

# THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

From working in the V.A. and the communities for 33 years helping millions, it is time for the truth of the matter.

**PREJUDICES**: No longer a black and white issue, it's deeper. Most people carry hidden prejudices. Don't go by what they say because actions speak louder than words. After 30 years talking about prejudices, nothing has changed. It is too deep. Most are scared to identify. The truth hurts. I do know you cannot do what I do with prejudices. That is why so many suffer and I can help so many. (job done) Treat people the way you want to be treated, if not you do have prejudices but you just don't know it. Many are guilty (sad).

**SEPARATISM** : I have been through all five boroughs and listened very closely. Everyone wants to be so separate. They still don't understand. Divide and conquer. They still don't know that working together helps more people. This is the people's disgrace and everyone suffers. They stopped sharing. Closed fist (sad).

**VETERAN SUPPORT**: After helping millions and having over one hundred resource and networking meetings, participating in veteran parades, picnics, etc., I know now why veterans cannot be helped right because veterans don't support the cause. It is proven once you are helped you forget where or how you were helped which was God's love. You will find there is not too many Barry G. Campbell's around. When you needed support, I was always there. You knew where to go.

**VETERANS AND THEIR MONEY**: I left plenty of room for veterans to take my kindness for weakness and they did. They must have felt like I did not know what I was doing. A good thing I did it for the right reasons; God's reason. I have never seen so much selfishness. They act like they don't know better. It is pure greed. Money does funny things to people. I have seen the good and the bad. The majority is bad. They don't realize they were one of the blessed ones. I know God don't like ugly. Lets chalk it up like that. I know they know better—Greed. The truth.

Example: It took me years to help an elderly couple. They won \$100,000.00 and showed Mr. Johnson and myself the check. They gave me a bottle of liquor and I asked for a donation to the organization. They left and never came back. They moved to Puerto Rico. This is one of a thousand stories. This happened after I put years into the claim.

## TRUTH

This work I have done and continue to do this with God's help (proven). Most know what I have been through to do God's work in today's world. The majority of the people just watched. Most of them reaped the rewards and forgot others. There are so many twisted minds from prejudices, separatism, greed, jealousy, and people being envious that they can no longer see the truth. I have been through it all. There are so many guilty, some V.A. employees, N.Y. Regional Office, NY Service Officers and some veterans. God and I forgive everyone because they don't know any better. (Sad) Remember I forgive but I don't forget. It is time for all veterans to wake up and identify because I know we can do better to stop the suffering. America needs us. (proven).

I want to thank all those who supported VQLAN and those who don't because of me being blackballed in the VA. It didn't work, but many fell for it. I made sure every veteran was treated fairly. The system tried to make me look like I was doing something wrong. (Sad)

This is the price you pay for helping the ones who need it the most. I would do it again because with God's love we cannot be defeated (proven). Remember I gave it up willingly to help others because it was the right thing to do. I have been through 33 years of hearing excuses on why not to do the right thing. (sad)

In veterans darkest moments, I gave and still give light to millions. (God's Work)

### **Understanding Who is eligible for VA travel**

- Veterans rated **30%** or more SC for travel relating to any condition
- Veterans rated less than **30%** for travel relating to their SC condition
- Veterans receiving **VA pension** benefits for all conditions
- Veterans with **annual income below** the maximum applicable annual rate of pension for all conditions
- Veterans who can present clear evidence that they are **unable to defray** the cost of travel
- Veterans traveling in relation to a **Compensation and Pension (C&P) Examination**
- Certain veterans in **certain emergency situations**
- Certain non-veterans when related to care of a veteran (**attendants & donors**)
- **Beneficiaries of other Federal Agencies** (when authorized by that agency)
- **Allied Beneficiaries** (when authorized by appropriate foreign government agency)

### **Are OEF/OIF Veterans, combat Veterans, spinal cord injury (SCI) or any other “special” group of Veterans eligible for travel based upon their inclusion in that group?**

With the exception of veterans traveling to a VA or VA authorized transplant center in relation to VA transplant care, veterans in a “special” group are not eligible for VA travel benefits based solely on their inclusion in that group. “Special” group” veterans must meet travel eligibility criteria in the same manner as any other veteran.

### **What travel can the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provide?**

VA has the authority to provide eligible beneficiaries reimbursement for mileage, special mode of transportation (when medically justified by a VA health care provider), and in certain circumstances, taxi or hired car.

### **What are current mileage rates for travel? Why are rates different for veterans and VA employees?**

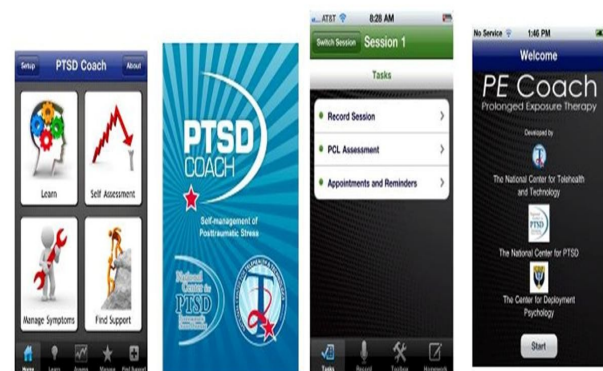
Effective November 17, 2008 VA reimburses 41.5 cents per mile for all veteran travel, including C&P exams and when VA has determined that a deficiency lab, EKG, x-ray etc. exists in relation to a C&P exam (“Convenience of the Government”).

(“Convenience of the Government”).

Mileage rates for veterans and VA employees are determined under separate authorities and take different criteria under account. Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 111 and 38 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 70.1 – 70.50 are the authorities for Beneficiary Travel. 41 C.F.R. Chapter 301 provides guidance for employee travel.

For a full disclosure of the yes and no of Veteran Patient Travel go to: <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/BeneTravelFAQ.asp#eligible>

### IPHONE APPS FROM THE DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



### IF YOU SUFFER FROM PTSD MILITARY RELATED ILLNESSES DOWNLOAD THESE FREE

<http://www.ptsd.gov/public/ptsdcoach.asp> or  
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ptsd-coach/id430646302?mt=8>

FOR YOUR IPHONE or IPAD



## V.Q.L.A.N. Attends N.Y. State Senator Ruth Russell-Thompson's 2012 Annual Veterans' Breakfast - December 7, 2012



Mr. Williams and Mr. Campbell



Senator Thompson and Mr. Johnson



Mr. Delgado and Mr. Campbell

Barry G. Campbell and Jay F. Johnson presents the latest issue of the V.Q.L.A.N. Newsletter to Johnnie H. Williams, NYS Senator Ruth Russell Thompson and other Veterans who attended the event at Eastchester Manor in the Bronx, NY. VQLAN members Pat Campbell, Donald and Kathie Hogan, and Anthony J. Williams also attended the breakfast.

