



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, August 13, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 33



This-N-That

Well are you ready for a real good kick in the pants?

DeWayne Hamlin, the notoriously corrupt VA director who was the first termination when President Donald Trump took office was just rehired by Veterans Affairs and worse yet, his present role and job duties are not publicly known.

The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) reinstated him, and mind you this is the same board that could reinstate Sharon Helman later this year based on her appeal. Helman is a felon for misconduct who was terminated from her job as Phoenix VA director after allegations of wait time manipulation surfaced at the facility in 2014.

This among many other reasons is why I continually push for Veterans to get involved in their own healthcare! To either stop or prevent things like this and others from happening.

There are so many of us who literally breath, eat and sleep fighting the VA

for all our Veterans and we've made some gains over the past couple of years, some slowly, others went relatively fast, but just imagine if only 4 or 5 million Veterans were to jump on the bandwagon what all we could accomplish and maybe almost over night.

We need to get rid of all the old guard, stop this bonus nonsense, focus on hiring staff who want and need the job and are more than happy to get the job done right the first time and medical professional who really care about your health and well being.

Not just peddling their pills and about their way they go without a care in the world.

Secretary Shulkin may be adding more ailments to the list of AO conditions approved already.

Ailments under review as possible adds to the presumptive diseases list include bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson-like symptoms without diagnosis of that particular disease. But hypertension (high blood pressure) and stroke also might be embraced, or ignored, as part of the current review.

So please, keep up the pressure on your Reps in DC, you can't even begin to imagine how much that truly helps even though the majority would say it does not good, or they're not listening to me, just keep it polite, respectful, and when you end your call, be sure to thank the person on the other end of the line for their time.

Please go to [Legislation for Veterans NEEDS Your Support](#) and send out all the pre-written E-Mails listed, and lets all chip in and help all Veterans. There are to letters pertaining to BWN (Blue Water Navy) and I strongly urge you to send those out. Maybe cope the link to the page and send in an E-Mail to your entire mailing list and ask each of them to send out the E-Mails then forward on to their lists.

All of the legislation being push is critical, but, in my humble opinion there are two very critical issues, WIDOWS and BLUE WATER NAVY.

So if you could also see the one action item listed below and send that out and do the same action as mentioned above and send to your emailing list.

Widows have literally been being stolen from and this bill would correct it and return any where from \$1,200.00 per month to maybe as much as \$1,700.00 per month!

Members of Congress have been promising this for going on twelve years now, enough is enough we need to remember and help our Widows of today and days gone by as well as protect all those of the future.

We continue to receive more stories and have been blast faxing to all members of Congress since thirteen weeks ago Sunday non-stop.

It's not too late, so if you'd like to share your story and help put faces on the problems that you face in your everyday life in dealing with the VA, please send them on to my e-mail address.

Only rules are no last names, no social security numbers, no phone numbers, only first name, city and state. All other information would be redacted and isn't needed so we can insure the protections of everyone.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org





MORE THAN 100 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS PUSH SHULKIN FOR ANSWERS ON AGENT ORANGE BENEFITS

More than 100 members of Congress sent a letter to Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin this week, urging him to provide follow-up information from his congressional testimony earlier this year questioning the validity of Agent Orange claims by U.S. Navy veterans who served in the coastal waterways of Vietnam.

Military Veterans Advocacy, a Louisiana-based non-profit serving the interests of service members and veterans, has long advocated for the restoration of benefits for these veterans - benefits they received until a reversal of VA policy in 2002. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017, which was heard in committee in April and which has 295 co-sponsors, would undo the damage caused by the policy change.

"Military-Veterans Advocacy thanks these 103 Members of Congress for their support to the 90,000 veterans of the Blue Water Navy," said Cdr. John Wells (USN, Ret.), executive director of Military Veterans Advocacy. "These veterans deserve the benefits that were stripped away from them in 2002 by the then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs. We call on Secretary Shulikin to restore these benefits and to do so promptly."

