

CONNECTIONS

JEWISH WAR VETERANS POST #373

ALBERT ARONOWITZ CHAPTER, Tampa, Florida

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OCTOBER 2020

NEXT POST MEETING

Sunday, October 18th

10:00 am Meeting

via FreeConferenceCall.com

Phone-In (Audio Only) —

(617) 829-6417

To Join Via Videoconference —

1. Download and launch the

FreeConferenceCall.com
desktop application

2. Click Join and enter your name, email address,
and the host's online meeting ID:

stevefalk



Date

Sunday October 18

Sunday October 25

Sunday November 1

Tuesday November 3

Wednesday November 11

Sunday November 15

Thursday November 26

Time Event

1000*** Post Meeting (Virtual)

0930 Dept. of Florida Quarterly Meeting,
(Virtual)

Daylight Savings Time Ends

Election Day

Veterans Day

0930** Post Meeting

Thanksgiving

* Dates and Times are subject to change

** Meeting begins at 0930 at James A. Haley VA

*** No Breakfast Provided for the October Meeting due to
COVID-19 outbreak.

**A full Participant's Guide to joining
the phone and/or videoconference
will be made available on the Post's
website at www.jwvtampa.org.**

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For the latest updates:

Check out all of our websites:

Post 373 — www.jwvtampa.org

Dept of FL — www.jwv-fl.org

JWV National — www.jwv.org



COMMANDER'S CORNER

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Sound familiar? It should – it was the beginning of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address delivered on November 19, 1863. That was 87 years after the founding of this great nation.

It is now almost two and a half centuries since the founders dedicated their fortunes and their lives to create a free nation. During that time, we endured many trials, yet here we are – the most free and secure nation on the face of the earth.

Were our founders perfect? No. That is why we have 27 amendments to our constitution. Did you know that over 11,000 amendments have been proposed? However, our founders were intelligent and worked to create the greatest nation on earth. A nation that all of us have at one time or another, just as the founders, been willing to give our lives for – some in uniform and others while fighting to right a wrong.

Did the founders agree on everything? No. They fought bitterly over many issues, but in the end, they came together for the good of the new nation.

Today we are embroiled in our own fight of national survival. Did you know that there are 7 people running for President? We tend to focus only on the 2 primary candidates. These 2 are different as day and night. Both campaigns accuse the other of being racist. Both claim they can run the country better than the other. Both claim their ideas are better than the other. Which is right? That is for you to decide.

The most important thing our founders gave us was the right to vote. It is alarming how few Americans exercise that right. In 2016 only 58.1% of eligible voters bothered to vote, but many of the other approximately 42% continue to complain about the candidates who won.

We members of the Jewish War Veterans, whether regular members, in service members, life members. or Patrons, all have our views of the candidates. Some are strong – some of us are probably in that 42% who did not bother to vote in the last election and will not vote this time. There however are 2 guiding principles within the JWV that we must adhere to: that we respect the opinion and position of our fellow members and that we leave politics out of what we do.

We are all members for two primary reasons: to be with other Jews who share our backgrounds and our desire to help our fellow veterans. Politics have no place in that.

I am asking that all members of this Post, as well as the entire JWV, refrain from making comments about political issues and I

am asking our National Commander to issue a statement to this effect. Openly making statements that are political in nature can destroy this organization. We are all entitled to our opinions and positions, but like our founding fathers, we need to respect the opinions and positions of our fellow members. Public statements on behalf of the JWV should not be made if it concerns a political issue, no matter how strongly one may feel about the issue. We need to remain an apolitical organization.

Some members have expressed to me their concern about the voting process, that one candidate or the other is trying to steal the election. I personally believe the system is set so that cannot happen. I feel every American should either go to their polling place and vote or request an absentee ballot and submit it in a timely fashion. I do not believe ballots should be sent to all registered voters blindly. It is a fact that in every state there are people on the voting rolls who are dead or no longer living at the address they have registered. This can allow anyone to submit a ballot in the name of someone else.

Both primary candidates have told us this is the most important election of our lives. In some ways they are right, considering how different their ideas are. You must decide for yourself which you believe is the best way to go. All I ask is that you take an honest look at the issues and positions, forget about your personal feeling of the candidates or party allegiance, and make an intelligent decision for the good of our great nation.

The most important thing any of us can do is vote. No matter who you vote for, be sure to vote. And have faith in the system.

Welcome to the Jewish New Year 5781. May it bring all of us peace and good health.

L'Shalom,

Larry Jasper



find us on
facebook

JWV National:

<https://www.facebook.com/JewishWarVeterans>

State of Florida:

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AS SUICIDES NEAR 100 IN 2020, AIR FORCE CREATES 'PLAYBOOK' FOR COMMANDERS

17 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Oriana Pawlyk

The U.S. Air Force's top leader said that nearly 100 airmen have taken their lives this year.

In light of that number, the service has distributed new instructions to leaders on how to talk through what could be troubling airmen during challenging times.

During a roundtable Wednesday with reporters during the Air Force Association's virtual Air, Space & Cyber conference, Chief of Staff Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown said 98 airmen have committed suicide thus far in 2020.

As a result, "we have a playbook that we pushed out to our leadership out in the field to help them work through some of this," he said. Brown did not offer additional details on the instructions.

Reiterating comments he made last month, Brown said the coronavirus pandemic may be a contributing factor.

"The challenge I've seen here is, the stressors that we have this year are much different than the stressors we had last year," he said. "We don't have a chance for [airmen] to connect and be close to the folks that they work with on a day-to-day basis ... and that creates a challenge."

But nearly half of airman suicides — 45% — are related to relationship issues, he added. "So how do I actually get more counselors who can talk to our younger airmen about relationships, and how they build meaningful relationships so they don't feel crushed the first time or second time with a relationship issue?" Brown said.

He first reported that the Air Force's suicide rate is on a path "to be as bad as last year" at the Air Force Sergeants' virtual symposium Aug. 26.

In 2019, 137 airmen across the active duty, Guard and Reserve took their own life, a 33% increase over the previous year and the highest annual number since the Air Force began keeping an official record in 2008.

"There is not one simple solution," Chief Master Sergeant of the

Air Force JoAnne Bass said Wednesday during a speech addressing mental health, trauma and suicide in the service. "When it comes to mental health, every single one of our airmen has a unique challenge or something that happens and, even if we fix policies and processes within the mental health system, there will still be challenges."



Airmen watch a presentation from Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. for the Air Force Association Virtual Air, Space & Cyber Conference 2020, at the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., Sept. 14, 2020. (Eric Dietrich/U.S. Air Force)

Bass said she has reached out to the Surgeon General's office and resiliency teams, which are already forming working groups to move some actions forward, reviewing policies that may need updating to help airmen who are struggling.

"What are our Air Force policies that we can fix, and what things do we need to take to [the Defense Department] so that we can fix some DoD policies?" she said. "I'm concerned we don't have enough mental health professionals to help in our Air Force."

But amid the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth is on the rise, not only in the military but

across the nation, Brown said.

There has also been a push to involve family members in the healing process more often. The Air Force is working to provide additional resources to those closest to an airman who detect early signs their loved one should seek help, he said.

"We've made some progress," Brown said. "[But] because the stressors are much different, as I said, there's still more work to be done."

**Help support the JWV with a
USAA Visa Credit Card.**



Go to JWV.org or USAA.com to apply.



GOVERNOR SIGNS FLORIDA VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH PROCLAMATION

10 Sept 2020

Florida joins President's Roadmap to Combat Veteran Suicides

TALLAHASSEE — Gov. Ron DeSantis has lent his signature to the Florida Veteran Suicide Prevention Month Proclamation, highlighting the state's involvement with the nation's comprehensive suicide prevention effort known as PREVENTS.

