

JANUARY 2020

# VFW

M A G A Z I N E

**BAMMIN' AND JAMMIN':**  
**IRAQ WAR VET**  
**TEACHES MARTIAL ARTS**

**'SHE SAVED MY LIFE'**  
**VETERANS BOND WITH SURFING DOGS**

VFW REVS UP AWARENESS AT

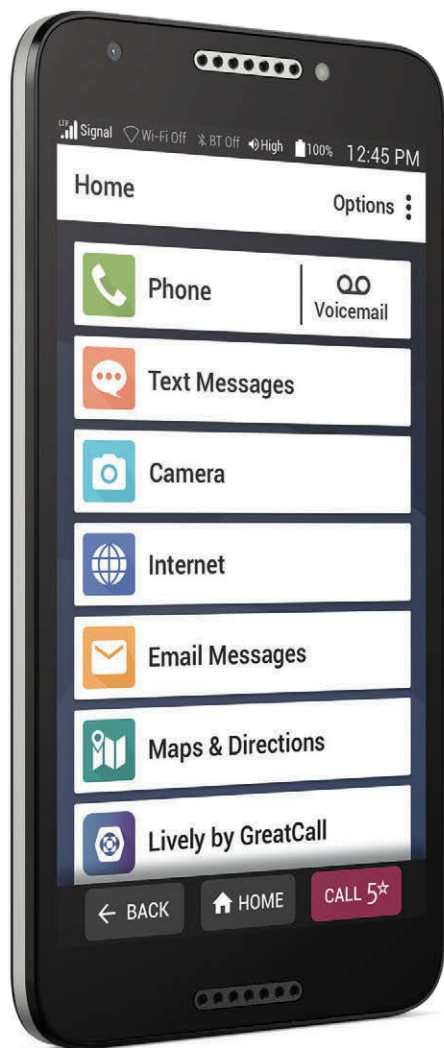
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MOTORCYCLE RALLY

**ARMY RANGERS LAUNCH**  
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## 22 'BIKERS ... ARE VERY PATRIOTIC'

For the second consecutive year, VFW joined thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts at one of the nation's largest biker rallies in Sturgis, S.D. This year, VFW brought more employees, assisted more veterans and signed up more members. **BY DAVE SPIVA**

## BUSINESS IDEA CAME FROM IRAQ SERVICE

In the beginning, this former Army staff sergeant just wanted his earned medals. After he learned that other vets had the same difficulties, he founded a company to meet that demand.

**BY STEVE ALVAREZ**



## 'I WANT TO SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE'

An Iraq War veteran and VFW life member is the owner of a growing network of martial arts schools in Texas. He says he wants to make sure the skills he teaches are "always affordable and accessible."

**BY KARI WILLIAMS**



## DEPOSING A DICTATOR IN PANAMA

When Panamanian Gen. Manuel Noriega led a coup against his nation's democratically elected president in 1989, the U.S. acted quickly. Within 42 days, a U.S. force led by Army Rangers and other U.S. units restored order.

**BY JIM SERVI**



## JANUARY 2020

Vol. 107 No. 4

**COVER PHOTO:** Persons B. Griffith IV and Ricochet surf off the beaches of San Diego last year. Griffith, an Afghanistan War veteran, and Ricochet, a service dog trained to assist veterans with PTSD, met at Naval Medical Center San Diego. (Photo by Tamandra Michaels)

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# Blue Water Vietnam Vets: Get Your Claims Filed Now



**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**  
William "Doc" Schmitz

**A**fter nearly 20 years of waiting, Vietnam War "blue water" sailors will finally get their benefits back. These Navy vets served off the coast of Vietnam during the war and were exposed to Agent Orange.

Our network of VFW service officers is ready to help. I want any and all Vietnam War blue water veterans to file claims. This includes those who have never filed, those whose claims were previously denied and those who had their benefits taken away.

VA, which stripped disability benefits from those vets in 2002, begins re-issuing disability ratings for Agent Orange exposure to blue water Navy vets this month. This historic reversal of policy is the result of VFW's and other veterans advocates' hard work to get the *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019* enacted into law (P.L. 116-23) on June 25, 2019.

A month after the law passed, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie told attendees at VFW's national convention in Orlando, Fla., that blue water Navy vets should begin filing claims for Agent Orange exposure in January 2020.

VA has actually been accepting claims for months now. As of mid-October, there were some 6,700 pending claims. That included about 6,200 from blue water veterans and about 500 submitted by their survivors. In addition, VA began sending letters in early November to about 14,000 veterans whose blue water claims had previously been denied.

