



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 20, 2015

Volume 6, Issue 38

This-N-That

Wait Lists and Homeless Veterans are still “in the news” but as usual we’re really not seeing much if any improvement at all!

It wasn’t long ago that Secretary McDonalds “solution” was to increase appointment times from 14 days to 30 days which in my personal opinion doesn’t help and/or solve.

The problem still remains lack of licensed medical professionals nationwide, an estimated 4,100 job positions remain open and unfilled. And at this time I’ve still not seen much in the way of job announcements or postings any where to show any signs of an attempt to fill those job positions, thus adding to the delays and wait times.

And it wasn’t long ago that the backlog list was composed of 600,000 Veterans actually living and waiting and more than 307,000 had more than likely passed away while waiting. That’s one in every three Veterans who has passed away WAITING!

To me, the loss of one life is just too many and for them to pass away while waiting is even less acceptable to me since we know the technology is out there in the civilian market that can handle the VA claims processing if sought out, reviewed, and adapted to the needs of the VA rules and regulations.

This type of software has been out there since 1978 and is still in use today with all the upgrades and improvements over the years has become quite good, very stable and highly secured. So the question is, why haven’t they (the VA and DoD) bothered to look into this?

If you recall when Secretary Shinseki was in office, he literally trashed millions of dollars worth of programs that the VA IT department had wasted so much time and money on designing and it was doomed to fail from the get go!

Then we find out the reason for that was the department was staffed by family members of the IT Director and none were educated in computer science or engineering, they were all in school courtesy of the IT Director, the VA and of course the TAXPAYER who funds the VA and DoD both!

Then to add insult to injury it was discovered the VA’s IT Director was also using VA funds to pay for her first class airfares to Florida to look for a new home, and what happened? This lady is still in that position, was only reprimanded and allowed to keep her job!

What a wonderful employer the VA and WE THE PEOPLE are to allow this corruption to continue as it has at the cost of Veteran lives!

And I’m sure this will upset and/or infuriate a few, but the bottom line in this is where are all the nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations on these issues? Personally I am seeing very little action from them if any at all.

Seems to me the fighting for Veterans, their benefits and medical care is all being done by very small groups and individuals such as Commander John Wells and his organization who is constantly fighting for Blue Water Navy Veterans.

More and more over the past few weeks I've been sending out special announcements of issue that need your help in order to succeed in legislation being passed and signed into law where before we were not sending out so many, but when we do it really does mean we do need your help!

You may think making the phone calls or sending out the E-Mails using the various organizations CAPWIZ systems, but it does, and what would help even more when we send out those announcements is to copy and paste into an e-mail and send to your entire friends and family lists and ask that they too make the calls, send the e-mails and forward on to their list as well.

Additionally go to your Congressman's and Senators websites and send the same message using their individual systems. The more we hound them, and flood their E-Mails and phones, the more attention we will get and the sooner we can see real positive action FOR and not AGAINST Veterans.

If you've not visit the Veterans-For-Change website lately, or never been there, give it a shot! In the past 30 days we've added another 1,300+ documents, and re-installed some that were missing in the transition to the new version of the software.

Betty Hidalgo who is our Operation Mail Call director has been making sure care packages have been going out weekly, and most of the requests have been coming from those in the Army. This past week she got a little bombarded with requests from the Air Force, and of course she is more than happy to try and meet their need too.

All we ask is for people to help by sending cards and letters to be included in the care packages.

For those who have served and especially those who have served on foreign soil know first hand what it's like to get a card or letter from home, and you also know what it's like to serve side by side with those who have no family or friends and never get a card or letter from home!

We need the help to put a smile on their faces, let them know we support them, we care about them, and we're proud of them. This can do so much for their moral and putting a smile on their face even if only for a moment, or give them a chuckle means so much!