On March 5, 2019, President Trump signed Executive Order 13861, The President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS), with a call to action to highlight and accelerate progress in addressing veteran suicides.

PREVENTS seeks to change the culture surrounding mental health and suicide prevention through enhanced community integration, prioritized research activities and implementation strategies that emphasize improved overall health and well-being.

In conjunction with PREVENTS, Florida accepted the "Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families," a national call to action asking state, military and civilian interagency teams to embark on a process of collaborating, planning and implementing suicide prevention best practices and policies for service members, veterans and their families statewide.

Both PREVENTS and the Governor's Challenge acknowledge that by working together on all levels, we can substantively reduce suicide.

The PREVENTS task force is partnering with stakeholders including the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, as well as nonprofits, state and local organizations, Fortune 500 companies, and government leaders, to implement best practices to improve health and prevent suicide.

For more information on the PREVENTS campaign, visit <https://www.va.gov/PREVENTS>

For 24-hour counsel, call the National Veteran Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-8255. You may also call the Florida Veterans Support Line at 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838) or 2-1-1.



- A dime has 118 ridges around the edge.
- A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.
- A crocodile cannot stick out its tongue. (You wanna stick around long enough to find out?)
- A dragonfly has a life span of 24 hours.
- A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds. (I know many people like that)
- A "jiffy" is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second.
- A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes.
- A snail can sleep for three years.
- Al Capone's business card said he was a used furniture dealer.



THIS IS HOW TO RESPOND TO A VETERAN CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE

Task & Purpose | By Duane K. L. France

All Task & Purpose illustrations by Matt Battaglia

This article originally appeared on Task & Purpose, a digital news and culture publication dedicated to military and veterans issues.



Hopefully, you'll never need it. Sadly, many do. Here's what to say to a veteran considering suicide.

I'll never forget him. Or his voice. That southern drawl made him sound sleepy, but there was more to

it. He was weary, frustrated.

He wanted to kill himself.

It was a story as old as war: He made it home. His buddies didn't.

He was a cavalry scout, an Iraq war veteran. Somewhere in Baghdad, one of the 15-month tours during the surge. He swapped with someone on patrol, the other guy didn't make it. "Should've been me." That kind of thing.



I was coming to the end of my career, and volunteering with a local organization as a veteran peer mentor. I wasn't a mental health counselor yet, just trying help other vets. Someone in the program thought he was thinking of hurting himself.

So, I called him and asked him.

That's the first step: Get them on the phone.

It doesn't matter that you're not a medic, or a therapist, or a first responder. It doesn't matter to your friend, and it shouldn't matter to you: The fact is, you are now the one connection to life that they have. Intimidating? You better believe it. That veteran's life is in your hands in a very real and critical way.

You have to view suicide like any other kind of danger. You would do literally everything you could to save your friend, whether it's from a burning building, a car accident, or a heart attack. Suicide calls for the same kind of immediate action.

I asked him how he would kill himself.

"I've got a gun here at the house," he told me. "I've tried before."

You have to ask it directly. No messing around. No, "are you in danger?" or "are you going to hurt yourself?" or "you're not thinking of doing something stupid, are you?" All of these questions can be denied. Don't mince words. If they are far enough along in their thoughts, they think the danger lies in living, not dying. People struggling with depression view death

as peace, not pain.

"Once, I got drunk and put a round in the chamber," he told me. "I was so wasted, I forgot it had a magazine disconnect. It wouldn't fire."

Don't judge them. That's first thing to remember: It's not about you. It's not about how you feel, what you think, what you did this morning, what you're doing tomorrow. It's not about how shocked, or betrayed, or sad, or scared you feel. Your total and complete focus is on your friend, on the other end of the phone, holding onto you, holding on to life.

Once you ask directly, and get a positive answer, then you can move on, because you know what you're dealing with — a life-and-death situation.

Maybe you think you're done at that point: "Now I know, I can call 9-1-1, it's out of my hands." Nothing could be further from the truth. Settle in because it gets real from here. Listen to their story. Tell them you want to hear about it, hear about what's going on. You can be clear with one thing, though: are they in a place, head-wise, to talk? If they've already taken some pills, or they've got some other means, and they are literally seconds away from taking their own life, then 9-1-1 is absolutely one to call. You can even tell them that: "Now that I know what's going on, if you hang up, I'm calling 9-1-1 immediately. If you don't want that to happen, then keep talking to me."

So, if they're not in immediate danger, take it slow and listen to their story. Something happened today, or yesterday, or this past week, to get your friend to this place. It is certainly going to be an accumulation of things, leading back to and possibly beyond their time in the service, but the chance is that there is something very specific that happened to get to this point. That's the story you need to listen to. Without judgment. Is it because something happened with that dude or chick they've been messing with, the one you don't like? Again, not about you. It's about your friend, and their pain, their story.

At some point, something is going to come up that makes them move back toward life. A reason to live, a reason they want to live. Their kids. Their spouse. You, because you're important to them too, if there's nothing else. Don't throw guilt, don't throw shame, no "how do you think they'll feel when you're gone?" Just listen, and when they start talking about things that could happen in the future, then you may have started to turn a corner.

After talking for a period of time, they got some stuff off their chest, they might have gotten a reminder that there is some stuff to live for anyway. Here's where you can start asking questions. What was your plan? What were you going to do? Because we

— Continued on Page 6



VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION BILLS WILL MOVE FORWARD AFTER COMMITTEES REACH COMPROMISE



Sgt. Rebecca Landry and Spc. Asia Jones, 529th Support Battalion Soliders and close battle buddies, assist with suicide prevention/ intervention photos taken at Camp Taji, Iraq, June 5, 2019. (*National Guard/ Roger Jackson*)

15 Sep 2020 Military.com | By Patricia Kime

The House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees have agreed on veteran suicide prevention legislation that would provide grants to charities and other non-governmental organizations focused on mental health and ensure that veterans have access to care during mental health crises.

Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., House Veterans Affairs Committee chairman, and Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, hammered out a plan late Monday that includes nine provisions to support veterans, in addition to a measure that passed the Senate last month.

The new legislation, dubbed the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care and Treatment, or COMPACT, bill, includes a Takano-sponsored bill mandating that the Department of Veterans Affairs cover acute care for emergency mental health crises, either at the VA or at a private facility.

The compromise legislation also would require the VA to furnish annual reports on its program to support veterans in the first year after they leave service; contact veterans who have not reached out to the department in two or more years; and provide annual training to all its security officers and police on de-escalation and crisis intervention, among other requirements.

The proposal will be considered by the House committee Thursday during a markup of legislation and is expected to be approved by the Senate and the House, which in turn will vote on the Cmdr. Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act.

Last week, the committee debated more than two dozen pieces of legislation to address veteran suicide, including a measure that would have required most VA employees to be trained on asking about access to lethal means for suicide like guns and a provision aimed at improving mental health in the Native American veteran population.

Facing the possibility that no veteran suicide laws would pass by the end of the legislative calendar, the two chambers struck a compromise.

“This agreement will make real progress toward reducing veteran suicide, but our work is not finished,” Takano said Monday. “I look forward to building on nearly two years’ work to continue improving the lives of those who have served our country, and

do our utmost to prevent veteran suicide.”

The Hannon bill will require the VA to hire additional suicide prevention coordinators, in addition to allowing it to provide grants to organizations that focus on veterans’ mental health.

The measure has the support of the VA and nearly 40 veterans service organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America and American Veterans.

The President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide, or PREVENTS, guidelines on veteran suicide prevention, unveiled in June, call for suicide prevention training across professions, a public awareness campaign and community partnerships to support veterans.