### ***MILITARY SERVICE AND VA LIFE INSURANCE***

#### **Benefit Description**

**Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)** is a low-cost group term life insurance program for Service members. Coverage can be extended for up to two years if the Service member is totally disabled at separation.

**Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)** allows Veterans to convert your SGLI to a civilian program of lifetime renewable term coverage after separation from service.

**Family Service members' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI)** insures spouses and children of Service members with SGLI coverage. Spousal coverage may not exceed the Service member's coverage. Dependent children are automatically covered at no charge.

**Service members' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI)** is an automatic feature of SGLI that provides payments to Service members who suffer losses, such as amputations, blindness, and paraplegia, due to traumatic injuries that occur in service.

**Service-Disabled Veterans' Life Insurance (S-DVI)** provides life insurance coverage to Veterans who have been given a VA rating for a new service-connected disability in the last two years. Totally disabled Veterans are eligible for free coverage and have the opportunity to purchase additional life insurance.

**Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI)** provides mortgage life insurance protection to disabled Veterans who have been approved for a VA Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant.

### ***Phase One of New Military Transition Program***

The Transition Assistance Program is making major changes that will revolutionize the way the military prepares people leaving the services, with mandatory participation in programs throughout their military careers to help set them up for a successful transition. The redesigned program, called Transition Goals, Planning, Success or Transition GPS, will be the most-sweeping change to the Transition Assistance Program in two decades. A three-phase rollout of the Transition GPS program will continue through 2014. During current phase one of the rollout, all separating service members will receive counseling about Department of Veterans (VA) benefits, and most will be required to attend newly revamped employment workshops run by the Department of Labor. For more information on the new Transition GPS Program, visit the White House website.

For more on military transition and civilian job listings nationwide, visit the Military.com Veteran Jobs Center.

### ***New Military.com App***

Get military news and benefits on the go with the new Military.com app, available at iTunes stores for the iPod and tablets. The app is a customizable, up-to-date interface which includes all the latest military news and benefits information from the Military.com site, covering today's headlines, all the important information you need to make use of your military benefits, and everything from discounts for military personnel and veterans to family guides and financial tips.

To download the free app, visit the iTunes store.

<http://www.military.com/veterans-report/new-military.com-app?ESRC=vr.nl>

## MAKE IT WORK

### Initiative helps those who served to serve labor force

By Phyllis Furman NY Daily News



Some of the country's top manufacturers, led by GE, have banded together to attack the crisis of Veterans unemployment. GET SKILLS TO

WORK, an initiative that looks to train and place 100,000 Veterans in jobs by 2015, kicked off at an event in Manhattan yesterday.

GE and its partners - Alcoa, Boeing and Lockheed Martin - have two goals: to train Veterans for jobs in advanced manufacturing and to help U.S. corporations upgrade the skills of their manufacturing workers to stay competitive.

"Through this initiative, we have an opportunity to help Veterans with extraordinary leadership capabilities better compete for good paying jobs with a long-term future," said GE CEO Jeff Immelt.

GE has invested \$6 million into the program which expects to train 15,000 Veterans with the help of the current members and a total of 100,000 as other companies join. The four founding members of the coalition already employ close to 64,000 Veterans.

The country's high unemployment rate, especially for younger Veterans, has been a key focus for the Obama administration and has been cited by Republican president candidate Mitt "Romney.

The jobless rate for post 9/11 Vets is currently 9.7% vs. 7.8% for the general population. The hurdle of placing Vets in jobs is expected to get more than 1 million servicemen and women who are set to return from deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan over the next four years.

At the same time, some 600,000 high-tech manufacturing jobs remain unfilled in the U.S. and more than 82% of manufacturers say they can't find people to fill their skilled production jobs.

"We have a critical shortage of talent in this sector," Mike Haynie executive director of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, one of the participants in the initiative, told the Daily News. Our Veterans are well-positioned to contribute to overcoming this challenge."

The Get Skills to Work program will train Veterans, help them communicate their military skills to civilian employers and assist employers who want to hire Veterans. The group plans to open skills-training centers in 10 states, including New York, which will train Vets in Schenectady starting next year.

[pfurman@nydailynews.com](mailto:pfurman@nydailynews.com)

Veterans and employers can learn more at

[GetSkillstoWork.org](http://GetSkillstoWork.org)

Article published Tuesday Oct. 16, 2012



## AGENCY TURNS TO TECHNOLOGY TO STREAMLINE VETERANS'S CLAIMS

by James Dao—NY Times

SALT LAKE CITY - One desk, clean and empty, suggested a recently retired employee. The other, piled high with brown folders wrapped in rubber bands and bristling with color-coded tabs, screamed "backlog"

Two desks, occupied by people doing the same work: processing claims. But on one, a new technology based on digitized records was in use. On the other, claims were being worked the traditional way: with paper files containing hundreds, even thousands of pages per Veteran.

"This can be a little oppressive," said Keaton Stamper, a service representative, looking at the wall of folders lining her cubicle. The clean desk embodies the Department of Veterans Affairs' vision for shrinking its mountainous inventory of disability compensation claims. At last count, the department had nearly 900,000 pending claims, two-thirds of which were more than 125 days old, the agency's benchmark for timeliness.

The backlog has become a major source of embarrassment for the department, causing bipartisan ire in Congress and bitter frustration among thousands of Veterans who complain of long waits, unfair decisions and delayed payments.

Vowing to process all claims within 125 days by 2015, Allison A Hickey, a retired Air Force general who is the under secretary for Veterans' benefits, has outlined a "transformation" plan for the Veterans Benefits Administration that includes more intensive training and a new system of organizing claims processors into teams that specialize in handling more complex claims.

But the plan's centerpiece is new technology known as the Veterans Benefits Management System that will use digital records to speed claims processing. To comprehend why it is crucial, one must understand just how cumbersome and paper-jammed the current system can be.

"Let's face it, V.B.A. is the land technology passed by," the deputy secretary of Veterans affairs, W. Scott Gould, told a Congressional committee recently. The existing system employs several different databases - one for medical records, and another for personnel files, and so on. Each requires a different login, and toggling between them can be time consuming. Moreover, mistakes in one database must be corrected in the others.

Once a claim is received, workers must input information by

a time-consuming and often mistake-prone step. Then a Veterans service representative who processes claims must review the documents - personnel records, doctors' memos, hospital receipts - thumbing through page after page of documents in search of data that can support a disability claim.

The new system will consolidate several old ones, making it faster to find documents - the department says Claims processors will be able to share files easier, allowing quality control agents to review work while it is under way.

Workers here say the system is also easier on the eye, looking like the Gmail screens they commonly use and providing useful prompts, like TurboTax, that reduce mistakes. Most important, digitized documents allow processors to search key words in seconds, rather than having to thumb through paper documents.

"I'm not rolling through 18 envelopes to find the one time it mentions heart disease," Ms. Hickey said. The system will also allow more automation for calculating benefits, based on the type and severity of a Veteran's disability. Department officials say the calculator will be used only to inform claim authorizers and that final decisions will be made by people, not machines.

