



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, February 17, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 07



This-N-That

As I'm sure this would apply to most Veterans across the country, the VA truly angers me in many ways.

Suicide rates are climbing, yet the VA says they're declining.

The VA says Veteran Homelessness is

declining, but the facts say just the opposite, they are indeed climbing again.

The VA used to publish what they called the Monday Morning Worksheet where it showed the number of claims, appeals, etc., but then before they stopped publishing the report, they altered it to reflect an entirely different story, mostly, in my personal opinion to cover their asses!

Agent Orange claims over the past 50 plus years has risen as well as we're still finding out more about what these rainbow chemicals actually do to your body, and some take years and years before they surface, yet the mountain of evidence continues to rise as well.

Wait times and proper, accepted standards of medical care are on the

decline again as well. And we continue to sit back, relax, and let it all happen.

Under Links to Other Stories, you will see a link to an article which is rather detailed.

Then we still have the "offset" between retirement and DIC benefits for widows where the government is stealing approximately \$1,200.00 per months from Widows, which is \$14,400.00 annually.

This "offset" also known as "double dipping" seems to be a favorite issue of members of Congress especially come election time.

Someone will always present a new piece of legislation to resolve this problem, but once elected, it's forgotten and this has been going on for at least the past twelve years and it seems they put that piece of legislation up to get re-elected, and never

once bother to stop and think just how badly this affects our widows!

Over the years, I've received a number of letters from widows asking me to help them, and there isn't anything I can do but the normal routine, to ask people to get involved, calling their reps in DC frequently in order to get the bill to the floor, voted on and passed.

Many of these widows for financial reasons all brought on by the very Government that send their spouses off to war and were KIA, or came home only to die a slow death due to contamination have ended up selling their home or losing it due to inability to pay their mortgage.

Imagine you and your spouse living in a house that you worked your tail off for,

scrimped and saved to make the down payment, then you pass on, and within a period of time your widow has to sell a home you've lived in for 10, 20, 30 years just to save money and be able to live on what you're being given.

Then we have the problem which has been ongoing for decades where the VA promotes people "within" the current ranks to Director, and those very same people were taught how to scam the system and end up making thousands of dollars all on the backs of those whom have served!

Is this right, absolutely not, but when people just refuse to speak out, what can be expected?

The West Los Angeles VA Medical Center is a prime example. And that fight to

make it right has been going on for years. Veterans protested every Sunday, week after week, rain or shine, some were threatened, some arrested.

VA Land was leased out to the Brentwood elitists who owned various businesses catering to civilians, private schools, hotel services, a dog park, and more which brought on a lawsuit which was won, yet there are still civilian businesses on land that was donated with strict provisions it be used for a Veteran Nursing Home back in the 1800's.

We again seem to have a VA Secretary who doesn't seem to accomplish anything of substance, and where are we? Sitting back, watching a ball game, chugging down a beer, or just doing what ever, but still remaining silent.

SILENCE=ACCEPTANCE!

I know I've said this a million times over, but, without your help, how can anyone expect real change in the VA Healthcare System? How many lives does it cost before we take serious action?

I know I've personally posted many articles on how another Veteran lost his life due to the VA, so it's really no secret it's happening!

So, again I am asking each and everyone to get involved, call your Reps in DC every week, we prefer Fridays as everyone wants to go home either early or on time to have their weekend fun, lets slow them down, and show how serious we are.

And you don't have to be a Veteran,

spouse of a Veteran, or children of a Veteran, civilians are more than welcome, even urged to help by calling, E-Mailing, what ever it takes.

Just keep it civil, no foul language, no screaming, just plain and simple requests.

The idea is, provided we can get the thousands upon thousands of people doing the same thing at the same time (and I recommend every Friday) is that it will slow down operations in their office, and in many cases prevent your Rep from doing the one and only thing they're good at, "**LINING THEIR POCKETS**" and will force them to take immediate, swift action to provide what we're demanding and get it to the floor for a vote and passage, just so they can get back to "lining their pockets!"

We announced three weeks ago that we've officially closed all our Face Book Pages and are now officially on MEWE.COM for everything. So if you're interested in following us on any of the various pages, all the links further down in the newsletter will take you there.