PREVENTS also calls for the promotion of safe storage of weapons for firearms owners and safety training for veterans and family members.

Veterans Crisis Line — 1-800-273-8255, press 1, text 838255 or go to VeteransCrisisLine.net for assistance.

SUICIDE *(Continued from page 5)*



need to figure out how to disable that particular plan. Pills? Let me have them or give them to someone to keep safe. Guns? Rope? Let’s figure out how to keep them out of the way. Not forever, just for now, until we can make sure you’re safe.

Probably best not to get drunk or high right now, because that keeps us from being focused. The best plan is one that you and your buddy come up with together, and then you confirm that plan.

Next step: Where are we going? Who are we going to tell next? Because we want to stay alive, right? If we’re not in the same town, who do you want me to call that will be safe to hang out with you until you can get in to see your doctor, or get into the vet center, or to see a therapist?

Once they’re safe — once you know they’re safe — tell them you love them like a brother or a sister, and how thankful you are that they chose you to connect with. Trust and believe me, it is an unparalleled honor to be the one who your buddy reaches out to in their darkest moment, and it will do you good to let them know that. Once you’re 100% sure they are in a better place and have someone safe near them, you can hang up the phone.

Then you can focus on you. It will be one of the most draining and intense experiences of your life but know this: You just saved a veteran’s life, and that is no small thing.

Veterans Crisis Line — 1-800-273-8255, press 1, text 838255 or go to VeteransCrisisLine.net for assistance.



THE VA HAS CHANGED TO BETTER SERVE POST-9/11 VETERANS, WILKIE SAYS

11 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Patricia Kime

On Sept. 11, 2001, Robert Wilkie was working as legal counsel for Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., heading into the Capitol for a full day of meetings with the then-Senate majority leader when the first aircraft struck the World Trade Center's north tower.

Like many, Wilkie initially thought a Cessna had gone off course or a pilot had experienced some type of medical crisis in the sky. But when the second plane hit, he -- as with all Americans that day -- felt the wave of nausea, horror and dreaded understanding of a world turned upside down.

But also as with many, Wilkie, a former naval reservist who continues to serve in the Air Force Reserve, felt a renewed sense of resolve and commitment to his country.

Nineteen years later, Wilkie leads the country's second largest federal agency, providing benefits to more than 2.5 million post-9/11 combat veterans, as well as the caregivers of the most severely wounded.

Since taking office two years ago as secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, he has led the transition from the VA Choice program to the Mission Act community care system, supported development of the electronic health records system, expanded the VA's program for caregivers and steered through the nation's second largest crisis since 9/11, the COVID-19 pandemic.

From his office on Sept. 11, 2020, he reflected on what it means to serve post-9/11 veterans as well as veterans from other eras, saying the differences in caring for the populations are practical, not emotional, with 9/11 veterans having expectations and demands distinct from their predecessors.

For Wilkie, it means ensuring that post-9/11 veterans have access to care and benefits information faster than previously possible.

"[Post-9/11 veterans] come from a faster-moving society. They are technically savvy. They don't come from a culture where people were very happy to sit in a big room and talk to other folks and not be rushed because that was their way of doing business. These folks want answers fast. And they want care faster, and that's as much psychological as it is as it is practical," he said.

To meet their needs, the VA has worked toward introducing its electronic health record, intended to improve medical care and tracking; provide faster service for scheduling appointments

and filling prescriptions; and allow for coordination between a veteran's medical team, including the VA, Defense Department and private-sector physicians.

The VA also has expanded telehealth options, conducting more than 900,000 virtual appointments in June alone -- 22 times the number per month before the COVID-19 pandemic.

And it has broadened access to benefits and services via smartphone platforms and other forms of electronic communication, Wilkie said.

Telemedicine, at least for mental health appointments, is likely here to stay, he said, a venue that "veterans from this current generation and even a generation before are very happy to have."

Wilkie said that the tremendous responsibility he and the department have to care for all veterans can be found in its motto, which includes a line from President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address, given just four weeks before Lincoln was assassinated.

While there have been calls to alter the motto, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan," for it to be gender neutral to apply to all veterans, including more than two million women, Wilkie said the entire speech needs to be considered in context.

"We are here because of that address. It's the most righteous address ever delivered by a president. ... It calls for a just society and peace among nations. ... What's the purpose of serving? Is there a higher calling? I think [it] puts it into a very clear perspective," he said.

Since 9/11, 7,068 U.S. military personnel have died as a result of combat and 53,539 were wounded, including some of the 413,858 personnel with traumatic brain injuries recorded as a result of military operations, training and accidents.

On Sept. 11, 2001, 2,977 people died at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

The son of an Army artillery officer injured in the Vietnam War and a mother who raised the family and served as caregiver for her wounded husband, Wilkie said his thoughts on serving veterans of all eras, regardless of conflict, also date to seeing Bob Hope on a television talk show in the 1970s. The host, Phil



Wounded U.S. service members and guests stand for the national anthem during the Warrior Games recognition ceremony at the Pentagon on June 25, 2012. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Teddy Wade)



VA OFFERS DEBT RELIEF TO VETERANS IMPACTED BY NATURAL DISASTERS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today its commitment to extend debt relief to Veterans adversely impacted by natural disasters.

The department recognizes Veterans and beneficiaries are negatively impacted by the wildfires and hurricanes prompting the offering of financial debt relief.

“Veterans and their families should be focused on their health and safety during the natural disasters,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA is taking action to give those with pending debts greater flexibility during these challenging times.”

This includes the suspension of debt collection action for up to 90 days or extending repayment terms on preexisting VA debts, whichever the Veteran prefers.

To request assistance for VA financial debt relief, Veterans should contact the VA Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648.

VA CHANGES *(Continued from page 7)*

Donahue, was “trying to get Bob Hope to say that somehow, soldiers from Vietnam were different. ... They were broken souls tormented by the cost of conflict.”

Hope, who traveled the globe to entertain troops in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, said the assessment was simply not true, that the “boys” he had seen in Hue and Danang were the same he’d seen at Kwajalein and Saipan.

“My mother, from the kitchen, said, ‘God bless you, Bob,’” Wilkie said. “So, I don’t see any difference between someone who’s been in combat in Fallujah, or somebody like my father who was wounded in Cambodia.”

Wilkie said he is proud to lead a department with the “highest approval ratings in history,” serving more veterans than at “any time in our history.” The VA has been caring for caregivers of the post-9/11 era and will expand it to include caregivers of the Vietnam era and earlier in October.

It will continue, Wilkie pledged, to provide benefits to eligible veterans and care to all, not “turning anyone away,” regardless of era, type of discharge or need.

“Are there going to be hiccups? Yes, we have nine and a half million patients and 400,000 employees. But the systemic problems that existed? You don’t hear anything about those anymore,” he said.



The Veterans Administration (VA) offers Veterans Community Care Program

Under the Veterans Community Care Program (replaces the Veterans Choice Program), Veterans can work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on new criteria. Please go to the following website for further information:

<https://missionact.va.gov>

THE VETERANS HEALTH ID CARD FOR MILITARY BASE ACCESS

The Defense Department announced expanded Commissary, Military Service Exchange and MWR access as of January 1, 2020. Veterans who are eligible and want to take advantage of in-person benefits must have a Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC). Veterans must be enrolled in the VA health care system to receive a VHIC. To enroll, you can complete an application for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a signed paper application. Just call 1-877-222-8387 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. Eastern. You can also apply for VA healthcare benefits online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll, or in person at your local VA medical facility. Once your enrollment is verified, you can have your picture taken at your local VA medical center, and VA will mail you a VHIC.

