



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, November 24, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 47



This-N-That

Our website has been fully transferred over to the new hosting service with some items added, and about a dozen documents need to be re-added as I was not aware that when we were discussing the situation we were still operating on the old host.

So the retrieval of documents uploaded should be fairly easy to accomplish over this next week along with the addition of more. In addition an added 110 new web links have been added and of

course there are still many hundreds more to be added.

Web site usage has diminished due to having been down for three weeks but we anticipate that too will change now that we're back up and operational. We do have a couple of small hiccups needing repair, so for now Forums are non-operational, but I do anticipate the correction will be simple.

Over this past week, being up and down myself, I have read numerous articles on homeless Veterans and as discouraging as it sounds and the VA is saying it will never be resolved, I disagree. It all depends on how much the VA is willing to concede that their processing of PTSD is slow, and mostly over looked, their not willing to use many buildings on VA land that simply need renovation and could easily be used to house thousands of Veterans nationwide all says just how little they do care.

It only stays in the lime light because organizations such as VFC continue to point out the problem and additionally provide solutions and

it continually goes ignored.

Same applies to Veteran Suicide, again those claims for the most part go ignored leaving the Veteran to be all on his/her own, feeling helpless, lost, feeling forgotten among hundreds of other reasons.

We know each VAMC has budget money to be used for both situations, but each VAMC director either fails to use it properly and as was budgeted, or they redirect such funds to other areas of the Hospital for "projected" needs that usually don't or never arise!

If you recall, some months ago we had two VAMC Directors close their Emergency Rooms for "lack of use", then we had an addition two more VAMC Directors who decided to close their Emergency Rooms at 5pm again, due to lack of use.

All of which had Veteran die in their parking lots!

It is my personal opinion that a specific GAO committee be developed that would be responsible for visiting each VAMC, reviewing the

budget of each, and monitor expenses for each line item to detect mis use of funds, non use of funds, etc and hold each director personally accountable with first offense a 30 days suspension without pay, second offense would be immediate termination.

Isn't it about time the VA be held accountable for medical care and benefits and those being ignored, denied, delayed?

I'd like to update you on my dear friend Lois. She is doing better now, the pneumonia is cleared up and she is slowly building up strength to be able to tolerate the chemo therapy for the leukemia. Right now it's being determined to move her to a rehabilitation facility, help her to continue building up strength and begin her chemo treatments

I would like to ask that she be kept in your prayers along with everyone else who is ill, and need our help with prayers.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



The Whole Country Is Grappling with Suicide Epidemic, VA Secretary Says

The Department of Veterans Affairs is trying to address the serious issue of veteran suicide, but the problem is not unique to former service members, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said Nov. 8. Speaking at a National Press Club luncheon, Wilkie said suicide claims the lives of about 20 veterans a day, but it's also the leading cause of death among young adults. Read more [here](#).





Calling all Veterans. Let your voice be heard!

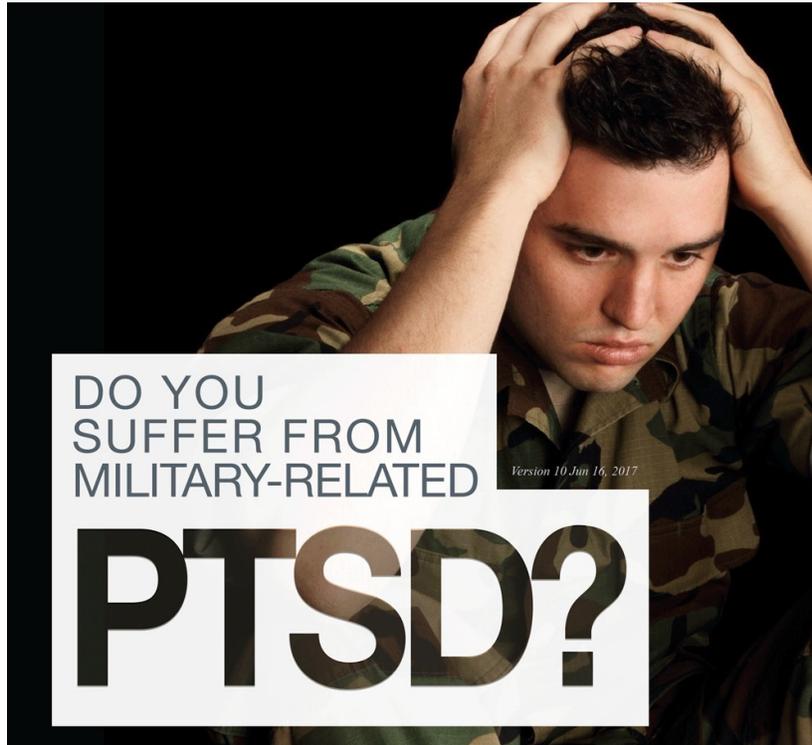
The US government has spent nearly 80 million dollars for veteran research to date and there are currently less than a handful of studies that have actually asked combat veterans what issues they face. This is completely unacceptable to us at Project Healing Heroes.

