



# CHAPTER 10 ARLINGTON- FAIRFAX, VA

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## CHAPTER 10 WEB SITE

The Chapter 10 Arlington-Fairfax, VA web site has information for members and non-members alike.

There are links to the National Headquarters, Department of Virginia, and other chapters' web sites. The site also contains information on news and events of interest.

Visit the Chapter 10 web site at [www.davmembersportal.org/chapters/va/10/](http://www.davmembersportal.org/chapters/va/10/)

## NEW MEETING CHAPTER MEETING PLACE

DAV Chapter 10 has a new meeting place. The next Chapter 10 meeting is Tuesday February 10 at the Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA. If you need assistance in finding the meeting location, please contact one of the Chapter Officers and they will assist with directions. The Chapter Officers and contact phone numbers can be found on page two of this newsletter. ★

## SHINSEKI SWORN IN JANUARY 21 AS THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON – Retired Army Gen. Eric K. Shinseki took the oath of office January 21 as the Nation's seventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs, assuming the leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs following confirmation by the Senate.

"The overriding challenge I am addressing from my first day in office is to make the Department of Veterans Affairs a 21st century organization focused on the Nation's Veterans as its clients," Shinseki said.

Shinseki plans to develop a 2010 budget within his first 90 days that realizes the vision of President Obama to transform VA into an organization that is people-centric, results-driven and forward-looking.

Key issues on his agenda include smooth activation of an enhanced GI Bill education benefit that eligible Veterans can begin using next fall, streamlining the disability claims system, leveraging information technology to accelerate and modernize services, and opening VA's health care system to Veterans previously unable to enroll in it, while facilitating access for returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans. **continued on page 3**

## VA SENDS LATEST GULF WAR ILLNESS REPORT TO IOM FOR REVIEW

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has sent the October 2008 report from the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses to the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (IOM) for review and recommendations.

The October report from the advisory committee identified potential causes for — and asserted that research supports the existence of — a multi-symptom condition resulting from service in the 1990-1991 Gulf War, which the committee identified as Gulf War Illness (GWI).

Because VA has traditionally and by law relied upon IOM for independent and credible reviews of the science behind these particular veterans' **continued on page 4**

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## CHAPTER 10 COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Chapter 10 begins the New Year by changing the location of our business meetings, which will now occur at the Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale, VA 22003. The chapter 10 web site has a link enabled that will generate a map and directions to the Government Center.

The Government Center has several conference rooms that will provide effective accommodations for the Chapter and Auxiliary meetings, and is conveniently located inside the I-495 beltway, north of I-395. Following are descriptions from each highway to arrive at the Center:

### From I-395

Take the Duke Street/Little River Turnpike WEST exit. At the first traffic light, turn RIGHT onto Beauregard Street. At the next light, turn LEFT onto Chambliss Street. At the next light, turn LEFT onto Lincolnia Road. Follow Lincolnia Road until it dead-ends at Columbia Pike. Turn LEFT onto Columbia Pike. Government Center is on the left in the same building as the Police Station

### From I-495 (the Beltway)

Take the Little River Turnpike East towards Annandale exit. Follow Little River Turnpike into Downtown Annandale. Turn LEFT at the traffic light at John Marr Drive.

At the next traffic light, turn RIGHT onto Columbia Pike. Follow Columbia Pike past the Mason District Park (on your right). The Mason Government Center is on your right, .5 miles past the park entrance (in the same building as the Police Station).

I look forward to seeing you at our new meeting location.

John L. Maki  
Commander

## MILITARY PHYSICAL DISABILITY BOARD OF REVIEW

Service members who have been medically separated since September 11, 2001 will have the opportunity to have their disability ratings reviewed to ensure fairness and accuracy.

The new Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) will examine each applicant's medical separation, compare DoD and VA ratings, and make a recommendation to the respective Service Secretary. A disability rating cannot be lowered and any change to the rating is effective on the date of final decision by the Service Secretary.

To be eligible for PDBR review, a service member must have been medically separated between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009 with a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less, and not found eligible for retirement.

While the Air Force is the lead for the PDBR process, case tracking and reporting, a joint service board will conduct the evaluation and review of each case. Applicants will not be able to appear in person, but may include any statements, briefs, medical records or other supporting documents with their application. After the document review is completed and a final decision is made, each applicant will be notified of the decision and any further information regarding a change of rating. ★

## COME TO A CHAPTER MEETING

The next Chapter 10 meeting will be at our new meeting place Tuesday, February 10. We meet at the Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA. If you need assistance finding the meeting location, please contact one of the Chapter Officers and they will assist you with directions.

Please bring another DAV or potential member. Bring your wife and friends.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 5** Bingo at Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center Nursing Home.
- Feb. 10** Regular business meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Mason District, Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA.
- Feb. 22-25** DAV Mid-Winter Conference, Crystal Gateway Marriott, 1700 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202.
- Feb 26 - Mar 1**  
DAV Dept of Virginia Spring Conference at Beach Resort Hotel and Conference Center, Virginia beach, VA.
- Mar. 5** Bingo at Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center Nursing Home.
- Mar. 11** Regular business meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Mason District, Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA. ★

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**continued from page 1** Shinseki, a former Army Chief of Staff, takes the reins of a 284,000-employee organization delivering health care and financial benefits to millions of Veterans and survivors under a \$98 billion budget authorized this year through networks of regional benefits offices and health care facilities from coast to coast.

Born in 1942 on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, Shinseki graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1965. He served two combat tours and was wounded in action in Vietnam. He served with distinction in Europe, the Pacific and stateside, eventually becoming the Army's senior leader from June 1999 to June 2003.