The new system, now being tested in Salt Lake City and three other regional offices, will be introduced into 12 more offices by the end of this year and 24 more by the end of 2013, the department says.

"We are already seeing fundamental improvements across the board," Ms. Hickey said of the department's pilot program. Gerald T. Manar, a former department official who now works for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said he believed the steps would make a difference, but cautioned that the new technology was still years away from being fully functional. Having witnessed previous campaigns to tame the backlog fall short, he is philosophical about the limits of "transformation."

"War is expensive," he said. "If we understood that, we would be more careful about sending people off to combat."

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SBP BASED ON A VA TOTAL DISABILITY RATING**

By Sgt Maj (Ret) Bill Hursh

Retirees may withdraw from the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) if they have a service-connected disability, and have been rated totally disabled by the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) for five continuous years from their date of retirement or for ten continuous years if the VA rated them totally disabled after their retirement. DoD allows Retirees to withdraw in these cases because the VA will presume the Retiree died of a service-connected disability regardless of the actual cause of death. The surviving spouse will then qualify for VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

Retirees that meet these time requirements must request withdrawal from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) in writing. DFAS requires a notarized concurrence statement from the Retiree's spouse.

Because federal law requires a dollar-for-dollar offer of the spouse SBP annuity by the spouse's DIC, when the Retiree dies, the surviving spouse will be refunded the SBP premiums paid. Spouses of Retirees who do not elect this withdrawal will receive DIC, any SBP amount that exceeds the DIC payments, and any authorized Special Survival Indemnity Allowance. They will also receive SBP premiums paid for the SBP amount that exceeds the DIC payments, and any authorized Special Indemnity Allowance. The SBP premiums paid for the SBP coverage that is offset by the DIC will be refunded to the survival spouse.

Do you have questions on benefits, SBP, Retiree Appreciation days or anything else retirement-related? Then contact the RSO for your area or go to the Army Retirement Services website [www.armygl.mil/retire](http://www.armygl.mil/retire)

(article from ECHOES the Newsletter for Retired Soldiers, Surviving Spouses and Families)

## **CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION WARNS COMPANIES AGAINST MISLEADING CONSUMERS WITH FALSE MORTGAGE ADVERTISEMENT (CFPB)**

*Nationwide Sweep of Ads Targeting Older Americans and Veterans (November 19, 2012)*

Washington, D.C. - Today the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), in partnership with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), is issuing warning letters to approximately a dozen mortgage lenders and mortgage brokers advising them to clean up potentially misleading advertisements, particularly those targeted toward Veterans and older Americans. The CFPB also announced it has begun a formal investigations of six companies that it thinks may have committed more serious violations of the law.

"Misrepresentations in mortgage products can deprive consumers of important information while making one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives," said CFPB and the FTC of about 800 randomly selected mortgage-related ads across the country, including ads for mortgage loans, refinancing, and reverse mortgages. The agencies looked at the public-facing ads in newspapers, on the Internet, and from mail solicitations; some came to the attention of the CFPB and the FTC from consumers who complained about them.

The CFPB and the FTC were looking for potential violations of the 2011 Mortgage Act and Practices Rule, which prohibits misleading claims concerning government affiliation, interest rates, fees, cost, payments associated with the loan, and the amount of cash or credit available to consumers. The CFPB and the FTC share enforcement authority for the rule. Companies that the CFPB have violated because of misleading advertising could be subject to enforcement actions. **FOR THE COMPLETE ARTICLE GO ONLINE TO** <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/pressreleases/consumer-financial-bureau-warns-companies-against-misleading-consumers-with-false-mortgage-advertisements/>

# SIMPLY INSPIRING

Mr. Barry Campbell:

I do not know if this e-mail will reach you, as I doubt you go by Louise on your off time, but this was the only e-mail I found on your site. If you have a moment I would like to share a short story with you.

My friend Jessica and I were in a Barnes and Noble last night (2/5/2013) and met three of the most amusing characters you could hope to meet in a book store café. Upon speaking with one at length named Eddie Hurdle, I realized all three of them were veterans, all Army, who worked at the VA hospital. I myself being a Marine veteran, sat and joked for a while in good military fashion, one of them even mentioning flying out of my home area of Travis AFB in California.

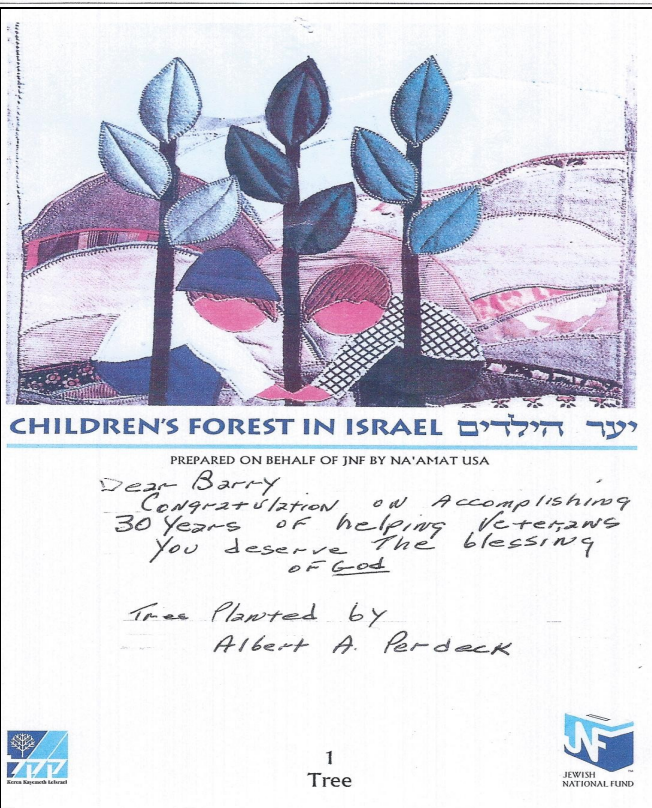
When Eddy discovered I had a 20% service connected disability, he began to tell me about you, and what you have done for veterans you have helped and they spoke very highly of you. He advised me to seek you out to ensure I am getting the correct compensation for my injury.

Now while I told him I would, I have a shattered ankle that works just fine and no feeling in a smashed thumb. I get 20% and neither hinder me much for the most part. I'm not overly interested in increasing my claim amount as God has blessed me incredibly in my life. The reason I am telling you this story is having moved to central PA from California to weather out the recession in 2007, I am now planning on moving here to New York City. Being a full time single father of three children, I have to find a job I can support my family on so I can't just jump on the first job I find. However I do have several promising leads and a goal set for April 15th to find employment and begin relocating. Once I do relocate, I would be honored if your organization needed some part time volunteer work done, because the way those veterans spoke of you was quite simply inspiring. I have an uncanny ability to learn things extremely quickly, and a knack for things like IT related issues, business management, and just dealing with people. I have no doubt I could bring value to your organization and your mission.