In April, Wells testified before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs and met with Shulkin to seek support for the policy change from both the administration and congress.

CDR John B Wells, USN (Retired)
Military-Veterans Advocacy Executive Director
JohnLawEsq@msn.com

For more information on Military-Veterans Advocacy see
www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org



Congress Passes New Forever GI Bill

The House and Senate quickly passed a bill to correct inequities under the [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) and boost or restore [education benefits](#) for thousands of [veterans](#) and select groups of dependents and [survivors](#). Those who stand to gain from GI Bill reforms moving toward enactment include: victims of for-profit colleges that have closed; Reserve and Guard members activated under "12304b orders" which don't trigger [GI Bill eligibility](#); Purple Heart recipients whose wounds resulted in shorter tours and reduced GI Bill benefits, and survivors who qualify for GI Bill Fry Scholarships. The bill is now headed to the President for signature. [Learn what this new Forever GI Bill will mean to you.](#)



VETERANS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES WREATH CAMPAIGN

Chairman Bill Dudley of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County has announced the annual drive for Wreaths Across America has begun.

The council is dedicated to ensuring that every headstone in the St. Augustine National Cemetery is adorned with a live holiday wreath this year. The council has successfully sponsored the drive for several years.

The community is invited to send donations to purchase the wreaths. Individual wreaths are \$15.00. If two wreaths are purchased at \$30.00 the council receives a free wreath (3 for cost of 2). Our local businesses are encouraged to participate. With more than 1,200 gravesites the project is truly considerable.

The community is invited to the St. Augustine National Cemetery on December 16, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. for a ceremony followed by placement of the wreaths. Youth organizations are encouraged to participate to learn and honor our veterans.

Checks made payable to WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA may be sent to: Veterans Council of St. Johns County, P. O. Box 2117, St. Augustine, FL 32085-2117.

For any additional information please contact the campaign chair, SGM (Ret) Ray Quinn at (904)-797-5622.



Support SBP/DIC Offset Repeal Legislation

Senator Nelson (FL) has introduced legislation (S. 339) and Congressman Joe Wilson (SC) has introduced identical legislation in the house (HR 846) that repeals the SBP/DIC offset for survivors, sometimes referred to as the "Military Widows Tax.". Please use this action center contact your legislators to ask them to support this important legislation.

[Take Action!](#)

Please, even if you have already sent this pre-written E-Mail, do it again, and forward the link to your friends, family, etc via an E-Mail and ask them

too, to please sign and forward on to their address book.

We need to take care of our widows too! Current, past and future!



FREE RESUME REVIEWS For VETERANS

September 10, 2017 only by

Appelbaum's Resume Professionals, Inc.

At the War Memorial Center

Doris Appelbaum

Founder and President of Appelbaum's Resume Professionals, Inc.

(414) 352-5994

<http://www.appelbaumresumes.com>



VA Considers Additional Agent Orange Ailments

VA Secretary David J. Shulkin will decide "on or before" Nov. 1 whether to add to the list of medical conditions the Department of Veteran Affairs

presumes are associated to Agent Orange or other herbicides sprayed during the Vietnam War, a department spokesman said Tuesday in response to our enquiry. Read the full [article](#).



Administration Announces Veteran Telehealth Initiatives Designed to Provide Greater Access, Care

President Trump and VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin announced last Thursday at the White House three initiatives that will expand access to health care for Veterans across the country. Using telehealth technology and mobile applications, VA will connect with more Veterans to provide services where they live.

"This will significantly expand access to care for our Veterans, especially for those who need help in the area of mental health ... and also in suicide prevention," Trump said. "It will make a tremendous difference for the Veterans in rural locations."

Through VA Telehealth, VA can practice over 50 clinical specialties, from tele-dermatology to tele-intensive care, Shulkin explained. Many of the

Veterans using telehealth live in rural areas or far away from their closest VA medical facility.

