



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, February 02, 2020

Volume 11, Issue 05



This-N-That

The Agent Orange battle continues on!

While the DoD released a list of locations outside Vietnam it omits 40 locations that had previously been identified, so is this their effort to continue to deny benefits or was it a mistake?

My personal opinion is that it was calculated and deliberate in their efforts to avoid paying out and providing benefits and medical care! Whose

decision was this?

Then we have Secretary Wilkie who further exacerbates the issue by delaying adding more illnesses that have been tied to Agent Orange exposure and contamination.

The military already has a retention problem, could it be due to how the DoD and VA combined have been and are treating our Veterans when it comes to taking care of our own?

The VA has a proven track record of not being able to catch theft and fraud as has been seen by the numerous articles I've posted to the VFC website in efforts to actually have money in reserves to have covered enough benefits for hundreds if not thousands of Veterans.

Add to that the VA has been "paying off" contracts with doctors who weren't performing up to medical and ethical standards when it was in most cases enough grounds for termination without compensation or paying them off to avoid court actions.

I don't know who is truly qualified to be Secretary of the VA who has the best interests of the Veteran community vs. political interests or seeking notoriety from media. But I'm sure that person is out there, does exist, and would be honored to serve Veterans not politicians!

Still makes me wonder what the real price is, how many more lives need to be lost needlessly till the red lights go on and someone sees the need for this type of person to come in and run the world largest health care system.

I receive reports from the IG's office almost daily of failures in the VA, but I still see little to no action being taken to cure or resolve the problems.

Some of the biggest problems are quickly reviewing claims and processing them with an approved stamp on them, then comes seriously addressing Veteran suicide, then Veteran Homelessness!

Yes, there are hundreds of other issues surrounding Veterans, care and benefits and

many times it's hard to prioritize all of them, but the most immediate needs should be on the top of the list and the Secretary of the VA and his/her staff should have their finger on the pulse of the Veteran Community Needs and address, resolve or cure them immediately.

But the reality of it still remains most Veterans won't or just don't speak out for one reason or another, and I do understand some, but certainly not all of it.

I know I ask for your help all the time, and some of you do come through and you have my deepest appreciate and thanks, but we're not making any headway and need more people to speak out, and no you don't have to be a Veteran, or even in the military or have ever served.

But if you care and I mean really care about your benefits and medical care then please, help us by seeing the action items, and sending those pre-written e-mails off weekly. And yes, you can do each one of them every week. The pass on the information or the newsletter to other friends and family and ask that they do the same, then

forward to on their e-mail list.

I know I have said this every single year, but please help us make 2020 the year of the Veteran and push for and help us see to it that all Veteran legislation is passed and signed into law.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



VA releases updated DOD list identifying Agent Orange sites outside of Vietnam

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released in January an updated Department of Defense (DOD) list of [locations outside of Vietnam](#) where tactical herbicides were used, tested or stored by the United States military.

“This update was necessary to improve accuracy

and communication of information,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA depends on DOD to provide information regarding in-service environmental exposure for disability claims based on exposure to herbicides outside of Vietnam.”

DOD conducted a thorough review of research, reports and government publications in response to a [November 2018 Government Accountability Office report](#).

“DOD will continue to be responsive to the needs of our interagency partners in all matters related to taking care of both current and former service members,” said Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper. “The updated list includes Agents Orange, Pink, Green, Purple, Blue and White and other chemicals and will be updated as verifiable information becomes available.”

Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including an Agent Orange Registry health exam, health care and disability compensation for diseases associated with exposure. Their dependents and survivors

also may be eligible for benefits.