PHH is a veteran-led, grass-roots, non-profit organization that wants to not only get to the root of these issues, but provide treatments options that are specific to combat veterans. Treatment that will actually be created, based on what you indicate. Instead of superimposing data onto combat veterans from car accidents and military sexual assault. MST and auto accidents, although

incredibly devastating, are not the same as combat trauma!

We encourage you to let your voice be heard loud and clear. At Project Healing Heroes, we are listening. Attached is an IRB-approved protocol that we developed with Auburn University to get to the heart of the matter. Please consider taking this questionnaire as it most likely will take you less than 10 minutes to complete. But what it will do is provide us with exactly what we need to know in order to create the best treatments for combat veterans. Please consider sharing as well. The direct link is: <http://aub.ie/vets>





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



**Get to Know Your TRICARE Reserve
Select Plan**

TRICARE offers health plans that let National Guard and Reserve members and their eligible family members maintain health care coverage throughout their service and status changes. If you're a Selected Reserve member, you and your family members may be eligible to purchase TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS). TRS coverage and costs for care are similar to TRICARE Select and TRICARE Overseas Program Select for active duty family members.

To learn more, [read the full article](#).



Student Veteran Housing Rates Could Change

This week, VA's Education Services testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity to discuss the upcoming changes to the student veteran housing allowances. The final sections of the Forever GI Bill will go into effect on Dec. 1 this year, which could mean different housing rates for different students. Some student veterans will see an increase in their housing allowance, others could see a decrease, but most student veterans should not see any change whatsoever. The VFW is urging all student veterans to check with their schools' veteran offices to make sure what the housing payments will be in the upcoming semester. [Watch the hearing.](#)



Below are links to all currently active pre-written E-Mails to many pieces of legislation. We ask that you go to each one, and send the pre-written E-Mails, and to also call your Reps or Senators and

ask for their support on a weekly basis!

You don't need to be Active Duty or a Veteran, in fact we ask all Veteran friends to also help!

1. [Allow Active Duty to Sue Military for Medical Malpractice \(H.R. 2422\)](#)
2. [H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act](#)
3. [Action Alert: Tell Congress to End the Widow's Tax Now!](#)
4. [H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act](#)
5. [H.R. 2359, the Whole Veteran Act](#)
6. [S. 514, the Deborah Sampson Act to Improve VA Services for Women Veterans](#)
7. [H.R. 445, Help Hire Our Heroes Act](#)
8. [S. 2022, Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019](#)
9. [H.R. 96, to Provide Dental Care for All Veterans Enrolled in Veterans Health Care](#)
10. [S. 555 and H.R. 1377, Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act](#)
11. [H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act](#)
12. [S. 179/H.R. 712, Legislation Calling for Clinical Trials to Evaluate the Effectiveness of](#)

