

**From:** [Wayne Gatewood, Jr](#)  
**To:** [Wayne Gatewood, Jr](#)  
**Subject:** Veterans News for Tuesday, March 18, 2014  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 18, 2014 7:23:14 PM

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Happy Tuesday folks. Hope everyone had a great weekend. Could not get to the Vets News yesterday...I have a day job that keeps me quite busy. :-)

**For Today:** *You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.*

*Maya Angelou*

**DOD Contracts Awarded for Tuesday, March 18, 2014**

<http://www.defense.gov/contracts/contract.aspx?contractid=5243>

**As of February 2014, VA employs more than 110,000 Veterans.** VA continues to rank second only to the Department of Defense in the number of Veterans in the workplace. Veterans now comprise nearly one-third (32.4 percent) of the VA workforce as we work toward VA's goal to increase the number to 40 percent. The Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO) within the Office of Human Resources and Administration leads VA's efforts to recruit, retain and reintegrate Veterans into VA through its *VA for Vets* program. VA remains committed to recruiting the most qualified Veterans and non-Veterans to join the workforce and contribute to our mission of serving Veterans. For additional information on the *VA for Vets* program, visit the website at <http://vaforvets.va.gov>.

**Jobs For Maryland Veterans - From Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.**

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=50af3daa-f16f-4b33-96b4-a472495f501b&c=8dbaae20-aaae-11e3-9e26-d4ae52844390&ch=8e909bc0-aaae-11e3-9e79-d4ae52844390>

**American Legion Women Veteran Small Business Course.** Washington DC, March 22, 23, 2014.

<http://www.legion.org/careers/conference>

**American Legion Legislative Update for Tuesday, March 18, 2014.**

<http://editor.legionemail.com/vo/?FileID=b7c9dc2d-99f2-4758-a460-c0d2407aa55a&m=f60ba55a-761b-463f-8a2b-c1a65794d1dd&MailID=28203190&listid=84772>

**California Disabled Veteran Business Alliance Weekly Newsletter for March 18, 2014.**

<http://track.namastelight.com/v/443/bb78f36a078aaa885198a6508c6eabceb33dfad1903dcf53>

**Reserve Officers Association (ROA) SmartBrief for Tuesday, March 18, 2014.**

<http://www2.smartbrief.com/servlet/encodeServlet?issueid=14418A86-29BE-4D9F-A131-8B425FD2ED6B&sid=22cbe9eb-3ef0-4eca-8105-ef9f466dc32d>

**Reserve Officers Association (ROA) SmartBrief for Monday, March 17, 2014.**

<http://www2.smartbrief.com/servlet/encodeServlet?issueid=322DACB0-37C4-48CC-B59F-7EA67F29BDF4&sid=22cbe9eb-3ef0-4eca-8105-ef9f466dc32d>

**Job Zone Job Fairs Update - Andrews, AFB, March 26, 2014, and Dahlgren, VA, March 27, 2014.**

<http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=0990c1fbb840ccb617b5992e6&id=3c105d556b&e=4c98ba860d>

**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Legislative Update.** Maryland is simply a great State for Veterans!!

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=7279b79c-1971-45f6-956a-de41fa94b365&c=8dbaae20-aaae-11e3-9e26-d4ae52844390&ch=8e909bc0-aaae-11e3-9e79-d4ae52844390>

**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Volunteer Opportunity - Veteran Re-Entry Associate Program.**

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=37a100e9-4d68-443c-a65c-8fd8491534e0&c=8dbaae20->

[aaac-11e3-9e26-d4ae52844390&ch=8e909bc0-aaac-11e3-9e79-d4ae52844390](http://www.va.gov/opa/aaac-11e3-9e26-d4ae52844390&ch=8e909bc0-aaac-11e3-9e79-d4ae52844390)

The [2012-13 Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force Report](#) (PDF) details VA's improvements in health care and services for 1990-91 Gulf War Veterans. Visit [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar) to learn more about Gulf War Veterans' illnesses and VA benefits.

Prayers and blessings for you and your loved ones and for our selfless and brave Troops and their loved ones everywhere.

Sincerely.....Wayne

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**VA HQ Veterans News for Tuesday, March 18, 2014. Thanks to Kevin Secor, VA VSO Liaison.**

1. [Heroics detailed for 24 soon to receive Medal of Honor.](#)
2. [Navy SEALs take control of hijacked tanker in Mediterranean.](#)
3. [NATO, Ukrainian minister talk closer ties in wake of Crimea referendum.](#)
4. [Seoul: NKorea test-fires 25 short-range rockets .](#)
5. [Hawaii to lose more than \\$200M for military construction.](#)
6. [Army general pleads guilty in sex case, says 'I failed her' as leader.](#)
7. [Marijuana study in veterans wins federal backing.](#)
8. [Eric Shinseki, Secretary, Veterans Affairs Department.](#)
9. [VA To Compete for Pentagon's EHR Contract, Official Says.](#)
10. [Eric Shinseki: VA Seeks to Adopt Commercial Software for EHR Architecture.](#)
11. [New tool helps veterans and military with education benefits.](#)
12. [More veterans taking advantage of Post-9/11 GI Bill.](#)
13. [Lawsuit filed against VA Pittsburgh over Legionnaires' outbreak.](#)
14. [Rep. Flores pushes to name Waco VA hospital after WWII hero Doris Miller.](#)
15. [UPDATE: Quarantine lifted at Boise VA Medical Center's extended-care building.](#)
16. [Despite Trauma, Talents Shine At VA Hospital.](#)
17. [Mobile centers for veterans at Stockton Tuesday.](#)
18. [Ohio job fair offers help for vets who are ex-cons.](#)
19. [Widow faces setback in benefits battle.](#)
20. [Paralympics, at Peace as Wars Wind Down.](#)
21. [Last Sochi Shot: Three Combat Amputees Take Aim at Gold.](#)
22. [Stanislaus van service delivers vets to health care.](#)
23. [Routt County sees higher demand for transportation to nearest hospital for veterans.](#)
24. [VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as March 18, 2014:](#)
25. [Today in History:](#)

1. [Heroics detailed for 24 soon to receive Medal of Honor.](#) Spc. Santiago J. Erevia had orders to tend the wounded while the rest of the platoon pressed on attacking. But when he and the men under his care came under fire from four nearby Viet Cong bunkers on May 21, 1969, Erevia didn't dive for cover.
2. [Navy SEALs take control of hijacked tanker in Mediterranean.](#) A team of U.S. Navy SEALs seized control early Monday of a commercial tanker that was hijacked in the Mediterranean earlier this month by a small group of armed Libyan men, the Defense Department said.
3. [NATO, Ukrainian minister talk closer ties in wake of Crimea referendum.](#) NATO will forge closer ties with Ukraine and intensify efforts to help build up the country's military, the alliance's secretary general said Monday, a day after a controversial referendum in Crimea on secession.
4. [Seoul: NKorea test-fires 25 short-range rockets .](#) North Korea fired 25 short-range rockets into the sea off its east coast Sunday in an apparent continuation of protests against ongoing U.S.-South Korean military drills, South Korean officials said.

