this writing we only know there are several actions pending in regard to Blue Water Navy, Da Nang Harbor.

We know that Commander Wells is working very hard to get legislation co-sponsored by many in Congress and we brought that information to you a few weeks ago, and we still urge you to contact your Congressman and ask they co-sponsor the bill. Phone numbers are at the bottom of this newsletter.

In addition there has been a suit filed Robert H. Gray v. Robert A. McDonald 13-3339 in which we wish them all the best and for a rock solid win, which could be a win for all BWN!

Tomah VA in Madison, Wisconsin is still somewhat in the news and now Senator Tammy Baldwin has called for a full scale investigation surrounding over medication and the immediate cause of deaths from that facility with PTSD patients particularly a Marine Corps Veteran.

If and when the investigation is done and completed, as soon as we can obtain a copy of the report, we will let you know so you can read it for yourself.

A new poll from Concerned Veterans for America shows strong support for health care options outside of Veterans Affairs Department facilities, despite a new announcement from VA officials about plans to cut back on those programs.

Currently the cards that the VA has sent or is still sending out to all Veterans, has had some rather serious problems in that in most cases the card is worthless at helping Veterans obtain medical care. The mileage from home to a VA Medical Facility is supposed to be the guideline at forty miles.

However many Veterans have contacted us and told us that being 43 miles plus are still being told no you have to come to the VA Medical Center. So this begs the question, if this program isn't working then how will the other program work any better?

The outside proposed budget for the VA shows a \$74.5 billion dollar figure for discretionary spending, a 9% increase over the previous year.

Makes one wonder why they cannot be more specific on budget line items so there isn't a need for such a high amount in discretionary spending. Especially since there is a huge need in hiring physicians, licensed support staff, facility upgrades, etc.

Only \$15 Billion is allotted for new medical staff. And these numbers have many advocacy groups upset saying this is still no where enough money, and we have to agree 100% with them.

We have hit a whole new mile stone with the Veterans-For-Change Web Site two weeks ago with over 2 Million visitors.

We've upgraded to a newer version of software and with that has come a few improvements on the User side of the system making it even more user friendly.

Additionally we've opened up 95% of the system so you don't have to subscribe except to use many of the forums that are era and gender specific and can only be seen and accessed once you subscribe.

We will be adding another 800-1,000 more documents here we hope within the next 5-7 days in many of the libraries. So visit often and the announcement will be seen on the front page.

To help you better prepare Veterans-For-Change provides [Tax Deduction Finder & Problem Minimizer](#) you can download, print out and locate all the documents you need for tax preparation.

Have you lost a loved one, friend, buddy who served our Country? We'd like very much to honor them by placing their picture and what ever information you'd like to have others know in our memorial pages.

Visit today <http://veterans-for-change.org/gallery3/> and do let us know how we can best honor your loved one or friend.

If you're a member on Face Book, be sure to visit our Faced Book Page for Veterans-For-Change and like us, and spread the word! If you're a fan of Twitter, be sure to visit us there and follow us!

And if you have not been to or visited our website lately, take a visit today. It's 100% free. You do need to subscribe to view all the Forums, to post freely, and a few of the libraries which are restricted. Visit today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Advocacy Group Members and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

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

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### ***Free Tax Prep for Veterans***

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has started accepting electronically filed income tax returns as well as paper returns. For a list of free tax preparation services for current and former military members and their families, see [this Military.com article](#).

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### ***VA Announces New Regions***

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that it is taking the first steps under the MyVA initiative to use state boundaries to divide the country into five regions. The new regions will allow VA to begin the process of producing a single regional framework to enhance internal coordination. Each organization within VA will begin work to ensure their structures are aligned within this framework by the end of June, 2015. The regional map is available at [www.va.gov/opa/publications/docs/myva-5-regions-map.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/docs/myva-5-regions-map.pdf).

