

# February 4, 2014

1. Report: Troop morale up in Afghanistan.
2. Army program helps soldier choose life over suicide.
3. Fort Carson officer accused of misconduct.
4. Senior acquisition officials leave VA.
5. Bill to Help Veterans Pay Tuition Advances.
6. House approves bill to ease in-state tuition rules for veterans.
7. Military Affairs beat: Online complaints system will identify colleges that cheat student veterans.
8. Vets see faster turnaround time for education claims.
9. VA lacks control over own data, leaks could occur: audit.
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1. [Report: Troop morale up in Afghanistan](#). U.S. soldiers had higher morale and suffered fewer mental health problems in Afghanistan last year as they handed off more duties to Afghans and saw less combat themselves, according to a report released Monday.
2. [Army program helps soldier choose life over suicide](#). The demons rushed in during the months after Levertis Jackson returned from Afghanistan in 2011. "I felt like I was losing complete control of my mind and my sanity," says the former Army specialist.
3. [Fort Carson officer accused of misconduct](#). Newly released Army documents accuse a former commander of Fort Carson's hospital of making inappropriate comments to his subordinates that some of them said made them cringe.
4. [Senior acquisition officials leave VA](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Federal Times:** Several senior executives at the Veterans Affairs Department's Office of Acquisition Operations have left the agency, the VA has confirmed.
5. [Bill to Help Veterans Pay Tuition Advances](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The New York Times:** The House passed legislation on Monday that would require public universities to charge veterans in-state tuition rates or face a financial penalty. The bill would help veterans who end up living in a new state once their service has ended and who find that the federal government's reimbursement will not fully cover the higher tuition rates that generally apply to students from out of state.
6. [House approves bill to ease in-state tuition rules for veterans](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Military Times:** A bill that would require schools to ease in-state tuition rules for veterans — or lose eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill entirely — sailed through the House today, with support from a broad, bipartisan majority of lawmakers.
7. [Military Affairs beat: Online complaints system will identify colleges that cheat student veterans](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Star Tribune:** An online complaints system that is expected to identify colleges that take advantage of student veterans and their military education benefits was launched last week to weed out fraud, waste and abuse.

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8. [Vets see faster turnaround time for education claims.](#) [Hyperlink to Article ConsumerAffairs.com:](#) Processing requests for GI Bill benefits for returning students has been speeded up considerably.
  
9. [VA lacks control over own data, leaks could occur: audit.](#) [Hyperlink to Article The Washington Times:](#) The Veterans Affairs Department doesn't have solid controls over its own financial reporting or computer data, leading to the possibility that the agency could leak information or mistake just how much it is spending, an investigation found.
  
10. [Veterans group: More effort needed on backlog, electronic medical records.](#) The Department of Veterans Affairs made significant strides in reducing the backlog of veteran disability claims last year, but aggressive steps are needed if the remaining 400,000 cases are to be handled and considerations are made for future claims, a new report suggests.
  
11. [VA backlog again gnarled in red tape, report finds.](#) NBCNews.com - By Bill Briggs, NBC News contributor. The Department of Veterans Affairs' promise to end by 2015 its massive, benefits backlog for disabled veterans ...
  
12. [Veterans group: Quality as important as quantity in addressing claims backlog.](#) [Hyperlink to Article The Washington Post \(Federal Eye Blog\):](#) The Obama administration should focus on quality as much as quantity in reviewing veterans' disability claims as it races to address a long-standing case backlog, according to a veterans group representing the latest generation of war fighters.
  
13. [Veterans group: VA needs to battle backlog of 400,000 disability claims.](#) [Hyperlink to Article The Hill:](#) A backlog of 400,000 veterans' disability claims has been waiting for longer than four months to be processed, according the veterans group Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.
  
14. [Two Conflicting Images of Veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article The Wall Street Journal:](#) Veteran support organizations such as American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Department of Veterans Affairs depict many veterans as disabled with post-traumatic stress disorder and various other service-connected disabilities going back to the Vietnam Agent Orange medical fiasco. This bleak image hardly encourages hiring managers to take a chance on veterans.

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15. [Veteran says he's been cheated out of car benefit.](#) [Hyperlink to Article WCVB \(Video\)](#): This 3:16 minute video features a Veteran who is eligible for a disability car benefit. The car dealership convinced him to purchase the car until the benefits were provided, but now he must pay for the car himself.
  
