



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, September 02, 2018

Volume 9, Issue 35



This-N-That

This week the VA put out a new report regarding Veteran Suicides, bottom line as usual they show "improvement" so now instead of saying 22 Veteran suicides per day it's down to 20!

Most of the agencies and organizations we connect with all feel that number is a lot closer to 54 per day, and none of us see any improvement on the part of the VA.

The VA had done the same with Homeless Veterans,

touting only 40,000. Heck that would only be the entire state of CA alone and most of the reports we get from the Health and Human Services Agencies across the country still put that number closer to 1.5 million.

One of the facilities that has been in the news off and on for many years is the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center where the entire piece of property was deeded back in the 1800's for the sole purpose of being a Veterans Home.

Yet that property has had lots leased out to civilian businesses and catered to the Brentwood elitists for many years, and in some if not many cases the "rent" has never been accounted for, and the ACLU had fought the VA and won and removal of the civilian businesses was ordered and all leases found to be invalid, yet they're still there. and again nothing has been done to help the Homeless Veterans of Los Angeles which that number is in the 9+ thousand.

Then to add more insult to Veterans, only to save buck or two which later down the road will be wasted on very expensive artwork, VA administration is fighting Blue Water Navy, telling what I consider to be flat out blatant lies when more evidence over the years has been provided and proven 100% truth.

Again is this to "save a buck" only to be wasted down

the road on construction cost over runs in the billions?

Makes me seriously wonder that if NO one in the VA healthcare system received bonuses, would they fight so damn hard to prevent further claims to be awarded?

And there evidently seems to be a "real" price for a life, so that too makes me wonder, what is that price tag? How many more lives must be lost to illness or mental health before the VA takes notice and actually does something about it?

Many of us have been fighting for several years to have Glioblastoma added to the approved list of illnesses with almost no success. So now I truly wonder since the passing of Senator John McCain how long before they add this illness to the approved list?

I guess that the one thing that angers me most are those who are in control over your lives and healthcare, that none are doctors, scientists or medical researchers, and I'd guess that those who have the control have never read one single paragraph of any medical reports or published research papers, and most probably still base all their decisions on the debunked garbage produced by Alvin Young.

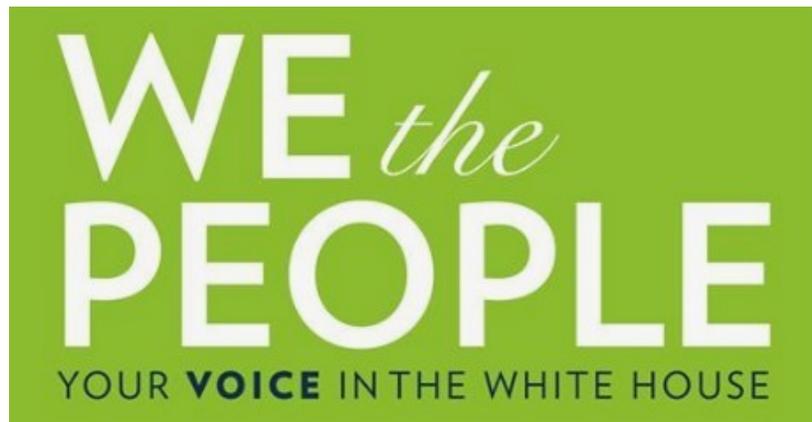
On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and myself, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



BWN Needs Your Help!

The United States government, through its agency the Veterans Affairs, has a DUTY to TREAT medical problems associated with military service; COMPENSATE veterans (or their families) for early death or disability associated with their service; and MONITOR and DOCUMENT the effects of government policy and MISTAKES that created a higher health risk. For 50 years, VA has FAILED to monitor and document the effects of Agent Orange on military members that served in the "Blue Water Navy" during Vietnam. Congress is attempting to "fix" this dereliction of duty - and VA Officials oppose the change. We the people support treatment and compensation for these medical issues; and believe monitoring and documenting these issues should be the responsibility of VA, not the individual veterans.

Please sign, share on your page, copy and paste web link into an e-mail and send out to your entire e-mail address book and ask all your friends and family to sign, and forward on to their entire e-mail address book too!

You don't have to be active duty military, or a veteran, civilians can sign too. 98,000 signatures are needed

Click [HERE](#)

VA Revamp of Appeals Process Continues

The [Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017](#) (Appeals Modernization Act) was signed Aug. 23, 2017, aimed at transforming a complex, frustrating appeals process into one that is simple, timely and transparent. VA states that is working toward full implementation of the law, scheduled to take effect in February 2019. The new system features three differentiated lanes from which a claimant may choose in seeking review of a VA denial (or partial denial). For more information about VA's appeals modernization process, visit the VA [website](#).

REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL



VA Using Slow-rolled Agent Orange Report Against New Bill

Since 2016, the U.S. government has had in its possession a report that suggests that as many as four new conditions — bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension — could be added to its list of 14 illnesses VA presumes have been caused by exposure to herbicides the U.S. military sprayed during the Vietnam War. That report is now being used to oppose a proposed bill regarding spina bifida care. For more details on the issue, see this [article](#).





