

# February 21, 2014

1. **Bipartisan legislative group wants to change VA funding.**
2. **VA phasing in new ID card with improved security features.**
3. **Military Uses Unproven Mental Health Programs, Report Finds.**
4. **Report: Military efforts to prevent mental illness ineffective.**
5. **VA, Congress Shrug as Sleep Apnea Claims 'Surge'.**
6. **Veterans using marijuana to ease PTSD symptoms.**
7. **Rubio, Miller would take away employee rights in name of serving veterans.**
8. **Key Republican concerned that VA obstructed quality review in Seattle.**
9. **VA Claims Dept. Goes Paperless.**
10. **Social Security officials announce expedited claims for vets with 100% disability rating.**
11. **Veterans Affairs should focus on results, not more spending: Opinion.**
12. **Four-legged therapists help struggling veterans.**
13. **Iraq war vet talks about experience in veterans court at Lubbock conference.**
14. **A second chance for vets.**
15. **Dorn VA Medical Center opens unit for veterans.**
16. **Des Moines Vet Center celebrates move with ribbon-cutting.**
17. **VA To Receive Upgrades.**
18. **American flags made in China now banned in U.S. military.**
19. **American Legion donates to returning veterans fund.**
20. **VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as February 21, 2014:**
21. **Today in History:**

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1. [Bipartisan legislative group wants to change VA funding.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **USA Today:** Bipartisan bills were introduced last year in the House and Senate to provide what veterans organization, led by the Disabled American Veterans, say is a simple fix: approve a budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs one year in advance.
2. [VA phasing in new ID card with improved security features.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Stars and Stripes:** The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced the phased rollout of a more secure Veteran Health Identification Card.
3. [Military Uses Unproven Mental Health Programs, Report Finds.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **NBCNEWS.com:** Veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars, as well as other service members and their families, have high rates of depression, anxiety and other disorders, yet the U.S. military isn't using tested screening methods to help prevent them, a team of experts said Thursday.
4. [Report: Military efforts to prevent mental illness ineffective.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **USA Today:** The military has produced dozens of programs aimed at preventing mental illness among troops during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but there's little evidence that most of them work, a blue-ribbon panel of scientists said in a report released Thursday.
5. [VA, Congress Shrug as Sleep Apnea Claims 'Surge'.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Military.com:** Last June the VA Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation privately recommended to Allison A. Hickey, under secretary for benefits, that the Department of Veterans Affairs consider four steps to address a "recent surge" in VA compensation awards for sleep apnea.
6. [Veterans using marijuana to ease PTSD symptoms.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **KHOU-TV (Video):** A growing number of veterans suffering from PTSD are using medical marijuana to ease their symptoms even though they risk violating federal drug laws.
7. [Rubio, Miller would take away employee rights in name of serving veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Washington Post:** The latest in a series of moves against top civil servants in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) would eliminate key employment protections.

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8. [Key Republican concerned that VA obstructed quality review in Seattle.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Washington Post** A top House Republican has raised concerns that the Veterans Affairs Department obstructed the efforts of a veterans group to evaluate claims processing at a Seattle regional office.
9. [VA Claims Dept. Goes Paperless.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **KELO-TV (Video):** Workers at the Sioux Falls VA have been waging an uphill battle scaling piles of paperwork. "So what you're seeing here in Sioux Falls is really a war on paper," VA Assistant Secretary Tommy Sowers said.
10. [Social Security officials announce expedited claims for vets with 100% disability rating.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Military Times:** Veterans with a 100 percent disability rating will get their Social Security claims processed faster, thanks to a change announced by the agency Wednesday.
11. [Veterans Affairs should focus on results, not more spending:](#) [Opinion.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **NJ.com:** Over the past 12 years, the VA budget has grown more than \$104 billion, including a nearly 58 percent increase since 2009. VA Secretary Eric Shinseki has gone on record saying money is not the problem, so the answer is not more spending. In reality, supporting America's veterans requires more than endless spending.
12. [Four-legged therapists help struggling veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Press-Enterprise:** Mosley, 45, has gone from being an angry, suicidal Iraq war veteran with post traumatic stress disorder and on the brink of divorce to a man who has found some peace with himself and is working to mend the family that he nearly shattered.
13. [Iraq war vet talks about experience in veterans court at Lubbock conference.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Lubbock Avalanche-Journal:** The Dallas veteran spoke at a conference about the need for a veterans court in Lubbock County. Veterans who are suffering from post traumatic stress disorder or closed head injuries who commit crimes could be funneled through such a court, focusing on healing, coping with their disorder, rehabilitation into society and finding effective ways to keep them out of court.
14. [A second chance for vets.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **West Hawaii Today:** Veterans Treatment Court — a specialized court that takes a holistic approach to healing U.S. Armed Forces veterans who've found themselves in the criminal justice system — is being considered for Hawaii Island.