Source:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/locations/tests-storage/index.asp>



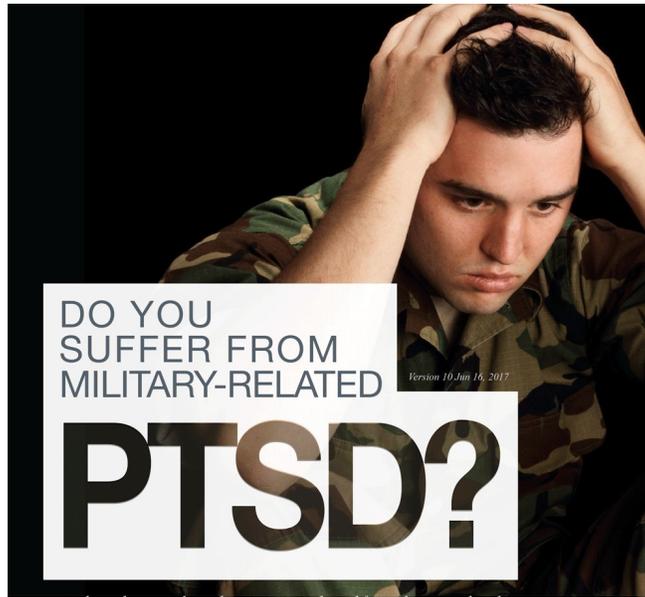
Links to Other Stories

1. Study results on new Agent Orange diseases not expected until 'late 2020' says VA secretary
2. Helping Veterans find new careers
3. HUD releases funds to help local homeless Veterans
4. VA expansion of Agent Orange excludes some exposed Veterans, advocates say
5. Cervical cancer screenings for women Veterans
6. Supporting providers who serve Veterans with suicide prevention resources
7. Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association and VA partner for Final Salute: The Last Mile
8. Free Braille and Talking Book Program for Veterans
9. Tricare Panel Votes to End Coverage of Brand-

Name Viagra, Cialis

10. Carolina Moment: Staff at Asheville VA use shadow boxes to honor Veterans
11. Veterans divided over decision to remove star-rating system from VA hospitals
12. Thank Vietnam Vets by hosting event as commemorative partner
13. New customers encounter some glitches with military shopping benefits
14. Veterans end 2019 with another positive job report
15. Doctor and sales rep charged in \$12M fraud scheme targeting Tricare and extensive coverup
16. A 103-year-old World War II Veteran finally gets his combat medals, 75 years later
17. Army Veteran claims prosthetic legs repossessed after VA refused to pay for them: 'medicare did not send me to Vietnam'
18. Court rules again to give Veterans access to both Post-9/11 and Montgomery GI Bill education benefits
19. VA North Texas opens new 13-bed inpatient unit

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



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



**Listen to New TRICARE Beneficiary
Bulletin Podcast #538**



Listen to this latest podcast to hear about:

- TRICARE Publications
- Marriage Qualifying Life Event
- Tobacco Cessation Benefits

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



[Veterans-For-Change Web Site](#)

The Veterans-For-Change website has been around since 2009. 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 **4,089** hits per day, and downloads average **6,743** per day with a total **5,800,444** visitors as of Friday.

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

www.Veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **18,424** documents in 171+ Libraries, added 94 documents on-line (Updated: 01/06/20)

- FAQ's on-line with **1,790** FAQ's on 101 topics!
(Updated 08/29/19 - 128 NEW)
- 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: **9,403**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **6,705**, Added 90 New Links (Updated: 01/22/20)

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



Updated List Identifying Agent Orange Sites Omits 40 Locations

VA released an updated Department of Defense list of locations outside of Vietnam where tactical herbicides were used, tested or stored by the U.S. military. The Military Times reported that the new list [omits 40 previously identified locations](#), such as Thailand, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including an [Agent Orange Registry health exam](#), health care, and disability compensation for diseases associated with such exposure. VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci indicated that “the new list was a result of a GAO report which compelled DOD to come up with a more comprehensive list, not go back and revise what they already confirmed. We’re more than half a century since many of these incidents occurred and the government keeps changing its story. We know

these chemicals harmed our veterans and VA has the obligation to deliver care and benefits regardless of DOD's ongoing revisions." The VFW implores VA to "grant benefits if a veteran has any evidence demonstrating that spraying may have occurred, regardless if the veteran uses the new list or old list where DOD confirmed that there was storage or spraying," Gallucci said. [Learn more.](#)