16. [VA hospital lax on surgery deaths: report.](#) [Hyperlink to Article The Washington Times](#): Key officials at a Veterans Affairs hospital in Kentucky never met to review patient records over what was behind an unusual number of deaths during surgery in the first half of 2013, federal investigators said.
  
17. [Government concedes negligence in Legionnaires' lawsuit.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#): House legislation that would make it illegal for veterans hospitals nationwide to conceal disease outbreaks won passage on Monday evening with bipartisan approval.
  
18. [Veterans with traumatic brain injuries and combat-related challenges.](#) [Hyperlink to Article MedicalXpress.com](#): Virginia Commonwealth University researchers have found that among traumatic brain injury-diagnosed veterans treated by the Veterans Health Administration between 2009 and 2011, the majority had a clinician-diagnosed mental health disorder and approximately half had both post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and pain.
  
19. [LI families recall struggles of their Mideast war vets.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Newsday](#): Tormented by memories of what they saw and did as combat troops in Iraq, three veterans sought refuge from their post-traumatic stress disorder by living in the Lake Ronkonkoma home of one of their parents at various times in 2012.
  
20. [9 Investigates: The VA's painkiller problem.](#) [Hyperlink to Article WSOC \(Video\)](#): Some veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have returned home to face another battle: addiction to prescription painkillers.
  
21. [Jamestown Nurse Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Distribute Oxycodone.](#) Former Nurse at VA Clinic in New York Faces Prison, Fines for Forging Prescriptions and Distributing Narcotics

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22. [Plan for Joplin VA clinic remains tentative.](#) Joplin Globe - ... a combat veteran of the Vietnam War — are looking forward to the day the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs opens its proposed clinic in Joplin.
23. [Paralyzed veteran eyes own rehab center.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Tampa Tribune:** For the past 18 months, that battle has meant four-hour roundtrips from his New Tampa home twice a week for three hours of intensive therapy at Project Walk Orlando, a spinal cord injury rehabilitation center.
24. [VA says Burlington clinic helping Vt. Patients.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **WCAX-TV:** Veterans Affairs showed off its new clinic in Burlington Friday, saying the facility has provided a big boost to patients in northwestern Vermont.
25. [Kat Miller: Reno could be site of Northern Nevada veterans home.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Nevada Appeal:** Lately, I've fielded a lot of questions about the governor's drive to build a veterans nursing home in Northern Nevada... We have a grant application in with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that would cover two-thirds of the cost, with Nevada funding the remaining one-third. If that is approved, construction could occur as early as January 2016, but more likely would be in 2017.
26. [VA Medical Center construction bogged in delays.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Florida Today:** Long awaited but beset by delays, the VA Medical Center at Lake Nona likely will not see its first patients before 2015.
27. [Wounded Warrior Overcomes Challenges.](#) Gunnery Sgt. Pedro Aquino has overcome injuries both mental and physical from fighting in Iraq.
28. [Lawmakers: We Need More National Cemeteries.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **NewsMax:** National cemeteries across the country are reaching capacity, and legislators — especially those with large veteran populations — are asking the government to approve additional sites, Fox News reports.
29. **VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as February 4, 2014:**
  - **February 5, 2014.** HVAC-DAMA will hold a hearing entitled, "Beyond Transformation: Reviewing Current Status and Secondary Effects of VBA Technology."

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- **February 20, 2013.** HVAC Health will be holding a field hearing in Camarillo, California focusing on mental health treatment and access.
- **February 25, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee (Chairman Miller, R-Fla.) will hold a hearing to receive a legislative presentation of the Disabled American Veterans.
- **March 5, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee (Chairman Miller, R-Fla.) and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (Chairman Sanders, I-Vt.) will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- **March 6, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentations of Veterans Organizations.
- **March 26, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentations of The American Legion.