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## ***My HealthVet***

The Department of Veterans Affairs [My HealthVet website](#) is designed to allow veterans enrolled in VA health care to check their health records, make and cancel appointments, or refill prescriptions from a computer or tablet. Veterans can send secure e-mails back and forth to their doctors about available treatments without having to go in for an appointment or wait for a phone call. The VA hopes to expand the program and other benefits under one specific app for Android or iPhones as early as this summer.

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## ***Lawmakers Noncommittal on Military Retirement and Health Care Changes***

President Obama and members of Congress on Thursday were quick to praise the Military Compensation and Retirement Commission for its report -- two years in the making -- but are holding off on saying what recommendations may get passed into law. The commission [laid out 15 recommendations that included overhauling the Defense Department's retirement and health care systems](#). It even offered a new [retirement system](#) that would enroll service members into a Thrift Savings Plan and offer new retirement options beyond the pension service members can receive after 20 years of service. For more details, see [this Military.com article](#).

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## ***Senate to Vote on Suicide Prevention Bill***

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on Wednesday voted to send to the floor legislation intended to help tackle suicide among veterans. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act has been reintroduced in the Senate following its overwhelming support in the House of Representatives. The anti-suicide bill was headed for easy passage in December when it failed on a procedural maneuver. The full Senate is expected to quickly pass the bill. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that, on average, some 22 veterans take their own lives each day.

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## ***The VA Discusses Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy***



An article was written by Marsden McGuire, M.D. of the Mental Health Standards of Care, Paula Schnurr, Ph. D. from the National Center for PTSD, and Tracey Smith, Ph.D. from the Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration. The article was published January 27, 2015 and titled "Prolonged Exposure: A first-line treatment for PTSD."

"In 2006, VA began a national training initiative to help VA clinicians learn two of the most effective types of psychotherapy for treating PTSD, Prolonged Exposure (PE) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). Today over 6,000 VA therapists have been trained in these treatments. These therapies are recommended as first-line treatments in all PTSD practice guidelines around the world, including the guideline jointly issued by VA and the Department of Defense. VA requires that all Veterans have access to these treatments, and for good reason. They are effective for Veterans and non-Veterans alike."

These therapies were not the “first-line” treatments offered to me at the VA. My first-line treatments were five different types of medications. Most of which the medical community (including the VA website) warns against using because of the potential side effects and a propensity for addiction. In fact these two treatments were never offered to me and I began my treatment at the VA just after 2006 when I had no other option because I lost my job and subsequently my health insurance because of the PTSD.

The authors mention that there has been some recent concerns about these treatments and VA wait times. I can understand that. The PE therapy is actually part of the Cognitive Therapy treatment and in order for it to be effective the patient must be seen once a week for three to six months according to the VA's own website. In my own experience, they could only see me once every two months or so for 30 minutes at a time and that 30 minutes never involved any therapy, counselling, or even just talking about my experiences. Obviously, that is not going to work. The VA may be aware of these treatments, however they don't seem to be able to conduct them in a way that would be effective. It could simply be an issue of inadequate staffing levels and perhaps even a lack of available quality personnel. I also have to consider the fact that every treatment seems to require medications, frequently multiple types, no matter what and we all know that medications generate financial contributions to those institutions/individuals whom prescribe them not to mention the side effects and health issues they cause for the patient.

According to the authors, PE involves the patient talking about their traumatic experience repeatedly, which in turn causes the experience to be less painful and less dominating of the individual's life. They also mention that there is homework involved for the patient and that they should visit places that are safe, but that they would normally avoid. Now, I have to say that this does work. I have done these things myself on my own. You can talk to a trusted family member or friend in the comfort of your own home. You actually don't even have to talk about it if you don't want to. You can write about it, which I used quite effectively I might add, you can paint about it, make a song about it, etc. Use the method that works best for you.

