



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE DIVISION
VETERANS SERVICES OFFICE
December 2017 Monthly Veterans' Newsletter

This Veterans Newsletter is compiled and provided by the Seminole County Veteran's Services Office. Its intent is to keep Seminole County Veterans informed about their rights, benefits, and news of interest. It is non-political and, except where noted, all articles are excerpted from outside sources. Local events honoring/supporting Veterans will be included as made available. You are encouraged to provide feedback and recommendations, as this is your Newsletter. Together with my small Team, I hope you find it both valuable and interesting.

Ed Burford, Seminole County Veterans Services Officer

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3. **Ed sends Thank You. Additionally a tremendous thank you to the DAV Post 30, Auxiliary**
4. **Ed sends Thank You. Thank You Seminole County.**
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1. **From your Veteran Staff**, regardless of your religious affiliation, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season. As you enjoy your family and friends, please remember those men and women of the military who will not be home this season. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers for a safe return. We are honored to have served you in 2017 and look forward to a prosperous and memorable 2018. *Ed, Cathy and Joyce*
2. *Ed sends* Thank You. **A big thank you to Heels and Holsters** for their donation of Thanksgiving Day gift baskets for low income/no income Seminole County Veterans and their families. You were able to put smiles on the faces of our Veterans, their spouse and children. This Thanksgiving you have made a difference.
3. *Ed sends* Thank You. **Additionally a tremendous thank you to the DAV Post 30, Auxiliary** for donating gift cards for our low income/no income Veterans. Through your efforts, Veterans of Seminole County, and their families, were provided Thanksgiving meals. You made our Veterans and families feel like they are not alone this holiday.
4. *Ed sends* Thank You. **Thank You Seminole County.** The above is but a small example of the generosity of our Seminole County residents and how they help our Veterans daily; working with the two organizations above, I saw smiles and more than one tear of a grateful Veteran. There are other organizations and individuals who reached out to our homeless and low income all over the County, and I thank them as well. I am proud to be a Resident of such a generous community. No Veteran Left Behind.
5. **Seminole County Celebrates its Veteran of the Month**, *Ed sends*, - Seminole County began recognizing a Veteran of the Month at the Board of County Commission (BCC) Meeting on November 12th, 2017. Subsequently a Veteran will be recognized monthly at the first BCC Meeting each month. A committee was formed using internal and external Veterans who developed a criteria for nomination; 1. Must be a Honorably discharged Veteran, and 2. Must be a Seminole County Resident. Additionally the Veteran must meet either 3 or 4 - 3. Must have distinguished themselves while on active duty bring credit upon themselves, their service and their country, and/or 4. Must have distinguished themselves post military bringing great credit upon themselves and Seminole County. Criteria 1 and 2 are mandatory; 3 and 4 are interchangeable. Three of the four criteria must be met in every case.
6. **Veteran of the Month, November 2017**, *Ed Sends* – On November 12th, 2017, Chief Master Sergeant Richard A. Ortega USAF (Ret) was recognized by the Seminole County Board of County Commission (BCC) as November 2017 Veteran of the Month. A Resolution, signed by the Chairman of the Board was presented To CSM Ortega. CSM Ortega went ashore with the first wave at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944, and lasted 56 days until he was severely wounded and returned to England for medical treatment. He served four years in the Army and 26 years in the Air Force. His many decoration included two Silver Stars, 4 Bronze Stars with V device, seven Purple Hearts and

discovered after his retirement – a recommendation for the Medal of Honor for his efforts in France. CSM Ortega served in WWII, Korea and during the Vietnam war in Laos. Congratulations CSM Ortega, we honor you.