Thank You



Guard, Reserve to Receive Expanded Transitional TRICARE Coverage

In the past, Guard troops and reservists and their families received 180 free days of TRICARE coverage only if they were activated for more than 30 days in support of a "contingency operation." Now they will qualify for that coverage regardless of the reason they were activated. For more details, see this [article](#).



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.

During the month of August 2018, we've added just under 200 new documents many in libraries you need to be a subscriber to view and download.

Additionally we're working on restructuring the NEWS section and making various categories where all new articles will be posted to and all older articles are slowly being moved over into the new categories.

This change will make it easier for everyone to choose a category and be able to scroll through all the news pieces and see how many times each has been viewed and you can see for yourself which news pieces are hot and which aren't.

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 for Mental Health and are currently seeking a new Licensed Mental Health Worker, where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average **3,000** hits per day, and downloads average **1,990** per day with a total **4,341,552** 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 **16,662** documents on-line (Updated: 08/27/18)
- 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 (**Counselor Needed**)
- 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: 01/11/18)
- News (Articles On-Line: **7,698**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,663, Added 1 New Links
(Updated: 09/04/18)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org



Army Secretary: Clean Up Lead-tainted Base Homes

Army Secretary Mark Esper said last week that the Army needs to eliminate chipping and peeling lead paint in roughly 40,000 base homes. The service launched an "immediate action plan" after a Reuters investigation revealed that more than 1,000 small children on bases had tested "high for lead" levels. For more details, see this [article](#).



Orrick Pro Bono Team Partners With Military Veterans Advocacy To Seek Justice For Disabled Vietnam Veterans

An Orrick pro bono team has partnered with non-profit Military Veterans Advocacy to pursue review before the en banc U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit of a longstanding and unlawful policy that denies many disabled Vietnam veterans the statutory rights to which they are entitled. MVA, led by Executive Director and retired Navy Commander John B. Wells, has been working tirelessly to change this policy in the courts and in Congress for over a decade. Last month, the Federal Circuit granted sua sponte en banc review to consider whether the approach taken by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is contrary to the plain language of the statute that protects Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and now suffer from disabilities as a result. A hearing is set for Dec. 7.

The issue the Court will consider involves "Blue Water" Navy vets, like appellant Alfred Procopio, Jr., who served on ships in Vietnam's offshore waters but never entered the internal rivers or set foot on Vietnamese soil. For veterans who "served in the Republic of

Vietnam," Congress affords a presumption of exposure to Agent Orange and of service-connection for a number of disabilities known to be linked to the toxic chemicals contained in that herbicide. But since 2002, the VA has denied this presumption to Blue Water Navy veterans unless they put "boots on the ground" during their service in Vietnam. This rule is at odds with a wealth of evidence confirming that veterans serving on ships in the territorial waters were exposed to Agent Orange and suffer from its effects to this day. The en banc Federal Circuit will now consider whether it is also at odds with Congress's decree that the presumption should be available to all who served "in the Republic of Vietnam," including its territorial waters. This question is critical to tens of thousands of veterans who faithfully served their country but who now find themselves on the short end of a crabbed and formalistic government view.

The Orrick team representing Mr. Procopio in the case is led by appellate partner Mel Bostwick and also includes Tom Bondy, Matt Shahabian, and Robbie Manhas. The team will be joined in the en banc effort by Cdr. Wells of Military Veterans Advocacy.



Emergency Prescription Procedures in AL, LA, and MS

Due to Hurricane Gordon, emergency prescription procedures are in place until October 3rd, 2018 for parts of AL, LA, and MS.

For more information, visit: [TRICARE Disaster Alerts](#)



September's Featured Song

Ladder Up To Heaven

By

LT Bobby Ross

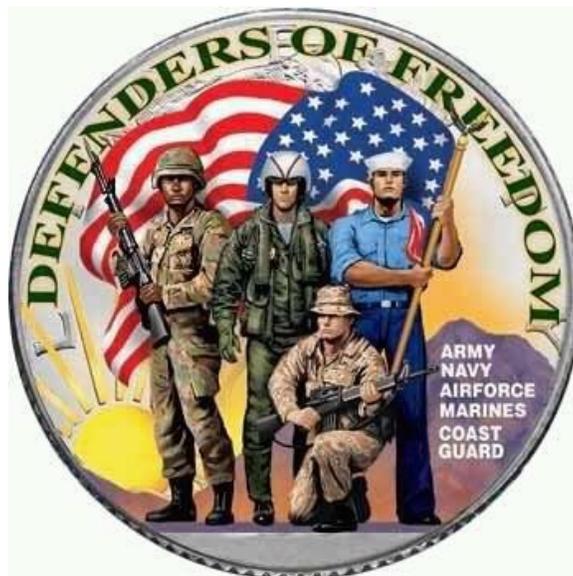
LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

Previous Featured Songs



Did VA Slow-roll Agent Orange Report?