I will be in the city today (2/6/2013) until 4pm when I head back to Lancaster, PA. If possible I would love to meet with you and see what I may be able to provide. Otherwise please contact me by phone or e-mail and I will make a trip up to NYC to see you at a time we can both work out. I have friends in the City I can stay with so it's not much of an issue for to come up.

I look forward to hearing from you,

## TREE PLANTED IN ISRAEL IN THE NAME OF BARRY G. CAMPBELL



## ACT OF KINDNESS

*There  
is a part  
in life you play,  
by helping people  
night and day.  
doing a job with  
special care,  
helping Veterans  
every where.  
You help their  
spouses  
&  
children too,  
and  
so I must say  
may God  
Bless you.*

Inspired by God  
Written by Lois Ciabattari  
Dedicated to Barry Campbell

## **VA SAYS MOST VETS STILL UNAWARE OF BENEFITS** Nov 20, 2012

WASHINGTON - More than half of America's Veterans say they have little or no understanding of the benefits due them, despite efforts over recent years to match returning soldiers with the help and services they need.

An analysis of a Dept. of Veterans Affairs survey data found that younger Veterans - those who served in the post 9/11 war period - are better versed in their benefits. But even among those Veterans, 40 percent say they have little or no understanding of their benefits, a figure that climbs to two-thirds for those unfamiliar with life insurance benefits available.

The VA said it's working hard to boost benefit awareness and has taken steps in recent years to do so.

"We want to accept them into the VA. We want to help them," said Joseph Curtin, who recently became VA's director of outreach.

One major change will come Wednesday when a new law will mandate all departing service members go through a series of detailed benefit sessions. Until now, participation in such sessions varied by service and was often optional.

The VA had been reaching 150,000 service members per year. Under the mandatory, beefed-up, sessions, that is expected to rise to 307,000.

America's Veterans are eligible for a range of benefits, from access to the VA's well-regarded medical system to lifetime payments for disabilities suffered during military service to access education, life insurance and home loan programs.

But VA data show that participation varies widely by geography. In addition, a Veteran's understanding of what's available varies greatly by period of service.

McClatchy Newspapers analyzed the VA's 2010 National Survey of Veterans, conducted about every 10 years to determine the state of America's Veterans. Included are several questions about Veteran's health coverage as well as understanding of the VA benefit package. McClatchy also reviewed benefits data by state in 2011, the most recent years available.

When asked about the VA benefits, Veterans' responses are all over the map, depending on their age and the benefit in question.

Among all Veterans, 59 percent said their understanding of available benefits was "a little" or "not at all," according to the analysis of the VA's survey data.

But there were some wide swings:

-Among older Veterans, including those from Vietnam, Korea and World War II, 55 percent or more have little or no understanding of their benefits; among Veterans from the period between Korea and Vietnam, the lack of understanding shot to 65 percent.

-Among younger Veterans, 40 percent had little or no understanding

-Asked specifically about life insurance benefits, 80 percent said they have little or no understanding of them - including 62 percent who said they have no understanding at all.

-Asked about educational benefits, younger Veterans - who would be most likely to use them - have far greater understanding of what's available than their older brethren. Even so, 41 percent said they have little or no understanding of those benefits, which include several different and sometimes overlapping programs.

In 2011, the Government Accountability Office pointed to the complexity of the VA's education programs as a possible factor that kept more Veterans from participating. The GAO said that although outreach efforts were widespread, "little is known about the effectiveness" of those efforts, since the VA didn't have a way to measure its outreach performance.

Some Veterans told the GAO they were forced to wait too long or had to call several times to get information from the VA's hotline; a high percentage of the attempted calls met a busy signal. Further, some Veterans and their advocates told the GAO that briefings for separating service members were not effective and often provided too much information to really digest.

The GAO recommends the VA establish new performance measures and improve communication with the colleges where Veterans enroll. The VA said last week it was putting the GAO's recommendations into place.

Lack of outreach could help explain why the participation in VA programs is so disparate across the country.

The VA has long grappled with widely divergent assessments in the disability awards it gives Veterans. The VA first confronted this program in 2005, when news organizations reported that Veteran's monthly checks varied widely depending on where they lived.

Beyond that, though, is the general issue of what percentage of Veterans even participate in the program.

Among the VA's disability compensation program, for example, 25 percent of Veterans in Nebraska participate, while only 10 percent of those in Connecticut do so.

In the life insurance program, participation goes from 8 percent in New Jersey to 2 percent in Alaska, according to 2011 VA data.

The VA said it's working to boost awareness of all its benefit programs, and it said that most of the variation it can explain deals with population differences by state - such as the percentage of a state's population that is retired military.

The VA also said the 2010 survey data does not capture some of the efforts undertaken in the last couple of years to expand access to its benefits. Among other things, the VA said that two-thirds of Veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan have used some VA benefits or service, and that 45 percent of those

Veterans have filed disability claims; both are far higher than from previous war periods. Health and disability benefits have also been expanded for certain older Veterans based on updated income or illness standards.

Among the most significant changes will come this week, when the VA and the Pentagon start the revamped briefings for service members transitioning to civilian life. The VA also will make the briefings available in monthly webinars.

The efforts will go a long way towards eliminating the problem of Veterans who don't understand their benefits, said Danny Pummill, who oversees the VA's transition assistance program.

But while the briefings should capture a greater amount of young Veterans and keep their participation rates relatively high, they don't address the soldiers and sailors who left military service after World War II, Korea, Vietnam or other periods.

Sometimes there's this warrior ethic - I served proudly and didn't get hurt," said Curtin. "Those benefits are for somebody else. There's a mentality and pride and they don't look into their benefits.... We've got to reach out to World War II, Korean and Vietnam Veterans who might never have look at these benefits before.

*(Article from McClatchy-Tribune News Service / by Chris Adams - via [Military.com](http://Military.com) News)*

## FED PROB OF VETERANS (SWINGIN') AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON - Another federal agency is being probed for questionable travel expenses. The House GOP and the inspector general are investigating the Dept. of Veterans Affairs for allegedly misusing some of the \$5 million that was spent on two Florida Conferences last year, where employees received gifts such as alcohol, concert tickets and spa treatments.

Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla), chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said a preliminary investigation has also found that planning trips for conferences cost tax payers thousands of dollars.

"In a twist of irony, a month before these conferences took place, VA officials testified before the committee that more stringent oversight regarding conference expenditures was unnecessary," Miller said.

VA officials said that they are cooperating with the investigation. The scrutiny of the agency comes as investigators are still trying to sort out wasteful spending at the General Service Administration.

The GSA spent more than \$1 million on two conferences including \$823,000 on lavish receptions and entertainments that included a clown, a mind reader and a comedian.