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



**VA Evicts Groups that Help Vets;
Dog Park, Baseball Stadium, Prep
School Athletic Fields, Upscale Store
Parking Stay**

The Los Angeles Veterans Affairs (VA) facility that illegally rents its sprawling grounds to institutions that don't serve veterans just evicted several groups dedicated to veterans, including a nonprofit that for decades has comforted dying vets and another that helps those who are disabled.

While the VA gave the volunteer organizations the boot without offering an explanation, it continues housing a parking lot for nearby upscale shops, a university baseball stadium, a dog park for the professional dog walkers of affluent residents, and athletic fields for a fancy prep school.

It marks the latest of several scandals involving the misuse of this VA property, where a top official [pleaded guilty](#) to multiple felonies last year for taking bribes

from a parking lot operator that defrauded the agency out of millions. This month at least five established nonprofits dedicated to providing veterans with therapeutic activities, counseling and other valuable survival skills have been evicted while private businesses that don't benefit vets remain.

The Jewish War Veterans is among the organizations that just got kicked out along with Twilight Brigade, the Disabled American Veterans, Vet-to-Vet and the Association for Parrot C.A.R.E., which provides therapeutic activities for vets at its parrot sanctuary. A local newspaper [reported](#) the latest travesty at the southern California VA this week, but Judicial Watch has for years investigated, sued and obtained government documents involving the VA's illegal use of this parcel.

The 338-acre property in West Los Angeles, which includes the National Veterans Park and Veterans Home, was deeded to the federal government in 1888 for the specific purpose of caring for disabled veterans. Thousands of disabled veterans once lived on the grounds, which also had churches, theaters, a library and post office. In the 1960s and 1970s the [VA quietly closed the facilities](#), according to the American Legion, and ousted mentally disabled veterans.

In recent years, the property has been used for many causes unrelated to veterans. Among them is a stadium for the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) baseball team, an athletic complex for a nearby private high school, laundry facilities for a local hotel, storage and maintenance of production sets for 20th Century Fox Television, the

Brentwood Theatre, soccer practice and match fields for a private girls' soccer club, a dog park, and a farmer's market.

For nearly a decade a group called the Old Veterans Guard has filed complaints against rampant corruption at the Los Angeles campus, specifically for abusing and misappropriating VA property. The group assembled weekly and on Memorial Day to protest the VA's failure to make full use of the facility to benefit veterans, particularly those who are homeless. The government retaliated by sending VA police to harass and intimidate them at weekly rallies.

One of the group's leaders, an elderly Army vet named Robert Rosebrock, got **criminally charged** for posting a pair of four-by-six-inch American Flags on the outside fence of the Los Angeles VA on

Memorial Day in 2016. The fence is part of the “Great Lawn Gate” and marks the entrance to the Los Angeles National Veterans Park. Judicial Watch represented Rosebrock in the federal case, which was tried in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. The court eventually ruled that Rosebrock was **not guilty** of violating federal law for displaying the flags above the VA fence.

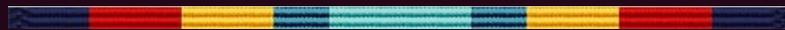
Judicial Watch sued the VA Police and other agency officials for violating Rosebrock’s and his fellow protestors’ Constitutional rights. Judicial Watch has also sued the VA twice for documents related to the non-veteran use of the Los Angeles facility and obtained **records** that show the VA paid private businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars to reimburse them for terminating unlawful lease agreements.

A 2011 [lawsuit](#) accusing the VA of misusing the Los Angeles grounds and illegally leasing the land forced the agency to make changes. As part of a settlement, the VA [announced](#) that it would dedicate the West L.A. campus to “serving veterans in need” by, among other things, designing a plan to help end homelessness among the county’s veterans. The legal settlement also compelled the VA to terminate leases with private businesses that were never supposed to be there in the first place.

The records obtained by Judicial Watch reveal that the VA paid Twentieth Century Fox Television \$435,000 and a construction company building an illegal amphitheater on the north side of the grounds \$287,318. The television studio used 72,160 square feet of VA land for parking, storage and maintenance of

production sets.

Just a few months ago a [federal audit](#) exposed rampant fraud and corruption involving the illicit land sharing agreements made by crooked VA officials in Los Angeles. Judicial Watch launched an investigation into the deals and has three Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests pending.