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. [Urge Congress to Pass the Retired Pay Restoration Act](#)
3. [Protect Bankrupt Disabled Veterans from Losing Benefits](#)
4. [S. 2966, the Rural Veterans Travel Enhancement Act of 2019](#)
5. [S. 1003, VET OPP Act to Reform VA Employment Programs](#)
6. [H.R. 4574 - Pass the Veterans' Right to Breathe Act Now!](#)
7. [S. 2810, the Veterans Hearing Benefits Act of 2019](#)
8. [Support H.R.4985, the Veterans Residential Care Choice Act](#)



~~Follow us on MEWE~~

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

HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF
VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

AMVETS GROUP

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

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

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY





Kiddie Tax Penalty - Legislative Update

The Enlisted Association worked hard to eliminate the so-called "Kiddie Tax" penalty for surviving military children and thanks Congress for getting this done in 2019!

The "**Kiddie Tax**" fix was included in the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act, which was attached to the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, the year-end spending bill. The Act was signed into law on December 20, 2019.

Why is this important to surviving military

family members and veterans?

- The law **eliminates the "Kiddie Tax" penalty on surviving military children.**
- The law also **fixes the "Kiddie Tax"** for other groups beside Gold Star Families - First Responders, Native American Tribal Income, and low-income college student scholarships.
- The bill allows survivors subjected to the "Kiddie Tax" **in 2018 to file an amended tax return and receive a refund** for the difference in taxes from year 2016 to 2017.
- A child's net unearned income will **return to being taxed at the parent's tax rate** if higher than the tax rate of the child, instead of being subjected to the much higher tax rate for estates and trusts.
- While ending the "Widow's Tax" and allowing surviving spouses to reselect is a major win, **spouses will not be allowed to reselect for 3 years** and would have been subjected to the "Kiddie Tax" for the remainder of that time.

Understanding the Issue

- Surviving spouses sign over their earned

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) to their children in order to temporarily receive all of their survivor benefits. This is the **"Child Option" for SBP**.

- The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is taxable. In past years, surviving children **under the "Child Option" paid an average tax rate of 12-15 percent**.
- Under the "Kiddie Tax", a child's unearned income was taxed at the same rate as their parents. The "Kiddie Tax" bracket was created in 1986 to prevent wealthy families from hiding money in their children's names by **taxing "unearned income" for children at a higher rate**.
- The **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017**, which went into effect in 2018, increased the **"Kiddie Tax" to the much higher tax rates for estates and trusts - as high as 37 percent**. This significantly increased the **tax rates that apply to military survivor benefits**, taxable portions of college grants, scholarships, and fellowships.
- It also caused **low and middle-income children to be taxed at much higher rates** than their parents.





VA Delays New Presumptive Conditions Related to Agent Orange Exposure

On Monday, VA sent a report to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs detailing VA's concern with the scientific evidence behind the link between bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, parkinsonism, and hypertension and exposure to Agent Orange. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie stated that the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine did not identify any "definitive causal links" between Agent Orange and the diseases. VA is now waiting on the results of its own study. "The National Academy of Medicine has already established an association between Agent Orange exposure and these four diseases," said VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Matthew Doyle. "There is no reason to wait for the results of a new study and delay providing care and benefits to veterans in need." [Learn 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



**Senate Advances VFW-Supported
Mental Health Bill**

On Wednesday, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a markup to discuss and advance the VFW-supported [S.785, Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019](#), which would improve VA mental health care programs and services for veterans. The bill would also establish two grant programs, one to enable nongovernment entities to provide supportive mental health care services and another to expand telehealth programs such as [Project ATLAS](#). The committee also advanced legislation to improve health care for women veterans, expand transportation grants for veterans who live in rural areas, expand veterans preference for reserve component members, and confirm Judge Grant Jaquith to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The bills and Judge Jaquith's nomination now await consideration by the full Senate. [Watch the markup](#), which begins at the 21:45 minute mark.