I also visited places I would avoid like the grocery store. I did it in baby steps. I started by driving to the store and parking my vehicle. I did a little more every day until I actually could walk into the store, then actually shop and finally complete the process by waiting in line and checking out without panicking and running out of the store. It worked. Now, I go to all kinds of places and enjoy myself without incident. It takes practice, time and dedication, but it can work for you. The fact of the matter is, your success comes from YOU, not from someone else. You do not have to be dependent on someone or something else. Your guarantee is you.

They go on to say that the VA's aim is to provide all kinds of different types of therapies and treatment options, however, their own website only lists the PE, CBT and of course medication. Yet, they never mention that you can help yourself. Like the bible says, “Give a man a fish and he will have a meal. Teach a man HOW to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.” You can conduct these “techniques” on your own. If someone can learn these techniques, and ultimately teach them, then so can you. We all have the same brain. The only real difference is how each of us actually uses it. As I like to say, “What do you do with your fear? Do you work to overcome it, or do you let it defeat you?” The answer to this question determines whether you are a success or a failure. Because, realistically speaking, we all experience fear at some point in our lives, but not everyone overcomes it.

They also state they (the VA) welcomes all types of feedback. Yet, every time I offered any they only increased my medication levels. They finally end the article with a quote from President Lincoln, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.” I have to admit that I found this highly offensive after the fact that the VA has obviously, and continues to, fall short on caring for Veterans, especially in Phoenix, Arizona where Veterans were allowed to die waiting for appointments while the person in charge was receiving a hefty bonus for manipulating statistics on patient wait times and hiding the actual facts of reality. This article written by McGuire, Schnurr and the VA's Smith, actually appears to be a PR stunt for the VA to try and re-invent their tarnished image that has existed at least as far back as the Vietnam era. This article has also obviously fallen quite short of its perceived goal.

In fact, on November 4, 2014 Representative Jeff Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veteran's Affairs released a statement about this very topic and the VA's image, “This isn't complicated. If the VA has the evidence needed to fire Sharon Helman, which it says it does, it should fire her. Keeping Helman and other Phoenix executives on the payroll when the department wants to fire them is nothing more than a waste of taxpayer dollars. The Department of Justice has already said it doesn't mind if Helman is fired, so VA's excuses as to why taxpayers must continue to pay her nearly \$170,000 a year for doing nothing are simply hot air. This is precisely the type of situation that makes the average citizen lose faith in their government and causes quality healthcare professionals to think twice when considering whether to work at VA. If VA wants to rebuild its reputation with veterans and the prospective

health care employees it says it needs, then it should stop making excuses for the villains of the VA scandal and get serious about purging them from the payroll.”

Furthermore, the USA Today published an article called, “Rise in PTSD cases from two wars strains resources” by Gregg Zoroya on November 29, 2011. It states, “Ten thousand combat veterans with PTSD flooded into VA hospitals every three months this year, pushing the number of patients ill with the disorder above 200,000 and straining resources, Department of Veteran’s Affairs data to be released today show. The increase is more than 5% per quarter, according to data obtained by USA Today and it occurs as the VA struggles to mover veterans quickly into therapy. New mental health patients at about a third of VA hospitals wait longer than the department’s goal of 14 days or less, according to a USA Today analysis published this month.”

So, the question that begs asking here is how training 6,000 clinicians over nine years going to help treat, not only the 200,000 Veterans from 2011, but treat the possible 800,000 Veterans we may have now in 2015 whom have PTSD? Especially with so many VA hospitals having wait times longer than 14 days and the PE therapy requires that a patient see their doctor every seven days for three to six months according to the VA website in order to be effective.

Happy health!  
Robert Serocki, Jr.  
23rd Veteran  
[www.robertserocki.com](http://www.robertserocki.com)



### ***America's Veterans United***

Is an advocacy group on Yahoo Groups developed to fight for the benefits, care, facilities, caring and compassionate fully licensed medical professionals, updated and properly operated VA Medical Facilities.

Are you sick and tired of the “business as usual” attitude, or the “delay, deny, until they die” attitude?

