



June 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

1. **Veteran of the Month, June 2018**
2. **Free Legal Advice Clinic for Veterans, Ed Sends**
3. **Senator Marco Rubio's staff to join Veterans Free Clinic at the Casselberry Library**
4. **Seminole County Sheriff's Office is hiring Veterans**
5. **Senate Passes Defense Bill: Here Are The Key Takeaways**
6. **Senate Committee's Defense Bill Markup Supports Readiness and the AVF**
7. **Here's What's In the House Defense Spending Bill for Military Veterans, Retirees**
8. **5 Wins for Active-Duty and Reserve Troops in the House Defense Spending Bill**
9. **Military Base Water Contamination Issues**
10. **Vision Coverage Coming**
11. **TRICARE Explains Pricing Changes**
12. **More TRICARE Fee Increases Could Be in Store**
13. **MOAA Leadership Supports Bill To Benefit Disabled Veterans**
14. **Army ECHOES, June 18, 2018, Ed Sends**
15. **Trump Signs MISSION Act Reforming VA Health Care MOAA**
16. **VA Issues Statement on the "VA Mission Act Military.com**
17. **New VA Mission Act: What It Means for Veterans**
18. **The Veterans Claim Appeal Process**
19. **Trump's Executive Order on Preventing Military Suicide Advances With New Joint Plan**
20. **New \$55 Billion Bill to Replace Veterans Choice Program**
21. **VA Board Makes over 53,000 Claims Decisions**
22. **VA's Medical Foster Home Program Military.com**
23. **PyschArmor Teams with VA to Help Prevent Suicide**
24. **New VA Policy to Protect Veterans from Predatory Lending**
25. **VA Caregiver Support Line**
26. **VA Video Connects Doctors and Vets**
27. **Vets May Wait Longer to See Private Doctor Than a VA Provider**
28. **Vet Confronts Congress Over Burn Pits**
29. **The Veterans History Project**
30. **How To Start the VA Loan Process: 6 Easy Steps**
31. **What Can You Buy With a VA Loan?**
32. **Beware: Trusts and VA Home Loans Don't Mix**
33. **The New Veteran ID Card: Should You Get It?**
34. **The Legion Offers Flag Lowering Alerts**

35. Here's How to Access One of the Largest Veteran-Only Grants to Start Your Business

- 1. Veteran of the Month, June 2018** was presented on June 12th in the Board of County Mission meeting beginning at 9:30 am. Captain Richard "Robbie" Roberts entered the United States Navy on July 1, 1938, and retired December 1, 1963, serving more than 25 years. His awards include the Bronze Star with Combat V, three Air Medals, two Presidential Unit Citations, nine Pacific Theater ribbons, plus twelve other awards. Captain Roberts served as a combat aviator during WWII, was shot down on the third day of the war, evaded capture, and repaired his aircraft then returned to the war to continue combat operations. Captain Roberts was instrumental in transitioning from sea planes to helicopters, developing tactics and doctrine still in use today. Captain Roberts is 104 years old and a longtime resident of Seminole County. Captain Richard "Robbie" Roberts has brought great credit and distinction upon himself, the United States Navy, his country, and Seminole County. Captain Roberts, we honor you.
- 2. Free Legal Advice Clinic for Veterans, Ed Sends** – Do you have questions concerning family law or a housing law matter? Come meet with experienced staff and volunteer attorneys to get answers to you legal questions. Where? Seminole County Public Library in Casselberry, meeting room's 1 & 2, 215 N Oxford Road, Casselberry, FL. When? The second Thursday of every month from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Questions or concerns, please contact Carolina Hernandez, Pro Bono Coordinator, Seminole County Legal Aid, Inc, 407-834-1660 extension 113 or email coordinator@scbalas.com.
- 3. Senator Marco Rubio's staff to join Veterans Free Clinic at the Casselberry Library, Ed Sends** – Beginning Thursday July 12, 2018, local staff from the Office of Senator Marco Rubio will have Mobile Office Hours and join the Seminole County Legal Aid Society at the Casselberry Library (see above) offering constituents services in areas such as Military/VA, Immigration, Medicare, Social Security, IRS/Banking and Legislative Issues. They will be at the Casselberry Library the second Thursday of every month from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm. The Seminole County Public Library in Casselberry is located at 215 N Oxford Road, Casselberry, FL. For more information, call the Central Florida Regional Office at 407-254-2573 or Toll Free in Florida at 866-630-7106.
- 4. Seminole County Sheriff's Office is hiring Veterans, Ed Sends** – The Seminole County Sheriff's Office will be hosting an on-site hiring event to support the community and hope to increase hiring opportunities for our local Veterans. Event: SCSO Recruitment/Open House Event, Date: Saturday 7/14/2018, Time: 1pm – 4pm, Location: Public Safety Building, 100 Eslinger Way, Sanford, Attendees: 80 – 100 estimated, Tours: Rotating tours of the Communications Center and the Correctional Facility. For more information contact Bob Hunter, Director Human Resources, Seminole County Sherriff's Office, 407-665-6729.