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/68479/veterans-need-vhicfor-in-person-commissary-military-exchange-and-mwr-access/-for-in-person-commissary-military-exchange-andmwr-access/>



SENATORS PUSH TO EXTEND CARE TO 34,000 MORE VETERANS FOR AGENT ORANGE DISEASES

22 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Patricia Kime

Senators have ramped up efforts to add three new diseases to the Department of Veterans Affairs' list of Agent Orange-related diseases, pressing the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to include them in the final version of the national defense policy bill.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and 45 other senators sent letters Tuesday to leaders of the committees, imploring them to amend the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the VA's list of conditions linked to herbicide exposure in Vietnam and elsewhere.

The bipartisan group, including four Republicans, said an amendment is needed to support 34,000 "frustrated and desperate veterans living and dying from these health conditions."

"Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans suffer from these three conditions due to their military service, yet these veterans continue to be denied the care and benefits they have earned and desperately need," they wrote.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in 2016 deemed the three illnesses to be associated with exposure to defoliants used during the war.

But VA officials have not added them to the list, saying they are waiting for the results of two studies -- the Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study, or VE-HEROeS, and the Vietnam Era Mortality Study -- to be reviewed for publication before announcing a decision on whether to broaden the presumptive list.

VA spokeswoman Christina Noel said Tuesday that the department continues to wait for the study results that will "guide decisions on this issue."

"VA has no announcements on changes to the list of Agent Orange-related presumptive conditions," Noel said. "VA is committed to regular review of all emerging evidence of adverse impacts to Veterans from Agent Orange, but the department will not be announcing new presumptive conditions until this additional research is complete to support an informed decision."

The academies also linked hypertension to Agent Orange in 2018, but the amendment sent to the Armed Services committees does not include the condition, which also is among the most common diseases that affect the elderly.

The department estimates that providing disability compensation and benefits to veterans affected by any of the four conditions, including hypertension, would run between \$11.2 billion and \$15.2



A U.S. Huey helicopter sprays Agent Orange over Vietnam. The U.S. military used at least 11 million gallons of Agent Orange in Vietnam from 1961 to 1972. (*Wikimedia Commons*)

billion, depending on interpretations of a court ruling.

But the VA has not released an estimate for covering the roughly 34,000 veterans for the three conditions listed in the proposed amendment.

The House and Senate have both passed their versions of the fiscal 2021 defense bill and a group of members from both chambers is supposed to meet to confer on a final draft. However, the conferees have not been named and a date has not been announced for the conference, making it unlikely that a vote will occur before the Nov. 3 election.

The amendment named in the letter, S.A. 1972, passed the Senate with 94 votes. A similar amendment was introduced in the House by Rep. Josh Harder, D-Calif. Thirty veterans groups and military groups support the proposals.

Many of the senators who signed the letter have constituents affected by at least one of the three conditions. Tester has pressed the VA for years to announce a decision.

diplomatic ties with some of its wartime Asian foes. It restored ties with South Korea in 1965, and with China in 1972, though disputes over wartime history continue to affect Japan's ties with its neighbors.

Japan has yet to sign a peace treaty with Russia because of territorial disputes and has not established diplomatic ties with North Korea.

The October meeting of Post 373, scheduled for Sunday, October 18th at 10:00 am will be held either by phone or videoconference. See page 1 for more details.





COMING SOON TO A MILITARY BASE NEAR YOU: 24/7 PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

23 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Jim Absher

You may soon be able to pick up your prescriptions at the commissary or exchange without waiting in line in a room full of sick people.

The Military Health System recently announced an expansion of the prescription pick-up locker, or "ScriptCenter" program, nearly doubling the number of locations that offer the self-service option.

The new ScriptCenter dispenses your medications while you wait. The units will also have video capabilities one day, allowing a patient to communicate directly with a pharmacist if necessary.

Patients at participating locations will be given the option to get their medication either from the pharmacy or ScriptCenter when they order refills. The ExpressScript mail-order home delivery pharmacy option will still be available.

Active-duty military, dependents, retirees and all authorized Defense Department ID holders are eligible to use the ScriptCenter. Once requested, prescription refills will be available for pickup after three duty days and will stay within the system for 14 days. If not picked up, the prescriptions will

return to the pharmacy.

The ScriptCenter offers refills on most common medications; controlled substances and refrigerated medications must still be received in-person from the pharmacist.



The 7th Medical Groups' ScriptCenter is displayed inside the Dyess Exchange at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, Feb. 26, 2020. (U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman Mercedes Porter)

In use by the Air Force since 2009, the locker lets users scan their government-issued ID and enter a second personal identifier, such as date of birth or fingerprint scan, to have their medications automatically dispensed to them.

ScriptCenters are normally located in places such as the exchange or commissary, which are generally open longer hours than the base pharmacy is; however, they can be located anywhere. The ScriptCenter machine is available 24/7, allowing convenient prescription pickup options for busy folks, shift workers and the parents of children (who tend to get sick only on weekends).

There are currently 27 units at Air Force bases in the U.S. and Europe, with plans to add more than 20 additional units throughout the Military Health System in the next year.

The expansion of the program depends on each location's individual situation, such as safety and security, ease of access and availability of power and secure network communications.

SAFE TRAVELS —WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICARE WHEN TRAVELING ABROAD:



In general, Medicare will not pay for health care services or supplies if you travel outside the United States. Please go to the following website to see Medicare Traveling Rules:

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/travel?>



ARMY PROPOSES LIMITING RETIREE BURIALS IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

16 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Jim Absher

The Army is proposing limiting the number of burials in Arlington National Cemetery, and retirees may be the first to be affected.

A proposed rule published in the Federal Register seeks public comment on limiting interments, both burials and inurnments, in Arlington National Cemetery to only those who are retired, saw combat, received certain military awards, served as president or vice president or were family members of otherwise qualified individuals.

An inurnment is the placing of a deceased person's cremated remains in an above-ground columbarium or wall; a burial is the placement of a body or ashes into the ground. An interment can refer to either act. There are different rules for who can be buried and who can be inurned in the cemetery; generally, the rules for burial are stricter.

Military retirees and veterans would no longer be eligible for burial in Arlington unless they saw combat and received the Silver Star or above. Those who died on active duty would not be eligible for burial unless their death was related to combat or combat support.

For any veteran to be eligible for interment in Arlington National Cemetery, they may not have received a dishonorable discharge or been convicted of certain crimes.

Who Is Currently Eligible for Interment at Arlington National Cemetery?

Currently, any service member who dies on active duty, a former prisoner of war, highly decorated military member or retiree is eligible for burial in Arlington National Cemetery. Reservist or Guard members who died on active duty for training and all veterans are eligible for inurnment in Arlington.

Who Will Be Eligible Under the Proposed Rule?

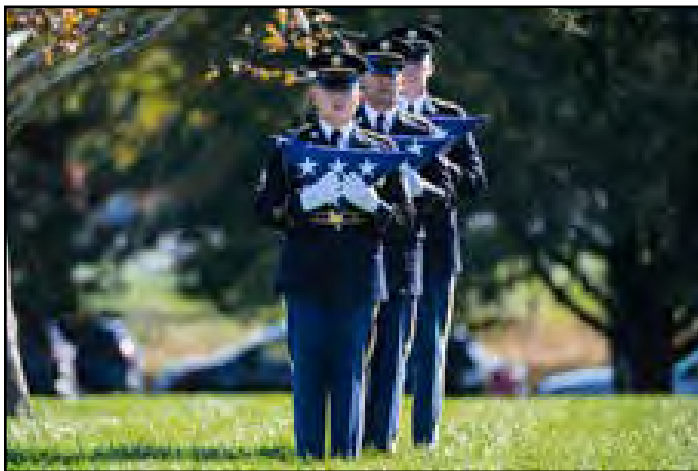
Under the proposed rule, eligibility for burial in Arlington will be limited to:

- Service members killed in action
- Service members whose death resulted from preparations or operations related to combat
- Any service member or veteran who served in combat and was awarded the Purple Heart, Silver Star or above.
- U.S. presidents or vice presidents
- Former POWs

- Qualifying family members of any eligible person

Those eligible for inurnment would include:

- Anyone eligible for burial
- Military retirees, or those eligible for retirement
- Veterans or service members with at least 24 months active duty



Soldiers hold folded American flags that will be presented to family members. *(Elizabeth Fraser/ Arlington National Cemetery)*

with qualifying combat service (Combat service requires receipt of combat pay, imminent danger or hostile fire pay, or receipt of a qualifying medal.)