*by Gary Shields*

## VA MEDICAL ARTICLE DISCUSSES SPECIALIZED IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS HEALTH CARE NEEDS — Review by VA Clinicians Assists Health Care Providers

WASHINGTON - Dept. of Veterans Affairs clinicians offer a comprehensive review of the health concerns of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and practical management guidelines for primary care providers in an article entitled Post Deployment Care for Returning Combat Veterans, and published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine (JGIM)

"We at VA are always seeking ways to improve the quality of health care we provide to our Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Erik K. Shinseki. "This article provides valuable insight into the fastest growing segment of the Veteran population at a time they are currently returning from combat."

Since September 11, 2001, approximately 2.4 million military personnel have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The health care needs of this particular patient population are complex, and requires a well integrated interdisciplinary approach to care.

The article written by Juliette F. Spelman, MD; Stephen C. Hunt, MD, MPH; Karen H. Seal, MD, MPH; and Lucille Burgo-Black, MD, reviews how combat deployments can impact the physical, psychological, and social health of Veterans and describes their unique health care needs. This includes the need for assessment and management of injuries associated with blast exposures (including mild traumatic brain injury) as well as mental health conditions such as stress disorder, depression, and substance abuse.

Other important health concerns discussed chronic musculoskeletal pain, medically unexplained symptoms, complications from environmental exposures, heightened suicide risk, sleep disturbances, and impairments in family, occupational and social functioning.

The article summarizes evidence which supports elevated frequencies of physiological and behavioral cardiovascular risk factors, including hypertension and tobacco use, raising concerns about future health implications for these Veterans. In light of relationships between physical, psychological and psychosocial concerns in this population, the VA authors recommend an interdisciplinary approach to care directed towards mitigating the long-term health impacts of combat.

This comprehensive review by VA clinicians will help both VA and non-VA health providers offer Veterans the best possible care as they return from combat deployment. It affords all involved the opportunity to develop greater collaboration between VA and community providers to insure optimal post deployment care and services for our returning combat Veterans and their families.

Each VA medical center has a highly specialized Operation Enduring Freedom/operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Care Management team in place that coordinates and overseas treatment and care for OES/OIF/OND Service members and Veterans. A dedicated case manager is assigned to work with the Service member/Veteran and family to screen for case management needs and implement a plan of care to completion, or as long as needed.

<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2327>

## ***PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS RUNYAN BILL BOOSTING VETERANS' BENEFITS***

The House of Representatives passed H.R. 5948, the Veterans Fiduciary Reform Act of 2012. The legislation was an omnibus bill that included Congressman Jon Runyan's (R-NJ) bill H.R. 5881, the Access to Veterans Benefits improvement Act.

***Veterans will receive larger benefit check next year after President Barack Obama signed federal legislation into law.***

**The law, which was authored by Rep. Jon Runyan, provides a 1.7 percent cost-of-living boost to the compensation paid to disabled Veterans and the survivors of deceased Vets.**

The increase took place Dec. 1, 2012 and will begin appearing in January checks. The dollar amount paid to Burlington County's disabled Veterans varies greatly, but county officials said most receive about \$1,100 a month. A 1.7 percent increase would amount to about \$19 more for those Veterans.

More than 40,000 Veterans live in Burlington County, according to the latest U.S. Census Bureau estimates.

The increase may seem trivial, but Runyan said the increase is important and sends a message of thanks. "Our nation's Veterans have sacrificed so much, putting their lives on the line to defend the United States," he said in a statement. "A simple COLA is the least we can do for them."

The Mount Laurel Republican, who was re-elected in November to a second term representing New Jersey's 3rd District, also helped secure a cost-of-living boost for Veterans in 2011.

Both increases were equal to the cost-of-living raise automatically awarded to Social Security recipients and retirement pay for federal employees based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

Veterans' benefit increases are not automatic and must be approved by Congress and the President. The adjustment signed by Obama almost became a victim of congressional gridlock.

Although the House passed Runyan's bill in July, the measure stalled in the Senate. A "secret hold" was placed on it by an unnamed senator. The hold is a procedural maneuver permitted by the Senate's rules that allows a legislator, with consent from the majority or minority leader, to block a motion for a vote on the Senate floor.

The hold was lifted after the Veterans Administration warned that if no action was taken by the Senate by Nov 13, the agency would be unable to guarantee that Veterans would receive the increase in their January checks. The Senate unanimously passed the bill Nov 13.

Runyan, who is on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, has introduced separate legislation, known as the American Heroes COLA Act, which would make Veterans' cost-of-living

adjustments automatic each year that Social Security benefits are changed.

Runyan said making the increase automatic would provide more certainty to Veterans, and the promise to continue to push for the bill's passage in the next congress

Go to website — <http://runyan.house.gov/>

Article: VVA 82 Nassau County Chapter

## ***VETERANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AWARDS CONTRACT TO TREAT TINNITUS***

***Program Notes - Military Medical and Veterans Affairs Forum***

American soldiers returning from service abroad and other Veterans who suffer from debilitating tinnitus now have access to advanced treatment covered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Starting August 15, the VA will begin providing SoundCure Serenade customized sound therapy for Veterans suffering tinnitus, or "ringing in the ears."

"We are very pleased to make this valuable treatment available to our nation's troops serving us in so many ways," stated Bill Perry, CEO of SoundCure.

"Improvised explosive devices and other explosions and noise damage can leave soldiers with a painful—and constant—reminder of their time on the battlefield. We are proud to work through the VA to provide a tinnitus solution and relief to military personnel."

Tinnitus, which is most commonly the result of damage to the auditory system, is the number one disability affecting Veterans. In the military, exposure to weapons systems, aircraft and other loud equipment that can cause damage is a daily occurrence. According to the American Tinnitus Association, the 2011 estimated cost of annual tinnitus disability payments for war Veterans was over \$1 billion. Severe tinnitus can be extremely incapacitating, causing, stress, anxiety and problems sleeping and concentrating.

In the U.S., the VA system consists of more than 170 medical centers and about 350 community clinics, with more facilities overseas. The number of Veterans on the rolls for tinnitus was estimated to be over 800,000 in 2011.

The FDA-cleared Serenade handheld device is anchored by S-Tones. The novel treatment uses soft tones that are modulated at a specific rate and were created from independent university research. S-Tones were designed to provide relief to patients using volumes softer than the patients tinnitus to reduce, rather than add to the patient's sound burden. Serenade generates customized sound therapy for the patient's unique tinnitus after testing, and programming by a VA audiologist.

Additional information and articles at:

[http://www.kmimediagroup.com/files/M2VA\\_Final.pdf](http://www.kmimediagroup.com/files/M2VA_Final.pdf)

Update: <http://www.mdva.statemn.us/Legislative/2013/Feb1/FederalUpdate1Feb2013.pdf>

# AMERICA'S MOST HIDEOUS CRIMES

## THE RAPING OF AMERICA'S VETERANS CONTINUE

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### STORIES FROM A HUSBAND AND WIFE'S AFTERMATH

My name is xxxxxxxxxxxx. My Service number is xxxxxxxxxxxx.