5. **Senate Passes Defense Bill: Here Are the Key Takeaways** MOAA, June 20, 2018, In an 85 to 10 vote, the Senate on Monday passed its version of the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. The sprawling legislation must now be reconciled with the House, which passed its version of the bill in May. The bill authorizes a 2.6 percent military pay raise, matching both the administration's request and what House lawmakers passed. The raise, consistent with private-sector wage growth, would be the biggest pay raise for service members in eight years. This also aligns with MOAA's 2018 Storming the Hill agenda. [Read more.](#)

6. **Senate Committee's Defense Bill Markup Supports Readiness and the AVF**, MOAA, May 31, 2017, The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) released its proposed version of the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), named the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 in honor of committee chair Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who is battling cancer. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) has been serving as acting SASC chair in McCain's absence. On May 24, the committee released some details about the legislation, which passed the full committee by a vote of 25-2. The legislation is expected to advance to the full Senate for floor action and a vote during the first two weeks of June. [Read more.](#)

7. **Here's What's In the House Defense Spending Bill for Military Veterans, Retirees** MOAA, May 31, 2018, Former service members and their families could benefit from new policies in the 2019 defense spending bill. The \$717 billion National Defense Authorization Act that was passed by the House of Representatives last week includes several key programs for veterans and retirees. The bill was passed on Thursday by the House with a vote of 351 to 66. It now moves onto the Senate. Here are four ways the next defense spending bill could affect military retirees and veterans: [Read more.](#)

8. **5 Wins for Active-Duty and Reserve Troops in the House Defense Spending Bill** MOAA, May 31, 2018, from credit for retirement pay for Reserve troops' maternity leave to tracking burn-pit exposure, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act could bring comprehensive changes to the military. The \$717 billion defense spending bill was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday by a vote of 351 to 66. It now moves onto the Senate. [Read more.](#)

9. **Military Base Water Contamination Issues** Military.com Week of June 18, 2018, A new health study details the scope of contaminated water supplies that have allegedly resulted in cancer and birth defects at nearly 126 military bases across the country — and the White House and Environmental Protection Agency have been pushing against its release over this past month. [Read more.](#)