Since 2016, the U.S. government has had in its possession a report that suggests that as many as four new conditions — bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension — could be added to its list of 14 illnesses VA presumes have been caused by exposure to herbicides the U.S. military sprayed during the Vietnam War. But to this point, nothing has been done with these findings. For more details on the issue, see this [article](#).



Vets, Don't Waste Your VA Loan Benefit: \$0 Down + No PMI

Don't waste your money on rent when you can buy a home with \$0 Down. Now is the time to use your VA loan benefit. Qualified borrowers can buy or refi with as little as \$0 down, and have no PMI payments with great rates and financing up to \$453k. [Use your VA loan benefit today.](#)



VFW Testifies in Support of Cemetery Improvements

On Wednesday, VFW National Legislative Service Director Carlos Fuentes testified on behalf of the VFW at a Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hearing on bills to improve VA cemetery benefits and operations. Fuentes offered the VFW's support for H.R. 4312, which ensures the battlefield cross is authorized to be displayed at VA national cemeteries; H.R. 6409, which would authorize VA to inscribe the name of spouses and children buried with veterans on veterans' headstones; and H.R. 6420, which would expand the Veterans Legacy Program that perpetuates the memories of veterans buried at VA national cemeteries. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#).



How to Keep Up with TRICARE During Natural Disasters

Access to your TRICARE benefit, prescriptions, and medical resources may change during a disaster. To prepare, sign up for TRICARE alerts on the TRICARE [website](#). Keep your key medical information accessible. Also, the Federal Emergency Management Agency [Ready campaign](#) has tips to help you create an emergency plan. In case of a natural disaster, TRICARE will announce any emergency procedures in its [disaster alert](#). If seeking non-network care during an emergency, keep your receipts and file any claims with TRICARE as soon as possible. For more tips, visit the TRICARE [website](#).



VFW Attends Arlington Cemetery Update

On Tuesday, VFW Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs John Towles attended a roundtable discussion hosted by the Honor Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC) to discuss the results of the most recent National Dialogue Survey, hear feedback from veterans service organizations regarding the survey process, and to discuss the future of Arlington National Cemetery. The survey had more than 230,000 respondents and included veterans, service members, and survivors from all generations and branches of service, many of whom are members of the VFW. The VFW appreciates the support of all its members who participated in this important process and will provide updates regarding the future of Arlington National Cemetery. [Read a brief summary of the survey.](#)



**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



Create Your Financial Plan

Do you know where you are and where you are going with your money? Here are three key elements that should be part of your financial plan: (1) conduct an insurance review. Health, life and property insurance can protect you from financial catastrophe; (2) create spending plan; Budget, spending plan, cash flow management, whatever you call it, make sure you have a game plan to save money and spend less than you earn; and (3) have short- and long-term savings and investments From building an emergency fund to creating long-term financial security, planning and executing your plan will allow you to save. For more information, read the [American Legion article](#) and visit the [USAA website](#). For more personal finance tips, from maintaining your credit to banking and saving, visit the [Military.com Money section](#).





AMERICAN SOLDIERS

**WILLING TO DIE FOR THE COUNTRY
THAT ISN'T WILLING TO PAY THEM!**



Reduce Your Co Pays & Rx Costs with a TRICARE Supplement

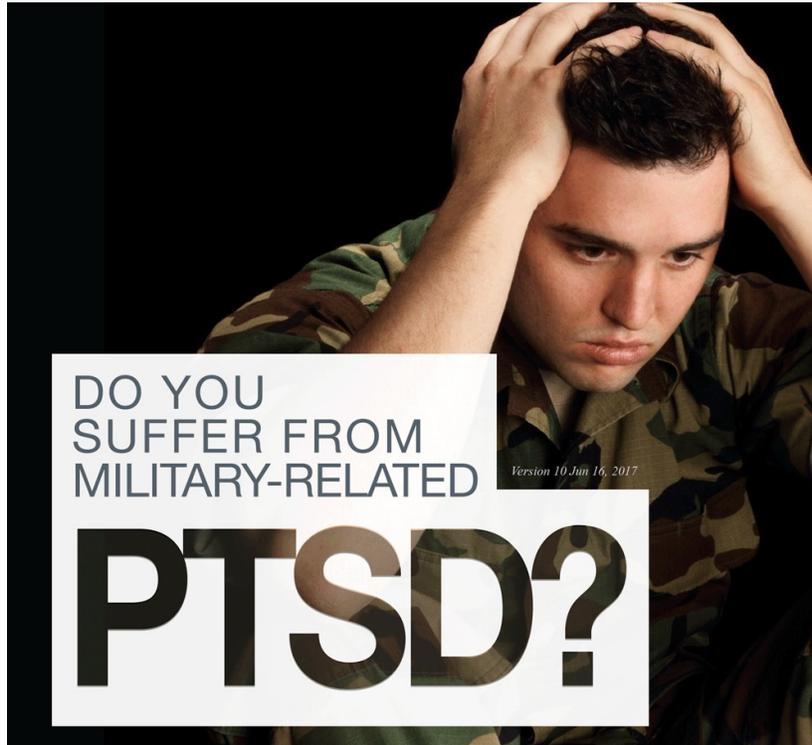
Get a Tricare supplement that pays your cost shares and can pay 100% of covered excess charges. [Get valuable coverage now.](#)