"VA already has the largest telehealth program in the country. Last year, we had 700,000 Veterans who got telehealth services through the VA," Shulkin said.

These initiatives will expand VA's Telehealth capability in three specific areas.

After working with the White House Office of American Innovation and the Department of Justice, Shulkin announced he will be issuing a regulation that explicitly authorizes VA providers, using telehealth technologies, to serve Veterans no matter where the provider or the Veteran is located in the country. The "Anywhere to Anywhere VA Health Care" initiative will empower VA to hire providers in major metropolitan areas, where there is an abundance of clinical services and connect them to better serve Veterans in rural communities that lack sufficient medical services.

VA plans to expand its telehealth services to support convenient, high-quality care for all Veterans. To do so, Shulkin announced VA is initiating the nationwide rollout of a new application called VA Video Connect. [VA Video Connect](#) provides a secure and web-enabled video service that makes it easy for Veterans to connect with their VA providers by video on their own mobile phones or personal computers. VA Video Connect is currently being used by more than 300 VA providers at 67 hospitals and their associated clinics. It will be rolled out to VA providers and Veterans across the country over the next year.

Shulkin also announced the nationwide roll-out of an application to make it easier to schedule or change appointments with VA. The [Veteran Appointment Request app](#), or VAR for short, is an application that makes it possible for Veterans to use their smartphone, tablet or computer to schedule or modify appointments at VA facilities. The VAR capability is currently available to Veterans at several locations nationwide. [During its initial rollout, Veterans used the app](#) to book more than 4,000 appointments with their providers. VA will continue to roll out the application nationwide - bringing the capability to all VA facilities and clinics.

Source: TREA



Viet Veterans State of Emergency!

AUG 7, 2017 — John Rossie, CEO of Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association, has declared a "State of Emergency" with regards to HR 299 and S 422. These bills are the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017 presently in the House and Senate. Mr. Rossie stated "Its to the point where there will no longer be Blue Water Vietnam Veterans to represent. This is the must do year. We are asking everyone we can reach to please place our poster anywhere that it is legal to do so. At work, on community billboards, at your markets, every place that people congregate." More information is available at the Blue Water Navy website, www.bluewaternavy.org. You can make as many copies as you need and the POST THEM. Posters are available at <http://bluewaternavy.org/bwnposter.pdf>

"I am declaring a Blue Water Navy State of Emergency!

If we do not start doing something different right now, our Legislation is

going to fade away and die in Committee like it has for the past 10 years. I propose that we all DO SOMETHING to change this immediately. And what that will require is NEWS MEDIA ATTENTION AND COVERAGE! Along those lines, I would like to begin the following projects:

The Public Distribution of our Poster (Download at BWNPOSTER) that you can download and print as many copies as possible. They can be put up on bulletin boards and other spots in public buildings, high traffic areas of the public, both indoors and outdoors, and handed out to the public and SENT to your LOCAL TV AND NEWSPAPER distributors. Please distribute generously and copiously, and get PERMISSION to post when required.

Letters to the editor and to TV News Anchors about our problems (Downloadable sample letters are being prepared) and news coverage of local individuals involved in distributing these posters or doing other activities that help get the word out about the Blue Water Navy problems to the general public.”

-John Rossie, Executive Director
Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association



U.S. Government Accountability
Office Reports

- 1) [Drug Discount Program: Update on Agency Efforts to Improve 340B Program Oversight.](#)
- 2) [Early Childhood Learning and Child Care: Overview of Federal Investment and Agency Coordination.](#)
- 3) [Early Learning and Child Care: Agencies Have Helped Address Fragmentation and Overlap through Improved Coordination.](#)
- 4) [Gulf War Illness: Additional Actions Needed to Improve VA's Claims Process.](#)
- 5) [Gulf War Illness: Improvements Needed for VA to Better Understand, Process, and Communicate Decisions on Claims.](#)
- 6) [Highlights of a Forum: Combating Synthetic Identity Fraud.](#)