- Some World War II and Korean War-era veterans
- Qualifying family members of any eligible person

Politicians would not be eligible unless they are otherwise qualifying veterans or receive an exemption from the rules.

Military retirees would no longer be eligible for burial unless they saw combat and received the Purple Heart, Silver Star or above, and veterans would no longer be eligible for inurnment unless they served in combat. Those who died on active duty would not be eligible for burial unless their death was related to

combat or combat support.

Why Is This Change Being Proposed?

Arlington is running out of space.

Without these changes, the Army says that the cemetery will run out of space for new interments by 2041, even if it expanded the size of the cemetery.

As a result of the cemetery running out of space, Public Law 115-232, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for 2019, directed the secretary of the Army to come up with a plan to revise the criteria for interments at Arlington to preserve its status as an active cemetery well into the future.

The Army says that one percent of the veteran population is currently laid to rest at Arlington every year. In fiscal 2019, this equaled 3,691 new graves. The proposed changes would limit burials to around 700 and inurnments to 1,950 each year.

The Army also says that restricting the eligibility of active-duty members for burial in Arlington to those killed in combat or combat support operations would affect approximately 43 service members each year. Most veterans who have at least one day of active service would remain eligible for above-ground inurnment, and approximately 1,900 retirees who are no longer eligible for burial would remain eligible for inurnments each year.



MILITARY RETIREES AND FAMILIES ARE GETTING AN EXTENSION ON ID CARD RENEWALS

21 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Amy Bushatz



Military dependents and retirees now have through the end of June 2021 to access benefits using ID cards that expired this year, thanks to an extension of temporary ID card rules issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Typically, cards must be applied for, issued and updated in person up to 30 days before the expiration date at one of the more than 1,600 ID card offices on military facilities worldwide. Cards that do not expire, such as those held by retirees over 65, do not need to be renewed.

But in an effort to reduce crowds at ID card facilities during the pandemic, officials in April issued guidance allowing dependents and retirees to continue to use cards that expired this year to access both military bases and benefits through the end of September.

New guidelines issued this month bump that expiration extension into next year. Now, holders of those cards will be able to use them for benefits such as medical care through June 30, 2021, and for base access through March 2021.

The pandemic allowances put in place a temporary system for remote ID card renewals, updates and reissuances. That system has also been extended indefinitely under the updated Pentagon order. Cards changed remotely will be given an expiration date of one year from the time they are issued, the new guidance states.

The update also extends an age bump for military kids to receive their first ID card. Under normal circumstances, that age is 10. Under the temporary rule, it is 14.

The extension, however, applies only to the cards held by retirees and dependents, known as the Uniformed Services ID (USID). Expired Common Access Cards (CAC) and Volunteer Logical Access Credentials (VoLAC) had previously also been allowed through September. That change will end Sept. 30 as planned.

THE COMMUNITY WITH THE MOST US VETERANS PER CAPITA IS FINALLY GETTING ITS OWN MEMORIAL

29 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Richard Sisk

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie participated in a groundbreaking ceremony this month at the Riverside National Cemetery in California for the first American Indian Veterans Memorial at any of the 150 national cemeteries run by the VA.

“More Native Americans per capita serve our country than any other demographic,” Wilkie said at the event. “This memorial will honor their sacrifice and service in the United States military.”

Once it is completed, the memorial will consist of a plaza and

walkway centered on the bronze statue of a Native American veteran to be called “The Gift,” according to a VA release.

Peter Young, executive director of the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, California, told Military.com that the figure of the American Indian is expected to be draped in the “Continental Flag” of the Revolutionary War era.

That flag is believed to have been carried by American defenders in the 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill, although historians dispute whether the flag was actually present.

Young said he is hopeful that the memorial will be completed within a year. “I’m thrilled that we’re doing this,” he said.

Funding for the memorial is being raised by the Riverside National Cemetery Support Committee, and no taxpayer money is involved, Young said.

The Riverside National Cemetery, at more than 1,250 acres, is the largest and busiest in the VA system, with more than 7,000 burials expected this year, he added.

Construction is also underway on a national memorial to Native American Veterans in Washington, D.C. The memorial, located on the National Mall, is set to be opened and dedicated this Veterans Day.



VA Secretary Robert Wilkie broke ground on the first American Indian Veterans Memorial at a VA national cemetery, which is VA’s first major monument honoring American Indian, Alaska Native and Pacific Islander Veterans, Sept. 25, 2020. (*Riverside National Cemetery Facebook page*)

IRAN VOWS 'HIT' ON ALL INVOLVED IN US KILLING OF TOP GENERAL

20 Sep 2020 | The Associated Press | By The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The chief of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard threatened Saturday to go after everyone who had a role in a top general's January killing during a U.S. drone strike in Iraq.

The guard's website quoted Gen. Hossein Salami as saying, "Mr. Trump! Our revenge for martyrdom of our great general is obvious, serious and real."



In this Nov. 25, 2019 file photo, Chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Gen. Hossein Salami speaks at a pro-government rally, in Tehran, Iran. (AP Photo/Ebrahim Noroozi, File)

the U.S. ambassador to South Africa in retaliation for Soleimani's killing at Baghdad's airport at the beginning of the year.

"We took out the world's number one terrorist and the mass murderer of American troops and many, many troops and many people all over the world," Trump said. "Qasem Soleimani is dead. He's dead. Bad guy. Bad guy. Very bad guy."

Salami rejected the report of an Iranian plot to assassinate Ambassador Lana Marks, but made clear that Iran intends to avenge the general's death.

"Do you think we hit a female ambassador in return to our martyred brother?" the general said. "We will hit those who had direct and indirect roles. You should know that everybody who had role in the event will be hit, and this is a serious message. We do prove everything in practice."

In January, Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting U.S. soldiers in Iraq in response to the fatal drone strike.

Trump has stepped up economic pressure on Iran with sanctions since he pulled the United States out of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

Tehran has continued to expand its stockpile of enriched uranium and pressured other nations to offset the harm of U.S. sanctions, while insisting it does not want to develop a nuclear weapon.

U.S. President Donald Trump warned this week that Washington would harshly respond to any Iranian attempts to take revenge for the death of Gen. Qasem Soleimani, tweeting that "if they hit us in any way, any form, written instructions already done we're going to hit them 1000 times harder."

The president's warning came in response to a report that Iran was plotting to assassinate

US FORCES ARE READY FOR IRAN'S RESPONSE TO NEW SANCTIONS, ESPER SAYS

20 Sep 2020 | The Associated Press | By The Associated Press

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In this July 21, 2019 file photo, a speedboat of the Iran's Revolutionary Guard moves around a British-flagged oil tanker, the Stena Impero, which was seized by the Guard, in the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. (Hasan Shirvani/Mizan News Agency via AP)

TOLD BY AN UNNAMED CHAPLAIN: AFTER FLIGHT 77 HIT THE PENTAGON ON 9/11, THE FOLLOWING HAPPENED.