Are you able to give 30-60 minutes of your time per month to help develop and send letters to all 535 members of Congress each month in an attempt to force Congress into getting off their seats and actually doing something for Veterans vs. their usual lip service?

And are you sick and tired of all the other organizations who say they are fighting for you, but have shown decades of really not doing much for you?

Then join us, we do more than use membership numbers to fight, we actually have you working with us in the fight. Take control of your health and medical care and help us fight for you.

If interested, check out our page on Yahoo Groups:  
[https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas\\_Veterans\\_United/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas_Veterans_United/info)

If you're not a member of any Yahoo Group, and not familiar with the system but want to join in the fight, you can do so via E-Mail as well:  
[americas\\_veterans\\_united-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:americas_veterans_united-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

One really good thing about America's Veterans United, it won't cost you one thin dime, no membership dues, not postage costs, just your time and your computer.

Help us to help you and your fellow Veterans in the fight!

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## ***Tax Credit for Vets Expanded in Wisconsin***

Wisconsin veterans and their families need to be aware of a change during this year's tax filings. The Wisconsin Disabled Veterans and Unremarried Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit has been expanded. Under the change, a surviving, unremarried spouse of a deceased veteran who is collecting Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefit payments from the VA is now eligible for this tax credit. For more information, contact your Wisconsin county veterans officer. Visit the County Veterans Service Officer Association of Wisconsin website at [Wicvso.org](http://Wicvso.org) to find your local contact.

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## ***Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports***

Defense Health Care: Additional Information Needed about Mental Health Provider Staffing Needs, GAO-15-184  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-184>

Enterprise Funds: Egypt and Tunisia Funds Are Established; Additional Steps Would Strengthen Compliance with USAID Grant Agreements and Other Requirements. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-196>

U.S. Commission On Civil Rights: Management Improvements Are Needed to Better Achieve Its Mission.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-92>

Department of Housing and Urban Development: Violation of Anti-Lobbying Provision and the Antideficiency Act, by Edda Emmanuelli Perez, managing associate general counsel, office of general counsel, before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, House Committee on Financial Services. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-360T>

Mental Health: HHS Leadership Needed to Coordinate Federal Efforts Related to Serious Mental Illness.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-113>

International Classification of Diseases: CMS's Efforts to Prepare for the New Version of the Disease and Procedure Codes. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-255>

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## ***One Year Exemption for Direct Care Recipients***

If you are eligible to receive medical care at a military facility because you are: dependent-parents and parents-in-law, or Guard/Reserve members getting Line of Duty care, or Service Secretarial Designees, then you are not covered by Tricare (unless you are purchasing Tricare Reserve Select). The care you are eligible to receive is called "direct care" and does not meet the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requirements for minimum essential coverage. The way the law is written, you are required to purchase health care coverage through the health care exchanges, or pay a "shared responsibility payment." However, there is a one year exemption. For more details, see [this Paycheck Chronicles post](#).

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## ***Free Admission to Florida Military Museum***

The Southwest Florida Military Museum and Library is dedicated to preserving and displaying military artifacts and memorabilia while educating the public about our nation's military heritage. It is the largest military museum in southwest Florida. All of the artifacts have been donated or loaned by the military, government and individuals. The museum is at 4820 Leonard St., Cape Coral, Fla. It is open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Sunday. Admission is free. For more information, visit the Southwest Florida Military Museum and Library website at [swfmm.org](http://swfmm.org).

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## ***CNH Industrial Hiring Veterans***

Whether you're a veteran in search of a career path or in transition from the military, CNH offers a broad range of veteran employment opportunities in an exciting global environment that will put your military skills and expertise to optimal use. Be a part of a global team that is truly "Shaping our World." [Learn more.](#)

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### ***TRICARE and the Affordable Care Act***

The Affordable Care Act (ACA and also known as Obamacare) requires a set of minimum essential benefits for commercial health insurance. TRICARE provides most of these benefits such as cost-free screenings, vaccinations and counseling. TRICARE also allows children to remain on their parent's health insurance up to age 26 under the TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) program. The ACA did affect change in health care coverage for many Americans, but the legislation did not apply directly to TRICARE. For more information, visit the TRICARE website at [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil).

