



February 2016 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. Mentors needed for Veteran's Court, *Ed sends*, I have previously discussed Seminole County's Veterans Treatment Court, Judge John Woodard III, presiding. VetCourt is not a get out of jail free card but Treatment vice Incarceration; VetCourt does not have violent offenders. VetCourt is a way to try to give something back to our Veterans who have issues which can be related to their military service. It is a treatment/diversion court designed specifically for our Veterans. VetCourt is in need of men and women, preferably Veterans, who can assist our troubled Veteran in finding his/her way back. A mentor is not a counselor nor attorney, but a brother or sister. Contact me for more information. Rburford@seminolecountyfl.gov

2. Seminole Veterans Stand Down, *Ed Sends*, It's that time of year again! The next Seminole Veterans Stand Down will be held on Saturday March 12th, at 9am. The Stand Down is a time when we reach out to homeless and precariously housed Veterans and reconnect them to VA and other service providers; we have medical, mental health, the VA, dental screening, legal, other service providers, showers, haircuts, clothing, food and etc etc. If you can attend, please go to the link below and register online. We are still reaching out to service providers and volunteers. Last year we had a 50% increase from the previous year.

When: Saturday March 12th, 2016

Services are provided: 9am - 1pm;

7:30am: Providers are ask to be there and begin set up

8am: Providers are asked to be set up

8am: Battle Buddies will be touring the facility

9am: Opening Ceremonies Start

Where: Florida Department of Health in Seminole County

400 W. Airport Blvd.

Sanford, FL

Provider Link to online Registration: <http://goo.gl/forms/eYclg48Sj0>

Volunteer Registration Link to online Registration: <http://goo.gl/forms/X23p9rTyni>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at: SeminoleStandDown@GMail.com

3. Ft. Stewart presents Retiree Appreciation Day, Saturday, February 20, 2016, at The Venue at University of Central Florida, 12777 Gemini Boulevard North, Orlando, FL 32816.

Registration begins at 8:00 AM, the Event is from 9:00 to 4:00. Retirees and their families from all branches are invited. Hosted by Ft. Stewart Retirement Services Office. Pre-registration desired, but can also register at the event. *Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier...A Soldier For Life*
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-retiree-appreciation-day-tickets-19551708687>

4. TRICARE Changes OTC Medication Coverage Military.com, Week of February 01, 2016, Effective Feb. 1, 2016, TRICARE is making some changes to its over-the-counter (OTC) drug coverage. Beneficiaries must pay the usual generic copays for covered OTC drugs. OTC drug coverage will still require a prescription from their doctor except for Levonorgestrel (the emergency contraceptive used to prevent pregnancy). Feb. 1 also brings a change to which

drugs are available under the OTC benefit. Visit the TRICARE Pharmacy page for more information on the TRICARE pharmacy benefit. If you have questions about whether or not one of your drugs is covered, you can always call the TRICARE pharmacy contractor, Express Scripts, at 1-877-363-1303. [Read more.](#)

5. DFAS Bulletin, Via email, February 5, 2016, Dear myPay customer: Technology today enables you to share your personal financial information electronically with industry service providers. DFAS is committed to maintaining the security of your myPay information and documents. If you choose to provide your login information to a provider you are responsible for your security. Please remember you are responsible for knowing who you are sharing your information with, how it will be used, and whether records will be kept, shared, and stored by that provider. This warning applies whether you use an online provider or visit an office in person. Protection of your personally identifiable information (PII) is a team effort, and you are a key part of that team. You are urged to do some research before you give someone the keys to your financial records.

