



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED



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The Tallahassee Chapter #5
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National Poppy Day

After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. Scientists attributed the growth to soils in France & Belgium becoming enriched with lime from the rubble left by the war. From the dirt & mud grew a beautiful red poppy. The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed during battle following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." written by Lt Col John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front lines.

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row.
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow.

VCP Phone Line Imposter

It has come to VA's attention that a phone line has been set up by an unknown party to potentially "mimic" the VCP phone line. This imposter phone line may be intended to reach Veterans who inadvertently dial the VCP number incorrectly. We want you to know that we are taking this seriously & to keep you aware of the steps we are taking.. VHA Office of Community Care (VHA CC) has reported the "mimic" line to the VA Office of Inspector General for a possible civil or criminal investigation. "Mimic" Phone Line - The phone line established to "mimic" the VCP phone line is 1-800-606-8198. You know you have reached the wrong VCP phone line when: The phone line offers callers a \$100 rebate if the caller provides a credit card. The phone line does not state the caller has reached U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the VCP phone line. Be aware that this phone number incorrectly confirms callers had reach the VCP if the caller asks that question. **VCP Phone Line The correct VCP phone line is 1-866-606-8198.** This line is for Veterans to check their eligibility for the VCP & ask questions about the program. If you are unsure if you have reached the correct phone line, hang up & dial 1-866-606-8198. The phone line will state the called has reach the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

There are many ways to demonstrate your support for Veterans during Mental Health Awareness Month: Start a

conversation with a Veteran in your life. Some Veterans may find it difficult to open up about their feelings & symptoms to their family members or friends, thinking that no one else can understand what they are going through. Stay up to date on Veteran stories & join the conversation on social media. Visit Make the Connection's What's New page to find the latest stories featuring Veterans from all service eras & branches, tips for reaching out to & supporting a Veteran in your life, and tools for accessing local sources of support. Share the new "Strength Over Silence" video. This is the latest VA video created to show Veterans that it's OK to speak up when they need support & that help can come in many different forms.

Veterans' ID Cards

Veterans will have to wait an unknown amount of time before they can get a photo ID card from the Department of Veterans Affairs under a law passed in 2015. The law, known as the Veterans Identification Card Act 2015, orders the VA to issue a hard-copy photo ID card to any honorably discharged veteran who applies for one. Getting the card can come with a fee, the law states, & the card must contain the veteran's name, photo & a non-Social Security identification number. The VA estimated in March 2016 that the cards would be available this year. "VA is currently making plans to implement the new law in the most efficient & cost-effective way possible while protecting veterans' personal information," officials said in a 2016 statement. "We estimate that VA will be able to implement the program in 2017." The legislation is designed to help all veterans have a way to prove their service without carrying a copy of their DD-214. "Goods, services and promotional activities are often offered by public and private institutions to veterans who demonstrate proof of service in the military, but it is impractical for a veteran to always carry Department of Defense form DD-214 discharge papers to demonstrate such proof," the law states. Veterans who receive health care from the VA or have a disability rating can get a Veteran Identification Card photo ID, also known as the VA health card, and military retirees hold an ID card issued by the Defense Department. Proof of service letters are also available to all veterans through the VA's ebenefits website, but don't include a photo. Some states will include a veteran designation on driver's licenses if requested.

Hepatitis C Awareness Month

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month & VA has made great progress in testing, treating, & curing hepatitis C (Hep C) for Veterans enrolled in VA health care. As of December 2016, 75 percent of VA's patients born between 1945 and 1965, (a group shown to have higher rates of Hep C) had been tested. And 98 percent of all Veterans tested have had reflex

confirmatory testing performed on those results, an important step. These are far better rates than any other large health care organization in the U.S. VA has also treated more patients for hepatitis C than any other health care system in the U.S. and in almost all other countries. Since the availability of all oral antiviral treatments in 2014 through January 2017, we've treated over 80,000 patients with cure rates over 90 percent. We are continuing to treat approximately 2,000 Veterans each month. As of December 31, 2016, there were approximately 64,000 Veterans with Hep C in VA care who are potentially eligible for treatment. We want to reach those patients and get them treatment as quickly as possible.

