



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

***Week Ending Sunday, May 05, 2019***

***Volume 10, Issue 18***



## **This-N-That**

I want to apologize for not having posted many articles to the website. I had cataract surgery a week ago so my vision is still a bit blurry, and I didn't want to push too hard and damage the work done.

But I am very upset and angry with the VA, again!

As I went through more than 100 new articles and choosing which one's to post first, there were a rather large number of articles on Veteran Suicide,

many happening right on VAMC Campuses, one had five within a month. And that VAMC Director wanted to put blame every where else but on his facility and staff, which in my humble opinion is exactly right where the blame belongs!

Had their staff done their job, provided the immediate emergency care, most if not all of these suicides would not have happened!

Families begging them to please not release that Veteran alone, families begging for help and all ignored and turned away. It truly pisses me off beyond imagination.

I may be wrong, but when a Veteran makes the ultimate decision to leave this world, and does so on VA Land send a very loud and very clear message to me, they're pointing the finger directly at those who should have done their job and provided the much needed urgent care.

MSM does their obligatory job of reporting, but it never fails there is no further reporting, no further investigation, it never makes front page news, is almost always buried pages deep within.

If we don't continue to put the pressure on the VA,

Congress and the various Veteran Service Organizations to all do their job, process claims more quickly, provide proper medical care whether or not a claim is pending or approved, believe me it's going to be status quo and absolutely NO changes made.

The back story on VA Nursing homes is also one no one ever sees, reads, or even hears about, they're neglected, meds not given on time, meals not provided on time or in some cases at all.

Most times they're parked in a wheel chair being provided "Entertainment" oh I forgot to tell you that entertainment is a TV, maybe on occasion a DVD, or worse yet left in bed for hours on end, and never provided proper turning, skin care, etc.

How can we allow any Veteran to be treated worse than a second class citizen?

Did you know, or do you care that illegal aliens get far better care and benefits than our Veterans do? More than \$180 BILLION dollars annually is given to those who've entered our country illegally, yet Congress can't ever seem to find money for Veterans!

In all seriousness, how many Veterans lives need to be lost do to lack of urgently needed medical care and benefits before we force Congress to wake up and see the facts?

For the past few weeks we've been running quite a number of pieces on various legislation and asking you to please send off the pre-written E-Mails, to follow those up with phone calls, to go to your reps individual websites and send a the same message, then share it all with family, friends, fellow Veterans.

These tasks are not strictly limited to Veterans, anyone who wants to help can. And even if you already did it, please, keep doing each one over and over, every week.

And if you want to help really drive the point home with all members of Congress when you make your calls, make them on Friday's. They and their staff are always in a hurry to leave early on Fridays, and putting the pressure on all day Friday prevents them from doing so.

In addition the more we tie up their phone lines, also prevents that member from doing the one and ONLY thing they're all good at, lining their pockets.

So if you've never participated before, please, reconsider and help us fight them tooth and nail!

Between last week and this week, we've added a total of 201 new web links. So if you've not visited that page in a while, visit again and check them out.

Over the next month we will be focusing on adding as many new documents as is possible. The goal is 500, but my limitation may be my vision, but do check back often.

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](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)



## **Original Stakeholders Pull Support from Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Bill**

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association and Military-Veterans Advocacy, the two original proponents of benefits for the so-called

Blue Water Navy benefits, have notified Congress that they are withdrawing support for the current version of the bill. In a April 26 letter letter to Congressman Mark Takano, Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, the two groups stated that the language of the bill and a proposed amendment by Mr. Takano, limited the far reaching effect of the landmark case of Procopio v. Wilkie. In tha case, the Court of Appeals for the Fedreal Circuit, sitting en banc, found that the original intent of Congress in the Agent Orange Act of 1991 was to include veterans who served in the territorial sea of the Republic of Vietnam. The court also left open the possibility of covering veterans who served in "waters offshore" which the court declared extended past the territorial sea.

Writing for both organizations, Military-Veterans Advocacy Executive Director Commander John B. Wells, USN (Ret), who was the attorjey for Alfred Procopio in the Federal Circuit case, questioned language in the House legislation that would define "waters offshore" or "offshore" by geographic points that conform with the territorial sea. "This language will prevent tens of thousands of sailors, primarily aircraft carier sailors, from claiming benefits for Agent Orange exposure," Wells said. "Hydrological

studies have shown that the dioxin traveled 150 nautical miles or more from the mainland", Wells continued. "These ships who operated just outside of the territorial sea were exposed. They should be compensated for their disabilities."

In the letter to Takano, Wells called on him to adopt the "less restrictive" language of the Senate bill. Introduced by Senator Kristen Gillibrand and Senator Steve Daines, the Senate bill modifies the Agent Orange Act by inserting the words "including the territorial seas of such Republic pursuant to the maximum extent authorized by international law)" after "served in the Republic of Vietnam."

"It gives me no pleasure to withdraw support for this bill," Wells said in his letter to Takano. "I've walked the halls of Congress for most of a decade trying to get benefits for these sailors. When Congress failed us we turned to the courts and won. I implore you to refrain from marginalizing that victory with the limiting language of the present bill and the proposed Amendment.

"Our withdrawal of support should not be construed as an abandonment of Blue Water Navy veterans," Wells wrote. "The opposite is true. We believe that

the current and proposed language will lead to an unnecessary narrowing of the presumption of exposure recognized by the courts. I urge you to adopt the Senate language so that we can again support your bill.

Military-Veterans Advocacy is a non-profit organization based in Slidell, Louisiana. Takano letter can be found [here](#).

MVA written testimony can be found [here](#).

**Source:** Commander John B Wells, USN (Ret)



## **Tricare Extends Window for Choosing Coverage After Retirement**

Retiring service members now have up to a year to decide whether to stay with Tricare Prime or choose Tricare Select for their family's health coverage after they leave military service. Effective immediately, the health care selection period for retirement — one of eight lifetime events considered by Tricare to be significant enough to warrant reconsideration of a beneficiary's health plan — is now 365 days rather than the 90-day window for any other qualifying circumstance. Read more about the extension [here](#).



## 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 **3,317** hits per day, and downloads average **2,966** per day with a total **4,944,567** visitors as of Friday.

