

**Robert E. Wheelock Memorial**  
**Po Box 9, Stanhope, NJ, 07874-0009**  
**Phone: 973.663-3008**

**Email: [fishman23@optonline.net](mailto:fishman23@optonline.net)**

**Editor: Frank Arminio**



Volume 8, Issue 1

BROTHERS IN ARMS

JANUARY 2021

**Women Veterans hotline—1-855-VA-WOMEN (829-6636)**

**VETERANS CRISIS HOT LINE 1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1**

**HOTLINE LINK: [THEVETERANSSUPPORT.ORG-SUPPORT 1](http://THEVETERANSSUPPORT.ORG-SUPPORT 1)**

**Vet Center Combat Call Center 877-WAR-VETS**

**NJ VET 2 VET 1-866-838-7654-[www.njveteranshelpline.org](http://www.njveteranshelpline.org)**



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**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA FOUNDING PRINCIPLE IS "NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER".**

The Next VVA Chapter 327 Board Meeting is at 9:00  
on Saturday

The Next VVA 327 Chapter Meeting is  
on Saturday , 2020



41 U.S. 46

Budd Lake, NJ 07828

973-691-2222

PTSD WARD VISIT

3<sup>RD</sup> Monday of EVERY Month

Welcome to the Vietnam Veterans of America New Jersey  
State Council Web Page

<http://vvanjsc.org/>

Popular on Vets.gov

<https://www.vets.gov/>

NJ VET2 VET 1-866-383-7654 [www.njveteranshelpline.org](http://www.njveteranshelpline.org)



VETS 2 VETS.pdf





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## Welcome to Sandwiches Unlimited!

Looking for the Best Sandwiches in New Jersey?

Tired of the same fast food menu? Looking for delicious food served your way?

Well look no further, Sandwiches Unlimited Lunch Box is here. We offer fresh food the way you want it. Our dining room offers table service or take out is always available.

Sandwiches Unlimited Lunch Box • 2 Locations

**1034 Rt 46 East • Ledgewood • New Jersey 07852**

**NEW! Boro Plaza Rt 46 East • Rockaway • New Jersey 07866**



PLEASE PATRONIZE SANDWICH UNLIMITED, THEY HAVE BEEN

SUPPORTING VVA CHAPTER 327 TRIPS TO THE PTSD WARD AT

THE LYONS, VA HOSPITAL SINCE 1991. SO STOP BY SANDWICH UNLIMITED AND GET THE BEST SANDWICH MONEY CAN BUY.

EVERY TIME YOU STOP BY SANDWICH UNLIMITED YOU WILL BE  
**HELPING VETERAN'S!**



YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT WITH THE VA AND ARE GETTING NOWHERE  
CLICK BELOW



Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General  
<https://www.va.gov/oig/>

## PTSD WARD SCHEDULE VISITS FOR 2019



2019 PTSD WARD  
SCHEDULE.pdf



<https://www.benefits.gov/categories>



## VA New Jersey Health Care System on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/VANJHCS/>

## VA New Jersey Health Care System

<https://www.newjersey.va.gov/>

## Surgeon General Social Distancing (:60)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKX1PQTz5\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKX1PQTz5_M)

## Veteran-Directed Care

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wucNcAjRI3c>

Here is the website for this program: [https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Veteran-Directed\\_Care.asp](https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Veteran-Directed_Care.asp)

Here is a link to an FAQ: [https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/docs/Veteran-Directed\\_Care.pdf](https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/docs/Veteran-Directed_Care.pdf)

## Have you downloaded VA's COVID Coach App?

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/covid-coach>



### **VA COVID-19 Update on Planning for Arrival of Vaccine**

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USVHA/2020/12/16/file\\_attachments/1628211/COVID-19%20Update%20on%20Planning%20for%20Arrival%20of%20Vaccine%20.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USVHA/2020/12/16/file_attachments/1628211/COVID-19%20Update%20on%20Planning%20for%20Arrival%20of%20Vaccine%20.pdf)

### **Big six veterans groups ask Trump to fire VA Secretary Wilkie immediately**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/16/big-six-veterans-groups-ask-trump-to-fire-va-secretary-wilkie-immediately/>

### **VA launches single access point to all VA contact centers**

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5588>

### **VA ends 2020 with more than 6,500 coronavirus deaths and 150,000 infections**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/31/va-ends-2020-with-more-than-6500-coronavirus-deaths-and-150000-infections/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Navy%2012-31-20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Navy%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/31/va-ends-2020-with-more-than-6500-coronavirus-deaths-and-150000-infections/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Navy%2012-31-20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Navy%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup)





## **Interview Questions To Ask A Potential VA Claims Representative**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjNaXN7wL1k&feature=youtu.be>

## **COVID-19 vaccines at VA**

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>



## **COVID-19 Relief Package**

<https://sherrillforms.house.gov/news/email/show.aspx?ID=GOELM5ABI6CN4>

**You only need to remember one number for information on VA care, benefits, and services or to speak to a live agent for assistance!**



## **Singleton Bill Gives Funds to Buy, Rehab Abandoned Homes for Homeless Vets**

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/bordentown/sections/military-and-veterans-1/articles/singleton-bill-gives-funds-to-buy-rehab-abandoned-homes-for-homeless-vets>

## **COVID-19 Test Basics**

### **My HealtheVet and COVID-19 testing results**

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthevet/ss20201214-covid-19-test-basics>

## **Veterans Corner: VA service-connected disability compensation**

[https://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/veterans-corner-va-service-connected-disability-compensation/article\\_93bc8006-e815-507d-9c80-2bd8d810cbe2.html](https://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/veterans-corner-va-service-connected-disability-compensation/article_93bc8006-e815-507d-9c80-2bd8d810cbe2.html)

## **Congress Passes Sweeping End-of-Year Bill Impacting 'Every Corner' of the Veteran Community**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/17/congress-passes-sweeping-end-of-year-bill-impacting-every-corner-of-veteran-community.html>



## COVID-19 Vaccine Supplies Start Arriving

### Front line staff, most vulnerable patients start vaccinations

VA will provide vaccinations to front-line VA health care workers and the most vulnerable Veterans residing in 37 medical centers across the country. [Learn more.](#)



### [Five Tips for Winter Exercise](#)

Winter's chilly temperatures and the risk of COVID-19 can discourage even the most active people from exercising. Don't let anything stop your fitness routine. [Learn more.](#)



### [Lung Cancer: Are You at Risk?](#)

With lung health being a concern, now is a great time to be screened for lung cancer. Take advantage of the screening that can help at an early stage, when it's easier to treat. [Learn more.](#)





### [Viewing Your Medications List](#)

Did you know that My HealtheVet's VA Health Summary feature can help you answer an important question: "What medications are you taking?" [Learn more.](#)



### [COVID-19 Test Basics](#)

COVID-19 cases are surging. More people than ever are getting tested. Sign in to your My HealtheVet account and follow these steps to access your test results. [Learn more.](#)



### [Stroke Awareness: Get the Facts](#)

Brain damage from strokes can be minimized if treated quickly. It's common to mistake the signs for other health problems. Discover the risk factors and [how to prevent stroke.](#)



### [Diet Changes as You Age](#)

When you turn 50, you may notice that your body doesn't digest food the same as it did when you were younger. We have seven tips for better health as you age. [Learn more.](#)



### [Boost Your Brain Health After TBI](#)

After a traumatic brain injury, everyone recovers differently. Luckily, there are a few simple ways you can improve your cognitive health. [Learn more.](#)

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**[COVID-19 makes a flu shot more important than ever. Get your flu shot today!](#)**



## COVID-19 vaccines:

### Stay informed and help VANJHCS prepare

We're working to get COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans as quickly and safely as possible. Sign up to help us understand your interest in getting a vaccine when one is available to you. We'll send you updates on how we're providing vaccines across the country—and **when you can get your vaccine if you want one.**

[Sign Up](#)

### Who will get a COVID-19 vaccine first?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized the first COVID-19 vaccine. We have a limited amount of this vaccine to start.

We've worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to develop a phased plan that will help us do the most good for the most people during this time. Under this phased plan, we'll first offer vaccines to Veterans in our long-term care facilities and frontline VA health care workers. Vaccinating our health care workers first helps us continue providing care for Veterans.

After 2 groups, we'll begin to offer vaccines to more Veterans who are at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Your VA health care team will contact you if you're eligible to get a vaccine during this time.

We will follow CDC guidelines for determining who is considered to be at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Factors that may influence the risk of severe disease include the following:

- **Age.** The risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 increases with age.
- **Existing health problems.** People with certain health problems (like diabetes, heart disease, or obesity) have a higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.
- **Other factors** that raise a person's risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19, such as living in a nursing home or other group living facility.

More questions answered at: [www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine/](http://www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine/)

WE AT THE VETS CHAT AND CHEW PROGRAM WISH EVERYONE HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAYS, 2020

[DONATE](#)



*The Vets Chat and Chew Program* is for veterans, active military and their families. Learn how to feel better with healthy eating! Participants create and share healthy, simple and inexpensive meals under the guidance of a professional chef and nutrition consultant. Check out more pictures and videos on the website and facebook.

Contact us: 201-592-1130

Website: [www.vetschatandchew.com](http://www.vetschatandchew.com)

[info@vetschatandchew.com](mailto:info@vetschatandchew.com)

"Like" us on facebook: [facebook.com/vetschatandchew](https://facebook.com/vetschatandchew)

[VIEW NEWSLETTER HERE](#)

**We at Vets Chat Inc. wish everyone happy holidays! Stay Safe!**

Section 1: INFOJINI -- VETERAN HIRING INITIATIVE: [click here](#)

Section 2: Meet&Greet with Dr. Lisa Hou-Re: NJ Veteran Suicide, Dec.11: [click here](#)

Section 3: Jobs: 2 Research Asst's, grant writer, locksmith: Orangeburg & NYC: [click here](#)

Section 4: Pricing Analyst Jobs--2, Princeton, NJ: [click here](#)

Section 5: Job: American Red Cross, SAF Regional Program Specialist: [click here](#)

Section 6: NPower Virtual Open House-Young Adults/Veterans, Dec.17: [click here](#)

Section 7: JOBS: EPS Corporation: [click here](#)

Section 8: Walgreens wants to hire Veterans for multiple positions in Morris County: [click here](#)

Section 9: NE NJ Legal Services hiring for 2 positions: [click here](#)

Section 10: Moynihan Construction hiring snow removal, landscape & construction jobs: [click here](#)

Section 11: Habitat for Humanity-House for Veteran-3 bedroom, Westwood, NJ: [click here](#)

Section 12: Peacetime Veterans and their NJ tax deduction: [click here](#)

Section 13: Heavy duty diesel mechanic wanted, Sussex, NJ: [click here](#)

## **Biden Taps Former White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough for VA Secretary**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/10/biden-taps-former-white-house-chief-of-staff-denis-mcdonough-va-secretary.html>

## **6 Facts About Chuck Yeager That Prove He Always Had 'The Right Stuff'**

<https://www.military.com/off-duty/6-facts-about-chuck-yeager-prove-he-always-had-right-stuff.html?ESRC=at-case.nl&spMailingID=6415671&spUserID=MTI5MTUxNjE2MDUwS0&spJobID=1160446258&spReportId=MTE2MDQ0NjIIOAS2>

## **VA Flags Potential Staffing, Resource Hurdles in Vaccine Distribution**

<https://www.govexec.com/management/2020/12/va-flags-potential-staffing-resource-hurdles-vaccine-distribution/170636/>

## **VA warns of 'long process' to distribute COVID-19 vaccine to employees and veterans**

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/veterans-affairs/2020/12/va-warns-of-long-process-to-distribute-covid-19-vaccine-to-employees-and-veterans/>

## **VA to start distributing coronavirus vaccines soon, but at limited sites and in limited numbers**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/09/va-to-start-distributing-coronavirus-vaccines-soon-but-at-limited-sites-and-in-limited-numbers/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Army%20DNR%2012.9.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Army%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/09/va-to-start-distributing-coronavirus-vaccines-soon-but-at-limited-sites-and-in-limited-numbers/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Army%20DNR%2012.9.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Army%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup)

## **VA warns of 'long process' to distribute COVID-19 vaccine to employees and veterans**

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/veterans-affairs/2020/12/va-warns-of-long-process-to-distribute-covid-19-vaccine-to-employees-and-veterans/>

## **Trouble's brewing for the post-pandemic VA health care system, top doc says**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2020/12/10/troubles-brewing-for-the-post-pandemic-va-health-care-system-top-doc-says/>

## **Early Veterans Affairs coronavirus vaccine supplies, sites 'not adequate' to reach all vets, official says**

<https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/inside-veterans-affairs/veterans-affairs-initial-coronavirus-vaccines-arent-enough>

## **House chairman calls for VA secretary to resign over handling of sex assault case**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/10/house-chairman-calls-for-va-secretary-to-resign-over-handling-of-sex-assault-case/>

## **5 Things to Know About Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Nominee**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_UDoW-WDBE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UDoW-WDBE&feature=youtu.be)

## **Wilkie Disparaged Congressional Aide Who Alleged Sexual Assault at VA Facility, IG Probe Confirms**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/10/wilkie-disparaged-congressional-aide-who-alleged-sexual-assault-va-facility-ig-probe-confirms.html>

## **Pennsylvania National Guard soldier killed in ambush shooting caught on video**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/national-guard-shaquira-mccottry-ambush-shooting-video/>

## **VFW Demands SECVA Wilkie Resign Immediately in Light of Damning VA OIG Report in Response to a Veteran's Sexual Assault Allegation**

<https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2020/12/vfw-demands-secva-wilkie-resign-immediately>

## **DAV calls for VA Secretary's removal**

<https://www.dav.org/learn-more/news/2020/dav-calls-for-va-secretarys-removal/>

## **Major veterans groups call for VA secretary's ouster following damning report**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/11/major-veterans-groups-call-for-va-secretarys-ouster-following-damning-report/>

## **VA Profile allows Veterans to update contact information on all VA systems**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82188/va-profile-veterans-update-contact-information-all-systems/>

## **Getting the VA secretary nominee right for veterans**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/opinion/commentary/2020/12/13/getting-the-va-secretary-nominee-right-for-veterans/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.14.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/opinion/commentary/2020/12/13/getting-the-va-secretary-nominee-right-for-veterans/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.14.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **'Steep Learning Curve:' Muted Response to VA Secretary Nominee from Veterans Groups**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/11/steep-learning-curve-muted-response-va-secretary-nominee-veterans-groups.html?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.14.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/11/steep-learning-curve-muted-response-va-secretary-nominee-veterans-groups.html?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.14.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)



## **VA announces initial plans for COVID-19 vaccine distribution**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced a preliminary plan for distributing COVID-19 vaccinations it will implement once the Food and Drug Administration issues an emergency use authorization for a vaccine.

VA has worked in close coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Operation Warp Speed to plan for COVID-19 vaccination of VA staff and Veterans.

VA will first provide vaccinations to front-line VA health care workers and Veterans residing in long-term care units in 37 of its medical centers across the country.

The centers, listed below, were chosen for their ability to vaccinate large numbers of people and store the vaccines at extremely cold temperatures.

Health care workers will be among the first to receive vaccinations because they are at high risk for contracting and spreading COVID-19 to other staff members and patients, and their health is critical to ensuring the continued care of Veterans.

Veterans in VA's long-term care facilities will be the first patient group to be vaccinated. As vaccine supplies increase, additional Veterans will receive vaccinations based on factors such as age, existing health problems and other considerations that increase the risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.

VA anticipates a limited vaccine supply immediately after FDA's approval, but expects more supplies to be available in short order.

"VA is well prepared and positioned to begin COVID-19 vaccinations," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Our ultimate goal is to offer it to all Veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated."

The 37 VA sites chosen for initial distribution of the vaccine will closely monitor patients and staff for side effects and log this information in its vaccine monitoring and tracking system. This is the same system VA uses to monitor reactions to all vaccines, including those for the flu and shingles.

VA will report directly to the CDC data on all vaccine doses administered by VA. The department will also provide general, public updates on the number of people who receive the vaccination at these sites, similar to how VA posts COVID-19 testing figures.

## **"Protect the Secretary": VA Chief Robert Wilkie Installs Political Aide at Watchdog Investigating His Inner Circle**

<https://www.pogo.org/investigation/2020/12/protect-the-secretary-va-chief-robert-wilkie-installs-political-aide-at-watchdog-investigating-his-inner-circle/>

The 37 VA sites are spread throughout the country and include:

**Southeast Louisiana (New Orleans) VA Health Care System**

Birmingham (AL) VA Health Care System

Phoenix (AZ) VA Health Care System

West Los Angeles (CA) VA Health Care System

Palo Alto (CA) VA Health Care System

Eastern Colorado (CO) VA Health Care System

Connecticut (West Haven Campus) VA Health Care System

Washington DC VA Health Care System

Orlando (FL) VA Health Care System

Augusta (GA) VA Health Care System

Edward J. Hines Jr. VA Hospital (IL)

Lexington (KY) VA Health Care System

Maryland (Baltimore) VA Health Care System

Bedford (MA) VA Health Care System

Ann Arbor (MI) VA Health Care System

Minneapolis (MN) VA Health Care System

Harry S Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital (Columbia MO)

St. Louis (MO) VA Health Care System

Omaha (NE) VA Health Care System

Southern Nevada (North Las Vegas) VA Health Care System

Raymond G. Murphy (NM) VA Health Care System

New York Harbor (Brooklyn) VA Health Care System

Western New York (Buffalo) VA Health Care System

Durham (NC) VA Health Care System

Cleveland (OH) VA Health Care System

Oklahoma City (OK) VA Health Care System

Portland (OR) VA Health Care System

Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (Philadelphia PA)

Pittsburgh (PA) VA Health Care System

Caribbean (Puerto Rico) VA Health Care System

Memphis (TN) VA Health Care System

Dallas (TX) VA Medical Center

Michael E. DeBakey VA Health Care System (Houston TX)

Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital (San Antonio TX)

Richmond (VA) VA Health Care System

Puget Sound (WA) VA Health Care System

Milwaukee (WI) VA Health Care System

Southeast Louisiana Veterans seeking additional information should visit the [VA Coronavirus Vaccine FAQs webpage](#), contact VA at 504-507-2819 or 1-800-935-8387, extension 72819 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

## **Initial limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine available for health care personnel**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82499/initial-limited-supply-covid-19-vaccine-available-health-care-personnel/>

## **COVID-19 vaccines at VA**

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>

## **VA to begin COVID-19 vaccinations at 128 additional sites**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82728/va-begin-covid-19-vaccinations-128-additional-sites/>

## Suspension of Veteran VA medical care debts during COVID-19 scheduled to end in December

Veterans should be aware and plan accordingly that the current [suspension of VA collection actions](https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5412) (<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5412>) and extension of terms of previous repayment agreements is **scheduled to end December 31, 2020**.

VA stopped sending monthly billing statements for medical care debt starting April 6, 2020. This change followed the President's April 2 announcement that was part of the nation's relief response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, all actions on debts owed to VA in the form of copayments under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Treasury were suspended.

With the conclusion of the mandated deferral, **VA plans to begin billing Veterans in January 2021 for those postponed copays.**

In January, Veterans should receive a patient statement that includes new copay charges for any care or prescriptions from April 6, 2020, through December 31, 2020, and any unpaid copays from before April 2020.

Veterans are not required to make payments until after December, but they can make them now if they want.

**For questions regarding your statement call (310) 478-3711 ext. 40793**

### **How do I pay my VA copay bill?**

Veterans can pay their bill in any of these 4 ways:

#### **Online**

Pay directly from your bank account or by debit or credit card on the secure [Pay.gov website](#).

---

#### **By phone**

Call the VA at **888-827-4817**. Be sure to have your account number ready.

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## **By mail**

Send your payment stub, along with a check or money order made payable to "VA," to the address below. Be sure to include your account number on the check or money order. Greater Los Angeles VA Medical Center 11301 Wilshire Blvd., Bldg. 500 Room 1402A Attn: Agent Cashier's Los Angeles, CA 90073

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## **In person**

Visit your nearest VA medical center and ask for the "agent cashier's office." Bring your payment stub, along with a check or money order made payable to "VA." Be sure to include your account number on the check or money order.

The agent cashier can look up your billing information; just bring a photo ID card and provide the last four (4) of your SSN.

Our Agent Cashier window is located on the 1st Floor of Building 500 on the WLA Medical Center Campus. Their number is (310) 478-3711 ext. 40217.

If you have any questions about your bill, please contact the Billing Department (Financial Management) at (310) 478-3711 ext. 44400. Their hours are 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

[View a PDF of the above info](#)

## **Study: NJ, NY Least Supportive States Of Vet-Owned Businesses**

<https://vetlikeme.org/study-nj-ny-least-supportive-states-of-vet-owned-businesses/>

## **VA reports more than 1,000 coronavirus deaths among patients in November**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/01/va-reports-more-than-1000-coronavirus-deaths-among-patients-in-november/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Air%20DNR%2012-01-20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/01/va-reports-more-than-1000-coronavirus-deaths-among-patients-in-november/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Air%20DNR%2012-01-20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup)

## **COVID-19 Care and Support for Veterans**

[https://www.va.gov/HEALTHEQUITY/index.asp?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www.va.gov/HEALTHEQUITY/index.asp?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22, 2020

### **Senator Booker, Congressman Payne Urge VA to Implement COVID-related Compensation for NJ Employees**

*VA New Jersey Health Care System has lost the largest number of employees to COVID-19 in the nation*

*Booker, Payne: “As New Jersey experienced one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in the nation, we believe their employees should receive compensation for their service on the frontlines”*

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr. (NJ-10) called on the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide COVID-related compensation, including retention pay, to eligible VA New Jersey Health Care System employees that are serving on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic. [In a letter](#) to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, the lawmakers explained that the VA New Jersey Healthcare System, unlike VA Health Care Systems across the country, is not currently offering retention pay, and has no plans to implement any form of COVID-related compensation to employees in the future. As the VA New Jersey Health Care System experienced one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in the nation, the lawmakers urged VA Secretary Wilkie to reconsider current compensation plans, and provide employees with the pay they earned and deserve.