## 30. Today in History:

- [1789](#) – [George Washington](#) is unanimously elected as the first [President of the United States](#) by the [U.S. Electoral College](#).
- [1794](#) – The French legislature abolishes [slavery](#) throughout all territories of the [French Republic](#). It will be reestablished in the French West Indies in 1802.
- [1801](#) – [John Marshall](#) is sworn in as [Chief Justice of the United States](#).
- [1810](#) – The [Royal Navy](#) seizes [Guadeloupe](#).
- [1820](#) – The [Chilean Navy](#) under the command of [Lord Cochrane](#) completes the 2-day long [Capture of Valdivia](#) with just 300 men and 2 ships.
- [1825](#) – The [Ohio Legislature](#) authorizes the construction of the [Ohio and Erie Canal](#) and the [Miami and Erie Canal](#).
- [1846](#) – The first [Mormon pioneers](#) make their exodus from [Nauvoo, Illinois](#), westward towards [Utah Territory](#).
- [1859](#) – The [Codex Sinaiticus](#) is discovered in [Egypt](#).
- [1861](#) – [American Civil War](#): In [Montgomery, Alabama](#), delegates from six break-away [U.S. states](#) meet and form the [Confederate States of America](#).
- [1899](#) – The [Philippine–American War](#) begins with the [Battle of Manila](#).
- [1932](#) – [Second Sino-Japanese War](#): [Harbin](#), [Manchuria](#), falls to [Japan](#).
- [1936](#) – [Radium](#) becomes the first [radioactive](#) element to be made synthetically.
- [1941](#) – The [United Service Organization](#) (USO) is created to entertain American troops.
- [1945](#) – [World War II](#): [Santo Tomas Internment Camp](#) is liberated from Japanese authority
- [1945](#) – [World War II](#): The [Yalta Conference](#) between the "Big Three" ([Churchill](#), [Roosevelt](#), and [Stalin](#)) opens at the [Livadia Palace](#) in the [Crimea](#).
- [1945](#) – [World War II](#): The [British Indian Army](#) and [Imperial Japanese Army](#) begin a series of battles known as the [Battle of Pokoku and Irrawaddy River operations](#).
- [1948](#) – [Ceylon](#) (later renamed [Sri Lanka](#)) becomes independent within the [British Commonwealth](#).

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- [1967](#) – [Lunar Orbiter program](#): [Lunar Orbiter 3](#) lifts off from [Cape Canaveral's Launch Complex 13](#) on its mission to identify possible landing sites for the [Surveyor](#) and [Apollo](#) spacecraft.
- [1969](#) – [Yasser Arafat](#) takes over as chairman of the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#).
- [1974](#) – The [Symbionese Liberation Army](#) kidnaps [Patty Hearst](#) in [Berkeley, California](#).
- [1974](#) – [M62 coach bombing](#): The [Provisional Irish Republican Army](#) (IRA) explodes a bomb on a bus carrying off-duty [British Armed Forces](#) personnel in [Yorkshire](#), England. Nine soldiers and three civilians are killed.
- [1976](#) – In [Guatemala](#) and [Honduras](#) an [earthquake](#) kills more than 22,000.
- [1977](#) – A [Chicago Transit Authority elevated train rear-ends another and derails](#), killing 11 and injuring 180, the worst accident in the agency's history.
- [1980](#) – [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini](#) names [Abolhassan Banisadr](#) as president of [Iran](#).
- [1992](#) – A [coup d'état](#) is led by [Hugo Chávez](#) against [Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez](#).
- [1996](#) – Major [snowstorm](#) paralyzes [Midwestern](#) United States, [Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#) and ties all-time record low temperature at -26 °F (-32.2 °C)
- [1997](#) – En route to [Lebanon](#), two [Israeli Sikorsky CH-53](#) troop-transport helicopters [collide in mid-air](#) over northern Galilee, [Israel](#) killing 73.
- [1997](#) – After at first contesting the results, [Serbian](#) President [Slobodan Milošević](#) recognizes opposition victories in the [November 1996](#) elections.
- [1998](#) – An [earthquake](#) measuring 6.1 on the Richter Scale in northeast [Afghanistan](#) kills more than 5,000.
- [1999](#) – Unarmed [West African](#) immigrant [Amadou Diallo](#) is shot dead by four plainclothes New York City police officers on an unrelated stake-out, inflaming race-relations in the city.
- [2003](#) – The [Bengali Hindus](#) declares the independence of the Republic of [Bangabumi](#) from Bangladesh.
- [2003](#) – The [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia](#) is officially renamed [Serbia and Montenegro](#) and adopts a new constitution.
- [2004](#) – [Facebook](#), a mainstream online [social networking site](#), is founded by [Mark Zuckerberg](#).
- [2006](#) – A [stampede](#) occurs in the [ULTRA Stadium](#) near [Manila](#) killing 71.