VA Nomination Hearings Held

This week, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a nomination hearing for two positions within VA's leadership. Dr. Tamara Bonzanto is nominated for the role of Assistant Secretary for the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP), and Mr. James Paul Gfrerer is nominated for the role of Assistant Secretary for the Office of Information and Technology (OIT). If confirmed, both would serve in critical roles within offices that have been under scrutiny in recent months. The OAWP was responsible for implementing the Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act last year, and overseeing the discharge and disciplinary actions against senior VA officials who failed veterans and VA employees. The OIT is tasked with overseeing the new Electronic Health Record Modernization Program, a ten year modernization of VA's records system, which is considered one of the more substantial changes to VA's operating procedures in decades. At the hearing, Ranking Member Tester stated, "You both have been nominated for two of the most challenging positions at VA. If you are confirmed, I hope that we can have a constructive relationship because our veterans deserve that." [Watch the hearing.](#)





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



TRICARE Emergency Procedures in Hawaii

TRICARE emergency procedures are in place in all counties in Hawaii. To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.



Adaptive Grant Hearing Held

This week, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held an oversight hearing on VA's Specially Adaptive Housing Grant Program (SAH). This program allows certain severely disabled veterans to receive various grants in order to add adaptive features into new homes or make improvements on existing properties. While programs like the SAH are an incredible benefit for many veterans, there are always areas that could be improved upon. Timeliness and accuracy of processing are issues with many claims within VA, and the SAH program is no exception. The VFW thanks Subcommittee Chairman Jodey Arrington and Ranking Member Beto O'Rourke for bringing attention to this incredibly vital program for our severely disabled veterans. [Read about the SAH program](#) or [watch the hearing](#).



**Our values
match yours.**



www.veterans-for-change.org



WWI Movie Gaining Public Attention

The movie 'Hello Girls' is moving into wider distribution across the nation. The film is embarking on whirlwind schedule of film festivals and screenings. According to the film's producer and director James Therese, Hello Girls has been accepted into the lineup of several major Film Festivals, to include the GI Film Festival in San Diego, as well as the Heartland International Film Festival in Indianapolis. For information about where the movie will be shown over the next couple of months, visit the [WWI Centennial Commission website](#). Read an article about [Hello Girls](#).



Suicide Prevention Month and Third Annual A Day to Change Direction

With an average of 20 veterans who die by suicide each day, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie launched a month-long VA campaign to spread awareness about

risk factors, warning signs for suicide, and to start a conversation about mental health and support for veterans in their communities. In June, VA released the most recent [national veteran suicide data](#) report, which examined more than 55 million veterans' records from 1979 to 2015. As veteran suicide is an ongoing problem, VA has named suicide prevention as its number one clinical priority. In recent years, VA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention has implemented varying suicide prevention initiatives such as expanding the Veterans Crisis Line, the joint action plan with DOD and the Department of Homeland Security, and multiple partnerships with groups such as the VFW. The VFW urges all its members and Posts to participate in the third annual "A Day to Change Direction" on Sept. 15. VFW Posts around the world will host a day of service and action to raise awareness, foster community engagement, and eliminate the stigma associated with mental health. If you are a veteran who is in a crisis or concerned about a loved one, please call **1-800-273-8255 and press 1**, **text 838255**, or **visit the** [Veterans Crisis Line website](#). [Watch or read](#) Secretary Wilkie's Suicide Prevention Month message and participate in the VFW's third annual [A Day to Change Direction](#).





VA Studying "Hidden" Wounds

Combat veterans can experience long lasting emotional and spiritual pain from participating in, witnessing, or failing to prevent traumatic events that violate their core values or expectations of themselves or others. Some have described such experiences as 'a deep soul wound that pierces a person's identity' leaving veterans to question who they are and how they can relate to others. As a result, veterans may experience symptoms of PTSD, depression or substance use, or they may consider ending their own lives. Researchers at the [San Diego VA](#) are tackling these critical questions with research aimed to understand how to help veterans recover from such events and resume their meaningful, fulfilling lives. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



VA Provides Training for Rural Women's Health Providers

The number of women veterans enrolled in VA has more than tripled since 2000, and as of May 2017 over a quarter of those women lived in rural or highly rural areas. As the demand for more gender-specific health care increases for VA, rural women veterans struggle with a lack of providers in general — let alone providers adequately trained in their gender-specific needs. Since 2009, Women’s Health Services (WHS) has been providing face-to-face education and training for clinical staff, called the Women’s Health Mini-Residency, 1-2 times per year in Orlando. Over the years, WHS realized the difficulties for rural VA providers to travel and partake in the three-day program. This summer, the program took to the road and will provide the education and training for rural providers and nurses in up to 40 rural clinical sites per year. Each provider and nurse who completes the program will receive more than 18 hours of accredited medical training. [Learn more](#) about the Women’s Health Mini-Residency.