Shinseki retired from military service in August 2003. His military decorations include three Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.

Shinseki succeeds Dr. James B. Peake as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. ★

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## NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS

The U.S. Department of Labor has joined with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to launch a Web-based National Resource Directory at <http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org> to help wounded warriors identify resources available to assist them in transitioning back to civilian life.

The National Resource Directory encompasses more than 10,000 services and resources from federal, state and local governmental agencies; veteran service and benefit organizations; nonprofit community-based and faith-based organizations; academic institutions, professional associations and philanthropic organizations. Information is organized into six categories: benefits and compensation; education, training and employment; family and caregiver support; health; housing and transportation; and services and resources. It also provides helpful checklists, frequently asked questions and connections to peer support groups. The directory is designed to serve the needs of care coordinators, providers and support partners with resources for wounded, ill and injured service members; veterans and their families; families of the fallen and those who support them. ★

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE (Washington, D.C.):** 202-530-9260  
**DAV NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE (Roanoke, VA):** 1-540-857-2373  
**VA MEDICAL CENTER:** 202-745-8000  
**VA CENTER FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER:** 1-802-296-5132  
**WOMEN'S COORDINATOR (DC VA MED CTR):** Fran Johnson: 202-745-8469  
**ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC:** 703-313-0694  
**ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME - WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 800-422-9988  
**ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY:** 703-607-8585  
**QUANTICO NATIONAL CEMETERY:** 703-221-2183

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

### LIFELINE

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has been enhanced to provide a new service for veterans in crisis. Veterans will be connected immediately to VA suicide prevention and mental health service professional by calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and pressing 1. ★

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### METRO CARDS

John Capriotti is still collecting cards for hospitalized and adjusting veterans at the DC VAMC.

If you have extra cards you can donate, please send them c/o DAV Chapter 10 or bring them to a meeting. ★

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### VAN DRIVERS NEEDED

The DAV transportation is in need of volunteer drivers to support the DAV Trans van in Virginia.

The DAV Trans van provides rides for veterans who have no means of getting to and from the Washington DC VA Medical Center for the care they need and earned.

We desperately need drivers to assist Monday through Friday from morning till early afternoon. We may no longer serve in uniform, but we can still serve those who served and also keep serving our serve country.

For details on how you can join our mission, contact Peter Ahearn, DAV Hospital Service Coordinator at (202) 745-8177. ★

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### NEWSLETTER

To receive your Chapter 10 newsletter by e-mail as a pdf file, send an e-mail to: [webmaster@DAV10.org](mailto:webmaster@DAV10.org). This will save us the postage. Past copies, as well as additional information are also available on our website at [www.davmembersportal.org/chapters/va/10](http://www.davmembersportal.org/chapters/va/10) THANKS! ★



**continued from page 1** health issues, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake asked IOM to review the advisory committee's report before VA officially responds to the report's conclusions.

"I appreciate the committee's work on this report, and I am eager to see the results of further independent study into their findings," Peake said. "Of course, VA will continue to provide the care and benefits our Gulf War veterans have earned through their service, as we have for more than a decade."

VA has long recognized conditions, granted benefits and provided health care to Gulf War veterans suffering from a broad range of symptoms, even though these conditions have not been scientifically recognized as a specific disease or injury or GWI.

These include chronic fatigue, persistent rashes, hair loss, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurologic symptoms, neuropsychological symptoms (such as memory loss), respiratory system symptoms, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, abnormal weight loss and menstrual disorders. ★

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## ENHANCED MORTGAGE OPTIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS

Veterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loan. These new options are available as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008, which the President signed into law on October 10, 2008. You can view the options at [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov). VA has never guaranteed subprime loans. However, as a result of the new law VA can now help many more veterans who currently have subprime loans.

The new law makes changes to VA's home loan refinancing program. Veterans who wish to refinance their subprime or conventional mortgage may now do so for up to 100 percent of the value of the property. These types of loans were previously limited to 90 percent of the value.

Additionally, Congress raised VA's maximum loan amount for these types of refinancing loans. Previously, refinancing loans were capped at \$144,000. With the new legislation, such loans may be made up to \$729,750 depending on where the property is located.

Increasing the loan-to-value ratio and raising the maximum loan amount will allow more qualified veterans to refinance through VA, allowing for savings on interest costs or even potentially avoiding foreclosure.

Originally set to expire at the end of October 2008, VA's authority to guaranty Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs) and Hybrid ARMs was also extended under this new law through September 30, 2012. Unlike conventional ARMs and hybrid ARMs, VA limits interest rate increases on these loans from year to year, as well as over the life of the loans. ★

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## VA ASSISTING VETERANS WITH HEALTH CARE COSTS

For veterans struggling financially due to a job loss or decreased income, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers an assortment of programs that can relieve the costs of health care or provide care at no cost.

Veterans whose previous income was ruled too high for VA health care may be able to enter the VA system based upon a hardship if their current year's income is projected to fall below federal income thresholds due to a job loss, separation from service or some other financial setback. Veterans determined eligible due to hardship can avoid copays applied to higher-income veterans. Qualifying veterans may be eligible for enrollment and receive health care at no cost.

Also eligible for no-cost VA care are most veterans who recently returned from a combat zone. They are entitled to five years of free VA care. The five-year "clock" begins with their discharge from the military, not their departure from the combat zone.

Each VA medical center across the country has an enrollment coordinator available to provide veterans information about these programs. Veterans may also contact VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit the VA health eligibility website at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility). ★



Currently DAV Chapter 10 has 3,183 members.  
Help recruit a fellow disabled veteran to Chapter 10.



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