- 7. Veteran of the Month, December 2017, *Ed Sends*** - On December 14th, 2017, Technician Fifth Grade Emil V. Abrahamian (US Army) was recognized by the Seminole County Board of County Commission (BCC) as December 2017 Veteran of the Month. A Resolution, signed by the Chairman of the Board was presented To Tech 5 Abrahamian. Tech 5 Abrahamian served in the Army during WWII with the 78th Infantry Division as a radio operator in France and Germany. Post military, Mr. Abrahamian became a cartoonist and is a member of the National Cartoonists Society and is an Internationally Syndicated Cartoonist. He has been recognized by five Presidents of the United States, has original artwork displayed in the George W. Bush Presidential Library and is a Good will Ambassador for the National Desert Storm War Memorial. Congratulations Technician Fifth Grade Abrahamian, we honor you
- 8. Post 9/11 Newsletter**, Department of Veterans Affairs, November 30, 2017, To get the most out of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, Veterans can do more than just participate online. The next step is to schedule an appointment for a free medical evaluation with a local VA provider. Read about how to schedule an exam. [Read more.](#)
- 9. Benefit Update: New TRICARE Select** Military.com Week of December 04, 2017, On Jan. 1, 2018, TRICARE Select will replace TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra. As a result, beneficiaries will notice improved coverage for preventive services with TRICARE Select. This type of health care allows you to address health problems before they become life threatening. Examples of TRICARE-covered preventive services include cancer screenings and vaccines, in addition to well-woman and well-child exams. [Read more.](#)
- 10. Connecting over TRICARE Concerns** MOAA, December 7, 2017, This week, MOAA led a delegation of concerned members of The Military Coalition (TMC) in visits with both the House and Senate Armed Services committees staffs to emphasize our collective opposition to the Defense Health Agency's (DHA's) recent, and surprising, changes to the TRICARE fee structure. TMC, of which MOAA is a key member, represents a powerful consortium of over 5.5 million currently serving, retired, and former servicemembers and their families and survivors. Needless to say, the congressional staff expressed keen interest as they listened to our concerns. [As background](#), earlier this fall, the DHA unexpectedly implemented an across-the-board fixed-fee copayment schedule for the new TRICARE Select option. This new fee schedule was intended to replace the existing TRICARE Standard/Extra percentage based on services-used model - the model most beneficiaries have been used to over the years. [Read more.](#)
- 11. Do you have free time? The Orlando VAMC needs Van Drivers, *Ed Sends*** – Orlando VA Flyer, December 7, 2017, The Orlando VA Medical Center is seeking Volunteer Van Drivers for daily runs; Training and Certification will be provided. If you have free time and a desire to help serve our Veterans or would like additional information, contact Voluntary Services at 407-631-0135.

- 12. Wreaths Across America Event to Honor Veterans at VA National Cemeteries** VA News Release, December 15, 2017, WASHINGTON — This Saturday, Dec. 16, volunteers will place holiday wreaths to honor and remember America’s Veterans at more than 100 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries as part of the annual Wreaths Across America event. [Read more.](#)
- 13. Army Launches Pilot to Direct Commission Cyber Lieutenants**, Military.com 5 Dec 2017, The U.S. Army recently launched a new direct-commissioning pilot program aimed at attracting talent from academia and industry to become officers in its cyber mission force. The service launched the Army Cyber Direct Commission Pilot in late October to "go after some of the most technical and adept talent out there that would like to serve our nation," said Lt. Gen. Paul Nakasone, commanding general of U.S. Army Cyber Command. [Read more.](#)
- 14. Trump Signs 2018 Defense Bill: Here's What It Means for You** Military.com 12 Dec 2017, President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed a massive defense bill that authorizes everything from troop pay raises to military end strength in fiscal 2018. [Read more.](#)
- 15. VA and DoD Join Forces Against Suicide** MOAA, November 20, 2017, VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin has made suicide prevention his top clinical priority, and he's serious about attacking the problem head-on with the help of his DoD colleagues., Back in September during suicide prevention month, Shulkin said, “We know that in 2014, an average of 20 veterans a day died in this country from suicide, which is 20 too many.” “This is a national public health crisis requiring a national public health approach,” Shulkin continued. “When it comes to preventing veteran suicide, VA can't - and should not - do this alone.” [Read more.](#)
- 16. VA Announces Rollout and Application Process for New Veterans ID Card, Press Release**, November 29, 2017, WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the application process for the national Veterans Identification Card (VIC) is now available for Veterans — yet another action honoring their service. [Read more.](#)
- 17. VA Suspends Applications for New ID Cards** Military.com 5 Dec 2017, The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) has suspended applications for its new veteran identification card program due to a large number of applicants, according to [a notice on its website.](#) [Read more.](#)
- 18. White House VA Hotline Now Fully Staffed and Operational Around the Clock to Serve Nation’s Veterans**, Press Release, November 29, 2017, **WASHINGTON** — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that the White House VA Hotline, first launched in June as part of President Donald J. Trump’s commitment to reforming VA, is now fully staffed with live agents working to serve Veterans 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. [Read more.](#)