- 10. Vision Coverage Coming** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, Beginning with the 2018 Federal Benefits Open Season running Nov. 12 to Dec. 10, beneficiaries enrolled in a TRICARE health plan will be eligible to enroll in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, or FEDVIP. Coverage starts Jan. 1, 2018. [Read more.](#)
- 11. TRICARE Explains Pricing Changes** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, On Jan. 1, the Defense Health Agency adjusted TRICARE costs. Some of these rates were based on laws set by Congress while others were based on unique factors, like the annual cost-of-living adjustment or average costs of covered health care services. TRICARE cost changes vary and may change annually. [Read more.](#)
- 12. More TRICARE Fee Increases Could Be in Store** MOAA, June 14, 2018, Once again, Congress wants military beneficiaries to provide more of their money to plow back into DoD to offset the costs of readiness. Congress is coming back to the TRICARE trough - for the second year in a row - with the intention of raising TRICARE fees aimed at retirees under age 65. DoD would gain over \$125 million through these new fee increases. Ouch. [Read more.](#)
- 13. MOAA Leadership Supports Bill To Benefit Disabled Veterans** MOAA, June 14, 2018, MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), and I recently met with Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-Ga.) to discuss concurrent receipt and the Chapter 61 issue and the potential way ahead in Congress. Bishop is the sponsor of the most comprehensive concurrent receipt legislation currently introduced in Congress - H.R. 333, the Disabled Veterans Tax Act. The legislation seeks to change current law and would allow all eligible service members to receive both retirement and disability compensation - a longstanding MOAA goal. [Read more.](#)
- 14. Army ECHOES**, June 18, 2018, *Ed Sends* –Army Echoes is the Army's official newsletter for Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses. It updates the retired Army community about changes to laws, policies, programs, and benefits that affect them. This is a good read for all retirees from each service branch. [Read more.](#)
- 15. Trumps Signs MISSION Act Reforming VA Health Care** MOAA, June 6, 2018, After more than two years of continuous negotiation and the unrelenting pursuit to fix VA's Choice program and reform the veterans' health system, veterans scored a victory when the long-awaited VA MISSION Act finally was signed by President Donald Trump on Wednesday. And, it's all thanks to MOAA members and veterans who never gave up until the mission was accomplished. [Read more.](#)
- 16. VA Issues Statement on the "VA Mission Act** Military.com Week of June 18, 2018. Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Peter O'Rourke recently

made a statement as President Trump recently signed the VA MISSION Act into law. [Read more.](#)

- 17. New VA Mission Act: What It Means for Veterans**, Military.com Week of May 28, 2018, Both the Senate and House have passed a new bill, nicknamed the VA Mission Act, to streamline veterans' access to non-VA community care, create a new VA benefit of commercial walk-in clinics, and open up the VA caregiver program, on a phased schedule, to older generations of veterans severely injured while in service. President Trump is expected to be sign the VA Mission Act by Memorial Day.
- 18. The Veterans Claim Appeal Process** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims reviews decisions of the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA), which is part of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This court has exclusive jurisdiction over these types of cases. [Read more.](#)
- 19. Trump's Executive Order on Preventing Military Suicide Advances with New Joint Plan MOAA**, June 7, 2018, Six months after President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at improving mental health care for troops leaving the military, the VA, Defense Department and Homeland Security have begun their work. "This collaborative effort represents a critical first step for ensuring that service members transitioning from active duty to veteran status understand that VA, DoD, and DHS are committed to easing the stress of transition by providing the best mental health care possible," Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke said in a Friday statement. "Transitioning to civilian life is difficult and, ultimately, this effort will make it easier for our veterans." [Read more.](#)
- 20. New \$55 Billion Bill to Replace Veterans Choice Program** Military.com Week of June 11, 2018, Last Wednesday, President Donald Trump signed a bill to replace the Veterans Choice Program and expand private health care options amid a fight between the White House and Congress over how to pay for it. For more on the new VA Mission Act bill, see this Military.com article. [Read more.](#)
- 21. VA Board Makes over 53,000 Claims Decisions** Military.com Week of June 11, 2018, The Board of Veterans' Appeals, as of May 27, has signed more than 53,650 decisions to date in fiscal year (FY) 2018, which is approximately 86 percent more than the 28,839 decisions signed through the same period last year. The Board is currently on track to meet and exceed its FY 2018 total goal of reviewing a historic 81,000 appeals by Sept. 30, 2018. [Read more.](#)
- 22. VA's Medical Foster Home Program** Military.com Week of June 11, 2018, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Foster Home program provides housing and care for more than 1,000 veterans in 42 states and Puerto Rico, serving as an

alternative to nursing home care for those who cannot live safely on their own. [Read more.](#)

