

# June 24, 2013

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3. **Vets caught in dispute over water catchment systems.**
4. **Veterans Affairs feverishly working to clear claims backlog.**
5. **Hospital wins award.**
6. **VA Healthcare System adds mental health professionals.**
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1. [WWII veterans receive Congressional Gold Medal for service in Montford Point.](#) [Muskegon Chronicle - MLive.com](#) “They were the start of the civil rights movement, so that's what this medal is ... it's the highest civilian award,” said David Eling, director of the Muskegon County Department of Veteran Affairs and a retiree of the U.S. Air Force. The Marines were ...
2. [Why a 5 Percent Lending Increase Matters to Veterans.](#) [Small Business Trends](#) According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are approximately 23 million veterans currently living in the United States. In 2007, there were 2.45 million businesses with majority ownership by veterans. Those businesses accounted for \$1.220 ...
3. [Vets caught in dispute over water catchment systems.](#) [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#) A bureaucratic scuffle between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the state Department of Health is leaving veterans unable to qualify for VA loans or refinance existing VA loans at lower interest rates. The VA has declined to approve home ...
4. [Veterans Affairs feverishly working to clear claims backlog.](#) [Berkshire Eagle](#) The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has announced technology upgrades, overtime for staff members and other changes within the past two months as it attacks a huge backlog of benefit claims from veterans. However, at the local level ...
5. [Hospital wins award.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Vindicator:** The Louis Stokes Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center is the only hospital in Cleveland to receive the Get With The Guidelines—Heart Failure Gold Quality Achievement Award from the American Heart Association.
6. [VA Healthcare System adds mental health professionals.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Heritage.com:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has met the goal to hire 1,600 new mental health professionals outlined in President Obama's Aug. 31, 2012, Executive Order to Improve Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families... VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS) has hired nine new mental health professionals toward this goal.

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7. [Senators Say VA Must Do More for Military Sex Assault Victims. \*\*Hyperlink to Story\*\*](#) With the Pentagon's startling estimate that 26,000 sexual assaults occurred last year, two key senators today urged the Department of Veterans Affairs to step up efforts to provide care and benefits for veterans who experienced sexual assault in the military.
  
8. [Big Changes for Diagnosing PTSD. \*\*Hyperlink to Above Story\*\*](#) **Brain Blogger:** The effects of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can dismantle the lives of not only those who suffer from this illness, but also those of family and friends. The federal government, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and professionals within the psychiatric field are working diligently to provide alternatives in treatment for victims suffering from PTSD and their families.
  
9. [Young veteran broaches taboo mental health topics. \*\*Hyperlink to Story\*\*](#) **Houston Chronicle:** A few years ago, O'Brien might have reacted to the insult by pounding his fists into a wall or drowning his sorrows in booze. Today, as he kicks off a three-month, national bus tour to talk about PTSD and the rising incidence of soldier suicide, he is ready with a healthier, more constructive response.
  
10. [Website Makes Tracking Health Records Easier for Vets. \*\*Hyperlink to Story\*\*](#) **Your News Now (YNN) Rochester:** Managing health care and keeping track of records can be complicated. The Department of Veterans Affairs has an online system for veterans that makes some of that easier. "It's one of the neatest things the VA has done in a long time," said Ken Moore of the Monroe County Veterans Services.
  
11. [Experts tout Blue Button as enabling information exchange between medical provider and patient. \*\*Hyperlink to Story\*\*](#) **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette:** At its heart, the Blue Button initiative is about health data -- your health data. Right now, unless you are an extremely meticulous note-keeper, most of your health data -- physicians visited, diagnoses, lab tests, recent prescriptions and more -- are housed by doctors and health insurers, on computers and servers and, in some cases, in manila folders.

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12. [Veterans Support Center in Roseville reaches out to all vets.](#) **Hyperlink to Story Macomb Daily:** There are nearly 900,000 pending claims for disability compensation and pensions awaiting decisions, and a new Veterans Benefits Management System is trying to deal with them. Polzin emphasized the importance of mental health care and a need for more outreach by the VA.
  
13. [VA 'surge' closes out 97 percent of oldest disability claims.](#) **Hyperlink to Story WFED-AM (Federal News Radio):** Over the past two months, the Department of Veterans Affairs surge accomplished nearly all that it set out to do, processing all the claims that have been waiting for two years or more.
  
