



February 2018 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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1. **Veterans Wheelchair Games Needs Volunteers** Military.com Week of January 29, 2018, The [38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games](#) is coming to Orlando, Florida, July 30 to Aug. 4 and your help is needed. Co-presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the games inspire veterans living with conditions such as spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, amputations and other physical disabilities. More than 3,000 volunteers are needed

during the week to help. For opportunities to get involved and to sign up, visit the [National Veterans Wheelchair Games website](#). [Read more](#).

2. **NAS Sanford Naval Air Station 50th Reunion**, All Squadrons 1942-1968, Notice June 21st, through June 24th, 2018; Hosted by the Fleet Reserve, 3040 West State Road_46, Sanford, Florida, 32771. For more information call [407-330-1706](#).
3. **Veteran of the Month, February 2018**, *Ed Sends* – On February 13, 2018, Major Octavius R. Clark, United States Navy and United States Air Force (Retired) was recognized by the Seminole County Board of County Commission (BCC) as February 2018 Veteran of the Month. A Resolution, signed by the Chairman of the Board was presented to Major Clark. He served three years in the United States Navy after graduating from Seminole High School and retired from the US Air Force Reserve in December 2017; he served two combat tours in Iraq and one combat tour in Afghanistan, he has been awarded numerous awards and decorations. A self-described Native Son of Seminole County, Major Clark grew up on his Grandparents farm in Bookertown, Seminole County, and graduated from Seminole High School; after spending his three years in the Navy, he went to college on a track scholarship and became a world class runner. He ran professionally for almost six years and won a Gold Medal in the 1991 Pan American Games held in Cuba where Fedele Castro presented him with his Gold Medal; after retiring from professional sports, Major Clark returned to Seminole County and is currently Dean of Students at Winter Springs High School and is the Coach for both the Cross Country and Track Teams, winning a State championship in 1999. Congratulations Major Clark, we honor you.
4. **Absentee Voting Procedures Update**, Military.com Week of January 22, 2018, The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has announced the release of the 2018-2019 Voting Assistance Guide with updated content for the 2018 General Election cycle. FVAP publishes the Guide for use by voters, military and State Department Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs), overseas citizen organizations and election officials. It includes the procedures that military and overseas voters must follow to successfully register to vote - [Read more](#).
5. **Khe Sanh Veterans Mark 50th Anniversary of Vietnam Battle** Military.com via Fox News, 21 Jan 2018, Today marks the 50th anniversary of the start of one of the most significant battles of the Vietnam War -- the Battle of Khe Sanh. Across the U.S., groups of Vietnam veterans are gathering to commemorate the 77-day battle, in which some 6,000 U.S. Marines defended a small combat base from tens of thousands of North Vietnamese fighters. [Read more](#).
6. **VA Launches New Tool To Make Upgrading Your Discharge Easier** Military.com Week of January 29, 2018, If you received a less than perfect discharge from the military and are confused about how to get it changed, the VA and DOD have a new program that may help you. The [VA's VETS.GOV](#) has launched a new online tool in

partnership with the DOD to make filing for a discharge upgrade a lot easier. [Read more.](#)

7. **Commissary Benefits at Risk Due to Falling Sales** Military.com Week of February 12, 2018, Sales at on-base grocery stores have fallen six percent in the past year, 21.3 percent since 2012, putting the shopping benefit at greater risk, say commissary executives. The worry is that falling sales leave commissaries open to criticism that they're losing relevancy as a military perk, or becoming too costly for taxpayers to support, given the fierce competition for customers from commercial grocers. [Read more](#)
8. **Low Recruit Discipline Prompts Army to Redesign Basic Training** Military.com Week of February 12, 2018, The U.S. Army will soon launch a redesign of Basic Combat Training intended to build more discipline after many commanders complained that new soldiers often show up to their first units with a sloppy appearance and undisciplined attitudes. [Read more.](#)
9. **Trump's 2019 Budget Includes 2.6% Raise, Modest Force Size Boost** Military.com 12 Feb 2018, The Defense Department's budget request for 2019 released Monday called for a 2.6 percent military pay raise, a modest increase in the end strengths of the services, and major rebuilding programs aimed at retaining the U.S. edge over China and Russia. [Read more.](#)
10. **How President's Food Stamp Cuts Would Impact Military Families** Military.com 14 Feb 2018, A federal funding proposal issued by the White House this week would cut the amount of food aid given to most recipients, including many military families, and replace it with a subscription-style box of delivered foods. Instead, about half of the benefits received by more than 80 percent of all users would be replaced by a regular supply of government-sourced nonperishable foods, which officials likened to a "Blue Apron-type program." [Read more.](#)
11. **Everything You Need to Know About Trump's 2019 Budget Request** Military.com 12 Feb 2018, President Donald Trump on Monday released his budget request for fiscal 2019, marking the first step in a months-long process in which lawmakers from both chambers of Congress debate and ultimately decide on its funding levels and policy provisions. Trump's defense budget request for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1 totals \$716 billion, including \$686 billion for the Defense Department alone. [Read more.](#)
12. **US Military Adds More Than 4,000 Names to Gun Ban List** Military.com via New York Daily News 13 Feb 2018, A Texas church massacre that killed 26 people last year prompted the U.S. military to add the names of more than 4,000 people to the list of dishonorably discharged people banned from owning guns, according to a report. [Read more.](#)