Exchange Sponsors Scholarships

Military students can earn cash for college in a scholarship contest sponsored by the Army & Air Force Exchange Service and Unilever. Four winners of the [Rewards of Caring scholarship contest](#) will each receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Military students can enter the essay contest from Aug. 31 to Sept. 27. To enter, authorized Exchange shoppers in grades six through 12 with a grade-point average of 2.5 or higher must submit an entry form and an essay in English of 500 words or less explaining why their community and involvement in community service projects are important to them. Entry forms can be obtained at the Sweepstakes webpage at ShopMyExchange.com/sweepstakes. For more information, see this [Paycheck Chronicles post](#).



DOD to Allow Purple Heart Recipients to Transfer GI Bill Benefits

Earlier this week, the Pentagon granted an exception to policy for active duty Purple Heart recipients, which will allow them to transfer their GI Bill education benefits without incurring an additional four years of service. This change comes in the wake of a larger policy issued in July of this year that prohibits service members from transferring this benefit without extending their service, including service members who were severely wounded and undergoing the medical retirement process. Because transferability was intended to be a retention tool and not a benefit of service, it is encouraged that service members who are currently eligible to designate a family member as a beneficiary do so prior to separating from the service. [Read the new policy memo.](#)



Never forget our fallen!





Farm Loans for Veterans

Are you interested in a career in agriculture? Whether you want to run your own farm or work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are programs, support and resources available to get you started. For more information, visit the [USDA website](#).



Congress Is Back in Town

While the Senate only took part of August off and has been in session the past couple of weeks, the House was out of session the entire month. Now both bodies are back and are under a looming deadline to fund the government before October 1. That date is the beginning of fiscal year 2019 for the government and that means Congress must appropriate money for the new year or the government will shut down.

The leaders in Congress, Mitch McConnell (R- Ky.) in the Senate and Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) in the House, have plans to fund the government and finish other items but they are hampered by the short calendar this month

and by the fact that at least some of the funding bills they are working on are controversial. In the House, Ryan has scheduled less than 12 full workdays in September to accommodate religious holidays, and it remains to be seen how long lawmakers in both chambers will stay in town in October before leaving to campaign for the coming elections.

The task is further complicated because the House has passed only six of 12 appropriations bills, while the Senate has passed 9 of the 12. Thankfully, as far as TREA is concerned, the one bill that has passed both the House and Senate and is officially in conference is the package with veterans, energy, and congressional funding. Unfortunately, reports are that during August appropriators made little progress in reconciling competing versions of the measures.

It now will be up to Speaker Ryan to decide which, if any, of the bills the House will put to a vote in September.

Source: TREA



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



Veterans Can Tee Up at Tournament

More than 200 veterans with visual impairments, severe illness or injury are set to tee up for the 2018 National Disabled Veterans Training, Exposure and Experience (TEE) Tournament, which will take place Sept. 9-14 near Iowa City, Iowa. The six-day event is co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV). In addition to golfing at several courses in Iowa City, veterans will participate in adaptive cycling, fishing, bowling, kayaking, scuba diving, disc golf, marksmanship and rock wall climbing. More than 600 volunteers are expected to donate their time to the event. Athlete registration for the event has closed. For more information, read the VA [VAntage Point Blog](#) and visit the [TEE Tournament webpage](#).



Defense Funding Bill Still Under Negotiation

When it comes to the Defense Department appropriations bill, the story is different. The House has passed a stand-alone Defense appropriations bill, but negotiating a compromise may be more difficult than it otherwise would be because the Senate added the politically difficult Labor-HHS-Education spending bill to the Defense bill. If the two bodies can't reach agreement on the package they will have to resort to a CR - a continuing resolution, which has become commonplace in recent years. That means that starting October 1, they will fund the Pentagon at fy2018 levels for a limited period of time, giving themselves more time to come to agreement on a single bill.

What is also uncertain is whether President Trump will sign whatever the final Defense bill is. He has been threatening to shut down the government and it is not clear how serious he is about that.

Source: TREA



Links to Other Stories

- 1) [14 things to know about Medicare Advantage Plans](#)

- 2) 45,239 Vacancies at the VA
- 3) Amputees in High Heels: VA Research Zeroes in on Quality of Life
- 4) Ask A Veteran: What Can I Tell A Young Person Who Wants To Enlist?
- 5) 'Paws of War' brings joy, in form of puppy, to family of airman killed in Iraq
- 6) Petraeus: US has 'sacred obligation' to help burn-pit Veterans
- 7) Prostate cancer options for Veterans – for one VA doctor, it's personal
- 8) PTSD: Basic Criteria
- 9) Report: The United States Air Force Is Too Small
- 10) Some Recently Fired VA Employees May Soon Be Reinstated With Back Pay
- 11) Troops beware: New security clearance rules could bite you
- 12) VA announces upcoming awards of nearly \$326M in grants to help at-risk Veterans and family members
- 13) VA expands Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program to improve service to Veterans
- 14) VA officials say one in 10 department jobs is unfilled
- 15) VA Ramps Up Hiring of Job Counselors for Disabled Vets
- 16) VA releases data on vacancies as required under MISSION Act
- 17) VA suicide data shows Vets still desperately

struggling

18) VA to Add Medical Staff After 'Rust and Blood'
Found on Surgical Instruments

19) Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization
Act

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



"Customer Service" New Focus for VA

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie pledged Wednesday that VA will focus on "customer service" without having to resort to a "cauldron of lawyers." In an address to the American Legion, Wilkie also said he has the commitment of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to work on developing a new electronic "patient-centered health care system" to allow for smooth transitions from active-duty to veteran status. For more details, see this [article](#).