- 7) Homeless Veterans: VA Should Improve Reporting on the Benefits Provided by Leases of Unneeded Property.
- 8) Investigational New Drugs: FDA Has Taken Steps to Improve the Expanded Access Program but Should Further Clarify How Adverse Events Data Are Used.
- 9) Medicare: CMS Should Evaluate Providing Coverage for Disposable Medical Devices That Could Substitute for Durable Medical Equipment.
- 10) Navy Shipbuilding: Policy Changes Needed to Improve the Post-Delivery Process and Ship Quality.
- 11) Older Workers: Phased Retirement Programs, Although Uncommon, Provide Flexibility for Workers and Employers.
- 12) Refugees: Actions Needed by State Department and DHS to Further Strengthen Applicant Screening Process and Assess Fraud Risks.
- 13) Social Security Numbers: OMB Actions Needed to Strengthen Federal Efforts to Limit Identity Theft Risks by Reducing Collection, Use, and Display.
- 14) Telehealth: Use in Medicare and Medicaid.
- 15) VA Health Care: Improvements Needed in Data and Monitoring of Clinical Productivity and Efficiency.
- 16) VA Real Property: Planning and Communication Improvements Could Help Better Align Facilities with Veterans' Needs.



Veterans call the President. Whose VA is it?

We need everyone to call The President's VA Hotline @ **855-948-2311** 8:00AM till 5:30PM ET and tell them about the Veterans plight with the VA denying presumption of exposure to Agent Orange and various other illnesses related to Agent Orange. Tell them your story.

This would also apply to Veterans from Korea, Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan as well.

This is YOUR CHANCE to get the message through to the President . Be patient and wait for the operator to talk to you .

The line is being manned by military spouses, parents and veterans. All are volunteers. Please show them the respect they deserve.

And if you have not written your story and sent it to me, please do keep them coming. We're not stopping the attack from the side of Congress either!

Send your stories to: Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

Just please keep in mind, no last names, street addresses, social security numbers or phone numbers. Just First Name, City and State.



Things to Know About Veterans Choice

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care from a community provider rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. Learn more about VCP on the VA [VAntage Point Blog](#).



CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!

**To Call your Representative:
202-225-2305**

**To Call your Senators:
202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553**

**To call Different Members of Congress:
202-224-3121**

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!

www.veterans-for-change.org



Make the Most of Your Finances During Deployment

Managing finances can be a tricky task for anyone – especially those who are, or are about to be, deployed. According to a survey by the National Military Family Association, 28 percent of military families say financial issues are among their greatest challenges during deployment. To help navigate this challenge, we've compiled [advice for maintaining personal finances](#).



Senate Unanimously Approves Six VA Nominees

After months of delays the Senate unanimously passed three leaders for the VA. They are:

- Thomas Bowman, VA Deputy Secretary
- James Byrne, VA General Counsel
- Brooks Tucker, VA Assistant Secretary of Congressional and Legislative

Affairs

Additionally, they unanimously approved three nominees to serve as judges to preside over the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims:

- Michael Allen
- Amanda Meredith
- Joseph Toth

This is very good news since the VA has been severely understaffed for the last several months.

Thomas Bowman, a retired Marine Corps Colonel, was the majority staff director for the Senate VA Committee and previously was chief of staffs for Department of Veterans Affairs Secretaries Jim Nicholson and James Peake. James Byrne is also a retired Marine Corps Colonel and has been associate general counsel for Lockheed Martin since 2008. And, yes indeed Brooks Tucker is a retired Marine Corps Lt. Colonel was presently an advisor to VA Secretary Shulkin and had been a senior policy advisor to Senator Richard Burr (R-NC)

Michael Allen is a law professor and director of the Veterans Law Institute at Stetson University in Florida. Amanda Meredith is the present Deputy Staff Director and general counsel for the SVAC and Joseph Toth served as a judge advocate in the Navy. In 2011, Toth partnered with prosecutors in Afghanistan to establish rule of law in the district where the Taliban was formed.