5. [Hawaii to lose more than \\$200M for military construction.](#) More than half of the \$449.5 million in projected military construction for Hawaii was axed from the Defense Department's 2015 budget request, and some other programs are being reduced or eliminated as the Pentagon starts to roll out the latest round of cuts.
6. [Army general pleads guilty in sex case, says 'I failed her' as leader.](#) Brig. Gen. Jeffery Sinclair formally pleaded guilty Monday to maltreating a subordinate under his command, telling a military judge in halting voice that he deceived her during their illicit three-year affair and caused her "emotional distress."
7. [Marijuana study in veterans wins federal backing.](#) The federal government has signed off on a long-delayed study looking at marijuana as a treatment for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, a development that drug researchers are hailing as a major shift in U.S. policy.
8. [Eric Shinseki, Secretary, Veterans Affairs Department.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **WFED-AM - Federal News Radio (Audio):** The Department of Veterans Affairs wants an extra \$10 billion in its overall budget for fiscal 2015. That would supply the agency with more than \$160 billion. VA Secretary Eric Shinseki tells the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee about his agency's 2015 budget request.
9. [VA To Compete for Pentagon's EHR Contract, Official Says.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **iHealthBeat:** On Thursday, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki told lawmakers that VA plans to submit an advanced version of its electronic health record system as part of the competitive bidding process to replace the Department of Defense's current EHR system, EHR Intelligence reports.
10. [Eric Shinseki: VA Seeks to Adopt Commercial Software for EHR Architecture.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **ExecutiveGov:** The Department of Veterans Affairs is seeking to upgrade its existing electronic health record system as the Defense Department holds a competition to upgrade the Pentagon's EHR system, Nextgov reported Thursday.
11. [New tool helps veterans and military with education benefits.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **AL.com:** A new online GI Bill Comparison Tool makes it easier for veterans, service members and dependents to calculate their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and learn more about the VA's approved colleges, universities and other education and training programs across the country.
12. [More veterans taking advantage of Post-9/11 GI Bill.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **McClatchy:** Since the Post-9/11 GI Bill was fully enacted in 2009, South Carolina, for example, saw the number of such students increase 89 percent, according to an analysis of VA data... Nationwide, the increase from fiscal 2009 to fiscal 2012 – the last year data was available - was 67 percent, from 564,487 students to 945,052.
13. [Lawsuit filed against VA Pittsburgh over Legionnaires' outbreak.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review:** A Vietnam veteran who volunteered at the Veterans Affairs' University Drive hospital contracted Legionnaires' disease, the man says in a lawsuit filed Monday in federal court.
14. [Rep. Flores pushes to name Waco VA hospital after WWII hero Doris Miller.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Waco Tribune-Herald:** U.S. Rep. Bill Flores is mounting an effort to rename the Waco Veterans Affairs Medical Center in honor of World War II veteran and Waco native Doris Miller.
15. [UPDATE: Quarantine lifted at Boise VA Medical Center's extended-care building.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Idaho Statesman:** The Community Living Center building at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus in Boise was quarantined for more than a week — no visitors allowed in — due to a highly contagious virus, possibly norovirus. The quarantine was lifted Monday morning, a VA spokesman said.

**16.Despite Trauma, Talents Shine At VA Hospital.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Vermont Public Radio (Audio):**

Once or twice a year, veterans share the spotlight at the VA Hospital in White River Junction, competing for the chance to move on to national competition in the visual and performing arts. As their work shows, even the most traumatic events can become fodder for compelling art.

**17.Mobile centers for veterans at Stockton Tuesday.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Press of Atlantic City:** Two

Mobile Vet Centers will be on campus at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey today... Coordinated by the Office of the Dean of Students and Veteran Affairs, the MVCs provide readjustment counseling and information resources for student veterans and help them make the difficult transition between military and civilian life.

**18.Ohio job fair offers help for vets who are ex-cons.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **San Francisco Chronicle**

(AP): Officials in the Dayton area plan a job fair catering to military veterans — including those who have felony convictions... The event on Wednesday in Dayton is being sponsored jointly by the Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Re-entry and the Dayton-Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

**19.Widow faces setback in benefits battle.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Tennessean:** When Betty Osborne

heard about World War II Marine veteran Millard Sells fighting for nearly two decades to get his veteran's disability benefits, she could only shake her head.

**20.Paralympics, at Peace as Wars Wind Down.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The New York Times:** A dozen

years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, years of grenades and land mines and roadside bombs, left thousands of American soldiers and their allies without limbs. Many of them regained a sense of self after being introduced to adaptive sports, enjoying life outside the constraints of wheelchairs or prosthetic legs.

**21.Last Sochi Shot: Three Combat Amputees Take Aim at Gold.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **NBCNews.com:**

The trio — two retired Marines wounded in Afghanistan and a former U.S. soldier severely injured in Iraq — proudly dubs itself the “Ugly Hockey Line.” As a unit that separately weathered enemy fire, they’re embracing a new mission at the 2014 Winter Paralympics in Sochi: shut down the opponents’ top scorers and finally claim gold in Russia.

**22.Stanislaus van service delivers vets to health care.** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Modesto Bee:** Respect

flows both ways when Joe Madden drives aging and ailing military veterans to Bay Area clinics... For five years, Madden used his own car and gas to cart others, often older, to Department of Veterans Affairs clinics in Livermore and Palo Alto.

**23.Routt County sees higher demand for transportation to nearest hospital for veterans.** [Hyperlink to](#)

[Article](#) **Steamboat Pilot & Today:** And with a recent uptick in the number of veterans who need help making the trip, Stanko said it may be time to take another look at the local veterans transportation system that largely has stayed static for the past 12 years.

**24.VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as March 18, 2014:**

➤ **March 25, 2014.** SAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.

➤ **March 25, 2014.** HVAC, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity will hold a hearing on Veterans Affairs Bills.

- H.R. 2942 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- H.R. 3056 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a

- pilot program on the provision of outreach and support services to veterans pursuing higher education under the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
  - H.R. 3614 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to improve the recognition by states of skills learned in the military by a Veteran when issuing licenses and credentials.
  - H.R. 4031 — Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014.
  - H.R. 4037 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to training and rehabilitation for Veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes.
  - H.R. 4038 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements in the information technology of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to process claims more efficiently, and for other purposes.
  - H.R. 4147 — Student Veterans IT Upgrade Act.
  - H.R. 4150 — Veterans Employment and Training Service Longitudinal Study Act of 2014.
  - H.R. 4151 — Veterans Education Survey Act of 2014.
- **March 25, 2014.** HVAC O&I will hold legislative hearing with issues related to construction, health, and other matters.
- *HR 3593* – Mandating arrangement with US Army Corps of Engineers for three major construction projects
  - *Draft bill* – informed consent for psychotropic drugs
  - *Draft bill* – oversight of contracts with service-disabled veteran owned small businesses
  - *Draft bill* –Gulf War Illness
  - *Draft bill* –Improve information security by implementing actions to improve transparency and governance
  - *Draft bill* –Biological implant protocol and procurement
- **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 26, 2014:** HVAC DAMA will hold a Legislative Hearing on bills related to NCA and VBA.
- HR 2018 – Honor Those Who Served Act
  - HR 2088 – Centers for Excellence
  - HR 2119 – Veterans Access to Speedy Review (Video Hearing)
  - HR 2529 – Veterans Spouse Equal Treatment Act
  - HR 3671 – NCA Medallion Bill
  - HR 3876 – Burial with Dignity Act
  - HR 4095 – Annual COLA
  - HR 4102 – Require Payment for Accrued Benefits to Veterans Estate
  - HR 4141 – Expand Enhanced Use Leases to Cemeteries

- HR 4191 – Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act (REVISED)

➤ **March 27, 2014.** HAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.

