



November 18, 2024



Call to Action for Dole Act: H.R. 8371, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, would provide enhancements to critical health care services for veterans and caregivers who need help now and cannot wait any longer. It has bipartisan support in the Senate but is not supported by Democrats in the House. Contrary to certain opposing voices, this IS a good piece of bipartisan-negotiated legislation that had input from numerous organizations representing veterans, caregivers, and survivors from around the country. [Tell your representatives to pass H.R. 8371](#), Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, to enhance health care services for veterans, caregivers, and survivors.



VFW Statement for House Subcommittee Hearing: VFW National Legislative Associate Director Nancy Springer provided a statement for the record for a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs' hearing on a review of funeral operations at VA national cemeteries. She commented on the National Cemetery Administration's goal to provide 95% of veterans with reasonable burial options within a 75-mile radius of their homes, the status of memorial affairs technology modernization, and the indefinite suspension of military caisson support at Arlington National Cemetery. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 19:20 mark.



VFW Speaks on Panel for Transitioning Service Members: VFW National Veterans Service Assistant Director of Field Operations Cindy Noel participated in a Veterans Voices program event in Washington, D.C., hosted by *The Hill*. She spoke on a panel titled "Saluting Our Heroes: Transitioning from Military to Civilian Life" along with other representatives from veteran organizations. Noel spoke about how it is critical that transitioning service members have access to accredited claims representatives, like VFW Service Officers, to file for VA disability benefits before leaving the military. She explained that this is a key part of the transition process to ensure veterans have access as early as possible to the benefits they have earned. [Watch the video.](#)



TRICARE Open Enrollment Now: Veterans have until Dec. 10 to take advantage of TRICARE's open enrollment season. The health care provider is bringing important updates to beneficiary enrollment and premium payments. Starting on Jan. 1, 2025, TriWest Healthcare Alliance will take over as the new regional contractor for the TRICARE West Region. Payments currently made through military allotments will be automatically transferred to TriWest, but it's crucial for affected veterans to set up their recurring monthly payments directly with TriWest before the new year. Failing to do so may result in disenrollment from their TRICARE health plan. Notably, the TRICARE West Region will now encompass [26 states](#), an increase of six from the previous coverage. Be sure to check your state's status and find out more details.



Military Environmental Exposure Evaluations Program: Veterans Exposure Team-Health Outcomes Military Exposures (VET-HOME) is a new VA program that uses telehealth to perform military environmental health registry evaluations. VET-HOME VA clinicians will create a detailed exposure history, record symptoms or abnormalities potentially related to the military environmental exposures, conduct a physical examination (or review the results of a previous examination), and inform veterans of their eligibility for one of VA's six environmental health registries. [Read more](#) about VET-HOME or locate an [accredited representative](#) for help filing a claim.



Changes Coming to VA Secure Sign In: VA has issued changes for signing into your VA.gov or My HealtheVet accounts. Currently, there are four ways to sign in to your VA accounts: LOGIN.GOV, ID.ME, My HealtheVet, and DS Logon. Both My HealtheVet and DS Logon will be discontinued for accessing VA accounts. My HealtheVet sign in will be available until Jan. 31, 2025. Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors with VA accounts are encouraged to transition how they sign in to access these accounts prior to that date. [Read more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced three burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Korean War.

Updates:

-- [World War II Army Air Forces Pvt. 1st Class](#)

[Bernard J. Calvi](#), Massachusetts

-- [World War II Army Air Forces Sgt. James W.](#)

[Swartz](#), Michigan

-- [Korean War Army Master Sgt. Wallace Simmons Jr.](#), Indiana

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