Source: TREA



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 2,200 hits per day, and downloads average 1,000 per day with a total 3,475,441 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

- Documents Library with over 16,047 documents on-line (Updated: 8/07/17)
- FAQ’s with more than 1,600 FAQ’s and answers
- Multiple Forums
 - o Afghanistan Veterans
 - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
 - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
 - o Iraq Veterans
 - o Korean Veterans
 - o Men Veterans Forum
 - o Mental Health for Veterans
 - o Political Issues
 - o Suggestion Box
 - o The Mess Hall
 - o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
 - o Veteran Affairs

- o Vietnam Veterans
- o Welcome Mat
- o Women Veterans Forum
- o WW II Veterans
- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 10/10/16)
- News (Articles On-Line: 6,677)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,591, Added 6 New Links (Updated: 06/21/17)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail:

Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org



SecNav and Others Confirmed by Senate

Eight Department of Defense nominees were confirmed by a voice vote in the Senate, which increased the Pentagon staffing. The prolonged Senate process reached an agreement between both parties, confirming Richard Spencer as the new Secretary of the Navy, Ellen Lord as the new undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Lucian Niemeyer and Robert Hood, both as assistant secretaries of defense. The confirmations double the number of nominees for the Pentagon confirmed by the Senate. There were only seven other defense officials who went through the same process since January.



House Passes Veterans Bills

The House recently approved several legislative proposals pertaining to veterans.

The proposed bills include:

- The "Global War on Terrorism Memorial Act" (H.R.873) that authorizes

the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish memorial on GWOT,

- The "Military Residency Choice Act" (H.R.282) that allow a military spouse to elect to use same residency as service member for purposes of taxation and voting, the "Veterans' Access to Child Care Act" (H.R.95), which would make a pilot program for child care at VA facilities a permanent program for veterans receiving care on a regular basis,
- The "VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act" (H.R.2006) that increases transparency in VA procurement and
- The "VA Bonus Transparency Act" (H.R.1690) which requires VA to submit annual report on paying bonuses.

The bills have moved to the Senate for further consideration.



Air Reserve Virtual Transition Assistance

Individual Reservists who need to complete the Congressionally-mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP), but whose qualifying 180+ day Title 10 orders have already ended, may now complete the requirement virtually. Individual Reservists can begin scheduling the virtual program through an over-the-phone pre-separation briefing with Ms. Vernesta Harris at **(478)-327-2107**. For more information on TAP and Transition GPS, visit the [DoD TAP website](#). Individual Reservists who need assistance requesting orders to complete TAP should contact their servicing HQ RIO Detachment and also visit the [Air Reserve TAP webpage](#).



My name is Greg Holt and I am reaching out on behalf of Project: Return To Work. Project: Return To Work Inc. (R2W), a 501(c)3 non-profit

organization established in 1998, provides personalized employment services to Veterans, their spouses and Americans with disabilities. Our objective is to connect qualified job seekers with employers.

We are hosting a special career hiring event September 8th in Boulder, Colorado. This is being sponsored by the Foothills United Way as part of their Day of Caring event. While we serve all veterans in search of any job type in any industry, for this event, we are focusing on those veterans who have an interest in careers with the trucking and security industries. We are also looking for employers currently hiring salaried positions in those industries that would be willing to participate and commit to hiring a qualified applicant during this event. Your help in locating applicants and employers is greatly appreciated. At your earliest convenience, please contact me at the number below for more information.

Respectfully,

Greg Holt, Employment Specialist

greg.holt@return2work.org

(801)-529-7442





Military Scrambles for Transgender Policy After Trump Tweets

President Donald Trump's [tweets declaring transgender people unwelcome](#) in the armed forces have plunged the Pentagon into a legal and moral quagmire, sparking a flurry of meetings to devise a new policy that could lead to hundreds of service members being discharged. Months after officially allowing transgender troops to serve openly in the military, the department may be forced to throw out those who willingly came forward after being promised they'd be protected. For more details, see this [article](#).