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

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

- Documents Library with over **17,242** documents on-line (Updated: 04/11/19)
- 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: **8,471**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **4,910**, Added **131** New Links (Updated: 05/02/19)

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



## **H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act**

Representative Clay Higgins introduced H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. This bill would provide veterans who are no longer capable of living independently an alternative to nursing home care, in which the veteran would continue to receive the care that they need in an intimate home-like environment through VA's Home-Based

Primary Care program, and the Medical Foster Home (MFH) attendant program.

Started in 2000, VA Medical Foster Homes provide veterans who need nursing home level of care an alternative to being placed in a nursing home. VA Medical Foster Homes merge traditional adult foster care with comprehensive longitudinal care provided in the home by a VA interdisciplinary team that includes a physician, nurse, social worker, rehabilitation therapist, mental health provider, dietitian, and pharmacist. Since its inception, over 4,000 veterans have resided in Medical Foster Homes.

However, many service-connected veterans who wish to reside in a VA Medical Foster Home are unable to do so because of substantial out-of-pocket costs of approximately \$1,500 to \$3,000 per month. Because VA does not have the authority to cover these costs, veterans are placed in nursing homes which VA pays for but cost more than twice as much.

As the veteran population continues to age, the need for long-term care services will continue to grow. Home-based community programs like MFHs will enable VA to meet the needs of aging veterans

in a manner closer to independent living than institutionalized care. With the passage of this bill, veterans would have the option of care that more closely aligns with their independence while maintaining their quality of life.

This bill is in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 085, which calls for legislation to improve the comprehensive program of long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans regardless of their disability ratings.

Please use the prepared letter to write your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

## **Take Action**



## **Adding a New Family Member Stateside? Take Action to Get TRICARE Coverage for Your Child**

Whether giving birth or adopting, this change in your family composition is a TRICARE Qualifying Life Event (QLE). The QLE allows you to enroll any new eligible family members. Or to make changes to your TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select health plan. You must take action to get TRICARE coverage for your newborn or adopted child. Register your newborn or adopted child in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, as well as choose a TRICARE health plan and enroll your child in one if necessary.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **Action Alert: Tell Congress to End the Widow's Tax Now!**

Background: More than 65,000 surviving military spouses and dependents are unjustly penalized because their loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Similar to life insurance, the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is purchased through DOD by military retirees to ensure their surviving loved ones can maintain a modest standard of living. When service members or veterans die from injuries or illnesses related to their military service, survivors are eligible for VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Despite the two payments being paid for two different reasons from two different federal departments, all monthly SBP retirement payments are reduced by \$1,319 — the current payout for DIC benefits. For many survivors, this offset completely eliminates their SBP payments and threatens their financial security. The recent tax law makes this situation worse by doubling the tax on dependents to whom parents transferred SBP benefits to avoid having to forfeit DIC benefits.

**Take Action:** Contact your members of Congress and urge them to end the injustice now! The message these aptly termed “Widow’s Tax” and “Kiddie Tax” sends to service members, veterans, and their families is that our government salutes their service while in uniform, but they cost too much if they die on active duty or from service-connected conditions.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION](#)



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Follow us on [MEWE](#)! We've move to [MEWE](#) and after three months, membership has grown and the support staff at [MEWE](#) is responsive, open to suggestions and works very hard to protect your personal information.

**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

cancel, diversity.

We know most people don't like change, however, this new Social Media Site, [MEWE.COM](http://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](http://www.mewe.com/join/veterans-for-change)

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

[www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change](http://www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change)

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## **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



## **DoD Officials Make Case for Keeping the Draft, Women Included**

The Selective Service System is an "inexpensive insurance policy" against a national emergency and should be modified to include women, a senior Defense Department official implied last week during a hearing on the future of draft registration in the U.S. Asked whether requiring women to register for a potential draft would "result in a more lethal military," Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs James Stewart avoided answering the question directly, instead pointing out that all military occupations are now open to men and women and the military basically looks "for standards." Until now, the Defense Department has stayed silent on the proceedings of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service, which is conducting a three-year review of public service in America, considering whether the U.S. needs the Selective Service System and if women should be required to register. Read more about women in the draft [here](#).



## **Tragic Trends: Suicide Prevention Among Veterans**

On Monday, the House Committee on Veterans Affairs held a hearing to discuss how to prevent suicides among veterans. The VFW submitted a statement highlighting the efforts of VFW Posts around the world who have participated in [A Day to Change Direction](#), which trains veterans and their families to identify the [five signs of emotional suffering](#). The VFW also urged Congress and VA to train VA staff to identify and assist veterans in crisis, ensure sufficient resources are available and used for effective VA suicide prevention efforts, exempt those who have worn our nation's uniform and receive urgent or emergent mental health care under VA's humanitarian care authority from having to pay the full cost of such care, expand peer support programs, and conduct research on veterans who die by suicide without contact with the VA health care system. Watch the [hearing](#).



## **S. 514, the Deborah Sampson Act to Improve VA Services for Women Veterans**

Senator Jon Tester (MT), Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced S. 514, the Deborah Sampson Act. This legislation, a comprehensive measure addressing gender disparities, aims to improve and expand Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs and services for women veterans.

The bill would permanently authorize counseling for veterans recently separated from military service and accompanying family members in group retreat settings, including in women-exclusive settings. It would extend the number of days, from seven to 14, VA may cover the cost of care for newborns of women veterans. It would also provide adoption assistance to veterans who have infertility conditions incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

S. 514 aims to eliminate barriers to care by:

- Adding \$20 million to retrofit VA medical facilities to comply with environment of care deficiencies;
- Requiring every VA medical facility to have at

least one full-time or part-time designated women's health provider on staff;

- Studying the staffing needs of Women Veteran Program Managers in addition to determining the need for a Women Veterans Ombudsman;
- Conducting mini-residency training for women's health providers;
- Requiring VA to create a training module for community providers specific to women veterans' unique medical needs;
- Providing support services for women veterans seeking legal assistance;
- Authorizing grants for organizations supporting women veterans and their families;
- Requiring VA to report on its use of various primary care models serving women veterans;
- Requiring VA to provide information on staffing levels of women's health providers including PACT team members and gynecologists;
- Requiring data collection and reporting on all VA programs serving veterans, by gender and minority status;
- Requiring VA to report on the availability of prosthetics for women veterans; and
- Centralizing all information for women veterans in one easily accessible place on VA's website.

