



VETERANS QUALITY OF LIFE ACCESS NETWORK INC. NEWS

BARRY G. CAMPBELL FOUNDER/PRESIDENT

V.Q.L.A.N.

MAY 2013

VOLUME III ISSUE III

Anthony J. Williams/Editor

INSIDE THIS EDITION

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

**From working in the Veterans Administration and all New York
City communities for 33 years, helping millions, it's time for the
*Truth Of The Matter:***

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) Prejudices | 3) Veterans support |
| 2) Separatism | 4) Veterans and their money |

Written by Founder/President

**Plus: The Raping of America's Veterans, the Homeless Veterans Crisis and
up -to-date Veterans Information**

President: *"I do this with God's Love."*

God's Love cannot be defeated. (proven)

Website: vqlan.org

NEW MILLENNIUM ORGANIZATION

Veterans of Foreign Wars

of the United States



Presented To

Barry G. Campbell

Veterans Quality of Life Access Network, Inc.

For Meritorious and Distinguished
Service in Furthering the Aims and
Ideals of the Veterans of Foreign
Wars of the United States.



Given this 3rd day of May, 2012

From the Andersen-Lagno VFW Post 5090

Commander

Robert Mira
Robert Mira

Adjutant

James Tobin
James Tobin

BARRY G. CAMPBELL

Founder and President

Veterans Quality of Life Access Network

Divide your bread with the hungry, bring the homeless into the house, when you see the naked cover him and do not divert eyes from your own flesh. Isaiah 58:7



FROM THE DESK OF BARRY G. CAMPBELL

Information is Powerful. Our goal is.....

Helping veterans fill out the correct forms for help and responding to the answers they need. An old question that has to be answered; "How can a veteran who sacrificed so much for our country be left with nothing but the shirt on his or her back? How can some of them have no home and live day by day from a bag on the street? This scenario is not make believe.

Meanwhile, without their benefits, most of them going through the Department of Veterans Affairs, (VA) processing system will find out it will take about 11 months to deliver any benefits they may be expecting. This has been happening to our veterans for years. We cannot walk the streets without seeing our veterans' homeless, with no transportation, no savings and living on the streets. It breaks my heart to see this in our country. Let me explain why your gift is urgently needed.

The life of our veterans (heroes) have none of the dignity that is due our soldiers that lie on the streets, with intense physical and mental pain and no help. While we are working to get these veterans off the street, into clean and safe housing, we need your help. What we do not have and sorely need are the funds required to service these veterans. It's hard enough to lose your life savings, but can you imagine also giving up all hopes and dreams of a better future for their children.

We want to honor the heroes who are here and returning from wars with painful injuries that they will carry the rest of their lives. They have a long road to recovery ahead - and they need to know that we stand behind them every step of the way.

After learning more about our veterans, I hope you decide to take advantage of this rare opportunity to take part from the very beginning. A great deal of work remains before we can say our country is whole again. That is why I am turning to you today. Please help us show these true American heroes how much you and I appreciate their service to our country. Your donations will go right to work for struggling veterans, brave service members and their families for whatever assistance they need most now. We keep simple dreams alive.

Please include the most generous donation you can afford. All donations are tax deductions. You may send all donations to P.O. Box 20829, New York NY 10025. Make check or money order payable to VQLAN.

THE MIAMI HERALD

by Chris Adams McClatchy News Papers 2-14-2013

DELAYS, ERRORS GREET VETERANS AS VA STRUGGLES

Washington - The processing time for disability claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs worsened in a majority of its regional offices last year, and the VA has struggled with its much anticipated plan to correct its problems, according to two recent audits and a review of the VA data.

The result for veterans is longer waits - often for disability decisions that are incorrect.

The declining performance came in a year the VA was working to boost its performance, hoping to meet department goals to decide veterans' claims faster and more accurately. Office by office, the department is switching to a new processing system designed to eliminate paper records, curtail pointless shuffling of files and speed decision-making. The VA plans to move all offices to the new system by year's end.

But in recent months, performance has been slipping. Beyond that, two recent audits call into question the VA's ability to transform the departments as planned.

The department's inspector general, in a report dated last week, said it was too early to decide whether the new system would help the VA reach its goals.

The problems "have made the claims process more difficult, rather than improving efficiency as intended," the report concluded. Users found documents sometimes took three or four minutes to open. The system repeatedly crashed. One VA worker told the inspector general it took two hours to process a key part of a claim in the new system—twice as long as before.

The Government Accountability office, which functions as Congress' investigative arm, said the VA is proceeding without a clear, comprehensive plan.

"The agency risks spending limited resources on initiatives that may not speed up disability claims and appeals processes," it concluded. "This may, in turn, result in forcing veterans to continue to wait months and even years to receive compensation for injuries incurred during their service to the country."

In response to both reports, the VA said much of the criticism was outdated and that the phase in of its new system allows the department to correct problems along the way.

The department says it's optimistic about hitting its speed and accuracy goal by 2015.