Medical Cannabis for Chronic Pain and PTSD

13. S. 980, the Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2019

14. H.R. 2201, Include Military Installations in Thailand as exposed to Agent Orange

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

16. S. 2216, Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act

17. H.R. 2200, the Keeping Our Promises Act

18. H.R. 553, Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act

19. Senate Bill Introduced to Protect Active Duty from Medical Malpractice

20. H.R. 1182, Veterans' Access to Acupuncture Services

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

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

23. H.R. 2568, the Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act

24. Urge Congress to Pass the Retired Pay Restoration Act

25. Protect Bankrupt Disabled Veterans from

Losing Benefits

26. S. 318, the VA Newborn Emergency Treatment Act
27. S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act
28. Blue Water Navy Veterans Need Your Help
29. H.R. 713, Provide Beneficiary Travel Funds to Veterans Seeking Specialized Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma
30. Urgent Action Needed to End "Widow's Tax"
31. S. 154, VA CLEAR Act of 2019
32. H.R. 663/S. 191, Burn Pits Accountability Act
33. S. 1392, the Support for Suicide Prevention Coordinators Act
34. S. 1881 and H.R. 3356, Veterans Expedited TSA Screening Safe Travel Act
35. H.R. 1963, Expanding Care for Veterans Act
36. NDAA and Spending Bills
37. H.R. 4137, Healthcare for Open Air Burn Pit Exposure Act
38. H.R. 2982, Women Veterans Health Care Accountability Act
39. H.R. 4451, Support Our Services (SOS) to Veterans Caregivers Act
40. H.R. 3036, Breaking Barriers for Women Veterans Act

41. S. 2950, the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2019



New Commissary, Exchange Access Delayed for Many Veterans

Disabled veterans and Purple Heart recipients won't see on-base access for commissaries and exchange stores or some recreation options any time soon, according to new guidance issued Nov. 13 by the Defense Department. By law, the new access is to start Jan. 1, 2020. However, a [policy document](#) issued last week by the Pentagon shows that, while veterans who hold a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs and caregivers registered with the VA's Comprehensive Program for Caregivers will be able to access the system as planned, all other new users will have to wait for a previously unannounced "phase two." Read more [here](#).





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Follow us on [MEWE](#)! The support staff at [MEWE](#) is responsive, open to suggestions and works very hard to protect your personal information.

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

AMVETS GROUP

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

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

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY





Links to Other Stories

1. 3D printing helps Veteran stay independent
2. Crisscross Organ Swap alters two Navy Veterans' lives forever
3. VA might not be able to end Veteran homelessness, but we shouldn't stop trying
4. Extreme left thinking infiltrates Veteran groups — to the detriment of Vets
5. VA, Men's Wearhouse team up to help Veterans "Dress for Success"
6. Help end Veteran homelessness as a postdoctoral fellow
7. Helping Veterans and their families with personalized mental health consultations
8. Veterans posthumously honored for donating their bodies to research

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



TRICARE Health Matters Newsletter Issue 4

Want to learn more about your TRICARE benefit?
Here's what you can look forward to in the latest
issue of the TRICARE Health Matters Newsletter:

- TRICARE Open Season Closes Dec. 9
- Federal Benefits Open Season Closes Dec. 9
- New TRICARE Health Plan Costs Available
- How TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select Differ
- Pain Management and Opioid Safety
- TRICARE Benefits Year in Review

Download the latest TRICARE East Region or
TRICARE West Region newsletter [here](#).





**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY 5TH
BRIGADE USACC, YSLETA
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
BEL AIR HIGH SCHOOL Army Junior
Reserve Officers' Training Corps 731
N. Yarbrough El Paso, TX 79915**

SUBJECT: Bel Air High School JROTC
Fundraiser

1. The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadets of Bel Air High School in El Paso, Texas are working on raising money for this school years upcoming events. One such event is the 2020 Bataan Death March which will have at least 3 Teams and several individuals participating in this prestigious event. We are also looking at conducting a Staff Ride to San Antonio, Texas to

provide some educational overview on military history.