- 19. Veterans Health Care Reform So Close, Yet ...?** MOAA, December 1, 2017, While others in Congress were focused this week on tax reform and preventing a government shutdown in early December, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee was busy holding a hearing to get legislation passed to improve veterans' health care before leaving for the holiday. [Read more.](#)
- 20. Senators Attach VA Caregiver Expansion to Choice Reform Plan** MOAA, December 8, 2017, The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee has embraced a plan from Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) to expand eligibility for Post-9/11 caregiver benefits to older generations of veterans and caregivers, attaching her bill to a legislative package whose centerpiece - reform of the Choice program - is seen as critical for Congress to pass, if not this month then by early next year. [Read more.](#)
- 21. Accessing VA Care, Services Online** Military.com Week of December 11, 2017, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made improvements to our digital tools that make it easier than ever before to access VA care and services online. Some improvements include: (1) Veterans not currently enrolled in VA health care can apply online using a simple, mobile-friendly application; (2) Existing VA patients can now schedule appointments online at over 100 participating medical centers; and (3) VA patients can also now message their health care team or refill a prescription from their smartphone. VA is looking for Veterans, caretakers, and dependents to participate in 45-minute feedback sessions. [Read more.](#)
- 22. Discover Lesser Known VA Services** Military.com Week of December 11, 2017, You may know that VA offers health care to eligible veterans, but did you know VA also offers a whole health approach? The focus of whole health is to offer health care options that are often not covered by private insurance. [Read more.](#)
- 23. VA Center Partners With Improvement Movement,** Military.com Week of December 11, 2017, In conjunction with Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) participation in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's 100 Million Healthier Lives initiative, the Center for Women Veterans has partnered with VA's Office of Community Engagement to improve women veterans' health and well-being. [Read more.](#)
- 24. Army Behavioral Health Program Focuses on Coordination** Military.com | 18 Nov 2017, JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD, Washington -- Officials with an Army mental and behavioral health program here want their system to be a model for providing the medical and emotional support they say military families desperately need after 16 years of war. The Child and Family Behavioral Health System (CFBHS), based out of Madigan Army Medical Center, has put in place something its organizers say is unique in the Defense Department health system. [Read more.](#)

- 25. VA to Provide Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy to Some Veterans with Chronic PTSD** VA Press Release, November 29, 2017— Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will offer Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) as a treatment option for a small number of Veterans with persistent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms resistant to standard options. *Ed sends – Please contact your VA Mental Health Counselor to see if this is available for you.* [Read more.](#)
- 26. VA Offers Care Provider Database** Military.com Week of December 04, 2017, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) database offers a directory of more than 40,000 full time and part time VA health care providers who are independently licensed to provide care to veterans, and who may be a member of your treatment team. Information about VA physicians, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, psychologists and other medical professionals can be found there. [Read more.](#)
- 27. Resources For Women Veterans** Military.com Week of December 04, 2017, Here are several resources for women veterans. To learn about health care and other resources available to women Veterans, visit the [Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) Women Veterans Healthcare website](#). Need to talk with someone about how you're feeling? Call the Women Veterans Call Center at 1.855.VA.WOMEN. All the representatives there are women, and many are Veterans themselves. [Read more.](#)
- 28. VA Offers Caregiver Course** Military.com Week of December 11, 2017, When you think of intimacy, what comes to mind? A new course from the PsychArmour Institute will help you better define four types of intimacy and understand why intimacy matters to healthcare providers caring for veterans and caregivers. You will also learn how to initiate and better approach conversations about intimacy with your patients. [Read more.](#)
- 29. MOAA Presents Research Report at National Meeting of Military and Federal Health Professionals** MOAA, December 1, 2017, This week, MOAA was invited to present its ground-breaking study, [America's Health Rankings, the Health of Women Who Have Served](#), presented in partnership with the United Health Foundation. Highlights of the study indicate women who have served in the U.S. armed forces are more likely than their civilian peers to report their health is very good or excellent. However, despite this positive self-assessment, female veterans report higher rates of cancer, mental illness, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and depression when compared to women with no military experience. [Read more.](#)
- 30. Undetected Parasitic Infection May Cause Deadly Cancer in Vietnam Vets** American Council on Science and Health, November 24, 2017, As if fighting in the Vietnam War was not awful enough on its own, veterans are now finding out they could be at increased risk of a deadly form of cancer. A small pilot study conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs has found a possible link between soldiers infected with a liver parasite and cancer of the bile duct. [Read more.](#)
- 31. 19 PC Keyboard Shortcuts You Need to Know** MOAA, November 13, 2017, There are lots of little (and sometimes not so little) tips and techniques that can shave a few of