OPENING PAGE OF NEW SITE



The VA's disability benefits are awarded to veterans who suffer physical or mental injuries during their military service. They range from \$129 a month to \$2,816 a month for a single veteran.

The VA has tried for years to reduce the waiting times, even as veterans have sent claims skyrocketing to more than 1 million a year.

According to a McClatchy review of department data and performance at regional offices deteriorated in 2012. The VA's long-term goals are that no disability claim is pending more than 125 days and that errors occur in just 2 percent of claims.

From fiscal 2011 to fiscal 2012, the VA's processing speed lumped from an average of 188 days to complete a claim to 262 days, according to the VA. The error rate went down slightly, from 16 percent to 14 percent.

In Florida, where the regional office is in St. Petersburg, error rates fell slightly in 2012, starting the year at 15 percent and falling to about 13 percent. The percentage of cases with claims pending for more than 125 days rose slightly from about 64 percent to about 68 percent.

In an interview, the VA said its ongoing transformation should eliminate many of the delays and errors.

Beth McCoy, who oversees 14 regional offices in the center of the U.S., said the new system would allow a VA worker processing a claim to see all needed data on one computer dashboard rather than toggling among eight to 10 screens.

Also, the reorganization involves routing certain types of claims into specialized "lanes" to move them through with dedicated reviewers. The paperless claims system will allow offices to share data quickly.

ONLINE VETERANS AND MILITARY DOCUMENTS

While most of our holdings are not on line a variety of military records, photos to documents to searchable databases are available. Listed below are online collections of specific interest to Veterans, their families and researchers. Additional online records may be found by searching the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) and Access to Archival Databases (AAD) systems.

Veterans' military service records and medical records are not online. However, Veterans and next-of-kin can order copies of these records.

HOW TO REQUEST MILITARY RECORDS

Start Your Military Service Record Request (DD Form 214 & SF-180)

Use the following to request Veterans' service records from WWI to Present

Launch the Rec SystemeVets to start your request on line.



Download form SF- 180 to mail or fax your request

PDF

FOR BURIAL REQUESTS

If your burial request involves internment at a Dept. of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery, contact the National Cemetery Scheduling office at (800) 535-1117 or visit the website at <http://www.va/been/need.asp>

If the Veteran is not going to be interned at a National Cemetery, the requester may fax SF-180 or signature page from eVetRecs (including signature of the next of kin and proof of death) to the Customer Service Team at (314)-801-0764. If your request involves the burial of a Marine Corps Veteran, you may also contact the USMC Liaison Office at (314) 538-2344

NOTE: The 1973 Fire at the National Personnel Records Center damaged or destroyed 16-18 million Army and Air Force records that documented the service history of former military personnel discharged from 1912-1964. Although the information in many of these primary source records was either badly damaged or completely destroyed, often alternative record sources can be used to reconstruct the service of the Veterans impacted by the fire.

Sometimes we are able to reconstruct the service promptly using alternate records that are in our holdings, but other times we must request information from other external agencies for use in records reconstruction. In some instances, therefore, requests that involve reconstruction efforts may take several weeks to a month to complete.

WHERE TO SEND MY REQUEST

You can mail or fax your **signed** and **dated** request to the National Archive's National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Most, but not all records, are stored at the NPRC. **Be sure to use the address specified by eVetRecs or instructions on the SF-180. Locations of Military Service Records.**

*** NPRC Fax number (314) 801-9195**

*** NPRC Mailing Address**

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63168

Online Request Using eVetRecs

Our online eVetRec system creates a customized order form to request information from your records or relative's military personnel records. You may use this system if you are:

- * **A military service member**, or
- * Surviving spouse that has not remarried
- * Father * Mother * Son * Daughter
- * Sister * Brother

Please note: Records are accessioned into the National Archives and become archival 62 years after the service member's separation from the military. This is a rolling date; hence the current.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THESE AND OTHER ARCHIVES RELATED ISSUES GO TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES WEB SITE AT <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

For 'Research Our Records' - Veteran Service Records - Teachers' Resources - Our Locations - Shop On Line' - and none military government records - Correcting Service Records - Medical and Health Records - Older (pre WWI) Service Records - What Records Are Not Available - Privacy and Security of Veterans Records - Special Notices Regarding Requests.

For a list of additional articles:

http://search.aol.com/aol/search?query=dept+of+veterans+affairs+missing+records&s_it=...

BURN PIT CLAIMS

An Analysis of Trends and Developments of Claims Arising Out of Exposures In Iraq and Afghanistan to Burn Pits

A Current Affair Blog - Jon L. Gelman/Attorney of Law
Senate Vets Committee Advances Udall's Burn Pits Legislation
(Thursday September 13, 2012)

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) reported today that the U.S. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee unanimously passed legislation that includes S.1798, The Open Burn Pits Registry Act.