Office of Inspector General

1. Opioid Use Disorder: Barriers to Medicaid Beneficiaries' Access to Treatment Medications
2. VA Health Care: Efforts to Prioritize and Translate Research into Clinical Practice
3. VA Health Care: Improved Communication about Available Data Needed to Enhance the HIV Screening Process
4. Military Construction: Cost Increase Reports Submitted in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019
5. 340B Drug Discount Program: Oversight of the Intersection with the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program Needs Improvement
6. Drug Control: Actions Needed to Ensure Usefulness of Data on Suspicious Opioid Orders
7. Medicaid: States' Changes to Payment Rates for Substance Use Disorder Services



Hearing on Expansion of Emergency Mental Health Options

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to talk about emergency mental health care options in VA. At the hearing, Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) introduced a bill that would allow veterans in need of emergency mental health care services to receive them free of charge through VA or civilian providers. The bill also contains language that significantly expands the population of veterans who are eligible to receive emergency mental health care. The VFW will work with members of the committee and their staffs to make sure veterans who need care are not left without aid but that veterans who are currently eligible maintain priority access to VA services. [Watch the hearing.](#)



Get to Know Your TRICARE Dental Program

If you're like many Americans, you're starting the New Year with new healthy habits. Don't forget about your dental health. As a TRICARE beneficiary, you may be eligible for different dental programs based on who you are and where you live. For those who are eligible, the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) is an option to help you achieve better dental health.

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



**TRICARE Expands Coverage for
Breast Cancer Screenings**

To improve preventive health care services for women, on Jan. 1, 2020, TRICARE expanded coverage for breast cancer screenings to include 3-D mammography (also known as digital breast tomosynthesis). TRICARE will cover 3-D mammography as a population-based, preventive health care service through the provisional coverage program, which requires pre-authorization. TRICARE covers annual screenings for all female beneficiaries age 40, and older and those age 30–39 who are high-risk and have either a 15 percent or greater lifetime risk of breast cancer as determined by a screening instrument or who meet a risk factor. In a 3-D mammogram, an X-ray source moves over the breast to obtain cross-sectional images of the tissue and this has the potential to improve accuracy in detecting abnormalities and reduce imaging problems due to overlapping tissue and dense breast tissue. [Learn more.](#)



The Navy Once Called Him an 'Unknown Negro Sailor.' Now It's Naming a Carrier After Him

Nearly 80 years after the Navy declined to even name the hero black sailor who displayed extraordinary bravery during the attack on Pearl Harbor, the service's acting secretary is breaking with tradition to name a powerful aircraft carrier in his honor. The family of Navy Cross recipient Doris "Dorie" Miller said that acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly's decision to name a carrier for their uncle is an honor. Having the announcement made on Martin Luther King Jr. Day only made the situation even more meaningful, Miller's niece Brenda Haven said. Read more [here](#).



New PTSD Coach Mobile App Released

VA has released PTSD Coach, its first mobile app that features tools to help you manage stress symptoms, information about post-traumatic stress disorder and treatments that work, improved graphics to help track your progress, and new ways to personalize your app with the ability to turn on or off daily quotes and the distress meter. The PTSD Coach app is available for download at Google Play for Android users and iTunes for iPhone users. [Read more.](#)



Veterans Wanted: American Income Life Has a Place for You

You have found the place to begin your search for a sales career. At AIL, Opportunity Unlimited puts you in control of how much you earn and how far you take your career. [Search jobs now.](#)





How TRICARE For Life Eligibility, Enrollment Works

Are you wondering what the TRICARE For Life (TFL) program is and whether you're eligible? TFL is Medicare-wraparound coverage for TRICARE beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A and Part B. This is regardless of your age or where you live. It provides comprehensive health care coverage. With TFL, you also get prescription coverage under the TRICARE Pharmacy Program.

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



Veterans Needed for VA Study

A group of researchers are working on a study designed to learn about the health and life experiences of veterans from all different backgrounds. This study has been approved by the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. The study will consist of four web-based questionnaire, no in-person visits are required. [Learn more](#).





SVAC Approves Veterans Suicide Prevention Bill

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee amended and approved the FRA-supported Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act (S.785) sponsored by Sens. Jerry Moran (Kans.) and Jon Tester (Mont.), SVAC Chairman and Ranking member respectively. The bill is a comprehensive and aggressive approach to connecting more veterans with the mental healthcare they need and earned.