VA May Add to List of Agent Orange-Caused Ailments

Last week Stars and Stripes printed an article by military columnist Tom Philpott which stated that VA Secretary Shulkin will announce no later than November 1 whether VA will add to the current list of diseases and ailments that are presumed to be caused by Agent Orange or other herbicides sprayed by the U.S. military during the Vietnam war.

According to the article those diseases and ailments could include "bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson-like symptoms without diagnosis of that particular disease. But hypertension (high blood pressure) and stroke also might be embraced, or ignored, as part of the current review."

Shulkin's decision could make thousands more Vietnam veterans eligible for VA compensation and benefits.

Source: TREA



VA 'STOP PAIN' Best Practices Guidelines

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin has announced the release of VA's top eight best practices to share with others in government and the healthcare industry who work to balance pain management and opioid prescribing, based on what VA has learned over the past four years. These best practices are summed up by the acronym S.T.O.P. P.A.I.N., which stands for: (1) stepped-care model, (2) treatment alternatives/ complimentary care, (3) ongoing monitoring of usage, (4) practice guidelines, (5) prescription monitoring, (6) academic detailing, (7) informed consent for patients, and (8) naloxone distribution. For more information, read the [VA press release](#) and visit the VHA Pain Management [webpage](#).

Counseling Services for Veterans

VA provides outreach and readjustment counseling services through 300 community-based Vet Centers located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and America Samoa. For more on the

services offered and eligibility, see this [article](#).



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



Links to Other Stories

- 1) [America's amnesia](#)
- 2) [Congress Moves to Improve Pay for PAs in the Veterans Administration](#)
- 3) [GAO Reports 08/06/17](#)
- 4) [Lynch: VA can't identify source of fentanyl in fatal overdose Hospital increases security](#)
- 5) [MSPB forces VA to take back fired official, VA exploring all options under new accountability authorities](#)
- 6) [Notoriously Corrupt VA Director Gets Hired Back At Veterans Affairs](#)
- 7) [Shulkin will decide whether to add more conditions to Agent Orange list by Nov. 1](#)
- 8) [VA Extends Funding to Groups Impacted By Grant and Per Diem Program Changes](#)
- 9) [VA official who allegedly stole \\$130K reinstated](#)
- 10) [VA Secretary Vows To Fire Person He Just Fired In April](#)
- 11) [VA to Decide on New Agent Orange Ailments by Nov. 1](#)
- 12) [Veteran Sexual Trauma Victims: You Are Not Alone](#)

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



VA Health Care Funding Increases

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary David Shulkin recently issued a statement on the [agreement reached on the funding to increase veterans' access to health care](#) and to strengthen the VA workforce. He also released a statement following [House Passage of S. 114, the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act](#). He also released a statement on the [Congressional approval of the VA Choice Funding Legislation](#).



Six-Month Extension of CHOICE Act Passed by Congress Before Recess

Late on August 1st the Senate joined the House in passing legislation funding the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 with \$2.1 billion to extend the program for an additional 6 months.

The VA Choice Program authorizes veterans who live farther than 40 miles from a VA facility, or those who cannot get an appointment with the VA in under 30 days, to access care outside the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system.

Source: TREA



This month please remember these women who died during August while serving our country in or during war times!