2. If you are able to help with the fundraiser, we ask that you make your donation to the snap raise link: <https://www.snap-raise.com/fundraisers/bel-air-hs-jrotc-2019>

3. Once again, thank you for your time, support and hope you can help our Cadets, future leaders, attain this goal. .

4. The point of contact for this letter is the undersigned at (915) 491-1181 or amunoz119@yisd.net

ARMANDO MUNOZ JR
CW4, US ARMY (RET)
SENIOR ARMY INSTRUCTOR
Bel Air High School - JROTC



Veterans Will Have Access to Health Records on iPhones Soon

The Department of Veterans Affairs is rolling out nationwide access for veterans to their VA health data, alongside their health records from other health care providers in one place, in the Health Records section of the Health app for iPhone. Patients will be able to see their medical information from various participating institutions, including VA, organized into one view. The view covers allergies, conditions, immunizations, lab results, medications, procedures, and vitals. Veterans will also receive notifications when their data is updated. [Read more.](#)



**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



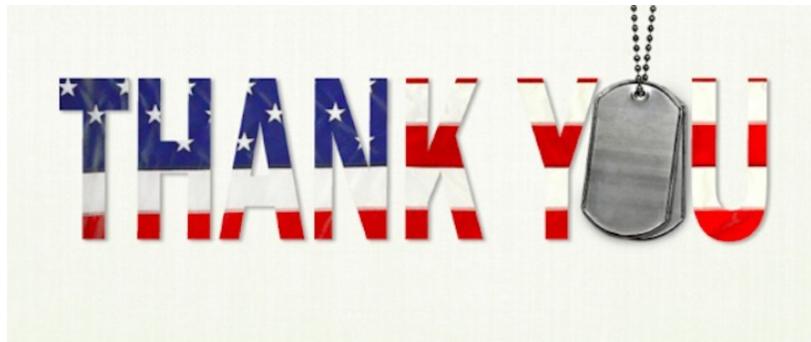
Student Veteran Protection Bill Introduced

This past week Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.) introduced the Protect Veterans' Education and Taxpayer Spending (Protect VETS) Act of 2019, which would eliminate financial loopholes in higher education that could be used to prey upon student veterans. Sen. Carper, a VFW Life member, has worked tirelessly to bring about protections for veterans, service members, and their families during their pursuit of higher education. Sen. Carper's proposal would finally eliminate the problematic 90/10 loophole that has been a VFW priority for years. The VFW would like to thank Sen. Carper, along with his colleagues Senators Cassidy (R-La.), Lankford (R-Okla.), and Tester (D-Mont.) for their bold bipartisan actions to protect the interests of student veterans. [Read the release.](#)



**Search Veteran Careers with
CenturyLink & Get Hired**

CenturyLink supports our veterans not just through volunteerism and employee resource groups, but also by creating opportunities for you to take the skills you've learned in the military and apply them here. [Learn more about our careers for Veterans.](#)



Pillars of Strength UMGC Caregivers Scholarship

University of Maryland Global Campus is offering a full scholarship opportunity for caregivers of our nation's service members and veterans who are wounded, injured, and ill. The Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program aims to honor the unparalleled selflessness and extraordinary commitment of these caregivers. If you are a caregiver, this scholarship is designed to help you achieve your educational goals in a high-demand, career-focused undergraduate or graduate program at UMGC. The application deadline is March 15, 2020. [Learn more.](#)



Everything You Need to Know About Vets' and Caregivers' New Base Access

New commissary and exchange customers will be granted on-base access in two phases, based on whether they have a Department of Veterans Affairs health insurance card, according to new information released by the Pentagon. The VA and Defense Department have fleshed out some of their plans to let 4.1 million new customers enjoy access next year to commissaries, military exchanges and recreation facilities located on secure military installations. Read more [here](#) about what the latest plans mean for eligible Veterans and their caregivers.