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***Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our veterans!***

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***This month please remember these women who died during February while serving our country in or during war times:***

1 Feb 1968: CIVILIAN Ruth Thompson, missionary, VIETNAM  
1 Feb 1968: CIVILIAN Carolyn Griswald, missionary, VIETNAM  
1 Feb 1968: CIVILIAN Ruth Wilting, missionary, VIETNAM  
3 Feb 2005: CIVILIAN Carmen Christina Urdaneta, 32, humanitarian, AFGHANISTAN  
3 Feb 2005: CIVILIAN Cristin "Cristi" Gadue, 26, humanitarian, AFGHANISTAN  
3 Feb 2005: CIVILIAN Amy Lynn (Niebling) Meeks, 29, humanitarian, AFGHANISTAN  
4 Feb 1997: USN AW3 Wendy L Potter, airplane crash, off coast of Israel  
7 Feb 1944: USA ANC LT Marjorie Morrow, WW II  
7 Feb 1944: CIVILIAN ARC Esther Richards, died at Anzio, WW II  
7 Feb 1944: USA ANC 1LT Carrie Sheetz, WW II  
7 Feb 1944: USA ANC LT Blanche Sigman, WW II  
7 Feb 2007: USMC CPT Jennifer Harris, 27, IRAQ  
7 Feb 2007: USMC CPL Jennifer Parcell, 20, IRAQ  
9 Feb 1944: USA ANC LT LaVerne Farquar, WW II  
9 Feb 1944: USA ANC LT Gertrude Spelboug, WW II  
9 Feb 1971: CIVILIAN Lucinda J. Richter, American Red Cross, VIETNAM  
9 Feb 2005: ILARNG SGT Jessica M. Housby, 23, IRAQ  
10 Feb 2010: USA PFC Adriana Alvarez, 20, gunshot wound, IRAQ  
12 Feb 2007: USN MA2 Laquita (Pate) James, 33, natural causes aboard USS Bataan, AFGHANISTAN  
12 Feb 2009: USN IT3 Caitlin Trask, 21, died of gunshot wound by her former boyfriend in Newport News, VA  
12 Feb 2009: USAF T/SGT Jessica Sweet, 30, leukemia, Walter Reed  
14 Feb 2008: USA SGT Julianna Gehant, 32, murdered in Northern Illinois University  
14 Feb 2013: USA SPC Kimberly Walker, 28, murdered by boyfriend, Colorado Springs, CO  
15 Feb 2010: USAF MG Jeanne Holm, died from double pneumonia  
16 Feb 1944: USA ANC Ellen Ainsworth, 24, WW II  
16 Feb 2004: USAR PFC Nichole M. Frye, 19, IRAQ  
16 Feb 2005: USA SPC Katrina Lani (Johnson) Bell, 32, IRAQ  
16 Feb 2014: USMC GySgt Monica Plank, 34, hit & run driver, OH  
17 Feb 2006: USAF SrAirman Alecia S Good, 23, plane crash near Africa  
18 Feb 1944: WASP Marian Toevs, WW II  
18 Feb 1966: USA ANC 2LT Carol Ann Drazba, 22, VIETNAM  
18 Feb 1966: USA ANC 2LT Elizabeth Ann Jones, 22, VIETNAM  
19 Feb 2009: HIARNG PFC Cwislyn K Walter, 19, non-combat vehicle accident  
19 Feb 2010: USA SGT Winter Plummer, 27, murdered by husband at Ft Lewis, WA  
21 Feb 2010: TNARNG CWO2 Billie J Grinder, 25, helicopter accident, IRAQ