If you're able to assist with cards and letters, please visit this link to obtain the address for the Operation Mail Call program: <http://veterans-for-change.org/4727-operation-mail-call>

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

Respectfully,
Jim Davis
Founder & CEO
Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

Update on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act

This week we have had 5 more Representatives signed onto the Bill making the total 269. We need to get that number up to over 289 so that certain rules will be suspended.

We also had 1 more Senator signed up making the total for the Senate to be 24.

John Wells is making another trip to Washington DC this coming week. On Blue Water Navy Awareness we have posted a list of some of the Members of Congress Offices he will be visiting along with the Contact Information for that office. We are trying to get as many people as we can to write these Congress Members and asked them to support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. Please visit us for the list and please join us in writing these Members of Congress.

Also we do have Contact Information for all Members of Congress. This is so we all can all keep contacting Member of Congress to let them know we are not going away. We are here to stay. We will be post a list of e-mail list for each member of Congress (it will be one of the staff members). Due to an agreement I have it will only be available on Blue Water Navy Awareness on Facebook (for the time being).

There was a Webinar this week put on by two of the best that are fighting for us to get the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act passed. Besides giving out the back ground information they suggested ways for us to help. Keep Contacting Congress was one of the ways along with getting the word out to the News Media. We need to let everyone know what Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans are going through. How the VA is putting us off and ignoring us. One other idea was to keep contacting the VA, if you know the e-mail address of Robert MacDonald and Sloan Gibson please send them my way. I have tried Robert.McDonald@va.gov and Sloan.Gibson@va.gov and I did not get a Bounce back so they may be valid. Yes I know they won't actually get the e-mails BUT if they keep getting them I am sure that the person who is reading them will let them know we are out here. You can see the Webinar here: <http://www.hillandponton.com/blue-water-and-agent-orange/>

Not only do we need to make the request for the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, we need to ask them to support the Extension of Agent Orange Act (HR 3423). This will extent by two years the original sunset deadline of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to ensure that Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange receive just compensation and care.

The Act expires on September 30, 2015 and the legislation would extend the sunset to September 30, 2017. FRA warned the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees regarding the sunset of the Act during its March 18, 2015 testimony.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 (AOA) established a presumption of service connection for diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, relieving Vietnam veterans from the burden of providing evidence that their illness was a result of military service. This law directs the the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to periodically research and review diseases that might be associated with Agent Orange exposure. The VA is required to add diseases the NAS finds to have a positive association to Agent Orange exposure to the VA's list of presumptive service connected diseases. Since the enactment of the AOA, the NAS has issued reports that have led to the presumption of service connection for diseases such as Parkinson's, B-cell leukemia and early onset peripheral neuropathy. Without these studies, thousands of Vietnam era veterans would have gone without the benefits they greatly deserve.

If the AOA expires the VA would no longer be obligated to review the NAS report or add any new diseases to the presumption of service list, in the process denying thousands of veterans their right to compensation.

Members are urged to use the Action Center to ask their Representative to support this important legislation.

For up to date information you can always check with Blue Water Navy Awareness on Facebook.

Combat Medicine Advances When Experts Collaborate

To reinforce the need to share life-saving and health-inducing ideas, the Defense Health Agency last month hosted a four-day Military Health System Research Symposium in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Government and private sector experts discussed continuing progress against signature wounds of recent wars, infectious diseases and operational hazards.

DoD Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

From Sept. 15 – Oct.15, the Department of Defense joins the nation in celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month. During this time, the department and the nation honor the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. The start of National Hispanic Heritage Month also marks the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The independence of Mexico and Chile are observed shortly thereafter, on Sept.16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

The theme of this year's observance, "Hispanic Americans: Energizing our Nation's Diversity," harkens to the vibrant and thriving contributions of Hispanics to our nation across the centuries. The celebration seeks to draw attention to the diversity and countless contributions Hispanics continue to make to enrich the United States and strengthen the defense of our nation.