Udall became an advocate for a burn pit registry after meeting Albuquerque Veteran MSgt. Jessy Baca and his wife Maria. Baca was stationed at the Joint Base Bal, Iraq, which hosted approximately 25,000 personnel at the height of operations and over ten acres of land for burning toxic debris. MSgt Baca has faced a multitude of health problems believed to be associated with burn pits, and has advocated for helping service members in similar situations.

After meeting Baca, Udall introduced a bill in the Senate with Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) in November 2011 to create a registry for returning service members and Veterans experiencing health problems due to open-air burn pits in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I am pleased we are one step closer to helping our Veterans and service members who are suffering following their exposure to open-air burn pits," Udall said. "I hope the full Senate will act quickly and pass this bipartisan bill for the heroes in New Mexico and across the country, like Jesse, who are struggling with the symptoms of these invisible wounds every day."

Udall's legislation establishes an open burn pit registry, similar to those created to track Agent Orange and Gulf War Syndrome, for individuals who may have been exposed during their service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The registry would be created within 270 days of the legislation enactment.

The bill will also help VA determine to what extent air pollution caused by open air burn pits has led to medical diseases among service members. It also includes a public information campaign to inform individuals about the registry and periodically notify its members of significant developments associated with burn pit exposure.

Finally, the bill requires that an independent, scientific organization submit a report to Congress no later than 24 months after the establishment of the registry and again 5 years after the publication of the initial report to track the progress of the registry and its effect on service members.

Sen. Udall testified in support of S. 1798, before the U.S. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in June 2012, highlighting the story of MSgt Jesse and Maria Baca, who traveled from New Mexico to attend the hearing.

The bipartisan, S 1798, was introduced in November 2011 with seven original co-sponsors. It was incorporated into an omnibus bill, S. 3340, the Mental Health Access Act of 2012, to improve and enhance the programs and activities of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, which the Veterans Affairs Committee passed today.

S. 1798 is supported by numerous groups, including Burn Pits 360, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Association of the U.S. Navy, Retired Enlisted Association, the Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees and the National Military Family Association.

(You can read additional information and view the video and photo of Senator Udall's testimony at the Senate hearing at <http://burnpitclaims.blogspot.com/>)

HIRE A HERO

Vets resumes lost in translation

Chris Erikson NY Post

A recent poll of employers suggest that military hiring is on the rise - but also that a gap persists when it comes to civilian employers' ability to decode the jargon on military resumes and/or job-seeking Veterans' ability to communicate their skills and experiences effectively.

More than three-quarters of human resource professionals in poll - conducted by the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) - said a skills map that translates military job skills into civilian job skills would help "a lot" or "somewhat" as they review resumes and job applications.

The poll also found that human resource managers who were interested in hiring Veterans were not always clear on how to connect with them. Only 13 percent of those polled said their organization is "very aware" of effective resources for finding Veteran candidates, while 35 percent said their organization is "not at all aware."

Human resource managers are keen to hire military Veterans but don't know how to find them and once they find them, they may not understand the military skills jargon on the resume, "said Mark Schmit, vice president of research at SHRM.

The good news- Sixty-four percent of those polled said they would hire military Veterans. During the past in 2010, 53 percent said likewise.

VA Guarantees 20 Millionth Home Loan

The Department of Veterans Affairs has guaranteed 20 million home loans since its home loan program was established in 1944. The program was part of the original GI Bill of Rights for returning World War II Veterans. According to the VA, the 20 millionth loan was for the surviving spouse of an Iraq War Veteran. The program's no-down payment requirement and current low interest rates have contributed to a 71 percent rise in VA loans for home purchases and an increase of 20 times as many refinances over the last five years. Learn more about the VA Home Loan program at www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans.

Visit [Military.com](http://www.military.com) to learn more about the VA Home Loan program, including a list of FAQs, advice and tips for buying a home.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/va-guarantees-20-millionth-home-loan?ESRC=vr.nl>

VETERANS QUALITY OF LIFE ACCESS NETWORK

' Helping Vets others want to forget'

At **VQLAN** we realize that the historical changes which are taking place the world over are merely a 'clarion call' for all of us to wake up and take responsibility for our **QUALITY OF LIFE**.

At **VQLAN** we realize that change is just an **OPPORTUNITY** waiting to happen.

At **VQLAN** we are learning to work **SMART** and not waste time working hard.

At **VQLAN** we recognize that there is great strength in **UNITY** and only weakness in separation.

At **VQLAN** we realize that we must **BECOME** the change we want to see in our lives.

At **VQLAN** we understand that no one can give us back our dignity, **WE MUST CLAIM IT**.

At **VQLAN** we are **JOINING FORCES** to fight for the same causes domestically that we fought for internationally. Our right to **LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**.