2 Aug 2008: USA PFC Jennifer L Cole, 34, IRAQ

3 Aug 2013: USA Lilli Anna (Moore) Panttila, 25, possible suicide, IL

4 Aug 1943: WASP Kathryn Barbara Lawrence, WW II

5 Aug 1984: USN Pamela Cahanes, 25, found murdered in Sanford, FL two days after

graduating from Orlando Navy Training Center

7 Aug 1998: USAF SrMSGT Sherry Lynn Olds, 40, Military Assistance Office in US

Embassy bombing in NAIROBI, KENYA, Africa

7 Aug 2007: USAF Airman Basic Paige R Villers, 19, boot camp flu, Lackland AFB

7 Aug 2010: USA SPC Faith R Hinkley, 23, RPG attack, IRAQ

8 Aug 2009: USA SSG Tara J Smith, 33, non-combat health, Bagram AFGHANISTAN

9 Aug 2007: USA SSG Alicia A (Finklea) Birchett, 29, non-combat vehicle accident, IRAQ

10 Aug 2006: PAARNG SPC Kirsten Fike, 36, died in AZ watching the Mexican border

13 Aug 2008: USAF SrAirman Sabrina Autrey, 23, unknown Bolling AFB

14 Aug 1944: WASP Mary E. Hartson, WW II

14 Aug 1968: USA ANC LTC Annie Ruth Graham, 52, VIETNAM

14 Aug 2005: USA SPC Toccara R. Green, 23, IRAQ

14 Aug 2008: USA PVT Janelle F King, 23, IRAQ

15 Aug 2006: USMC LCPL Amanda Carrithers, 19, murdered in NC

15 Aug 2007: USA SGT Princess C Samuels, 22, mortars, IRAQ

15 Aug 2007: USA SPC Zandra T (Worthy) Walker, 28, mortars, IRAQ

16 Aug 2007: USA SPC Kamisha J Block, 20, non-combat murdered by US soldier, IRAQ

16 Aug 2008: USA SGT Kendale B Carney, died of natural causes while home on leave,

Hamlet, NC

17 Aug 2006: USCG LT Jessica Hill, 31, drowned in training off Barrows,

AK

18 Aug 2005: USA 1LT Laura M. Walker, 24, AFGHANISTAN

19 Aug 2006: USA SGT Wakkuna A Jackson, 21, AFGHANISTAN

21 Aug 2012: NYANG SGT Kristie A (Roberts) Proctor, 27, suicide, NY

23 Aug 1943: WASP Mabel Virginia Rawlinson, WW II

24 Aug 2012: USA PFC Patricia L Horne, 20, AFGHANISTAN

24 Aug 2015: USA PFC Karlyn S Ramirez, 24, shot in Severn, MD

25 Aug 1950: USN NNC LT Wilma Ledbetter, drowned when USS Benevolence sank

after colliding with the SS Mary Luckenback near the Golden Gate Bridge

in San Francisco, CA

25 Aug 2013: USA WO1 Anisha Phillips, 30, motorcycle accident, Florence, SC

25 Aug 2014: USA SFC Paula Walker, 33, suicide, Ft Lee, VA

26 Aug 1944: USA WAC PVT Allene M Baker, suicide, Camp Patrick Henry, VA

27 Aug 2012: MEARNNG SSG Jessica M. Wing, 42, non-combat, KUWAIT

29 Aug 2008: USA Kanika T Powell, 28, murdered, Laurel, MD

30 Aug 1943: WASP Margaret "Peggy" June Seip, WW II

30 Aug 1943: WASP Helen Jo Anderson Severson, WW II



Vets Can Now Use Smartphones for VA Consultations, Appointments

President Donald Trump hailed a "historic breakthrough" Thursday at the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand telehealth services, allowing vets to get health care consultations and appointments on their smartphones and home devices. For more details, see this [Defensetech post](#).





Learn How TRICARE For Life Works With Medicare

Are you getting close to age 65? Then you should learn how TRICARE for Life (TFL) and Medicare work together. Next week TRICARE and Military OneSource is holding a webinar on the subject. It will be on August 15th from 1 to 2 p.m.

Click below to read about and register for the session.

Read the full [article](#).

Source: TREA





15 Free Events for Troops, Veterans and Families in August

What better way to finish out the summer than attend a fun concert or sporting event with friends or your caregiver? From major country artists, to top MLB matchups and even NFL preseason games, there are a host of events you can attend in August through the national nonprofit, [Veteran Tickets Foundation](#), or Vet Tix.