6. Another Year of Pay Caps MOAA, February 5, 2016, It's not official yet, but advance word indicates the Pentagon will propose capping the 2017 military pay raise below the average American's for the fourth year in a row. Based on the Employment Cost Index (ECI, the statutory standard for the average American's pay raise), the military should receive a 2.1 percent pay raise next year. Instead, the Pentagon is proposing a 1.6 percent capped pay raise in its budget proposal, which will be submitted to Congress next week. [Read more.](#) Additional Reading : **Lawmaker: Congress Must Fight for Higher Troop Pay** Raise Military.com, Feb 08, 2016, A 1.6-percent pay raise for military members proposed as part of the president's fiscal 2017 budget is "ridiculous," says one lawmaker who oversees the House subcommittee responsible for personnel issues, including pay. Additional Reading: **Army Budget Cuts Modernization and Personnel, Invests in Readiness** Military.com, Feb 09, 2016, A shrinking U.S. Army rolled out its proposed fiscal 2017 budget today -- a plan that funnels more money into readiness but cuts every other area including personnel, modernization and construction.

7. VA's McDonald sets 12 'breakthrough priorities' for 2016, Stars and Stripes, January 21, 2016, WASHINGTON — In a bold move Thursday before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Secretary Bob McDonald identified 12 "breakthrough priorities" that the VA will accomplish by the end of 2016. All 12 would improve care for veterans, but the promises come from an agency that has been engulfed in scandal for the past two years over its inability to meet the needs of the 2.2 million veterans it serves. [Read more.](#)

8. Busting Myths About VA Health Care Eligibility, VA Press Release, November 18, 2010, Rumor mills are permanent fixtures in schools, offices and wherever people congregate, and most of the time they're pretty innocuous. But myths and rumors that deal with health—in this case Veterans health—are a serious matter that can prevent qualified Vets from seeking the care they both need and deserve. Many have come up in the comments section, and others I hear from the guys in my old unit. The myths won't die unless they are addressed publicly and

clearly, so we present you with the most common we hear, and the straightforward answers they need. [Read more.](#)

9. Caregivers Lose Stipends Military.com, Week of February 08, 2016, Due to closer scrutiny by VA, the caregivers of about 7,000 veterans who once were enrolled in VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program no longer are receiving stipends. The program delivers extra compensation to caregivers of badly wounded Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in the interest of keeping them out of expensive, long-term treatment facilities. Most of the caregivers are spouses or close family members of veterans. [Read more.](#)

10. Veterans to Save Money on VA Prescriptions, MOAA, January 29, 2016, Under new rules proposed earlier this month by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), most veterans can expect to see \$1 - \$4 in savings per prescription for outpatient medications, starting next year. The new regulations will change the VA's drug payment schedule for veterans with non-service connected conditions in priority groups 2 through 8, to a three-tiered system, similar to the TRICARE pharmacy program. Under the current system, these veterans pay a flat fee of \$8 - \$9 per medication for a 30-day supply, with copayments capped at \$960 per year. Starting in 2017, the VA will implement a three-tier copayment system, capping the annual maximum for copayments at \$700: [Read more.](#)

11. Women Veterans Call Center, VA news release, VA now operates a Women Veterans Call Center, created to provide women Veterans access to services for which they may be eligible. As of June 2015, WVCC received over 24,000 incoming calls and made over 219,000 successful outbound calls. Women Veterans deserve health care provided with privacy, safety, dignity and sensitivity to gender-specific needs. VA offers comprehensive health services to women Veterans including primary care, specialty care, gynecology and maternity care services, including 7 days of newborn care. We don't want female veterans to be discouraged from obtaining critical services from the VA, which is why at each VA Medical Center nationwide, a Women Veterans Program Manager is designated to assist women Veterans along with experienced women's primary care providers. That means women Veterans can be seen in one place by a provider specially trained in women's health. If you are a female Veteran and have questions about benefits, eligibility and services specifically for women Veterans, you can contact VA's Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-VA-WOMEN or 1-855-829-6636. [Read more.](#)

12. Get Answers to Your Medication Questions, MOAA, January 15, 2016, Have you ever picked up a prescription, gone home, and then realized you had a question? Or maybe you've had a headache and didn't know which pain reliever would be the safest option to take with your other medications? Your pharmacist should be your first resource to answer questions about your medications. [TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery](#), offers access to a pharmacist 24/7. For answers to your medication questions, call Express Scripts Inc. at (877) 363-1303. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is another good resource. FDA's [Division of Drug Information](#) (DDI) will answer almost any drug question. Call (855) 543-DRUG (3784). [Read more.](#)