Marine Corps Needs More Body Bearers

If you can squat more than 300 pounds, the Marine Corps may want you to join its special cadre of casket-bearers. The service is soliciting applications for its Body Bearer Section, according to a recent public message. Body bearers carry caskets for Marines, former Marines and Marine family members buried at Arlington National Cemetery and other cemeteries in the National Capital Region, and occasionally travel around the country to conduct funeral honors for top officials and former presidents. Body bearers must possess “a high degree of maturity, leadership, judgment, and professionalism, as well as physical stamina and strength,” the message states. Minimum physical requirements include the ability to conduct 10 reps each of bench press with 225 lbs.; military press 135 lbs.; straight bar curl 115 lbs.; and squat 315 lbs. Only active-duty male Marines in the ranks of corporal or below who stand between 70 to 76 inches tall are eligible. Marines must be able to serve 30 months upon check-in to ceremonial drill school. Read more [here](#).



House Veterans Affairs Committee Considers Suicide Factors Bill

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing this week on H.R. 3495, Improve Well-Being for Veterans Act, also known as the Improve Act. The bill, introduced by Representative Jack Bergman (R-Mich.), seeks to establish a pilot program that will use grants to support local organizations that provide mental health and support programs focused on veterans and their families in local communities. VA estimates that 20 veterans die by suicide every day, 14 of whom have not engaged with VA in the year of or year preceding their suicides. The goal of the Improve Act is to reach veterans in the community who are not engaged with VA by offering them support through community-based programs. The VFW supports the concept of the Improve Act and is working to ensure it addresses the needs of veterans and their families in a meaningful way. [Watch the hearing.](#)





House Holds Hearing on PFAS Exposure

This week, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing to discuss federal regulation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are a classification of compounds used in many household items such as non-stick cookware, degreasers, and cosmetics. Since these compounds are also used in certain types of firefighting foam, military communities are at a greater risk of PFAS contamination in drinking water. PFAS exposure has been linked to many adverse health effects including abnormal childhood development, liver and kidney toxicity, and cancer. At the hearing, actor Mark Ruffalo stated, “There is still no legal requirement to filter PFAS from tap water, so more than 100 million Americans today are likely drinking water contaminated with PFAS.” Learn more about [PFAS](#). [Watch the hearing](#).



WWII Soldier Gets Silver Star 75 Years Late

A member of the 101st Airborne Division who fought heroically during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II has finally received the Silver Star he earned. Staff Sgt. Edmund “Eddie” Sternot was honored posthumously with the award Nov. 10 for his gallantry Jan. 4, 1945, in the Ardennes Forest, according to an Army news release. Sternot set up a perimeter defense around Bastogne, Belgium, to defend against attacking German soldiers, and led a machine gun section to beat back German attacks, killing 60 enemy fighters. He died Jan. 13, 1945, when he exposed himself to enemy fire to throw a hand grenade and was hit by a German tank round. He never received his medal. The Silver Star was presented to Sternot’s first cousin, Delores Sternot, 80, of Goleta, California. Read more [here](#).





**CR Passes to Keep Government
Open until December 20**

As predicted in last week's NewsBytes, the House and Senate passed a second Continuing Resolution (CR) that keeps the government operating until Dec. 20, 2019. The first CR passed before the Oct. 1, 2019 deadline. It ensured the enactment of the 12 appropriations (spending) bills and kept government operating until Nov. 21, 2019. The main sticking point is funding for the U.S.-Mexico border wall. President Trump diverted several billion dollars from military projects last year, which enraged Democrats. The issue is now in the courts.

The House has passed 10 of 12 FY2020 funding bills, while the Senate has passed four funding bills. The Senate did not have enough support on Oct. 31 to overcome procedural obstacles to debate a second four-bill spending package. Further, The FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act is in conference committee awaiting the House and Senate to resolve the differences between the two bills but efforts have stalled.



Bills Would Award Congressional Gold Medal to Army Rangers of WWII

For one veteran who fought through the crossfires of German heavy machine guns in the D-Day landings, receiving a Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of his service and his World War II comrades would be "quite meaningful." Bills have been introduced in the House and Senate to award the Army Rangers of World War II the medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by the United States, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Retired Maj. Gen. John Raaen, 97, said in an interview Friday that the award, if approved, would come as a "final act of recognition" for the service of Rangers in all theaters of World War II, including the legendary "Boys of Pointe du Hoc." Read more [here](#).