A daycare facility inside the Pentagon had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare supervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do.



There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants who would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers.

Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, “Well, here we are, on our own.”

About 2 minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child, and the rest started gathering up toddlers.

The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac .

Once they got about 3/4 of a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing - they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West.

Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers, to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children.

The chaplain then said, “I don’t think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there.” There wasn’t a dry eye in the room.

The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted; could we expect any less from them? It was one of the most touching stories from the Pentagon.

It’s the military, not the politicians that ensures our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It’s the military who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag.

If you care to offer the smallest token of recognition and appreciation for the military, please pass this on and pray for our men and women, who have served and are currently serving our country, and honor the memory of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice! God Bless The USA!

AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS, DWIGHT EISENHOWER Will GET His DC MONUMENT

17 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Richard Sisk

The dedication of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial, just off the National Mall in Washington, D.C., is set to take place Thursday, even as the legacy of the World War II commander and nation’s 34th president has become a subject of debate in the current presidential election.

The event had originally been set for May 8, the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe, or VE-Day, a triumph

that Eisenhower oversaw as commander of allied forces through the D-Day landings, the Battle of the Bulge and the crossing of the Rhine. It was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thursday’s ceremony, at the site off Independence Avenue near the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, is for invited guests only. It will be livestreamed on Facebook at 7 p.m. ET Thursday.

Eisenhower, a five-star general and Republican, was ranked in a 2017 C-Span survey of historians as the fifth-greatest president. First on the list was Abraham Lincoln, followed by George Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt.

Thursday’s ceremony will feature an address by Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kans., a Marine Corps veteran and chairman of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission, and recorded remarks from former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

In a statement leading up to the ceremony, Roberts said he is “proud to honor Kansas’ favorite son” at the dedication. Though Eisenhower was born in Texas, he spent much of his childhood in Abilene, Kansas.

Victoria Tigwell, deputy executive director of the Memorial Commission, said, “While we have had to adjust our celebratory plans, it’s important to note that Eisenhower’s legacy, as honored through the memorial, transcends one moment in time and must be shared with the world.”

The four-acre park on which the \$150 million memorial is situated will open to the public on Friday, Sept. 18; it will be operated by the National Park Service.

The memorial, designed by architect Frank Gehry, combines “grand architectural elements, sculpture and green space” to record Eisenhower’s rise “from his humble childhood in



A view of the new Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial under construction in Washington, Friday, Sept. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR FAMED MERRILL'S MARAUDERS AWAITS PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL

24 Sep 2020 | Stars and Stripes | By Wyatt Olson

House lawmakers approved a bill Tuesday that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to members of the famed Merrill's Marauders of World War II.

The Senate passed a version of the bill late last year, and supporters say they expect President Donald Trump will sign the legislation.

The Marauders were named for Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill, who led the Army unit as it fought behind Japanese lines in Burma during the war.

The Congressional Gold Medal would recognize the extraordinary service of the nearly 3,000 men of the 5307th Composite Unit, as the Marauders were formally known.

The unit was tasked with capturing the Myitkyina airfield in northern Burma, which they did on May 17, 1944, after a 1,000-mile trek over the Himalayan foothills, through jungles and enemy resistance. Disease, exhaustion, malnutrition and the enemy winnowed them down to a handful by the time they seized the airfield.

"I feel like I'm floating on air," Robert Passanisi, a 96-year-old Marauder veteran, said in a statement after the bill passed Tuesday evening.

"It has been a long journey, and we've had to struggle through three congressional sessions to obtain this great honor," said Passanisi, who emerged as the Marauder's spokesman and historian as the years have passed.

"My one regret is that only eight of us are alive to enjoy this historic honor," he said.

The House passed the bill one day after the 77th anniversary of 2,000 volunteers from the Caribbean and United States boarding the SS Lurline on Sept. 21, 1943, in San Francisco to ship out to New Caledonia. There, another 1,000 veterans from South Pacific battles joined them to head to a mission in Burma that not even they fully understood.

Some individual members of the Marauders have in the past received the Congressional Gold Medal. Second-generation Japanese-American soldiers, known as Nisei -- some of whom worked as translators with the Marauders -- were presented the medal in 2011. Members of the Office of Strategic Services, which was the forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency, were given the medal in 2018. OSS members were among the Marauders.

But as an overall unit, Merrill's Marauders had been overlooked for what is perhaps the most prestigious award bestowed to civilians.



Members of Merrill's Marauders, gaunt from disease and malnutrition, cross a bridge over Tanai River, Burma, March 18, 1944. (U.S. Army)

Jonnie Melillo Clasen, daughter of Vincent Melillo, a Marauder who died in 2015 at age 97, has spearheaded the effort for congressional recognition of the Marauders' role in the war, which was tantamount to a suicide mission given what they faced.

She has served as an informal liaison to the still-living Marauders and their families after the group of surviving veterans grew too old and too few to maintain an association and plan reunions.

It was her father who first sparked the idea of seeking the Congressional Gold

Medal for the 5307th.

After reading a newsletter about Roy Matsumoto, a friend of his who was among the Nisei awarded the gold medal in 2011, Melillo said to his daughter, "Why can't we get this for the rest of the guys?" Clasen told Stars and Stripes Wednesday.

"And I thought, well, why not?" she said.

Passanisi and fellow Marauder veteran Gilbert Howland, 96, visited Congress three times during the current session to seek support from lawmakers of both chambers.

"It is a great honor for me and our unit," Howland said in the statement. "We all volunteered and came together as a team to complete our mission. I wish all those men were alive today to receive this honor.

"I fought in WWII, in Korea in the Pork Chop Hill sector and did two combat tours in Vietnam. But the worse fighting I experienced was in Burma with Merrill's Marauders."

With so few Marauders alive, supporters of the medal legislation have pressed ahead with a sense of urgency.

Twenty-eight were alive in 2016 when the first bill was introduced in the House; only eight now remain.

Marauder veteran Lester Hollenback, of Deltona, Fla., was the most recent loss, dying in July at age 97.

Noting that the Nisei medals were not presented until a year after they were approved, Clasen said she hoped for a faster timeline.

"We've already lost one, and we're just hoping we don't lose any more," she said.

AUTOMATIC US CITIZENSHIP RESTORED FOR ALL MILITARY CHILDREN BORN OVERSEAS

24 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Richard Sisk

In compliance with a new law, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has changed its rules to give children born overseas to U.S. military families and civil servants immediate American citizenship.

The changes adopted by USCIS on Sept. 18 will, in a small number of cases, allow military families and civil servants to



A United States Embassy employee discusses the passport application process with a family at a United States Embassy Outreach event at Yokota Air Base, Japan, May 22, 2019. (U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman Matthew Gilmore)

avoid a laborious and potentially costly application process to get citizenship for their children, according to Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a sponsor of the new law passed by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump.

The new law scraps rules put in place by USCIS in August 2019 that caused widespread confusion for military families.

The August 2019 rules still gave citizenship in the vast majority of cases, but said that it was not automatic for children born overseas if the parents adopted them while serving abroad; the parents became U.S. citizens after their children were born; or the parents were American citizens but had never lived in the U.S.

In a statement, Duckworth said the new law will make sure that children born while stationed abroad, as well as stepchildren and adopted children, will automatically acquire U.S. citizenship.

In addition, service members and civil servants who were subject to the old rules can now avoid application fees that can amount to \$1,000 or more to gain citizenship for the children, she said.

