

February 25, 2014

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3. **Proposed Pentagon budget favors high-tech over personnel.**
4. **Commissaries avoid cuts, but at cost to customers.**
5. **Alaska National Guard members face accusations of sexual misconduct.**
6. **Local veterans worry about funding deadline.**
7. **Veterans Journal: Promised benefits restored, but vets warn against future cuts.**
8. **Agent Orange study with OHSU co-author challenges VA's conclusions on residue-tainted aircraft.**
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1. [Leesburg Man Sentenced for Role in Procurement Fraud Scheme Affecting over \\$33 Million in Federal Contracts.](#) 16 Months Prison Time, \$1M Forfeiture for Leesburg, VA, Man for Fraud Involving Government Contracts Meant for Disabled Veterans
2. [Nashville veteran who worked while accepting disability pay pleads guilty.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Tennessean:** A Nashville man pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Nashville on Monday to theft of government property after embezzling more than \$26,900 from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
3. [Proposed Pentagon budget favors high-tech over personnel.](#) Facing fiscal constraints, the Defense Department will try to preserve high-tech warfare capabilities while cutting people and platforms and curbing the growth of pay and benefits, according to a budget preview unveiled by Pentagon officials Monday.
4. [Commissaries avoid cuts, but at cost to customers.](#) The long-feared cuts to military commissaries appear to be real: The Defense Department subsidy would drop from \$1.4 billion annually to \$400 million under a defense budget proposal the Obama administration plans to deliver to Congress next week, Pentagon officials announced Monday.
5. [Alaska National Guard members face accusations of sexual misconduct.](#) A dozen members of the Alaska National Guard face charges of sexual misconduct in what members of the guard call a severe problem in the ranks.
6. [Local veterans worry about funding deadline.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **WHAM-TV:** It's called the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, VRAP for short, and according to the VA more than 74,000 veterans are enrolled in the program. It gives approximately \$1,600 a month in tuition assistance for veterans at community colleges, but VRAP is scheduled to expire on March 31st.
7. [Veterans Journal: Promised benefits restored, but vets warn against future cuts.](#) The Providence Journal Veterans and their families protested on Capitol Hill, attended news ... project to bring accountability to the U.S. Department of
8. [Agent Orange study with OHSU co-author challenges VA's conclusions on residue-tainted aircraft.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Oregonian:** The paper, which was written by lead investigator Peter Lurker along with Fred Berman, a toxicologist at Oregon Health and Science University and two other scientists, argues that the Department of Veterans Affairs has wrongly downplayed the likelihood that the crews who flew the C-123 aircraft were exposed to dangerous levels of toxins.

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9. [Our View: Gulf War syndrome research merits more time.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Fayetteville Observer](#): The Gulf War of early 1991 was among the quickest and most successful military operations in U.S. history. But 23 years later, a mysterious illness that has plagued veterans of that conflict remains poorly understood, difficult to treat and a painful ongoing problem for too many who served.

10. [Veterans Reluctant to Seek Mental Health Assistance.](#) [Hyperlink to Article WBOY-TV \(Video\)](#): According to a January report from Veteran's Affairs, of the service members that seek assistance from the program, more than half will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder... But beyond those, there are many that never even seek help for their mental health. This could be due to the mentality of many in the service.

11. [A Concrete Way to Honor Military Sacrifices.](#) [Hyperlink to Article The Wall Street Journal](#): But despite the best wishes and good intentions of many elected officials, our nation is not living up to this ideal. One of the principal reasons is Congress's annual failure to enact veterans appropriations bills on time.

12. [Massive veterans bill heading toward Senate vote.](#) [Hyperlink to Article USA Today](#): What has been characterized as the most sweeping veterans legislation in decades could reach the Senate floor for a vote as early as Tuesday... The legislation authored by Sen. Bernie Sanders... contains 143 provisions and would cost more than \$30 billion.

13. [Dozens of veterans priorities rolled into 1 bill.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#): Two weeks after rolling back an effort to slow cost-of-living pension increases for working-age military retirees, the Senate is now being asked to give veterans new benefits that would cost \$21 billion over the next decade.

14. [Sanders' Veteran Bill Asphyxiates the VA System.](#) [Hyperlink to Article Heritage Action for America \(The Forge Blog\)](#): ...it became clear to me that S.1982 does very little to improve services to our veterans; indeed, it actually may make things worse in some of the most vital programs, adding roughly \$20 billion in new debt along the way.