“In order to ensure that New Jersey’s vital VA healthcare centers remain open and fully staffed, COVID-related compensation, including retention pay, is crucial for retaining personnel,” **the lawmakers wrote**. “We urge you and your administration to institute COVID-related compensation for VA employees working in the hardest hit areas, review current policies related to staff health and safety, and provide greater transparency to employees and union leadership on how the VA is creating a safe work environment for all personnel.”

“It remains a complete mystery why the New Jersey VA Health Care System, one of the hardest hit in the country, refuses to address the issue of COVID-related compensation,” **said Randy Erwin, National President of National Federation of Federal Employees**. “Other VA systems use COVID-related compensation authority to retain and compensate staff who work extreme hours. New Jersey VA medical staff and other personnel have worked around the clock for

months on end, suffering physically and emotionally, to care for our veterans during the pandemic. The nightmare is far from over. The NJ VA needs to accept its responsibility to properly compensate VA workers to ensure veterans get the care they need with enough staff to make that happen.”

A federal agency may pay a retention incentive to a current employee if the agency determines that the employee’s qualifications or a special need of the agency for the employee's services makes it essential to retain them. Retention pay allows for employees that would not receive hazard pay to financially benefit from their essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several Veterans Integrated Service Networks, VA Medical Centers, and other VA organizations across the country have started to provide this benefit.

Specifically, the lawmakers posed the following questions to Secretary Wilkie:

- How many VA Health Care Systems are currently providing COVID-related compensation, including Incentive Pay and Retention Pay? Please provide a list with the breakdowns of each form of compensation currently being provided.
- As the VA begins to experience a spike in COVID-19 cases across the nation, what steps is your administration taking to ensure that all employees are provided with proper amounts of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)? Specifically, those serving in the New Jersey VA Health Care System.
- Has your administration been in contact recently with union leadership representing those employed by the New Jersey VA Health Care System to ensure that the VA is providing a safe and secure work environment for all personnel?

The full text can be found [here](#) and below:

December 22, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wilkie

Secretary, U.S Department of Veterans Affairs

810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

We write to express our concern over recent reports that the VA New Jersey Health Care System will not be providing any form of COVID-19 related compensation, including Retention Pay, to eligible employees that are serving on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the start of this pandemic, over 2,000 VA healthcare workers have contracted the virus, and sadly, 56 have died. Of those 56 deaths, six have been employees of the VA New Jersey Health Care System. To date, the VA New Jersey Health Care System has lost the largest number of employees to COVID-19 in the nation. These numbers are staggering, and those who put their well-being at risk in order to serve our veterans deserve adequate and fair compensation. We urge you and your administration to institute COVID-related compensation for VA employees working in the hardest hit areas, review current policies related to staff health and safety, and provide greater transparency to employees and union leadership on how the VA is creating a safe work environment for all personnel.

As you know, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, our offices heard from VA employees across the state that there were shortages of personal protective equipment, and limited staff availability due to mandatory quarantine. In response, the New Jersey Department of Health encouraged individuals who had left the healthcare field to return in order to assist medical facilities like the VA obtain operational staffing levels. Employees from the VA New Jersey Health Care System rose to the occasion – managing a caseload that, at one point, was the highest in the nation. For many of those VA employees in New Jersey, their service resulted in the ultimate sacrifice. In order to ensure that New Jersey's vital VA healthcare centers remain open and fully staffed, COVID-related compensation, including retention pay, is crucial for retaining personnel. As you are aware, retention pay allows for employees that would not receive hazard pay to financially benefit from their essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to staff members from the VA Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, federal agencies are authorized to provide a retention incentive to employees as a substitute for hazard duty pay, and several Veterans Integrated Service Networks, VA Medical Centers, and other VA organizations across the country have started to provide this benefit. It is our understanding that the VA New Jersey Healthcare System is not only not offering retention pay, but also has no plans to implement any form of COVID-related compensation to employees. As New Jersey experienced one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in the nation, we believe their employees should receive compensation for their service on the frontlines.

In order to best protect the VA New Jersey Health Care System's employees and their families, we respectfully request that you provide a response to the concerns raised in this letter, and to the questions listed below, by no later than December 21<sup>st</sup>.

- How many VA Health Care Systems are currently providing COVID-related compensation, including Incentive Pay and Retention Pay? Please provide a list with the breakdowns of each form of compensation currently being provided.
- As the VA begins to experience a spike in COVID-19 cases across the nation, what steps is your administration taking to ensure that all employees are provided with proper amounts of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)? Specifically, those serving in the New Jersey VA Health Care System.
- Has your administration been in contact recently with union leadership representing those employed by the New Jersey VA Health Care System to ensure that the VA is providing a safe and secure work environment for all personnel?

Thank you for your time and attention to these important concerns. We stand ready to work with you and your team to ensure that our veterans, their families, and the employees of the VA are provided with the highest quality of care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

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### **VA restarts collection notices for benefits overpayments after COVID put them on hold**

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/veterans-affairs/2020/12/va-restarts-collection-notices-for-benefits-overpayments-after-covid-put-them-on-hold/>

### **VA resumes overpayment notifications while continuing relief options for Veterans**

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5597>

### **FY2021: Veteran Readiness And Employment Subsistence Pay Increases**

<https://www.disabledveterans.org/2020/12/30/fy2021-veteran-readiness-and-employment-subsistence-pay-increases/>

Veterans,

As always, we are honored to serve you in your medical and clinical needs, and we are equally excited to present this opportunity to you also. We greet you with some positive news concerning the COVID-19 Vaccine. The Durham VA Health Care System (DVAHCS) has received authorization to provide the COVID-19 vaccines to the most vulnerable Veterans including frontline essential workers in our communities.

Two (2) safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines have been authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The COVID-19 vaccines are highly recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Currently, the vaccines are in limited supply. However, we will be offering vaccinations to Veterans who are at high risk of being exposed, hospitalized, or dying due to COVID-19.

We are pleased to be able to start scheduling the following groups of Veterans for COVID-19 vaccination:

**Veterans**

- Age 75 and older
- Dialysis
- Chemotherapy
- Solid organ transplant
- Homeless

**Veteran frontline essential workers**

- First responders (firefighters, police)
- Education (teachers, support staff, daycare)
- Agriculture and food processing
- Manufacturing
- Corrections workers
- U.S. Postal service workers
- Public transit workers
- Grocery store workers

**The COVID-19 vaccine is a 2-dose vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine must be scheduled 21 days apart from initial injection to second dosage. The Moderna vaccine is 28 days apart. The COVID-19 vaccine cannot be given within 14 days of any other vaccine.**

If you fall into one of the groups listed above, please call the Durham VA at 919-286-0411 and dial 0 for the operator to schedule the appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine. As additional vaccine becomes available, we will be reaching out to more Veterans.

COVID-19 continues to affect many North Carolinians. Vaccination is important to stop the spread of COVID-19 and end the pandemic so we can get back to our lives and gather with others safely. The two (2) available COVID-19 vaccines have been studied in tens of thousands of people and have been determined to be very safe and very effective at preventing COVID-19.

In the meantime, please continue to wear your mask, distance from others, and wash your hands often. We can fight this pandemic together!



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

December 22, 2020

**Booker, Menendez Outline How NJ Families, Small Businesses Benefit from COVID-19 Relief Package**

**NEWARK, N.J.** – U.S. Senators Cory Booker and Bob Menendez today detailed how New Jersey will benefit from the COVID-19 relief package that was passed by Congress and signed into law earlier this week. The senators, who both voted in favor of the bipartisan package, secured at least \$7.2 billion for New Jersey. Both senators are committed to passing additional funding bills to address the ongoing health and economic crisis.

Click the links to view [Sen. Booker's](#) and [Sen. Menendez's](#) statements on the bipartisan relief package.

Below is a breakdown of the funding, including how much New Jersey is estimated to receive based on projections and existing funding formulas, but are not final pending official allocation.

**Financial Assistance for New Jersey Families**

- **\$3,928,997,000 in Direct Payments for New Jersey Families.** Over 92% of single tax filers and eight-in-ten joint-filers in New Jersey will receive payments up to \$600 for individuals earning less than \$75,000 and \$1,200 for couples earning less than \$150,000, plus \$600 per child under the age of 17.
  - The bill ensures that U.S. citizens living in a mixed status household will receive direct payments and will receive retroactive payments from the CARES Act when they file their 2020 tax return. Under the provision, at least one of the two parents or heads of household must have a social security number for all eligible family members to receive a direct payment.
- **Extended Unemployment Insurance (UI).** The bill provides an extra \$300 a week in addition to one's base unemployment compensation benefit through March 14, 2021. It also extends the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program through March 14,

2021, which will ensure self-employed individuals and gig workers have access to UI benefits, and adds 11 more weeks of eligibility for the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program.

- **\$591,000,000 in rental assistance** prioritized for those most in need. Funds can be used to pay for rent, utilities and home energy costs, and housing stability services.
- **Extends the eviction moratorium** until January 31, 2021.
- **15% increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits** through June 30, 2021.

### **State and Local Funding**

- The bill does not include additional funding for state and local governments, but does extend the deadline for state and local governments to expend the \$150 billion provided in the CARES Act until December 31, 2021. Both Sens. Menendez and Booker remain committed to including additional state and local resources in any future COVID-19 relief package.

### **Help for NJ's Small Businesses**

- **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).** The bill extends PPP and provides an additional \$284 billion in funding.
  - Expands eligibility to local news outlets and 501(c)6 nonprofits.
  - Dedicates \$15 billion in funding for live venues, independent movie theaters and cultural institutions.
  - Sets aside \$15 billion for PPP loans to be issued by smaller financial institutions with \$10 billion or less in assets.
  - Dedicates \$35 billion for first-time borrowers, \$15 billion of which is for small businesses with 10 or fewer employees or for PPP loans of \$250,000 or less that are made in low-income or moderate income neighborhoods.
  - Dedicates \$25 billion of second draw loans to be made to small businesses with 10 or fewer employees or for PPP loans of \$250,000 or less that are made in low-income or moderate income neighborhoods.

- Allows PPP borrowers to deduct ordinary business expenses like rent and payroll costs.
  - Adds costs related to personal protective equipment and outdoor dining as eligible and forgivable expenses.
  - Simplifies the forgiveness process for loans of \$150,000 and less.
- **Targeted Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Grant Program.** The bill creates a \$20 billion EIDL grant program which offers \$10,000 for small businesses with 25 employees or less or for small businesses in low-income communities.

### **Help for NJ's Health Care System**

- \$8.75 billion, including **\$103,335,811 for New Jersey** for vaccine distribution, planning, promotion, monitoring and tracking.
- \$22.4 billion for testing and contact tracing, including **\$525,432,205 million for the state.**

### **Support for NJ's Schools and Child Care Providers**

- \$54.3 billion to support K-12 education, including **\$1,230,972,000 for New Jersey** schools.
- \$22.7 billion, including **\$512,040,000 to support New Jersey's** institutions of higher education.
- **\$98,971,000 for Governor Murphy** to allocate to the hardest hit schools districts and institutions of higher education. This funding is from the \$4.05 billion Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund.

- **\$179,491,309 to support New Jersey's** child care providers. The funding is from the \$10 billion fund for Child Care and Development Block Grants

### **Help for NJ's Transportation Network**

- Of the \$14 billion allocated for transit agencies, **New Jersey will receive a significant share of a combined \$5,924,788,143.50** being directed to the New York-Newark, Philadelphia, Atlantic City and Allentown, Pa., metro areas.
- **\$1 billion** for Amtrak, including **\$ 655.43 million** for the Northeast Corridor.
- **\$40 million to support New Jersey's airports** from the \$2 billion airport fund.
- \$10 billion for state Departments of Transportation, including **\$248.2 million for New Jersey DOT** through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program.

### **Catstipation: Legislators Take Action To Stop Gruesome Cat**

[https://www.disabledveterans.org/2020/12/23/catstipation-legislators-stop-cat-experiments-va/?inf\\_contact\\_key=97b6fb3e5b6559a0bfa71926a60c1067680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1](https://www.disabledveterans.org/2020/12/23/catstipation-legislators-stop-cat-experiments-va/?inf_contact_key=97b6fb3e5b6559a0bfa71926a60c1067680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1)

### **Biden nominee: VA staff hampered by 'mismanagement'**

<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/531307-biden-nominee-va-staff-hampered-by-mismanagement?amp>

### **Good morning vietnam best scenes**

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=good+morning+vietnam+best+scenes&docid=608022324154663998&mid=4D39F4920EBC825EA1C74D39F4920EBC825EA1C7&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

### **Social Security Disability Assistance Programs**

[https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/414?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20ES%20Issue](https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/414?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20ES%20Issue)

## **In Case You Missed It: Congressman Gottheimer's October and November Updates**

Hi all,

We wanted to provide you with an update on the Congressman's latest work in the Fifth District. Congressman Gottheimer continues to work tirelessly on behalf of the people of the Fifth District. Recent work includes:

### **November**

- Sounded the alarm on heightened food insecurity in North Jersey resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing issues regarding the school meal program for families and students in need.
- Visited small businesses to promote Small Business Saturday and advocated to shop local.
- Joined Mount Olive Baptist Church, Hillsdale United Methodist Church, St. Peter the Apostle in River Edge, and the Bergen NAACP to collect and hand out Thanksgiving foods for communities across Bergen County.
- Honored veterans at ceremonies at Bergenfield and Lodi, advocating for better care for North Jersey's veterans.
- Outlined steps Josh is taking in reaction to the announcement that Mondelez, the producer of Oreo cookies, is likely closing its Fair Lawn bakery manufacturing plant for sixty years. It could impact approximately 600 employees. Congressman Gottheimer has spoken with Mondelez senior leadership, labor leadership, local government officials, and Governor Murphy. Congressman Gottheimer has also formally sent letters to Mondelez requesting they reconsider this decision. The Congressman is staying in close touch with elected officials in Fair Lawn.

### **October**

- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congressman Gottheimer led calls for an investigation into the state-run Paramus Veterans Memorial Home since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. In October, it was announced that there will be a new federal investigation into the state-run facility and the replacement of the facility's CEO.
- Continuing the fight to renew the U.S. Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program.
- Announced new bipartisan legislation — the U.S.-Israel Common Defense Authorization Act — cosponsored by Rep. Brian Mast (FL-18) to strengthen Israel's Qualitative



Military Edge (QME) in the region and secure both the U.S. and Israel from the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

- Led a virtual forum on battling extremism, hate, and homegrown lone-wolf terrorism joined by Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) Vice President of the Center on Extremism Oren Segal and NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP) Deputy Director Andrew Campi.
- Announced bicameral, bipartisan legislation with Senator Cory Booker — the Nursing Home Pandemic Protection Act of 2020 — to require that nursing homes have a crisis plan in place to manage an outbreak, that facilities keep a stockpile of PPE on hand, that nursing homes report communicable diseases, infections, and potential outbreaks, and work to ensure that residents and their families be kept informed of infections inside the facilities.
- Stood with the Building & Construction Trades of Bergen County and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 164 to sound the alarm on how a new financial transaction tax being considered by the New Jersey State Legislature will force the New York Stock Exchange back-end facility and other financial data processing centers across New Jersey to move out of the state, cost the Fifth District hundreds of jobs, and cause a multi-million dollar loss in local tax revenue.
- Continued to sound the alarm on the opioid epidemic's impact on Northern New Jersey and worsening due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, and what vital federal resources and local rehabilitation and treatment programs can help.
- Announced veterans in Northwestern New Jersey would finally be able to receive referrals for health care services at the Newton ImageCare Center — much closer to home — instead of having to drive more than an hour to the East Orange VA Medical Center for services like MRIs, mammograms, ultrasounds, and cancer screenings.
- Reported updated federal COVID-19 relief investment clawed back to Sussex and Warren Counties. Sussex County has received an estimated \$292 million and Warren County has received an estimated \$228 million — all from the bipartisan CARES Act.

Below, we linked several articles highlighting the Congressman's hard work for the community in the last months of 2020.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or comments. You can reach me by email at [Cheryl.Krouse@mail.house.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Krouse@mail.house.gov) or by phone at (201) 577-8420. You can also reach me by email at [Lauren.Gonnelli@mail.house.gov](mailto:Lauren.Gonnelli@mail.house.gov) or by phone at (201) 615-4126.

Kind regards,

Cheryl Krouse and Lauren Gonnelli

Deputy Chief of Staff & Director of Return on Investment

Congressman Josh Gottheimer

November

- [Montague school chief blasted by New Jersey lawmakers over meal program](#)
- [Hundreds of Turkeys, Grocery Bags, and Boxes of Food Distributed In Hackensack Ahead of Thanksgiving](#)
- [Gottheimer Celebrates Small Business Saturday, Encourages North Jersey to Shop Local](#)
- ['We are all Americans, and we have each other's backs': Veterans honored at NJ ceremonies](#)
- [NORTH JERSEY OFFICIALS URGE MONDELEZ TO KEEP FAIR LAWN PLANT OPEN](#)

October

- [Gottheimer, Phillips sound alarm to renew Paycheck Protection Program, urge bipartisan COVID-19 relief deal negotiations continue](#)
- [Pascarella and Gottheimer React to News of COVID-19 Positive Case at Paramus Veterans Home](#)
- [Gottheimer announces new bipartisan bill to bolster Israel's security, protect from Iranian threats](#)
- [Gottheimer, U.S. Special Envoy Elan Carr Call for Combating Foreign Terrorists on Social Media and Fighting Anti-Semitism at Home and Abroad](#)
- [Sen. Booker, Rep. Gottheimer Announce Proposal To Protect Nursing Homes From Second Wave Of COVID-19](#)
- [Gottheimer Wants NJ Lawmakers To Kill Financial Transaction Tax Proposal](#)
- [Gottheimer sounds alarm on the worsening opioid epidemic during COVID](#)
- [Gottheimer Reacts to New Federal Investigation into State-Run Paramus Veterans Memorial Home](#)
- [Gottheimer, Malinowski Lead NJ House Members Urging FBI to Counter 'Proud Boys' Hate Group Presence in New Jersey](#)
- [SUSSEX VETERANS NOW ABLE TO ACCESS HEALTH CARE SERVICES CLOSER TO HOME](#)
- [Gottheimer Announces New Federal COVID-19 Relief Investment to Sussex, Warren Counties to Date](#)
- [Gottheimer celebrates WWII veteran's 104th birthday](#)

## **Rep. Andy Kim - Veterans Update**



## **FIGHTING FOR THOSE WHO SERVE**

*As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, it is one of the great honors of my job to fight for those who have fought for us. I will spend every day continuing to advocate for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL) and will always stand up for the tens of thousands of veterans that call our district home.*



"Captain

Kelliann Leli dedicated her life to military service; the people of the State of New Jersey and America pay tribute and will never forget the sacrifice she and her family gave to our great nation."  
- Congressman Andy Kim

**Do You Know Other Veterans or Servicemembers that would find this update useful?**

If so, please share our sign up link: <https://kim.house.gov/contact/veterans-subscribe> OR contact: Tom Smith, [TomB.Smith@mail.house.gov](mailto:TomB.Smith@mail.house.gov), (202) 744-3622.

### **Announcements & Events**

- [Congressman Kim Delivers Wins for Joint Base, New Jersey in NDAA Conference Committee](#). The NDAA conference report contains provisions that Congressman Kim fought for including:
  - 3 percent increase in military pay for all military service members.
  - KC-46 mission scheduled to arrive at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in Q4 2021. This conference report slows the KC-10 drawdown over the next three years to ensure KC-46s will come online without degrading readiness. Prohibits the use of funds authorized to be appropriated in fiscal year 2021 to fiscal year 2023 for the retirement of any KC-135 aircraft or reduce the number of primary mission KC-135 aircraft.
  - Two construction projects authorized at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst including \$22M for a Munitions Storage Area and \$15M for National Guard Readiness Center.
  - [National Guard and Reserve hazard duty pay equity](#), which could increase a National Guard and Reserve service members pay by as much as \$1,200 a year.

60 percent of service members at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst are National Guard or Reserve.

- Expedited phasing out of PFAS chemicals through coordinating an effort for public-private partnerships, allowing DoD to work alongside industry experts and research groups to develop and secure a safer alternative foam that will help to protect the health of our servicemembers, their families and surrounding communities.
  - Increased funding for the GenCyber program from \$5 million to \$23 million to ensure a strong, diverse and educated pipeline for cybersecurity talent in the United States who can address next-generation cybersecurity threats.
  - Expanded access to care for Vietnam Veterans dealing with the impact of toxic exposure during their service to include 'Parkinsonism, Bladder cancer, Hypothyroidism. This will allow veterans to receive better care for ailments contracted during their service.
  - Paid parental leave extended to approximately 100,000 federal civilians inadvertently excluded from last year's legislation, including employees at the VA, TSA, FAA and others.
- Congressman Kim led a Congressional letter to the Administration in strong support of extending COVID-19 Title 32 support through March 31, 2021. The National Guard's current Title 32 funding was set to expire on December 31st, 2020.
  - The VA is phasing in a new web-based portal to submit and process beneficiary travel claims. The new portal, the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS), is VA's preferred method to receive travel reimbursement claims. Once implemented, BTSSS will phase out claims submitted through the facility kiosks. However, in-person claims, and hard-copy submissions will still be available. BTSSS is available through the [AccessVA](#) website.
  - The VA is offering Flu shots. Veterans can come to the medical center or one of the outpatient clinics for their vaccination or go to one of the many community locations where Veterans need only show their VA ID card to receive a flu shot. For more information click [here](#).

### **Update on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst**

- On November 19th, 2020, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst was the first Joint Base to [complete the Department of Defense's Energy Resilience Readiness Exercise \(ERRE\)](#). ERREs serve as a method of testing the resilience posture of an installation's energy, water and communication networks, and ultimately will help JB MDL be more resilient in the face of future natural disasters.
- Effective Saturday, November 21st, 2020 JB MDL transitioned to HPCON Charlie and tighten restrictions due to an uptick in positive COVID-19 cases on base and in the local area. Two critical changes noted for the transition:
  - Organizations will be encouraged to maximize essential Personnel only in work areas and encourage telework for the workforce whenever practical and feasible, and when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
  - The local area is now limited to a 150-mile radius. Per SECDEF's memo, any leave requires commander approval. This will also apply to mass-transit travel.