Their bill seeks to improve VA care by bolstering the VA's mental health workforce and increasing veterans' access to VA care in rural or hard-to-reach areas. The objective is to make sure veterans have access to alternative and local treatment options such as; animal therapy, outdoor sports and activities, yoga and acupuncture. The bill now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

It is estimated that more than 20 veterans die by suicide every day. Of those, 14 did not receive treatment or care from the VA. The bill will improve outreach to veterans about their mental healthcare options in five major ways:

1. Bolster the VA's mental health workforce to serve more veterans and placing at least one suicide prevention coordinator in every VA hospital.
2. Improve rural veterans' access to mental healthcare by increasing the number of locations at which veterans can access VA telehealth services. Offering grants to non-VA organizations that provide mental health services or alternative treatment to veterans.
3. Strengthen assistance for service members

transitioning out of the military by automatically giving every service member one full year of VA healthcare when they leave the military. Improving services that connect transitioning veterans with career and education opportunities.

4. Study and invest in alternative treatment options by expanding veterans' access to animal, outdoor, or agri-therapy, yoga, meditation and acupuncture.

5. Hold the VA accountable for its mental health and suicide prevention efforts by examining how the VA manages its suicide prevention resources and how the VA provides seamless care for veterans seeking mental healthcare from both the VA and community providers.

Members are urged to use the [Action Center](#) to urge their Senators to support this important legislation.





Some Civilians Who Served in Vietnam Are Getting Veteran Status

A recent ruling by the Defense Department has granted veteran status to a group of civilians who served in Vietnam. Specifically, the group consists of "Department of the Navy civilian special agents who served in direct support and under control of the Department of the Navy within the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975." The ruling determines that this group will be "considered as having served on active duty for the purposes of all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs." That means that they and their family members may be eligible for health, disability and burial benefits. Read more [here](#).



Legislation Introduced to Add Diseases Caused by Agent Orange Exposure

Reps. Josh Harder (Calif.) and Pete Stauber (Minn.) have introduced the Fair Care for Vietnam

Veterans Act (H.R.5610). The bill would increase the presumptive conditions linked to exposure of the Agent Orange herbicide to include parkinsonism, bladder cancer, hypertension and hyperthyroidism. In October 2019, it was revealed that White House officials impeded the inclusion of these diseases as presumptive conditions despite a recommendation from former Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin to be added. Currently, Vietnam Veterans (including those that served of the coast of Vietnam) with specific health care problems developed as the result of exposure to Agent Orange during their service get "presumptive" access to VA benefits. However, some health problems that have been linked to Agent Orange by National Academy of Medicine research done in 2016, are not covered. The decision to ignore the results of real scientific evidence and wait on the outcome of other studies means dragging out care for more than 83,000 Vietnam veterans struggling with bladder cancer, Parkinsonism, hypertension or hypothyroidism. They must struggle without the benefits they deserve.

Members are urged to use the [Action Center](#) to

urge their legislators to support this important legislation.



VA Proposes End to Obama-Era Policy for Faith-Based Groups

The Department of Veterans Affairs wants to eliminate a rule requiring faith-based organizations to find secular alternatives for veterans who refuse help because of the groups' religious nature. The public can comment until Feb. 18 on whether the VA should eliminate the rule and its requirement that religious groups post notices about this referral procedure. The VA said in a news release that the current rule "unequally placed impediments on religious organizations and cast unwarranted suspicion on them." VA Secretary Robert Wilkie called it a "victory for religious freedom" and said it would "end discrimination" against religious organizations. Read more [here](#).





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Support Legislation to Add Diseases Caused by Agent Orange Exposure

Reps. Josh Harder (Calif.) and Pete Stauber (Minn.) have introduced the “Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act” (H.R.5610), which would increase the presumptive conditions linked to exposure of the Agent Orange herbicide to include parkinsonism, bladder cancer, hypertension and hyperthyroidism. In October 2019, it was revealed that White House officials impeded the inclusion of these diseases as presumptive conditions despite a recommendation from former Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin that they be added.