13. **VA resumes online applications for new ID cards** Stars and Stripes, January 29, 2018 – Veterans can again submit online applications for new identification cards through the Department of Veterans Affairs website after the system was taken down in December following rollout problems. The purpose of the identification cards is to help veterans prove their military history without having to carry around their DD-214 certificates, which contain sensitive information. The new IDs do not replace VA medical cards or defense retiree cards, nor do they qualify as official government-issued identification. [Read more.](#)
14. **Not Enough Veterans Are Opting Into The VA’s Test Plan To Fix Appeals** Task & Purpose, February 1, 2018, Last year, President Donald Trump signed the [Appeals Modernization Act of 2017](#) into law — a policy meant to jump-start appeals reform within the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an eye toward ending the backlog of appeals for veterans benefit claims, which is sitting at around 470,000. [Read more.](#)
15. **VA Will Not Study Use of Medical Marijuana** Military.com Week of January 22, 2018, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) says it will not conduct research into the effects of medical cannabis on post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic pain, some of the very ailments veteran patients rely on the drug to treat. [Read more.](#)
16. **VA to Share Data with Dept. of Health** Military.com Week of January 29, 2018, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have announced a partnership to share data, data analytics tools and best practices for identifying and preventing fraud, waste and abuse. [Read more.](#)
17. **Telehealth Revolutionizing Veterans Health Care** Military.com Week of January 29, 2018, The Department of Veterans Affairs is using new technology to deliver health care to veterans. VA’s TeleHealth service utilizes health informatics, disease management and telehealth technologies to care for and provide case management. The aim is to help veterans continue to live independently: [Read more.](#)
18. **VA Video Connect**, February 5, 2018, News Release, Greetings Veterans, The Orlando VAMC has a new Telehealth service called VA Video Connect which enables Veterans to see VA Healthcare Providers in a *virtual medical room*, using encrypted video to ensure the session is secure and private. It allows Veterans to see and speak with their healthcare team from anywhere. If you have a Smart Phone, iPad, iPhone or mobile device with internet connection and video capability, it may be possible to connect with your health care team through a VA Video Connect web link. If interested in using this technology, let your provider know and he/she will contact the Orlando VAMC Telehealth Service for follow up. [Read more.](#)

19. **VA Offers Same-Day Urgent Care** Military.com Week of February 05, 2018, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that 100 percent of its more than 1,000 medical facilities across the country now offer same-day services for urgent primary and mental health-care needs. Same-day services means a veteran with an urgent need for primary care and mental health-care receives services that may include: [Read more.](#)
20. **6 Unbeatable Benefits of VA Loans** Military.com Week of January 29, 2018, The VA program provides significant financial benefits that make home buying possible for score of veterans who might not otherwise qualify. [Read more.](#)
21. **Congress Tries Again To Restore Gun Rights To Veterans With Caretakers** Task & Purpose, February 9, 2018, A group of bipartisan senators want to reverse a longstanding federal policy that prevents veterans from owning firearms if someone else is handling their personal finances. [Read more.](#)
22. **IRS Announces Filing Information** Military.com Week of February 12, 2018, The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced recently that the nation's 2018 tax season is underway and reminds taxpayers about claiming certain tax credits that refunds will not be available until late February. [Read more.](#)
23. **Veterans Business Initiative**, *Ed sends*, Email dated February 8, 2018, - We are very excited to announce our next Veterans Business Initiative (VBI) Kick-off starting Monday, March 5th, 2018 at 8:30am. This is a no cost program for all Military Veterans, spouses and families who are seeking careers, entrepreneurial training and continuing education. The VBI will be held at the Central Florida Disability Chamber of Commerce located at the National Entrepreneur Center and sessions will run for ten weeks from March to May. To register: [CFDC Veterans Registration Link](#) For more information please email: CFDCInfo@nationalec.org . The Central Florida Disability, Chamber of Commerce, at the National Entrepreneur Center, 3201 E. Colonial Drive -Suite A-20, Orlando, FL 32803, Office: 407-420-4875| [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.