At **VQLAN** we are remembering what it means to **BE AN AMERICAN!**

PLAN OF ACTION

- 1) **ECONONMICS** - make our dollars count. (If each Vet donates just \$1 we can begin to leverage our financial power community by community. Learn the ABC's of **\$1 POWER!**)
- 2) **POLITICS** - Become a registered Veteran and unite to become a mighty **VOTE FOR CHANGE**. (There is strength in numbers. Make the numbers work in our favor).
- 3) **SOCIAL** - We are ready to **RECLAIM** our **HONOR** and our **DIGNITY**. (Reinvest in our lives, our families and our communities).
- 4) **CULTURAL** - We are more alike than we are different. Let us start celebrating our **SAMENESS**. (There is no longer any such thing as cultural diversity, we are now all in the same boat and that boat is sinking **FAST**).

VQLAN is COMMITTED to becoming a '**FORCE**' TO BE RECKONED WITH!



Founder and President Barry G. Campbell

CONTACT US

DO YOU NEED HELP?

**GO TO OUR WEBSITE
WWW.VQLAN.ORG**

GO TO SERVICES ICON FOR PRICE LIST

**SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR HELP OR DONATION TO P.O.
BOX AND YOU WILL BE CONTACTED**

**Do you have a question, comment or suggestion for Veterans
Quality of Life Access Network?**

Send us your thoughts.

Contact Information:

**Veterans Quality of Life Access Network, Inc.
P.O. BOX 20829
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10025
OR**

**THROUGH OUR WEBSITE
WWW.VQLAN.ORG**

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. GO TO OUR INFORMATION BANK ON
WEBSITE AND PASS IT ON.**

THIS IS TEMPORARY DUE TO RENOVATIONS.

STUDIES SHED LIGHT ON BRAIN INJURIES FROM BLASTS - Problems with memory and balance seen. by Greg Zomya USA TODAY

ARLINGTON, VA. - Military scientists are learning how roadside bombs - the most common weapon used against U.S. troops in the field - harm the brain even when there is no other physical damage, according to research results released by the project's lead scientist.

They discovered a sliding scale of injury ranging from brain scale inflammation to cell damage or cell death depending on the power of the blasts, says Army Col. Geoffrey Ling, a neurologist at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Future research building on these findings may lead to ways in which battlefield medics can use a combination of helmet sensors and over-the-counter pain reliever to identify and treat mild cases of blast-caused brain injury, Ling said.

Scientists also found that brain damage from an improvised explosive device (IED) can be made worse for those riding inside an armored Humvee because materials in the vehicle magnify the blast wave effect, Ling says.

Up to 360,000 Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan may have suffered brain injuries, the Pentagon announced last month. Many of those injuries are from IED blasts, and about 90% are so-called mild cases where recovery is expected.

An estimated 45,000 to 90,000 victims, however, suffer persistent symptoms such as memory loss, lack of balance and problem-solving difficulties.

"This rally sheds light where there was none," said says Army Col. Mike Jaffee, director of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. "I think it's extraordinarily important. It's some of the first research and findings that help to illustrate the evolution of traumatic brain injury (TBI).

During an eleven month period of research ending in December, scientists wrapped pigs in body armor and placed them in a Humvee simulator in open fields and in a closed room and subjected them to varying degrees of explosives at a research laboratory in a location researchers declined to disclose. Pigs were used because their brains are structured much like the human brain, Ling says. Rats were also part of the study that has cost about \$10 million so far.

Some key preliminary findings from the studies:

- * A blast can injure the brain even without shrapnel or a victim being knocked down. The power of the explosion in the first fraction of a second - known as the primary blast effect - can damage or destroy brain cells in ways conventional imaging devices cannot see.

- * Brain cell inflammation occurs in mild TBI cases, he says. It caused balance and coordination problems in the pigs but healed in hours or weeks, depending on the blast severity, Ling says. "It's probably what a lot of the guys (in combat) are getting," Ling says.

"Shaken up a little bit, but they recover quickly. No surprise. That's the natural order of the disease."

- * In the most severe of these cases, the inflammation can damage areas of the brain that have been associated with the later onset of Alzheimer's and Parkinsons, Ling Says. No connection between the blasts and these later diseases have been proved, he cautions.

- * Research will continue to determine whether basic off-the-counter drugs such as Motrin can help reduce the inflammation, Lind says, which could help treat troops suffering from TBI on the battlefield. "That would be awesome," he says.

- * As scientists learn more about how much blasts can cause brain cell inflammation or worse, they may use helmet sensors to alert medics when a soldier needs a break from combat to heal a mild brain injury, Ling says. That would help scientists diagnose or identify soldiers who are most at risks, he says.

Unlike a blow to the head, where damage occurs at the point of impact, blasts damage radiates across the brain, although it's heaviest on the side facing the explosion, Linds says.

You can go to the library or internet for additional information on Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) for updated articles. Military Used Pigs In Blast To Test Armor is another interesting article related to TBI by Tom Vanden Brook - USA TODAY

LETTER TO A VQLAN MEMBER

TO: VQLAN MEMBER WESTLEY THOMAS

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for getting in touch about my late husband. Wallace Terry's audio recording of :Guest Who's Coming Home: Black Fighting Men Recorded Live in Vietnam." I wasn't aware either that the jacket of the original recording is displayed at Motown's Hitsville Museum in Detroit and I appreciate your letting me know, for it means that there is a very popular venue for visitors to learn about the heroism of black servicemen in the Vietnam War.