➤ **March 27, 2014.** HVAC Health intends to hold a Legislative Hearing on health related bills.

- H.R. 183 – The Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act
- H.R. 2527 – Veterans counseling and treatment for sexual trauma that occurred during inactive duty training
- H.R. 2661 – The Veterans Access to Timely Medical Appointments Act
- H.R. 2974 – To provide for the eligibility for beneficiary travel for veterans seeking treatment or care for military sexual trauma in specialized outpatient or residential programs at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes
- H.R. 3387 – The Classified Veterans Access to Care Act
- H.R. 3508 – Qualifications of hearing aid specialists
- H.R. 3180 – To include contracts and grants for residential care for veterans in the exception to the requirement that the Federal Government recover a portion of the value of certain projects (Kaptur)
- H.R. 3831 – The Veterans Dialysis Pilot Program Review Act of 2014 (Roe)
- H.R. 4198 – The Appropriate Care for Disabled Veterans Act
- DRAFT – To authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014 and for other purposes. (VA FY14 Construction Package)

## 25. **Today in History:**

- [1644](#) – The [Third Anglo-Powhatan War](#) begins in the [Colony of Virginia](#).
- [1741](#) – New York governor [George Clarke](#)'s complex at [Fort George](#) is burned in an arson attack, starting the [New York Conspiracy of 1741](#).
- [1766](#) – [American Revolution](#): The [British Parliament](#) repeals the [Stamp Act](#).
- [1834](#) – [Six farm labourers](#) from [Tolpuddle, Dorset](#), England are sentenced to be transported to Australia for forming a [trade union](#).
- [1848](#) – [March Revolution](#): in Berlin there is a struggle between citizens and military, costing about 300 lives.
- [1850](#) – [American Express](#) is founded by [Henry Wells](#) and [William Fargo](#).
- [1865](#) – [American Civil War](#): The [Congress of the Confederate States](#) adjourns for the last time.
- [1871](#) – Declaration of the [Paris Commune](#); President of the French Republic, [Adolphe Thiers](#), orders the evacuation of Paris.
- [1874](#) – Hawaii signs a treaty with the United States granting exclusive [trade](#) rights.
- [1892](#) – Former Governor General [Lord Stanley](#) pledges to donate a [silver](#) challenge cup, later named after him, as an award for the best [hockey](#) team in Canada the [Stanley Cup](#).
- [1913](#) – King [George I of Greece](#) is [assassinated](#) in the recently liberated city of [Thessaloniki](#).
- [1915](#) – [World War I](#): During the [Battle of Gallipoli](#), three [battleships](#) are sunk during a failed British and French [naval attack on the Dardanelles](#).
- [1922](#) – In India, [Mohandas Gandhi](#) is sentenced to six years in [prison](#) for [civil](#)

- [disobedience](#). He serves only 2 years.
- [1925](#) – The [Tri-State Tornado](#) hits the Midwestern states of [Missouri](#), [Illinois](#), and [Indiana](#), killing 695 people.
  - [1937](#) – The [New London School explosion](#) in [New London, Texas](#), kills 300 people, mostly children.
  - [1937](#) – [Spanish Civil War](#): Spanish Republican forces defeat the [Italians](#) at the [Battle of Guadalajara](#).
  - [1937](#) – The [human-powered aircraft](#), [Pedaliente](#), flies 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) outside [Milan](#).
  - [1938](#) – Mexico nationalizes all foreign-owned [oil](#) properties within its borders.
  - [1940](#) – [World War II](#): [Axis Powers](#) – [Adolf Hitler](#) and [Benito Mussolini](#) meet at the [Brenner Pass](#) in the [Alps](#) and agree to form an alliance against France and the United Kingdom.
  - [1942](#) – The [War Relocation Authority](#) is established in the United States to take Japanese Americans into custody.
  - [1944](#) – The eruption of [Mount Vesuvius](#) in Italy kills 26 people and causes thousands to flee their homes.
  - [1945](#) – World War II: 1,250 American bombers attack Berlin.
  - [1946](#) – [Diplomatic relations](#) between [Switzerland](#) and the [Soviet Union](#) are established.
  - [1948](#) – Soviet consultants leave Yugoslavia in the first sign of the [Tito-Stalin split](#).
  - [1959](#) – [President Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) signs a bill into law allowing for Hawaiian statehood, which would become official on [August 21](#).
  - [1962](#) – The [Evian Accords](#) end the [Algerian War of Independence](#), which had begun in 1954.
  - [1965](#) – [Cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov](#), leaving his spacecraft [Voskhod 2](#) for 12 minutes, becomes the first person to [walk in space](#).
  - [1967](#) – The [supertanker Torrey Canyon](#) runs aground off the Cornish coast.
  - [1968](#) – [Gold standard](#): The [U.S. Congress](#) repeals the requirement for a gold reserve to back [US currency](#).
  - [1969](#) – The United States begins [secretly bombing](#) the [Sihanouk Trail](#) in [Cambodia](#), used by [communist forces](#) to infiltrate [South Vietnam](#).
  - [1970](#) – [Lon Nol](#) ousts Prince [Norodom Sihanouk](#) of [Cambodia](#).
  - [1970](#) – The [U.S. postal strike of 1970](#) begins, one of the largest [wildcat strikes](#) in U.S. history.
  - [1971](#) – In [Peru](#) a [landslide](#) crashes into [Lake Yanahuani](#), killing 200 people at the mining camp of Chungar.
  - [1974](#) – [Oil embargo crisis](#): Most [OPEC](#) nations end a five-month oil [embargo](#) against the United States, Europe and Japan.
  - [1980](#) – At [Plesetsk Cosmodrome](#) in Russia, 50 people are killed by an explosion of a [Vostok-2M](#) rocket on its launch pad during a fueling operation.
  - [1989](#) – In [Egypt](#), a 4,400-year-old [mummy](#) is found near the [Pyramid of Cheops](#).
  - [1990](#) – Germans in the [German Democratic Republic](#) vote in the [first democratic elections](#) in the former communist dictatorship.
  - [1990](#) – In the largest [art theft](#) in US history, 12 paintings, collectively worth around \$300 million, are stolen from the [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#) in [Boston, Massachusetts](#).
  - [1992](#) – In a national referendum white South Africans vote overwhelmingly in favor of ending the racist policy of [Apartheid](#).
  - [1994](#) – [Bosnia's Bosniaks](#) and [Croats](#) sign the [Washington Agreement](#), ending war between the [Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia](#) and the [Republic of Bosnia and](#)

- [Herzegovina](#), and establishing the [Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).
- [1996](#) – A [nightclub fire](#) in [Quezon City, Philippines](#) kills 162 people.
  - [1997](#) – The tail of a Russian [Antonov An-24](#) charter plane breaks off while en route to Turkey causing the plane to crash and killing all 50 people on board and leading to the grounding of all An-24s.

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VA HQ Veterans News for Monday, March 17, 2014. Thanks to Kevin Secor, VA VSO Liaison.

