



## Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, August 21, 2016**  
Volume 7, Issue 31

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

I haven't discussed in a while the need for a service dog for Veterans with PTSD and thought it was time to bring it up again.

Although the VA is not always easy to deal with, and getting them to approve or even provide a service dog to help with PTSD, I still always strongly recommend to every Veteran I work with to seriously consider a rescue dog.

I've seen and many others have told me they too have seen that even a rescue dog is tremendously helpful, and seriously they don't need special training to help Veterans through difficult times. They have a "sixth" sense built in and just know when you need them most and will just be there for you.

Owning a dog can lift your mood or help you feel less stressed. Dogs can help people feel better by providing companionship. All dog owners, including those who have PTSD can experience these benefits.

#### **What are the emotional benefits of having a dog?**

- Dogs can make great pets. Having a dog as a pet can benefit anyone who likes dogs, including people with PTSD. For example, dogs:
  - Help bring out feelings of love.
  - Are good companions.
  - Take orders well when trained. This can be very comfortable for a Servicemember or Veteran who was used to giving orders in the military.
  - Are fun and can help reduce stress.
  - Are a good reason to get out of the house, spend time outdoors, and meet new people.

An emotional support animal is a pet that helps an owner with a mental health condition. Emotional support dogs help owners feel better by giving friendship and companionship. These dogs are also called comfort dogs or support dogs.

And when you adopt a rescue dog, consider this:

You're saving two lives! That of the dog you rescue, and your own!

On behalf of myself and Volunteers nationwide, 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)

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### ***State of Emergency Declared in Louisiana due to Flooding***

The governor of Louisiana has declared a State of Emergency in the entire state due to severe flooding. Emergency refill procedures are in place from August 12, 2016 through September 11, 2016.

Learn more [here](#).

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions). Connect with TRICARE on Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus at [www.facebook.com/tricare](http://www.facebook.com/tricare), [www.twitter.com/tricare](http://www.twitter.com/tricare) and [www.plus.google.com/+TRICARE](http://www.plus.google.com/+TRICARE).

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### ***VA to Look for Electronic Health Record Help in Private Sector***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is considering companies in the private sector to manage the massive database of veterans' health records.

The VA asked for "industry feedback, guidance and recommendations" regarding its electronic health record (EHR) system in an official request for information, according to the government contracting website FedBizOps.com.

The VA's current EHR system has become complex and each region works differently. If the records aren't easily transferred between hospitals, it undermines a key advantage of electronic records.

While an update to the system is needed, the fact that each region has added its own elements to the software over the years makes “modernization and standardization efforts extremely complicated, expensive and time consuming,” the request says.

TREA: The Enlisted Association has been pushing for an upgrade, or a replacement, of the existing 1970s-era Vist-A system for seemingly decades now. Hopefully VA finds the information that they need from the new Request for Information (RFI) and VA's EHR system can be brought into the 21st century. We will keep you updated when there is more information.

Source: TREA

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### ***50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War***

CalVet seeks to support activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. If your organization plans to host an event marking this important historical era, please send details to [pao.calvet@calvet.ca.gov](mailto:pao.calvet@calvet.ca.gov).

CalVet will include your event on our online calendar and, with enough lead time (typically at least 90 days in advance), we can assist event organizers in obtaining materials such as lapel pins, buttons, certificates, posters, and stickers from the Department of Defense (DoD) to honor Vietnam Veterans attending the event.

Please submit the following information:

- Event name
- Sponsoring organization (s)
- Time and location
- Contact name and phone number or e-mail address
- How many Vietnam Veterans you expect to attend (for pins)

The goals of the DoD Vietnam War Commemorative Program are:

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war (POW), or listed as missing in action (MIA), for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
  2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
  3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
  4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
  5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.
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## ***State of Emergency Declared in Several California Counties due to Wildfires***

The governor of California has declared a State of Emergency in Lake, San Luis Obispo and San Bernardino counties due to wildfires. Emergency refill procedures are in place from August 17, 2016 through September 16, 2016.

Get more information [here](#).

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions).