When you listen to the voices of the black soldiers and Marines, I am certain you will be not only riveted by their comments—poignant, satirical, reflective and many times hilarious—but how their comments made in 1969 are just as accurate today as they were over 40 years ago. (I was with my husband in Vietnam when he taped many of these interviews.) Listen especially for the soldier who calls himself 'Gastruck.'

I wish you the best of luck and success with your book, "A Hard Decision," and I thank you for the good and heartfelt work you are doing on behalf of our Veterans, who always need a true champion for their cause and who will always take care of them.

With my best wishes, Janice Terry 9-10-2012

INFORMATION FROM THE GULF WAR VETERANS' ILLNESSES TASK FORCE REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE POCKET CARD

A resource for clinical providers

* AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER HERBICIDES * BURN PIT SMOKE *

A. ASK THE VETERAN ABOUT EXPOSURE CONCERNS

- What...** ▶ were you exposed to?
Chemical (pollution, solvents, etc.), Biological (infectious disease), or Physical (radiation, heat, vibration, etc.)
- ▶ precautions were taken?
Avoidance, PPE, Treatment, etc.
- How...** ▶ were you exposed?
Inhaled, On Skin, Swallowed, etc.
- ▶ concerned are you about the exposure?
- Where...** ▶ were you when you were exposed?
- When...** ▶ were you exposed?
- Who...** ▶ else may have been affected?

B. BECOME INFORMED

- ▶ Find current information on military exposures
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/

C. CREATE A CARE PLAN

- ▶ **Perform a broad health screen.** Exposures may affect any system of the body, but the most common sites are the skin and the nervous, respiratory, and cardiovascular systems.
- ▶ **Do not rule out current or latent effects based on routine labs.** In some cases, routine labs can indicate moderate or severe effects of an exposure. Depending on the type of hazard and the dose, however, signs and symptoms may be subtle or may not occur until years later and can be nonspecific.
- ▶ **Follow up with your patient.** Have the patient return periodically for check-ups to monitor their health. The response or lack of response to standard treatments can be an important factor to consider in Veteran patients with possible environmental exposures.
- ▶ **Encourage healthy living.** Advise your patient to incorporate healthier habits into their everyday lives. While the long-term effects of exposures may not be established, eliminating risk factors like smoking and obesity can help prevent the occurrence of significant health issues for many Veterans.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE POCKET CARD

A resource for clinical providers

* AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER HERBICIDES * BURN PIT SMOKE *

C. DISCUSS VA SERVICES WITH THE VETERAN

VA offers specialized programs to address health issues related to deployment. Providers should encourage their patients to enroll in the VA in order to take advantage of these services as part of their overall healthcare plan.

VA Environmental Health Clinics:

- ▶ Environmental Health Clinicians provide specialized knowledge on potential environmental exposures.
- ▶ Exams are conducted for all VA Registry programs [Ionizing Radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War (including OIF and OND), and Depleted Uranium].
- ▶ For a directory, visit: www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp

War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC):

- ▶ Three locations nationwide provide telephone or inter-facility consultations:
- East Orange, NJ
 - Palo Alto, CA
 - Washington, DC
- ▶ Medical evaluations and treatment plans are provided for chronic, difficult-to-diagnose conditions related to deployment.
- ▶ For additional information, visit: www.warrelatedillness.va.gov

USEFUL WEB SITES

- ▶ Exposure Fact Sheets and Newsletters for Veterans
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/resources.asp
- ▶ Benefit Information
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits.asp
- ▶ Environmental Health Continuing Medical Education
www.publichealth.va.gov/vethealthinitiative

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Public Health
Post-Deployment Health Strategic Healthcare Group
October 2012 (Version 5)



VA HEALTH CARE
Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

PUBLIC HEALTH

IB 10-509 P96576

RULES EASED FOR VETERANS' BRAIN INJURY BENEFITS NY Times 12-7-2012 by James Dao

The Department of Veterans Affairs will propose new regulations on Friday that will make it easier for thousands of veterans to receive health care and compensation for certain illnesses that have been linked to traumatic brain injury. The regulations, which will be published in the Federal Register, lists Parkinsonism, unprovoked seizures, certain dementias, depression and hormone deficiency diseases related to the hypothalamus, pituitary or adrenal glands as eligible for the expanded benefits.

The proposal, which must undergo a 60-day public comment period, could open the door to tens of thousands of veterans filing claims with the Veterans Benefits Administration, which is already struggling to process a huge inventory of such claims.

Since 2000, more than 250,000 service members — some still on active duty — have received diagnoses of traumatic brain injury, or T.B.I., according to the Defense Department. Though T.B.I. is commonly viewed as resulting from blast exposure, the vast majority of those injuries were diagnosed in non-deployed troops who were involved in vehicle crashes, training accidents or sports injuries.