22 Feb 2008: USA SPC Keisha M Morgan, 25, non-combat overdose, IRAQ  
22 Feb 2010: USA PFC Autumn M Shannon, 32, murdered by mother, Ft Bragg, NC  
22 Feb 2012: CIVILIAN Journalist Marie Colvin, 56, killed in crossfire, Syria  
24 Feb 1944: ANC 2LT Elizabeth J Howren, plane crash near Gela-Vittoria, Sicily  
25 Feb 1944: WASP Trainee Betty Pauline Stine, WW II  
25 Feb 1991: USAR SPC Christine Mayes, 22, barracks building in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM  
25 Feb 1991: USAR SPC Beverly S Clark, 23, barracks building in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM  
25 Feb 1991: USAR SPC Adrienne L Mitchell, 20, barracks building in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM  
26 Feb 2007: MDARNG PVT May Yuen, 22, Basic Training suicide?  
27 Feb 1991: USA SGT Cheryl (LaBeau) O'Brien, 24, DESERT STORM  
27 Feb 2007: CIVILIAN Geraldine Marques, 31, suicide bomber, AFGHANISTAN  
28 Feb 1991: CTARNG SPC Cindy Marie Beaudoin, 19, Kuwait, DESERT STORM  
28 Feb 2003: USAF SSG Shelby Dawn Orelup, 22, murdered at Sheppard AFB, TX  
28 Feb 2009: USMC Carri Leigh Goodwin, 20, suicide due to rape

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### **VFC Website Update**

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,800 and 5,000 visitors per day and have had **2,015,376** visitors to date.

Visit today and subscribe, it's 100% **FREE** of charge to all! Just be sure to use a valid E-Mail address so the system can send you an authentication E-Mail.

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 9,000 documents, various VA and DoD forms, over 4,000 articles which is updated at minimum every one to two days and more.

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

- Documents Library with over **130** different libraries and over **10,669+** documents
- FAQ's (**1,362** on-line now)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 12/04/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **4,196** articles on-line)
- Sponsors
- Web Links (**1,579** Active Links)(**Updated 02/04/15**)

The documents library has many different categories and will eventually house more than 50 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which we'll lock to use by women only. Another for Men Veterans which is also locked to men only.

In the documents and forums we provide information pertaining to women and the ability speak freely in the forums to other women about the same issues and problems you face.

The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org))

You also have the ability to comment and rate all NEWS articles which would be very helpful for us so we know the types of information you'd like to see on our website.

There is **NO charge** to use the site, or to become a member. Members have full access where non- members will have limited access approximately 45%.



Are you seeking employment? Been looking forever and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working very hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job Postings available across the country.

For a couple of weeks now we did a separate posting of jobs available, and now we've made a library on the Veterans-For-Change web site just for that purpose.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: [JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG](mailto:JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG) there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

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### ***Army approves awards for victims of 2009 Fort Hood attack***

Secretary of the Army John McHugh announced today that he has approved awarding the Purple Heart and its civilian counterpart, the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Defense of Freedom, to victims of a 2009 shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, following a change in the medals' eligibility criteria mandated by Congress. Thirteen people were killed and more than 30 wounded in the attack by Major Nidal Hassan, who was convicted in August, 2013, of 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted murder.

"The Purple Heart's strict eligibility criteria had prevented us from awarding it to victims of the horrific attack at Fort Hood," McHugh explained. "Now that Congress has changed the criteria, we believe there is sufficient reason to allow these men and women to be awarded and recognized with either the Purple Heart or, in the case of civilians, the Defense of Freedom medal. It's an appropriate recognition of their service and sacrifice."

Under a provision of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015, Congress expanded the eligibility for the Purple Heart by re-defining what should be considered an attack by a "foreign terrorist organization" for purposes of determining eligibility for the Purple Heart. The legislation states that an event should now be considered an attack by a foreign terrorist organization if the perpetrator of the attack "was in communication with the foreign terrorist organization before the attack" and "the attack was inspired or motivated by the foreign terrorist organization."