seconds off frequently used procedures or maybe even completely change how you work. No compilation like this can possibly be comprehensive, but here are a few Windows tips and tricks worth doing if you're not already. If you're a Mac user, a good source of shortcuts is support.apple.com/en-us/HT201236. [Read more.](#)

- 32. What's Buried in the NDAA?** MOAA, November 21, 2017, You wouldn't call them secrets, but some provisions in the annual defense bill (NDAA) don't receive the same visibility as others. Some issues don't make the headlines because they don't have the same potential impact as pay cuts, housing allowance changes, and new health care fees. But that doesn't mean MOAA doesn't keep track of them or that our members shouldn't be aware. [Read more.](#)
- 33. Tax Clock Ticking** MOAA, December 1, 2017, Republicans are relying on tax legislation to be the crowning achievement of the year. With just a handful of days left on the legislative calendar, the clock is ticking loudly as Congress tries to smooth out some differences. [Read more.](#)
- 34. Be Smart About Charitable Giving** MOAA, December 4, 2017, In 2016, Americans donated \$389.05 billion to charity, a more than 4 percent increase from 2015, according to the [National Philanthropic Trust](#). Nonprofit organizations noted they received about half of these individual donations at the end of the year, either because of the holiday spirit of giving or a desire to give before the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) deadline. Whatever your reason for giving, how and to whom you give can make your philanthropic gift - no matter the size - more meaningful. [Read more.](#)
- 35. Veteran Employment Link**, *Ed Sends*, I wanted to remind you about the [Veteran Employment Link](#), which will allow you to sign up and receive emails and text for job postings and listings. [Sign up here!](#)
- 36. The Legion Introduces New Skills Translator** Military.com Week of December 04, 2017, Military.com, a partner of The American Legion, has released a new, personality-assessment based version of its popular Military Skills Translator to help veterans better understand their qualifications and what career fields may best match their interests and skill sets. The Military Skills Translator is designed to allow job seekers and recruiters to directly translate military experience and skills into civilian terminology. [Read more.](#)
- 37. GI Bill Changes Coming** Military.com Week of December 04, 2017, A few weeks ago we ran a story about the changes coming with the new Forever GI Bill. Up until recently, VA hadn't said too much about when exactly we could expect to see everything contained in the law. Last week the VA let us know what exactly those changes are, and when we can expect to see them. [Read more.](#)

38. HUD Reports 1st Increase in Homeless Veterans Since 2010 Stars and Stripes 8 Dec 2017, WASHINGTON -- One night in January, volunteers across the country counted 40,056 veterans living on the streets or in transitional housing and shelters -- 585 more than in 2016 and the first increase of homeless veterans since 2010. The Department of Housing and Urban Development reported this week the results of its annual point-in-time count of the country's homeless. [Read more.](#)

Newsletter from your local Seminole County Veterans' Services Office Staff.

Thank you for your service to our Country!

It Takes the Strength of a Warrior to Ask for Help

The journey after military service can be a difficult one. If you are Veteran in crisis or know of one who is, please call the VA's 24/7 Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to speak with a trained counselor, or find a Crisis Center near you.