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### **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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## ***IRS Provides 'Information for Veterans'***

The Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) office has a special webpage called '[Information for Veterans](#)'. The page highlights programs offering tax preparation and counseling services, in addition to information about VA disability benefits, homeless veterans, veteran legal services, programs for hiring veterans and much more. The webpage will be updated frequently to include the latest news and information about VA/IRS partnership and any new tax information for veterans as well as Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs. SPEC is the education and outreach department of the IRS. SPEC is widely known for oversight of the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) and [Tax Counseling for the Elderly \(TCE\)](#) programs, which offer free tax return preparation to these taxpayers.

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## ***Commissaries to Enhance Their Method of Calculating Savings***

The Defense Commissary Agency is forming a new approach to calculating savings, aligning it more closely with private sector practice. This better reflects what patrons experience daily with the products they routinely buy in the geographic regions in which they routinely shop, agency officials said.

"We hear from our military families that they sometimes find lower prices on selected items outside the gate," said Joseph H. Jeu, DeCA's director and CEO. "For the first time through this new approach, we will compare our prices with local grocers on a more frequent basis to better inform our customers of potential cost savings over stores in their nearby community."

"Our approach to calculating savings will not impact the prices our customers pay or the dollar benefit that they receive," he added. "There will be no change to their out-of-pocket expense."

Through this improved process, DeCA will calculate and monitor patron savings more frequently than the current practice. Prices will be compared with actual prices at local competitors surrounding each commissary, as well, using a market basket of products that reflect what patrons normally purchase.

For more information on DeCA's new approach to calculating patron savings, go to detailed Transformation FAQs posted under the "Customer Service" tab on [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com).

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### ***Operation Mail Call***



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

Our men and women in uniform often go months without hugging their children, walking through the park with a significant other or enjoying Mom's home-cooked Sunday dinners.

Ask them where they'd go if they had a free plane ticket anywhere in the world, and the overwhelming majority would say, "home."

Of course, we can't replace the hugs, the love or the secret family chili recipe – but with your help, we can provide them a connection to their fellow Americans who are grateful for their service.

Now, we're hoping you'll take your support to the next level by sending more cards and letters. Hand made cards by your children, or class mates are a terrific means of putting smiles on their faces even if only for a moment.

Cards and Letters of encouragement to help boost moral and let them know we sincerely appreciate the job they are doing and look forward to the day they are all brought home. Your card or letter will show your appreciation and help thousands more American heroes feel connected to the people they love and the country they serve.

Please help us to make a powerful expression of how much their fellow Americans care about them.

Thank you so much for all you're doing to show our service men and women they are appreciated missed and loved.

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my E-Mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from kids too!

For more information, visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

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### ***Government Accountability Reports***

Air Force Training: Further Analysis and Planning Needed to Improve Effectiveness.

[http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted\\_reports](http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports)

Army Training: Efforts to Adjust Training Requirements Should Consider the Use of Virtual Training Devices.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-636>

Defense Budget: DOD Needs to Improve Reporting of Operation and Maintenance Base Obligations.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-537>

Information Security: OPM Needs to Improve Controls over Selected High-Impact Systems.

[http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted\\_reports](http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports)

Antidumping and Countervailing Duties: CBP Action Needed to Reduce Duty Processing Errors and Mitigate Nonpayment Risk. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-542>

Cultural Property: Protection of Iraqi and Syrian Antiquities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-673>

Emergency Communications: Effectiveness of the Post-Katrina Interagency Coordination Group Could Be Enhanced. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-681>

Federal Workforce: Opportunities Exist to Improve Data on Selected Groups of Special Government Employees. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-548>

Grants Management: EPA Could Improve Certain Monitoring Practices.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-530>

Department of Housing and Urban Development: Actions Needed to Incorporate Key Practices into Management Functions and Program Oversight. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-497>

DOD Financial Management: Improvements Needed in the Navy's Audit Readiness Efforts for Fund Balance with Treasury. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-47>

Sexual Violence Data: Actions Needed to Improve Clarity and Address Differences Across Federal Data Collection Efforts. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-546>

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# 2ND ANNUAL VETERANS CARE FAIRS