The VA says that a smaller number of veterans - about 51,000 - are currently receiving benefits for service-connected traumatic brain injuries. However the dept. acknowledges that thousands of more troops with T.B.I. may be eligible for expanded benefits.

Veterans of prior wars will also be eligible for the benefits, if they can demonstrate that a traumatic brain injury was connected to their military service.

Under current rules, a veteran with one of the five illnesses has to provide medical evidence that the disease is the result of military service in order to receive veterans' benefits.

The new rule would potentially speed up and simplify their cases, provided a veteran could first demonstrate a service-connected trauma brain injury. Once that is established, the department will accept without further evidence that any of the five diseases was caused by the T.B.I., making the veteran eligible for additional compensation and health care for that particular disease.

Go to <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/07/usbenefit-rules-eased-for-veterans-with-brain-injuries.html?ref=veterans>

HOMELESS VETERANS INCREASE

Non-profit groups can offer help with housing

Gregg Zoroya USA Today

The number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who are homeless or at risk of losing a roof over their heads has more than doubled in the past two years, according to government data.

Through the end of Sept., 26, 531 of them were living on the streets at risk of losing their homes, staying in temporary housing or receiving federal vouchers to pay rent, the Dept., of Veterans Affairs reports.

That's up from 10,500 in 2010. The VA says the number could be higher because they include only the homeless the department is aware of.

The increase arrives as President Obama's goal of ending homelessness for all veterans is showing some results.

The VA attributes the increase partly to more aggressive efforts to identify and assist the younger generation of veterans.

The department says effects of two wars on them, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and a slow economic recovery have contributed to their homelessness.

The issue is particularly acute as the military continues to draw down its ranks. About 307,000 are likely to leave the military each of the next four years.

Obama vowed in 2009 to end veterans homelessness by 2015. The numbers have declined, though not at a pace to meet the president's goal. Using an annual one-night count, the tally has fallen from 76,329 in 2010 to 62,619 in 2012.

The VA insists it will meet the goal, particularly with a program instituted in 2011, that provides community non-profit groups with cash to help get them off the streets. Expenses can cover housing costs, health care, child care, transportation and training.

Anne Murphy, a Salvation Army program director in Los Angeles, says she's helped an Army veteran of multiple combat tours who was living out of a car with his family of six to get into a hotel, and the program will allow her to help get the family a permanent place to live.

Iraq and Afghanistan vets are different from other veterans, she says. They're younger, much more savvy and they don't necessarily like to ask for help," Murphy says. "But there are a lot of them out there."

Funding for the program, known as the Supportive Services for Veteran Families, has grown from \$60 million in 2011 to \$100 million this year and \$300 million next year - or about a \$5,000 investment for every homeless veteran.



Vincent Kane, director of VA's National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans, says operating through 151 community organizations in nearly every state, has had a marked effect.

About 22,000 veterans were assisted last year, most after the 2012 one-night count was done in February. They included 14,000 who were homeless and 3,035 who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kane says.

"We believe this (Supportive Services) resource and partnership with our community providers is ready to help drive us to the goal of ending all (veteran) homelessness by the end of 2015," Kane says.

Randy Brown, a spokesman for the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, says the group would like nothing better than to be driven out of business and is encouraged by the VA's efforts.

Making a transition to civilian life—readjusting to family, getting a job or education—after multiple combat tours may not come early and could have delayed consequences, "And that's something we're looking at," he says

HOW DOES WASHINGTON D.C. COUNT AMERICA'S HOMELESS VETS?

Popular Mechanic 2012 by Joe Parpalardo

The Obama administration recently said that the number of homeless Veterans dropped by 12 percent from 2011 to 2012. But getting accurate counts of the homeless is extremely difficult, and the government changed its counting methods during the year of the reported drop. Is the number of homeless Vets really going down, or is the drop an artifact of murky statistics?

It's extraordinarily difficult to get accurate statistics on the number of homeless people in the United States. That's why it's so interesting that Shaun Donovan, the secretary for housing and Urban Development (**HUD**), announced in late December a double-digit percentage point drop in the national number of homeless Veterans over one year.

"I'm thrilled to announce that we have evidence that this funding is making a real difference to getting homeless Veterans off the street and into homes they can call their own," Donovan said during a press conference. "Thanks to the work done by **HUD**, and agency partners across the Obama Administration, the most recent homeless estimate shows Veteran homelessness fell nearly 12 percent in just one year."

Donovan attributed the improvement to billions in anti-homeless initiatives by the federal government since 2009. But what he didn't mention is that between 2010 and 2011, **HUD** changed the way it counts homeless Veterans and those changes could certainly impact on the veracity of the numbers. Last year, HUD stopped using statistical estimating and instead mandated that homeless organizations that receive federal money survey homeless people to determine if they are Veterans. They also used figures supplied by local Veteran Administration (VA) programs instead of estimates.

The big question, then is: Are we really seeing a substantial drop in the number of homeless Vets? Or could the 12 percent decline in homeless Vets be an artifact of 2011's new methodology?