13. Study: Toxic Exposures Caused Gulf War Illnesses Military.com, Week of February 01, 2016, New research shows that exposure to pesticides and other toxins caused Gulf War Illness among the 700,000 U.S. troops who fought in the first Gulf War. Researchers concluded that exposure to pesticides and ingestion of pyridostigmine bromide (PB) (prophylactic pills intended to protect troops against the effects of possible nerve gas) are "causally associated with GWI and the neurological dysfunction in Gulf War veterans." The research team also cites multiple studies showing a link between veterans' neurological problems and exposure to the nerve-gas agents sarin and cyclosarin, as well as to oil well fire emissions. A report of the study is available in the journal Cortex. Study: Toxic Exposures Caused Gulf War Illnesses. [Read more.](#)

14. Questions and Answers about Health Care Information Forms for Individuals (Forms 1095-A, 1095-B, and 1095-C), IRS Website, Because of the health care law, you might receive some new forms this winter providing you with information about the health coverage you had or were offered in 2015. [Read more.](#)

15. Military Bases No Longer Accepting IDs from Five States, Military.com, Jan 13, 2016, U.S. military installations are no longer allowing visitors to gain base access using official ID cards from five states -- and other installations may soon follow. State-issued driver's licenses and identification cards from Illinois, New Mexico, Missouri, Washington and Minnesota can no longer be used to obtain a visitor's pass because those cards don't comply with federal standards, officials said. DoD officials did not say whether or not enhanced driver's licenses (EDL) from Minnesota or Washington would still be accepted. [Read more.](#)

16. Veterans should remain on high alert for IRS impersonators VA Blog, January 26, 2016, As tax-filing season begins, Veterans should be aware of people contacting them who claim to be from the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury. These IRS tax impersonators have been using phone calls and emails to take millions of dollars from taxpayers in every state in the country. The callers tell intended victims they owe taxes and must pay using a pre-paid debit card, money order or a wire transfer. The scammers threaten those who refuse to pay with being charged for a criminal violation, a grand jury indictment, immediate arrest, deportation or loss of a business or driver's license. To prevent taxpayers from falling victim to these scams, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration has expanded their outreach efforts to make sure people remain on high alert. [Read more.](#)

17. Veteran Burial Honors Military.com, Week of February 01, 2016, It is critical for family members who want military funeral honors to tell the funeral director, who can make the request for them. The honors are not automatic. The family should have access to the veteran's discharge papers (DD Form 214). Department of Defense (DoD) policy is to provide a minimum of a two-person uniformed detail, and one service member must represent the veteran's branch of service. The core elements include playing taps, folding the American flag and presenting the flag to the family. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) also offers other benefits, such as headstones. [Read more.](#)

18. Museum to Honor Native American Vets Military.com, Week of February 01, 2016, Honoring the thousands of Native Americans who served in various U.S. Military branches and better educating the public are the goals of the proposed National Native American Veterans Memorial. The project is being overseen by Kevin Gover, director of the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The memorial will be erected by Veterans Day in 2019. A design for the memorial will be selected by a juried competition. The Memorial will be located prominently on the NMAI's grounds on the National Mall, between the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol. For more information, visit the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of the American Indian website. [Read more.](#)

19. Vern Buchanan's Proposal to Replace DD-214 With Veterans ID Card Delayed Until 2017 - Sunshine State News, February 1, 2016, After the Military Times reported last week that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was delaying the launch of the Veterans ID card program, a Florida congressman wants answers. Back in July, President Barack Obama signed U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan's, R-Fla., "Veterans ID Card Act" into law. Buchanan's proposal looked ensure all veterans receive ID cards from the VA instead of just those vets who served 20 years in the armed forces or are seeking medical treatment for service-related wounds. [Read more.](#)