New Login For My HealtheVet

You may have noticed that government websites you visit now display information about system monitoring. This is a legal requirement for all government systems & websites. Monitoring protects these systems from unauthorized use. Government websites are required to display a notice about system monitoring. This notice will be added to the My HealtheVet website on May 20, 2017. A link to the monitoring notice will be added to the homepage. The notice provides information about how VA monitors network traffic to identify and prevent unauthorized attempts to upload or change information. VA does not obtain personally-identifying information when you visit the site, unless you choose to provide such information. When you log in to your My HealtheVet account, a second required notice will display. You'll need to click the "I Agree" button each time you log in. You are agreeing that you may only access information you have the legal authority to view and use. This notice also reminds you that VA monitors the system to protect it from unauthorized use. VA is committed to protecting the security of our computer systems & websites. These legal notices are provided on all government websites to make sure that you are notified and aware of the monitoring activity.

GOLD Star Family Members

Immediate family members of fallen troops now can receive long-term access cards for Air Force bases thanks to a program launched this month. "The chief of staff of the Air Force expressed consideration for more outreach to Gold Star families so they know they will always be part of the Air Force family," said Brooke Brzozowska, an Air Force spokesperson. "These families have had access to and have received long-term care and support through the Air Force Families Forever program located with Airman and Family Readiness Centers," she added. "The base access cards will make it easier to access support services, attend ceremonies and events." In the past, Gold Star family members had to be escorted on Air Force bases by a current ID card holder, despite the presence of survivor services programs on base specifically for their use. The new card will allow families to come on base without an escort. The Army & Navy have similar programs, officials with those services said. The Navy's program, in place since 2014, has issued 559 cards, officials said. Army officials said their program, launched in 2015, issues cards through the DA Form 1602 or "civilian ID card" system. Officials with the Marine Corps did not respond by deadline for requests for information. Air Force officials said surviving family members will be notified about the new program through mail sent from their closest base. Family members eligible for the card are

the same as those eligible to receive the official Gold Star lapel button, including parents, siblings and adult children of those killed in combat. Widows and minor dependents already have base access through the dependent ID card system. The ID cards allow only base access & are not good for entrance into Morale, Welfare, Recreation (MWR) activities, medical facilities, or exchange/commissary services. Card applicants must have a background check before a card is issued.

DFAS Address Change

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service's addresses changed effective May 1, 2017. The old addresses are being discontinued and will be replaced by addresses in Indianapolis. The new addresses are: **Retired Pay:** Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Retired Pay, 8899 E 56th Street, Indianapolis IN 46249-1200. **Annuitant Pay:** Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Annuitant Pay, 8899 E 56th Street, Indianapolis IN 46249-1300 The old PO Boxes in London KY will remain open & all mail will be forwarded to the new address for one year. However, sending mail to the old address will add three to five days to the normal processing time. The telephone & fax numbers are not changing. Web addresses are as follows: <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html> for information. <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> to access retired account.

The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association

The Florida Disabled Outdoors Association (FDOA) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that is working to enrich lives through accessible inclusive recreation. Since its inception in 1990, the FDOA has promoted accessible recreation to persons with disabilities as well as the general public through its hands-on recreation programs, newsletters and community outreach and education. FDOA has also assisted in compliance of the Americans with Disabilities Act and worked closely with many state, local and private organizations to develop, enhance and/or support recreation opportunities for the people with disabilities across Florida and beyond. If interested in joining or finding out more information, please contact: Florida Disabled Outdoors Association, 2475 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 205, Tallahassee, FL 32301 Or call their office at (850) 201-2944

Requesting Time Reference in the Military

Tower received a call from asking, "What time is it please?"
Tower responded, "Who is calling?"
The crew replied, "What difference does it make?"
Tower replied "It makes a lot of difference.

If it is an American Airlines flight, it is 3 o'clock.

If it is an Air Force plane, it is 1500 hours.

If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells.

If it is an Army aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3.

If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, it's Thursday afternoon and 120 minutes to "Happy Hour".

Veteran Travel Payment Rules:

Veterans qualify for travel benefits if: In a receipt of a single or combined service-connected (SC) disability rating of 30 % or more; Travel is in connection with care for a SC disability; in receipt of a VA pension; travel to a Compensation & Pension exam, or travel is to obtain a service dog.