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

We average **2,340** hits per day, and downloads average **1,344** per day with a total **4,725,946** 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 **16,925** documents on-line (Updated: **02/11/19**)
- 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: 10/30/18)
(37 Added)
 - News (Articles On-Line: **8,192**)
 - Polls
 - Web Links, more than **4,678**, Added 20
New Links (Updated: 01/10/19)

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



**~Veterans-For-Change Makes Social
Media Change from Face Book to
MEWE~**

Effective several weeks ago, all social media pages that have been on Face Book for many years have all been moved to MEWE.com for a number of reasons.

**IMAGINE A SOCIAL NETWORK WITH
ALL THE FEATURES YOU LOVE AND
NONE OF THE BS.**

Where you are the customer to serve and not data to sell.

Where you share your real life and celebrate, not censor, diversity.

We know most people don't like change, however, this new Social Media Site, MEWE.COM has no advertisers, truly respects privacy and protects your security far better than Face Book ever could. They also have a fantastic customer service group who actually does respond to your messages, suggestions, ideas and more!

We hope you will join us on this new site.

VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

www.mewe.com/join/veterans-for-change

**HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF
VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE**

www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change

AMVETS GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/amvetsgroup

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup

{USAVET} SUPPORTING GOD & ALL WHO SERVED OUR GREAT NATION

www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggodallwhoserveandserve

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY

www.mewe.com/join/americansforsovereignty





H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act

On January 8, 2019, Representative Gus Bilirakis (FL) introduced H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act.

This bill would extend concurrent receipt authority to longevity retirees with service-connected disabilities rated less than 50 percent disabling. Under current law disabled veterans with longevity retirement from active military service who are also in receipt of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability determination of 50 percent or higher may retain both military retirement pay and their compensation.

DAV strongly supports H.R. 303 as it

would end the unfair policy of forcing many military longevity retirees to forfeit some of their retired pay in order to receive equal amounts of disability compensation from the VA. This legislation is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 104 and would eliminate concurrent receipt for all longevity retirees.

Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Representative to support and cosponsor H.R. 303. As always, we appreciate your support for DAV and your grassroots activism in participating in DAV CAN. Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

Take Action





February's Featured Song

Blowing In The Wind

By

LT Bobby Ross

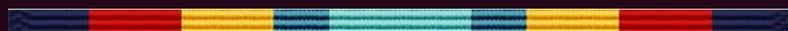
LT Bobby Ross - Voice Of America

Previous Featured Songs



**New High-Tech GI Bill Program
Coming Soon**

A new pilot program from the Department of Veterans Affairs aims to help student veterans enroll in non-traditional programs that teach high-tech skills. Dubbed the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program, it was announced Feb. 13. The program, set to start in April, focuses on high-tech skills that are in demand in today's workplace, the VA says. VET TEC will pay you a housing allowance and take care of tuition costs just like the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Classes must be in one of five areas: information science; computer programming; data processing; media applications; or computer software. Information on how to apply has not yet been released. Read more about the [VET TEC program](#).





VA Touts Health Record Access for iPhone Users

Veterans using VA health care will soon be able to easily access their medical data using their [iPhone's built-in Health Records app](#), Department of Veterans Affairs officials said in a press release. Veterans' health care data will be integrated into the free app by this summer. Veterans will be able to see an aggregated view of all their VA health care data, including lab test results, medications, vital signs, medical procedures and more in the health app at anytime on their iPhone. Data from VA medical providers should be available on your mobile phone within 24 hours of receiving treatment. Read more about the upcoming feature in this [article](#).





Taking Care of Your Heart with TRICARE Benefits

Are you ready for Heart Health Month? This is the time to listen to and take care of your heart. You can do so by getting familiar with the risk factors of heart disease and taking action to reduce your risk. TRICARE covers cardiovascular disease screenings, including blood pressure and cholesterol checks.

Read the full article [here](#).



**CONTACT YOUR
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

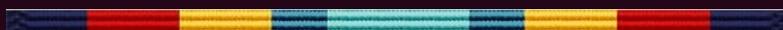
To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!

www.veterans-for-change.org



**Join Feb. 21 Webinar on TRICARE
Dental Options for Service Members,
Families**

Want to learn more about your dental options with TRICARE? Join the "TRICARE Dental Options for You and Your Family," webinar on Feb. 21, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET. This webinar will discuss dental options for service members and their family members. Dental experts from the Active Duty Dental Program and TRICARE Dental Program will provide detailed information about these programs. Register today.

Read the full article [here](#).





AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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



Appeals Act Effective 2/19/19

TREA is working hard to keep you updated on issues with the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). TREA is sharing the information to assist you. Is the information helpful? Do you have an issue with DOD or VA and would like to see it addressed? Please provide feedback on the newsletter content or let us know if you would like to see an issue covered that has not been covered in an upcoming newsletter.

UPDATE: Since TREA January entry on the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA)

February 19, 2019 - Effective date new Veteran appeals law - AMA

On February 14, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will discontinue the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP), which provided eligible Veterans with early resolutions to their appealed claims, ahead of full implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (AMA) that takes effect Feb. 19, 2019.

Under the AMA, thousands of veterans, some of them trapped indefinitely in a complex system of trying to obtain benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, will get new options next week

promised to deliver decisions in days or months, instead of years. This is the biggest change to appeals in decades.

The VA is set to implement a new process Tuesday, February 19, for veterans to appeal their claims for VA disability compensation - a system devised by VA, veterans organizations including TREA and lawmakers and approved by Congress in 2017. Under the current system, veterans wait three to seven years to reconcile their appeals. The new one could get veterans through the process in as little as 125 days, VA officials vowed.

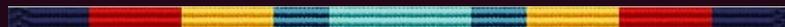
The new system involves multiple avenues for veterans, including an option to appeal their claims with a higher-level adjudicator or directly with the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Another option is to

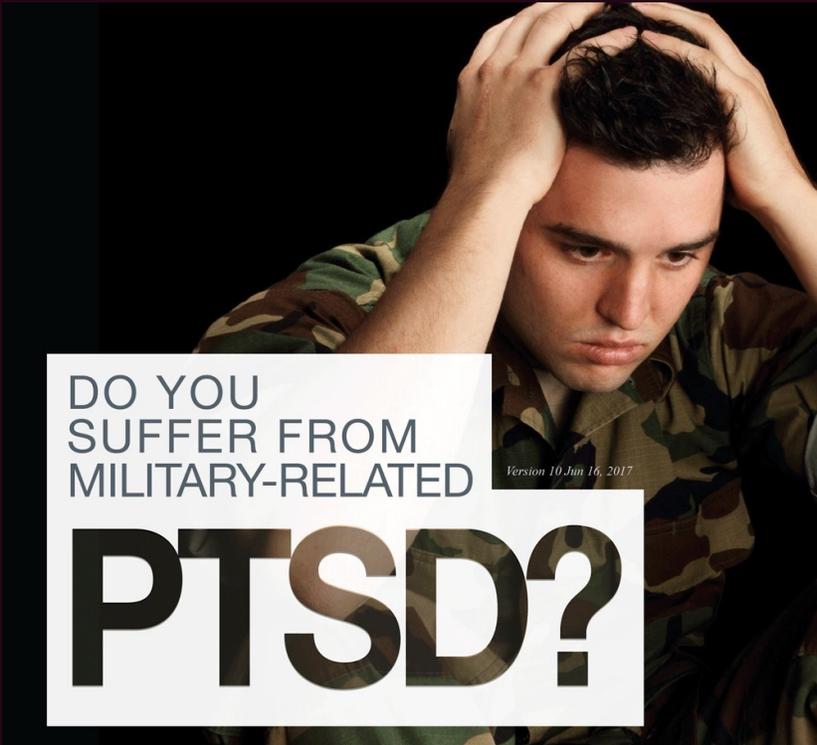
add information to their claim and appeal it with the same adjudicator who reviewed it. According to VA, officials will track the amount of time it takes veterans to get through each option. The agency will make that information public to help veterans decide which route to take.

For more information on Appeals Modernization, visit

<https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp> and <https://www.bva.va.gov/>.

Source: TREA





DO YOU
SUFFER FROM
MILITARY-RELATED

Version 10 Jun 16, 2017

PTSD?