- Access to the Commissary and AAFES are NOT restricted but should be limited due to the significant health and public safety risks. Essential Personnel status applies to all contractors, companies, and other agencies on JB MDL. Restrictions and guidelines will be strictly enforced for all who access and work on the installation.
- Gate Closures: On Thursday, December 17th, 2020 Pemberton Gate will be closed, and reopen for buses only on Friday, December 18th, 2020. On Thursday, December 24th, 2020 Brown Mills Gate will close at 0600, and Pemberton Gate will open as a substitute at 0530 on December 24, 2020. The Brown Mills Gate will reopen on Friday, December 25th, 2020 at 0530. Pemberton Gate will close Friday, December 25th, 2020 at 0600. Please note that Wrightstown Gate will remain closed until January 4th, 2021.

### **Recent Legislation and Efforts**

- On Wednesday, December 9th, 2020, [Rep Kim will co-host a Telephone Town Hall](#) with representatives from the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance (DOBI), Center for Family Services, Fulfill New Jersey, and New Jersey Citizen Action a Town Hall on Health Care Coverage. The focus of the telephone town hall will be providing updates and answer questions on how New Jersey residents can sign up and receive subsidies through the new state-based health care exchange.
- Rep. Kim [cosponsored H.R. 2982 Women Veterans Health Care Accountability Act](#) This bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study of the barriers for women veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Rep. Kim honored to support [H.R.801 Reserve Component Employer Incentive, Compensation, and Relief Act of 2019](#). This bill allows a tax credit for certain employers of reservists (i.e., members of the National Guard or a reserve component of the Armed Forces). The tax credit is equal to \$1,000 for each reservist employed during the year, plus an additional amount that ranges from \$3,000 to \$10,000, depending on the number of days the reservist serves in the uniformed services during the year.

### **Please Contact Us If We Can Be Of Service To You**

<b>Toms River Office</b>	<b>Washington, D.C. Office</b>	<b>Willingboro Office</b>
33 Washington Street Toms River, NJ 08753 District Director Ben Giovine <a href="mailto:Ben.Giovine@mail.house.gov">Ben.Giovine@mail.house.gov</a> (202) 760-1692	1516 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 Military Legislative Assistant, Tom B. Smith Former AF Combat Medic <a href="mailto:TomB.Smith@mail.house.gov">TomB.Smith@mail.house.gov</a> (202) 744-3622	429 John F. Kennedy Way Willingboro, NJ 08046 Outreach Director, Antoinette Miles <a href="mailto:Antoinette.Miles@mail.house.gov">Antoinette.Miles@mail.house.gov</a> (202) 744-1940

## **Former Navy SEAL, Wife Sue VA Over New Caregiver Program Rules**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/02/former-navy-seal-wife-sue-va-over-new-caregiver-program-rules.html?ESRC=mr\\_201207.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/02/former-navy-seal-wife-sue-va-over-new-caregiver-program-rules.html?ESRC=mr_201207.nl)

# Response from Senator Menendez



Dear Mr. Arminio:

Thank you for writing to me to express your support for S. 2950, the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act. Your opinion is very important to me, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to you on this legislation.

As you may know, the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act recognizes and concedes that service members who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Djibouti, and other locations were exposed to toxins, chemicals, and airborne hazards emanating from burn pits. This legislation has been referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Although I am not a member of this committee, rest assured I will keep your views in mind should the bill receive a vote in the United States Senate.

I believe that veterans' services should not be a pawn in partisan debates. Veterans have earned the services and the benefits they were promised, and it is our responsibility to provide them in a timely and predictable manner. I have always supported our troops and veterans and have consistently voted in favor of additional funding for the resources and benefits they need and are entitled to, both during and after their service.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance. You may also visit my website (<http://menendez.senate.gov>) to learn more about my work in the United States Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Menendez".

BOB MENENDEZ  
United States Senator



**See Your 2021 VA Disability Pay Rates**

[https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-pay-rates.html?ESRC=mr\\_201207.nl](https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-pay-rates.html?ESRC=mr_201207.nl)



### **A Holiday Message from BVA's Executive Director**

To our valued members, volunteers, staff, friends, and partners:

Another year has swiftly passed, bringing us to the brink of a new year, a year that will bring significant challenges to which we will, no doubt, rise above. This year has offered solid proof that, despite the enormity of the challenges facing us due to the global pandemic, we are resilient and will remain so. I echo what the optimists continue to say: We will get through this.

We hope that you and your family members are healthy and have found ways to persevere and make the most of this time during the pandemic. The holidays will likely look different for all of us this year. However, no matter what, late December will most definitely be a time to feel extra grateful for family and friends, even if we are only connecting virtually.

During this special season, the lives of millions of Americans will be filled with the spirit of giving, the importance of family and friends, and a sense of healing, renewal, and new opportunity. That spirit lives year-round within our Blinded Veterans Association family throughout every corner of the country.

Although it may be a little more difficult this year to keep up with our usual celebrations and traditions, there are some things we can do to take care of ourselves and those we love that are both needed and still very much in keeping with the holiday spirit. Such activities may include additional physical and emotional rest, reflecting on our priorities and what really matters to us, learning some new skill, or sampling a food dish or two totally new to the family.



The holiday season takes on added meaning for all Americans, and none more so than for the men and women who currently serve in the military away from home. We know that holidays are especially tough for their families. Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers.

To our loyal friends and partners, a huge thank you for contributing to our accomplishments during 2020. Nothing would be possible without you, our community. We rely on our network of dedicated donors, advocates, families, and friends to fuel our progress as an organization and ensure a Happy New Year for the blind and visually impaired veterans we serve. We look forward to continuing and expanding our relationship with you in 2021.

To our members, Board of Directors, regional group leaders, and staff, thank you for being part of this dynamic organization. You are truly inspirational!

So, in keeping with the spirit of the season, I reflect and express my pride and gratitude for those I have the honor and privilege of serving—the people who make the mission and values of the Blinded Veterans Association a reality, our members and their families. I equally express the same pride and sincere gratitude to our loyal volunteers, staff, friends, and partners that sustain us in so many ways. I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Blessed Festive Season and a prosperous New Year.

May these days be filled with joy, peace, and hope for the New Year! Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!

With sincere gratitude,  
Donald D. Overton, Jr.

*P.S. If you haven't already made your end-of-year donation, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Blinded Veterans Association today. Your support helps thousands of our nation's blinded veterans overcome life's challenges after vision loss.*



## VA Center for Minority Veterans

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2af4368>

## **Military spouses are the backbone of the military**

[https://taskandpurpose.com/community/military-spouses-the-backbone-of-the-military/?utm\\_source=TaskandPurpose&utm\\_medium=ThirdSlot&utm\\_campaign=12/2](https://taskandpurpose.com/community/military-spouses-the-backbone-of-the-military/?utm_source=TaskandPurpose&utm_medium=ThirdSlot&utm_campaign=12/2)

## **Wounded veteran receives car donation through Transportation4Heroes**

<https://www.njherald.com/story/news/2020/12/01/wounded-veteran-receives-car-donation-through-transportation-4-heroes/3785894001/>

## **Turning 40: What to Know**

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20191209-what-to-know-in-your-40s>

## **How to Spot Deep Vein Thrombosis**

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20201201-deep-vein-thrombosis>

## **VA vision care**

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/vision-care/>

## **My HealtheVet is Mobile-Friendly**

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20191203-myhealthvet-mobile-friendly>

## **Pandemic Copayment Relief for Veterans**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/80768/collections-debt-relief-statement-information-updates/>

## **COVID-19: What Veterans Need to Know**

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20200319-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know>

## **Here's Why Veterans Groups Are Happy About the New Airline Restrictions on Service Animals**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/03/new-rules-animals-airlines-set-help-veterans-service-dogs.html?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.04.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/03/new-rules-animals-airlines-set-help-veterans-service-dogs.html?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.04.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **Spouses report more stress, less satisfaction with military lifestyle. And that was before COVID**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2020/12/03/spouses-report-more-stress-less-satisfaction-with-military-lifestyle-and-that-was-before-covid/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.04.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2020/12/03/spouses-report-more-stress-less-satisfaction-with-military-lifestyle-and-that-was-before-covid/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.04.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## Tricare Select for Retirees - Action Needed! New Enrollment Fee Begins Jan. 2021

Tricare Select will have a new enrollment fee beginning in January 2021. This is a monthly enrollment fee of \$12.50 for individuals or \$25.00 for family plans. This only applies to retirees in Group A (those who entered military service prior to January 1, 2018).

This does not apply to active duty families, medical retirees, survivors, or their family members.

If this applies to you, then please set up your automatic payment plan as soon as possible to avoid any lapse in coverage!

You can learn more about this here:

<https://themilitarywallet.com/tricare-select/>

## Illinois lawmaker tapped as next ranking member on House Veterans' Affairs committee

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/03/illinois-lawmaker-tapped-as-next-ranking-member-on-house-veterans-affairs-committee/>

## VA Doesn't Care One Bit About It's Veterans. They Are Just NUMBERS, Not ...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fw6laZL\\_hQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fw6laZL_hQ&feature=youtu.be)

## VA Plans Poop Pilots to Detect COVID-19 Outbreaks at Nursing Homes

<https://www.nextgov.com/emerging-tech/2020/12/va-plans-poop-pilots-detect-covid-19-outbreaks-nursing-homes/170938/>

## Troops With Debilitating Cases of COVID-19, or Their Survivors, to Be Eligible for VA Disability Pay

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/17/troops-debilitating-cases-of-covid-19-or-their-survivors-be-eligible-va-disability-pay.html>

## VA Now Has One Centralized Phone Number for all Customer Service

<https://www.military.com/benefits/2020/12/17/va-now-has-one-centralized-phone-number-all-customer-service.html>

### **Healthcare Open Season**

- **Tricare Select for Retirees - Action Required for New Monthly Enrollment Fee**
- **Trees for Troops - Free Christmas Trees for Military Families**
- **Free Access to National Parks Year-Round (Active, Retired, and Veterans)**

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving! My family and I kept things small this year. We wanted to play it safe, so we only had a small gathering of immediate family members.

We are working on putting together some resources for the holidays, which we will send out next week. But before we do that, we need to give you some quick updates about health insurance.

This is Open Season for most health insurance providers, including Tricare. It's also a good idea to check with your civilian employer if you have health insurance outside of Tricare.

Open Season is the one time each year you can change your health care plan without having a Qualifying Life Event (moving, changing jobs, marriage or divorce, etc.).

If you are currently participating in Tricare, then I recommend checking out these articles to help you make your decision between Tricare Prime and Tricare Select.

Tricare Open Season

<https://themilitarywallet.com/tricare-open-season/>

Tricare Prime vs. Select

<https://themilitarywallet.com/tricare-prime-vs-select/>

Quick Links:

- [How to Get a Free Flu Shot](#)
- [2021 VA Disability Rates](#)

[VA Loan Rates Again Near Record Lows](#) (I might refinance my VA Loan again this year) .

## **Certain TRICARE Fees To Take Effect**

With open enrollment slated to close Dec. 14, TRICARE is advising certain beneficiaries that their 2021 coverage will entail new fees. The change affects the roughly 850,000 beneficiaries with TRICARE Select Group A coverage – meaning, they entered the service before Jan. 1, 2018. Enrollment fees for this group will be \$12.50 per month (\$150 per year) for individuals. Families would pay \$25 per month -- \$300 per year. The annual cap for catastrophic medical expenses is rising to \$3,500, up from \$3,000.

Another change involves monthly payment of enrollment fees. Beginning next year, the fees will be drawn whenever possible in a monthly allotment from beneficiaries' defense pay centers. Beneficiaries need to set up enrollment fee payments by Dec. 31. Failure to do so will result in having their coverage dropped. If this happens, beneficiaries can contact their regional contractor and ask to be reinstated within 180 days, as long as they do so before next June 30.

Retirees with monthly allotments from their pay center that are not large enough to cover the enrollment fees or survivors who do not receive their allotments through a pay center can pay their fees using a debit or credit card or electronic transfer of funds.

Beneficiaries covered by TRICARE Young Adult and TRICARE Reserve also will see fees rise next year. The estimated 38,000 TRICARE Young Adult Select beneficiaries' fees will increase to \$257 per year. TRICARE Young Adult Prime annual fees will increase to \$459 per year, up from \$376.

Premiums for TRICARE Reserve Select will rise by \$3.03 for members, and \$10.72 for members and their families. TRICARE Retired Reserve members will pay \$484.83 (an increase of \$40.46) while members and families will pay \$1,165.01 (an increase of \$98.75).

<https://themilitarywallet.com/trees-for-troops/>

## **Many VA Benefits Will Be Expanding in 2021 Thanks to a New Law**

[https://www.military.com/benefits/2020/12/17/many-va-benefits-will-be-expanding-2021-thanks-new-law.html?ESRC=mr\\_201221.nl](https://www.military.com/benefits/2020/12/17/many-va-benefits-will-be-expanding-2021-thanks-new-law.html?ESRC=mr_201221.nl)

## **You May Be One of the Many Veterans Getting a Big Bill from the VA Next Month**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/21/you-may-be-one-of-many-veterans-getting-big-bill-va-next-month.html>

## **VA Administrators' common culture is to work together to cover up their crimes**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NytAHW3wri0&feature=youtu.be>

## Free Access to National Parks - Veterans and Gold Star Families Now Have Free Access Year Round

U.S. military veterans and Gold Star Families are eligible to receive free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests year-round. This is a new program that began on Nov. 11, 2020, and applies to the veteran/Gold Star Family member and the occupants of their vehicle.

Military veterans and retirees will need to provide proof of military service, which can include a military ID card, VA-issued health care or VA ID Card, driver's license with veterans designation, or a similar form of official ID.

Gold Star families will need to provide a signed Gold Star Family voucher, which is provided by the National Park Service.

The "America the Beautiful" pass provides free access to National Parks and is already available to active duty, reserve, and National Guard servicemembers.

You can learn more here.

<https://themilitarywallet.com/military-free-admission-national-parks/>

## Earplug Lawsuit for Tinnitus & Hearing Loss

For over a decade, service members were issued faulty earplugs that are alleged to have caused hearing damage. Apparently, these earplugs were sold to the DoD with a known design flaw that reduced their effectiveness, resulting in hearing damage for many veterans.

Due to this, a class-action lawsuit will be filed against the company that manufactured the Combat Arms Earplugs™ (CAEv2).

The lawsuit covers military members who used these earplugs between 2003 and 2015.

You can find more information at the following link. This is a third-party website that works to connect people with legal representatives.

[Lawsuit-winning.com](https://lawsuit-winning.com)

I wish you and your family the best during these times, and always.  
*Thank you for subscribing, and more importantly, thank you for your service!*

*Regards,*

*Ryan Guina  
The Military Wallet*

### **When we REACH, we will prevent suicide**

*12/04/2020 07:18 PM EST*

Larry and Jennifer are struggling with difficult circumstances in their life, Larry with the loss of h and Jennifer with the effects of serving in the military. They each find ways to REACH out for he talking about the issues they're facing, either with loved ones or those with shared experiences we REACH to those in need, we will provide hope. When we REACH because we are hurting, we find help.

### **Discussing the Capture of Saddam Hussein**

*12/04/2020 06:12 PM EST*

Operation Red Dawn kicked off 17 years ago from today. It was the mission that eventually capt Saddam Hussein. Army and Delta Force Veteran Tom Satterly discusses some of the behind the of that mission. Taken from Borne the Battle Ep. 223. \*\*\*\*\* SUBSCRIBE TO BORNE THE BATTLE: <https://link.chtbl.com/YouTube> \*\*\*\*\* BLOG: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/81989/borne-battle-223-tom-and-jen-satterly-all-secure-foundation/> \*\*\*\*\*

### **Army Veteran Tom Satterly Discusses his experiences during the Battle Mogadishu**

*12/04/2020 06:08 PM EST*

Tom Satterly spent 20 years in Delta Force. He opens up about his experience during the Battle Mogadishu - which was portrayed in the 2001 Oscar-Winning film, Black Hawk Down. Taken fro Borne the Battle Ep. 223. \*\*\*\*\* SUBSCRIBE TO BORNE THE BATTLE PODCAST: <https://link.chtbl.com/YouTube> \*\*\*\*\* READ: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/81989/borne-battle-223-tom-and-jen-satterly-all-secure-foundation/> \*\*\*\*\*

## **S. 4511, Veteran Benefits Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2020**

[https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56879?utm\\_source=feedblitz&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=Express\\_2020-12-04\\_12:00&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=Express\\_2020-12-04\\_12:00](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56879?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=Express_2020-12-04_12:00&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=Express_2020-12-04_12:00)



# WHAT HAPPEN TO THE VETERANS SERVICE ORIGINATION'S ???

## IS THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION TRANSPARENT WHEN IT COMES TO VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY SOLDERS SUICIDES PLEASE READ BELOW YOU BE THE JUDGE!

### [GAO-20-664, VETERAN SUICIDE: VA Needs Accurate Data ...](#)

[www.gao.gov > assets](#)

PDF

Sep 9, 2020 — VA *reported* that veterans accounted for 13.5 percent of all deaths by *suicide* among U.S. adults in 2017, despite constituting only 7.9 percent of the adult population. ... plan to correct any identified *deficiencies*. As another ...

You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 12/1/20

### [U.S. GAO - Veteran Suicide: VA Needs Accurate Data and ...](#)

[www.gao.gov > products > GAO-20-664](#)

Sep 9, 2020 — Preventing *veteran suicide* is the Department of *Veterans Affairs*' highest ... In recent years, there have been *reports* of veterans dying by *suicide* on VA ... Could Better Leverage Data to Help Improve *Veteran Retention Rates*.

Missing: ~~deficiency~~ | Must include: [deficiency](#)

### [GAO-19-465, VA MENTAL HEALTH: VHA Improved Certain ...](#)

[www.gao.gov > assets](#)

PDF

Jun 17, 2019 — ... Affairs (VA) medical centers (VAMC) GAO spoke with *reported* various factors that contribute to ... Examine *Suicide Risk among Veterans*. 25.

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## **GAO-21-69, VA HEALTH CARE: Better Data Needed to ...**

[www.gao.gov > assets](http://www.gao.gov/assets)

PDF

Oct 19, 2020 — A *report* accompanying the Military Construction, *Veterans Affairs*, and. Related Agencies ... data showed that *suicide rates* among women veterans had increased by ... These *deficiencies* could negatively affect patient care,.

## **U.S. GAO - VA Health Care: Improvements Needed in Suicide ...**

[www.gao.gov > products > GAO-19-66](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-66)

Dec 17, 2018 — VA *reports* that an average of 20 veterans die by *suicide* each day. ... of *suicide* prevention resources *among* veterans and their loved ones.

Missing: ~~deficiency~~ | Must include: [deficiency](#)

## **VAOIG Report - Deficiencies in Care Coordination and Facility ...**

[www.va.gov > oig > pubs > VAOIG-19-00468-67](http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-19-00468-67)

PDF

Jan 7, 2020 — The OIG team found *deficiencies* in care coordination, internal review effectiveness and ... *report* the patient's *suicidal* ideation to the facility's *Suicide* Prevention ... *Level 3* facilities are the least complex. VHA Office of Productivity, ... Director, GAO/OIG Accountability Liaison Office (VHA 10EG GOAL Action).

## **Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General ...**

[www.va.gov > oig > pubs > VAOIG-16-03985-181](http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-16-03985-181)

PDF

Mar 20, 2017 — General Reviews, and Publication of *GAO Report* . ... We also found *deficiencies* in governance and oversight of VCL operations. Both administrative and ... suicide.” The *report* also compared *veteran* to civilian *suicide rates*.

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## **Deficiencies in Care, Care Coordination, and Facility ...**

[www.va.gov > oig > pubs > VAOIG-19-09493-249](http://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-19-09493-249)

PDF

Sep 3, 2020 — *Report* suspected wrongdoing in VA programs and operations ... *Deficiencies* in the facility's response to the patient's *death* by *suicide*. ... characterized by elevated T4 and/or T3 and low TSH *levels*. [https://www.thyroid.org/wp-](https://www.thyroid.org/wp-...) ... Director, GAO/OIG Accountability Liaison Office (VHA 10EG GOAL Action). 1.