1. [Karzai says Afghanistan doesn't need US troops.](#)
2. [Defense: Sinclair's plea deal drops sex assault charge.](#)
3. [Reflecting on the long war and the toll it has taken.](#)
4. [Wounded warrior returns to Afghan mission.](#)
5. [Marine Corps Trials reveal wounded warriors' capabilities.](#)
6. Obama backing bad budget for military.
7. [Ariz. college may face freeze on veteran enrollments.](#)
8. [Agent Orange talk prompts memories, emotion.](#)
9. [VA program serves needs of female veterans.](#)
10. [Military sexual trauma therapy group meets at VA Clinic in MC.](#)
11. [Collateral damage: The mental health issues facing children of veterans.](#)
12. [VA says "Diabetes is a silent epidemic".](#)
13. [Hospital Alarms Pose Risk For Patients: Study.](#)
14. [Exploring therapeutic effects of MDMA on post-traumatic stress.](#)
15. [Army doctors examine bad habits.](#)
16. [Paralyzed combat veteran uses bionic suit to stand, walk.](#)
17. [Quick test could spot Alzheimer's, dementia earlier.](#)
18. [New USF counseling program helps veterans, families cope.](#)
19. [VAMC's Rural Health Team Tells Veterans About Their Benefits.](#)
20. [Neff: Providing legal assistance through veterans treatment dockets.](#)
21. [Merrillville judge pursuing veterans treatment court.](#)
22. [Court offers new options for veterans.](#)
23. [Indiana Veterans' Home's new leader is eager to right the ship.](#)
24. [The Pipes Provisio: The VA Angle.](#)
25. [News you can use.](#)
26. [Claims appeals spike for Texas veterans State workers might help reduce latest VA claims backlog.](#)
27. [Vermont's Lyndon State to host summit for veterans.](#)
28. [Public bids farewell to wax figures at former American Civil War Wax Museum.](#)
29. [Gun Show features Vietnam War era helicopters, veterans assistance.](#)
30. [Students' D.C. trip inspires fundraising to send WWII veterans on Honor Flights.](#)
31. [A nose for trouble.](#)
32. VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as March 17, 2014:
33. Today in History:

1. [Karzai says Afghanistan doesn't need US troops.](#) In his final address to Afghanistan's parliament Saturday, President Hamid Karzai told the United States its soldiers can leave at the end of the year because his military, which already protects 93 percent of the country, was ready to take over entirely.
2. [Defense: Sinclair's plea deal drops sex assault charge.](#) Defense attorneys said Sunday that an Army general has agreed to a plea deal that includes the dropping of sexual assault charges against him.
3. [Reflecting on the long war and the toll it has taken.](#) Since 2001, servicemembers have left their families to serve in dangerous hot spots. Thousands have paid the ultimate price and thousands more have come home damaged. Families back home have endured untold hardships as deployments drag on during a war in Afghanistan that long ago became the longest in U.S. history.

4. [Wounded warrior returns to Afghan mission.](#) 1st Lt. Josh Pitcher put his fear on the back burner as he climbed back through the ranks, earning the U.S. Army's Expert Infantry Badge — something not easily obtained even by soldiers with two legs.
5. [Marine Corps Trials reveal wounded warriors' capabilities.](#) When Marine Staff Sgt. Dorman Bilbrey was first encouraged last year to participate in the Marine Corps Trials, he figured swimming would be his sport. But, he wasn't so sure about how far he could swim.
6. [Obama backing bad budget for military.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Clarion-Ledger:** Almost 5.5 million veterans received care in Veteran Administration health care facilities in 2008 (va.gov), yet we know that the VA is understaffed and incapable of handling all the ailing veterans, especially the many with (1) mental illnesses and (2) injuries and conditions that will need a lifetime of treatment.
7. [Ariz. college may face freeze on veteran enrollments.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Stars and Stripes (The Arizona Daily Star):** The federal Department of Veterans Affairs has asked the state agency that oversees veterans' education to determine if the college should be allowed to keep serving such students... The VA made the request this week after its latest audit showed PCC still isn't complying with laws aimed at protecting the tax dollars that fund education benefits for veterans.
8. [Agent Orange talk prompts memories, emotion.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Hays Daily News:** More than 100 people were at the town hall meeting for Vietnam veterans to discuss Agent Orange. So many people showed up, extra chairs had to be brought in. Healthy veterans gave up their seats and stood so others could sit.
9. [VA program serves needs of female veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Globe Gazette:** The Veterans Affairs Central Iowa Health Care System, which includes the Mason City Outpatient Clinic, has a program to serve the increasing numbers of female veterans.
10. [Military sexual trauma therapy group meets at VA Clinic in MC.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Globe Gazette:** A military sexual trauma therapy group has been meeting at the Mason City Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic since October 2012... The group, which currently has six members, is for women who were sexually assaulted while serving in the military.
11. [Collateral damage: The mental health issues facing children of veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **CBSNews.com (Video):** The stories of veterans' lives upended by PTSD are all too familiar to us -- the struggles of their children practically unknown... It's estimated that as many as five million kids have had a parent or sibling serve in Iraq or Afghanistan since 9/11... veterans' kids who have psychological issues are largely on their own, if they get help at all.
12. [VA says "Diabetes is a silent epidemic".](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **KMA-AM:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs calls diabetes a silent epidemic among those who have served in the military and is dedicating resources to better management of the disease.
13. [Hospital Alarms Pose Risk For Patients: Study.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Science World Report:** Hospital alarms that are meant to improve patient safety and prevent harm are a potential health hazard to patients who spend a great amount of time in the facility. A new study suggests that redesigning the hospital alarm may lower the risk for patients.
14. [Exploring therapeutic effects of MDMA on post-traumatic stress.](#) MDMA has been banned by the federal government since 1985 as a dangerous recreational drug with no medical value. But interest is rising in its potential to help people suffering from psychiatric or emotional problems.