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



**Our values
match yours.**



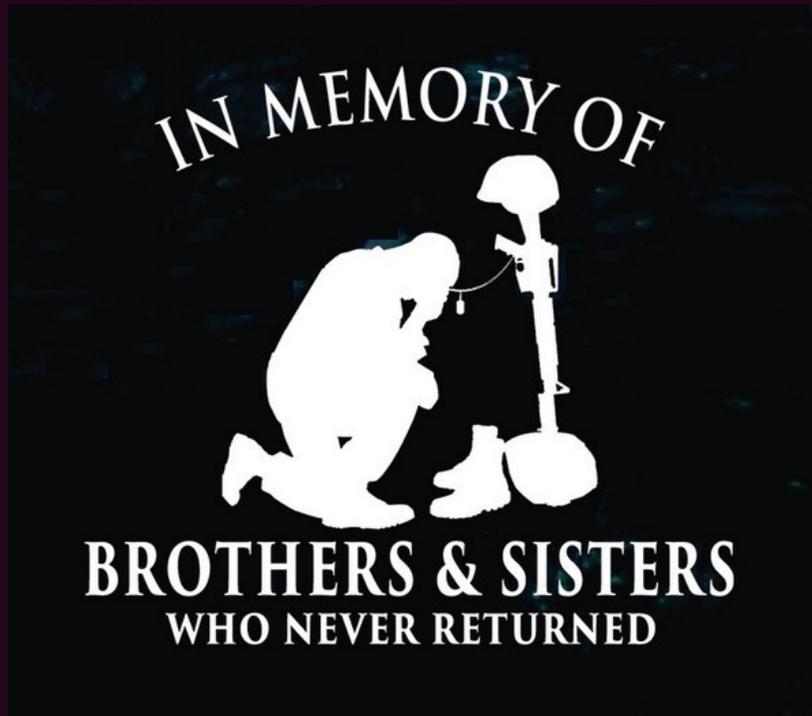
www.veterans-for-change.org

Veterans Groups Say \$103 Billion in VA Funding Needed for FY 2020

This week, the three coauthors of The Independent Budget (IB) — the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., Disabled American Veterans, and Paralyzed Veterans of America — released the IB's fiscal year (FY) 2020 budget recommendations for VA. The IB coauthors recommend a total of \$103.3 billion to ensure VA begins to fully and faithfully implement the VA MISSION Act of 2018, make needed improvements, and is able to timely deliver benefits and services to wounded, ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors.

[Read the IB FY 2020 budget recommendations.](#)





H.R. 444, Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All Ages Act of 2019

On January 10, 2019, Representative Julia Brown (CA) introduced H.R. 444, the Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All

Ages Act of 2019.

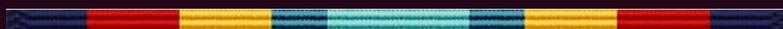
Currently, veterans with service-connected disabilities or other employment handicaps are able to receive career development services through VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program up to 12 years after they separate from military service. H.R. 444 would remove the limiting 12-year-period for eligibility.

In agreement with DAV Resolution No. 310, we support this legislation to eliminate the 12-year-period of eligibility. By removing the limited eligibility period, H.R. 444 will provide veterans the flexibility to receive the support they have earned and deserve throughout their lifetime and thus help reduce unemployment for service-connected veterans.

Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Member of Congress to support and cosponsor H.R. 444.

Standing up for veterans is vital and we thank you for your advocacy. Your actions help make DAV a highly influential and effective organization in Washington. Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

Take Action





VA to Implement High Tech Training Program

In anticipation of launching the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program in April, VA is seeking training providers to help implement this new training course. The VET TEC program will provide training on information technology, computer software, information science, media application, data processing and computer programming fields. The VET TEC program was part of the VFW-supported Forever GI Bill that made sweeping reforms to education and training programs for veterans. Learn more or apply for the [VET TEC program](#).

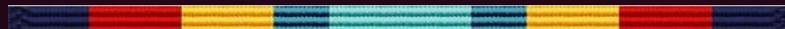




Task Force Backs Merger of Exchange, Commissary Systems

The Defense Commissary Agency and the military's three separate exchange services should be consolidated under a single resale enterprise for the purpose of streamlining above-store and back-of-store operations, according to a report the Defense Department is expected to endorse and send to Congress next month. Commissaries and exchanges would remain separate stores on base, officials said. Consolidation would focus on a new central governance structure

and squeezing efficiencies and achieving synergies by merging back office and "above-store" functions that customers don't see. Doing so could save an estimated \$700 million to \$1.3 billion over the first five years, less about \$500 million in implementation costs, but then realize \$400 million to \$700 million a year in recurring savings after full transformation, officials said. Read more [here](#).



Links to Other Stories

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.