### Inadequate Emergency Department Care and Physician ...

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) > [oig](#) > [pubs](#) > [VAOIG-19-07507-214](#)

PDF

Jul 28, 2020 — (facility) Emergency Department prior to the patient's *death* by *suicide* six days later. ... care tenets and suggested a high *level* of insensitivity to the patient's needs, ... A 2018 *report*, *Critical Deficiencies* at the Washington DC VA ... Director, GAO/OIG Accountability Liaison Office (VHA 10EG GOAL Action). 1

### .Systematic Review of Suicide Prevention in ... - VA HSRD

[www.hsrd.research.va.gov](http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov) > [publications](#) > [esp](#) > [SuicideP...](#)

PDF

Summary of Studies of Methods to Identify *Suicide Risk Reporting* Sensitivity and ... *among* Veterans rose higher than the *rate among* civilians. ... The body of evidence has few or no *deficiencies*, the findings are stable, and ... Fishbain DA, Lewis JE, Bruns D, Gao J, Disorbio JM, Meyer L. Patient predictor variables for six ...

by D Kansagara · 2015 · [Related articles](#)

## GAO'S HIGH-RISK LIST AND THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

<https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/3-15-17%20GPO%20Final.pdf>

## FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET AND 2021 ADVANCED APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-116shrg36913/pdf/CHRG-116shrg36913.pdf>

## End Endless Wars: Joe's Story

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfCHddpPEyU&feature=youtu.be&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfCHddpPEyU&feature=youtu.be&utm_medium=EMAIL)



[https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/413?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20Issue](https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/413?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20Issue)

## **Veterans, why does your percent of VA disability matter?**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVHA/bulletins/2b0b42c>

## **The fight against Veterans' lung diseases**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82144/fight-veterans-lung-diseases/>

## **From K9 handler in Vietnam to VA volunteer**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82130/k9-handler-vietnam-va-volunteer/>

## **Mental Health**

<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>

## **'This can't be my Army' — The Fort Hood report is a long-overdue wake-up call for Army leaders**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-leaders-respond-fort-hood-report/>

## **The Supreme Court just delivered a major victory for military sexual assault survivors**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/military-rape-statute-of-limitations/>

## **President signs Smith's outdoor therapy veterans legislation into law**

<https://centraljersey.com/2020/12/11/president-signs-smiths-outdoor-therapy-veterans-legislation-into-law/>

## **Veterans groups 'surprised' by Biden's VA pick**

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/federal-newscast/2020/12/veterans-groups-surprised-by-bidens-va-pick/>

## **Veterans Tuned Into a 'Live' Town Hall with VA Secretary Wilkie. It Was Prerecorded**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/11/30/veterans-tuned-live-town-hall-va-secretary-wilkie-it-was-prerecorded.html?ESRC=army\\_201201.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/11/30/veterans-tuned-live-town-hall-va-secretary-wilkie-it-was-prerecorded.html?ESRC=army_201201.nl)

## **What Tricare for Life Enrollees Should Know About Medicare Advantage Plans**

[https://www.military.com/benefits/tricare/what-tricare-life-enrollees-should-know-about-medicare-advantage-plans.html?ESRC=army\\_201201.nl](https://www.military.com/benefits/tricare/what-tricare-life-enrollees-should-know-about-medicare-advantage-plans.html?ESRC=army_201201.nl)

## **See Your 2021 VA Disability Pay Rates**

[https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-pay-rates.html?ESRC=army\\_201201.nl](https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-pay-rates.html?ESRC=army_201201.nl)

## **Military Suicides Reached All-Time High in 2019; Impact of COVID-19 Remains Unclear**

[https://vetlikeme.org/military-suicides-reached-all-time-high-in-2019-impact-of-covid-19-remains-unclear/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=military-suicides-reached-all-time-high-in-2019-impact-of-covid-19-remains-unclear](https://vetlikeme.org/military-suicides-reached-all-time-high-in-2019-impact-of-covid-19-remains-unclear/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=military-suicides-reached-all-time-high-in-2019-impact-of-covid-19-remains-unclear)

## **Former SEAL, not-for-profit sue VA over new rules restricting caregiver benefits**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2020/12/01/former-seal-non-profit-sue-va-over-new-rules-restricting-caregiver-benefits/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.02.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2020/12/01/former-seal-non-profit-sue-va-over-new-rules-restricting-caregiver-benefits/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.02.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **Remains of 36 more Korean War service members identified over year period**

[https://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2020/12/01/Remains-of-36-more-Korean-War-service-members-identified-over-year-period/8511606846543/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.02.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2020/12/01/Remains-of-36-more-Korean-War-service-members-identified-over-year-period/8511606846543/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.02.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief&utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **House Republicans to pick new top veterans policy leader this week**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/01/house-republicans-to-pick-new-top-veterans-policy-leader-this-week/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.02.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/01/house-republicans-to-pick-new-top-veterans-policy-leader-this-week/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.02.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief&utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **Coronavirus has now killed more than 5,000 VA patients**

<https://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/coronavirus-has-now-killed-more-than-5-000-va-patients-1.653837>

## **Veterans Benefits Newsletter | December 2020**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAVBA/bulletins/2ae5164>

## **Senate bill aims to help more Native veterans access VA, eliminate copays**

[https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/inside-veterans-affairs/bill-would-eliminate-copays-for-native-american-veterans?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.03.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/inside-veterans-affairs/bill-would-eliminate-copays-for-native-american-veterans?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.03.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **The number of veterans in Congress will drop to lowest level since at least WWII**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/02/the-number-of-veterans-in-congress-will-drop-to-lowest-level-since-at-least-ww-ii/?utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/02/the-number-of-veterans-in-congress-will-drop-to-lowest-level-since-at-least-ww-ii/?utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **19 Veterans Affairs patients have died of COVID-19 daily during pandemic, 1,000 in November alone**

<https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/inside-veterans-affairs/19-veterans-affairs-patients-have-died-of-covid-19-daily>

## **For-Profit Trade School Owner Charged With Defrauding VA, Student Veterans**

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndtx/pr/profit-trade-school-owner-charged-defrauding-va-student-veterans>

## **The number of veterans in Congress will drop to lowest level since at least WWII**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/02/the-number-of-veterans-in-congress-will-drop-to-lowest-level-since-at-least-ww-ii/>

## **Robotic Surgeries Are Changing the Game Inside One VA Facility**

<https://www.nextgov.com/emerging-tech/2020/12/robotic-surgeries-are-changing-game-inside-one-va-facility/170513/>

## **Partnership with Postal Inspection Service helps Veterans avoid scams**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/81832/partnership-postal-inspection-service-helps-veterans-avoid-scams/>

## **Keep an eye on your mental health.**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVHA/bulletins/2afdf50>

## **Pentagon and Veterans Affairs preparing to get and administer Covid vaccine**

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/04/politics/dod-va-covid-vaccine/index.html>

## **COVID keeps WWII vets from 79th Pearl Harbor remembrance**

[https://www.stripes.com/covid-keeps-wwii-vets-from-79th-pearl-harbor-remembrance-1.654375?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Stars+and+Stripes+Emails&utm\\_campaign=Daily+Headlines&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.stripes.com/covid-keeps-wwii-vets-from-79th-pearl-harbor-remembrance-1.654375?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Stars+and+Stripes+Emails&utm_campaign=Daily+Headlines&utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **VAntage Point Blog Update**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVHA/bulletins/2b05807>

## **#HonoringVets: Chuck Yeager**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr-bu3hUD7o>

## **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs CMV - News Update**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b0550a>

## **From Surviving to Thriving: How Posttraumatic Growth Helps Veterans, First Responders Heal, Live a Great Life**

<https://washingtonexec.com/2020/12/from-surviving-to-thriving-how-posttraumatic-growth-helps-veterans-first-responders-heal-live-a-great-life/#.X9D4N7NOIPY>

## **Home COVID-19 Tests Now Available In Morris County**

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/longvalley/home-covid-19-tests-now-available-morris-county>

## **He Designed A Smartwatch App To Help Stop His Dad's Nightmares**

[https://www.npr.org/2020/12/06/943647610/he-designed-a-smartwatch-app-to-help-stop-his-dads-nightmares?utm\\_campaign=storyshare&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_medium=EMA](https://www.npr.org/2020/12/06/943647610/he-designed-a-smartwatch-app-to-help-stop-his-dads-nightmares?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_medium=EMA)  
[IL](#)

## **Trump veto will hurt troops and families, Republican and Democratic leaders warn**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/07/trump-veto-will-hurt-troops-and-families-republican-and-democratic-leaders-warn/>

## **Letter: Veterans benefits could be decided by private contractors**

<https://www.recordonline.com/story/opinion/2020/12/07/veterans-should-treated-respect/3861555001/>

## **Why Ketamine Could Be the All-in-One Solution to Curb Veteran Suicide Rates**

[https://vetlikeme.org/why-ketamine-could-be-the-all-in-one-solution-to-curb-veteran-suicide-rates/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=why-ketamine-could-be-the-all-in-one-solution-to-curb-veteran-suicide-rates](https://vetlikeme.org/why-ketamine-could-be-the-all-in-one-solution-to-curb-veteran-suicide-rates/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=why-ketamine-could-be-the-all-in-one-solution-to-curb-veteran-suicide-rates)

## **Trump signs law authorizing Medal of Honor to Alwyn Cashe for heroic vehicle rescue in Iraq**

[https://taskandpurpose.com/news/alwyn-cashe-medal-of-honor-authorized/?mc\\_cid=bd777dd721&mc\\_eid=5350920981](https://taskandpurpose.com/news/alwyn-cashe-medal-of-honor-authorized/?mc_cid=bd777dd721&mc_eid=5350920981)

## **VA Colmery Act IT implementation complete**

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5578>

## **The VA Will Cover Late Mortgage Payments Under This Plan**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/va-will-cover-late-mortgage-payments-under-plan.html?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.09.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/va-will-cover-late-mortgage-payments-under-plan.html?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.09.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **Minority Veterans on VA's Priority List for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/minority-veterans-vas-priority-list-covid-19-vaccine-distribution.html?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.09.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/minority-veterans-vas-priority-list-covid-19-vaccine-distribution.html?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.09.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)



## **Neal, Kennedy introduce Holyoke Veterans Act to boost safety at soldiers' homes after deadly coronavirus outbreak**

<https://www.bostonherald.com/2020/12/09/neal-kennedy-introduce-holyoke-veterans-act-to-boost-safety-at-soldiers-homes-after-deadly-coronavirus-outbreak/>

## **Minority Veterans on VA's Priority List for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/minority-veterans-vas-priority-list-covid-19-vaccine-distribution.html>

## **Senator calls for 'compassionate resolution' for vets facing GI Bill problems**

[https://vetlikeme.org/senator-calls-for-compassionate-resolution-for-vets-facing-gi-bill-problems/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=senator-calls-for-compassionate-resolution-for-vets-facing-gi-bill-problems](https://vetlikeme.org/senator-calls-for-compassionate-resolution-for-vets-facing-gi-bill-problems/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=senator-calls-for-compassionate-resolution-for-vets-facing-gi-bill-problems)

## **Vets living abroad left to navigate pandemic problems without VA help**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/09/vets-living-abroad-left-to-navigate-pandemic-problems-without-va-help/>

## **Chinese Americans who served in WWII honored by Congress**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/military-honor/salute-veterans/2020/12/09/chinese-americans-who-served-in-wwii-honored-by-congress/?utm\\_source=Salithru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.10.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/military-honor/salute-veterans/2020/12/09/chinese-americans-who-served-in-wwii-honored-by-congress/?utm_source=Salithru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.10.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **The Veteran's Guide to Saving Money When Buying a Home**

<https://time.com/nextadvisor/mortgages/veterans-home-saving/>

## **Little-Known Grants and Loans for Veterans and Their Families**

<https://www.nextavenue.org/little-known-grants-and-loans-for-veterans-and-their-families/>

## **S. 4511: Veteran Benefits Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2020**

[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/s4511/text?utm\\_campaign=govtrack\\_email\\_update&utm\\_source=govtrack/email\\_update&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/s4511/text?utm_campaign=govtrack_email_update&utm_source=govtrack/email_update&utm_medium=email)

## **H.R. 7105: Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020**

[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr7105?utm\\_campaign=govtrack\\_email\\_update&utm\\_source=govtrack/email\\_update&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr7105?utm_campaign=govtrack_email_update&utm_source=govtrack/email_update&utm_medium=email)

## **H.R. 1925: To designate the Manhattan Campus of the New York Harbor Health Care System of the Department of Veterans Affairs as the “Margaret Cochran Corbin Campus of the New York Harbor Health Care System”.**

[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr1925?utm\\_campaign=govtrack\\_email\\_update&utm\\_source=govtrack/email\\_update&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr1925?utm_campaign=govtrack_email_update&utm_source=govtrack/email_update&utm_medium=email)

## **Veterans healthcare fight snagging government funding deal**

[https://thehill.com/policy/finance/529765-veterans-healthcare-fight-snagging-government-funding-deal?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.11.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://thehill.com/policy/finance/529765-veterans-healthcare-fight-snagging-government-funding-deal?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.11.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **Among Nursing Homes Hit by Covid-19, Veterans Homes Struggled the Most**

**The virus killed at least 46 vets at one home in Alabama. Their family members still have questions.**

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/among-nursing-homes-hit-by-covid-veterans-homes-struggled-the-most-11607977327>

## **Blumenthal seeks probe amid whistleblower claims at VA facility where 2 workers died in accident**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2020/12/15/blumenthal-seeks-probe-amid-whistleblower-claims-at-va-facility-where-2-workers-died-in-accident/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.16.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2020/12/15/blumenthal-seeks-probe-amid-whistleblower-claims-at-va-facility-where-2-workers-died-in-accident/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.16.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief&utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **VA releases order of veterans, staff to be vaccinated**

[https://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/va-releases-order-of-veterans-staff-to-be-vaccinated-1.655414?utm\\_medium=EMAIL#X9kBn4jb\\_3k.twitter](https://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/va-releases-order-of-veterans-staff-to-be-vaccinated-1.655414?utm_medium=EMAIL#X9kBn4jb_3k.twitter)

## **VA Center for Minority Veterans**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b1a292>

## **VA Is Increasingly Leaning on Contract Nurses as COVID-19 Cases Surge**

<https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2020/12/va-increasingly-leaning-contract-nurses-covid-19-cases-surge/170832/>

## **H.R. 4356: Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act**

[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr4356?utm\\_campaign=govtrack\\_email\\_update&utm\\_source=govtrack/email\\_update&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr4356?utm_campaign=govtrack_email_update&utm_source=govtrack/email_update&utm_medium=email)

## **H.R. 7105: Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020**

[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr7105?utm\\_campaign=govtrack\\_email\\_update&utm\\_source=govtrack/email\\_update&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr7105?utm_campaign=govtrack_email_update&utm_source=govtrack/email_update&utm_medium=email)

## **Trump repeats his vow to veto the defense budget bill, but won't say when**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/17/trump-repeats-his-vow-to-veto-the-defense-budget-bill-but-wont-say-when/>

## **Lawmakers urge VA to continue deferring debt collections; agency says it won't**

[https://www.stripes.com/lawmakers-urge-va-to-continue-deferring-debt-collections-agency-says-it-won-t-1.655638?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Stars+and+Stripes+Emails&utm\\_campaign=Daily+Headlines&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.stripes.com/lawmakers-urge-va-to-continue-deferring-debt-collections-agency-says-it-won-t-1.655638?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Stars+and+Stripes+Emails&utm_campaign=Daily+Headlines&utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **Vet groups call on Congress to investigate Dan Crenshaw's alleged smearing of a sexual assault victim**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/dan-crenshaw-smear-va-inspector-general/>

## **Legion Riders bring Christmas to Indy foster children**

<http://veteransview.com/news/legion-riders-bring-christmas-to-indy-foster-children>

## **Insurance changes could help disabled veterans, troops in the new year**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/18/insurance-changes-could-help-disabled-veterans-troops-in-the-new-year/>

## **44 Veterans File Lawsuits Against The Veterans Health Administration**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcC\\_0GNg0Eg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcC_0GNg0Eg&feature=youtu.be)

## **VA launches single access point to all VA contact centers**

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5588>

## **Clinician's Trauma Update Online (CTU-Online)**

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/publications/ctu\\_online.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/publications/ctu_online.asp)

## **Marine Vietnam veteran buried months after dying in nursing home**

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-military/2020/12/18/vietnam-marine-veteran-buried-months-after-dying-in-nursing-home/>

## **Heavily Criticized Veterans' Home Sued Over COVID Outbreak**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/22/heavily-criticized-veterans-home-sued-over-covid-outbreak.html>

## **VA gets big funding increase in final fiscal 2021 budget deal**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/22/va-gets-big-funding-increase-in-final-fiscal-2021-budget-deal/>

## **December is now the VA's deadliest month for coronavirus as deaths top 6,000**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/22/december-is-now-the-vas-deadliest-month-for-coronavirus-as-deaths-top-6000/>

## **VA updates welcome kit for Veterans and families**

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5593>

## **Black airmen 74% more likely than whites to get Article 15, report finds**

[https://taskandpurpose.com/news/air-force-racial-disparity-study-2020/?mc\\_cid=28ef66e65a&mc\\_eid=5350920981](https://taskandpurpose.com/news/air-force-racial-disparity-study-2020/?mc_cid=28ef66e65a&mc_eid=5350920981)



<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b2afc5>

## **An Updated Guide to Benefits.gov Resources**

[https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/411?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20ES%20Issue](https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/411?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20ES%20Issue)

## **Find Disability Assistance Online**

[https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/394?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20ES%20Issue](https://www.benefits.gov/news/article/394?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20Selection%20ES%20Issue)

## **The 9 Best Job Programs for Veterans Separating in 2021**

<https://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/9-best-job-programs-veterans-separating-2021.html?ESRC=careers.nl&spMailingID=6456334&spUserID=Mjk3ODQzNzY0MjUS1&spJobID=1160943225&spReportId=MTE2MDk0MzlyNQSZ>

## **The VA's Definition of "Veteran" – An In-Depth Look**

<https://www.hillandponton.com/vas-definition-veteran-depth-look/>

## **Veterans Affairs reverses plans to waste extra coronavirus vaccine doses**

<https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/inside-veterans-affairs/veterans-affairs-plans-to-waste-extra-coronavirus-vaccine>

## **This MOH recipient crashed his plane on purpose to get to his downed wingman**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/popular/medal-of-honor-hero-crashed-plane-on-purpose/>

## **That time a Marine vet chased down a shoplifter during the holidays**

[https://taskandpurpose.com/mandatory-fun/that-time-marine-chased-holiday-thief/?mc\\_cid=d32fc2e589&mc\\_cid=5350920981](https://taskandpurpose.com/mandatory-fun/that-time-marine-chased-holiday-thief/?mc_cid=d32fc2e589&mc_cid=5350920981)

## **Two gravestones with swastikas removed from veterans cemetery in Texas**

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/25/us/va-cemeteries-swastikas-headstones-removed-trnd/index.html>

## **5-year-old delivers letters to veterans in VA hospital**

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/5-year-old-delivers-letters-to-veterans-in-va-hospital/>

## **New VA Cape May CBOC opens**

## **Wilmington VA's new clinic in Rio Grande, New Jersey**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82475/new-va-cape-may-cboc-opens/>

## **Actions - H.R.7105 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress**

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7105/actions?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22H.R.+7105%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=1>

## **West Va. VA hospital announces changes after patient deaths**

[https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-clarksburg-west-virginia-richard-stone-e548e1f5012d439d3420d0181ebad975?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.28.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-clarksburg-west-virginia-richard-stone-e548e1f5012d439d3420d0181ebad975?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.28.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **You May Be One of the Many Veterans Getting a Big Bill from the VA Next Month**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/21/you-may-be-one-of-many-veterans-getting-big-bill-va-next-month.html?ESRC=mr\\_201228.nl\\_blurb](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/21/you-may-be-one-of-many-veterans-getting-big-bill-va-next-month.html?ESRC=mr_201228.nl_blurb)

## **Sports Heroes Who Served: Baseball Legend Served During the Cuban Missile Crisis**

<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Features/Story/Article/2455217/sports-heroes-who-served-baseball-legend-served-during-the-cuban-missile-crisis/source/GovDelivery/>

## **Gay, lesbian, bisexual veterans at increased risk for suicide mortality**

<https://www.healio.com/news/psychiatry/20201228/gay-lesbian-bisexual-veterans-at-increased-risk-for-suicide-mortality>

## **'AARP Watchdog Alert Handbook': 10 Ways Fraudsters Target Veterans and Their Families**

<https://www.aarp.org/home-family/voices/veterans/info-2020/watchdog-alert-handbook.html>

## **For Veterans With PTSD, Life In COVID-19 Isolation Can Lead To Relapses And New Symptoms**

<https://www.cpr.org/2020/12/28/for-veterans-with-ptsd-life-in-covid-19-isolation-can-lead-to-relapses-and-new-symptoms/>

## **One vet's GI Bill fight could win benefits for millions of other students**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/education-transition/2020/12/26/one-vets-gi-bill-fight-could-win-benefits-for-millions-of-other-students/>

## **We need veterans treatment courts now more than ever**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/opinion/commentary/2020/12/28/we-need-veterans-treatment-courts-now-more-than-ever/>

## **Veterans in the 117th Congress, by the numbers**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/28/veterans-in-the-117th-congress-by-the-numbers/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.29.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/28/veterans-in-the-117th-congress-by-the-numbers/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.29.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **Reach VA Telephone Dementia Support Group Program**

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USVHA/2020/12/30/file\\_attachments/1636474/Caregiver%20Interest%20Flyer%20FY21%20REACH%20Dementia%20TS%20Groups.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USVHA/2020/12/30/file_attachments/1636474/Caregiver%20Interest%20Flyer%20FY21%20REACH%20Dementia%20TS%20Groups.pdf)

## **VA's Employee Education System accredited**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82769/vas-employee-education-system-accredited/>

## **Greetings Veterans and Stakeholders,**

There is a **NEW** My HealtheVet video that guides Veterans on how to upgrade to a My HealtheVet **Premium** account. This 4:20 minute [video](#) is housed on VHA YouTube, however, a direct link is accessible on the My HealtheVet Product website on the [Promotion & Communications page](#).