- 23. PyschArmor Teams with VA to Help Prevent Suicide** Military.com Week of June 18, 2018, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with PsychArmor Institute, recently launched an online suicide-prevention training video titled 'SAVE.' SAVE stands for Signs, Ask, Validate, Encourage and Expedite. It offers simple steps anyone can take when talking with Veterans at risk for suicide. [Read more.](#)
- 24. New VA Policy to Protect Veterans from Predatory Lending** Military.com 19 Jun 2018, VA has issued a new policy implementing the May 2018 Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, to protect veterans who apply for a VA-guaranteed refinance loan. The act helps protect veterans and service members from the dangers associated with repeatedly refinancing their home loans. [Read more.](#)
- 25. VA Caregiver Support Line** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Line has developed informational handouts that help you understand and prepare for aging. The handouts are (1) Negotiating the Emotional Milestones of Aging, Illness and Caregiving; (2) Starting the Conversation: Advanced Care Planning; and (3) Understanding Long Term Care Options. [Read more.](#)
- 26. VA Video Connects Doctors and Vets** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, For many veterans, communicating with a doctor in real time will now be as convenient as putting a new app on their smartphone, tablet or personal computer. VA Video Connect, which the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began piloting in 2017, is now being rolled out to veterans across the country. [Read more.](#)
- 27. Vets May Wait Longer to See Private Doctor Than a VA Provider: Report** MOAA, June 14, 2018, *This article by Richard Sisk first appeared on Military.com, the premier resource for the military and veteran community.* The Veterans Choice Program for private health care is in such bad shape that the bill backed by President Donald Trump to fix it will be difficult to implement even if done right, according to the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office. The Choice program was aimed at reducing wait times through increased access to private health care, but the GAO's performance audit conducted from April 2016 through May 2018 found that, in many cases, veterans would have been better off making appointments at VA facilities. [Read more.](#)
- 28. Vet Confronts Congress Over Burn Pits** Military.com Week of June 11, 2018, Former Army Staff Sgt. William Thompson has had two double-lung transplants since returning from two tours in Iraq, which he attributes to exposure to a toxic brew of medical waste, human waste, plastics, tires, electronics, paint cans, routine garbage and clouds of muck that came off the big burn pit at Camp Victory and other U.S. bases in Iraq. [Read more.](#)

- 29. The Veterans History Project** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, The mission of the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress American Folk life Center is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of United States military Veterans so that future generations may hear directly from them and better understand the realities of war. [Read more.](#)
- 30. How to Start the VA Loan Process: 6 Easy Steps** Military.com Week of June 04, 2018, Now that you've determined that you're eligible for a VA home loan (if you aren't sure, please check your [VA loan eligibility](#)), you can begin the loan application process. This process involves six important steps: [Read more.](#)
- 31. What Can You Buy With a VA Loan?** Military.com, June 7, 2018 A two-story home in the suburbs, a condo in the city, a modular home in the countryside. For many service members and their families, buying a home and laying down roots is a powerful step to reentering civilian life. No matter what a Veteran's ideal home, a VA home loan can help. [Read more.](#)
- 32. Beware: Trusts and VA Home Loans Don't Mix** MOAA, June 14, 2018, If you're a veteran nearing full retirement or getting your estate in order, you might be establishing a living trust instead of preparing a simple will. But are you also considering taking out a new VA Home Loan? Beware: One MOAA life member recently found out the hard way that because he and his wife had transferred their home into an irrevocable living trust, they were ineligible for a new VA Home Loan on this property. The VA Home Loan Office told them that if a home is placed in trust, then both of the individuals had to qualify for the home loan — meaning *both* had to be veterans. [Read more.](#)
- 33. The New Veteran ID Card: Should You Get It?** Military.com Week of June 11, 2018, The free veteran ID card was created by Congress as a way to give veterans proof of service at businesses without carrying a copy of their DD-214 forms. It is available for all honorably discharged veterans, regardless of era or time in service. But should you get one? [Read more.](#)
- 34. The Legion Offers Flag Lowering Alerts** Military.com Week of June 18, 2018, The American Legion is offering veterans and the public the opportunity to receive text alerts when the president declares flags to be lowered to half-staff. To receive these text alerts, simply text the word flag to 35893. You will receive a confirmation text within a few minutes. The service is free but message and data rates may apply. [Read more.](#)
- 35. Here's How to Access One of the Largest Veteran-Only Grants to Start Your Business,** Military.com, June 5, 2018, More than 2.5 million small businesses in the U.S. are veteran owned, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. That's an impressive number given the lack of veteran-friendly funding options in the market place. In recent years, though, veteran startups have gained attention and investors and

philanthropists are realizing veterans are a great investment. Case in point: one of the largest veteran-only business grants in the country is provided by the Bob Evans Farms 'Heroes to CEOs' business grant. [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.