After speaking to **HUD** officials, homeless shelters, and statisticians, PM found good and bad news. There has been very real local coordination between the VA and **HUD** to help homeless Veterans. But the truth is that no one - not even **HUD**'s number crunchers - is sure if the new method of counting homeless Vets is driving the stats up or down. Furthermore, federal reports warn that draw downs in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the White House's proposal to cut overall troop levels, may lead to spikes in homelessness in young Veterans, which local aid workers say is a growing program.

And even if it's real, much of the improvement can be attributed to a one-shot infusion of cash from the administration's economic stimulus plan in 2009. Thus, while we hope the homeless Vets situation is indeed improving, headlines that tout a big decrease in the number of homeless Vets situation is indeed improving, headlines that tout a big decrease in the number of homeless Veterans may give a false impression of substantial progress - just as the problem is poised to get worse.

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/technokogy/military/news/how-does-washington-dc-count-america-homeless-vets-6641668>

U.S. SOLDIERS HEAVILY OVER MEDICATED



By Truth Warrior

OVER 11,000 US FORCES USED PSYCHOTROPIC MEDS IN 2011



More than 110,000 Army personnel were given antidepressants, narcotics sedatives, antipsychotics and anti-anxiety drugs while on duty last year, according to new figures by the US Army Surgeon General.

Apparently, US soldiers are going into combat fueled by all sorts of prescription medications. Experts say that consumption of drugs on a regular base can lead to deviant behavior and mental disorders.

The recent case of Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, accused of murdering 17 civilians in a blood rampage in Afghanistan, once more raised the question of drug-related incidents in the US Army.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE U.S. SOLDIERS DANGEROUSLY OVER MEDICATED

<http://coupmedia.org/health/u-s-soldiers-dangerously-over-medicated-0904>



Women's Enterprise Action Loan Fund

You Can Receive Up to \$5,000 in Loans with Free Mentoring Assistance to Grow Your Small Business

Woman who are small business owners can now apply for an interest free loan of up to \$5,000 for resources, services, supplies, including, but not limited to: inventory, hardware, software, web development, and marketing materials.

We also offer **FREE** business mentoring from experts in your business field with your loan.

How Do I Qualify?

This program is available to women who reside in the New York metropolitan area and who have started their own business.

This program is administered by The Thynin Olchick Institute for Women's Entrepreneurship @ FECS Health & Human Services. FECS is a beneficiary of UJA-Federation of New York.

FECS is an Equal Opportunity Employer

FECS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Now Accepting Applications

To download an application, click here.

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For more information, e-mail: wealf@fecs.org

Application Deadline
Applications are due January 4, 2013

Five Programs for Veteran Entrepreneurs

Here are five programs veterans entrepreneurs should know about:

- 1) The TechStars RisingStars program at www.techstars.com/risingstars/, which extends technology company startup opportunities to veterans and others;
- (2) InclineHq, which teaches military veterans the tools they need to become a junior programmer;
- (3) American Corporate Partners (**ACP**) at www.acp-usa.org/, which supplies a veteran a mentor that can assist an entrepreneur in connecting them with potential investors, advisors and maybe even customers;
- (4) VictorySpark, which exposes veteran-initiated startups to a national group of mentors and investors; and
- (5) the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (**EBV**), which offers training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 veterans with disabilities.

For more on military transition and interviews with veteran entrepreneurs, visit the Military.com Veterans Jobs Center.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/five-programs-for-veteran-entrepreneurs?ESRC=vr.nl>

College Admissions Tips for Veterans

Military veterans who qualify for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill (also known as Chapter 33 benefits) may have the full cost of their tuition and fees paid directly to their public, in-state college or university. They may also receive a monthly housing allowance and stipends for books and school supplies. Veterans who are interested in attending a private or out-of-state public school might consider the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program. There are other programs to help veterans finance their education, all listed on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) website. VA also offers an online "Road Map for Success" to help veterans find the benefits plan that best fits their circumstances.

For more on military education programs and benefits, visit the Military.com Education Center.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/college-admissions-tips-for-veterans?ESRC=vr.nl>

Is VGLI Enough? \$300k Coverage for \$22 a Month

Is VGLI enough for your growing family? What about college, living expenses, your mortgage, other expenses? If the unthinkable happens, protect your family's financial security. Get \$300k life insurance protection starting at less than \$22 a month.

[http://www.military.com/veterans-report/is-vgli-enough-\\$300k-coverage-for-\\$22-month-102912?ESRC=vr.nl](http://www.military.com/veterans-report/is-vgli-enough-$300k-coverage-for-$22-month-102912?ESRC=vr.nl)

Vet Benefit Calculator:

What Do You Qualify For?