The Army Is Using Playing Cards to Train Soldiers on Enemy Weapons

In the early days of the Iraq war, soldiers carried playing cards showing the "most wanted" members of Saddam Hussein's regime. Now, the Army is issuing decks to help them memorize Russian and Chinese tanks and rocket launchers. As the Army prepares for war with a major power, Training and Doctrine Command has designed the "Worldwide Equipment Identification" cards. And so far, it has released about 100,000 decks across the Army, according to a recent service news release. Read more [here](#).



ANC Survey-Burials for Retirees

Acting Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy has proposed changes to eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) that includes military retirees, without combat experience, for above-ground inurnment. For more details on proposed changes, see the 10/4/2019 [NewsBytes](#).

The FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Secretary of the Army to revise eligibility criteria to keep the cemetery functioning as an active burial ground "well into the future," which is defined as 150 years. The Army will now begin the federal government's public rule making process that will include soliciting public feedback to the proposed changes. The FRA would like to know your thoughts on providing retirees above-ground inurnment at ANC.

Please complete the [short survey](#) and we will share your responses with ANC.





Never forget our fallen!



FRA Takes Part in House Speaker Veterans Roundtable

Director of Legislative Programs John Davis participated in a VSO/MSO roundtable discussion of pending issues with House Democrats. The Capitol Hill event was hosted by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (Calif.) and House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (Calif). Other legislators in attendance include Reps. Gil Cisneros (Calif.), Mike Levin (Calif.), Julia Brownley (Calif.) Susan Lee (N.V.), Elaine Luria (Va.), Debra Wasserman Schultz (Fla.), Joe Cunningham (S.C.) and Donald Norcross (N.J.).

Speaker Pelosi boasted that the House had just recently passed nine veteran bills, including the

Debra Sampson Act (H.R.3224) while expression concern about the veteran suicide problem. In closing she expressed opposition to any effort to privatize the VA.

The group of MSO/VSO organizations thanked Chairman Takano for his efforts to pass the Agent Orange Blue Water Navy Bill (H.R.299) and thanked the committee for holding hearings to ensure prompt implementation of the Act.

The FRA issues that were shared are, concurrent receipt expansion, opposing the "skinny" NDAA and ensuring timely implementation of Agent Orange Blue Water Navy law. Other issues discussed included veteran suicides, helping women veterans, SBP/DIC offset repeal, opposing the "skinny" NDAA, veteran homelessness and the GI Bill housing payments backlog. Rep. Wasserman Schultz, Chair of the House Appropriations Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, discussed how the MilCon/VA Appropriations Bill passed the House unanimously and has now stalled in the Senate.



The Latest Backlog at the VA: Whistleblower Complaints

Members of Congress expressed concern and curiosity about the reason for a "significant" backlog in resolving the Department of Veteran's Affairs' whistleblower complaints. The VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection has 572 investigative cases that are more than 120 days old, with "many" that have been open for one or two years, Assistant Secretary Dr. Tamara Bonzanto testified in a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing Nov. 14. Read more [here](#).



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DoD to Expand Commissary, MWR and Exchange Access

The Department of Defense is expanding commissary, military exchange, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) retail privileges on U.S. military installations, as required by the FY2019 Defense Authorization Act. Starting Jan. 1, 2020, access will expand to include all veterans with service-connected disabilities, veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war, and approved individuals designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program for Family Caregivers. While this expansion will extend eligibility to more than 4.1 million new patrons, the DoD expects little to no impact on current patrons in most locations. There may be some impact in areas with a high cost of living, but the DoD is preparing to accommodate all new patrons.

New patrons now eligible by the Act should be aware that the law requires the DoD charge them a small user fee to offset the increased expense incurred by the Department of the Treasury for

processing commercial credit or debit cards used for purchases at commissary stores.

The DoD is finalizing the details for these new privileges with the VA, Homeland Security and the Treasury. Information will be announced soon regarding installation access and the authentication process for these privileges. To learn more about the commissary, military exchange and MWR expansion, [go online](#).