The department will honor National Hispanic Heritage Month with programs and activities at installations around the world. The Pentagon will host a ceremony to present a temporary display, designed and owned by the Hispanic Medal of Honor Society, which features Hispanic Medal of Honor recipients. The society promotes the awareness of the patriotism, gratitude, and loyalty of Hispanics in the United States. The ceremony will be held in the Pentagon on the second floor in corridor 2A.2.5 on Friday, Sept.18 at 2 p.m.

Other Hispanic Medal of Honor displays around the National Capital Region include one titled, "Return with Honor," which illustrates the story of Commander Everett Alvarez Jr., the first American pilot shot down over North Vietnam. "Return with Honor" will be featured at the Navy Yard. A third display entitled "Justice for my People" showcases the story of Dr. Hector P. Garcia, the first civil rights activist and founder of the American G.I. Forum will be displayed at Fort Belvoir in Building 1458.

The department is committed to honoring and recognizing the Hispanic Americans that strengthen the fabric of our country and serve in defense of the values we hold dear. All department personnel are encouraged to recognize the immeasurable contributions made by Hispanic Americans and to celebrate the diversity of our workforce. Please visit the Hispanic Heritage Month web special to learn more about Hispanic service across the Total Force:

http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/0915_hispanic-heritage.

VFC's OPERATION MAIL CALL



Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/4727-operation-mail-call>

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Medicaid Part D: Changes Needed to Improve CMS's Recovery Audit Program Operations and Contractor Oversight. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-633>

Federal Spending Accountability: Preserving Capabilities of Recovery Operations Center Could Help Sustain Oversight of Federal Expenditures. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-814>

Veterans Benefits Management System: Ongoing Development and Implementation Can Be Improved; Goals Are Needed to Promote Increased User Satisfaction. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-582>

Information Technology Reform: Billions of Dollars in Savings Have Been Realized, but Agencies Need to Complete Reinvestment Plans. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-617>

Affordable Rental Housing: Assistance Is Provided by Federal, State, and Local Programs, but There Is Incomplete Information on Collective Performance. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-645>

U.S. Coast Guard National Pollution Funds Center: Improved Controls Needed for Oil Removal Disbursements and Action Needed for Sustainable Funding. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-682>

State Health Insurance Marketplaces: CMS Should Improve Oversight of State Information Technology Projects
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-527>

American Red Cross: Disaster Assistance Would Benefit from Oversight through Regular Federal Evaluation
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-565>

Confidential Informants: Updates to Policy and Additional Guidance Would Improve Oversight by DOJ and DHS Agencies, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-807>

Federal User Fees: Key Considerations for Designing and Implementing Regulatory Fees
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-718>

Child Welfare: Steps Have Been Taken to Address Unregulated Custody Transfers of Adopted Children.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-733>

Wildland Fire Management: Agencies Have Made Several Key Changes but Could Benefit from More Information about Effectiveness. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-772>

Federal Student Loans: Education Could Do More to Help Ensure Borrowers Are Aware of Repayment and Forgiveness Options. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-663>

Prepositioned Stocks: Marine Corps Needs to Improve Cost Estimate Reliability and Oversight of Inventory Systems for Equipment in Norway. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-651>

International Classification of Diseases: CMS Has Updated Systems and Supported Stakeholders' Efforts to Use New Codes. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-789>

Internet Management: Structured Evaluation Could Help Assess Proposed Transition of Key Domain Name and Other Technical Functions. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-642>

Affected Vietnam Veterans should consider Filing Reconsideration of Claim

As reported in the May 1, 2015 issue of NewsBytes, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims has ruled that veterans who served aboard ships in the harbors of Vietnam more than 40 years ago should not be arbitrarily excluded from Agent Orange claims—a significant step forward for these veterans. Former Navy seaman Robert Gray has been denied multiple disability claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) based on the fact that he was aboard a ship—not on land—during the Vietnam War, when the herbicide Agent Orange was liberally sprayed by American forces to remove foliage and eliminate enemy cover. The chemical was later found to cause numerous health problems for service members who were exposed, but the VA has denied disability claims to U.S. Navy sailors under the argument that the seamen were offshore and were not directly exposed. Veterans who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam who later developed specific health problems tied to exposure to Agent Orange should consider filing a claim for VA benefits or filing for re-consideration of previously denied claims.