DAV's 2018 report, [Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead](#) identified many of these gaps in VA programs for women and calls for comprehensive VA women's health services that appropriately recognize and honor their military service and sacrifices. This bill is also consistent with DAV Resolution No. 019, which supports enhanced medical services and benefits for women veterans.

Please contact your Senators to urge co-sponsorship and passage of S. 514. A letter has been prepared for this purpose or you may write your own to express your personal views.

As always, thank you for your advocacy and support of our nation's women veterans.

### **Take Action**



## **Cancer Survivor Finally a Marine After 956 Days as a Recruit**

Lance Cpl. Caleb Eudy first stepped on the yellow footprints in 2016 and, on April 26, he finally departed Parris Island, South Carolina, as a United States Marine. Though recruit training is typically just three months long, for Eudy it was an uphill battle that took 956 days. Just a month after arriving at boot camp, he was diagnosed with lymphoma. After his cancer was diagnosed, Eudy returned home to Alabama to serve with a reserve artillery unit in Huntsville, roughly 30 miles from his hometown of Arab. From there, he underwent cancer treatment, and fought to keep from being medically separated from the Marine Corps. Eudy's battle with cancer lasted two years before it went into complete remission. Earlier this year, Eudy went before a medical board, which found him fit for duty and he returned to Parris Island as a recruit to finish his training. Two weeks ago, he completed the Crucible, the final challenge would-be Marines must overcome before they earn the title. Read more about Eudy on [here](#).





## **H.R 445, Help Hire Our Heroes Act**

On January 10, 2019, Representative Julia Brownley introduced H.R. 445, the Help Hire Our Heroes Act. This bill would amend the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 to make permanent the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP).

The VRAP was started in 2012 to provide training assistance to unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 who are no longer eligible for the GI Bill. It provided up to 12 months of training

benefits at community colleges and technical schools in occupations that the Department of Labor has identified as "high demand." Since funding for this program expired in March 2014, the VA has not been able to enroll new veterans in VRAP. This program gap means that thousands of older, qualified veterans have been unable to access the resources which could help them find work.

This bill would strike the end dates of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program and would replace it with year to year authorizations. This bill is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 190 which seeks adequate funding and permanency for veterans' employment and training programs.

Please use the prepared letter to write to your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 445, the Help Hire Our Heroes Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

**Take Action**



**Hearing on the Feres Doctrine**

On Tuesday, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing to discuss policy changes to the Feres Doctrine. Created by the Supreme Court in the 1950s, the Feres Doctrine prevents active-duty service members from suing the federal government for medical malpractice. Special Forces Green Beret SFC Richard Stayskal told the committee that he was misdiagnosed three separate times for lung cancer by military doctors. He was never informed by military medical personnel of the condition despite numerous medical scans that documented his tumor. The VFW is working closely with members of Congress to rectify the Feres Doctrine. [Watch the hearing.](#)



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



## **H.R. 96, to Provide Dental Care for All Veterans Enrolled in Veterans Health Care**

Chairwoman Julia Brownley of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health introduced H.R. 96, legislation that would phase in eligibility for all Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for health care to receive dental care as a part of their medical benefits package.

The bill would require the VA Secretary to furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service, and defines a four-year implementation plan beginning with Veterans in priority groups one and two (Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 30 percent or more) in year one.

Dental care has been proven to be an important part of overall health care. Many private employers

and state Medicaid programs provide it as part of a comprehensive health care package. Most clinicians agree there are strong associations between significant dental issues and other adverse systemic health outcomes.

Unfortunately gaps in coverage often affect people with lower incomes and complex health needs the most.

DAV Resolution No. 018 calls for the provision of comprehensive dental care to all service-connected disabled Veterans within the VA health care system. Therefore, DAV strongly supports this legislation.

Please use the prepared email or your own letter to ask your Representative in Congress to cosponsor H.R. 96.

Thank you for your support of the DAV's legislative priorities.

### **Take Action**



## **Utah Man Pushes for Census to Include Veterans Question**

The former head of the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs is pushing for the U.S. census to include a question about veterans next year. Terry Schow, a Vietnam veteran, wants the 2020 census to ask about veteran status so the state can have a more accurate count of people with military service, the Standard-Examiner reported April 20. "It's really just one question: Are you a veteran?" Schow said. The Census Bureau pulled the veteran status question from the questionnaire in 2010, according to the agency. Read more about the push on [here](#).



## **Voluntary Drug Recall Alert: Fentanyl**

On April 19, 2019, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a voluntary recall of a small number of carts labeled Fentanyl 12 mcg/h Transdermal System patches. Fentanyl is used to manage pain for patients who can tolerate opioids. The recalled cartons contained 50 mcg/h patches instead of 12 mcg/h patches.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act**

Representative Julia Brownley introduced H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act, authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay for or provide child care for veterans traveling to and returning from a VA facility for regular or intensive mental health treatment or necessary health care services. Veterans—particularly younger women veterans returning

from recent deployments-have indicated that lack of child care is a significant barrier in accessing medically necessary mental health readjustment services.

VA reports that younger veterans demonstrate high usage rates of VA mental health care services and data shows women veterans are especially likely to make intensive use of such services. In a recent study, a third of veterans indicated an interest in access to child care services and 10 percent reportedly have canceled medical appointments because they did not have child care. H.R. 840 would allow VA to pay for or otherwise furnish child care to those children for whom a veteran is the primary caretaker to allow the veteran to seek needed treatment.

DAV Resolution No. 173 supports VA's provision of child care services and assistance to veterans accessing needed VA health care, benefits, education, employment, rehabilitative or other specialized services offered.

Please help support passage of this important legislation by sending your representative the prepared letter or drafting your own version.

Thank you for your participation in the DAV



## **SUCCEED ANYWAY!**

Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable.

## **BE HONEST AND FRANK ANYWAY!**

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

## **DO GOOD ANYWAY!**

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds.

## **THINK BIG ANYWAY!**

People favor underdogs; but, follow only top dogs.

## **FIGHT FOR SOME UNDERDOGS ANYWAY!**

What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight.