Commissaries Adding New Gift Card Feature as They Celebrate Millionth Sale

As the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) celebrates the sale of one million gift cards since 2011, it's also unveiling a new "open value" feature that lets buyers put any amount, from \$5 to \$300, on a card, DeCA said in news releases Nov. 7. Customers have redeemed the cards, originally offered in denominations of \$25 and \$50, for \$32 million worth of groceries over eight years, DeCA said. That includes thousands of dollars that went to Coast Guard patrons during the 35-day federal shutdown that ended Jan. 25. Read more on [here](#).



Your actions

could save a life.

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

VeteransCrisisLine.net



Hospitals Seeing Rise in Veterans Seeking Care

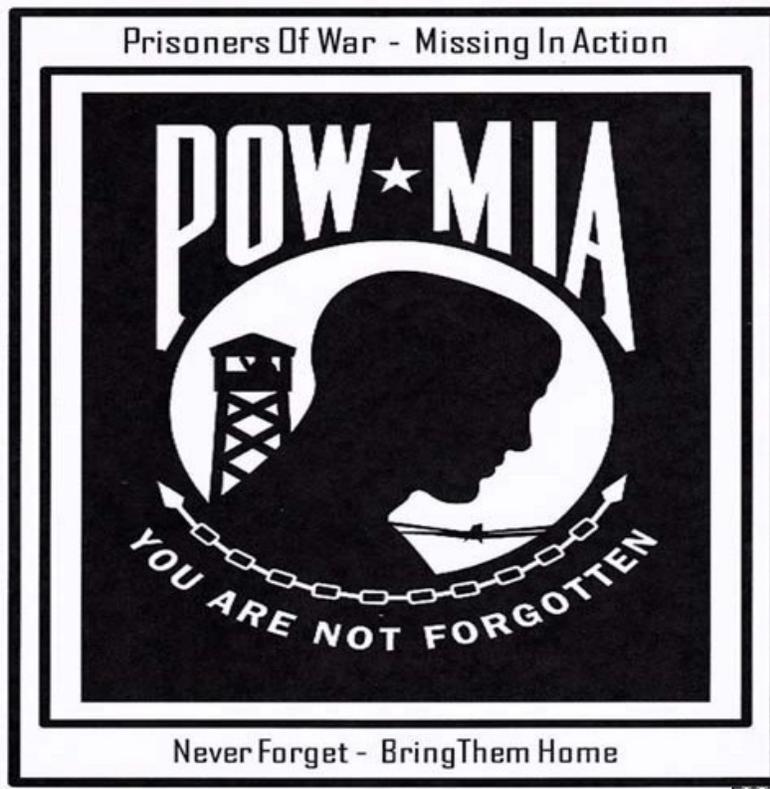
Local hospitals have seen upticks in veterans seeking care this year after a new law opened up more health care options for patients with Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. The Mission Act, signed into law by President Donald Trump in June 2018, established a new community care program allowing VA benefits to cover care outside VA clinics. The law included an urgent care benefit, making it possible for veterans to seek non-emergency care for some conditions at hospitals or clinics in the VA network. Read more [here](#).



VA Cuts Support to Employee Unions Following Executive Orders

The Department of Veterans Affairs is cutting off some support for its staff's unions next year -- ending pay union representatives receive while pursuing grievances on behalf of bargaining unit employees and requiring unions to pay rent to use VA office space and equipment, the department said in a statement Nov. 15. These changes are the result of three executive orders President Donald Trump signed in May 2018 to cut how much money the federal government compensates unions and its representatives. Read more [here](#).





Future Navy Carrier JFK Treats First Patient at Medical

The future aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy may be a way off from commissioning, but its medical facilities have already accepted and treated their first patient. The United States' second Ford-class aircraft carrier will be the "premier forward asset for crisis response and early decisive striking power in major combat operations," the Navy said in a Nov. 8 release. And as more than 100 sailors have officially checked into the command with more expected, the Navy said it's important to have essential care for the pre-commissioning unit sailors. Read more [here](#).