1. [A Tennessee clinic swindled the](#)

military out of \$65M. This is how it got caught

2. As Congress begs for VA information, agency touts unprecedented level of transparency

3. Death rates, bedsores, ER wait times: Where every VA hospital lags or leads other medical care

4. Did the VA lowball your VA PTSD rating? Here's how to find out.

5. House VA committee to probe Trump-connected individuals' influence over VA

6. How the VA Rates Mental Disorders

7. Local Vietnam Veteran still fighting for VA disability benefits

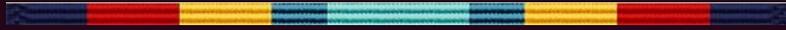
8. Minnesota approaches goal of eradicating Veteran homelessness through outreach programs

9. Problems with military housing conditions under scrutiny on Capitol Hill this week

10. The appeals process: Appeals at the

regional office level

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



Veterans Wanted: Sitel Is Hiring Now

Grow your career with a leading customer experience provider. At Sitel, we offer military veterans an exciting range of career opportunities in our locations worldwide. Whether seeking a role as a customer service professional, a front-line supervisor or an executive, we embrace one thing – diversity. [View jobs now.](#)



CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER!



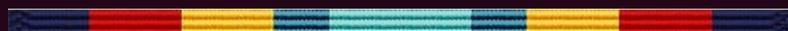
Reduce Your Rx Costs with a TRICARE Supplement

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

VA to Receive Three New Fisher Houses

VA announced yesterday that it is scheduled to receive three new buildings from the Fisher House Foundation. The new facilities will be located in Ann Arbor, Mich., Aurora, Colo., and Omaha, Neb. The Fisher House Foundation donates housing facilities to VA and the military to act as a “home away from home” for active duty military, veterans, and their families when receiving treatment at a VA medical facility or major military installation. These facilities are located within walking distance from treatment facilities and provide cost-free housing. Currently, there are 80 Fisher Houses around the world — 38 are located next to VA facilities. An expansion from 38 to 64 is planned over the next few years.

[Read more about VA Fisher Houses.](#)





New App Helps Soldiers Access Personnel Records

A new mobile app for the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A) will let soldiers access their own personnel records on a smartphone or tablet. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, or TRADOC, created a mobile team to screen and approve the new IPPS-A Mobile App on Jan. 18, 2019, according to a release. This month, the app was made available to National

Guard soldiers in Pennsylvania; Virginia; and Washington, D.C. It will be released to all other Army regions in phases. Until now, soldiers had to use a Common Access Card, or CAC, to access their Army personnel record. This app allows soldiers to access their records "on the move." They can also submit help inquiries, ask for record updates, and monitor the status of personnel actions on the app. The app's creators are still collecting feedback to improve it as the rollout continues. [Read more at the Army website.](#)



Office of Inspector General

1. Additional Federal Authority Could Enhance Consumer Protection and Provide Flexibility
2. DOD Should Assess the Tradeoffs Associated With Expanding Public Access to and Information About Terrorism Trials



TREA Supporting Several Legislative Proposals

H.R. 333, The Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act. TREA is pleased to continue to support and work with Rep. Sanford Bishop (GA) on legislation to eliminate the offset and permit Concurrent Receipt of retired military benefits and VA disability benefits. If enacted, TREA members would be permitted to receive both benefit payments.

H.R. 553, Ending the SBP-DIC Offset
TREA continues to support efforts to

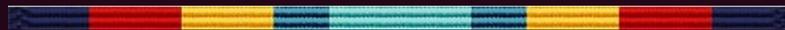
allow military retiree survivors to receive full Survivor Benefit Plan benefits. Legislation introduced by Reps. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) and John Yarmuth (D-Ky.) would end the deduction of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities from Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) paid to survivors of fallen service members, also known as the "widows tax."

The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) was enacted into law in 1972. It includes a dollar-for-dollar offset of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from SBP, called the SBP/DIC offset, for surviving spouses of retired service members who voluntarily participated in the insurance annuity program, paid premiums, and then died of a service-connected issue. Post-9/11 active duty surviving spouses also are impacted. The offset affects over

63,000 military surviving spouses.

Contact your Congressman and Senators and urge them to support both proposals.

Source: TREA



**“We Proudly Support our
Military Personnel & Families”**



Military Family Housing Horrors

Testimony from three military spouses Wednesday before a joint hearing of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel, and Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support revealed military family housing horrors ranging from insects and rodents, to asbestos and lead-based paint.