- 15. [Army doctors examine bad habits.](#)** Leaders at Fort Carson's Evans Army Community Hospital hope soldiers will take a smoke break as the war in Afghanistan winds down. Not a break to light up - commanders want soldiers to take a break from the bad habits that have festered in the ranks during 13 years of continuous combat, including tobacco, lack of exercise and lack of sleep.
- 16. [Paralyzed combat veteran uses bionic suit to stand, walk.](#)** Just under three years ago, a powerful bomb blast ripped the earth apart along a remote road in Afghanistan, leaving Army Sgt. Dan Rose paralyzed from the chest down. Since then, Rose has plied Rocky Mountain powder on specially adapted skis, completed his first marathon in a wheelchair and surfed on ocean waves atop a longboard.
- 17. [Quick test could spot Alzheimer's, dementia earlier.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Star Tribune:** The Mini-Cog was developed at the University of Washington and was tested several years ago in more than 8,000 patients over age 70 in the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. None had a prior dementia diagnosis, but the Mini-Cog identified cognitive problems in nearly 26 percent of them.
- 18. [New USF counseling program helps veterans, families cope.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Bay News 9:** But not every veteran is as willing to seek treatment. It's why the USF Psychological Services center is starting a new program to encourage veterans and their families to get help... Dr. Jack Darkes, a veteran himself, helped spearhead the program called "Families Serve Too." The services range anywhere from marriage counseling to talking to kids about deployment.
- 19. [VAMC's Rural Health Team Tells Veterans About Their Benefits.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **WVVA-TV (Video):** The Beckley U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs's Rural Health Team traveled to Bluefield on Saturday to teach Veterans about the benefits of Veterans Administration Medical Centers.
- 20. [Neff: Providing legal assistance through veterans treatment dockets.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Richmond Times-Dispatch:** A resource that should be more readily available to veterans dealing with war-related health issues leading to a cycle of addiction, arrest, conviction, incarceration, relapse and re-arrest, is Veterans Treatment Courts (VTCs).
- 21. [Merrillville judge pursuing veterans treatment court.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Times of Northwest Indiana:** Town Court Judge Gina Jones said the town has been selected to participate in training necessary to form the court. The training, which starts in June, is provided by Justice for Vets and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Jones said.
22. **[Court offers new options for veterans.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Times:** Debbie Mott, head of treatment services overseeing Hall County's Accountability Courts, said the county's Veterans Court began in January, and has eight veterans enrolled. Program directors are seeking funds from the state Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to continue for the 2015 fiscal year.
23. **[Indiana Veterans' Home's new leader is eager to right the ship.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Journal & Courier:** Despite its large staff, ample grounds and hale camaraderie among veterans, the quality of care at Indiana Veterans' Home has consistently ranked near the bottom of Medicare's nursing home ranking system — two stars out of five possible.
24. **[The Pipes Provisio: The VA Angle.](#)** [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Power Line:** Although we are generally able to see patients for an initial visit in a somewhat timely manner, repeat visits are much harder to come by. A patient that I might see on a biweekly basis in

private practice, I will see every few months at the VA.

25. [News you can use. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Garden Island:** Veterans can now speak directly via video conference with a VA benefits adviser in Honolulu to ask questions and discuss concerns involving their benefit claims.
26. [Claims appeals spike for Texas veterans State workers might help reduce latest VA claims backlog. Hyperlink to Article](#) **Austin American-Statesman:** As the backlog of first-time claims plummeted nationally, the number of appeals of claims that were rejected or awarded at lower-than-sought levels has ballooned. At the same time, they are taking longer than ever to resolve, leaving veterans who depend on the money scrambling to make ends meet.
27. [Vermont's Lyndon State to host summit for veterans. Hyperlink to Article](#) **San Francisco Chronicle (AP):** Vermont's Lyndon State College is hosting a summit for veterans... The Department of Veterans Affairs will also be hosting a one-day "stand down," a community-based intervention program designed to help homeless veterans.
28. [Public bids farewell to wax figures at former American Civil War Wax Museum.](#)  
Abraham Lincoln: \$1,500. John Wilkes Booth: \$350. Bidding farewell to a piece of Gettysburg history: Priceless.
29. [Gun Show features Vietnam War era helicopters, veterans assistance. Hyperlink to Article](#) **AL.com:** The Alabama Gun Collectors Spring Gun Show is this weekend at the BJCC... Several veterans organizations are on hand to answer questions and provide services for veterans. A van from the VA Hospital is also on site to provide answers to veterans' medical questions.
30. [Students' D.C. trip inspires fundraising to send WWII veterans on Honor Flights.](#) The eighth-graders from Grizzell Middle School were likely to see World War II veterans on their trip to Washington, D.C., their teachers told them.
31. [A nose for trouble. Hyperlink to Article](#) **WSOC-TV:** One of the main reasons Storm was brought to the Salisbury VA was for her tracking capability; her ability to find a person in a short amount of time can be crucial depending on the condition of the patient... People at the Salisbury VA know her, and Police Chief Jason Harrington gave his take on how Storm fits in.

### **32.VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as March 17, 2014:**

- **March 25, 2014.** SAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.
- **March 25, 2014.** HVAC, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity will hold a hearing on Veterans Affairs Bills.

- H.R. 2942 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
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- H.R. 4031 — Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014.
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- H.R. 4038 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements in the information technology of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to process claims more efficiently, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 4147 — Student Veterans IT Upgrade Act.
- H.R. 4150 — Veterans Employment and Training Service Longitudinal Study Act of 2014.
- H.R. 4151 — Veterans Education Survey Act of 2014.

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  - *HR 3593* – Mandating arrangement with US Army Corps of Engineers for three major construction projects
  - *Draft bill* – informed consent for psychotropic drugs
  - *Draft bill* – oversight of contracts with service-disabled veteran owned small businesses
  - *Draft bill* –Gulf War Illness
  - *Draft bill* –Improve information security by implementing actions to improve transparency and governance
  - *Draft bill* –Biological implant protocol and procurement
  
- **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 26, 2014:** HVAC DAMA will hold a Legislative Hearing on bills related to NCA and VBA.
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  - HR 2088 – Centers for Excellence
  - HR 2119 – Veterans Access to Speedy Review (Video Hearing)
  - HR 2529 – Veterans Spouse Equal Treatment Act
  - HR 3671 – NCA Medallion Bill

- HR 3876 – Burial with Dignity Act
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- HR 4102 – Require Payment for Accrued Benefits to Veterans Estate
- HR 4141 – Expand Enhanced Use Leases to Cemeteries
- HR 4191 – Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act (REVISED)

➤ **March 27, 2014.** HAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.

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- H.R. 183 – The Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act
- H.R. 2527 – Veterans counseling and treatment for sexual trauma that occurred during inactive duty training
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- H.R. 3387 – The Classified Veterans Access to Care Act
- H.R. 3508 – Qualifications of hearing aid specialists
- H.R. 3180 – To include contracts and grants for residential care for veterans in the exception to the requirement that the Federal Government recover a portion of the value of certain projects (Kaptur)
- H.R. 3831 – The Veterans Dialysis Pilot Program Review Act of 2014 (Roe)
- H.R. 4198 – The Appropriate Care for Disabled Veterans Act
- DRAFT – To authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014 and for other purposes. (VA FY14 Construction Package)

### **33. Today in History:**

- [1452](#) – The [Battle of Los Alporchones](#) is fought in the context of the [Spanish Reconquista](#) between the [Emirate of Granada](#) and the combined forces of the [Kingdom of Castile](#) and [Murcia](#) resulting in a Christian victory.
- [1560](#) – [Fort Coligny](#) on [Villegagnon Island](#) in [Rio de Janeiro](#) is attacked and destroyed during the [Portuguese](#) campaign against [France Antarctique](#).
- [1677](#) – The [Siege of Valenciennes](#), during the [Franco-Dutch War](#), ends with France's taking of the city.
- [1776](#) – [American Revolution](#): British forces [evacuate Boston](#), ending the [Siege of Boston](#), after [George Washington](#) and [Henry Knox place artillery](#) in positions overlooking the city.
- [1780](#) – American Revolution: George Washington grants the [Continental Army](#) a [holiday](#) "as an act of solidarity with the Irish in their fight for independence".
- [1805](#) – The [Italian Republic](#), with [Napoleon](#) as president, becomes the [Kingdom of Italy](#), with Napoleon as King.
- [1860](#) – The [First Taranaki War](#) begins in [Taranaki](#), New Zealand, a major phase of the [New Zealand land wars](#).
- [1861](#) – The [Kingdom of Italy](#) is proclaimed.
- [1891](#) – [SS Utopia](#) collides with [HMS Anson](#) in the [Bay of Gibraltar](#) and sinks, killing