Check it out and upgrade today!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87dt\\_z8LeRM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87dt_z8LeRM)

## **COVID-19 vaccines at VA**

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>

## **Register Now - The Chartbook on Healthcare for Veterans: VA and AHRQ Identify Opportunities to Improve Care and Reduce Disparities for Veterans**

[https://veteransaffairsevents.webex.com/mw3300/mywebex/default.do?main\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fveteransaffairsevents.webex.com%2Fec3300%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FEMK%3D4832534b00000002023279d76ea884fcc8800ae83e6b858d4f11eb4da464590de4ffda66debea99e%26confViewID%3D180629106730229453%26encrptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAAIs7YdNeoD7YhjFBeYQvmYeVfsdFoPzTFsM4Gm7xIM-nQ2%26siteurl%3Dveteransaffairsevents%26theAction%3Ddetail%26utm\\_content%3D%26utm\\_medium%3Demail%26utm\\_name%3D%26utm\\_source%3Dgovdelivery%26utm\\_term%3D&nomenu=true&rnd=0.9059629228231543&service=6&siteurl=veteransaffairsevents&utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://veteransaffairsevents.webex.com/mw3300/mywebex/default.do?main_url=https%3A%2F%2Fveteransaffairsevents.webex.com%2Fec3300%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FEMK%3D4832534b00000002023279d76ea884fcc8800ae83e6b858d4f11eb4da464590de4ffda66debea99e%26confViewID%3D180629106730229453%26encrptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAAIs7YdNeoD7YhjFBeYQvmYeVfsdFoPzTFsM4Gm7xIM-nQ2%26siteurl%3Dveteransaffairsevents%26theAction%3Ddetail%26utm_content%3D%26utm_medium%3Demail%26utm_name%3D%26utm_source%3Dgovdelivery%26utm_term%3D&nomenu=true&rnd=0.9059629228231543&service=6&siteurl=veteransaffairsevents&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)



<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b36eb9>

## **Jessica Buchanan: "Navy Seal Foundation Speech"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peYaDqEUnLM&feature=youtu.be>

## **< Wounds Of War Must Be Considered For Veterans Discharged For Misconduct**

[https://www.npr.org/transcripts/951363618?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Mil%20EBB%2012.31.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.npr.org/transcripts/951363618?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Mil%20EBB%2012.31.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)



# **WOMAN VETERANS CORNER**



**The VA cold-called military sexual assault survivors for a town hall meeting, re-traumatizing some in the process**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/va-military-sexual-trauma-town-hall-calls/>

**Female veterans say firings, suspensions after Vanessa Guillén's death should only be a first step**

<https://www.thelily.com/female-veterans-say-firings-suspensions-after-vanessa-guillens-death-should-only-be-a-first-step/>

**An astonishing number of Black women are running their own small businesses— Opinion**

[https://vetlikeme.org/an-astonishing-number-of-black-women-are-running-their-own-small-businesses-opinion/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=an-astonishing-number-of-black-women-are-running-their-own-small-businesses-opinion](https://vetlikeme.org/an-astonishing-number-of-black-women-are-running-their-own-small-businesses-opinion/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=an-astonishing-number-of-black-women-are-running-their-own-small-businesses-opinion)

## **Partnership to enhance breast cancer treatment for Veterans**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/81095/partnership-enhance-breast-cancer-treatment-veterans/>

## **Army to fire, suspend officers and enlisted soldiers over violence at Fort Hood**

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/12/07/army-to-fire-suspend-officers-and-enlisted-soldiers-over-violence-at-fort-hood/>

## **A woman will take command of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier for the first time in US Navy history**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/amy-bauernschmidt-first-woman-to-command-aircraft-carrier/>

## **VA Center for Women Veterans**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b026ab>

## **VA Adapting to meet women Veterans' needs**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82195/va-adapting-meet-women-veterans-needs/>

## **Former VA Official Claims Refusal to Discredit Female Veteran Who Complained of Sexual Assault Led to Firing**

[https://vetlikeme.org/former-v-a-official-claims-refusal-to-discredit-female-veteran-who-complained-of-sexual-assault-led-to-firing/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=former-v-a-official-claims-refusal-to-discredit-female-veteran-who-complained-of-sexual-assault-led-to-firing](https://vetlikeme.org/former-v-a-official-claims-refusal-to-discredit-female-veteran-who-complained-of-sexual-assault-led-to-firing/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=former-v-a-official-claims-refusal-to-discredit-female-veteran-who-complained-of-sexual-assault-led-to-firing)

## **Amateur mistakes by investigators at Fort Hood hampered the Vanessa Guillén investigation**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/fort-hood-vanessa-guillen-investigator-mistakes/>

## **Merrillville breaks ground on female veterans facility**

[https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/merrillville-breaks-ground-on-female-veterans-facility/article\\_378f6027-d512-5b20-b92a-f97dc8441181.html](https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/merrillville-breaks-ground-on-female-veterans-facility/article_378f6027-d512-5b20-b92a-f97dc8441181.html)

## **Accomplice admits to burning car to cover up the murder of an Army wife**

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/12/10/accomplice-admits-to-burning-car-to-cover-up-the-murder-of-an-army-wife/>

## **Center for Women Veterans seeks nominees for 2021 Women Veterans Trailblazers**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82091/center-women-veterans-seeks-nominees-2021-women-veterans-trailblazers/>

**Pennsylvania National Guard soldier killed in ambush  
shooting caught on video**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/national-guard-shaquirra-mccottry-ambush-shooting-video/>

**'This can't be my Army' — The Fort Hood report  
is a long-overdue wake-up call for Army leaders**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/army-leaders-respond-fort-hood-report/>

**The Supreme Court just delivered a major victory for  
military sexual assault survivors**

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/military-rape-statute-of-limitations/>

**VA Center for Women Veterans**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b12fb8>

**VA Center for Women Veterans**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b12d31>

**Female Recruits to Train at Marines' All-Male San Diego  
Boot Camp in Historic First**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/14/female-recruits-train-marines-all-male-san-diego-boot-camp-historic-first.html?ESRC=eb\\_201215.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/14/female-recruits-train-marines-all-male-san-diego-boot-camp-historic-first.html?ESRC=eb_201215.nl)

**'Gravely Disappointed:' 14 Fort Hood  
Leaders Fired, Suspended in Wake of  
Vanessa Guillen Murder**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/gravely-disappointed-14-fort-hood-leaders-fired-suspended-wake-of-vanessa-guillen-murder.html?ESRC=army\\_201215.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/08/gravely-disappointed-14-fort-hood-leaders-fired-suspended-wake-of-vanessa-guillen-murder.html?ESRC=army_201215.nl)

**Featuring cover story**

**Jeanette Epps**

**Dream Flight**

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1011145243269&ca=1a3386fc-9af1-4c52-8d4d-5c03bdd85f2b>

**US Supreme Court ruling reverses military  
statute of limitations on rape cases**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/12/15/us-supreme-court-ruling-reverses-military-statute-of-limitations-on-rape-cases/>

## **Women will attend boot camp at San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot for first time in history**

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2020/12/15/women-will-attend-boot-camp-at-marine-corps-recruit-depot-san-diego-for-first-time-in-history/>

## **Congress finalizes sweeping veterans policy bill with new protections for women, students**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/16/congress-finalizes-sweeping-veterans-policy-bill-with-new-protections-for-women-students/>

## **Andover Twp. woman named US Marine of the Year**

<https://www.njherald.com/story/news/2020/12/04/andover-woman-named-us-marine-year/3826425001/>

## **Healing after feeling hopeless**

[https://www.maketheconnection.net/stories/461?utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=december\\_monthly\\_12.17&utm\\_term=button\\_text\\_page&utm\\_content=whatsnew\\_visits\\_all\\_null](https://www.maketheconnection.net/stories/461?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=december_monthly_12.17&utm_term=button_text_page&utm_content=whatsnew_visits_all_null)

## **Women Veterans and Pregnancy Complications**

[https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/EQUITY/Women\\_Veterans\\_and\\_Pregnancy\\_Complications.asp?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/EQUITY/Women_Veterans_and_Pregnancy_Complications.asp?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)

## **VA's Women's Health Transition Training brings information to transitioning service women**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82521/vas-womens-health-transition-training-brings-information-transitioning-service-women/>

## **The Military Sisterhood Initiative Holiday Membership Drive**

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/82543/military-sisterhood-initiative-holiday-membership-drive/>

## **'I hung up and vomited' — Veteran sexual assault survivors say VA's outreach retraumatized them**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/18/i-hung-up-and-vomited-veteran-sexual-assault-survivors-say-vas-outreach-retraumatized-them/>

## **Act is a victory for female veterans**

<https://www.hotsr.com/news/2020/dec/20/act-is-a-victory-for-female-veterans/>

## **After controversial event on sexual assault support, VA postpones future telephone town halls**

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/21/after-controversial-event-on-sexual-assault-support-va-postpones-future-telephone-town-halls/>

## **VA Center for Women Veterans**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b27b17>

## **Two Women Are Currently Attempting Special Warfare Training, Air Force Says**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/22/two-women-are-currently-attempting-special-warfare-training-air-force-says.html>

## **Lovell FHCC Nursing Honor Wall Unveiling**

<https://www.facebook.com/112849013196/videos/1246268025728539>

## **NYC Woman Follows Fatal Leap From Hudson Yards Vessel With Heartbreaking Instagram Post**

<https://dailyvoice.com/new-jersey/hudson/news/nyc-woman-follows-fatal-leap-from-hudson-yards-vessel-with-heartbreaking-instagram-post/800378/>

## **Women veterans, nurses serve post-Christmas lunch to Chicago frontline workers in Bronzeville**

<https://abc7chicago.com/chicago-coronavirus-pandemic-national-women-veterans-united-provident-hospital-frontline-workers/9090709/>

## **Purple Heart Veteran, Family Get Mortgage-Free Home for the Holidays**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/24/purple-heart-veteran-family-get-mortgage-free-home-holidays.html>

## **Two Women Are Currently Attempting Special Warfare Training, Air Force Says**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/22/two-women-are-currently-attempting-special-warfare-training-air-force-says.html?ESRC=mr\\_201228.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/22/two-women-are-currently-attempting-special-warfare-training-air-force-says.html?ESRC=mr_201228.nl)

## **VA Center for Women Veterans**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/2b34e30>

## **Year in review: Notable women, veterans of 2020**

<https://www.crainsdetroit.com/year-review/year-review-notable-women-veterans-2020>

## **Biden Taps Kathleen Hicks to Be the Pentagon's First Female Deputy SecDef**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/30/biden-taps-kathleen-hicks-be-pentagons-first-female-deputy-secdef.html?ESRC=eb\\_201231.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/30/biden-taps-kathleen-hicks-be-pentagons-first-female-deputy-secdef.html?ESRC=eb_201231.nl)

# **CLAIMS CORNER**

## **Are you stuck with a 94% VA Disability Rating**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZGTOQNr5Co&feature=youtu.be>

## **The #2 Way VETERANS CAN MAKE \$3,000+ Per Month With NO JOB**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKohyGuAc\\_A&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKohyGuAc_A&feature=youtu.be)

## **HadIt.com For Veterans Who've Had It With The VA**

<https://hadit.com/10-tips-help-keep-your-va-compensation-and-pension-exam-perspective/>

## **E-Benefits Questions**

<https://community.hadit.com/forum/124-e-benefits-questions/>

## **PTSD Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Claims**

<https://community.hadit.com/forum/76-ptsd-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-claims/>

## **Appealing Your Veterans Compensation Disability Claims NOD, DRO, BVA, USCAVC**

<https://community.hadit.com/forum/81-appealing-your-veterans-compensation-disability-claims-nod-dro-bva-uscavc/>

## **Veterans Compensation & Pension Exams**

<https://community.hadit.com/forum/71-veterans-compensation-pension-exams/>

## **VA Disability Compensation Benefits Claims Research Forum**

<https://community.hadit.com/forum/36-va-disability-compensation-benefits-claims-research-forum/>

## **Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemptions by State**

<https://hadit.com/veterans-property-tax-exemptions-state/>

## **VA Claims References**

<https://community.hadit.com/forum/102-va-claims-references/>

## **Electronic Code of Federal Regulations**

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e01889934e16ee0751373657d3b13a6e&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38tab_02.tpl)

[idx?SID=e01889934e16ee0751373657d3b13a6e&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38tab\\_02.tpl](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e01889934e16ee0751373657d3b13a6e&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38tab_02.tpl)

## **Title 38: Pensions, Bonuses, and Veterans' Relief**

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e01889934e16ee0751373657d3b13a6e&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div5)

[idx?SID=e01889934e16ee0751373657d3b13a6e&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div5](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=e01889934e16ee0751373657d3b13a6e&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div5)

## **SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES**

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=42e72aed270be991635ce3be064d08c1&mc=true&node=pt38.1.4&rgn=div5)

[bin/text-idx?SID=42e72aed270be991635ce3be064d08c1&mc=true&node=pt38.1.4&rgn=div5](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=42e72aed270be991635ce3be064d08c1&mc=true&node=pt38.1.4&rgn=div5)

## **General Policy in Rating**

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=42e72aed270be991635ce3be064d08c1&mc=true&node=sp38.1.4.a&rgn=div6)

[idx?SID=42e72aed270be991635ce3be064d08c1&mc=true&node=sp38.1.4.a&rgn=div6](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=42e72aed270be991635ce3be064d08c1&mc=true&node=sp38.1.4.a&rgn=div6)

## **Common Claimed VA Service Connected Disabilities**

<https://hadit.com/common-va-service-connected-disabilities/>

## **Can a 100 percent Disabled Veteran Work and Earn an Income?**

<https://hadit.com/can-100-percent-disabled-veteran-work/>

## **Free Dental Services For Veterans**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXwrRVTztZU&feature=youtu.be>

## **10 Tips To Increase Your VA Disability Rating**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC0ProouiUc&feature=youtu.be>

## **Can the VA Reduce Your Disability Rating for PTSD?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw0a7KBHlTM&feature=youtu.be>

## **How Do I Get A 100 Percent VA Disability Rating?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uo5ET-iWg1Q&feature=youtu.be>



## **VALUABLE VA DISABILITY CLAIMS The VA Does NOT Want You To Know About!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxlaNEQPAPA&feature=youtu.be>

## **VA wrongly denied hundreds of military sexual trauma claims by veterans**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQiVOQ90KAE&feature=youtu.be>

## **Did YOU PAY Your Hard Earned Money For A DBQ From A Private Doctor That Was Denied?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTWcR5ouxZs&feature=youtu.be>

## **Can I Get Service Connected For Diabetes?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8Zs3sCfu2U&feature=youtu.be>

## **How To Research Your Service Connected Disabilities**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe-hzgfjVvo&feature=youtu.be>

## **VA Ratings for Anorexia and Bulimia**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmkrpcqL6D8&feature=youtu.be>

## **VA Disability Benefits:**

## **Process for Identifying Conditions Presumed to be Service Connected and Challenges in Processing Complex Gulf War Illness Claims**

[https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-21-253T?utm\\_campaign=usgao\\_email&utm\\_content=topic\\_veterans&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-21-253T?utm_campaign=usgao_email&utm_content=topic_veterans&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

## **10 Ways To Connect Sleep Apnea as a Secondary VA Disability Claim**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV0mlbEuqgI&feature=youtu.be>

## **VA C and P Exam – Do's and Don'ts – VA Compensation Pension Exam**

<https://hadit.com/things-to-do-at-your-va-compensation-and-pension-exam/>



## **How To File A VA Disability Claim (Intent To File - VA Form 21-0966)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7qqCXIbX9U&feature=youtu.be>

## **Mental Health Symptoms Explained**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s40RvJ64qa8&feature=youtu.be>

## **Your Combined Rating Evaluation is Zero Percent**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ism0ByWo76g&feature=youtu.be>

## **100% Disabled Veterans Benefits, Total and Permanent**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxeI4hv5N\\_4&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxeI4hv5N_4&feature=youtu.be)

## **How to Increase Your VA Disability Rating from 40% to 100%**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2zoDQZq5J4&feature=youtu.be>

## **44 Veterans File Lawsuits Against The Veterans Health Administration**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcC\\_0GNg0Eg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcC_0GNg0Eg&feature=youtu.be)

## **How To FIX Your VA Claim**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzTH232DIGc&feature=youtu.be>

## **How To Get A Higher VA Disability Rating**

<https://www.disabledveterans.org/2011/01/14/how-to-file-a-va-claim-for-disability-compensation/>

## **How the VA Handles Back Pay for Veterans in 2020**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAgWh7XnnO0&feature=youtu.be>

## **How VA TBI Ratings Are Evaluated for Compensation**

<https://www.hillandponton.com/va-evaluates-traumatic-brain-injuries-compensation/>

## **How Difficult Are VA Mental Health Claims?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EmBmWsC3T8>

## **You may be able to get 100% TDIU if you don't have the required percentages!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOEdgSAWmOE&feature=youtu.be>

**When Will Disability Benefits Questionnaires Be  
OFFICIALLY BACK?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObHzCQS-VhU&feature=youtu.be>

**This Bully Is Scamming Thousands Of Dollars Out Of Their  
Veterans Benefi...**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaPcQPlM9Kc&feature=youtu.be>

**Veterans are getting scammed daily  
(Original Video)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNjH12MMBxg&feature=youtu.be>

**Are YOU The Definition of INSANITY?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYQB96inw8&feature=youtu.be>

**How Do You KNOW If You're 100 VA  
disability is permanent?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPT698Tfj8c>

**Can the VA Reduce Your Disability Rating for PTSD?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw0a7KBHlTM>

**Secondary Disability Claims ARE Where  
THE MONEY IS!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fZhzX1f6o>

**Three most common claims for side effects of  
medications**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7OMwsb8kec>

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[View this email in your browser](#)



December 30th, 2020

Our firm is still actively working on cases through the COVID-19 Pandemic! We want to hear from you! Which topic is impacting your life the most?

–Matthew Hill, Managing Partner



## Five Common Mistakes Vets Make When Filing a VA Disability Claim!

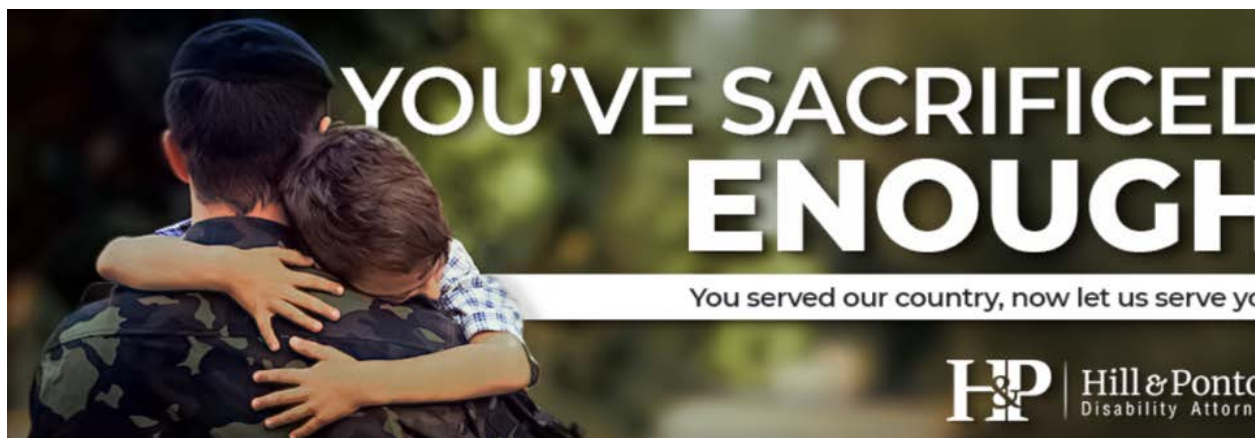
# 5 Mistakes Veterans Make when Filing VA Claims



We know that the process of filing VA disability claims for disability benefits can be very frustrating and confusing. Any veteran who has not yet started the VA claims process has probably heard about the delays and lengthy appeals process. For any disabled veteran who needs help making their way through this process with Veterans Affairs, there are five common mistakes to avoid when filing for VA disability benefits. Don't wait any longer if your VA disability claim has been denied! Our team at Hill & Ponton has over 20 years of experience helping veterans obtain their rightful VA disability benefits.

You can read about the Five Most Common Mistakes We See Vets Make [here!](#)

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## VA gets big funding increase in final fiscal 2021 budget deal

MilitaryTimes.com



The Department of Veterans Affairs will see nearly a 12 percent increase in total funding under the full-year spending deal approved by Congress, another significant financial boost for a department that has seen steady growth over the last two decades.

Under the budget measure approved by Congress in last-minute legislative work, the fiscal 2021 budget for the department is set at \$243 billion, up \$3 billion from the president's initial request earlier this year



and up \$26 billion from fiscal 2020 levels.

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## VIDEO - VA says I OWE Money (VA Overpayments)



In this video, our firm COO Natalia Jofre and attorney Melanie Williams sit down to discuss what happens when the VA says you have been overpaid benefits and now owe them money. Unfortunately, this is something that we have seen happen quite frequently and often times there is an error. This can be very stressful to an unsuspecting veteran.

Learn more about VA benefits and what you can do when the VA says you owe them money by clicking on the picture or the button below.

# **MILITARY EXPOSURE**

## **Vietnam veterans with bladder cancer, other serious illnesses would get presumptive benefit status in final defense budget bill**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/02/vietnam-veterans-with-high-blood-pressure-other-serious-illnesses-would-get-presumptive-benefit-status-in-final-defense-budget-bill/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.03.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/12/02/vietnam-veterans-with-high-blood-pressure-other-serious-illnesses-would-get-presumptive-benefit-status-in-final-defense-budget-bill/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.03.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **H.R. 1603, Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now Act of 2019**

[https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56880?utm\\_source=feedblitz&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=Express-2020-12-04-12:00&utm\\_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm\\_content=812526&utm\\_campaign=Express-2020-12-04-12:00](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56880?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=Express-2020-12-04-12:00&utm_medium=FeedBlitzEmail&utm_content=812526&utm_campaign=Express-2020-12-04-12:00)

## **US Navy Veterans Mesothelioma Advocate Has Endorsed Attorney Erik Karst of Karst von Oiste to Ensure a Navy Veteran with Mesothelioma Receives the Best Compensation Results-It Might Exceed \$1,000,000**

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/us-navy-veterans-mesothelioma-advocate-has-endorsed-attorney-erik-karst-of-karst-von-oiste-to-ensure-a-navy-veteran-with-mesothelioma-receives-the-best-compensation-results-it-might-exceed-1-000-000--301185593.html>

## **More research on K2 veterans' toxic exposures included in key defense bill**

[https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/politics/k2-veterans-toxic-exposures-research-in-ndaa-defense-bill?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_medium=EMAIL&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.08.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.radio.com/connectingvets/news/politics/k2-veterans-toxic-exposures-research-in-ndaa-defense-bill?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.08.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

## **Research Delays Push Back VA Decision on New Agent Orange Conditions**

<https://vetlikeme.org/research-delays-push-back-va-decision-on-new-agent-orange-conditions/>

## **New leading House Republican on veteran issues says toxic exposure needs to be a top priority**

[https://www.stripes.com/new-leading-house-republican-on-veteran-issues-says-toxic-exposure-needs-to-be-a-top-priority-1.654603?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Stars+and+Stripes+Emails&utm\\_campaign=Daily+Headlines&utm\\_medium=EMAIL](https://www.stripes.com/new-leading-house-republican-on-veteran-issues-says-toxic-exposure-needs-to-be-a-top-priority-1.654603?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Stars+and+Stripes+Emails&utm_campaign=Daily+Headlines&utm_medium=EMAIL)

## **VA Disability Benefits:**

## **Process for Identifying Conditions Presumed to be Service Connected and Challenges in Processing Complex Gulf War Illness Claims**

[https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-21-253T?utm\\_campaign=usgao\\_email&utm\\_content=topic\\_veterans&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-21-253T?utm_campaign=usgao_email&utm_content=topic_veterans&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

## **Congress looks to help veterans previously exposed to toxic burn pits**

<https://www.13newsnow.com/video/news/national/military-news/congress-looks-to-help-veterans-previously-exposed-to-toxic-burn-pits/291-3f92c496-f75b-4b45-8ea4-e52daf1fbc21>

## **This bill would grant automatic care to veterans who believe burn pit exposures made them sick**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/12/10/this-bill-would-grant-automatic-care-to-veterans-who-believe-burn-pit-exposures-made-them-sick/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=AIr%20Force%20DNR%2012.10.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/12/10/this-bill-would-grant-automatic-care-to-veterans-who-believe-burn-pit-exposures-made-them-sick/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AIr%20Force%20DNR%2012.10.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup)

## **Veterans who Led on Toxic Exposure Call Defense Bill Passage a Critical First Step**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/12/12/veterans-who-led-toxic-exposure-call-defense-bill-passage-critical-first-step.html>

## **Agent Orange Diseases and Symptoms Breakdown!**

<https://www.hillandponton.com/agent-orange-and-your-body-symptoms/>

## **Agent Orange VA Benefits and Related Conditions!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIDAjikLcuU&feature=youtu.be>

## **Trump weighs executive order for ill veterans who served at toxic ‘black goo’ base**

Read more here: [https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/national-security/article247860080.html?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.16.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief#storylink=cpy](https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/national-security/article247860080.html?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.16.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief#storylink=cpy)

## **Toxic chemical exposure can increase risk for COVID-19 complications — and adverse reactions to vaccine**

[https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/12/17/toxic-chemical-exposure-can-increase-risk-for-covid-19-complications-and-adverse-reactions-to-the-vaccine/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2012.18.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/12/17/toxic-chemical-exposure-can-increase-risk-for-covid-19-complications-and-adverse-reactions-to-the-vaccine/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2012.18.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)



# Because Every Birth Defect has a Cause

December 2020 Newsletter  
Issue 14 Vol: 4

## Happy Holidays from Birth Defect Research for Children!

We wish you and your family a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year. It's been a challenging year, but with your help we will continue to be there for you and your family in the years to come.