"Blue Water Navy" Bill Runs Into Trouble

We have reported in the past about the Blue Water Navy bill. This legislation would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to give presumption of exposure to Agent Orange to those (mostly) Navy veterans who served aboard ships offshore in Vietnam.

It provides eligibility for disability compensation to those sailors aboard aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and other ships who contend they were exposed to Agent Orange through the ships' water systems. The dioxin-laden herbicide has been found to cause respiratory cancers, Parkinson's disease and

heart disease, as well as other conditions.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has long opposed this because of the cost and because they say there is no scientific proof that these individuals were exposed to Agent Orange.

TREA supports presumption of exposure for these veterans, but we have been troubled by the way the House of Representatives opted to pay for it. In the bill that passed the House non-disabled veterans would be charged an extra \$250 on every \$100,000 in loan value in order to cover the cost of extending Agent Orange benefits to Blue Water Navy veterans.

In other words, one group of veterans' benefits would be cut in order to give another group of veterans a new benefit. TREA is opposed to that in principle. That is no way to "take care of our veterans," as our politicians keep saying.

Nonetheless we have been supporting the House bill because we believe the goal is correct. It passed the House and looked pretty certain to pass in the Senate until the VA's Undersecretary for Benefits testified before the Senate recently that the Trump Administration opposes the bill. This was somewhat of a turn-around on the part of the VA because former VA Secretary Shulkin was indicating support for the bill

before he was fired by the President.

Now it is unclear when the bill might pass, if it even passes at all.

TREA's position remains the same: we support VA disability benefits for Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans but we do not support cutting the benefits of some veterans in order to give new benefits to other veterans. In this case, the need of the aging Blue Water Navy veterans won out, but we will continue to fight to stop cuts to veterans benefits going forward.

Source: TREA



[CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER!](#)



*** RED ALERT ***

**Everyone Call The Senate Committee
On Veterans Affairs Members Ask
Them To Support and Vote to pass
HR 299 Blue Water Navy
Vietnam Veterans Act Of 2018 to the
Full Senate for a Vote!**

**Jon Tester (D - MT)202-224-2644-Tony
Murray, Patty (WA)202-224-2621-Ryan
Sanders, Bernie (VT)202-224-5141-Matt
Brown, Sherrod (OH)202-224-2315-Anna
Blumenthal, Richard (CT)202-224-2823-Ethan
Hirono, Mazie (HI)202-224-6361-Adam
Manchin, Joe (WV)202-224-3954-Emily**

**Please Ask everyone to Make The
Calls and Share this with
Everyone!**

**Thank You Michael F Kvintus
Sr. BWNVVA
National Vice Commander**



**Exchange Debuts Resource
Webpage**

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service has debuted a [resource page](#) on ShopMyExchange.com with up-to-date information on installation-wide events and programs in their area. [The Hub](#) provides information on events and specials at local Exchanges and commissaries, Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs and Air Force Services activities in one easy-to-navigate location. The Hub is the go-to source to stay connected to Exchange events, Express specials and other happenings in the military community.



Tips for Protecting Your Identity

The Internet has made our lives easier in many ways. But, unfortunately, the Internet can sometimes be exploited by scammers and criminals. So, it is vital to [learn how to protect your identity](#). Additionally, there is helpful information from the Federal Trade Commission on how to avoid modern scams and fraud. For more information, visit the Federal Trade Commission [website](#).



GAO

U.S. Government Accountability
Office Reports

1. [CMS Needs to Better Target Risks to Improve Oversight of Expenditures](#)
2. [Continued Management Attention Needed to Address Challenges and Risks with Developing, Testing, and Securing IT Systems](#)
3. [DOD Needs to Improve Budget Estimates and Accuracy of Forecasts for Airlift Services](#)
4. [Improved Oversight Needed for Reusable Medical Equipment](#)



VA Healthcare for Women

The number of women Veterans receiving health care from VA tripled from between 2000 and 2016, driving an increase in need for high-quality, gender-specific health care. As of May 2017, 26 percent of enrolled women Veterans lived in rural and highly rural areas. Since 2008, the [Women's Health Services](#) (WHS) has developed and delivered a comprehensive education and training model for clinical staff, called the Women's Health Mini-Residency, to address gaps in knowledge and skills in women's health topics. Additional training needs persist, including for staff in rural VA facilities. For more information, read the VA [VAntage Point Blog](#).