- 562 of the 880 passengers on board.
- [1939](#) – [Second Sino-Japanese War: Battle of Nanchang](#) between the [Kuomintang](#) and [Japan](#) begins,
  - [1941](#) – In Washington, D.C., the [National Gallery of Art](#) is officially opened by President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#).
  - [1942](#) – [Holocaust](#): The first Jews from the [Lvov Ghetto](#) are gassed at the [Belzec](#) death camp in what is today eastern Poland.
  - [1945](#) – The [Ludendorff Bridge](#) in [Remagen](#), Germany, collapses, ten days after its capture.
  - [1947](#) – First flight of the [B-45 Tornado strategic bomber](#).
  - [1948](#) – The [Benelux](#), France, and the United Kingdom sign the [Treaty of Brussels](#), a precursor to the [North Atlantic Treaty](#) establishing [NATO](#).
  - [1957](#) – A [plane crash](#) in [Cebu](#), [Philippines](#) kills [Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay](#) and 24 others.
  - [1958](#) – The United States launches the [Vanguard 1 satellite](#).
  - [1959](#) – [Tenzin Gyatso](#), the 14th [Dalai Lama](#), flees [Tibet](#) for India.
  - [1960](#) – U.S. President [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) signs the [National Security Council](#) directive on the anti-[Cuban](#) covert action program that will ultimately lead to the [Bay of Pigs Invasion](#).
  - [1963](#) – [Mount Agung](#) erupted on [Bali](#) killing more than 1,100 people.
  - [1966](#) – Off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean, the [DSV Alvin submarine](#) finds a missing American [hydrogen bomb](#).
  - [1968](#) – As a result of [nerve gas](#) testing in [Skull Valley](#), [Utah](#), US, over 6,000 sheep are [found dead](#).
  - [1969](#) – [Golda Meir](#) becomes the first female [Prime Minister of Israel](#).
  - [1970](#) – [My Lai Massacre](#): The [United States Army](#) charges 14 officers with suppressing information related to the incident.
  - [1973](#) – The [Pulitzer Prize](#)-winning photograph [Burst of Joy](#) is taken, depicting a former [prisoner of war](#) being reunited with his family.
  - [1979](#) – The [Penmanshiel Tunnel](#) collapses during engineering works, killing two workers.
  - [1985](#) – [Serial killer Richard Ramirez](#), aka the "Night Stalker", commits the first two [murders](#) in his Los Angeles, [California](#) murder spree.
  - [1988](#) – A [Colombian Boeing 727 jetliner](#), [Avianca Flight 410](#), crashes into a mountainside near the [Venezuelan](#) border killing 143.
  - [1988](#) – [Eritrean War of Independence](#): The Nadew Command, an [Ethiopian](#) army corps in [Eritrea](#), is attacked on three sides by military units of the [Eritrean People's Liberation Front](#) in the opening action of the [Battle of Afabet](#).
  - [1992](#) – [Israeli Embassy attack in Buenos Aires](#): [Suicide car bomb](#) attack kills 29 and injures 242.
  - [1992](#) – A [referendum to end apartheid](#) in South Africa is passed 68.7% to 31.2%.
  - [2000](#) – 530 members of the [Ugandan](#) cult [Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God](#) die in a fire, considered to be a mass murder or suicide orchestrated by leaders of the cult. Elsewhere another 248 members are later found dead.
  - [2003](#) – [Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Robin Cook](#), resigns from the [British Cabinet](#) in disagreement with government plans for the [2003 invasion of Iraq](#).
  - [2004](#) – [Unrest in Kosovo](#): More than 22 are killed and 200 wounded. 35 [Serbian Orthodox](#) shrines in [Kosovo](#) and two [mosques](#) in [Belgrade](#) and [Niš](#) are destroyed.

- [2013](#) – The largest [meteorite](#) (since [NASA](#) started observing the moon in 2005) hit the [moon](#).

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VA HQ Veterans News for Saturday, March 15, 2014. Thanks to Kevin Secor, VA VSO Liaison.

1. [Denied a Medal of Honor, a worthy soldier finds out why decades later.](#)
2. [Japan testing drums dug up on Camp Foster for toxins.](#)
3. [Air Force leaders detail force cuts, defend religion policies.](#)
4. [New policy allows Navy to send some sailors back to sea early.](#)
5. [Army used Thrift Savings Plan in fake e-mail to test cybersecurity \[awareness\]\(#\).](#)
6. [Congress seeks independence for Gulf War illness board.](#)
7. [Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki says agency is open and accountable, then clams up.](#)
8. [Congress Wants to Shield Veterans From Another Government Shutdown.](#)
9. [VA is Competing for the Pentagon's Electronic Health Record Contract.](#)
10. [Women Veterans Summit is April 17.](#)
11. [Vet Groups Question \\$1 Billion VA Jobs Program.](#)
12. [Will more money for VA fix the IT 'deficiencies'?](#)
13. [Concerned Vets to testify before congress.](#)
14. [Servicemen and women: VA care for older veterans has different approach.](#)
15. [VA Mobile Vet Center to offer counseling services in Paragould, Walnut Ridge.](#)
16. [A look around the Dallas VA Hospital.](#)
17. [McGuire VA hospital shows off \\$8 million renovation to laundry.](#)
18. [VA clinic moving to MCLB.](#)
19. [Wisconsin delegation pushes VA on claims backlog.](#)
20. [Experts: Veterans' Disability Programs Need Reform.](#)
21. [Homeless vets forced to leave: Where will they go?](#)
22. [On flag protests, court takes the VA's word.](#)
23. [New, more secure veterans ID cards coming.](#)
24. [Prison inmates join new American Legion post in Indiana.](#)
25. VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as March 15, 2014:
26. Today in History:
  1. [Denied a Medal of Honor, a worthy soldier finds out why decades later.](#) Again and again, over the decades, John "Mac" MacFarland searched lists of Medal of Honor recipients, looking for Santiago Jesse Erevia's name. He feared that his recommendation had failed to capture Erevia's extraordinary heroism.
  2. [Japan testing drums dug up on Camp Foster for toxins.](#) About 12 objects — what is thought to be a mix of culvert pipes, a wheel assembly and a drum — were discovered during a Japanese cultural assets survey at a construction site for facilities related to the new U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa.
  3. [Air Force leaders detail force cuts, defend religion policies.](#) Air Force leaders detailed future force cuts and defended the service's religious accommodation practices after coming under attack from conservative lawmakers at a congressional budget hearing.
  4. [New policy allows Navy to send some sailors back to sea early.](#) The policy allows the Navy to pull some enlisted sailors from shore duty early when sea duty vacancies

outnumber the sailors available.

5. [Army used Thrift Savings Plan in fake e-mail to test cybersecurity awareness](#). An ominous e-mail message landed in the inboxes of a small group of U.S. Army employees last month, warning of a security breach in their federal retirement plans and urging them to log in and check their accounts. The e-mail was a fake.
  
6. [Congress seeks independence for Gulf War illness board](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#)  
**USA Today:** Two representatives introduced an act Friday seeking more autonomy for a board that provides oversight on Gulf War illness research after Veterans Affairs limited the board's charge.
  