In 1964, I was stationed with the xxth CAV Air Assault, 1st Battalion, Bravo Company  
Commanded by Capt. xxxxxxxxx at Fort Benning, GA.

My social security number is: xxx xx xxxx

The date of the sexual abuse was in September 1964 at Ft. Benning in the company barracks and outside the barracks, in the woods.

My Squad leader, SSG. Xxxx, a full blooded Indian was drunk when I saw him trying to kiss the soldier in the bunk next to mine late at night. As I leaned up on my elbow to see better, my eyes could not believe this. At the sound, Sgt. Xxxx turned and stared at me, then got off the bunk and left. The next night, early in the evening he ordered me to report to his sleeping quarters. He said he wanted to be my friend, knowing that I was smaller than the others and constantly picked on. He said he would look out for me, lets go out and have some beer. He drank several beers. I sipped on one and then he told me to come with him out into the woods. Inside, he ordered me to take off my clothes and lay on a blanket he had spread out. Then he pinned me down and raped me ignoring my pleas for him to stop.

The next night, he stalked me and I tried to hide in the latrine. It was late and all the other soldiers were sleeping. I went into a stall and closed the door when I heard him come in. I lifted my feet on the toilet seat so he could not see me. Then he left. I hid the rest of the night in the empty mess hall.

Not knowing what to say to my Company Commander, I had no choice in my 18 year mind, never having sex before Sgt xxxx's assault, I packed my civilian clothes and went AWOL, vowing to never go back into that hell again.

Signed xxxx xxxxxxxxx

My personal hell starts with a horror long ago. It was like buried lava, under the volcano, inert into this last month until Dr.xxxxx asked me to respond to his notes in a computer about my sexual abuse and it's trauma, and the change of direction for the rest of my life. It was created under tons of grief, mistakes, errors, fuck-ups, missed opportunities and bad relationships, all searching for that father figure who sodomized me that night, when I was a young private of 18 years, a virgin, who knew nothing of the sexual abuse that exists in this world. I was a boy scout, trusting, scared, defenseless, a child, who never had a father, an immature boy who just wanted some protection, some guidance, some help for a kid that nobody else wanted to know, only beat up and humiliated, a boy who wanted to have friends. Then he said (my squad leader) we'll be friends. I can help you here, at this base. I can help you understand the system. Let's walk out into the woods. By the way, do you want another Budweiser? This powerful company sergeant, my boss, my father figure, my salvation who was an American Indian, someone who understood what it meant to be different. A tormented soul who needed to fuck another white man and me feel his pain, changed my life forever. He still today haunts me and commands my deep-seated and dark needs. Today I'm writing about that day I first visited the offices of Jo P at the Veterans sexual trauma center, I started to relive the beginning of a long slide into despair and failure as a person. An individual. A dream. A possibility of great things. An understanding of the great tragedy that became me. The meeting was easy. Lasting results were devastating. As I walked up Wall Street, headed to my handyman's job at a film production company's office, that represented what I once was, my despair grew. I now take Laical that keeps my moods from exploding as they have most of my life, certainly since SSGxxx raped me in the woods behind the barracks at Ft. Benning that night in 1964 was such a waste of opportunity, the loss of my life as a possible person of anything. A handyman, fuck, what a waste. I now live in a studio hovel, across from a crack addict, below me, as really crazy women bang on my ceiling each day into the night, if I make the slightest noise. My clients, mostly women, never are happy with my work and I struggle to find some self-respect. This was brought clear this day. Clear to me, now more than ever, so. Once again deep depression sets in, no matter how much the psychiatrists at the VA prescribes to ward off this blackness.

*Continued next issue.*

# THE AFTER MATH

## THE WIFE'S LETTER

Dear Mr. Campbell:

My name is xxxxxxxxx. Xxxxxxxx is my husband. I'd like to share with you what life has been with him for the past couple of years.

We met a little over three years ago. I liked him because I found him kind, generous, good natured and gentlemanly. After six months we became engaged to be married.

Xxxxxxx and I didn't argue much, there were issues and for two people over 50 it seemed almost normal. Sometimes he would lose his temper and storm out, but I chalked it up to the arguments people have in relationships.

He drank but when I pointed this out to him that he didn't seem to have a very good time, he slowed down and even stopped for a long period of time. When he drank, it hadn't anything to do with the taste of the wine, the quantities were big and he'd sink into a dark mood.

After we married, I didn't think it was six weeks when he started flying off the handle over anything. The screaming was intense. He'd be filled with rage and irrational thinking. Something was wrong. We went to couples therapy and sometimes he'd get up, yell and leave. He'd calm down and we'd have a couple of days and then anything would set him off.

He started drinking again, smoking marijuana in huge quantities. Our marriage was coming apart. We started going to a psychologist who helped both of us and pointed out how our lives from when we were children affected us both. I understand that he was in a great deal of pain about something.

In the fall of 2005 I convinced xxxxx to seek help. He was ill and when I pointed it out to him that ticked off the episodes and irrational thinking and irresponsibility. He ran up hundreds of dollars of parking tickets, had great disdain for authority and I became the enemy.

After he sought help he told me without specifics the sexual abuse. I could see that it was painful for him. I thought it was a breakthrough and maybe it was but it didn't save our marriage.

The mood swings were becoming more frequent; the lack of responsibility was beyond frustration. I felt as though I had to do everything and walk on eggshells lest he have another episode. I've never experienced such high highs and lows.

We are now separated. At a certain point I had to start thinking about my own mental health. I feel great relief on some level - no more arguing, worrying about if he paid a bill, no more wondering which xxxxxxx is going to walk through the door.

Xxxxxx seems calmer these days, not that I see much of him but it seems like he's doing the work to try and deal with this ordeal.

I was his third wife, the charm they say. Our marriage is probably over but that doesn't mean that maybe we can have a new beginning. I hope so because he is a good person but the damage has wrecked havoc in his life and those around him.

I hope that I've been able to shed some light on the situation and that it helps you help xxxxxxxxxx and many others in this situation.

Sincerely,

THE RAPING NEVER ENDS, NOR WILL VQLAN!

# VA FINDS ASSAULTS MORE COMMON

USA TODAY Gregg Zoroya 12-27-12

About half of the women sent to Iraq or Afghanistan report being sexually harassed, and nearly one in four say they were sexually assaulted, according to new research by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The study - based on anonymous surveys of female service members who deployed to war - suggest a far higher prevalence of sexual misconduct against women in war zones than is reflected by complaints gathered by the various service branches.

In February, more than 20,000 women were serving in Afghanistan. In the preceding year only 115 reports were filed alleging sexual assaults, according to the Pentagon.