14. [Warner sees progress in VA disability claims backlog problem.](#) **Hyperlink to Story The Daily Press:** The Virginia senator has touted the College of William and Mary's veterans benefit clinic, which enlists law school students to help veterans with claims that are considered difficult or complex.
  
15. [Veterans disability claims on fast track.](#) **Hyperlink to Story Argus Leader:** Few of those backlogged claims are from South Dakota, according to Larry Zimmerman, South Dakota's secretary of veterans affairs. The percentage of South Dakota veterans whose claims take longer than 120 days is a "very small window compared to the rest of the nation," he said.
  
16. [Veterans Affairs feverishly working to clear claims backlog.](#) **Hyperlink to Story Berkshire Eagle:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has announced technology upgrades, overtime for staff members and other changes within the past two months as it attacks a huge backlog of benefit claims from veterans.
  
17. [eBenefits available at Waco VA.](#) **Hyperlink to Story Killeen Daily Herald:** A paperless method of filing disability claims with the VA is now possible in Central Texas. The Department of Veterans Affairs announced the online Veterans Benefits Management System is now available at all 56 regional VA offices, including Waco.

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18. [Lawmakers want to know more about VA's quick progress on old claims.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Army Times:** While lawmakers are encouraged that the Veterans Affairs Department has processed 65,000 older disability claims in two months, they want details about the disposition and accuracy of the ratings decisions.
  
19. [Bill would help rural veterans access VA services.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Army Times:** At the urging of Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee is ordering an assessment of Veterans Affairs Department-operated outpatient clinics in rural areas to determine, among other things, if they fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for access by the disabled.
  
20. [Senators to VA: Ramp up outreach on burn pit registry.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Army Times:** The Senate Appropriations Committee is turning up the heat on the Veterans Affairs Department to establish a registry for troops exposed to potentially toxic fumes from open-air burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.
  
21. [Advocates Fear VA Changes To Gulf War Illness Research Panel.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Forbes:** Now advocates say that recent changes to the committee's charter approved by VA Secretary Eric Shinseki strip the panel of its independence and its mandate to press the federal government to develop treatments.
  
22. [Tucson seeks to end veteran homelessness by 2015.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **KOLD-TV:** Tucson is one of 25 "flagship cities" selected by the Obama administration to take part in an initiative to end homelessness among veterans, Tucson mayor Jonathan Rothschild said Friday. The goal is to end veteran homelessness by the year 2015.
  
23. [City effort aims to help homeless vets.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Arizona Daily Star:** Mayor Jonathan Rothschild wants to find a solution to the plight of homeless veterans in Tucson... President Obama's administration recently selected Tucson as one of 25 cities to participate in an initiative to end homelessness among veterans.

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24. [Veteran trains to compete in National Veterans Wheelchair Games.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Joplin Globe:** He is training now to compete July 13-18 in the National Veterans' Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Fla. The largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world, it is presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America.
25. [Towns teaming up to help veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Worcester Telegram & Gazette:** Beginning July 1, veterans in Grafton, Shrewsbury, Northboro and Westboro will have more opportunity for assistance when the new Central Massachusetts Veterans Services District starts... The regionalized veterans' service is intended to enhance services provided to veterans and save money for most of the towns.
26. [Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation gives veterans a chance for an education.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **KUSA-TV Video):** The Colorado Chapter of the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation has recently seen a surge in requests for support... "We'll be supporting 200 men and women around the country and 51 in Colorado. That is a 10 percent increase from last year." Boian said.
27. [Iowa ceremony to honor heroic cavalryman.](#) [Hyperlink to Story](#) **Omaha World-Herald (AP):** Officials will dedicate a grave marker for a cavalryman who won the Medal of Honor during the Indian Wars in the 1870s... An Iowa National Guard honor guard and Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Director Robert King will join for the ceremony Saturday at Rose Hill Cemetery near Fredericksburg.
28. **VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as June 24, 2013:**
- **June 26, 2013.** HVAC Economic Opportunity Subcommittee will hold a legislative hearing on the following bills. Time: TBD
- The tentative bill list is as follows:
- HR 331 – School Consortium Bill, to permit the centralized reporting of Veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions.