## POLK COUNTY

**Tuesday, August 30, 2016**

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Iowa Center for Higher Education  
2280 Bell Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa

## POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

**Thursday, September 1, 2016**

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Treynor Community Center  
11 West Main Street  
Treynor, Iowa

@RepDavidYoung

## *AF Course on New Retirement System*

Most total force members have questions about the new Blended Retirement System (BRS) including how it will work and who is eligible. The new BRS leader course is designed to educate leaders on the new retirement system. The course is available both online and through a mobile version for a smartphone or tablet via [Joint Knowledge Online](#), course number P-US1330. The course is also available to those without a Common Access Card, to include family members, via an alternate [website](#). The mobile version has a login option that provides a training certificate, which will be necessary for the required opt-in training next year. Leaders can download the app from their respective app store for free.



## *18 Servicemembers on Olympic Team*

Among the 555 members of Team USA at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, are 18 U.S. service members. The athletes represent the Army, Navy and Air Force competing in events ranging from rowing, to track and field, to shooting. For more details, see [this Under the Radar post](#).

## *Former Navy Fullback and Wide Receiver Begin NFL Careers*

During last May's Naval Academy graduation ceremony Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that both Navy fullback Chris Swain and Wide receiver Keenan Reynolds were being granted their requests to defer their military obligations until their time playing with the NFL was over. During the first exhibition games last week both Reynolds with the Baltimore Ravens and Swain with the San Diego Chargers started their professional football careers.

Last year, Swain ran for 1,023 yards and 10 touchdowns on 211 carries as part of the No. 2-ranked rushing offense in major college football. Reynolds had 1,373 yards and 24 touchdowns to cap a record-setting career in Annapolis. Navy finished 11-2, including a 14th straight win against Army to extend the series record. The Midshipmen also won a third consecutive bowl game for the first time in program history.

Source: TREA

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#### **Veteran Crisis Resources**

**Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**  
**Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**  
**1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)**  
**VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274**

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#### ***Bar Association to Offer Legal Services for Vets***

To help military veterans, the new president of the American Bar Association (ABA), Linda A. Klein, has launched the ABA's Veterans Legal Services Initiative. It is designed to push efforts that include getting bar associations and law schools to help develop legal services incubators, especially in rural areas, by supporting new and underemployed lawyers in providing legal services for needy vets. For more information, visit the ABA [website](#).

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#### ***Veterans-For-Change Web Site***

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly "One-Stop-Shop" website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 1,700 hits per day, and downloads average 1,400 per day with a total **2,944,751** visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE** of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

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

- Documents Library with over 15,616 documents on-line (Updated: **08/02/16**)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers (Updated: **02/20/16**)
- Multiple Forums
- Job Postings (Updated: **07/11/16**)
- Memorial Pages (Updated: **01/02/16**)
- News (Articles On-Line: **5,948**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,442, Added 2 New Links (Updated: **08/01/16**)

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

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***Guide Dogs For Veterans***

Southeastern Guide Dogs in Palmetto, Fla. gives veterans highly trained guide or service dogs free of charge. The organization currently serves more than 400 graduates across the U.S. and continues to place more than 100 dogs each year with people with visual impairments and with veterans. For more information, visit the Southeastern Guide Dogs [website](#).

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**<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>**

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***Legacy Run Event Coming***

Discovery Channel is launching a three-part miniseries about the creation of the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycle company. In advance of the series, Discovery is hosting a special preview in celebration of The American Legion's 2016 Legacy Run kickoff. A screening of Discovery Channel's original "Harley and the Davidsons" will be shown Aug. 20 outdoors on a big screen at Post 64 in Indianapolis. The free public event is from 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Post 64, 601 S. Holt Road. View and download a flyer of the event on the American Legion [website](#).