Currently, Vietnam Veterans (including those that served of the coast of Vietnam) with specific health care problems developed as the result of

exposure to Agent Orange during their service get “presumptive” access to benefits at the VA. However, some health problems, which have been linked to Agent Orange exposure by the research done by the National Academy of Medicine in 2016 are not covered. The decision to ignore the results of real scientific evidence and wait on the outcome of other studies means dragging out care for over 83,000 Vietnam veterans struggling with bladder cancer, Parkinsonism, hypertension, or hypothyroidism who must struggle without the benefits they deserve.

Please click here to go to the FRA [Action Center](#) to weigh in on this FRA-supported legislation.



Military Announces 2020 Blended Retirement Continuation Pay Rates

The military has announced the 2020 continuation pay amounts for Blended Retirement System (BRS) participants. Continuation pay is a cash payment for mid-career service members participating in the Blended Retirement System. The payment is used as an incentive for these service members to remain in the service until they reach the traditional 20-year mark needed to qualify for monthly military retired pay. Read more [here](#).



Your actions
could save a life.

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

VeteransCrisisLine.net

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

The advertisement features two men, one in a light blue shirt and glasses, and another in a dark sweater, with the latter's arm around the first. The text is in blue and black, with a white background for the text area.

Special Extra Earnings for Military Service

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1940

through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. Special extra earnings are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Social Security cannot add these extra credits to your record until you file for Social Security benefits. (Note: Special extra earnings are not granted for inactive duty training.)

How You Get Credit For Special Extra Earnings
The information that follows applies only to active duty military service earnings from 1940 through 2001. Here's how the special extra earnings are credited:

Service In 1978 through 2001

For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.

Service In 1957 Through 1977

You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

Service In 1940 Through 1956

If you were in the military during this period, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, your Social Security record may be credited with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940, through December 31, 1956, under the following circumstances:

You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or
You are still on active duty; or

You are applying for survivors benefits and the veteran died while on active duty.

You cannot receive credit for these special extra earnings if you are already receiving a federal

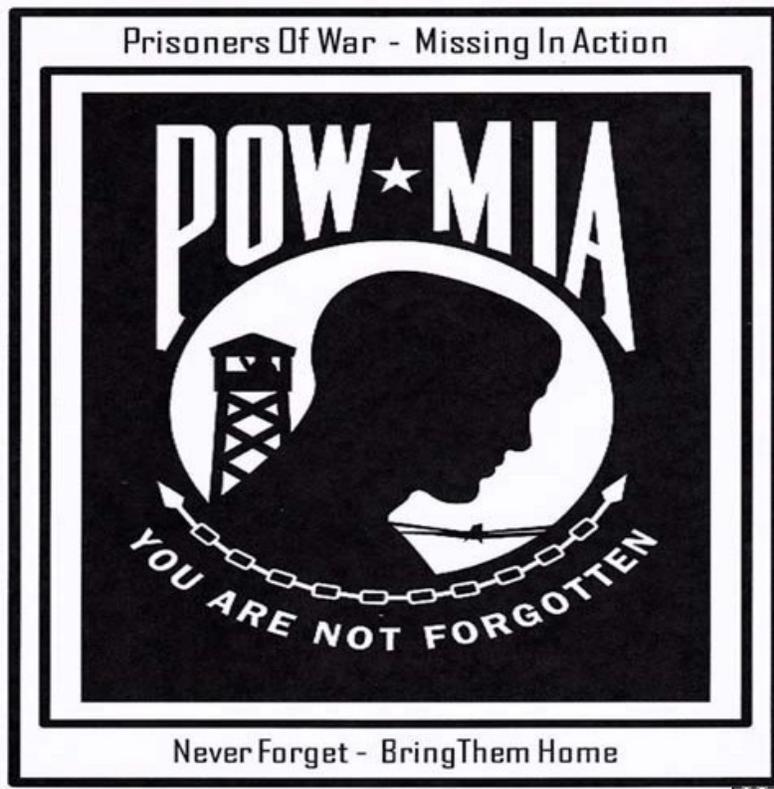
benefit based on the same years of service. There is one exception: If you were on active duty after 1956, you can still get the special earnings for 1951 through 1956, even if you're receiving a military retirement based on service during that period.