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- HR 1357 – VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, to improve the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program by providing assistance under such program for certain training programs that are considered less than fulltime.
  - HR 1796 – Troop Talent Act, ensure that the education and training provided members of the Armed Forces and Veterans better assists members and Veterans in obtaining civilian certifications and licenses, and for other purposes.
  - HR 2210 – Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship Improvements Act of 2013, amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility of children of certain deceased Veterans to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
  - Education bill on ‘irrevocable decision’.
  - Draft “Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration Act of 2009,” this is a reprise of a Buyer Bill from 2009 that would split off from VBA a new “Economic Opportunity Administration.”
- **June 27, 2013.** HVAC will hold a hearing to discuss VA’s capital investment options to provide Veterans with care. 10:00 A.M.; 334 Cannon
  - **July 10, 2013.** The House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs will hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Armed Services entitled, “DOD and VA Collaboration to assist Service Members Returning to Civilian Life.” 10:00 A.M.; 2118 Rayburn

## 29. Today in History:

- [1779](#) – [American Revolutionary War](#): The [Great Siege of Gibraltar](#) begins.
- [1812](#) – [Napoleonic Wars](#): [Napoleon's Grande Armée](#) crosses the [Neman River](#) beginning the [invasion](#) of [Russia](#).
- [1813](#) – [Battle of Beaver Dams](#): a [British](#) and Indian combined force defeats the [United States Army](#).
- [1821](#) – The [Battle of Carabobo](#) takes place. It is the decisive battle in the war of independence of [Venezuela](#) from [Spain](#).
- [1859](#) – [Battle of Solferino](#) (Battle of the Three Sovereigns): [Sardinia](#) and France defeat [Austria](#) in [Solferino](#), northern [Italy](#).
- [1866](#) – [Battle of Custoza](#): an [Austrian](#) army defeats the [Italian](#) army during the [Austro-Prussian War](#).
- [1880](#) – First performance of [O Canada](#), the song that would become the [national anthem](#) of [Canada](#), at the Congrès national des Canadiens-Français.
- [1913](#) – [Greece](#) and [Serbia](#) annul their alliance with [Bulgaria](#).
- [1916](#) – [Mary Pickford](#) becomes the first female film star to sign a million dollar [contract](#).

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- 1916 – [World War I](#): the [Battle of the Somme](#) begins with a week-long artillery bombardment on the [German Line](#).
- 1932 – A bloodless [Revolution](#) instigated by the [People's Party](#) ends the absolute power of King [Prajadhipok](#) of [Siam](#) (now [Thailand](#)).
- 1938 – Pieces of a [meteor](#), estimated to have weighed 450 [metric tons](#) when it hit the Earth's atmosphere and exploded, land near [Chicora, Pennsylvania](#).
- 1939 – Siam is renamed [Thailand](#) by [Plaek Pibulsonggram](#), the country's third [prime minister](#).
- 1947 – [Kenneth Arnold](#) makes the first widely reported [UFO sighting](#) near [Mount Rainier, Washington](#).
- 1948 – Start of the [Berlin Blockade](#): the [Soviet Union](#) makes overland travel between [West Germany](#) and [West Berlin](#) impossible.
- 1949 – The first [television western](#), [Hopalong Cassidy](#), is aired on [NBC](#) starring [William Boyd](#).
- 1957 – In [Roth v. United States](#), the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) rules that obscenity is not protected by the [First Amendment](#).
- 1982 – "The Jakarta Incident": [British Airways Flight 9](#) flies into a cloud of volcanic ash thrown up by the eruption of [Mount Galunggung](#), resulting in the failure of all four engines.
- 1985 – [STS-51-G Space Shuttle Discovery](#) completes its mission, best remembered for having [Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud](#), the first [Arab](#) and first [Muslim](#) in space, as a [Payload Specialist](#).
- 2004 – In New York, [capital punishment](#) is declared unconstitutional.
- 2010 – [John Isner](#) of the [United States](#) defeats [Nicolas Mahut](#) of [France](#) at [Wimbledon](#), in [the longest match in professional tennis history](#).
- 2012 – The last known individual of [Chelonoidis nigra abingdonii](#), a subspecies of the [Galápagos tortoise](#), dies, making the species extinct.