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15. [Dorn VA Medical Center opens unit for veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article San Francisco Chronicle \(AP\)](#): The Dorn Veterans Administration Medical Center in Columbia is set to hold a ribbon-cutting for a new center devoted to veterans, including those who've served since the 2001 terrorist attacks.
16. [Des Moines Vet Center celebrates move with ribbon-cutting.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Des Moines Register](#): The Des Moines Vet Center has a new site this year to celebrate its 35th anniversary and to better serve veterans bearing the mental and emotional scars of war.
17. [VA To Receive Upgrades.](#) [Hyperlink to Article KELO-TV](#): “We have seen a dramatic expansion in the VA footprint, not just in hospitals, but in the community-based outpatient clinics as well. We've seen that here in the Dakotas because the VA's responsibility is to serve those who have served,” Sowers said.
18. [American flags made in China now banned in U.S. military.](#) [KMOV.com](#) “I thought it was appalling our Department of Defense would have flags ... Chinese-made flags cost significantly less than all-American ones. ... The Rohnert Park company makes thousands of flags each year, mainly for the Department of Veteran Affairs, which was already required to ...
19. [American Legion donates to returning veterans fund.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Marshall News Messenger](#): “They’re very appreciative of it. Some of these guys who are coming back, they’re hurt or injured or have problems paying light bills or some type of household expense and the VA (Veterans Affairs) only provides so much so we help.”
20. **VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as February 21, 2014:**
  - **February 25, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will hold a hearing to receive a legislative presentation of the Disabled American Veterans.
  - **February 26, 2014.** HVAC, Subcommittee on Health will conduct an oversight hearing entitled, “VA Accountability: Assessing Actions Taken in Response to Subcommittee Oversight.”
  - **February 27, 2014.** Hearing of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs (HVAC EO) entitled, “VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program: Further Performance and Workload Management Improvements Needed.”
  - **March 5, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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- **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: BVA, JWV, MOPH, AMVETS, TREA, MOAA, VVA, NGUAS and NASDVA.
- **March 12, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentations of Veterans Organizations: PVA, IAVA, GSW, WWP, FRA, AFSA, NCAO, AXPOW.
- **March 25, 2014.** SAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.
- **March 25, 2014.** SVAC, Full Committee, "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015."
- **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.
- **March 27, 2014.** HAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.