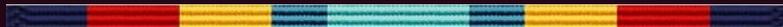
Testimony was also given by five company CEOs and/or presidents, who collectively manage some 200,000 family housing units throughout the military; and four assistant DOD, Army, Navy, and Air Force secretaries, who are responsible for installation oversight. To the VFW, the dismissive attitude of housing contractors and installation commanders, who may have thought their days of listening to housing complaints were over when the military signed 50-year contracts with civilian management companies in the mid-1990s, was egregious. It was clear from testimony and ensuing Q&A sessions that all military installation commands must take an active role in contract fulfillment, oversight and customer satisfaction, and families need an effective forum to communicate their issues with housing authorities and installation commanders without fear of

retribution. The VFW will continue to monitor this issue to ensure the military and their contractors make good on their pledges to perform and communicate better. [Read testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 18:30 mark.](#)



U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

1. Birdseed Food Co. Issues Allergy Alert on Undeclared Cashews in Craft Granola Goldenola Turmeric & Ginger
2. McDaniel Life-Line LLC Issues Voluntary Worldwide Recall of Indian Herb
3. Ottogi America, Inc. Expands Recall on Undeclared Egg in Products
4. World Waters Issues Voluntary Recall of Select WTRMLN WTR Original 12 Packs Due To The Possible Presence of Soft Plastic Pieces. Company urges consumers to check packages prior to consumption.



Survey Finds Toxic Conditions in Military Housing

A [new poll of military families](#) living in base housing found that more than half of respondents said they had negative experiences living in privately managed housing, and some reported living in dangerous conditions that included mold, lead paint, faulty wiring, poor water quality and pestilence, such as mice and squirrels. The non-profit [Military Family Advisory Network](#) (MFAN) conducted an online survey from Jan. 30 to Feb. 6 to understand the scope of problems in military homes. Of the 14,558 respondents who now live in privately managed military housing or have resided in such homes in the past three years, nearly 56 percent said they had "negative or very negative experiences" with their houses. Read more about the survey results [HERE](#).





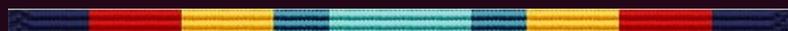
SURVIVAL IS FUN



VA's 2019 Golden Age Games Applications to Open Soon

Applications will open Feb. 25 for the 2019 National Veterans Golden Age Games, scheduled to take place June 5-10 in Anchorage, Alaska. The top senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the U.S., it is also the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors'

competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs release. Veterans ages 55 and older who receive VA health care may apply. Registration will close once the cap is reached. Events include air pistol, air rifle, badminton, basketball, blind disc golf, boccia, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, nine-ball, pickleball, power walking, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, and track and field. Learn more at the [VA website](#).



Military Mulls Medical Personnel Cuts Even as Suicide Rates Rise

The Defense Department is weighing the option of cutting thousands of uniformed medical personnel, including psychologists and other mental-health professionals, even as military leaders grapple with rising suicide rates among troops. With the National Defense Strategy pushing for a more lethal force, Pentagon leaders are considering slashing as many as 17,000 uniformed medical corps billets across all the services. Read more about the change [HERE](#).





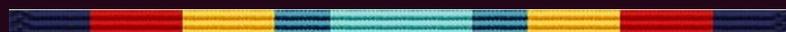
Understand Tricare's Dental Options

Are you keeping up with your and your family's dental health, and dental options? [National Children's Dental Health Month](#) is a perfect time to learn about [Tricare's Dental Program](#). Not sure about your eligibility or how to enroll? Join the [Tricare Dental Options for You and Your Family webinar](#) on Feb. 21, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET. This webinar will discuss dental options for service members and their family members. Dental experts from the [Active-Duty Dental Program \(ADDP\)](#) and [Tricare Dental Program \(TDP\)](#) will provide detailed information on these programs.



Are You the VA's Next Deputy Policy Officer?

The Department of Veterans Affairs is looking for candidates to serve as the [Deputy Chief Policy and Planning Officer \(DCO\)](#) at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Serving as principal deputy to the assistant deputy under secretary for health for policy and planning, the DCO develops and analyzes national health care policy and manages VA legislative and policy agendas, according to a release. Key responsibilities include executing the Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, overseeing the Office of Rural Health, and managing and analyzing data. Visit [USAJobs](#) to apply for the position.