“Children of Americans serving their nation abroad are just as worthy of automatic citizenship as any other children,” Duckworth said. “Forcing military families to jump through bureaucratic hoops and spend hundreds of dollars applying for citizenship on behalf of their children was not right.”

EISENHOWER MEMORIAL *(Continued from page 14)*

America’s heartland, to his decisive role as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in World War II and his two terms as president,” the commission said.

To depict his historic career, the memorial features three bronze sculptures of Eisenhower, stone bas relief images and inscription panels from addresses he made.

The park’s most striking feature is a first-of-its-kind stainless steel woven tapestry by artist Tomas Osinski, which depicts the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc on the Normandy beach stormed by Army Rangers in the D-Day landings of June 6, 1944.

The memorial was 21 years in the making and survived a dispute between Gehry and the Eisenhower family over the design.

Susan Eisenhower, the late president’s granddaughter, objected to the original design, which depicted her grandfather as a barefoot boy gazing at the metal tapestry showing the Kansas prairies. The barefoot boy now has shoes, and the metal tapestry was changed to depict the cliffs in Normandy.

The memorial dedication comes at a time when Eisenhower’s legacy on civil rights and his warnings about the influence of the “military-industrial complex” have gained attention in the increasingly bitter back-and-forth of the current presidential campaign.



- All 50 states are listed across the top of the Lincoln Memorial on the back of the \$5 bill.
- Almonds are a member of the peach family.
- An ostrich’s eye is bigger than its brain. (I know many people like that, too)
- Babies are born without kneecaps. They don’t appear until the child reaches 2 to 6 years of age.
- Butterflies taste with their feet.
- Cats have over one hundred vocal sounds. Dogs only have about 10.
- “Dreamt” is the only English word that ends in the letters “mt”. (Verklemt doesn’t count?)
- February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.
- In the last 4,000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.
- If the population of China walked past you, in single file, the line would never end because of the rate of reproduction. (Of the Chinese or their Virus?)
- If you are an average American, in your whole life, you will spend an average of 6 months waiting at red lights.
- It’s impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

PROPOSAL TO RENAME BASES STILL UNDER DEBATE IN THE ARMY

8 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Matthew Cox

Despite a lack of White House support, the U.S. Army's chief of staff said Tuesday that the service has not abandoned the idea of renaming several bases named after Confederate leaders.

"For some soldiers that I talk to, it's a very emotional issue; for other soldiers, they don't even realize the names of the people on the bases they are at, so I think we have to take a look at it," Gen. James McConville said during a discussion on the state of the Army, sponsored by Defense One.

Army leaders began stressing the need for more inclusion in the ranks shortly after demonstrations and riots broke out across the country in May in response to the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man who died while in Minneapolis police custody.

"At the end of the day, what we want to do -- at least as the leadership in the Army -- is to identify those things that may divide us, and take a look at and come up with solutions that can bring us together and bring everyone together and really make us more of a cohesive team," McConville said.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said in early June that he would consider discussion on changing the names of 10 posts named in honor of Confederate leaders, including Fort Hood in Texas, Fort Benning in Georgia and Fort Bragg in North Carolina. But the idea lost momentum when President Donald Trump tweeted that he would not support changing the names of bases that are part of American heritage.

However, it's clear that debate on the issue is not over as the November presidential election draws closer.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges called on the service to move

"immediately" forward with the base name changes.

"The Army has got to change these...bases named after Confederate generals," said Hodges, who is now the Pershing chair in Strategic Studies at the Center for European Policy Analysis. "I am embarrassed I was so late in my career before I even realized, and I started thinking what this is about. It's indefensible. There is no point in trying to defend it."

The Army is also considering adding to a Pentagon policy that bans the display of Confederate flags on bases, possibly adding more flags to the list that soldiers are authorized to display.

In mid-July, Defense Secretary Mark Esper signed a policy specifying flags that are cleared to be displayed publicly

on military installations. The Confederate flag is not on the list of those cleared to fly.

The list includes flags for U.S. states, territories and Washington, D.C., as well as the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag.

"What we want to do is take a look at where the policy could be adjusted," McConville said, adding that soldiers continue to ask him about the issue. "We have heard from some soldiers and from some families [voicing] the concern about what flags fall into the policy."

McConville did not name any flags the Army is considering adding to the list, but said leaders will continue to look at the policy and "question, 'Hey, we didn't have this flag. Was that the intent for what we are trying to do?' And I think that discussion is ongoing."

"We want to make sure that everyone feels included and everyone belongs," he said.



Gen. James C. McConville, chief of staff of the Army, attends the Association of the United States Army's 2019 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 15, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Dana Clarke)



- Leonardo Da Vinci invented the scissors.
- Maine is the only state whose name is just one syllable.
- No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.
- Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing
- Peanuts are one of the ingredients of dynamite.

- Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.
- "Stewardesses" is the longest word typed with only the left hand and "lollipop" with your right.
- The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing.
- The cruise liner, QE2, moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns.
- The microwave was invented after a researcher walked by a radar tube and a chocolate bar melted in his pocket.
- The sentence: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" uses every letter of the alphabet.

STARS AND STRIPES HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY SAVED FROM THE CHOPPING BLOCK, NOTICE STATES

10 Sep 2020 | Military.com | By Oriana Pawlyk

The Pentagon is reversing course on plans to shutter the venerable Stars and Stripes newspaper following an order from President Donald Trump, officials with the paper said Thursday.

According to an email, Col. Paul Haverstick, the Pentagon's acting director of Defense Media Activity, announced that the recent direction to discontinue publishing Stars and Stripes content on Oct. 1, 2020, and to dissolve the organization by Jan. 31, 2021, had been rescinded.

The Defense Department is making it official by drafting a new memo in coming days, Haverstick said in the email to Ernie Gates, the paper's ombudsman, and publisher Max Lederer. The email was shared with Military.com.

Gates applauded the assurance that Stripes' funding would continue in the near-term, but said more work needs to be done to ensure publication continues.

"That's a concrete act," Gates said of the rescinded shutdown order. "Next, it's up to Congress to be sure there is money in the fiscal 2021 defense budget to keep it publishing."

Haverstick said in the email that the DoD is also "tackling the best approach for FY21 funding since the budget is already on [Capitol Hill]."

Last week, Trump tweeted that funds to Stars and Stripes would not be cut under his watch after media outlets and lawmakers publicized the paper's impending closure.

"It will continue to be a wonderful source of information to our

Great Military!" the president said Friday. That was hours after USA Today reported on a Pentagon memo that said Stars and

Stripes would end its publication by Sept. 30. Earlier last week, a bipartisan group of senators sent a letter to Defense Secretary Mark Esper to preserve the "historically significant publication," which only requires "a tiny fraction" of the Defense Department's annual budget.

"Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation's freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom," the 15 senators said in the Sept. 2 letter.

"Therefore, we respectfully request that you rescind your decision to discontinue support for Stars and Stripes and that you reinstate the funding necessary for

it to continue operations."

The Pentagon in February proposed cutting all of the newspaper's funding -- roughly \$15.5 million annually -- to reallocate those dollars toward other high-profile programs, such as space, nuclear and hypersonic systems, Esper said at the time. The Senate version of the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act does not contain funding for the paper; lawmakers will convene this fall to develop a joint version of the bill.

"We trimmed the support for Stars and Stripes because we need to invest that money, as we did with many, many other programs, into higher-priority issues," Esper said during a news conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels, following DoD's \$740 billion budget submission to Congress.

Stars and Stripes is published in print and online.



Sgt. 1st Class David Birkman with 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion reads a Stars and Stripes newspaper as he and several hundred soldiers wait to leave Camp Buehring, Kuwait, en route to Iraq in April 2006. (Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood)



- The winter of 1932 was so cold that Niagara Falls froze completely solid.