In related news, FRA is supporting the “Agent Orange Extension Act,” (H.R. 3423) which would extend by two years the original sunset deadline of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 and ensure that Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange receive just compensation and care. The Act expires on September 30, 2015, and the legislation would extend it to September 30, 2017.

In addition, FRA supports the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act,” (H.R. 969/S. 681) which would clarify a presumption for filing disability claims with the VA for ailments associated with exposure to Agent Orange herbicide during the Vietnam War. Congress should recognize that so-called “Blue Water” veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange herbicide. The bill authorizes presumptive status for VA disability claims associated with this exposure for this group of veterans. Members can weigh in on these proposals through the FRA Action Center (action.fra.org/action-center).

State of Emergency Issued in California Due to Wildfires

The governor of California has issued a state of emergency in Amador and Calaveras counties for the Butte Wildfire and in Lake and Napa counties for the Valley Wildfire. Emergency prescription refill procedures are in place from 9/11/2015 through 10/11/2015 and 9/13/2015 through 10/13/2015 respectively.

For more information, please visit: www.tricare.mil/Resources/DisasterInfo.

Webinar Matt Hill and Wells on Gray VS McDonald case

For those who could not listen in to the webinar, here is the link to video and transcript. It is about the Gray VS McDonald case that was won by Matt Hill and CMDR John Wells.

Susie Belanger

I put up a page on my blog today with the video, transcript and a way to download the slides. The download part is a little tricky—under the slides there is an IN on the right. Click that and it will take you to a page to download.

I've had a lot of vets say that they could not make it.

<http://www.hillandponton.com/blue-water-and-agent-orange/>

Thanks for helping with this!

Matt

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

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 **2,369,080** 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. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

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 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **13,451+** documents (**498** total New Docs)
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 09/11/15 52 New Jobs, 1 New Job Fair)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,193** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,586** Active Links)(**Updated 08/16/15**)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked 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)

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.

VA Announces Price Freeze

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced that veterans who fill their prescriptions at a Veterans Affairs Department pharmacy will see no increase in co-payments until at least January 2017.

Under the new policy published in the Federal Register, VA will extend a freeze on co-payment increases until at least Dec. 31, 2016.

Veterans are required to pay a portion of the cost for prescription drugs they receive for non-service-related conditions if their incomes exceed established threshold limits.

They pay either \$8 or \$9 per 30-day prescription, depending on their eligibility status within the VA health system.

According to VA, veterans tend to reduce use of their pharmacy benefits when co-payments rise, which leads to not taking their medications as prescribed.

Patients also are at greater risk for adverse drug interactions if they fill some of their prescriptions at VA and others at civilian pharmacies, VA officials say.

The freeze is designed to continue providing the benefit to veterans at moderate cost.

Source: NAUS

A Possible NDAA Compromise Emerging?

There appears to be movement on the stalled National Defense Authorization conference report. According to multiple sources, the chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees are close to resolving a dispute over military health care fees that has ground to a halt negotiations to craft a final version of this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

One proposal being considered is to allow a "one-time reset" of TRICARE fees - an approach that could kick to next year the contentious issue of whether to green-light the Obama administration's request for a series of fee increases phased in over a decade. This would be similar to what happened last year, when negotiators agreed to a pharmacy fee hike for the current fiscal year but rejected long-term fee hikes, saying they might reconsider the 10-year proposal in the future.

"I think we're making progress," said Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV), chairman of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee. "I think that there is an opportunity to look potentially for a smaller, one-time reset of the co-pays that could pass muster."

He cautioned that "negotiations are ongoing." Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain also said Thursday there has been "progress" in the House-Senate conference negotiations, which have been stalled since July over TRICARE fees and other issues.