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



VetSuccess Aid on Campus

Recognizing that making the transition to college life can be challenging for veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers the VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program, which can help veterans and qualified dependents. The VSOC program provides a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to each VSOC school. These VRCs are called VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) Counselors. A VA Vet Center Outreach Coordinator is also provided, and co-located on many campuses, to provide peer-to-peer counseling and referral services. For more information, visit the VetSuccess on Campus [website](#).



Soldiers' Angels Provides Food Relief to Veterans

Through a partnership with the Veterans' Administration (VA) and local food banks, Soldiers' Angels provides monthly mobile food distributions for veterans in need of hunger relief. The relief program provides up to 200 veteran families with approximately 50 pounds of food each. For more details, see this [article](#).



1. Beaumont Bio Med, Inc. Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of all their Homeopathic Aqueous/Alcohol-Based Medicines due to the Nationwide Recall by the Contract Manufacturer, King Bio, of all their Aqueous-Based Products due to Possible Microbial Contamination
2. H&C Food Inc. Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Wheat, Pork, Egg, and Crustacean in Frozen Fish Balls
3. Vyaire Medical, Inc. Recalls Tri-Flo Subglottic Suction System Due to Risk of Device Breakage



How Security Clearance Affects Your Credit

Do you know how your security clearance might affect your credit rating? Are you up on the latest guidelines? The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently ran a report regarding security clearances and credit reports — for full details, see this [Paycheck Chronicles article](#).





SURVIVAL IS FUN



**Back to School with the GI
Bill**

Are you enrolled, or do you plan to enroll, in school under the Post-9/11 GI Bill this year? If so, check out your estimated monthly housing allowance using the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#). Beginning August 1, 2018, VA will calculate monthly housing payments using the zip code of the campus you physically attend for most of your classes, which may be different than the actual school location.





TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin #466

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:

- Child Enrollment in DEERS
- ECHO
- TRICARE For Life Overseas

Visit the TRICARE Media Center for this and previous podcasts at www.tricare.mil/podcasts.



MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 10 new identifications, and the burial date and location for one previously identified serviceman. Returning home with full military honors are:

Navy Reserve Ensign Harold P. DeMoss, 21, of Nashville, Tenn., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Sept. 15 in his hometown. DeMoss was a member of Fighting Squadron 100 (VF-100), piloting an F6F-3 Hellcat from Naval Air Station Barbers Point, Hawaii. On June 23, 1945, DeMoss was accompanied by two other squadron aircraft for a night division tactics training flight. Following the completion of their flight plan, the pilots circled the island. DeMoss climbed above the clouds and attempted to descend through them. His aircraft was not seen reemerging from the clouds and DeMoss was declared missing shortly thereafter. [Read about DeMoss.](#)

Army 1st Lt. Herman L. Falk was a member of Company B, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, supporting Republic of Korea Army attacks against units of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces (CPVF) in the vicinity of Changbong-ni, South Korea. Falk, and half of his platoon, were reported missing in action on Feb. 12, 1951. Following the war, returning American prisoners of war reported that Falk died in either April or May of 1951, while being held as a prisoner of war at the Suan Bean Camp in North Korea. Interment services are pending. [Read about Falk.](#)

Army Sgt. 1st Class James S. Streetman, Jr. was a member of Company B, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. In July 1950, the Korean People's Army outmaneuvered and overwhelmed Streetman's regiment, forcing units into a fighting withdrawal through enemy lines. Streetman was initially reported to have been killed in action on Aug. 14, 1950. However historical records determined he had been killed on July 22, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Streetman.](#)

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. John D. Crouchley, Jr. served as a pilot with the 828th Bombardment Squadron, 485th Bombardment Group. On June 28, 1944, Crouchley was lost when his B-24H aircraft was shot down and crashed during a combat mission over Romania. The other nine crewmembers parachuted safely, were captured as prisoners of war in Belgium, and subsequently returned to duty. American personnel were not able to conduct an immediate search due to enemy forces in the area. Based on no further information of his status, he was declared deceased as of June 29, 1945. Interment services are pending. [Read about Crouchley.](#)

Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Herbert W. Harms served as a B-17 tail gunner with the 569th Bombardment Squadron, 390th Bombardment Group,

13th Combat Bombardment Wing. On Aug. 16, 1944, Harms' aircraft was struck by anti-aircraft artillery during a bombardment mission to Zeitz, Germany, and subsequently crashed. Eight of the nine crewmembers safely bailed out of the aircraft and were captured by German forces, but Harms could not be located. Interment services are pending. [Read about Harms.](#)

Marine Corps Sgt. Millard Odom was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Odom died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943, during the first waves of the assault. Interment services are pending. [Read about Odom.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class George E. Naegle was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Naegle. Interment services are pending. [Read about Naegle.](#)

Marine Corps Pfc. Alva J. Cremean was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Cremean. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cremean.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Earl P. Baum was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Baum. Interment services are pending. [Read about Baum.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Joseph K. Maule was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Maule. Interment services are pending. [Read about Maule.](#)

Navy Water Tender 2nd Class Edgar D. Gross was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly

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

1 Sep 2008: USA SSG Renee A Deville, 44, died at Walter Reed from injuries sustained in IRAQ

2 Sep 1899: Army Contract Nurse Anna Campos, Typhoid Fever, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

3 Sep 2016: USA PFC Shadow B McClaine, 25, murdered, Clarksville, TN

4 Sep 2006: USA PFC Hannah L. (Heavrin) Gunterman McKinney, 20, non-combat vehicular homicide, IRAQ

5 Sep 2004: ILARNG SGT Shawna M. Morrison, 26, IRAQ

5 Sep 2012: USA CWO2 Thalia S (Ramirez) Belbeck, 28, helicopter crash, AFGHANISTAN

6 Sep 2011: NVARNG SFC Miranda McElhiney, 31, murdered at IHOP in NV

7 Sep 2007: USA SPC Marisol Heredia, 19, IRAQ

8 Sep 2006: USAR SFC Merideth L Howard, 52, AFGHANISTAN

11 Sep 2001: PAPD CPT Kathy Mazza-Delosh, 46, killed when WTC collapsed

11 Sep 2001: EMT Yamel Merino, 24, killed when WTC collapsed

11 Sep 2001: NYPD Officer Moira Smith, 38, killed when WTC collapsed

11 Sep 2001: USNR LT Mari-Rae Sopper, PENTAGON on AA Flight 77

11 Sep 2001: USN YN3 Melissa Rose Barnes, 27, telecommunications, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: USN SK3 Jamie Lynn Fallon, 23, storekeeper in Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

Support Activity, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: USA SPC Chin Sun Pak-Wells, 25, administrative assistant to the deputy chief of staff

for personnel, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: USN IT1 Marsha Dianah. Ratchford, 34, Navy information technician, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: USA SGT Tamara Thurman, 25, assistant in the office of the deputy chief of staff for

personnel, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: USA LTC Karen J. Wagner, 40, medical personnel officer in the office of the Army

surgeon general and deputy chief of staff for personnel, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: CIVILIAN Meta L Waller, 60, special programs manager for the administrative assistant

to the Army secretary, PENTAGON

11 Sep 2001: USA SSG Maudlyn A White, 38,
PENTAGON

12 Sep 2006: USA 2LT Emily J T Perez, 23, IED,
IRAQ

13 Sep 1944: WASP Alice E. Lovejoy, WW II

13 Sep 2014: USAR SSG Virginia Caballero, 41,
possible blood clot while enroute home

14 Sep 2006: USA SGT Jennifer Hartman, 21, IED,
IRAQ

14 Sep 2006: USA CPT Rebecca Ann Jarabek, 28,
Medivac Pilot died in OH

15 Sep 2003: USA SPC Alyssa Renee Peterson, 27,
non-combat gunshot, IRAQ

18 Sep 1920: USN NNC Grace Coulter, died at Marine
hospital, Louisville, KY

18 Sep 2010: USA PFC Barbara Vieyra, 22, IED/RPG
attack, AFGHANISTAN

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC ENS Eleanor Beste, plane
crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC ENS Marie Boatman, plane
crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Jeanne E. Clarke,
plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Jane L. Eldridge,
plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC ENS Constance R. Esposito,
plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Alice S. Giroux, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Calla C. Goodwin, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Constance A. Heege, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC LT (jg) Margaret Grace Kennedy, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC Ensign Mary E. Lijegreen, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 1950: USN NNC Ensign Edna J. Rundell, plane crash into the Pacific Ocean

19 Sep 2006: USA 1LT Ashley (Henderson) Huff, 23, IED, IRAQ

19 Sep 2006: USN LCDR Jane E (Lanham) Tafoya, 43, natural causes, Bahrain

19 Sep 2009: USA SSG Cynthia Meadows, 35, difficulty breathing, Ft Huachuca

19 Sep 2015: USAR MAJ Paula (Askins) Graham, 38, Chester, VA, suicide

20 Sep 2007: USA CPT (Dr) Roselle M. Hoffmaster, 32, non-combat incident, IRAQ

23 Sep 1943: WASP Betty Taylor Wood, WW II

24 Sep 2010: USA PFC Jaysmine S Petree, 19, IED, AFGHANISTAN

25 Sep 1898: Army Contract Nurse Irene Toland MD, Typhoid Fever, SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

25 Sep 2008: USA PVT Dominique Gibson-Brooks, 19,

seizure in room during BCT Ft Jackson, SC

26 Sep 1950: USAF AFNC CPT Vera M. Brown, died at Ashiya Air Base, Japan due to plane she

was assigned to crashed during a medical evacuation flight

28 Sep 2005: USAF A1C Elizabeth N. Jacobson, IRAQ

28 Sep 2007: MAARNG SPC Ciara Durkin, 29, non-combat gunshot, AFGHANISTAN

30 Sep 1943: WAC Tech5 Edith Ballinger, air crash at Maxton Field, Laurinburg, NC

30 Sep 2008: USA SGT Christina Smith, 29, murdered by soldier husband at Ft Bragg, NC

30 Sep 2011: USA SGT Sophie Champoux, 25, suicide after being raped 3 times, Ft Stewart, GA



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