## 21. Today in History:

- [1808](#) – Without a previous declaration of war, Russian troops cross the border to Sweden at Abborfors in eastern Finland, thus beginning the [Finnish war](#), in which Sweden will lose the eastern half of the country (i.e. Finland) to Russia.
- [1828](#) – Initial issue of the [Cherokee Phoenix](#) is the first periodical to use the [Cherokee syllabary](#) invented by [Sequoyah](#).
- [1842](#) – John Greenough is granted the first [U.S.](#) patent for the [sewing machine](#).
- [1848](#) – [Karl Marx](#) and [Friedrich Engels](#) publish [The Communist Manifesto](#).
- [1862](#) – [American Civil War: Battle of Valverde](#) is fought near [Fort Craig](#) in [New Mexico Territory](#).
- [1878](#) – The first [telephone book](#) is issued in [New Haven, Connecticut](#).
- [1885](#) – The newly completed [Washington Monument](#) is dedicated.
- [1913](#) – [Ioannina](#) is incorporated into the [Greek state](#) after the [Balkan Wars](#).
- [1916](#) – [World War I](#): In [France](#), the [Battle of Verdun](#) begins.
- [1918](#) – The last [Carolina Parakeet](#) dies in captivity at the [Cincinnati Zoo](#).
- [1919](#) – German socialist [Kurt Eisner](#) is [assassinated](#). His death results in the establishment of the [Bavarian Soviet Republic](#) and parliament and government fleeing [Munich, Germany](#).
- [1921](#) – [Constituent Assembly](#) of the [Democratic Republic of Georgia](#) adopts the country's first constitution.
- [1921](#) – [Rezā Shāh](#) takes control of Tehran during a [successful coup](#)
- [1925](#) – [The New Yorker](#) publishes its first issue.
- [1937](#) – The [League of Nations](#) bans foreign national "[volunteers](#)" in the [Spanish Civil War](#).
- [1945](#) – [World War II](#): [Japanese Kamikaze](#) planes sink the escort carrier [USS Bismarck Sea](#) and damage the [USS Saratoga](#).

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- [1947](#) – In [New York City](#), [Edwin Land](#) demonstrates the first "[instant camera](#)", the [Polaroid Land Camera](#), to a meeting of the [Optical Society of America](#).
- [1948](#) – [NASCAR](#) is incorporated.
- [1952](#) – The [British government](#), under [Winston Churchill](#), abolishes [identity cards](#) in the [UK](#) to "set the people free".
- [1952](#) – The [Bengali Language Movement](#) protests occur at the [University of Dhaka](#) in [East Pakistan](#) (now [Bangladesh](#)).
- [1958](#) – The [peace symbol](#), commissioned by [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament](#) in protest against the [Atomic Weapons Research Establishment](#), is designed and completed by [Gerald Holtom](#).
- [1965](#) – [Malcolm X](#) is assassinated at the [Audubon Ballroom](#) in New York City by members of the [Nation of Islam](#).
- [1970](#) – [Swissair Flight 330](#): A mid-air bomb explosion and subsequent crash kills 38 passengers and nine crew members near [Zürich](#), [Switzerland](#).
- [1971](#) – The [Convention on Psychotropic Substances](#) is signed at [Vienna](#).
- [1972](#) – [President Richard Nixon](#) visits the [People's Republic of China](#) to normalize [Sino-American relations](#).
- [1972](#) – The [Soviet](#) unmanned [spaceship Luna 20](#) lands on the [Moon](#).
- [1973](#) – Over the [Sinai Desert](#), [Israeli fighter aircraft](#) shoot down [Libyan Arab Airlines Flight 114](#) jet killing 108.
- [1974](#) – The last Israeli soldiers leave the west bank of the [Suez Canal](#) pursuant to a truce with [Egypt](#).
- [1975](#) – [Watergate scandal](#): Former [United States Attorney General John N. Mitchell](#) and former [White House](#) aides [H. R. Haldeman](#) and [John Ehrlichman](#) are sentenced to prison.
- [1986](#) – [The Legend of Zelda](#), the first game of [The Legend of Zelda](#) series, was released in Japan on the [Famicom Disk System](#).
- [1995](#) – [Steve Fossett](#) lands in [Leader, Saskatchewan](#), [Canada](#) becoming the first person to make a solo flight across the [Pacific Ocean](#) in a [balloon](#).
- [2013](#) – [Two bomb blasts](#) in [Hyderabad, India](#), kill at least 17 people and injure more than 100 others.