Office of Inspector General

1. Tribal Programs: Resource Constraints and Management Weaknesses Can Limit Federal Program Delivery to Tribes



Military Exchange Extends Return Policy for Holiday Shopping

Holiday shoppers will be able to return Army and Air Force Exchange Service purchases with a receipt until Jan. 31, 2020, according to a new AAFES announcement. The return policy extension applies to items bought in store or online from Nov. 1 until Dec. 24. The regular time period is 15 to 90 days after purchase, so returns will still be honored if the item's regular return window extends past Jan. 31. Read more [here](#).



Listen to New TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin Podcast #528

Listen to this latest podcast to hear about:

- TRICARE Open Season Webinar
- TRICARE Costs
- Warrior Care Month

Visit the [Multimedia Center](#) for this podcast and previous podcasts.





**U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION**

1. Golden State Medical Supply, Inc. Issues a Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Ranitidine Hydrochloride 150mg and 300mg Capsules (Manufactured by Novitium Pharma LLC) Due to an Elevated Amount of Unexpected Impurity, N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA)
2. Select Varieties of Breakstone's Cottage Cheese are Voluntarily Being Recalled Due to Potential Presence of Foreign Material



Join Today's TRICARE Webinar on Open Season

Open season is here. Be sure to make your choice for 2020 health coverage before open season ends on Dec. 9. If you need help picking a TRICARE health plan or a plan through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, join TRICARE for the open season webinar on Nov. 21, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET.

Presenters will discuss your options for 2020 health care, dental, and vision coverage. A Q&A led by the presenters will follow the presentation.

To learn more and to register for the webinar, [read the full article](#).



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



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Problems with Military Housing Began Decades Ago, Manager Says

The head of a company named in a lawsuit charging mold infestation and other substandard conditions in on-base housing at Fort Meade, Maryland, acknowledged a history of neglect by private firms and the Defense Department in managing military housing and pledged \$325 million for fixups. Management overall "went sideways" in a series of poor decisions and inaction on budgeting and oversight, John Picerne, founder and chief executive officer of the Rhode Island-based Corvias Group, said in an interview with Military.com before the Fort Meade lawsuit was filed. Read more [here](#).





MIA Update

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced three new identifications, and four burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from WWII and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Navy Fireman 1st Class Hadley I. Heavin, 23, of Kansas City, Missouri, was assigned to the battleship USS West Virginia, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS West Virginia sustained multiple torpedo hits, but timely counter-flooding measures taken by the crew prevented it from capsizing,

and it came to rest on the shallow harbor floor. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 106 crewmen, including Heavin. Interment services are pending. [Read about Heavin.](#)

Navy Fireman 3rd Class Welborn L. Ashby, 24, of Louisville, Kentucky, was assigned to the battleship USS West Virginia, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The ship sustained multiple torpedo hits, but timely counter-flooding measures taken by the crew prevented it from capsizing, and it came to rest on the shallow harbor floor. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 106 crewmen, including Ashby. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ashby.](#)

Army Sgt. Maximiano T. Lacsamana, 37, of the Philippines, a veteran of the Philippine Scouts during World War II, was a member of Company I, 3rd Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division. During the Korean War, his unit was engaged in intense fighting with the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces near Hagaruri, North Korea. He was reported missing in action

Dec. 3, 1950. Following the war, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lacsamana.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Alfred Edwards, 33 of Stilwell, Oklahoma, was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Edwards was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Edwards will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Edwards.](#)

Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. John R. Bayens, 20, of Louisville, Kentucky, was a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the

Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed, including Bayens on the third day of battle, Nov. 22, 1943. Bayens will be buried Dec. 16, 2019, in Louisville, Kentucky.

[Read about Bayens.](#)

Army Pfc. Wilbur T. Tackett, 18, of Alger, Ohio, was a member of Battery B, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 6, 1950, when enemy forces attacked his unit near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. His remains could not be recovered following the attack. Tackett will be buried in his hometown. The date has yet to be decided. [Read about Tackett.](#)

Navy Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Arnold M. Nielsen, 32, of Oakland, California, 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 crewmen, including Nielsen. The funeral date and location have yet to be

decided. [Read about Nielsen.](#)



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