## **BUILD ANYWAY!**

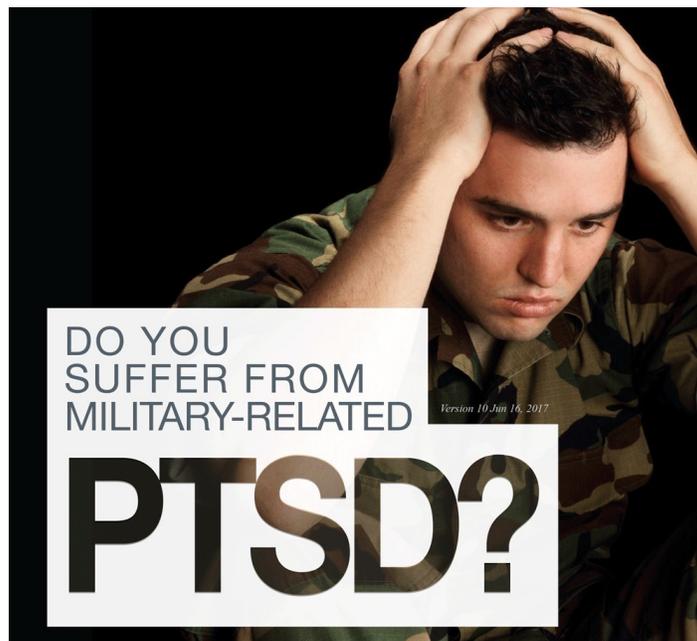
Give the world the best you have; and, you'll get kicked in the teeth.

## **GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU'VE GOT**

# ANYWAY!

*(From my Dale Carnegie Course notes –  
December 1983/January 1984)*

Paul Sutton



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





## **S. 179/H.R. 712, Legislation Calling for Clinical Trials to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Medical Cannabis for Chronic Pain and PTSD**

These companion bills, S. 179 and H.R. 712, would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out a clinical trial of the effects of cannabis on health outcomes of adults with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

These measures would require the VA Secretary to conduct clinical trials that look into whether cannabis is able to reduce symptoms associated with chronic pain such as inflammation, sleep disorders, spasticity, and agitation and effects on the use or dosage of opioids, benzodiazepines or alcohol for veterans with PTSD.

Research is necessary to determine the safety and efficacy of any drug. At this time there are few definitive answers about risks and benefits

associated with the use of cannabis on various medical conditions and illnesses. Research is necessary to help clinicians better understand the safety and efficacy of cannabis use for certain conditions common in the veteran population such as chronic pain and posttraumatic stress.

These bills are in line with DAV Resolution No. 023 which calls for comprehensive and scientifically rigorous research by the VA into the therapeutic benefits and risks of cannabis, cannabis-derived products as a possible treatment for service-connected disabled veterans.

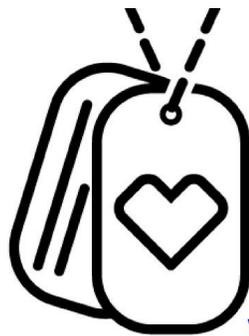
Thank you for your support of our nation's ill and injured veterans. Please use the letters below to ask your elected officials to support S. 179/H.R. 712.

### **Take Action**



## **Troops in Navy Prisons Get New, Standard Uniform**

Troops confined in Navy-operated prisons will soon wear a standard uniform instead of a utility uniform specific to their branch. Starting May 1, prisoners will wear a Navy non-military standardized prisoner uniform, known as an “SPU.” Pretrial prisoners will wear a brown uniform and post-trial prisoners will wear a tan uniform. The change is driven in part by cost. A service-specific military utility uniform with one pair of trousers and a top is approximately \$95, but the new top and trousers will cost approximately \$18.50. Read more at [Navy.mil](http://Navy.mil).



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match yours.**



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



**This Year's Tax Cut Cost Some Gold  
Star Families Dearly**

For some, tax season brings a small boon in the form of a refund. For others, it can be a source of stress. But Theresa Jones sees it as an annual reminder of her husband, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Landon Jones, who was killed in a helicopter crash on Sept. 22, 2013. Since then, Jones and her two sons, ages 5 and 11, have received monthly compensation in the form of survivor benefits — one allotment through the Department of Defense, which is taxable, and another through the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is not taxed. Military widows and widowers who put their benefits in their child's name saw a significant spike in their taxes this year. To make matters worse, Jones, along with three other military widows, said they were not aware how much their taxes would increase and were unable to budget or otherwise prepare for the hike in cost. Read more about the issue [here](#).



## **DOD Releases 2018 Sexual Assault Data**

On Thursday, DOD released its 2018 report on sexual assault in the military. The report estimated that 20,500 service members — 13,000 women and 7,500 men — across the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and the National Guard experienced “contact or penetrative sexual assault” while serving in the military in 2018. These results are a sharp increase from the 14,900 service members who reported similar experiences in the 2016 report. Additionally, the report revealed that roughly one in five women who experienced sexual harassment while serving also experienced sexual assault, even when controlling for pay, service and deployment status. [Learn more or read the report.](#)



## **New Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Selected**

Sgt. Maj. Troy E. Black has been selected to replace retiring Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green later this summer as the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. Black now serves as the sergeant major of Manpower and Reserve Affairs. He enlisted in 1988 and has served as sergeant major of the Officer Candidates School, the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit and 1st Marine Logistics Group. He also deployed for Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. [Read more.](#)





## **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**



## **Allstate: Make a Big Impact: Search Jobs Now**

At Allstate, we share your passions and have options available for you. [View jobs now.](#)





## **World War I Valor Medals Review Act**

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) have introduced legislation that would allow the World War One Centennial Commission Valor Medals Review Task Force to conduct a systematic review of 150 minority World War I veterans. The veterans were potentially denied the Medal of Honor due to racial bias. Rep. French Hill (R-Ark.) and Rep. Emmanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) have introduced the House version of the [World War I Valor Medals Review Act](#). Learn more or [read the bill](#).





## Coast Guard Gets New Memorial to Fallen Enlisted Personnel

The Coast Guard's Cape May Training Center is getting a new monument: the service's only memorial dedicated to enlisted men and women who have died in the line of duty. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz joined the center's commanding officer, Capt. Owen Gibbons, in dedicating the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial on April 27 in New Jersey. The memorial — three granite walls etched with the names of 1,500 service members, centered around a pyramid topped with a bronze flame — is located on the training center's parade field. Read more about the monument [here](#).



Never forget our fallen!



## **H.R. 553, Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act**

On January 15, 2019, Congressman Joe Wilson introduced H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act. This bill would eliminate an unfair offset placed on many surviving spouses of service members who pass away during active duty or spouses of retirees who die of a service-connected disability.