[Click to Donate](#)

### Expecting Dads' Health Tied to Risk for Pregnancy Loss

Pregnancy loss was more common for couples when the father had medical comorbidities, an analysis of insurance records found.

Risk of ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, or stillbirth was at least 10% greater when fathers-to-be had claims related to medical conditions in the year before conception, such as obesity, diabetes, or high blood pressure, reported Michael Eisenberg, MD, of Stanford University in California, and colleagues.

There was a dose-response as well, with pregnancy loss becoming increasingly more likely as the number of paternal comorbidities rose, the researchers wrote in *Human Reproduction*.

"The fact that the health of the father before conception really laid the groundwork for the trajectory of the pregnancy... that wasn't something that we really expected to find," Eisenberg told *MedPage Today*.

Looking not only at paternal metabolic syndrome diagnosis, but additional health metrics such as the Charlson comorbidity index and individual chronic illnesses, Eisenberg said he was surprised by the consistency of the findings. "Regardless of how we defined health, we saw the same pattern," he said.

[View More](#)

## **Congenital Heart Disease Flagged By Heel Stick Blood?**

A new biomarker test using routinely-collected dried blood samples could facilitate detection of congenital heart disease (CHD) in newborns, a pilot study showed.

Performed as early as 2 days after birth, a dried blood spot (DBS) test for NT-proBNP flagged 71% of the 34 tested babies with known CHD and 68% of the critical CHD cases.

Combining the DBS test with pulse oximetry screening improved CHD detection to 82% and detection of critical CHD to 89%, according to a group led by Henning Clausen, MD, of University Teaching Hospital Ryhov in Jönköping, Sweden, reporting online in JAMA Network Open.

In distinguishing between the 34 newborns with CHD and 81 healthy controls, the DBS NT-proBNP test had an area under the curve (AUC) of 0.87 (95% CI 0.792-0.952), which increased to 0.93 (95% CI 0.865-0.989) when combined with pulse oximetry screening. AUC was generally better when DBS was sampled later rather than sooner after birth.

The NT-proBNP test hit a peak AUC of 0.96 (95% CI 0.908-1.0) when comparing newborns born in the same period.

[View More](#)

## **Air pollution a cause in girl's death, coroner rules in landmark case**

A coroner has made legal history by ruling that air pollution was a cause of the death of a nine-year-old girl. Philip Barlow, the inner south London coroner, said

Ella Kissi-Debrah's death in February 2013 was caused by acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure.

He said she was exposed to nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM) pollution in excess of World Health Organization guidelines, the principal source of which were traffic emissions. The coroner said the failure to reduce pollution levels to legal limits possibly contributed to her death, as did the failure to provide her mother with information about the potential for air pollution to exacerbate asthma.

[View More](#)

## **Midwest Center sensors find potentially hazardous pesticides near schools, parks and homes**

The past few summers, Laura Wetherell's three children often played in the family's backyard next to Barkstall Elementary School in Champaign, Illinois. Her home and the school are both within 100 feet of agricultural fields. Unbeknownst to her, pesticides with potentially harmful health effects have been floating through the air.

For one year, the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting periodically sampled for pesticide drift in five locations surrounded by agricultural fields in Central Illinois, where large numbers of corn and soybeans are planted.

Five air sensors put up by the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting from June 2018 to July 2019 found the presence of pesticides near schools, parks and homes where vulnerable populations live. These include: Wetherell's home, East Prairie Middle School in Tuscola, the Bismarck School District central office, a public park in rural Sadorus and a private home outside of Sidney. Filters from the sensors were later sent to be tested at an independent lab accredited by the USDA for pesticides. The Midwest Center conducted follow-up interviews over the past year.

[View More](#)

## **The Agent Orange Next Gen Campaign**

The Agent Orange Next Gen Campaign will draw attention to how many veterans' families

During the Agent Orange litigation, 65,000 veterans reported that their children had been born with birth defects or developmental disabilities. Now veterans are also reporting that their grandchildren are affected. Yet, no government studies have been done on the association between the father's exposure to Agent Orange and adverse outcomes in their children.

Since 1990, only Birth Defect Research for Children has collected data showing a pattern of birth defects and disabilities in the children of Vietnam veterans.

have been affected and raise funds to continue birth defect research.

Join the Vietnam Veterans of America Charles Kettle Chapter 31 in showing your support for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans affected by Agent Orange. Wear an Agent Orange Next Gen mask. For each \$10 mask sold, a donation will go towards research connecting Agent Orange exposure to the birth defects and illnesses that veterans' children and grandchildren are facing every day. Please help by ordering your mask today.

[Click Here](#)

## **National Birth Defect Registry**

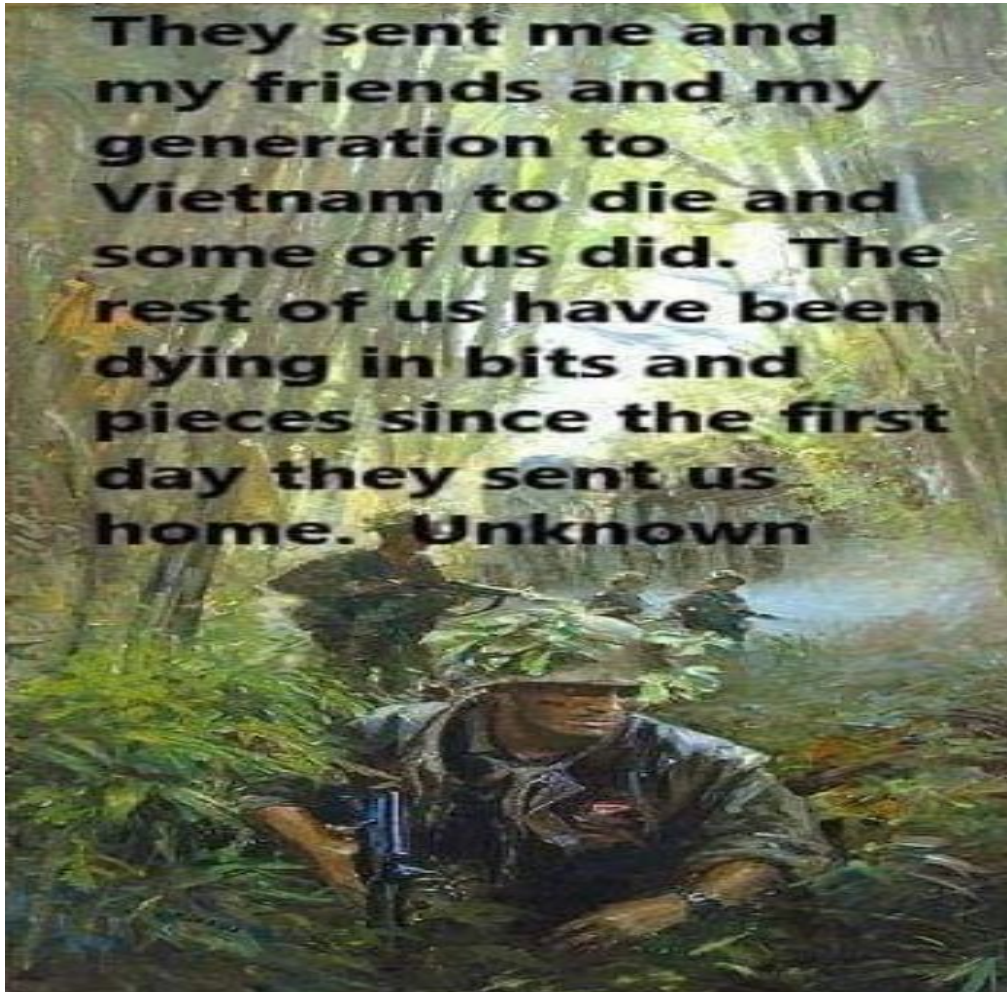
Our National Birth Defect Registry is back up after redesigning it to be much more mobile friendly. Now you can easily fill it out from any phone or tablet. To complete the registry, please visit.

<https://birthdefects.org/national-birth-defect-registry/>

[www.birthdefects.org](http://www.birthdefects.org)

Thank you for your service

**They sent me and  
my friends and my  
generation to  
Vietnam to die and  
some of us did. The  
rest of us have been  
dying in bits and  
pieces since the first  
day they sent us  
home. Unknown**



More questions answered at: [www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine/](http://www.va.gov/covid-19-vaccine/)

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at 10:21 AM

## **VA receives 73,000 coronavirus vaccines in initial distribution**

### **READ THE STORY**

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs on Monday administered its first doses of the coronavirus vaccine as part of national inoculation effort to prevent the disease as the death toll from the virus surpassed 300,000 in the United States.

World War II Army veteran Margaret Klessens, 96, is the VA's first patient to receive the vaccine, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie announced. She is a patient of the Bedford Healthcare System in Massachusetts. The Bedford VA system is a set of three clinics outside of Boston that has seen 473 coronavirus infections and 39 deaths, according to the VA.

The VA has 73,000 vaccines of the initial distribution, according to Christina Noel, a department spokeswoman. It is unclear when the department will get more doses.

Thirty-seven hospitals within the Department of Veterans Affairs have been selected to receive the first doses of the coronavirus vaccine, though VA officials are not confident that every veteran will have quick, easy access to the treatment.

### **KEEP READING**

Thursday, December 3, 2020

## **Is Trump 'foolish enough' to veto the defense bill?**

### **READ THE STORY**

FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which passed today and when signed into law by the President, will add three Agent Orange-related diseases--bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism to the Department of Veterans Affairs list of conditions linked to herbicide exposure in Vietnam and elsewhere.

**WASHINGTON** — House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith said he believes it's still possible President Donald Trump would veto the annual defense policy bill but warned it "would be a huge political mistake."

The House and Senate versions (which were reconciled Wednesday after months of negotiations) initially passed by veto-proof majorities, and Smith predicted that Republicans would vote to override in the event of a veto. Beyond the bill's role in setting military personnel and acquisition policy, and securing a pay raise for troops, Smith touted its inclusion of [new benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange](#).

### **KEEP READING**



Sunday, December 6, 2020

**December 7, 1941**



Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [11:01 AM](#) [No comments:](#)

## **Looking back 38 Years: How dioxin and flooding wiped Times Beach off the map**

### **READ THE STORY**

On Dec. 5, 1982, about a month after residents learned of dangerous dioxin levels in Times Beach, the town along the Meramec River was ravaged by a record-breaking flood. The flood damaged or destroyed most homes in the town.



### **KEEP READING**

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at 10:59 AM No comments:

## **Internal Documents Detail Who VA Will Vaccinate First**

***The Veterans Affairs Department's multi-tiered plan prioritizes delivering COVID-19 inoculations to high-risk staff and patients.***

### **READ THE STORY**

The federal agency that will likely receive the largest distribution of COVID-19 vaccine doses plans to quickly inoculate some employees upon first receiving the vaccine, according to internal documents describing the phased rollout, but other workers could wait for some time before they're eligible to receive the vaccine.

Like all jurisdictions around the country awaiting vaccines against the novel coronavirus, the Veterans Affairs Department is planning a multi-tiered, phased approach to inoculate its workforce and constituents based on the availability of doses. Staff will comprise four of the first five populations to receive the vaccine, according to a predecisional, draft document obtained by *Government Executive*. Employees at department nursing homes and its 25 Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders Centers would receive the first batch of vaccines, followed by veterans at those facilities.

VA is one of five federal agencies slated to receive a **direct distribution of vaccines** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after viable candidates are approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration. The department, which runs the largest health care network in the country, has faced criticism for failing to publicize a detailed vaccine distribution plan, with Democratic senators last week **imploping** VA to develop a comprehensive strategy. VA has told employees it will only finalize its vaccine strategy after a candidate is approved for use.

After vaccinating its employees and patients at long-term care sites—more than 105,000 veterans receive long-term care through VA—the department under the draft plan would move, in successive order, to inoculate staff in emergency departments, COVID-19 intensive care units and COVID-19 non-intensive care units. Employees in “other congregate living settings” and veterans over the



age of 85 would then receive vaccines from VA. The department has not yet set out timelines for each phase of its distribution plan, as it would depend on vaccine availability.

### KEEP READING

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [10:53 AM](#) [No comments:](#)

## Black veterans more likely to test positive for coronavirus than white veterans

### READ THE STORY

Black veterans are twice as likely to test positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, compared to white veterans, according to a [new study](#).

Medical records from over a thousand Veteran Affairs (V.A.) hospitals and clinics, which provide healthcare to more than 5 million U.S. veterans, were analyzed. Between Feb. 8 and July 22 of this year, researchers found that about 16,000 veterans tested positive for the coronavirus, and more than 1,000 died.

Among the veterans who were tested for the coronavirus, 10.2% of Black, 11.4% of Hispanic, and just 4.4% of white veterans tested positive. Despite the racial gap in positive tests, there weren't any differences in the proportion of deaths from COVID-19. [The findings](#) were reported in the journal *PLoS Medicine* on Sept. 22.

These results were surprising because the racial disparities in positive test results remained, even after accounting for things like where the veterans lived and medications they were taking, said [Christopher Rentsch](#), lead author of the study and an assistant professor at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in the U.K.

Rentsch's findings differ from previous research studies. [A report](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that Black and Hispanic patients were twice as likely as whites — 5.6 vs. 2.3 deaths per 10,000 people — to die from COVID-19, based on data collected from nearly 400 different hospitals in 21 states. [Another study](#), from the U.K., also found that minorities had the highest risk of death from COVID-19, even after accounting for each person's health issues, including heart disease and diabetes.

### KEEP READING

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [10:51 AM](#) [No comments:](#)

## VA, Defense Department under new pressure to help ailing veterans who served at toxic Uzbek base

### READ THE STORY

Hundreds of veterans have come forward after [a CBS News investigation](#) revealed new evidence of toxic materials at a remote base the U.S. military used after 9/11.

More than 15,000 U.S. troops passed through Karshi-Khanabad, or K2, a former Soviet air base in Uzbekistan that U.S. forces used to hunt Al Qaeda in nearby Afghanistan.

The investigation was cited at a recent House hearing that put new pressure on the Veterans Affairs and Defense Departments to address health concerns from sick service members.

Although nearly 2,500 current and former service members have now reported rare cancers or other illnesses they believe are linked to their deployments, neither the Defense Department nor the VA acknowledges a link between K2 and illness.

CBS News' Catherine Herridge spoke to K2 veteran Mark Jackson, whose illnesses have baffled doctors for years.

"I went from being able to run a marathon to not being able to walk up a flight of stairs," he said. "Turns out my thyroid simply did not function. I was 28 years old."

### **KEEP READING**

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [10:47 AM](#) [No comments:](#)

## **Birth Defect Research for Children - The Agent Orange Next Gen Campaign**

During the Agent Orange litigation, 65,000 veterans reported that their children had been born with birth defects or developmental disabilities. Now veterans are also reporting that their grandchildren are affected. Yet, no government studies have been done on the association between the father's exposure to Agent Orange and adverse outcomes in their children.



Since 1990, only Birth Defect Research for Children has collected data showing a pattern of birth defects and disabilities in the children of Vietnam veterans.

The Agent Orange Next Gen Campaign will draw attention to how many veterans' families have been affected and raise funds to continue birth defect research.

Join the Vietnam Veterans of America Charles Kettle Chapter 31 in showing your support for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans affected by Agent Orange. Wear an Agent Orange Next Gen mask. For each \$10 mask sold, a donation will go towards research connecting Agent Orange exposure to the birth defects and illnesses that veterans' children and grandchildren are facing every day. Please help by ordering your mask today.

### **KEEP READING**

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [10:44 AM](#) [No comments:](#)

## Agent Orange disaster and efforts to overcome the consequences

*thanks to Alan Stelzer for forwarding this story...*

### READ THE STORY

#### Part 1

##### Agent Orange disaster

During their invasion war against Vietnam, the US Army conducted the largest-scale and longest-time chemical warfare in Vietnam, which has caused unprecedented consequences in human history.

In April 2012, an international scientific symposium was held in Yale University, the US, attracting a large number of world leading scientists. The participating scientists discussed the latest scientific research projects on chemical warfare and concluded: The US has conducted the largest, most cruel and inhumane chemical warfare in human history in South Vietnam.

During the 1961-1971 decade, the US Army sprayed some 80 million liters of toxic chemicals, including Pink, White, Green, Purple, Orange, among others. Among the toxic chemicals, Agent Orange (AO) accounted for 61%. This amount of AO containing 366kg of dioxin was sprayed onto one fourth of the area of South Vietnam, of which 86% was sprayed twice and 11% was sprayed 10 times or more.

“Agent Orange/dioxin” that is often used to label the toxic chemical sprayed in South Vietnam by the US Army contains 2,3,7,8 tetrachlorodibenzodioxin (called dioxin in short) – the most poisonous chemical compound. According to the World Health Organization, some dozens of nanograms of the chemical compound can kill a person.

Dioxin is an unwanted by-product, which is born during production of other chemicals. If AO is produced properly at 88.80 degrees Celsius in 12 hours, the by-product of dioxin is insignificant.

But in order to get more profits, US Agent Orange manufactures shortened the production time to eight minutes and raised the production temperature to 277.70 degrees Celsius, which made the amount of dioxin in the AO product increase by hundreds of times.

### KEEP READING

**BTW: President-elect Biden announced that he is appointing a NON-VETERAN as Secretary of the VA - BOOO!**

Thursday, December 10, 2020

## **One phone number to reach VA**

**1-800-MyVA411**

**(1-800-698-2411)**

**The number to call when you don't know who to call.**

**You only need to remember one number for information on VA care, benefits, and services or to speak to a live agent for assistance!**

The infographic features a central smartphone displaying the VA seal and the phone number 800-MyVA411 (800) 698-2411. Surrounding the phone are ten service categories, each with an icon and a brief description:

- LIVE ASSISTANCE** (Headset icon): General information, directory assistance and technical support for VA.gov
- VA HEALTH CARE** (Medical bag icon): Eligibility, enrollment, locations and COVID-19
- COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE** (Flame icon): MISSION Act eligibility, copayments
- NATIONAL CEMETERIES** (Gravestone icon): Burial benefits, interment scheduling and headstone/Veteran marker
- VETERANS CRISIS LINE** (Star and speech bubbles icon): Immediate connection to caring, qualified responders
- DEBT MANAGEMENT** (Dollar bill icon): Debt details, payment options and debtor rights
- FACILITY LOCATOR** (Location pin icon): Locations of medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries
- BENEFITS ASSISTANCE** (Dollar sign icon): Information about a variety of VA benefits
- HOMELESS VETERANS LINE** (House icon): Information and support for homeless and at-risk callers
- COVID-19 INFORMATION** (Virus icon): Frequently asked questions and live assistance for COVID-related questions

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at 11:24 AM No comments:

## **Climate change puts the heat on cleanup of Dioxin hotspot**

**[READ THE STORY](#)**

**Vice Mayor alerts City Council to Arcata Bay Shoreline dioxin threat**

City Council Vice Mayor Paul Patino said he intends to pull the approval of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan and Plant Improvement Project from the items scheduled to be rubber stamped by the city council.

The \$60 million investment is a response to the threat of sea level rise which involves enlarging levees around the Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facility. Patino is calling on the council to further discuss the project after he learned the mud around the bay shoreline of the wastewater facility has the highest levels of dioxin ever discovered in Humboldt Bay sediments.


“I don’t see how you could mess with that area without it affecting that dioxin,” Patino said. “I think we need to get clear here.”

Dioxin can cause birth defects, cancer and organ failure. It is known to undergo bioaccumulation, meaning it increases in toxicity as it moves up the food chain from plants to predators. It was widely used from the 1940s to the 1980s before the EPA started regulating its use.

Patino raised particular concern with the staff report in the council packet where it states, “This project would involve enlarging the levee surrounding the majority of the outer perimeter of the Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facility (AWTF) by increasing the levee’s height and volume.”