Tax & Credit

Information



1. Avoid the rush: Be prepared to validate identity if contacting the IRS
2. Avoid the rush: Fastest way to check tax refund is 'Where's My Refund?' tool at IRS . gov
3. Avoid the rush: Pay taxes owed online or set up a payment plan
4. Here's how taxpayers can pay their taxes
5. IRS provides a safe harbor method of accounting for passenger automobiles that qualify for the 100-percent additional first year depreciation
6. IRS provides various payment options for taxpayers who owe but can't pay in full
7. IRS: Avoid the rush over Presidents Day holiday; online tools, resources can help
8. January 2019 Recap
9. National Taxpayer Advocate delivers annual report to Congress: Addresses impact of shutdown; urges more funding

for IT modernization

10. Presidents Day brings a surge of activity – avoid the rush

11. Videos help taxpayers learn more about tax reform



Don't Waste Your \$0 Down VA Loan Benefit

The VA Loan Benefit is now worth up to \$484k financing. Take advantage of this great benefit and lock in a low rate for as little as \$0 down. [Use your VA loan benefit today.](#)



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**Wreck of WWII Aircraft Carrier
Hornet Discovered**

The wreck of the World War II aircraft carrier USS Hornet (CV-8) has been discovered off the Solomon Islands by a research organization set up by the late billionaire Paul Allen. The carrier was located in late January by the crew of the Research Vessel Petrel, resting on the floor of the South Pacific, according to a statement released Tuesday by Allen's Vulcan organization. Vulcan oversees Allen's network of organizations and initiatives, which includes R/V Petrel's research. Researchers used information from national and naval archives to find the ship, as well as action reports from other vessels involved in the fateful Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands in 1942. The wreck was found at a depth of nearly 17,500 feet. Read more about the discovery in this [article](#).



MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 12 new identifications. Returning home with full military honors are:

Army Pvt. Winfred L. Reynolds was a member of Medical Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, and attached to 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, near Hwach'on Reservoir, South Korea. He was killed on April 26, 1951, while caring for wounded soldiers. Because of ongoing fighting in the area, Reynolds' remains were unable to be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Reynolds.](#)

Army Cpl. Carlos E. Ferguson was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry

Division, engaged in combat against the North Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces during the "Battle of the Soyang River." Ferguson was reported missing in action on May 18, 1951. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ferguson.](#)

Army Master Sgt. Charlie J. Mares was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, engaged in combat against the Korean People's Army. Mares was reported missing in action following the battle, fought near Kwonbin-ni, South Korea, on July 31, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mares.](#)

Army Sgt. George R. Schipani was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. Early in the morning of Nov. 2, 1950,

Schipani's battalion was struck by enemy units of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces. After several days of intense fighting, survivors escaped to friendly lines. Schipani was reported missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Schipani.](#)

Army Cpl. James C. Rix was a member of Company E, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He was killed in action on Nov. 30, 1950, during heavy fighting between the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces and the 7th Cavalry Regiment in South Pyongan Province, North Korea. His remains were processed through a 7th Cavalry Regiment Collection Station and interred at the United Nations Military Cemetery Pyongyang, on Dec. 2, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Rix.](#)

Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Alfred R. Sandini was a member of 22nd Bombardment Squadron, 341st Bombardment Group, serving as a radio gunner aboard a B-25C aircraft. On Feb. 15, 1944, the aircraft crashed, near the Do Len Bridge in Thanh Hoa Province, French Indochina, now known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Interment services are pending. [Read about Sandini.](#)

Navy Electrician's Mate 3rd Class William A. Klasing was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Klasing. Interment services are

pending. [Read about Klasing.](#)

Navy Fire Controlman 1st Class Edward J. Shelden was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Shelden. Interment services are pending. [Read about Shelden.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Kirby R. Stapleton was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly

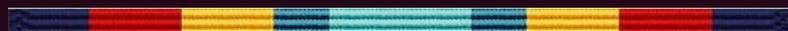
capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Stapleton. Interment services are pending. [Read about Stapleton.](#)

Seaman 1st Class John A. Karli was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Karli. Interment services are pending. [Read about Karli.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Kenneth H. Sampson was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple

torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Sampson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Sampson.](#)

Marine Corps Pvt. Waldean Black was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Black. Interment services are pending. [Read about Black.](#)



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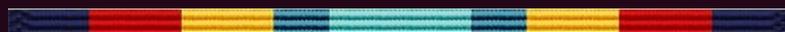
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