Currently, purchased Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

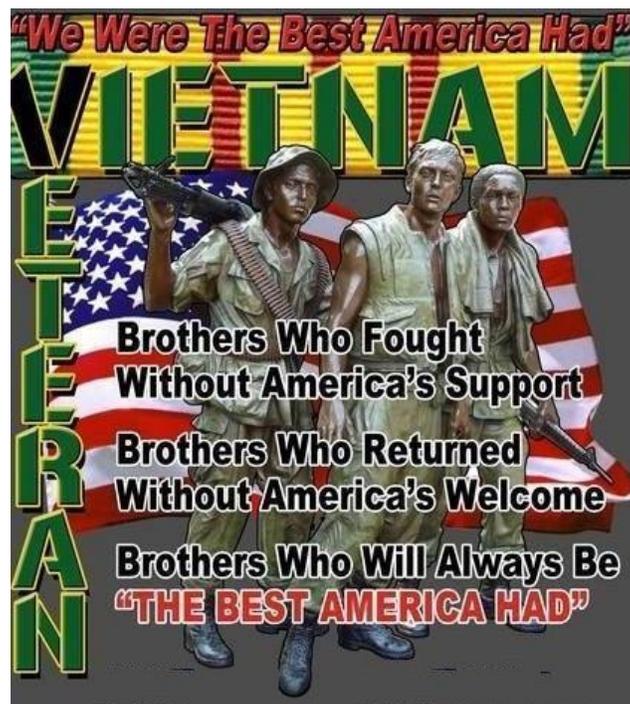
annuities are offset by the amount of any benefit payable under the VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program. SBP is not a government gratuity benefit; rather, it is a type of insurance purchased out-of-pocket by military retirees for their survivors while DIC is a VA benefit intended to provide spouses of veterans who died from a service-connected condition some semblance of financial security. Thousands of survivors of military retirees are adversely affected by this unfair offset between SBP and DIC benefits.

Upon the retiree's death, the SBP annuity is paid monthly to eligible beneficiaries; however, if a surviving spouse is also entitled to DIC, the SBP benefit is reduced by the amount of the DIC benefit (currently \$1,283.11 per month). In general, when DIC benefits are payable but the monthly rate is equal to, or greater than, the monthly SBP payment amount, beneficiaries lose the entire SBP payment.

This bill would eliminate the offset and allow surviving spouses to receive both the purchased SBP annuities and their earned DIC benefits. This bill is in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 014, which calls for Congress to repeal the offset between SBP annuity payments and DIC payments.

Please use the prepared letter to write your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

## Take Action



Links to Other Stories

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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. Barracks to business: Hiring Veterans has never been easier
2. ChooseVA – Greg's Story
3. Haddonfield man's mission is a gift to Veterans
4. Indiana Veteran in long wait to receive benefits from the VA
5. Legislation adds nine diseases to list of illnesses caused by Agent Orange
6. Legislation to address uptick of Veteran suicides at VA facilities
7. Lubbock wounded Veteran competes in Boston Marathon
8. Marine Corps Veteran creates 'Operation Coffee' to raise awareness, money to help prevent Veteran suicide
9. 'Mastermind' in 7-Person Military Construction Scheme Sentenced to Prison
10. Parasites on the Clock: How Malaria Races against Mosquito Reproduction
11. Remains of 15 Unclaimed Veterans Get Military Funeral
12. Secretary Robert Wilkie Outlines Cultural Changes At The Department Of Veterans Affairs

13. Some colleges receiving the most GI benefits spend the least on educating Veterans, report says
14. The GMO Scrapbook: GLYPHOSATE: It's Much Worse Than We Thought
15. The Link Between PTSD and Substance Use
16. To the Left, the Only Veterans Affairs Scandal Is That It's Not Big Enough Disqualifying ignorance
17. VA ensures Veterans have same-day access to emergency mental health care
18. VA National Cemetery Administration partners with Carry The Load to honor Veterans and their families
19. VA office in charge of protecting whistleblowers from retaliation is under investigation... for retaliating on whistleblowers
20. Veterans Affairs Cerner EHR Replacement For VistA To Cost 60 Percent More

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



## **Consumer Magazine Gives Military Commissaries High Marks**

Defense Department commissaries continue to rank highly on a Consumer Reports survey of the country's best supermarkets, on par with stores such as national wholesaler Costco and regional groceries Publix and Fareway. A survey of 75,000 readers of the consumer magazine ranked Defense Commissary Agency stores in the top 10% of 96 grocery chains. DeCA stores received a score of 86, up a point from a similar 2017 survey. Retail outlets are judged on cleanliness, prices, prepared food options, checkout speed, helpfulness of employees, and the quality and selection of goods. Read more about the survey results [here](#).



## **H.R. 1182, Veterans' Access to Acupuncture Services**

HR 1182, Acupuncture for Our Heroes Act would provide access to acupuncture for veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. It would provide such care at a

minimum of one VA medical center in each veterans' integrated service network and ensure access to such services for certain conditions by contract without need for the veteran to have a referral for such care.

DAV supports complementary and integrative medical practices such as acupuncture as part of a comprehensive medical benefits package under DAV Resolution No. 277. Veterans have increasingly sought such treatments as a means of providing relief from conditions that have not been effectively addressed by more conventional medical practices and to decrease or avoid the use of controlled substances, such as opioids, that have the potential for harmful side effects, including addiction.

Please consider sending the letter prepared below to encourage your Representative to support H.R. 1182.

Thank you for your support of our nation's wartime service-disabled veterans.

**Take Action**





*CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER*



**Support SBP/DIC Offset Repeal (S.  
622/H.R. 553)!**

Sen. Doug Jones (AL) has introduced legislation (S. 622) that repeals the SBP/DIC offset for survivors, sometimes referred to as the "military widows tax." Earlier, Rep. Joe Wilson (SC) introduced similar legislation in the House, the "Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act" (H.R. 553).

SBP and DIC payments are paid for different reasons. The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is purchased by the retiree and is intended to provide a portion of retired pay to the survivor. Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a special indemnity compensation paid to the survivor when a member's service causes his or her premature death. In such cases, the VA DIC should be added to the SBP the retiree paid for, not substituted for it. It should be noted as a matter of equity that surviving spouses of federal civilian retirees who are disabled veterans and die of military-service-connected causes can receive DIC without losing any of their federal civilian SBP benefits.

## **TAKE ACTION**





# Your actions

**could save a life.**

Showing you care can make a big difference to someone in crisis.