The Military.com Benefit Calculator is designed to quickly and easily connect you with your benefits information based on service and status. Find Federal Benefits, State Benefits, National Guard State Benefits, Special Military Discounts and More. Find Your Benefits Now. Visit the Military.com Benefit Channel to access Pay Charts, TRICARE information, **BAH**, Survivor Benefits, Vet Benefits and More.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/vet-benefit-calculator-what-do-you-qualify-for-102912?ESRC=vr.nl>

Chenega Is Hiring Veterans

Chenega is a premier Government and Commercial services provider to the security, healthcare, IT, environmental, military operations, construction, and tourism industries. Our integral business practices are rooted in the Alaska native culture of our shareholders. Chenega is known for exceptional employees, fiscal strength, creativity and innovation, and providing excellent cost and performance value to our customers and business partners.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/chenega-is-hiring-veterans-102912?ESRC=vr.nl>



VETFRIENDS: Helping U.S. Veterans Re-Connect

Search for Veterans and Military Personnel. Search Military Units. Veterans & Military Discussion Board. Military Records. Veteran Reunion Stories about Vetfriends. New Announcements

<http://www.vetfriends.com/search.cfm>



2012 VETERANS' DAY PARADE



NEWSMAX + COMMENTARY: VA ACCUSED OF SPINNING GULF WAR VETERANS' HEALTH *(Below is a lightly edited version of the Newsmax article, minus the mistaken quotes and "added" pieces.*

Members of a federal committee created by Congress say the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ...isn't telling the truth about its treatment of America's Veterans, and the department's latest public statements are more spin than substance.

The VA recently issued a lengthy press release touting its alleged accomplishments regarding Gulf War Illness.

But several members of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans (**RAC**) - created by Congress in 1998 to advise the VA Gulf War health issues - say the press release is filled with misleading and inaccurate statements. Some members of **RAC**, which is comprised of physicians, scientists, and Veterans, tell Newsmax they are outraged by the press release - and... neglect of men and women who served in the 1990 - 1991 war against Iraq.

Anthony Hardie, a Gulf War Army Special Ops Veteran and Research Advisory Committee (**RAC**) report released in late June that gave the department a unanimous vote of "no confidence" for its "failure to develop treatments for the estimated 250,000 Veterans suffering from Gulf War Illness."

In a landmark 2012 report, Gulf War Illness was ruled a legitimate disease - not a psychological ailment - by the Institute Of Medicine (**IOM**), a nonprofit organization that provides non-partisan advice to decision-makers and the public.

But the VA now seems determined to reverse that historic decision and downplay the problem, committee members say.

Marguerite Knox, a Gulf War Veteran, former member of President Clinton's Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, and member of **RAC**, was "disgusted" by the VA's latest statements. "Despite the expertise of the **RAC** and the scientific validation of the existence of Gulf War Illness, VA bureaucrats are once again working to sabotage the truth," she said.

Among VA claims disputed by **RAC** members is the assertion that its research initiatives include funding of an independent **IOM** review of medical research related to treatment of chronic multi-symptom illness among Gulf War Veterans that is expected to conclude in 2013. But according to Hardie: "The **IOM** treatments panel has thus far focused on psychological and psychosomatic issues that have long since been debunked. The panel has failed to meet the terms of its statutory mandate requiring consultation with medical practitioners experienced in treating ill Gulf War Veterans."

Read entire article and information at: <http://www.91outcomes.com/2012/08/newsmax-commentary-va-accused-of.html>

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED TO VETERAN'S PREFERENCE FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JOBS:

- Most Veterans who served in a hostile area
 - **Note:** Since October 1, 1980, retirees at or above the rank of major or equivalent aren't entitled to preference unless they qualify as disabled Veterans. * Disabled Veterans
 - Certain un-remarried widows and widowers of deceased Veterans
 - Spouses of service-connected disabled Veterans who are no longer able to work in their usual occupations
 - Mothers of military personnel who died in service
 - Mothers of Veterans who have permanent and total service-connected disabilities
- Civil service preference adds points to passing scores in examinations and preference in job retention. The jobs must be filled by open, competitive exams.

Here's how the points are awarded:

- 5 points are given to Veterans who served in a hostile area
- All others get 10 points from a number of different hiring sources.

For example, they can hire from an open competitive list of eligible candidates. In this case, Veterans' preference applies.

The additional points *don't guarantee* that you'll get a job. The law requires Federal agencies to follow Merit System hiring principles. Agencies have broad authority under law to select.

NEW YORK STATE VETERAN BENEFITS

The state of New York provides several Veteran Benefits.

- * Housing * Financial Assistance Benefits
- * Employment Benefits * Education Benefits
- * Other State Benefits

New York Veteran Housing Programs

- State Veterans Home—A 242 bed Veterans home -
- 250 Bed Veterans Home Chenango County NY -
- 250 Bed Facility St Albans Queens NY
- 126 Bed Facility Genesee County NY
- 250 Bed Facility Montrose County NY

Additional information at: <http://www.military.com/benefit/veteran-state-benefit/new-york-state-veterans-benefits.html> and

<http://veterans.ny.gov/> and <http://www.nyc.gov/html/vets/html/home/home.shtml>