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15. [Group wants heart attack warning on testosterone.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Washington Post (AP):** A consumer advocacy group is calling on the Food and Drug Administration to add a bold warning label to popular testosterone drugs... The agency said its review was first prompted by a U.S. Veterans Affairs study published in November 2013 that showed a 30 percent increase in stroke, heart attack and death among older men taking testosterone.

16. [Defending Veterans' Rights.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Salem-News.com:** Veterans across the country are outraged and frustrated with the Department of Veterans Affairs' ("VA") improper denial of their benefits. Many vets are unsure of their rights and how to proceed in a legal action against the VA. Some are not even aware that they may bring a legal action against the VA for improperly denying their benefits.

17. [Help our Homeless Veterans and Citizens Receives Surprise Cash.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **WHNT-TV (Video):** Whether you pay attention or not, whether you like it or not, there are homeless people in our community. Many of them are veterans. One man is on a mission to make sure they get help.

18. [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.

19. [In Roseburg, veterans and the VA flare up again over the hospital's lack of intensive care.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Oregonian:** Officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Roseburg hospital have hit a frosty impasse with southern Oregon veterans who want the hospital to reinstate its shuttered intensive care unit.

20. [Task force hears veterans' testimonies.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Rapid City Journal:** About 30 local veterans gave strong, passionate testimonies on behalf of keeping the VA Black Hills Health Care System's facility open in Hot Springs, before a crowd of more than 100 people at the American Legion on Monday, Feb. 17.

21. [Special Court for Veterans Gaining Momentum.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Military.com (Minneapolis Star Tribune):** After a slow start, an innovative effort to reduce crime by veterans in Washington County is showing encouraging signs of lowering recidivism rates among vets, county court officials say... The county's veterans court was established two years ago, around the same time that similar diversion programs were sprouting up across the metro area.

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22. [Good days, bad days: Life as a chaplain's assistant in Afghanistan.](#)

Army Staff Sgt. David George's job is to protect the chaplain, a non-combatant who cannot carry a weapon. Armed always with his pistol and often with his assault rifle, George accompanies him wherever he goes.

23. [Iraq War vet honored with belated homecoming celebration.](#) It was Sunday afternoon and Tiffini Horton, 48, was nervous. Her husband never got a genuine homecoming celebration. Well, today he was going to.

24. VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as February 25, 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 26, 2014.** Senate Armed Services Committee, Personnel Subcommittee will be conducting an open session on the relationships between military sexual assault, posttraumatic stress disorder and suicide, and on Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs medical treatment and management of victims of sexual trauma.
- **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.
- **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 13, 2014.** HVAC, Full Committee, "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015."

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- **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.

25. Today in History:

- [1797](#) – [Colonel William Tate](#) and his force of 1000-1500 soldiers surrender after the [Last Invasion of Britain](#).
- [1821](#) – [Greek War of Independence](#): [Alexander Ypsilantis](#) issues a proclamation at [Iasi](#), announcing that he had "the support of a great power" (i.e. Russia).
- [1831](#) – [Battle of Olszynka Grochowska](#), part of Polish [November Uprising](#) against Russian Empire.
- [1836](#) – [Samuel Colt](#) is granted a United States [patent](#) for the [Colt revolver](#).
- [1843](#) – [Provisional Cession of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands](#) established by [Lord George Paulet](#).
- [1848](#) – Provisional government in [revolutionary](#) France, by [Louis Blanc](#)'s motion, guarantees workers' right.
- [1856](#) – A [Peace conference](#) opened in Paris after [Crimean War](#).
- [1866](#) – Miners in [Calaveras County, California](#), discover what is now called the [Calaveras Skull](#), human remains that supposedly indicated that man, [mastodons](#), and [elephants](#) had co-existed.
- [1870](#) – [Hiram Rhodes Revels](#), a [Republican](#) from [Mississippi](#), is sworn into the [United States Senate](#), becoming the first [African American](#) ever to sit in the [U.S. Congress](#).
- [1875](#) – [Guangxu Emperor](#) of [China](#) began his reign, under [Empress Dowager Cixi](#)'s regency.
- [1901](#) – [J. P. Morgan](#) incorporates the [United States Steel Corporation](#).
- [1912](#) – [Marie-Adélaïde](#), the eldest of six daughters of [Guillaume IV](#), becomes the first reigning [Grand Duchess](#) of [Luxembourg](#).
- [1916](#) – [World War I](#): the Germans capture [Fort Douaumont](#) during the [Battle of Verdun](#).
- [1919](#) – [Oregon](#) places a 1 cent per U.S. [gallon tax on gasoline](#), becoming the first [U.S. state](#) to levy a gasoline tax.
- [1921](#) – [Tbilisi](#), capital of the [Democratic Republic of Georgia](#), is [occupied](#) by [Bolshevik Russia](#).
- [1928](#) – [Charles Jenkins Laboratories](#) of [Washington, D.C.](#) becomes the first holder of a [television](#) license from the [Federal Radio Commission](#).
- [1932](#) – [Adolf Hitler](#) obtains German citizenship by [naturalization](#), which allows him to run in the 1932 election for [Reichspräsident](#).
- [1933](#) – The [USS Ranger](#) is launched. It is the first US Navy ship to be built solely as an [aircraft carrier](#).
- [1941](#) – [February Strike](#): In [occupied Amsterdam](#), a [general strike](#) is declared in response to increasing anti-Jewish measures instituted by the [Nazis](#).