VeteransCrisisLine.net



## **Military Not Following Own Rules for On-Base Domestic Violence Investigations**

Military commanders and law enforcement personnel have been failing to follow their own rules regarding incidents of on-base domestic violence, according a new report from the Pentagon's Office of Inspector General. Of 219 cases examined at eight installations, 201 were found not to comply with Defense Department policies on how they should be handled, the IG's report states. Overall, military service law enforcement personnel failed to consistently conduct the thorough interviews needed to provide commanders and prosecutors with the information they needed to make prosecution decisions, the report found. Read more about the findings on [HERE](#).





## **S. 374/H.R. 1092, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019**

Senator Jon Tester (MT) and Representative Chellie Pingree (ME) introduced S. 374 and H.R. 1092, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019.

This legislation will codify VA regulations regarding the adjudication of claims for mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, associated with experiencing Military Sexual Trauma (MST). It would also add technological abuse, defined as "behavior intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, or monitor another person, [...] that occurs via the Internet, through social networking sites, computers, mobile devices [...] to the types of trauma and resulting conditions for which survivors

may seek benefits and health care. Finally, the bill would require VA to re-establish specially trained teams to adjudicate MST-related claims for mental health conditions and to report annually to Congress to ensure that these claims are adjudicated equitably.

VA's regulations for adjudicating claims for mental health conditions stemming from MST allow the Department to consider sources such as a statement from police, a rape hotline, or corroborating reports from friends, relatives or roommates to substantiate a claim. However, in 2017 the Inspector General (IG) issued a report indicating VA had discontinued the specialized training and handling of MST-related cases which resulted in discrepancies in the outcome of many of these claims.

The IG reported it found that VA's manuals related to processing these cases were outdated and that more than half of the MST-related PTSD claims had been inappropriately developed and considered. This legislation will help to re-establish protocols for developing and adjudicating these cases thereby eliminating the disparity between awards for MST-related PTSD claims and other PTSD claims.

This bill is consistent with DAV Resolution No. 042 which calls for VA to conduct rigorous oversight of adjudication personnel who are responsible for evaluating disability claims associated with military sexual trauma and review of data to ensure existing policies are being faithfully followed and standardized in all VA regional offices.

Please ask your elected officials in Congress to cosponsor and support for final passage of S. 374/H.R. 1092.

Thank you for your support of the DAV CAN-Commanders Action Network.

**Take Action**



**Superior Healthcare for all Veterans**

Either we are committed to superior healthcare for all veterans; or, we are stuck in trough of complaining about minor stuff that delays us getting to that goal.

Those that say it can't be done need to get out of the way those that are working to achieve the goal of superior healthcare for all veterans.

Paul Sutton



## Office of Inspector General

1. Additional Data and Analysis Could Provide Insight into Early Withdrawals
2. Past Performance System Recommendations Have Not Been Implemented



**Urge Congress to Pass the Retired  
Pay Restoration Act**

Background: Military retirees who have a service-connected disability rating below 50 percent have their retirement pay reduced, dollar for dollar, by the amount of disability compensation they receive. This demeaning tax, created by Congress to save money, forces those who have dedicated their careers to military service to make due without benefits they need to provide for their families.

Take Action: Contact your members of Congress and urge them to cosponsor the Retired Pay Restoration Act. Our nation is still at war. We must ensure that benefits earned through honorable service to this country are improved, not eroded.

## **TAKE ACTION**



## **Navy Eliminates 2 Specialty Career Path Program Categories**

The Navy is dropping Anti-Terrorism Force Protection and Shore Installation Management from its specialty career path program, effective immediately, according to an official Navy message released April 19. Officers already accepted or participating in these disciplines in the program will remain until they retire or separate from service. The eight disciplines remaining on the list are: Antisubmarine Warfare, Education and Training Management, Financial Management, Mine Warfare, Missile Defense, Naval Operational Planner, Operations Analysis, and Strategic Sealift. [Read the official Navy message.](#)



## **Protect Bankrupt Disabled Veterans from Losing Benefits**

Sens. Tammy Baldwin (Wis.) and John Cornyn (Texas) have introduced the Honoring American Veterans in Extreme Need (HAVEN-S.679) bill to shield veterans' disability benefits from debt collectors when a veteran declares bankruptcy.

Under current law, when a disabled veteran declares bankruptcy debtors can seize their disability benefits because they are considered disposable income. Yet social security benefits are exempt from being included as disposable income. Disability benefits in any form are not taxable and therefore should not be considered disposable income. The legislative sponsors noted that it is unfair veterans may be forced to give up their disability benefits when declaring bankruptcy, while the general population receiving similar benefits from social security do not.

Sen. Baldwin believes this bill will help veterans with mental health issues by easing their financial burdens. Members are encouraged to weigh in on this issue by contacting their Senators through the [FRA Action Center](#) online.



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



## **S. 318, the VA Newborn Emergency Treatment Act**

On February 4, 2019, Senator Patty Murray (WA) introduced S. 318, the VA Newborn Emergency Treatment Act. The bill would authorize the VA Secretary to provide payment for emergency transportation of a woman veteran's newborn who requires more specialized treatment at a newborn care facility. In some cases, women veterans are transferred with the newborn and payment is authorized by VA. However, VA believes it lacks clear authority to pay for the transportation of the newborn infant alone. This legislation would provide such authority.

DAV Resolution No. 019 calls for enhancing women veterans health care services. DAV

believes women veterans deserve a robust maternity care benefit that allows their infants initial coverage for care that would be covered under Medicaid and many private insurance plans. Maternity care is an important benefit to the significant portion of women veterans now under VA care. Many women veterans for whom VA coordinates maternity care are at high risk for pregnancy complications, including pre-term labor or low-birth weight newborns, because of service-connected conditions. Infants born to these mothers often require more specialized and intensive services after birth; however, not all hospitals have such services available and transportation for the infant, but not necessarily the mother, becomes necessary.

Please help us ensure that VA covers the expense of emergency transportation for newborns of women veterans. Use the letter below to ask your Senators to support this important measure.

Thank you for your support of America's disabled veterans and the Commander's Action Network.

**Take Action**



## **S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act**

Jon Tester (MT), introduced S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act to improve eligibility and access to transitioning service members and veterans to federal programs such as transitional assistance programs and health care, including mental health care, to reduce suicide rates and improve mental health among veterans.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health program experienced tremendous growth (86%) between 2005 and 2017. Troops returning from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan required mental health care services including treatment for PTSD, substance use disorders, depression, and anxiety. During this time VA also identified an upward trend in suicides among veterans.