7. [Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki says agency is open and accountable, then clams up](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Washington Examiner:** Openness and accountability are important to maintain the public's trust in the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), Secretary [Eric Shinseki](#) told a congressional committee Thursday.
  
8. [Congress Wants to Shield Veterans From Another Government Shutdown](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Government Executive:** During the last government shutdown, lawmakers feared veterans were days away from not receiving their disability checks.
  
9. [VA is Competing for the Pentagon's Electronic Health Record Contract](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **NextGov:** The Veterans Affairs Department plans to enter its next generation electronic health record into the competition for the Defense Department's EHR job, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki told a hearing of the House Veterans Affairs Committee Thursday.
  
10. [Women Veterans Summit is April 17](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Salisbury Post:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the N.C. Division of Veterans Affairs are partnering to host a Women Veterans Summit and Expo on April 17. The Summit will take place from 8 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the N.C. National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters in Raleigh.
  
11. [Vet Groups Question \\$1 Billion VA Jobs Program](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#)  
**Military.com:** The administration is again hoping to establish a major veterans' employment program that would see thousands of former service members employed in public sector jobs across the country.
  
12. [Will more money for VA fix the IT 'deficiencies'?](#) [Hyperlink to Above Article](#)  
**Federal Computer Week:** The Department of Veterans Affairs wants to spend more money in 2015 on information technology, but will another \$180 million – a 5 percent increase to \$4.03 billion – be enough to shore up VA's highly publicized IT vulnerabilities?
  
13. [Concerned Vets to testify before congress](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Times-Georgian:**  
Two combat veterans from Tallapoosa plan to testify before a congressional committee soon on behalf of the VA Management Accountability Act of 2014, which would hold higher-ups in the Veterans Administration accountable for delivering improved services to veterans.
  
14. [Servicemen and women: VA care for older veterans has different approach](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Houston Chronicle:** With this change of focus, however, the in-home caregiver is responsible for more of the older veteran's care, and the VA is addressing this with additional services.

**15.VA Mobile Vet Center to offer counseling services in Paragould, Walnut Ridge.**

**Hyperlink to Article KAIT-TV:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Mobile Vet Center will visit Lawrence County on March 18 and Greene County on March 19.

**16.A look around the Dallas VA Hospital.** **Hyperlink to Article Dallas Business Journal:**

The Veterans Affairs of North Texas Health Care System will open a 35-bed psychiatric unit in early June, and officials at the South Dallas hospital took the opportunity to showcase that and other parts of the facility on a media tour Friday.

**17.McGuire VA hospital shows off \$8 million renovation to laundry.** **Hyperlink to**

**Article Richmond Times-Dispatch:** Albert Boyd, textile care manager at McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center, demonstrated how laundry center workers there used to have to feed sheets into a machine for ironing.

**18.VA clinic moving to MCLB.** **Hyperlink to Article WALB-TV (Video):**

It's been a work in progress, but veterans and active duty military in South Georgia will begin to see healthcare improvements as early as next month.

**19.Wisconsin delegation pushes VA on claims backlog.** **Hyperlink to Article Oshkosh**

**Northwestern:** The Milwaukee Regional Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs is one of the best in the country these days at processing veterans' disability and pension benefit claims.

**20.Experts: Veterans' Disability Programs Need Reform.** **Hyperlink to Article The**

**Weekly Standard:** Daniel Gade lost his right leg in Iraq. But Gade, an assistant professor of political science at the U.S. Military Academy, does not consider himself disabled. Instead, he uses himself as an example of how the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs often inaccurately assesses disability.

**21.Homeless vets forced to leave: Where will they go?** **Hyperlink to Article KGUN-TV**

**(Video):** Homeless in a Northwest side wash -- forced to leave -- but where will they go?

**22.On flag protests, court takes the VA's word.** **Hyperlink to Article San Francisco Chronicle:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has rules prohibiting the "posting of materials" on its property without prior approval.

**23.New, more secure veterans ID cards coming.** **Hyperlink to Article Newsday:**

Veterans enrolled in VA Health Care should be on the lookout for a new ID card.

24. **Prison inmates join new American Legion post in Indiana.** Wearing khaki-colored matching uniforms, more than 20 veterans inside a maximum-security prison in Indiana stood tall to salute the flag of the United States at an event that welcomed them as new American Legion members.

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- DRAFT – To authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014 and for other purposes. (VA FY14 Construction Package)

## 26. Today in History:

- [1493](#) – [Christopher Columbus](#) returns to [Spain](#) after his first trip to the [Americas](#).
- [1781](#) – [American Revolutionary War](#): [Battle of Guilford Courthouse](#) – Near present-day [Greensboro, North Carolina](#), 1,900 [British](#) troops under General [Charles Cornwallis](#) defeat an American force numbering 4,400.
- [1783](#) – In an emotional speech in [Newburgh, New York](#), [George Washington](#) asks his officers not to support the [Newburgh Conspiracy](#). The plea is successful and the threatened [coup d'état](#) never takes place.
- [1820](#) – [Maine](#) becomes the 23rd [U.S. state](#).
- [1848](#) – A [revolution breaks out in Hungary](#). The [Habsburg](#) rulers are compelled to meet the demands of the Reform party.
- [1864](#) – [American Civil War](#): The [Red River Campaign](#) : U.S. Navy fleet arrives at [Alexandria, Louisiana](#).
- [1875](#) – [Archbishop of New York John McCloskey](#) is named the first [cardinal](#) in the United States.
- [1888](#) – Start of the [Anglo-Tibetan War of 1888](#).
- [1906](#) – [Rolls-Royce Limited](#) is incorporated.

- [1916](#) – [President Woodrow Wilson](#) sends 4,800 United States troops over the [U.S.-Mexico border](#) to pursue [Pancho Villa](#).
- [1917](#) – [Tsar Nicholas II of Russia](#) abdicates the [Russian](#) throne and his brother the Grand Duke becomes Tsar.
- [1922](#) – After [Egypt](#) gains nominal independence from the United Kingdom, [Fuad I](#) becomes [King of Egypt](#).
- [1926](#) – The dictator [Theodoros Pangalos](#) is elected President of Greece without opposition.
- [1931](#) – [SS Viking](#) explodes off [Newfoundland](#), killing 27 of the 147 on board.
- [1933](#) – [Austrian](#) Chancellor [Engelbert Dollfuss](#) keeps members of the [National Council](#) from convening, starting the [austrofascist](#) dictatorship.
- [1935](#) – [Percy Shaw](#) founded his company Reflecting Roadstuds Limited to make "cat's eye"s
- [1939](#) – World War II: [German](#) troops occupy the remaining part of [Bohemia](#) and [Moravia](#); [Czechoslovakia](#) ceases to exist.
- [1939](#) – [Carpatho-Ukraine](#) declares itself an independent republic, but is annexed by [Hungary](#) the next day.
- [1943](#) – World War II: [Third Battle of Kharkov](#) – the Germans retake the city of [Kharkov](#) from the [Soviet](#) armies in bitter street fighting.
- [1945](#) – World War II: Soviet forces begin an [offensive](#) to push Germans from [Upper Silesia](#).
- [1952](#) – In [Cilaos, Réunion](#), 1870 mm (73 inches) of [rain](#) falls in a 24-hour period, setting a new world record (March 15 through March 16).
- [1956](#) – [My Fair Lady](#) receives its premiere performance on Broadway at the Mark Hellinger Theatre.
- [1961](#) – [South Africa](#) withdraws from the [Commonwealth of Nations](#).
- [1965](#) – President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#), responding to the [Selma](#) crisis, tells [U.S. Congress](#) "We shall overcome" while advocating the [Voting Rights Act](#).
- [1978](#) – [Somalia](#) and [Ethiopia](#) signed a truce to end the [Ethiopian-Somali War](#).
- [1985](#) – The first [Internet domain name](#) is registered ([symbolics.com](#)).
- [1985](#) – [Brazilian military dictatorship](#) ends.
- [1986](#) – [Hotel New World Disaster](#): Thirty-three people die when the Hotel New World in Singapore collapses.
- [1990](#) – [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) is elected as the first [President of the Soviet Union](#).
- [1991](#) – The [Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany](#) comes into effect, granting full sovereignty to the [Federal Republic of Germany](#).
- [2011](#) – Beginning of the [Syrian civil war](#).