Source: NAUS

Changes Coming to TRICARE Rx

Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all TRICARE beneficiaries, except active duty servicemembers, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery (www.tricare.mil/homedelivery/) or from a military pharmacy. Beneficiaries who keep using a retail pharmacy for these drugs will have to pay the full cost. Maintenance drugs are those you take regularly for a long time. The law does not apply to drugs you take for a short time, like antibiotics. Beneficiaries living overseas, or with other prescription drug coverage, are not affected. You can check with your [local military pharmacy](#) to see if they carry your prescription. For more information about this change to TRICARE's pharmacy benefit, visit the TRICARE New Rules for Filling Prescriptions webpage at www.tricare.mil/RxNewRules.



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.

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 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.

To be updated by 8pm PST 09/18/15

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Advocates place 16 homeless Veterans in single day in Oklahoma City](#)
- 2) [After the VA scandal, Veterans were told their wait for care would get shorter. But it's actually getting worse.](#)
- 3) [Airmen, Soldiers display rapid medical response](#)
- 4) [Check Health Care Compliance Before Tax Season Kicks Off, Official Says](#)
- 5) [Corpsmen face an uphill battle](#)
- 6) [Defense Centers of Excellence summit seeks to improve the lives of service members, Veterans, families](#)
- 7) [Deported Veterans Thousands of Honorably Discharged Veterans Deported Since the Korean War](#)
- 8) [Getting there: the path forward for delivering better health care](#)
- 9) [High Desert walk to shine light on Vets' suicides](#)
- 10) [Marine Veteran with PTSD Reunites with Missing Service Dog After 9 Months: 'He Saved My Life'](#)
- 11) [Medical collaboration provides world-class care](#)
- 12) [Military Blood Program Returns To Fort Stewart](#)
- 13) [Military suicides: search for answer](#)
- 14) [Pentagon blocks report on 'toxic contamination' at base outside Okinawa capital](#)

- 15) [Rescue dogs get second chance, help Veterans](#)
- 16) [Research to control blood loss underway for enhanced battlefield care](#)
- 17) [Scientists investigate ways to help soldiers recover from stress](#)
- 18) [Sleep issues bedeviling soldiers' health](#)
- 19) [VA announces more money to stave off Veteran homelessness](#)
- 20) [Virtual Hope Box puts suicide prevention tools at users' fingertips](#)

You can help Veterans-For-Change by reading the articles posted, and comment at the bottom and rank the article. If you don't have an account, sign-up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings help us to better determine the type of information you'd like most to see.

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

Veterans Sue Army Over Chemical Testing

Veterans who were used in chemical and biological testing from 1922 to 1975 have filed a class action lawsuit against the U. S. Army. If they are successful, the Army will have to explain to anyone who was used in testing exactly what substances they were given and any known risks. The Army would also have to provide those veterans with health care for any illnesses that result, in whole or in part, from the testing. The law firm representing the veterans estimates at least 70,000 troops were used in the testing, including World War II veterans [exposed to mustard gas](#). In June, an appeals court ruled in favor of the veterans. The Army has filed for a rehearing. For more information, visit the Morrison Foerster website at edgewoodtestvets.org/press-releases/pdfs/20090107-Morrison-Files-Suit.pdf.

CalVet Honors Latino American Veterans

SACRAMENTO - Our Latino American Veterans honorably defended our country in war and built prosperity in California during times of peace. To honor our state's approximately 296,000 Latino Veterans, CalVet celebrates the start of National Hispanic Heritage Month by hosting a kickoff event on Tuesday, September 15, 2015. The event will be held at the "El Soldado" Memorial.

"The El Soldado Memorial serves as a testament to the service and contributions of our Latino Veterans and is the perfect backdrop for honoring our heroes," said CalVet Deputy Secretary of Minority Veterans Affairs, Mirtha Villarreal-Younger. "We proudly celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring generations of Latinos in California and across the country for their selfless contributions in protecting our nation," she added.