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- [1945](#) – [World War II](#): [Turkey](#) declares war on Germany.
- [1947](#) – The State of [Prussia](#) ceases to exist.
- [1948](#) – The [Communist Party takes control](#) of government in [Czechoslovakia](#) and the period of the [Third Republic](#) ends.
- [1951](#) – The first [Pan American Games](#) are held in [Buenos Aires](#), Argentina.
- [1954](#) – [Gamal Abdel Nasser](#) is made premier of [Egypt](#).
- [1956](#) – In his speech [On the Personality Cult and its Consequences](#) [Nikita Khrushchev](#), leader of the [Soviet Union](#) denounces the [cult of personality](#) of [Joseph Stalin](#).
- [1964](#) – [North Korean](#) Prime Minister [Kim Il-sung](#) calls for the removal of [feudalistic](#) land ownership aimed at turning all [cooperative](#) farms into state-run ones.
- 1964 – U.S. Air Force launches a satellite employing a US Air Force Atlas/Agena combination from [Point Arguello](#) (LC-2-3) in California and from [Cape Kennedy](#) in Florida.
- [1968](#) – [Vietnam War](#): 135 unarmed citizens of Hà My village in [South Vietnam's Quảng Nam Province](#) are killed and buried *en masse* by [South Korean troops](#) in what would come to be known as the [Hà My massacre](#).
- [1971](#) – The first unit of the [Pickering Nuclear Generating Station](#), the first commercial [nuclear power](#) station in Canada, goes online.
- [1980](#) – The government of [Suriname](#) is [overthrown by a military coup](#) which is initiated with the bombing of the police station from an army ship off the coast of the nation's capital, [Paramaribo](#)
- [1986](#) – [People Power Revolution](#): President of the Philippines [Ferdinand Marcos](#) flees the nation after 20 years of rule; [Corazon Aquino](#) becomes the [Philippines'](#) first woman president.
- [1987](#) – [Southern Methodist University's](#) football program is the first college football program to receive the [Death Penalty](#) by the NCAA's Committee on Infractions. It was revealed that athletic officials and school administrators had knowledge of a "[slush fund](#)" used to make illegal payments to the school's football players as far back as 1981.
- [1991](#) – [Gulf War](#): An [Iraqi scud missile](#) hits an American military barracks in [Dhahran](#), [Saudi Arabia](#) killing 28 [U.S. Army Reservists](#) from [Pennsylvania](#).
- 1991 – The [Warsaw Pact](#) is declared disbanded.
- [1992](#) – [Khojaly massacre](#): about 613 civilians are killed by [Armenian](#) armed forces during the conflict in [Nagorno-Karabakh](#) region of [Azerbaijan](#).
- [1994](#) – [Mosque of Abraham massacre](#): In the [Cave of the Patriarchs](#) in the [West Bank](#) city of [Hebron](#), [Baruch Goldstein](#) opens fire with an automatic rifle, killing 29 [Palestinian](#) worshippers and injuring 125 more before being subdued and beaten to death by survivors.
- [2009](#) – Members of the [Bangladesh Rifles](#) [mutiny](#) at their headquarters in Pilkhana, [Dhaka](#), Bangladesh, resulting in 74 deaths, including more than 50 army officials.