- The words 'racecar,' 'kayak' and 'level' are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes).

- There are 293 ways to make change for a dollar.

- There are more chickens than people in the world.

- There are only four words in the English language which end in "dous": tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous.

- There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: "abstemious" and "facetious."

- There's no Betty Rubble in the Flintstone's Chewable Vitamins.

- Tigers have striped skin, not just striped fur.

- TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.

- Winston Churchill was born in a ladies' room during a dance.

- Women blink nearly twice as much as men.

- Your stomach has to produce a new layer of mucus every two weeks; otherwise it will digest itself.

LEICA AND THE JEWS

By John Cahan

The Leica is the pioneer 35mm camera. It is a German product - precise, minimalist, and utterly efficient.

Behind its worldwide acceptance as a creative tool was a family-owned, socially oriented firm that, during the Nazi era, acted with uncommon grace, generosity and modesty. E. Leitz Inc., designer and manufacturer of Germany's most famous photographic product, saved its Jews.

And Ernst Leitz II, the steely-eyed Protestant patriarch who headed the closely held firm as the Holocaust loomed across Europe, acted in such a way as to earn the title, "the photography industry's Schindler."

As soon as Adolf Hitler was named chancellor of Germany in 1933, Ernst Leitz II began receiving frantic calls from Jewish associates, asking for his help in getting them and their families out of the country. As Christians, Leitz and his family were immune to Nazi Germany's Nuremberg laws, which restricted the movement of Jews and limited their professional activities.

To help his Jewish workers and colleagues, Leitz quietly established what has become known among historians of the Holocaust as "the Leica Freedom Train," a covert means of allowing Jews to leave Germany in the guise of Leitz employees being assigned overseas.

Employees, retailers, family members, even friends of family members were "assigned" to Leitz sales offices in France, Britain, Hong Kong and the United States, Leitz's activities intensified after the Kristallnacht of November 1938, during which synagogues and Jewish shops were burned across Germany.

Before long, German "employees" were disembarking from the ocean liner Bremen at a New York pier and making their way to the Manhattan office of Leitz Inc., where executives quickly found them jobs in the photographic industry.

Each new arrival had around his or her neck the symbol of freedom - a new Leica camera.

The refugees were paid a stipend until they could find work. Out of this migration came designers, repair technicians, salespeople, marketers and writers for the photographic press.

Keeping the story quiet The "Leica Freedom Train" was at its height in 1938 and early 1939, delivering groups of refugees to New York every few weeks. Then, with the invasion of Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, Germany closed its borders.

By that time, hundreds of endangered Jews had escaped to America, thanks to the Leitzes' efforts. How did Ernst Leitz II and his staff get away with it?

Leitz, Inc. was an internationally recognized brand that reflected credit on the newly resurgent Reich. The company produced cameras, range-finders and other optical systems for the German military. Also, the Nazi government desperately needed hard currency from abroad, and Leitz's single biggest market for optical goods was the United States.

Even so, members of the Leitz family and firm suffered for their good works. A top executive, Alfred Turk, was jailed for working to help Jews and freed only after the payment of a large bribe.



Leitz's daughter, Elsie Kuhn-Leitz, was imprisoned by the Gestapo after she was caught at the border, helping Jewish women cross into Switzerland. She eventually was freed but endured rough treatment in the course of questioning. She also fell under suspicion when she attempted to improve the living conditions of 700 to 800 Ukrainian slave laborers, all of them women, who had been assigned to work in the plant during the 1940s.

(After the war, Kuhn-Leitz received numerous honors for her humanitarian efforts, among them the Officier d'honneur des Palms Academic from France in 1965 and the Aristide Briand Medal from the European Academy in the 1970s.)

Why has no one told this story until now? According to the late Norman Lipton, a freelance writer and editor, the Leitz family wanted no publicity for its heroic efforts. Only after the last member of the Leitz family was dead did the "Leica Freedom Train" finally come to light.

It is now the subject of a book, "The Greatest Invention of the Leitz Family: The Leica Freedom Train," by Frank Dabba Smith, a California-born Rabbi currently living in England.

THIS 59-YEAR-OLD ARMY BCT GRAD IS ABOUT TO BE THE NEW GUY IN HIS SON'S UNIT

12 Sep 2020 Military.com | By Hope Hodge Seck and Bing Xiao

At 59, Staff Sgt. Monte Gould is the oldest-ever graduate of the Army's current Basic Combat Training Course, finishing Aug. 27 in the top 10% of his class. Now, a decade or two older than retirement age for most career soldiers, he's starting a new journey — with plans to join his son, Spc. Jarrod Gould, in the 405th Civil Affairs Battalion's Las Vegas detachment.

In an Army news release, Staff Sgt. Gould spoke about the challenge of making it through the rigorous BCT, the Army's entry-level training course. A veteran of the Marine Corps and Army National Guard, Gould went through boot camp in 1978 — more than four decades earlier.

The BCT experience, Gould said, was “completely different.”

“One, I was in the Marines, and this is the Army. And two, it is 43 years later,” he said in a released interview. “The context is this. It'd be like taking a guy that went through Marine Corps boot camp in 1944 and putting him back in boot camp in 1986.”

Though much older than his fellow trainees, Gould said in the interview that he didn't indulge in self-pity.

“After the first two weeks (here) I said to myself, ‘This isn't going to be hard,’” he recalled. “And anytime it did get a little bit hard, I just said, ‘Dude, what are you whining about? You've been through way worse than this.’”

BCT was “absolutely not” harder than his first entry-level training cycle as a Marine recruit, he said.

However, “I couldn't physically do now what I did then.”

He'd left the Marine Corps to work in civilian law enforcement, then enlisted in the Army National Guard in the early 2000s as an infantryman, according to the release. After serving until 2009, he once again hung up his uniform. He came back this year, according to the release, because he's two years shy of earning a military retirement pension.

But “I'll stay as long as they have me,” Gould said.

He did have praise for the 10-week BCT, which he went through at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, with 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry

Regiment. He said the physical training was better-organized and designed to avoid stress injuries.

It was “better planned, better choreographed, better executed in that it wasn't just ‘PT until you die’ kind of thing,” said Gould. “You didn't PT until exhaustion. You PT'd with a purpose, and you physically trained to the point where your body developed and your muscles had time to heal.”

When drill sergeants administered corrective PT, they didn't work recruits until muscle failure, like drill instructors did in the Marine Corps in the 1970s, he added in the release. Still, that didn't

stop his knees from swelling up and sending him to sick call multiple times over the course of training.

“But the amount of squats that we do consistently and constantly was really rough on my joints. And it was a matter of being rough on it initially and my body getting used to it,” he said.

He was also satisfied with the better PT uniforms.

“When I was in the Marine Corps, we ran in boots and utility pants and T-shirts,” Gould said. “We weren't authorized tennis shoes.”

Despite Gould's 18 years of military experience, he said he was able to connect with his fellow recruits.

“I think a lot of the kids were kind of awestruck or gobsmacked that I was here doing this because to them -- I mean when I was 17, a 59-year-old man, that's an old man,” he said. “But I think the kids had that as an influence, and they're like, ‘Oh my God, this guy's 59,’ and then I'm doing the PT and doing everything with them — you know, doing the road marches, doing everything they're doing.”

For the record, according to the release, Gould is not the oldest-ever graduate of BCT. A 68-year-old completed an earlier version of the course in 1999.



Staff Sgt. Monte Gould, 59, walks down the range during training. He recently graduated Basic Combat Training with 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment. *(Rebekah O'Donnell/U.S. Army)*