Since 2008, Vet Tix has provided veterans, service members, caregivers and family members of those killed in action with more than three million free tickets to major sports games, concerts and a diverse mix of other ticketed events.

Check out just 15 major events below out of the hundreds of events available at [VetTix.org](#):

August 4: Nashville, Tennessee: Tim McGraw and Faith Hill Soul2Soul Tour

August 5: Tinley Park, Illinois: Rob Stewart with Cyndi Lauper

August 9: Jersey City, New Jersey: Comedy's Best Kept Secret Tour

August 10: Pelham, Alabama: Jason Aldean's They Don't Know Tour with

Chris Young and Kane Brown

August 16: Portland, Maine: Goo Goo Dolls' Long Way Home Summer Tour with Phillip Phillips

August 18: Rochester, New York: Nitro Circus Live

August 19: San Diego, California: Fleet Science Center

August 24: Evansville, Indiana: An Evening with Olivia Newton

Sports

August 6: Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Twins vs. Texas Rangers - MLB

August 10: Green Bay, Wisconsin: Green Bay Packers vs. Philadelphia Eagles - NFL Preseason

August 15: Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Diamondbacks vs. Houston Astros - MLB

August 16: Washington, DC: Washington Mystics vs. Los Angeles Sparks - WNBA

August 23: Anaheim, California: Los Angeles Angels vs. Texas Rangers - MLB

August 24: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh Pirates vs. Los Angeles Dodgers - MLB

August 31: Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Milwaukee Brewers vs. Washington Nationals - MLB

To become a Vet Tixer and request tickets to these and hundreds of other events, which are free except for a very small delivery fee, visit VetTix.org to create a **free account**. Once you've created an account and verified your military service, you can review hundreds of upcoming events across the country.

Source: TREA



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Service Dogs and Other Lesser-known VA Benefits

While 44 percent of all Veterans use at least one VA benefit, several lesser-known benefits could help Veterans live better, healthier lives. [Here are three lesser-known VA benefits veterans may be eligible to receive.](#)



Questions and Benefits: Can I Transfer the Montgomery GI Bill?

In this week's questions and benefits column, we answer a question from a military family member who asks that if a late service member had GI Bill benefits before 2001, can they be transferred to his children? For the answer to this question, see this [post](#).



Stay Informed About TRICARE

Here are six ways to learn more about TRICARE: (1) when you have questions about TRICARE benefits, coverage or costs, visit the [TRICARE Publications page](#); (2) read TRICARE's [Health Matters newsletters](#); (3) the latest [TRICARE news articles](#); (4) find videos about your medical and dental coverage on [TRICARE TV](#); (5) listen to the weekly Podcast, TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin; (6) Sign up for upcoming TRICARE webinars and watch previous archived webinars on the Military OneSource website; and (7) visit Military.com's [TRICARE section](#).



Veterans Reflect on Korean War

Recently, United States and Korean Veterans joined together at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the armistice agreement that brought a cease fire to the conflict. The event included a poetry reading from a Korean War Veteran, the laying of roses to honor each country that lost lives in the war, and the playing of taps as wreaths were presented. The Korean War armistice was signed on July 27, 1953. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#). Learn more about the Korean War on the [Wikipedia website](#). For more military history features, visit the Military.com [History section](#).



AF Health Professions Loan Repayment Program

Application packages for the Air Force's Health Professions Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP) will now be accepted until Sept. 1, 2017. Active-duty Biomedical Sciences Corps and Nurse Corps officers are eligible to apply. The maximum loan repayment is \$40,000 per year for up to two years, minus about 28 percent in federal income taxes. Officers may use HPLRP to repay any qualified loans obtained for their qualifying degree that allows them to hold their Air Force Specialty Code. The service commitment for HPLRP is a minimum of two years. For more information, visit [myPers](#). Select 'Active Duty Officer' from the dropdown menu and search 'HPLRP.'



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