Event: Honoring our Latino American Veterans
 When: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 – 11:00 a.m. to Noon
 Where: El Soldado Memorial on the Capitol grounds (10th Street and Capitol Mall)

BACKGROUND:

- El Soldado is the only monument located on State Capitol grounds in the nation recognizing the military contributions of Latinos from all branches of the military.
- During World War II, an estimated 500,000 Latinos served with distinction.
- Latinos represent the highest number of Medal of Honor recipients per capita of any ethnic group.

Follow CalVet on [Facebook](#) and Twitter.

To Contact your Members of Congress

To Call your Representative:	202-225-2305
To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121

Toll FREE Number:	866-272-6622
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~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

National Veterans Crisis Line

September is suicide prevention month, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is raising awareness about its Veterans Crisis Line. When veterans call the Veterans Crisis Line, use the chat service, or send a text, they are connected to resources local to them. There are suicide prevention coordinators (over 300) located at every VA in the country. The Veterans Crisis Line is able to connect veterans with their local suicide prevention coordinator who can then ensure they are getting the treatment and resources they need, like getting enrolled in VA care. Veterans and their loved ones can connect with VA responders 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling the toll-free Veterans Crisis Line hotline at (800) 273-8255, and then pressing 1; texting the number 838255; or chatting at the Veterans Crisis Line website at www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat.

Service Dogs for Wounded Warriors

The Walter Reed Wounded Warrior Service Dog Training Program (WWSSTP) internship provides therapy while allowing military servicemembers to train dogs that will later be given to other disabled warriors. The program can help people who have trauma, depression, anxiety, stress and other conditions. Military servicemembers are recommended for the program by people on their care team. Once they are accepted into the program, the servicemember goes to work with service dog trainers during train-the-trainer sessions. Service dogs learn as many as 90 tasks during the training. Service dogs trained in the program are mainly mobility dogs — those trained to help people who have some form of physical disability such as an amputation. Once the dogs complete the program they are placed with a wounded, ill or injured veteran. For more information, visit the Soldiers Magazine website at soldiers.dodlive.mil/2014/12/how-to-train-a-service-dog/.

Veterans Still Waiting

A new report from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) inspector general has found that nearly 900,000 military veterans have pending applications to access health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The report recommended a total overhaul of their record-keeping system that could take years. The report says one-third of those veterans are thought to be dead, but problems with the data make it tough to know how many former troops are still struggling to get care. VA has said it has no way to purge the list of dead applicants. The report is available on the VA Office of Inspector General website at www.va.gov/oig/publications/report-summary.asp?id=3586.

Veterans and Financial Readiness

The millennial generation of veterans and their families — those between 18 and 35 years old — have proven to be outstanding warriors. But, they are struggling in basic financial readiness. They are missing basic financial readiness skills — skills like spend less than you earn, put money away each month for retirement, and for a rainy-day fund, protect yourself and your family and your belongings, and prepare basic estate-planning documents. To address this issue, USAA Bank and The American Legion have worked together to develop a dedicated webpage (www.legion.org/usaa) to provide personal finance assistance and access points to USAA's online tools.

VA Awards \$8 Million in Adaptive Sport Grants to Aid Disabled Veterans

Grants promote rehabilitation, health and wellness and community reintegration

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald today announced the awarding of up to \$8 million in grants to eligible recipients with experience managing largescale adaptive sports programs for disabled Veterans and disabled Servicemembers of the Armed Forces. The grant recipients may use these funds for planning, developing, managing and implementing adaptive sports programs.

The VA is awarding the Grants to national governing bodies, which prepare high-level athletes for Paralympic competition; Veterans service organizations; city and regional municipalities; and other community groups to provide a wide range of adaptive sports opportunities for eligible Veterans and Servicemembers. The Grants will support sports ranging from rowing, cycling and skiing to golf, fly fishing and equestrian sports.

“Adaptive sports help Veterans heal both physically and emotionally,” said Secretary McDonald. “We are proud to partner with organizations nationwide to provide these rehabilitative opportunities for America’s Veterans.”