The finding shows that there are traumatic strains beyond when troops go to war, said Amy Street, a lead researcher, clinical psychologist and a deputy director at the VA's National Centers for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) in the Boston.

The "lions share of the attention...has focused on combat exposure," says Street, adding that her study shows how sexual harassment and sexual assault on U.S. Troops and their emotional consequences also are a cost of war.

Nate Galbreath, a senior advisor for the Pentagon's sexual assault prevention office, said reports of any abuse concern him.

He said he's withholding an assessment of Street's findings until he better understand how the research was conducted.

## CULTURE HASN'T CHANGED

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., who has pushed for better ways to investigate these cases, said women are left with no "safe haven" war zones.

"It come down to the culture," Speier says. "(IT) hasn't changed no matter what the generals or the secretaries of Defense say about zero tolerance. They have not scrubbed the sexism...out of the military."

The results emerge as the Pentagon wrestles with the problem of sexual abuse within the ranks and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's orders for steps to guard against it.

Earlier this year, dozens of female recruits at Lackland Air Base in Texas reported being sexually assaulted by male instructors.

An Army brigadier general is on trial for alleged sexual misconduct with lower-ranking women while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Associated Press reported last week that sexual assaults at military academies increased from 65 to 80 in 2012.



In the VA study, researchers mailed survey questions to more than 1,100 women who served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Some 48.6% said they had been sexually harassed during their time in a war zone. Sexual assaults during deployment, up to and including rape, were reported by 22.8% of women.

In a workplace of women across the military by the Pentagon, 4.4% said they were victims of unwanted sexual contact."

## COLLEAGUES MAIN OFFENDERS

Almost all the women in the VA study of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans said the offenders were other service members, in many cases from within their own unit, and 47% said that person held a higher rank, according to the findings.

A second research presentation at the Los Angeles conference by the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego cited data from the Millennium Cohort Study, a project that follows the health of thousands of troops over years.

Scientists found that military women who had served between 2001 and 2004, and who had been in direct combat, were 2 1/2 times more likely to say they had been sexually assaulted during those years than female service members who had never been to war.



## WHAT IS eBENEFITS?

eBenefits provides electronic resources in a self-service environment to service members, veterans and their families. Through the eBenefits website you can:

- Track the status of your claim or appeal
- View your payment history
- Obtain verification of your military service, civil service preference or VA benefits
- Receive a copy of your military discharge document, and
- Manage your VA life insurance policy

Enrolling in eBenefits is easy. Just visit [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) for more on this joint Department of Defense and VA service

## ***NATIONAL PTSD CONSORTIUM TO IMPROVE DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT***

***Program Notes - Military Medical and Veterans Affairs Forum***

Half of patients suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are not identified, and treatment for those who are diagnosed is only partially effective, leading Draper Laboratory experts for PTSD to improve tools and treatment outcome.

PTSD has been diagnosed in more than 200,000 troops returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, but it is also commonly found in civilians who have been involved in an accident or assault, or have suffered from the unexpected loss of a loved one. Approximately 8 percent of the U.S. population will suffer from PTSD at some point in their lives, which can lead to panic attacks, substance abuse, depression, suicide, and a host of serious medical complications, most notable cardiovascular disorders.

The current state of the art in PTSD diagnosis is based on clinical interviews, so doctors have to rely on patients' subjective reports. Although the clinical history is a good start, PTSD diagnosis would be better informed if reliable biomarkers of the condition were available, as is the case in many other areas of medicine.

The team plans to develop solutions based on objective, clinical decisions made by using sophisticated algorithms to integrate data from a spectrum of biomarkers including neuroimaging, psychophysiology, chemical assays and gene expression. The resulting diagnostic and treatment protocols will be more objective and personalized, complimenting today's primary subjective means of evaluation and treatment selection.

"Although some biological characteristics that point to a PTSD diagnosis have already been identified, more comprehensive study is critical to examine the integrated roles of multiple potential biological factors of the condition," according to Dr. Roger Pitman, director of the PTSD Research Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital and Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. "This will help clinicians develop personalized treatment plans to improve outcomes, rather than relying on 'one size fits all' approaches."

Reducing inconclusive diagnoses and avoiding ineffective treatments, in turn, will help significantly reduce costs, both for patients as well as society, Pittman said.

The technology platform underlying the proposed solutions to PTSD diagnosis and treatment will be derived from those Draper has developed for a variety of systems for NASA and the Dept. of Defense. These systems synthesize data from multiple sources to create actionable information. One example is Draper's Timeliner system, which currently collects data from hundreds of sources to automate operations and diagnose points of failure in real time aboard the International Space Station and in power plants.

"We have the most advance data fusion technology in critical decision making available to apply to PTSD diagnosis and personalized treatment care," said Dr. Len Polizzotto, Draper's vice president in charge of the program.

Bringing together a national team of leading PTSD experts from a variety of disciplines and institutions offers several advantages over pursuing the problem as a single organization, including the ability to look at the full spectrum of factors from neuro-imaging to gene expression, and conduct human and animal studies in parallel, thus accelerating knowledge and development of solutions

"No one of us could do this alone, but collaboratively, we will be able to create a solution to one of the most expensive health care problems our nation is facing in both cost and human tool," said Dr. David Diamond, psychology professor at the University of South Florida

Additional information and articles at  
[http://www.kmimediagroup.com/files/M2VA\\_Final.pdf](http://www.kmimediagroup.com/files/M2VA_Final.pdf)

## ***THE SYMPTOMS OF PTSD***

Know what to look for. Educate yourself about PTSD as much as you can. Here are a few of the symptoms.

- \* emotional/social isolation
- \* numbing
- \* sexual dysfunction
- \* intrusive thoughts and memories (flashbacks)
- \* sleep disturbance
- \* heightened anxiety and startle reaction
- \* inability to concentrate
- \* depression
- \* nightmares
- \* survival guilt
- \* spacing out
- \* night sweats
- \* Sudden anger (or repressed anger)
- \* inability to feel anything but anger

Symptoms may not surface for years. Go on the internet to:

<http://www.helpartshere.org/issues-and-answers/issues-answers-veterans-affairs-help-for-spouses-of-combat-vets-with-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-from-people-who-know.html>

***Read entire article:***

***HELP FOR SPOUSES OF COMBAT VETS WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER FROM PEOPLE WHO KNOW***

## ***VETS WHO SUFFER FROM PTSD ARE BEING REJECTED BY THE NYPD DUE TO A BIZZARE CATCH 22***

By Kirstan Conley NY Post Dec 12, 2012

Combat veterans who proved themselves fighting terrorists in the Middle East are being rejected for jobs battling crime on the city's streets because of a bizarre Catch-22. If vets say they're suffering from any symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, NYPD recruiters will likely turn them away. But if they don't admit having PTSD symptoms they risk losing critical health care if their condition worsens.