In a review of the Fort Hood incident and the new provisions of law, the Army determined that there was sufficient evidence to conclude Hasan "was in communication with the foreign terrorist organization before the attack," and that his radicalization and subsequent acts could reasonably be considered to have been "inspired or motivated by the foreign terrorist organization." Previous criteria required a finding that Hasan had been acting at the direction of a foreign terrorist organization.

McHugh directed Army officials to identify soldiers and civilians now eligible for the awards as soon as possible, and to contact them about presentation of the awards. Soldiers receiving the Purple Heart automatically qualify for combat-related special compensation upon retirement. Recipients are also eligible for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Following his 2013 conviction, Hasan was sentenced to death by a general court-martial. He is incarcerated at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, while post-trial and appellate processes continue.

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### ***Business Resources for Disabled Vets***

Set to launch this spring, the Veterans Entrepreneurship Jumpstart at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pa. is designed to give disabled veterans the education and resources to take their ideas for new businesses from dream to reality. Offered free to candidates who are accepted, the program is part of the university's six-month-old Office of Veterans Services. Applications are being taken until Feb. 6. For more information, visit the St. Joseph's University website at [sites.sju.edu/vej/](http://sites.sju.edu/vej/) or contact Ralph Galati, Director, telephone 610-660-3263, e-mail [rgalati@sju.edu](mailto:rgalati@sju.edu), or Andrew Colket, Program Director, telephone 610-660-3329, e-mail [acolket@sju.edu](mailto:acolket@sju.edu).

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### ***Report Recommends Combining Exchange, Commissary Systems***

The commissary and exchange should be combined into a single agency that would sell some products at cost and others at a profit, a panel commissioned by lawmakers recommended. "The commissary and exchange benefits are valued by many service members, retirees, and their families, and should be maintained," according to a [report released Thursday by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Committee](#). "A consolidated resale organization, with combined resources, increased operational flexibility, and better alignment of incentives and policies, would improve the viability and stability of these systems," the panel said in the report. For more details, see [this Military.com article](#).

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### **Veterans-For-Change on Facebook & Twitter**

You can now track us, meet fellow vets and their families and friends on our [Veterans-For-Change](#) page, come "LIKE" us!



Come join us, follow us and friends, make new friends, share useful information and more!

Follow us on Twitter too: [@Veterans4Change](#)

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### ***Links to other Stories***

- 1) ['Having his freedoms back': Vet has vision restored after 20 years in darkness](#)
- 2) [9 myths about PTSD](#)
- 3) [Advocates worry planned VA budget hikes aren't enough](#)
- 4) [After damaging silence, Baldwin now calls for probe of troubled VA center](#)
- 5) [Compensation commission testifies on health issues](#)
- 6) [Counting the homeless to change their fortunes](#)
- 7) [Hagel: Fight to End Sexual Assault Must Be 'Personal'](#)
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Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

### **Upcoming Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings 2015**

March 7, 2015  
 Davenport, Iowa  
 Time to be updated  
 Rogalski Center  
 St. Ambrose University Campus  
 518 W Locust St, Room 211  
 Davenport, IA 52803  
 (Lombard Street. Proceed to an alleyway for Visitor Parking Lot 7)  
 Contact: Greg Pauline  
 563-650-3055

March 24, 2015  
 Florida Highlands County  
 VVA Chapter 1097  
 More Details Upcoming  
 Contact : Rod Phillips 386-690-9553  
 Marvin Desselle 863-214-0601

### **DynCorp International Is Hiring**

DynCorp International is a global government services provider supporting national security and foreign policy objectives around the world. Over the years, DynCorp International has been consistently recognized as a top veteran friendly business. [Read more.](#)

### **To Contact your Members of Congress**

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To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121
Toll <b>FREE</b> Number:	866-272-6622

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Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.

~Winston Churchill~

***Veterans-For-Change, Inc.***

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

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

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