The Pentagon Must Do More to Attract and Keep Good Dentists and Doctors, GAO Finds

The Defense Department needs to do more to track whether its physician and dentist retention and recruitment programs are working, a government watchdog report states. Meanwhile, the Defense Department is exploring other ways to address its personnel shortage, including extending service obligations for students receiving DoD assistance for physician or dentist education. Read more [here](#).





VA IG Warns Long Wait Times Could Continue with Mission Act Reforms

Department of Veterans Affairs patients seeking private-sector health care saw a nearly two-month delay for medical appointments in 2018, and the problem could worsen under the new Mission Act, the VA Office of Inspector General reported. The inspector general's report based its conclusions on the region of VA hospitals that includes 1.6 million veterans across Florida, south Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. VA officials in that region referred more than 206,500 requests in 2018 for community care at clinics outside the VA network, with veterans facing a 56-day wait on average before receiving care, according to the report. Read more [here](#).



Navy Warns Mail-In DNA Kits Could Bring 'Unwelcome' Family News

Navy personnel should consider the unintended consequences of learning who they're related to, a new servicewide message states. "Some genetic tests inform participants of a network of likely siblings and parents," wrote Andrew Haeuptle, director of Navy Staff. "While in most cases this is good and interesting, in some situations this new information could negatively affect your family." In his message, Haeuptle recommended naval personnel discuss those issues with family members who are considering genetic testing. "Thanks to social media and [publicly] available information, even if you don't participate, when one of your relatives does, unwelcome associations may be created," he said. Read more [here](#).





FDA Expands Access to Ecstasy Drug for PTSD Therapy

Under the program, patients take a dose of ecstasy and then are guided through eight hours of intensive psychotherapy. The drug, which enhances feelings of empathy and euphoria while blocking the brain's ability to process fear, can break down barriers that prevent patients from opening up to therapists. The study has so far shown positive results. A Phase 2 trial near Charleston, South Carolina, resulted in 68 percent of participants no longer showing PTSD symptoms after their second session. Of the 26 participants in that study, 22 were veterans. Read more [here](#).



Tax & Credit Information



1. Taxpayer Bill of Rights begins with the right to be informed
2. Global tax chiefs undertake unprecedented multi-country day of action to tackle international tax evasion
3. IRS kicks off 2020 tax filing season with returns due April 15; help available on IRS dot gov for fastest service
4. Due dates for backup withholding forms coming quick
5. IRS provides relief to financial institutions affected by tax law change raising the age for required minimum distributions
6. IRS outlines new tax law effect on tax exempt organizations
7. IRS, partners nationwide mark Jan. 31 as 'EITC Awareness Day' Taxpayers may qualify for significant tax benefit
8. IRS: Jan. 31 filing deadline for employers, other businesses to file wage statements, independent contractor forms
9. Taxpayers filing for the first time should look into Free File



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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Veterans Who Join the Civil Service Are Eligible for Valuable Service Credits

If you serve on active duty and later take a position with the federal civil service, you will have the opportunity to apply your military service toward the civil service's Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). You will even have the opportunity to "buy back" your military service to further increase your benefits. Read more [here](#).





The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced six new identifications, and one burial update 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:

U.S. Army Cpl. Arthur C. Ramirez, 19, of Pima, Arizona, was a member of Battery B, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 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. Ramirez will be buried March 19, 2020, in Marana, Arizona. [Read about Ramirez.](#)

U.S. Navy Seaman 2nd Class Cecil H.

Thornton, 21, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Thornton. Interment services are pending. [Read about Thornton.](#)

U.S. Navy Seaman 1st Class Warren C.

Gillette, 21, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Gillette.

Interment services are pending. [Read about Gillette.](#)

U.S. Navy Fireman 2nd Class Martin D. Young, 21, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Young. Interment services are pending. [Read about Young.](#)

U.S. Navy Fireman 2nd Class Joseph W. Carroll, 20, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Carroll. Interment services are pending. [Read about Carroll.](#)

U.S. Navy Fireman 1st Class Dan E. Reagan,

20, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Reagan. Interment services are pending. [Read about Reagan.](#)

U.S. Seaman 1st Class Joe R. Nightingale, 20, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Nightingale. Interment services are pending. [Read about Nightingale.](#)



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