20. Two Republican Congressmen Introduce Bill to 'Draft Our Daughters' Military.com, Feb 04, 2016, Two House Republicans -- both opponents of opening up combat roles to women -- introduced a bill Thursday called "Draft America's Daughters Act of 2016," which would require women to register for the draft. The bill was offered by Rep. Duncan Hunter, a Republican from California and former Marine, and co-sponsored by Rep. Ryan Zinke, a Republican from Montana and former Navy SEAL. [Read more.](#)

21. VA Demands Proof WWII Combat Vet With Purple Heart Served in Military Military.com via Fox News | Feb 08, 2016, The Department of Veterans Affairs refuses to pay benefits to a World War II vet in his 90s who says he was wounded in combat and earned a Purple Heart. Fox 2 Now in St. Louis reports that after Emil Limpert submitted an application for benefits to the VA he was told he needed to provide more proof that he was in the military. "I get this letter that says we can't accept it because we've got no record of you being in the service," he told the station. "I guess I'm the unknown soldier." [Read more.](#)

22. New Vet Business Program in Florida, Military.com, Week of January 25, 2016, A new entrepreneurship program that is geared toward military veterans is being implemented with the help of Hillsborough Community College in Tampa. The college will offer training and entrepreneurial education to veterans living in Florida who aim to open their own businesses through the Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program. The program will also be implemented at the University of West Florida, University of North Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University and Florida Atlantic University. The Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program is provided free of charge to Florida resident veterans who are active duty or who have been honorably discharged. Veterans who plan to relocate to Florida to pursue entrepreneurship are also eligible for the program. The [Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program website](#) is set to

launch in February 2016; interested veterans can visit the website to apply for the program or contact (850) 898-3489 or info@FloridaVetBiz.org for more information. [Read more.](#)

23. Upcoming Military and Veteran Job Fairs, Military.com, January 27, 2016, Attending a job fair is a proactive way of getting to know companies or industries you're interested in. It's also a great way to make contacts. [Read more.](#)

24. VETERANS FLORIDA ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS, February 1st, 2016 in News Releases, New Statewide Initiative Offers Accelerated Entrepreneurship Education to Veterans at No Cost The Veterans Florida Entrepreneurship Program, a new statewide initiative that offers qualified veterans the opportunity to receive an accelerated entrepreneurship education at no cost, is now accepting... [Read more.](#)

25. Altamonte Springs City is Veteran Friendly, Check out their job listing at [Altamonte Springs, FL Jobs](#)

26. 7 Steps to Landing a Civilian Job Military.com, Week of February 08, 2016, Here are seven steps every veteran can take to find civilian employment: (1) set your goals; (2) collect intelligence. Ask a few fundamental questions that will help guide your job hunt and search for the answers; (3) expand your network of contacts; (4) customize your resume for the specific job you are applying for; (5) strengthen your interview techniques; (6) take the initiative on a job hunt. Never let your potential new employer take all of the responsibility in communicating; (7) if you lack information or experience and need a point in the right direction, reach out for help to friendly experts. [Read more.](#)

27. University of Phoenix Reinstated for Tuition Assistance Military.com, Jan 15, 2016, Military members wishing to use their Tuition Assistance at the University of Phoenix are back in luck. The Department of Defense has lifted its suspension of the University of Phoenix today. That means that military members will once again be able to use their tuition assistance benefits to pay for classes at the online institution. In October the Department of Defense announced that the university "had been placed on probationary status in respect of its participation in the DoD Tuition Assistance Program for active duty military personnel". [Read more.](#)

28. FTC Files Suit Against DeVry University Military.com, Week of February 01, 2016, In the Federal Government's latest move to crack down on what it sees as problems with private universities, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) today announced that it has filed suit against the operators of DeVry University. In its suit the FTC alleged that DeVry's advertisements deceived consumers about the likelihood that students would find jobs in their fields of study, and would earn more than those graduating with bachelor's degrees from other colleges or universities. For more details, see this Military.com article. [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.