The Arcata City Council is faced with the choice to approve the final application for the project, or first investigate the dangers of the dioxin believed to be largely the result of pentachlorophenol used during historic lumber mill operations up Jolly Giant Creek several blocks south of the town square.

#### KEEP READING

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [11:13 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

## PFAS CHEMICAL ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERE COVID-19

#### READ THE STORY

A Danish study found that people with elevated levels of a compound called PFBA were more than twice as likely to have a severe form of Covid-19.

Elevated levels OF a PFAS compound were associated with more severe forms of Covid-19, according to a Danish study now undergoing peer review. The research, which involved 323 patients infected with the coronavirus, found that those who had elevated levels of a chemical called PFBA were more than twice as likely to have a severe form of the disease.

PFBA is one of a class of industrial compounds, often called “forever chemicals,” that has come to contaminate soil, water, and food around the world. It has been presented as relatively safe because it stays in human blood for much less time than some of the other compounds in the class and is a shorter molecule. Both traits are thought to be indications of its innocuousness. PFBA, which was created by 3M, is based on a four-carbon chain and is gone from human blood in a matter of days. It is still in use, while PFOA, which is based on eight carbons and stays in the human blood for years, has been phased out since 2015.

#### KEEP READING

Although not as widely used as Agent Orange, Agent Blue presented its own set of hazardous exposure, which - as this article states - caused us problems long after we left Vietnam. This is forwarded, courtesy of Paul Kasper in Alabama.

Paul Sutton

[https://asiatimes.com/2020/12/agent-blue/?fbclid=IwAR3RG1pzChn\\_1iBupmwXo9qfDypDc51wm5MDBx03RWcWYZKGr73OZy\\_rMFA](https://asiatimes.com/2020/12/agent-blue/?fbclid=IwAR3RG1pzChn_1iBupmwXo9qfDypDc51wm5MDBx03RWcWYZKGr73OZy_rMFA)

Monday, December 14, 2020

## **Wilkie Disparaged Congressional Aide Who Alleged Sexual Assault At VA Facility, IG Probe Confirms**

### **READ THE STORY**

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie disparaged a veteran who claimed she was sexually assaulted at a VA hospital and sought to undermine her credibility, a new investigation from the department's inspector general has found. The report did not, however, substantiate reports that Wilkie actively investigated the former service member or ordered others to look into her background.

The VA IG has since February been investigating allegations that Wilkie took steps to discredit Andrea Goldstein, a Navy Reserve intelligence officer and adviser to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, after she said she was groped at the VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C. in September.

In a report released Thursday, Inspector General Michael Missal said his office could not substantiate the charge that Wilkie actively sought proof that Goldstein had filed "at least six equal employment opportunity-type complaints" while she was on active duty.

But the VA IG did find that VA officials began to take actions within hours of Goldstein's report that appeared to seek reasons to undermine her credibility. According to the investigation, the same day as the complaint, they began discussing whether Goldstein had complained about verbal abuse from a VA provider. And, the probe found, they ran a background check on Goldstein and circulated the findings before a background check was conducted on the accused, and later launched a media campaign to question Goldstein's credibility, targeting nine national press outlets.

### **KEEP READING**

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at 4:33 PM



## **Military Rape Cases Have No Statute of Limitations, Supreme Court Decides**

### **READ THE STORY**

In an 8-0 opinion issued Thursday, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that military personnel accused of a rape between 1986 and 2006 -- a period previously subject to a five-year statute of limitations -- can be charged for the crime.

At issue in *U.S. v. Briggs* is a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, or CAAF, to overturn three rape convictions that occurred within that 20-year period.

Prior to 1996, the UCMJ held that rape was a crime punishable by death and therefore had no time limit for prosecuting the crime. A 1998 CAAF ruling established the five-year time limit, which remained in place until Congress moved to abolish it in 2006.

In the new opinion, authored by Justice Samuel Alito, the justices said the Uniform Code of Military Justice favored the government's interpretation that military rape cases are "punishable by death" and therefore, carry no statute of limitations regardless of when the crime occurred.

The justices also agreed with government's argument that rape is a particularly damaging crime in the military context because it disrupts good order and discipline.

### **KEEP READING**

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at 4:31 PM

## **Agent Blue haunts Vietnam War vets**

### **READ THE STORY**

*from Paul Kasper via Paul Sutton*

Add one more primary color to the poisonous palette of Vietnam: Agent Blue.

Agent Orange, its toxic defoliant cousin, has become well known in the US for its lethal effects on American troops who served in the war 1965-75 – and on their offspring.



Agent Blue, an arsenic-based herbicide, is becoming known because it has no half-life – in other words, it lasts forever in soil, sediments, rivers, canals and public water supplies.

Once it is in the environment, its toxicity is magnified as it moves up the food chain, slowly killing and disabling humans as it accumulates in the body.

Kenneth Olson, professor emeritus of soil science at the University of Illinois and a US Army Vietnam-era veteran, has studied and published on the soils and sediments of South Vietnam, the roles they played in Vietnam warfare and the legacies left behind.

Olson's recently released paper, "The Fate of Agent Blue, the Arsenic Based Herbicide Used in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War," is co-authored with Larry Cihacek, also a US Army veteran, who is professor of soil science at North Dakota State University. It is their most recent in a series of papers on Vietnam soils and sediments and herbicide persistence in the environment.

"Agent Blue was sprayed on 100,000 hectares (one hectare is about 2.5 acres) of mangrove forests and about 300,000 hectares of rice paddies just before rice harvest time," Olson said. That "resulted in destroying the standing crop and contaminated soils and water sediments with arsenic."

### [KEEP READING](#)

Posted by [AgentOrangeZone](#) at [4:29 PM](#)

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

## **VA COVID-19 Updates**

COVID-19 vaccines: [Stay informed and help us prepare](#)





We're working to get COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans as quickly and safely as possible. Sign up to help us understand your interest in getting a vaccine when one is available to you. We'll send you updates on how we're providing vaccines across the country—and when you can get your vaccine if you want one.

### VA releases COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan

**Who will get a COVID-19 vaccine first?**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized the first COVID-19 vaccine. We have a limited amount of this vaccine to start.

We've worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to develop a phased plan that will help us do the most good for the most people during this time. Under this phased plan, we'll first offer vaccines to Veterans in our long-term care facilities and frontline VA health care workers. Vaccinating our health care workers first helps us continue providing care for Veterans.

After 2 groups, we'll begin to offer vaccines to more Veterans who are at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Your VA health care team will contact you if you're eligible to get a vaccine during this time.

We will follow CDC guidelines for determining who is considered to be at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Factors that may influence the risk of severe disease include the following:

- **Age.** The risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 increases with age.
- **Existing health problems.** People with certain health problems (like diabetes, heart disease, or obesity) have a higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.
- **Other factors that raise a person's risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19, such as living in a nursing home or other group living facility.**



Monday, December 28, 2020

## **It's a slow Agent Orange news week - so here's a little history...The Fairchild C-123 Provided Just What the Air Force Needed in Vietnam**

### **READ THE STORY**

The C-123 Provider, which had a crew of three or four, could carry up to sixty passengers or up to twenty-four thousand pounds of cargo.



One of the lesser-known aerial workhorses of the Vietnam War was the Fairchild C-123K Provider, a short-range assault transport that was used to airlift troops and cargo to and from short runways and even unprepared airstrips. The rugged aircraft provided the United States Air Force with the means to reach remote areas, where it could deliver supplies and evacuate wounded, while the hardy transport plane was later used to spray Agent Orange as part of the U.S. military's defoliant operations.

Originally designed as an assault glider for the Air Force in the late 1940s, the Chase Aircraft XCG-20 evolved from earlier large gliders. A powered variant was subsequently developed with two Pratt & Whitney R-2800-23 air-cooled radial piston engines—and the first of those prototypes made its initial flight in 1949. While Chase began manufacturing the rugged assault transport in 1953, the contract was subsequently transferred to Fairchild, which produced about three hundred C-123Bs.

A second prototype was also built and fitted with four General Electric J47-GE-11 turbojets in two pods. Known as the XC-123A it had the distinction of being the U.S. Air Force's first jet-powered military transport, even if it was just an experimental prototype.

However, the Air Force opted for the piston-powered version, which was seen as well-suited for use as a tactical transport. Known for its ruggedness and reliability, and more importantly, its ability to operate from those short and even unimproved airstrips, it was just what the military needed for the coming conflict in Vietnam.

C-123 Provider, which had a crew of three or four, could carry up to sixty passengers or up to 24,000 pounds of cargo. It had a maximum speed of 228 miles per hour, a cruise speed of 173 miles per hour and a range of 1,035 miles.

Between 1966 and 1969, a total of 184 C-123Bs were converted to C-123Ks with the addition of two J85 jet engines for improved performance. The jet engines increased the C-123's payload weight by a third, shortened its takeoff distance, improved its climb rate, and even gave a much greater margin of safety should one of the piston engines fail.

During "Operation Ranch Hand," eight of the aircraft were also modified to spray defoliant, which was used to destroy the heavy vegetation that provided cover to the enemy soldiers near U.S. forward bases.

Two additional Providers were also modified under Project Black Spot to the NC-123K configuration, and equipped with a long, 57.75-inch nose fairing that housed an X-band forward-looking radar. The aircraft were also fitted with two rectangular aluminum weapons dispensers stacked within the fuselage and each container housed twelve cells containing three Cluster Bomb Units (CBUs) for use in night time operations. Those two aircraft were first deployed operationally at Osan Air Base, South Korea, between August and October 1968, where they flew in support of operations against North Korean infiltrators approaching by boat.

Upon completion of their Korean assignment, the Providers were deployed to South Vietnam for a combat evaluation of the "Black Spot" weapons system and used in night operations against the Viet Cong.

As the war in Southeast Asia wound down, the U.S. military transferred many of its Providers to the South Vietnamese Air Force as well as the Royal Thai Air Force. The remaining USAF C-123s were transferred to the U.S. Air Force Reserve, which flew them well into the mid-1980s. Other operators of the Provider also included the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as with the air forces of the Philippines, South Korea and Venezuela.

## **VA INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICE**

**[Federal Indictment Charges Buncombe County Man For Receiving Veteran Benefits Based On Fraudulent Service-Connected Disabilities](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2af828d)**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2af828d>

**Federal Indictment Charges Buncombe County Man For Receiving Veteran Benefits Based On Fraudulent Service-Connected Disabilities**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2af828d>

## **Workrite Companies to Pay \$7.1 Million to Settle Alleged Furniture Overcharges**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2afa8ec>

## **Three Family Members Sentenced In Connection With Defrauding Veterans Health Care In The Villa**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b0403f>

## **Michigan Woman Sentenced For Defrauding U.S. Department Of Veterans Affairs Of Over \$1.7 Million In Benefits**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b02c9b>

## **Florida Attorney Admits Role in \$7.5 Million Bank Extortion Scheme**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b02c9d>

## **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Claims Processing Training and Guidance Need Improvement**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b0602c>

## **Senior VA Officials' Response to a Veteran's Sexual Assault Allegations**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b08ee8>

## **Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection of the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, South Carolina**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b13ae1>

## **Surgical Service Care Deficiencies in the Critical Care Unit at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b16662>

## **Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b16661>

## **Review of Veterans Health Administration's Emergency Department and Urgent Care Center Operations During the**

## **COVID-19 Pandemic**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b196e0>

### **Medical Equipment Company Handicare USA, LLC, Agrees to Pay \$800,000 to Resolve False Claims Act Action**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b1a62c>

### **Agawam Man Sentenced for Defrauding VA Hospitals by Failing to Inspect Medical Gas Systems**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b1daf3>

### **GOVERNMENT CONTRACTOR ADMITS SCHEME TO INFLATE COSTS ON FEDERAL PROJECTS AND PAYS \$11 MILLION TO RESOLVE CRIMINAL AND CIVIL PROBES**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b1daf2>

### **Added Measures Could Reduce Veterans' Risk of COVID-19 Exposure in Transitional Housing**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b1d2f0>

### **Review of Veterans Health Administration's Emergency Department and Urgent Care Center Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b1e807>

### **Veteran Indicted for Falsifying Records of Travel for Treatment**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAOIG/bulletins/2b2c463>

# **RAO BULLETIN**

## **1 December 2020**

**HTML & PDF Editions**

**THIS RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE BULLETIN CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES**

<b>Pg</b>	<b>Article</b>	<b>Subject</b>
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**\* DOD \***

03 == DOD Lawsuit --- (Navy Unlawful Disability Retirement Benefits Denials)

04 == DoD Lawsuit | Bad Paper Discharges [04] ---- (Army to Reconsider Rulings on Vets With PTSD)

05 == SECDEF [21] ---- (All Wars Must End)

07 == SECDEF [22] ---- (New Senior Advisor Formerly Proposed USMC Elimination)

08 == National Security [03] ---- (Climate Change Threat)

09 == DoD Budget 2022 ---- (Will It Be a Climate-Focused?)

11 == NPRC Military Records [06] ---- (Covid-19 Reduced Operations)

11 == POW/MIA Recoveries & Burials ---- (Reported 16 thru 30 NOV 2020 | none)

**\* VA \***

13 == Toxic Exposure Documentation [01] ---- (Trove of US Documents on Okinawa Released)

15 == VA Blue Water Claims [85] ---- (Court Orders VA to Redecide Thousands of Claims)

17 == VA Accountability [56] ---- (FLRA Calls for Rehiring of Fired Workers)

19 == VA Vision Care [09] ---- (Orcam MyEye | Digital Technology Helps Blind Veteran)

20 == VA Vaccination Program [01] ---- (Planning Underway to Deliver a COVID-19 Vaccine)

21 == VA COVID-19 Cases [09] ---- (Doubled in 20 Days)

22 == VA Health Care [03] ---- (Ask Not Get Not | What Do You Need?)

22 == VA Fraud, Waste, & Abuse ---- (Reported 16 thru 30 NOV 2020)

23 == VA Secretary [91] ---- (Accused of Issuing Directive to Discredit Veteran)



**\* VETS \***

- 26 == Vet Tax Breaks ---- (Approved in 3 State's 2020 Elections)
- 27 == Proposal to Incoming Administration ---- (A Simple Political Appointee Tasking)
- 28 == Vet Jobs [269] ---- (Code Platoon Offers Vets Software Development Training)
- 29 == WWII Vets 238 ---- (David Baker | Silver Star PI Vet)
- 30 == WWII Vets 239 ---- (George Percy | Bataan POW Killed in Transfer to Japan)
- 31 == WWII Vets 240 ---- (Horace Carswell Jr. | China B24J Pilot)
- 32 == | Karshi-Khanabad [03] ---- (Lawmakers Upset w/VA over Failure to Provide Care)
- 33 == Military Retirees & Veterans Events Schedule ---- (As of 30 NOV 2020)
- 34 == Vet Hiring Fairs ---- (Scheduled as of 30 NOV OCT)
- 34 == Veteran State Benefits ---- (Virginia 2020)

**\* VET LEGISLATION \***

- 35 == VA Medical Malpractice [02] ---- (S.4883/ H.R.3813 | VA Medical Care and Liability Improvement Act)
- 37 == Vet Suicide [52] ---- (S.4900 | Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Vet Suicide)
- 38 == VA Website [06] ---- (H.R. 1199/S.3587 | VA Website Accessibility Act)
- 38 == Military Domestic Violence [01] ---- (S.4922 | Military Domestic Violence Prevention Act)

**\* MILITARY\***

- 40 == Navy Carrier Fleet [04] ---- (No margin Left | Overworked after Decades of Overuse)
- 40 == Military Force Reduction [03] ---- (Afghanistan & Iraq)
- 41 == Military Cellphone Use ---- (Are Phoneless Deployments the Future for Marines?)
- 42 == Navy Retention [02] ---- (Voluntary Separations to be Offered to Some)



43 == Navy Terminology, Jargon & Slang ---- ('Pork Sword' thru 'Puzzle Palace)

## **\* MILITARY HISTORY \***

44 == Taps ---- (How It Originated)

45 == USS Lehigh Grounding ---- (Civil War Action)

46 == Nuremburg Trials [01] ---- (German Admiral Karl Doenitz)

48 == WWII Italian Sub Performance ---- (Why 100 Submarine Fleet Do So Little)

49 == Battle of Saipan ---- (Rather than Surrender Japanese Ordered to Commit Suicide)

51 == WWI Battle of Cambrai ---- (First Successful Use of the Tank)

52 == WWII Rationing ---- (Americans Were Asked to Conserve on Everything)

55 == WWII Bomber Nose Art [64] ---- (Bottoms Up)

55 == Every Picture Tells A Story ---- (Elephant Power)

56 == Military History Anniversaries ---- (01 thru 15 DEC)

56 == Medal of Honor Awardees ---- (Christian Schilt | Nicaragua)

## **\* HEALTH CARE \***

58 == Trump Drug Price Plan [02] ---- (Pharmacy Industry Warnings Not to Proceed)

59 == Coronavirus Vaccine [18] ---- (Federal Allocation Program)

60 == Coronavirus Vaccine [19] ---- (Most States Aren't Ready to Distribute Pfizer Vaccine)

63 == Covid-19 Testing [08] ---- (Symptoms to Look For)

64 == Covid-19 Victims [01] ---- (Those Most Often Hospitalized)

65 == Covid-19 Precautions [04] ---- (Symptoms Unique to Seniors)

## **\* FINANCES \***

66 == Tricare Select [09] ---- (Have You Signed Up for Payments?)

67 == Traffic Tickets [02] ---- (Impact on Insurance Premiums)

68 == Seniors Financial Abuse & Exploitation [02] ---- (Congress Approves Bill Protecting Seniors)

68 == Retirement ---- (How a Biden Presidency Might Impact Yours')

71 == Holiday Scams [05] ---- (Phony Copycat Events)

72 == Online Shopping Scam [04] ---- (Among Top 3 Since 2017)

72 == Fake Gaming Console Scam ---- (Fake Deals Trick Holiday Shoppers)

73 == State Tax Burden for Kansas Retired Vets ---- (As of NOV 2020)

**\* GENERAL INTEREST \***

77 == Notes of Interest ---- (16 thru 30 November 2020)

78 == Military Congressional Committees ---- (Shake-Ups Coming for Some after the Election)

79 == U.S. Russian Tensions [05] ---- (Military Activity Picking Up in the Quiet Waters between the Two)

81 == U.S. Russian Tensions [06] ---- (Trump Cancels Open Skies Treaty)

82 == Climate Change [04] ---- (The Climate Hustle)

83 == Air Quality ---- (Ten Worst U.S. States)

85 == Sub Drug Smuggling ---- (Narco Sub Discovery Indicates Trend to Larger Vessel Use)

86 == China's Submarine Program [02] ---- (Increasing Nuclear Submarine Shipyard Capacity)

87 == Tomb of the Unknowns [12] ---- (Near Fatality during Veterans Day Ceremony)

88 == Turkey ---- (Ben Franklin's Bird of Courage)

90 == Cars That Never Made It ---- (1956 Oldsmobile Golden Rocket & 1956 Pontiac Club De Mer)

90 == News of The Weird ---- (November 16-30, 2020)

91 == Have You Heard or Seen? ---- (Military Humor (12) | Nostalgia | Latest Satirical Cartoons)

**NOTE**

1. The page number on which an article can be found is provided to the left of each article's title

2. Numbers contained within brackets [ ] indicate the number of articles written on the subject. To obtain previous articles send a request to [raoemo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:raoemo@sbcglobal.net) 'or' [raoemo77@gmail.com](mailto:raoemo77@gmail.com)

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**\* ATTACHMENTS \***

Attachment - Virginia Veteran State Benefits

Attachment - Military History Anniversaries 01 thru 15 DEC (Updated)

Attachment – Overworked Navy Carrier Fleet

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**TO READ and/or DOWNLOAD THE ABOVE ARTICLES, ATTACHMENTS, OR PAST BULLETINS GO  
Online To:**

-- <http://www.nhc-ul.org/12012020.html> (PDF Edition with ATTACHMENTS)

-- <http://www.veteransresources.org/2020/11/rao-bulletin-update-01-december-2020> (PDF/HTML Editions with attachments)

-- <http://frabr245.org> (PDF Edition in Word format only. No attachments)

-- <http://veteraninformationlinksasa.com/emos-rao.html> (PDF & HTML Editions with ATTACHMENTS)

-- <https://www.cgretirenw.org> (Listed under VET & RETIREE LEGISLATIVE & GENERAL NEWS)

-- <http://www.veteransresources.org/rao-bulletin> (past Bulletins)

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# RAO BULLETIN

## 15 December 2020

### HTML & PDF Editions

**THIS RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE BULLETIN CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES**

Pg	Article	Subject
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**\* DOD \***

- == NDAA 2021 [10] ---- (White House Objections to Proposed Cuts)
- == NDAA 2021 [11] ---- (President Donald Trump's Veto Threat Rejected)
- == NDAA 2021 [12] ---- (What the Finalized Bill Contains)
- == DoD Budgets ---- (JCS Calls for Reality Check on Future One)
- == Navy 1<sup>st</sup> Fleet ---- (Being Resurrected to Cover Indo-Pacific Region)
- == Navy 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet [01] ---- (Focus to Be On Russian Threat)
- == Navy Frigate Program ---- (Congress Pushes the US Navy to Get FFG(X) Right)
- == USAF Mothball Effort ---- (What Was Wanted in 2021 & What They Got)
- == Military Rape [01] ---- (Supreme Court Decides Cases Have No Statute of Limitations)
- == POW/MIA Recoveries & Burials ---- (Reported 01 thru 15 DEC 2020 | Six)

**\* VA \***

- == VA Care Abroad [01] ---- (Vets Left to Navigate Pandemic Problems without VA Help)
- == VA Covid-19 Care [03] ---- (Priority for Receiving Vaccines)
- == VA Autism Care ---- (New Coverage under ChampVA)
- == VA Lawsuit ~ Final Rule ---- (New Rules Restricting Caregiver Benefits)
- == VA Blue Button Program [03] ---- (EHR Access Means Still Effective After 10 yrs)
- == ALS [15] ---- (Eye Gaze Controlled Wheelchair Drive System)
- == VA Solid Start [02] ---- (Transition to Civilian Life Assistance)
- == Vet Education [03] ---- (VA Completes Colmery Act Changes)
- == VA Secretary [92] ---- (IG Charges for Wilkie Prosecution Never Filed)
- == VA Secretary [93] ---- (President-elect Biden's Choice Gets Mixed Response)
- == VA Telehealth Program [21] ---- (AT&T Added to VA Video Connect)