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

- 1) *Cumberland County replacing grave markers at Veterans cemetery*
- 2) *Former Veterans Affairs investigator who faked background, training gets five years in prison*
- 3) *MHSRS attendees discuss how to fight infectious disease*
- 4) *New EIRB streamlining Military Health System research processes*
- 5) *Phone problems hit VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System*
- 6) *Physicians urge caution to avoid heat-related illnesses*
- 7) *Problems at the Phoenix VA: Not Everything is What it Seems*
- 8) *Public health has sights on Veterans affairs office space*
- 9) *Star Studded Rally Behind Nation's Veterans*
- 10) *The DEA turns its back on freedom; refuses to reschedule cannabis, claims it's worse than METH*
- 11) *VA Organ Transplant Scandal Exposed By Whistleblower*
- 12) *Veterans Affairs Spending Millions on Artwork as Vets Suffer*
- 13) *Wanted: Half a Million More Veterans to Volunteer*

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

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

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

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

If you're an employer and have a job to post, send and E-Mail to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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## ***VA Releases Vet Suicide Report***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has released its findings from the nation's most comprehensive analysis of veteran suicide rates in the United States. VA examined more than 55 million Veterans' records from 1979 to 2014 from every state in the nation. The effort advances VA's knowledge from the previous report in 2012. The current analysis indicates that in 2014 an average of 20 Veterans a day died from suicide. A summary of the report's findings is available on the VA [website](#). The report is available [online](#). Other VA mental health information is available [here](#). Veterans in crisis can call Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or text 838255 or chat on the Veterans Crisis Line [website](#). A Suicide prevention fact sheet is available [online](#).

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## ***VA Predicts Emergency Care Claim Tsunami***

More than two million claims for private sector emergency healthcare services provided to VA-enrolled veterans since February 2010 could be eligible for VA reimbursement if a recent ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims is allowed to stand, the VA general counsel has warned. The counsel also has warned in court documents that over the next decade VA could be swamped with an estimated 68.6 million additional claims for emergency care reimbursements, which could drive up VA health costs over that period by as much as \$10.6 billion.

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## ***TRICARE Webinar to Discuss Health Care Options***

TRICARE and Military OneSource are co-hosting a webinar to discuss health care options available to TRICARE beneficiaries once they are no longer eligible for any TRICARE health plan coverage. The webinar will be held on Wednesday, August 17, 2016 at noon EST. Go to [this site](#) to register. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited due to system capacity. Networked users can access the webinar via the [Defense Collaboration Services link](#). For audio, dial 1-866-724-3083, access code 1085851. Questions will be taken immediately after the presentation. Participants must avoid sharing personal health information when asking a question.

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***~We Proudly Support our Military Personnel & Families~***

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## ***Work Opportunity Tax Credit***

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) offers a tax benefit for businesses that hire individuals, such as veterans, who are having trouble finding work. This temporary tax break is in effect through 2019, unless renewed by Congress. Employers can earn a tax credit up to \$9,600 for certain military veteran employees. The exact tax benefit amount that a business can receive depends on several factors such as how long the new employee was unemployed, the new employee's salary, and the number of hours the new employee worked during the first year. For more information, read the article on [Bankrate.com](#), and visit the [IRS website](#).

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

<https://gem.godaddy.com/signups/193302/join>

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

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

[www.Veterans-For-Change.org](http://www.Veterans-For-Change.org)

*Serving those who served!*

**Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family**

| Distribution     |         |
|------------------|---------|
| Express Mail     | 144,554 |
| Boston           | 73,245  |
| Courtesy Copies  | 3,500   |
| Department of VA | 12,110  |
| DoD              | 12,386  |
| Face Book Pages  | 3,297   |
| Google           | 7,824   |
| Los Angeles      | 132,847 |
| Microsoft        | 3,689   |

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| National Guard               | 1173       |
| New York                     | 149,684    |
| Other Social Media           | 28,676     |
| San Francisco                | 79,538     |
| Twitter                      | 33         |
| US House of Reps & Staff     | 829        |
| US Senators & Staff          | 99         |
| University of So. California | 3,699      |
| US Air Force                 | 30,742     |
| US Army                      | 39,885     |
| US Marines                   | 22,229     |
| US Navy                      | 21,873     |
| Veterans                     | 19,067,312 |
| Washington DC                | 143,293    |
| Yahoo                        | 134        |
|                              | 19,982,651 |

**Please do not reply to this E-Mail, this is an unattended E-Mail address, please send all correspondence to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)**