Homelessness and unemployment were considered contributing factors, particularly for some subgroups in the veterans' population such as women and minorities.

The bill would:

- Improve access to transition services for veterans by extending VA health care eligibility to a year after discharge from military service;
- Create a grant program to help veterans obtain employment and help identify the many non-profit programs available to veterans in their communities;
- Create a new suicide prevention program to include new grant programs designed to reach veterans at risk of suicide who are not obtaining VA mental health care;
- Help facilitate post-traumatic growth services through community partners;
- Encourage peer support by organizing education and awareness of Buddy Checks;
- Require VA to track and report on goals and objectives in its suicide prevention plan and direct the Government Accountability Office to evaluate VA's case management program for veterans at high risk of suicide;
- Require VA to update guidelines on suicide

prevention including using gender specific risk factors and treatment options

- Require VA to create treatment guidelines for trauma comorbid with chronic pain and substance abuse; and
- Require certain oversight reports and improve authorities to assist in recruiting mental health providers and increasing veterans' access to telehealth.

The following resolutions lead DAV to strongly support this bill. DAV Resolution No. 293 supports program improvement and enhanced resources for VA Mental Health Programs, emphasizing the importance of timely access to mental health and readjustment services for transitioning service members. DAV Resolution No. 304 urges Congress to monitor programs in place to assist those service members transitioning to civilian life with access to appropriate federal programs.

Please contact your Senators to ask them to support this comprehensive bill to support our nation's veterans. Please use the letter prepared below or draft your own letter to ask for their support.

## Take Action



1. AmEx Pharmacy Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall for one Lot of Bevacizumab 1.25mg/0.05mL 31 G Syringe Due to Reported Defective Delivery System
2. Edwards Lifesciences Recalls Miller and Fogarty Atrioseptostomy Dilation Catheters Due to Balloon Deflation, Fragmentation and Detachment Issue
3. FDA requires stronger warnings about rare but serious incidents related to certain prescription insomnia medicines
4. Norbrook Laboratories Limited Expands Recall of Veterinary Products
5. Sagent Pharmaceuticals Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Ketorolac Tromethamine Injection, USP, 60mg/2mL (30mg per mL) Due to Lack of Sterility Assurance
6. Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc. Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Losartan Potassium 25 mg and 100 mg Tablets USP, Sold Exclusively to Golden State Medical Supply



# **Bonuses Expanded for Air Battle Managers**

The Air Force recently announced details of the expanded fiscal 2019 Aviation Bonus program, intended to increase the number of air battle managers. The program supports service aircrew retention efforts by offering incentives to aviators to sign contracts ranging from three to 12 years of continued service. The expansion will increase the pool of air battle managers eligible for the bonus by 595, according to a recent release. The expansion also increases the pool of eligibility. Previously, the only eligible air battle managers were those who had completed their initial undergraduate flying training service commitment or those who were retirement eligible. Now, aviators whose contracts have expired or who have never signed a previous air battle manager agreement may be eligible for annual payments of \$20,000 for contract lengths of five years, totaling \$100,000. ABMs must have fewer than 19 years of total active federal military service at the time of signing a fiscal 2019 aviation bonus agreement. In addition, no contracts may extend beyond 24 years of aviation service. [Read more at AF.mil.](#)





## **H.R. 713, Provide Beneficiary Travel Funds to Veterans Seeking Specialized Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma**

Representative Jackie Walorski introduced H.R. 713, a bill that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide beneficiary travel for veterans seeking specialized outpatient or residential treatment at another VA facility for conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST).

DAV Resolution No. 138 recognizes the current VA policy on beneficiary travel is a barrier to some veterans obtaining appropriate care and calls for changes to improve veterans' access to specialized care for MST-related conditions.

One in four women and one in 20 men using VA health care services screen positive for MST. While all VA medical centers are required to offer screening and related treatment for MST, about a

third claim that staffing shortages compromise their ability to provide such care. Travel is often necessary for veterans to obtain the right type of specialized treatment in an environment veterans consider safe and appropriate to discuss sensitive issues. These perceptions are often the basis for choosing a provider and/or group of their own gender or where they feel most comfortable.

Please write your Representative today to urge co-sponsorship and enactment of H.R. 713. As always, thank you for your efforts and for participating in the Commander's Action Network.

### **Take Action**



## **VFW Testifies on Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act**

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to discuss H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which would expand care and benefits to veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in the offshore waters of Vietnam, the Korean DMZ, and in Thailand. Members of the Committee expressed their strong support for Blue Water Navy veterans, despite VA not providing comments on the bill or how it plans to implement the [Procopio v. Wilkie](#) decision because the Department of Justice (DOJ) has requested an additional 30 days to decide whether to oppose the decision. The previous deadline was April 30, 2019. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie has recommended that DOJ not appeal the decision. VFW National Legislative Service Director Carlos Fuentes testified in strong support of H.R. 299 and other legislation that was discussed, such as COLA increases for VA disability compensation, authorizing surviving spouses to continue to receive the Medal of Honor pension, among others. [Watch the hearing.](#)



## **[VFW Testifies on Medicinal Cannabis Research](#)**

On Tuesday, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to discuss medicinal cannabis and suicide prevention legislation. Committee members urged VA to work with Congress to research and expand access to complementary and integrative alternatives to opioids when treating veterans with chronic pain and other comorbid conditions. VFW National Legislative Service Director Carlos Fuentes testified in support of legislation to commission a VA study of veteran patients on the effectiveness of medicinal cannabis for treating chronic pain. The VFW also supported other bills to reduce overmedication and improve suicide prevention efforts. [Watch the hearing.](#)



## **H.R. 1200, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2019**

On February 13, 2019, Representative Elaine Luria (VA), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Ranking Member Michael Bost (IL), introduced H.R. 1200, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2019.

This bill, if enacted, would authorize a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans in receipt of compensation and pension, and for survivors of veterans who died from service-incurred disabilities and are in receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). It would provide a COLA increase by the same percentage as Social Security and would be effective December 1, 2019.