== VA Fraud, Waste & Abuse ---- (Reported 01 thru 1 DEC 2020)

### **\* VETS \***

== Vet Unemployment [27] ---- (November Increase to 6.3%)

== Operation September Freedom ---- (Free Vintage Flight for 1,000 WWII Vets)

== WW2 Chinese American Vets ---- (20,000 Honored By Congress)

== WWI Vet 14 ---- (Samuel Woodfill | Sgt. York's Rival)

== Iraq War Vet 04 ---- (Joshua Wheeler | Operation Inherent Resolve Casualty)

== WWII Vet 241 ---- (Robert Feller | Renowned Cleveland Indians Pitcher)

== Military Retirees & Veterans Events Schedule ---- (As of 15 DEC 2020)

== Vet Hiring Fairs ---- (Scheduled as of 16 DEC 2020)

== State Veteran Benefits ---- (Vermont 2020)

### **\* VET LEGISLATION \***

== VA Medical Marijuana [71] ---- (H.R.3884 | MORE Act of 2020)

== VA Mental Health Care [42] ---- (S.2864/H.R.5324 | Veterans Network of Support Act of 2019)

== Women Vet Support ---- (S.514/H.R.3224 | Deborah Sampson Act)

### **\* MILITARY\***

== USS Bonhomme Richard [03] ---- (Will Not Return to Sea - Restoration Deemed too Expensive)

== M-240 Machine Gun ---- (New Sound Suppressor Gets Rave Reviews)

== USMC Drug Problem ---- (Zero Tolerance is the Marine Corps' Stance)

== USMC Retention [02] ---- (Tank Marines Get the Chance to Leave the Corps Early)

== Air Force Retention [03] ---- (Spiked Amid COVID | Now, Retention Bonuses Might Be Cut)



- == Army Missing Soldier Policy ---- (Created to Prevent Disappearances Ending in Tragedy)
- == National Guard Employment Rights ---- (Uncovered State Government Jobs)
- == USMC Infantry Training ---- (Not Long Enough — Or Good Enough — For Future Fight)
- == USMC ASW EABO ---- (How Marines Could fight Subs in the Future)
- == Military Base Names [01] ---- (Congress' Detailed Plan to Get Rid of Confederate Ones)
- == Navy Terminology, Jargon & Slang ---- ('Qual Card thru 'Ramrod')

## **\* MILITARY HISTORY \***

- == WWII Operation Uranus ---- (How the Soviets Trapped the German 6th Army in Stalingrad)
- == Great Emu War ---- (Emu Victory over Australian Military)
- == Berga am Elster ---- (WWII POWs Recall Camp Berga)
- == WWI Gas Mask ---- (Improvisation)
- == Every Picture Tells A Story ---- (Preventing Salt Water Corrosion)
- == Military History Anniversaries ---- (16 thru 31 DEC)
- == WWII Bomber Nose Art [65] ---- (Moonhappy)
- == Medal of Honor Awardees ---- (Allan Ohata | WWII)

## **\* HEALTH CARE \***

- == Covid-19 Treatment [06] ---- (Baricitinib plus Remdesivir Show Promise)
- == Coronavirus Vaccines [19] ---- (Gamble Pays Off | How They Made It to the Finish Line)
- == Sickle Cell Trait ---- (Army Begins Testing Recruits)
- == Constipation ---- (Tips to Relieve It Naturally)
- == Sinusitis [04] ---- (Congestion Relief)
- == Prescription Drug Disposal [08] ---- (Do It the Safest Way)

== TRICARE Caregiver ---- (How to Become One)

== TRICARE Flu Shots [05] ----Seasonal Flu Vaccine FAQ

== Alcohol Use [02] ---- (Unhealthiest Choices)

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## **\* FINANCES \***

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== SBP DIC Offset [65] ---- (Q&A for Impacted Beneficiaries)

== VA Loans [02] ---- (Covid-19 Hardship Proposal would Allow Mortgage Payments by VA)

== VA Debt [11] ---- (Vet Billing to Restart in JAN)

== DFAS Pay Schedule ---- (Retiree & Annuitant 2021)

== Attorney Earnings ---- (States with Highest & Lowest)

== Adoption Scams [02] ---- (Online Puppy Scams Rising Sharply in 2020)

== COVID-19 Scams [04] ---- (Watch for Cons as the COVID Vaccine Rolls Out)

== Zoom Invite Scam ---- (Don't Click on Suspicious Zoom Meeting Invites)

== State Tax Burden for Kentucky Retired Vets ---- (As of DEC 2020)

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## **\* GENERAL INTEREST \***

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== Notes of Interest ---- (December 01 thru 15, 2020)

== Map Comparisons ---- (Australia's Size vs. U.S.)

== Surviving Spouses [02] ---- (New Organization Looking for Members)

== China's Military Expansion ---- (Will Test the Biden Administration)

== Iran Tensions [13] ---- (US Troop Pullouts Raise Fears of Iranian Attacks)

== Car Ownership [01] ---- (2020's Six Most Reliable Automakers)

== Trump Border Wall [17] ---- (Federal Court Rules Lower Court Wrong in Baring Funds)

== Life Hacks ---- (A Few Things to Make Your Life Easier)

== Home Rodent Control ---- (Humane Tips to Keep Them from Moving In)

== News of The Weird ---- (December 1-15, 2020)

== Have You Heard or Seen? ---- (Military Humor (13) | Dad Jokes (1) | Latest Satirical Cartoons)

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## NOTE

*1. The page number on which an article can be found is provided to the left of each article's title*

*2. Numbers contained within brackets [ ] indicate the number of articles written on the subject. To obtain previous articles send a request to [raoemo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:raoemo@sbcglobal.net) 'or' [raoemo77@gmail.com](mailto:raoemo77@gmail.com)*

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## \* ATTACHMENTS \*

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Attachment - Vermont State Veteran Benefits

Attachment - Military History Anniversaries 16 thru 31 DEC (Updated)

Attachment – WWII Operation Uranus

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-- <http://www.nhc-ul.org/rao.html> (PDF Edition w/ATTACHMENTS)

-- <http://www.veteransresources.org> (PDF & HTML Editions w/ATTACHMENTS)

-- <http://frabr245.org> (PDF & HTML Editions in Word format)

-- <http://veteraninformationlinksasa.com/emos-rao.html> (PDF & HTML Editions w/ATTACHMENTS)

-- <https://www.cgretenw.org> (Listed under VET & RETIREE LEGISLATIVE & GENERAL NEWS)

-- <http://www.veteransresources.org/rao-bulletin> (past Bulletins)

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# **PTSD Treatment During COVID - PTSD Monthly Update, December, 2020**

# PTSD

## Monthly Update

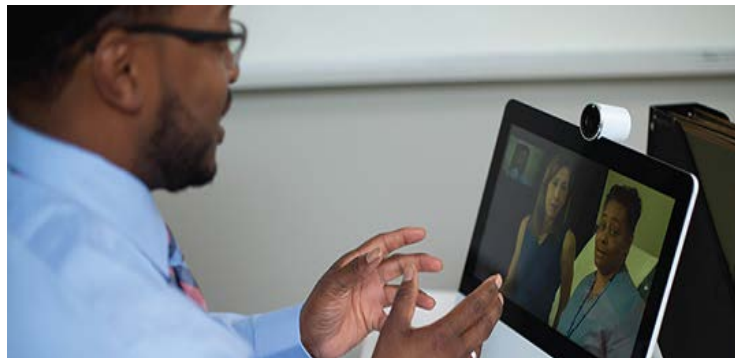
News Relevant to the Issues of Trauma and PTSD



December 2020

### FEATURED TOPIC

## PTSD Treatment During COVID



One of the most common symptoms of PTSD is avoiding upsetting situations, people or memories. The desire to avoid is likely even greater during the coronavirus pandemic. Current public health guidance—quarantine, physical distance, limited time with other people—is necessary to control the spread of COVID-19.

But avoidance can actually maintain PTSD symptoms or make them worse. So, if avoidance or other PTSD symptoms begin to increase during the pandemic, it's important to get help or continue treatment.

### Telemental Health and Effective PTSD Treatments

The good news is that effective PTSD treatment is still available. Using telemental health, you can video call with a provider instead of going to their office. It works just like a Facetime or Zoom call you might have with friends

or coworkers. You get the same treatments and professional service as a face-to-face appointment.

The biggest difference from an in-person session is that you'll have to set up your own safe and private therapy environment at home. It's important that you feel free and open to talk about your trauma, without any distractions. Setting up a good therapy environment in your home can be tricky depending on your situation.

### **Therapy in Your Home: Common Challenges and Suggestions**

Our clinicians have suggestions for dealing with some of the common challenges you may be facing:

#### **1. Challenge: Lack of privacy**

*Suggestions:* Get creative when finding a quiet space

- Consider a basement, garage/shed or your car
- Use a room with a lock if you're concerned about being interrupted
- Play white noise videos on a computer or tablet placed by the door so you won't be overheard
- Reserve a room at a local library, Veteran Service Organization or other VA location, or another business or partner organization

#### **2. Challenge: Distractions in your environment**

*Suggestions:* Remove as many distractions from the room as possible

- Keep your pets out of the room
- Mute your phone and turn off the TV
- Don't eat, smoke or do any activities you wouldn't do at your therapist's office

#### **3. Challenge: Caring for children**

*Suggestions:* Arrange childcare like you would if you had to go to the VA or a therapist's office for care

- Ask a family member or friend to care for your children during your session



- Hire childcare – some childcare businesses are providing services virtually if age appropriate

#### **4. Challenge: Protecting private information**

*Suggestions:* VA only uses secure platforms for TMH, but you should work with your provider on how to store your private information between sessions

- Place paperwork in a locked cabinet or drawer, or work with your provider to find another secure storage place.
- Always sign out of your email or My HealtheVet account after communicating with your provider or sending private information.
- If using a [treatment companion mobile app](#), like CPT Coach or PE Coach, be sure to password protect your phone.

#### **5. Challenge: Technology**

*Suggestions:* Your therapist will ask you for an alternate phone number or contact information to reach you in case of a crisis, or to reach you if you lose video connection during a session.

- If you don't have the proper equipment for telemental health, the VA may be able to help.

If you've reviewed these tips and are still having issues setting up a useful therapy environment, talk to your provider. They can help you brainstorm additional solutions for your specific situation.

### **What About Treatment?**

What if you're not ready to try therapy? Or you can't fit therapy into your life right now? The National Center for PTSD has resources you can use on your own when you have time. These resources are also helpful if you're in treatment but want extra support between sessions.

- Use [mobile apps](#), like PTSD Coach and Mindfulness Coach, to manage PTSD symptoms.
- Hear other Veterans and family members share their experiences with PTSD and PTSD treatment at [AboutFace](#).
- Learn about and compare effective treatment options using the [PTSD Treatment Decision Aid](#).

[Explore: Treatment information, videos, and tools](#)

## For Providers

### PTSD Consultation Program

#### Treating Veterans with PTSD? We can help.

Any healthcare provider treating Veterans can ask our expert clinicians a question. [Meet our consultants and get started.](#)



### PTSD Monthly Lecture Series

**January 20, 2021 at 2pm ET** - *A Precision Medicine Approach to Prazosin for PTSD and Its Comorbidities: An Update* by Murray Raskind, MD.

- [Mark your calendar](#) for the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 2pm ET
- [Subscribe](#) to monthly emails to find out how to join live lectures.
- Registration is required to receive free continuing education credit for attending the live lecture.

### Resource of the Month

#### Patient Education Materials

We offer a wide variety of materials to help your patients understand what PTSD is and how it is treated, as well as tools for providers on how to engage patients in treatment and enhance the delivery of PTSD care.

You can now order our print materials free from the [US Government Publishing Office](#).

## Research at the Center

### PTSD Brain Study May Lead to New Treatment

The first study to examine post-mortem brain tissue from PTSD sufferers--conducted by the VA National Center for PTSD, National PTSD Brain Bank, and Yale University--has identified molecular changes in the brain that may

lead to new ways to diagnose and treat posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. [Read more...](#)\*

## PTSD in the News

### **How to Reduce Your Risk of PTSD in a Post-Covid-19 World**

Dr. Denise Sloan from the Center's Behavioral Science Division, talks with the New York Times about PTSD in a post-COVID-19 world. [Read more...](#)\*

## Stay Connected - Subscribe Here

Be sure to forward this update to others so they can [subscribe](#). We send one update per month to keep you informed of the latest PTSD developments.

Thank you,

The Staff of VA's National Center for PTSD

[View Archived Issues](#)



**Produced by VA's National Center for PTSD - Executive Division**

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**#BeThere**  
for Veterans and Service members



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# Veterans Wellness Guide



Are you feeling tired, stressed, or wanting to improve your overall well-being? What if you could feel happier, less stressed, and more in control? There's no better time than now to check out the Veterans Wellness Guide.

This workbook is based on the science of well-being and is organized in short, easy-to-use activities. Topics include: Understanding Health, Managing Thoughts, Making Every Moment Count, Sleeping Well, and Health Eating.

Check it out [here](https://www.mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/docs/veteran-wellness-guide.pdf) or at <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/docs/veteran-wellness-guide.pdf>

## New 211 Helpline App



We're excited to announce that 211 Helpline resources are now available in the 211 App! During a time when many individuals and families are experiencing challenges, we hope this additional option provides an ease to accessing resources.

The 211 Helpline app connects users to community resources in South Dakota. From quick questions to serious concerns, the free and confidential app brings resources to your fingertips.

Winter 2020 Edition

- [Veterans Wellness Guide](#)
- [New 211 Helpline App](#)
- [Firearm Safety in Times of Community Stress](#)
- [2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#)



Read the latest VA Black Hills Health Care Whole Health Newsletter by clicking [here](#).



### Annie App for Veterans

Annie is a VA service that sends automated text messages to Veterans to help them stay focused on their self-care. Thousands of Veterans successfully use Annie to stay healthy and on track in meeting their wellness goals. Anyone with a phone that can send and receive text messages can use Annie. For more information on Annie App for

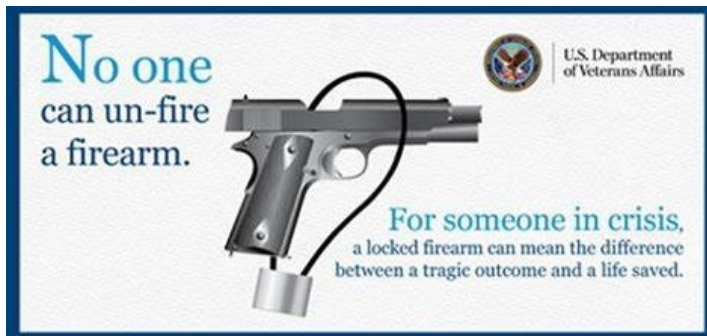
You are not alone. Every day people turn to 211 for information and support – whether financial, family, health, or disaster-related. The call or text is free and confidential.

You can choose your location to find resources available in your area. From health and human service programs, community services, disaster services and government programs, the 211 Helpline app is a one-stop source of information. Categories listed include food, housing, financial assistance, employment services, healthcare, volunteer/donate and more.

To find out more or download the app, [click here](#).

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## Firearm Safety in Times of Community Stress



VA respects the important role firearms play in many Veterans' lives and is dedicated to educating Veterans, their families, and communities about how safe storage can prevent suicide. In 2018, firearms were used in nearly half of all U.S. suicide deaths and nearly 70% of suicides among U.S. Veterans. Safe storage can put time and space between an individual and a firearm and help keep Veterans and their loved ones safe during a suicidal crisis.

There are several reasons why firearm safety is even more critical in times of community stress, when the risk of firearm injury increases. Click [here](#) to learn more about why community stress is a risk factor for firearm injury and best safety-related practices if you reside in a home with a firearm.

Veterans call (605) 347-2511 ext 17848 or visit: <https://mobile.va.gov/app/annie-app-veterans>



### New Live Whole Health Mobile App Available

Veterans, are you ready to take the next step in your Whole Health journey? It is now easier than ever for you to *Live Whole Health* thanks to VA's new Live Whole Health mobile app. The app was designed for Veterans like you interested in taking charge of their health needs and goals. With this new tool, you develop a personalized plan and get virtual coaching to achieve your health goals.

[Learn More](#)

[Get the App](#)



### My HealtheVet

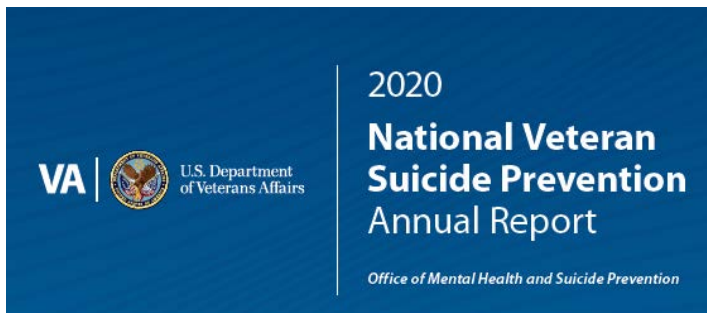
Need to make an appointment? Refill prescriptions? Contact your provider? Do all that and much more with MyHealtheVet. For more information visit:

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov>

VA offers community trainings on lethal means safety. Let us know if you are interested in hosting a training by sending an email to [VHABHHCSSuicidePrevention@va.gov](mailto:VHABHHCSSuicidePrevention@va.gov)

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## 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report



The 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report was released following Veteran's Day this year. The Report provides an analysis of Veteran suicide data from 2005 through 2018. Findings documented in this report highlight the continuing and increasing problem of suicide among U.S. adults and among Veterans, and the need for ongoing efforts to improve methods of suicide risk mitigation. As a deliberate reminder to all that there is always hope, we first share several Anchors of Hope that emerged from the data.

- Anchor 1: From 2017 to 2018, adjusted suicide rates fell among Veterans with recent VHA care, while rising among other Veterans.
- Anchor 2: Among Veterans in VHA care, rates fell from 2005 to 2018 in those with depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders.
- Anchor 3: In 2018, suicide rates decreased for specific Veteran populations engaged in VHA care.
- Anchor 4: The Veteran suicide rate did not increase significantly between 2017 and 2018.
- Anchor 5: There is a groundswell of support for coordinated efforts at the local, regional, and



VA Mobile releases new Apps for Veterans regularly. Check here often for new information about available Apps.

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### Telephone Lifestyle Coaching (TLC)

Ask for a TLC referral today and work with your coach to:

- Eat Wisely
- Limit Alcohol
- Manage Stress
- Be Physically Active
- Strive for a healthy weight

VA Black Hills Health Care System offers Telephone Lifestyle Coaching for Veterans who may choose to work on their health and wellbeing without having to come to the medical center.

To start the program, Veterans simply need to let their health care team know they would like to enroll and then be prepared to receive a call from their coach at a time they prefer.

For more information on Telephone Lifestyle Coaching, visit [www.prevention.va.gov/tlc](http://www.prevention.va.gov/tlc)

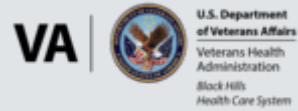
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national levels to implement a public health approach to end suicide.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, VA is monitoring trends in suicide-related behaviors. Thus far, findings do not indicate increases in suicide-related behavior among Veterans in VHA care. COVID-19 Veteran Surveillance data is also included.

Take a deeper dive into the data and Anchors of Hope [here](#) or by visiting [https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/data.asp](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/data.asp)



Mental Health Updates: Explore the latest mental health news, resources, and real-life stories of mental health Recovery @ <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>.

**Contact us to learn more about the Suicide Prevention Program and how you play a vital role in preventing Veteran suicide [VHABHHCSSuicidePrevention@va.gov](mailto:VHABHHCSSuicidePrevention@va.gov) or by calling 605-720-7087**

*Forward this newsletter to a friend?*  
And if you received this from a friend, you can [subscribe yourself!](#)  
Log In to My HealtheVet Today.



Rx Refills and the Pandemic

## **Tips for refilling your VA prescriptions**

During the pandemic, people who regularly take prescription drugs for chronic conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure may be concerned about getting refills. We're working hard to get you your prescriptions when you need them. [Learn more.](#)





## **Second Vaccine Arrives**

With the recent FDA approval of a second COVID-19 vaccine, VA will begin Moderna and Pfizer vaccinations to front-line health care workers and the most vulnerable Veterans at an additional 128 medical centers.

[Learn more.](#)



## **New Year, New Password**

Start 2021 confident that your personal health information is well-protected. Update your My HealtheVet password today to protect your privacy in the New Year. [Learn more.](#)



## **What to Do If You're Sick with COVID-19**

If you've been diagnosed with COVID-19 or think you might have it, there are steps you need to follow to take care of yourself and protect those at home and in your community. [Learn more.](#)



## **Have a Successful Video Visit**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, secure video visits are the safest way to connect with your health care team for non-emergency care. [Learn more.](#)



### **Top 5 Health Threats to Men**

Men, it's important to be aware of possible dangers to your health as you get older. Remind yourself of these top threats and see how you can lower your risks. [Learn more.](#)



### **Recognizing a Heart Attack**

Having a heart attack can be scary for anybody. Knowing the signs of a heart attack can help you act fast to not only save your heart but also your life. [Learn more.](#)



### **Aging and Muscle Loss**

Keeping your muscles strong as you age can keep you independent longer and help you continue doing the things you love without needing much help from others. [Learn more.](#)



### **Keep Your Immunity Strong**

Germes are always trying to invade our bodies. Follow a few simple tips to give yourself some extra support against outside forces. [Learn more.](#)

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[COVID-19 makes a flu shot more important than ever. Get your flu shot today!](#)

If you are new to My HealthVet, be sure to upgrade your account so you can use all these great features. [Upgrade today!](#)