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**From:** [Michael Siegel, House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)  
**Sent:** [Friday, March 14, 2014 12:21 PM](#)

**Subj:** [Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki says agency is open and accountable, then clams up](#)

*NOTE: Rep. [Tim Huelskamp](#), R-Kan., confronted Shinseki about roughly 70 recent instances he'd found in which Veterans Affairs officials refused to respond to media questions on topics including [disability claims backlogs](#), [patient deaths](#) and the [mass purging of scheduled medical tests and procedures](#).*

**Washington Examiner**  
**By Mark Flatten**

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/veterans-affairs-secretary-eric-shinseki-says-agency-is-open-and-accountable-then->

[clams-up/article/2545659](http://clams-up/article/2545659)

Openness and accountability are important to maintain the public's trust in the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), Secretary [Eric Shinseki](#) told a congressional committee Thursday.

But then he refused to answer reporters' questions about whether top administrators were disciplined for preventable patient deaths at veterans' hospitals.

"[Transparency](#) is an important aspect of our being able to establish and retain trust in this department," Shinseki told the House Committee on Veterans Affairs during a hearing about the agency's \$163.9 billion budget proposal for the 2015 fiscal year. "It's a high item on my list of things that we commit to."

Rep. [Tim Huelskamp](#), R-Kan., confronted Shinseki about roughly 70 recent instances he'd found in which Veterans Affairs officials refused to respond to media questions on topics including [disability claims backlogs](#), [patient deaths](#) and the [mass purging](#) of scheduled medical tests and procedures.

Huelskamp also pressed Shinseki about whether people in charge of veteran's medical facilities where preventable deaths occurred had been disciplined. Shinseki responded "we do hold employees accountable."

Six members of the Senior Executive Service, the top tier of agency management, have been "dismissed" over the past two years, Shinseki said without providing any details. Last year, about 3,000 employees were forced out of their jobs agency-wide because of performance issues, he said.

When the *Washington Examiner* tried to question Shinseki for specifics after the hearing, he refused to answer and dashed off to a waiting elevator, surrounded by a cadre of his staff.

VA has been under fire for a [series of recent deaths](#) due to delayed or improper care at medical centers in [Georgia](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [South Carolina](#) and [Tennessee](#).

At least 22 preventable deaths have been acknowledged by VA officials or identified by the agency's [inspector general](#) in recent investigations.

That includes the disclosure last month that a [sixth death](#) was probably linked to Legionnaire's disease at a veteran's hospital in Pittsburgh.

Internal VA documents indicate there were at least 10 additional deaths nationwide due to delayed endoscopic procedures, which have not been explained by the agency.

Shinseki did not address individual cases or specify facilities where discipline resulted.

At a Feb. 26 [subcommittee hearing](#), Robert Petzel, under secretary for health, said three senior-level employees resigned rather than be disciplined in Columbia, S.C., where six patients died due to delayed care.

Petzel added "a number of people" retired or resigned in Augusta, Ga., where delayed care has been linked to three patient deaths.

However, the Augusta Chronicle [reported this week](#) that the former chief of staff at the Augusta hospital resigned that position, yet remains on the hospital's payroll in a different job.

Disciplinary investigations in Pittsburgh were delayed because the inspector general was conducting a criminal investigation, which did not result in charges, Petzel said during the February hearing. They are still under review and should be completed shortly, he said.

On the transparency issue, Huelskamp said he is concerned about VA's unwillingness to answer questions about its problems and urged Shinseki to be more open with the media, members of Congress and the public.

Shinseki said he would check into it.

The VA's public affairs office, which handles media calls, has 54 full-time employees, according to the current year's budget.

The budget proposal for 2015 includes \$95.6 billion in mandatory spending for disability and other benefits, and \$68.4 billion in discretionary funds that pay for health care and other services.

Medical funding for 2016 would also be funded in advance, which protects it from being suspended during government shutdowns such as the one that occurred in October 2013.

Mike Siegel  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
335 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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**From: Curt Cashour, House Committee on Veterans Affairs**

**Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 10:44 AM**

**Subj: At Atlanta VA, The Only Punishments for 3 Preventable Deaths are Temporary  
Written Warnings**

**NOTE:** Channel 2 action news was the first to report on Veterans Affairs department audits that linked the deaths of three vets to mismanagement in the mental health unit at the Atlanta facility.

...Sources tell Channel 2 Action News that seven staff members were given written reprimands.

**Ga. Congressman says VA secretary should be fired for patient deaths**

**By Justin Gray**

**ABC Atlanta**

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/local/congressman-says-va-secretary-should-be-fired-pati/nfDBF/>

A Georgia congressman is reacting to an interview he saw Thursday on Channel 2 Action News.

Channel 2's Justin Gray spoke exclusively to the head of the Veterans Administration about the management problems at the [Atlanta VA Medical Center](#) linked to patient deaths. Gray talked to Rep. David Scott Friday in Washington, who is demanding that the VA secretary resign.

Scott said he is not satisfied with the answers VA Secretary Eric Shinseki gave about the patient deaths at the VA hospital in DeKalb County. Scott has personally asked President Barack Obama to fire Shinseki.

"How in the world can he even begin to say he has his hands on the problem when he hadn't even set foot there," Scott said. Channel 2 action news was the first to report on Veterans Affairs department audits that linked the deaths of three vets to mismanagement in the mental health unit at the Atlanta facility.

On Thursday, Shinseki told Gray the Atlanta VA is now in better shape. "I believe we have the right leadership in place and the appropriate changes are being made," Shinseki said.

But Scott said he thinks Shinseki himself and other top managers should lose their jobs. "The buck starts at the top," Scott said.

Sources tell Channel 2 Action News that seven staff members were given written reprimands. Two, including the hospital's director, retired. But Scott said that's not enough.

"Those families right now have question marks as to whether they want their sons or daughters in the VA hospital and that is a damn shame," Scott said. "Do you think heads should roll?" Gray asked. "Heads should roll, they should have been rolled," Scott said.

An audit by the VA's own inspector general found that the [Atlanta VA Medical Center](#) has completed seven of the 19 changes that were recommended after Channel 2's original investigation last year.

Curt Cashour  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

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*Godspeed all..... Wayne*

**Wayne M. Gatewood, Jr., USMC (Ret)**

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***"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their Nation." - George Washington***