"Three psychiatrists said I was fine, but I was still branded psychologically unfit," said Keith, a decorated Army sergeant from Long Island who served in Humvees that were shelled six times in Iraq. After six months away from war, Keith passed the NYPD's entrance examination in 2006.

But then he detonated a bureaucratic land mine. He'd admitted his occasional PTSD symptoms to the Army, which handed over his record to the NYPD. "Getting blown up by IEDs is scary. Once in a while, I got a little uncomfortable. In large, disorderly crowds I was a little hyper-vigilant, which could be viewed as a good thing," he said.

He was disqualified from wearing an NYPD badge. But Keith soldiered on — going through his grandfather's inheritance to appeal the Civil Service Commission disqualification. He found experts to say he was cleared of any symptoms. But applications have a five-year expiration date from when the test is taken.

Keith, who graduated magna cum laude from CUNY's John Jay College while trying to become a cop, decided not to keep fighting. "It was a long, complicated process and they didn't know how to clear my record because people don't usually ask the Army for less benefits — they ask for more," he explained.

The NYPD insists every soldier and applicant is reviewed on an individual basis. But Keith's lawyer, Robert Kronenberg, said a department counselor admitted that he hasn't given clearance to one person who admitted PTSD symptoms.

"It's a scarlet letter," the retired NYPD captain-turned-lawyer said. "It's having a significant impact on soldiers who are coming back perfectly normal."

NYPD spokesman Paul Browne defended strict screening.

"We screen on a case-by-case basis," he said. "Every candidate is subjected to a psychological evaluation, which is important considering the fact that a police officer may be called upon to use deadly force."

Meanwhile, Keith was hired by another police department. "They taught me to have integrity in the Army and be honest, and look where it got me," he said. "I'll never realize my childhood dream of joining the NYPD."

## ***SOME REINFORCEMENTS***

**WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT:** Helps injured Vets transition into civilian jobs, with services including training and job placement: [woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

**G.I. Jobs:** Offers job-seeking tips for vets: [gijobs.com](http://gijobs.com).

**Veteran Employment:** A job site for both Veterans and active duty military run in partnership with [Monster.com](http://Monster.com): [veteranemployment.com](http://veteranemployment.com).

**Employment Partnership of the Armed Forces:** Connects Job seekers to Veteran-friendly employers: [employer-partnership.org](http://employer-partnership.org).

**Feds Hire Vets:** Helps Vets find jobs within the federal government: [fedshirevets.gov](http://fedshirevets.gov)

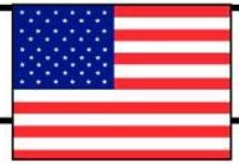
**Veterans Across America:** Offers mentorship and other services to job-seeking vets: [veteransacrossamerica.org](http://veteransacrossamerica.org)

**Helmets to hardhats:** Helps military Vets build careers in construction: [helmetstohardhats.org](http://helmetstohardhats.org)

**American Corporate Partners:** Connects Veterans with mentors from the corporate world: [acp-usa.org](http://acp-usa.org)

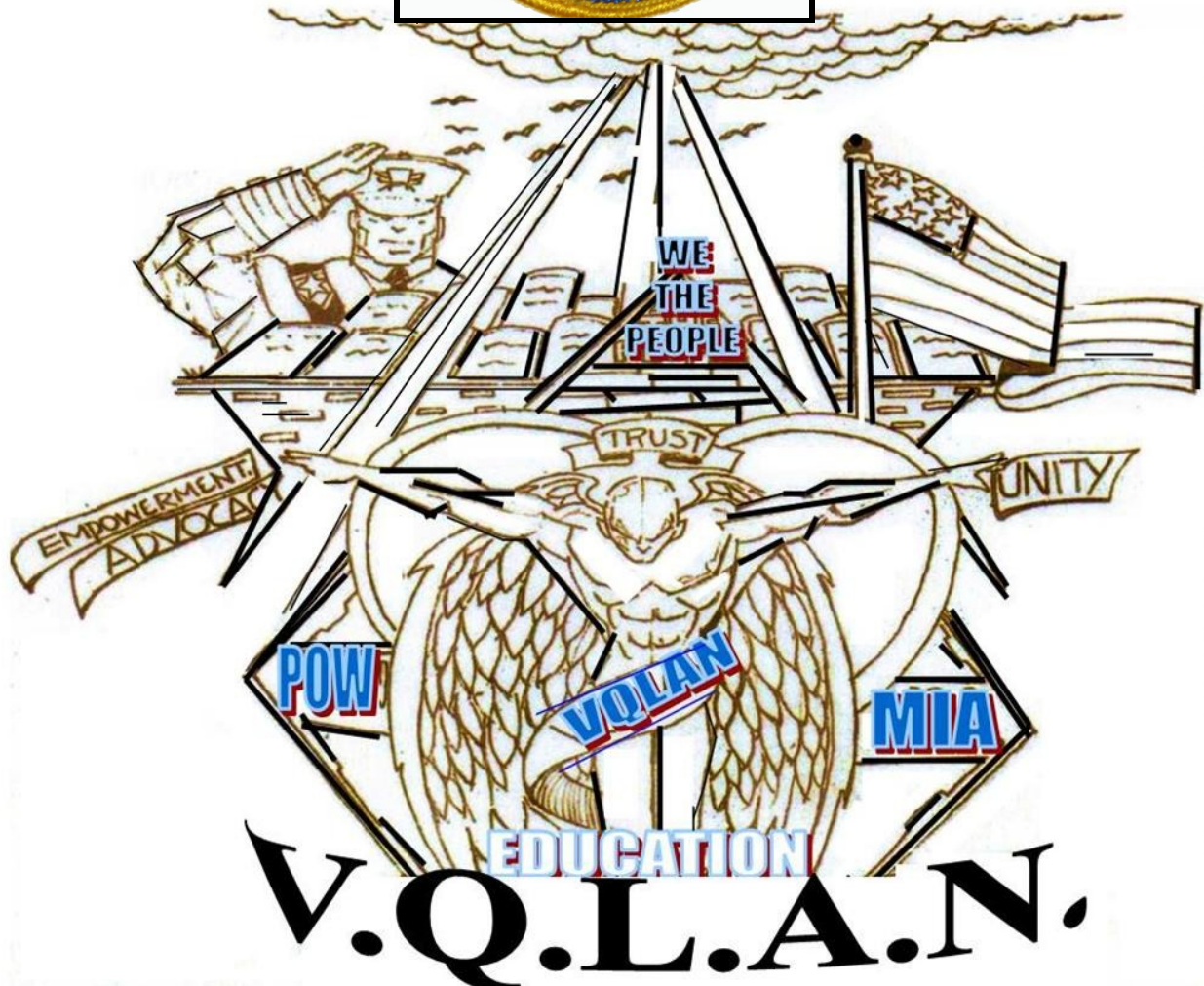
*New York Post*

Searching for your dream job? Find it online at [nypost.com/jobs](http://nypost.com/jobs)



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