VA will distribute the [grants](#) to [89](#) national, regional and community programs serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Approximately 10,000 Veterans and Servicemembers are expected to benefit.

VA Awards Local Grants to Prevent and End Homelessness

Flexible Grants Are Helping Achieve Lower Rates of Veteran Homelessness, Community By Community

WASHINGTON – Thousands of very low-income Veteran families around the nation, who are permanently housed or transitioning to permanent housing, will continue to have access to crucial services with the renewal of approximately \$300 million in grants under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program.

SSVF renewal funding, which supports outreach, case management and other flexible assistance to prevent Veteran homelessness or rapidly re-house Veterans who become homeless, went to [286](#) non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. A list of grantees is located at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

“SSVF grants empower our local partners to provide short-term-focused interventions that promote housing stability among the most economically vulnerable Veterans and their families,” said Department of Veterans Affairs’ Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “Whether they need rental or child care assistance, transportation vouchers or another type of support, SSVF grantees offer Veterans the mix of services they need to gain housing and stay housed.”

SSVF grantees typically serve Veterans with incomes below 30 percent of the area median income. Grantees must follow the housing first approach, which centers on permanently housing homeless Veterans quickly without preconditions and providing supportive services as needed. Additional SSVF requirements are that grantees engage in outreach to find and serve Veterans in need, provide Veterans with case management and assist them in obtaining VA and other public benefits.

SSVF served 127,829 participants in fiscal year (FY) 2014 and is on track to serve 135,000 Veterans and their family members by the end of FY 2015. As a result of these and other efforts, Veteran homelessness is down significantly since the launch of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010. Since 2010, nearly 230,000 Veterans and their family members have been permanently housed, rapidly rehoused or prevented from falling into homelessness by VA’s homelessness programs and targeted housing vouchers provided by HUD.

The funding announced today will support SSVF services in FY 2016, which starts October 1, 2015, and ends September 30, 2016.

The SSVF program is authorized by 38 U.S.C. 2044. VA implements the program by regulations in 38 CFR part 62. Visit www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp to learn more about the SSVF program.

Still Time To Use Your VA Loan in 2015

Thinking of buying or refinancing? Don't wait until rates rise. Qualified borrowers can pay as little as \$0 down, with no PMI payments. Plus you can get financing up to \$417,000. [Use your VA Loan Benefit today.](#)

New Crisis Hotline in Tampa

The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and other state agencies are trying a new project in the Tampa bay area. The hotline at 1-844-MY-FL-VET (or 1-844 693-5838) is available to veterans as well as active duty. Veterans at the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay direct people in need to the resources that can help them. On this support line, veterans can speak with veterans. Veterans, their families, or anyone associated with a veteran can use this hotline. Veterans in the Tampa area can also call the 2-1-1 line, and ask to speak with a veteran.

Legion Hosts Job Fair in Atlantic City

The American Legion, Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian, and the N.J. State Parole Board will host a Veteran Job & Resource Fair to bring together active duty, National Guard, reservists, veterans, and their spouses who are or will soon be looking for either employment or services. The Job and Resource Fair will be held Oct. 8 from 9 a.m. To 1 p.m. (workshop at 10 a.m.) in the All Wars Memorial Building (Old Soldiers Home), 1510 Adriatic Ave. in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Employers with current job openings or entities that can offer services as well as active duty, National Guard, reservists, veterans, and their spouses should pre-register with Martin Houston, State Parole Board, at martin.houston@spb.state.nj.us (preferred) or call 609-984-4588. "Walk-ins" are welcome.

If you received this Newsletter as a forward or as a Courtesy Copy and would like to continue to receive this FREE weekly newsletter, click on link below:

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Or if you prefer you can sign up to the Yahoo Groups VFC-News page and receive our weekly newsletter by sending an E-Mail to: VFC-News-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!



We need an America with the wisdom of experience. But we must not let America grow old in spirit.

~Hubert H. Humphrey~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today
www.veterans-for-change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

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