Receipt of annual COLA increments aids injured and ill veterans, their families, and their survivors to help maintain the value of their VA benefits against inflation. Without COLAs, these individuals, who sacrificed their own health and their family life for the good of our nation, may not be able to maintain a quality of life in their elder years. DAV strongly

supports H.R. 1200 as it is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 031.

Take Action Today! Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Representatives to support and co-sponsor H.R. 1200.

As always, we appreciate your support for DAV and your grassroots activism in participating in DAV CAN. Your advocacy helps 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**



**VFW Testifies on VA's Budget Request**

This week, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing to discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request from VA. VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Pat Murray testified before the subcommittee regarding funding levels for some of VA's economic opportunity programs. Alongside Mr. Murray were the Independent Budget co-authors, DAV and PAV. Together, they advocated for increased funding for the GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, homeless programs, and Specially Adaptive grant programs. Mr. Murray noted the decrease in funding for VA's education services seems problematic and should remain at current levels or be higher, until full implementation of the Forever GI Bill is accomplished. "We would not want to repeat the failures from this past fall semester, and we think this represents a step backwards in funding," said Murray. [Watch the hearing.](#)



## Tax & Credit Information



1. Dirty Dozen part 2: Thieves work all year to scam taxpayers
2. Done with taxes this year? Use 2018 return to get 2019 withholding right IRS announces new personnel selection for Office of Chief Counsel
3. For those who missed the tax-filing deadline, IRS says file now to avoid bigger bill
4. Here's what people should know about reporting cash payments
5. IRS accepting applications for 2020 grants for low income taxpayer clinics
6. IRS expands retirement plan Determination Letter Program and Self- Correction Program
7. IRS seeks applications for the Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee through May 29
8. IRS.gov is the first place to go for answers to tax questions
9. Some taxpayers may need to amend their tax return



## **H.R. 663/S. 191, Burn Pits Accountability Act**

On January 17, 2019, Representative Tulsi Gabbard (HI) introduced H.R. 663, the Burn Pits Accountability Act in the House and Senator Amy Klobuchar (MN) introduced a companion bill, S. 191, in the Senate.

Since the Persian Gulf War, a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside the United States was the use of burn pits. Smoke from these pits contained toxic substances that may have short- and long-term health effects, especially for those who were exposed for longer periods. Many service members reported acute symptoms of respiratory or eye irritation, gastrointestinal distress, or rashes during or shortly after exposure, but the research thus far has been inconclusive about whether there are longer lasting consequences to these exposures as many veterans, who are still struggling with health conditions that arose during or after military service believe.

Both bills would require the Secretary of Defense to ensure that periodic health assessments ascertain whether a service member has been at a location

when an open burn pit was used or exposed to toxic airborne chemicals. It will further require the Secretary to enter into an information sharing agreement with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA). If a service member was exposed, the VA Secretary will enroll the member into the VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, unless the member elects not to enroll.

In agreement with DAV Resolution No. 069, DAV supports H.R. 663 and S. 191-legislation that would ensure that exposure to burn pits and airborne chemicals are recognized by both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

Thank you for all you do for America's wartime service-disabled veterans and their families.

## **Take Action**





## Outdoor Recreation Therapy for Veterans Act Introduced

On Wednesday, Congressmen Chris Smith (R-N.J.) and Adam Smith (D-Wash.) introduced H.R. 2435, the Outdoor Recreation Therapy for Veterans Act, to help veterans heal through outdoor recreation. Senators Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) and Daines (R-Mont.) will lead the Senate version. “This bill would rightfully evaluate and remove barriers to access for veterans who would like to use outdoor activities to cope with their service-related illnesses and injuries,” said VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace. [Learn more.](#)



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## **Adding a New Family Member Overseas? Take Action to Get TRICARE Coverage for Your Child**

Are you giving birth or adopting overseas? A change in your family composition, such as a newborn, adopted child, or placement of a child by a court in your home, is a TRICARE Qualifying Life Event (QLE). The QLE allows you to enroll any new eligible family members. Or to make changes to your TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) Prime or TOP Select health plan. You must take action to get TRICARE coverage for your newborn or adopted child.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **Barriers Impacting Women Veterans' Access to Health Care**

Following the launch of the [Women Veterans Task Force](#), the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing to discuss the barriers women veterans face when accessing VA health care services. The VFW submitted a statement urging Congress and VA to improve the gender-specific competency of VA health care providers; require VA to continue to improve privacy at women clinics; give women veterans the ability to choose the gender of their health care provider; extend the number of days newborn care is covered by VA; expand the successful VA childcare pilot program; and conduct targeted outreach to women, so no veteran is left to wonder what benefits she is eligible to receive. Watch the [hearing](#).



## **MIA Update**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identifications of five American servicemen who had been missing and unaccounted-for from WWII and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

**Army Pfc. Herschel M. Riggs** was a member of Headquarters Company, 19th Infantry Regiment,

24th Infantry Division, involved in combat actions against North Korean forces near Taejon, South Korea. Riggs was declared missing in action on July 16, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. Interment services are pending. [Read more about Riggs here.](#)

**Army Cpl. Ralph L. Bennett** was a member of Headquarters Company, 209th Engineer Combat Battalion, as an engineer in the China-Burma-India Theater. On June 13, 1944, Bennett's battalion fought in the siege of the Myitkyina, Burma, after successfully taking the airfield west of Myitkyina from Japanese control. Bennett was reported to have been killed during the battle. Interment services are pending. [Read more about Bennett here.](#)

**Army Sgt. 1st Class Elden C. Justus** was a member of Headquarters Battery, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, which was a part of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT). In late November 1950, the 31st RCT deployed east of the Chosin Reservoir where it was engaged by overwhelming numbers of Chinese forces who were there supporting North Korea. Justus could not be accounted for by his unit at the end of the

battle. He was reported missing in action as of Dec. 6, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read more about Justus here.](#)

**Army Pfc. Sterling Geary, Jr.** was a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, which was engaged in battle with the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces in North Korea. He was declared missing in action on Nov. 27, 1951, when he could not be accounted for by his unit following fighting at Hill 234 and Tong-dong Village, North Korea. Interment services are pending. [Read more about Geary here.](#)

**Navy Fireman 3rd Class Jasper L. Pue** was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which capsized after sustaining multiple torpedo hits as it was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmembers, including Pue. Interment services are pending. [Read more about Pue here.](#)





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Riverside County, CA

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



Please do not reply to this E-Mail, this is an unattended E-Mail address, please send all correspondence to:

**[Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)**

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