It's been reported that as many as 90,000 blue water sailors could be eligible for Agent Orange-related disability compensation based on the new law. But that number could be woefully underestimated. After talking with the staff of our National Veterans Service in Washington, D.C., I now believe that as many as 450,000 Vietnam War sailors could be eligible.

Now that VFW's legislative work is done, our service work begins. VFW looks forward to assisting every Vietnam War blue water veteran who seeks our help. This assistance is always

free of charge and has no VFW membership requirement attached.

An accredited VFW service officer will advise you about the VA claims process, tell you what type of paperwork you'll need to document your service and what type of information you'll need from your doctor or medical history.

If you are a blue water Navy vet of Vietnam and haven't filed yet, you are already behind. Do it today to protect yourself and your family.

## NEED HELP WITH A CLAIM?

For free assistance filing a VA disability claim, find a VFW service officer at [vfw.org/NVS](http://vfw.org/NVS) or call 1-800-VFW-1899.



**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.**

VFW magazine is the official publication of the  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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VFW magazine is protected through trademark registration in the United States and in the foreign countries where VFW magazine circulates. VFW magazine (ISSN 0161-8598) is published 10 times a year by Veterans of Foreign Wars, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. Non-profit standard class postage paid at Oklahoma City, Okla., and additional mailing offices.

Publications Agreement No. 1476947

Available on recording for the blind and those with physical handicaps that preclude reading material.

Contact: [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org).

#### SUBMISSIONS

Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs must be accompanied by return postage and no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. **Poetry submissions not accepted.** VFW magazine is available in microfilm from **NA Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998.** Payment of membership dues includes \$1.98 for a year's subscription to VFW magazine.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS/DECEASED MEMBER

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For subscription in other countries, \$20 per year.

Make checks payable to **VFW Magazine** and send to:

**Member Service Center, 406 W. 34th St., KC, MO 64111.**

#### VFW OBJECTIVES

**To ensure national security**  
through maximum military strength.

**To speed the rehabilitation**  
of the nation's disabled and needy veterans.

**To assist the widows and orphans**  
and the dependents of disabled and needy veterans.

**To promote Americanism** through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live.



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## Outpost Keating

I recently finished the book *Red Platoon*, authored by former Staff Sgt. Clinton Romesha, who

was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at COP Keating. I recommend the book to all readers. It is a brutally honest account of soldiers who exhibited great heroism in the heat of battle.

**BRUCE NEWBY**  
KANSAS CITY, KAN.

Thank you for helping keep the memory of Keating alive. It was a costly mistake to establish an outpost in the middle of Afghanistan's "Indian country." Keating was completely surrounded by tall cliffs, and the Taliban quickly took advantage of the high ground. The men manning the post fought valiantly for hours fending off the Taliban attackers. Our guys took a beating at Keating.

**PAUL HOYLEN**  
DEMING, N.M.

Thanks for relating the heroic actions of our troops during the siege of COP Keating. [The book] *Red Platoon* describes the events of the battle in far greater detail.

**PETER KILLIAN**  
PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y.

As a retired U.S. Army trained physician's assistant (PA), I read with great pride your article and the actions of Capt. Christopher Cordova, the squadron PA. Facing extremely difficult circumstances and a mass casualty situation, Capt. Cordova's tireless devotion, skill and ingenuity not only reflect highly upon himself and his profession, but demonstrate the contributions of physician's assistants to Army medical care for more than four decades.

**GLENN DAVIS**  
SALEM, W. VA.

## Peacekeeping in Beirut

Thank you for remembering the peacekeeping force in Lebanon. Combat decorated Beirut, Grenada and Panama veterans should fall under periods of war time frames. This would allow their spouses to receive death benefits.

**KEVIN PERRY**  
ORNEVILLE, MAINE

## Fight for Relevance

VFW magazine has once again ignored the U.S. Coast Guard. They are members of the U.S. military. As a VFW life member and Coast Guard veteran with 12 1/2 years of service, including deployment to Vietnam, I find this offensive. I am sure there are many Coast Guard vets who serve and support the VFW, and your exclusion of them is a disgrace.

**CHRIS FARINA**  
PITTSBURGH, PA.

The Coast Guard is not mentioned at all in the article. It is my service, the Coast Guard, who is fighting for relevance. My part may have been small, but I always did my duty. To have my service marginalized like this is so disappointing.

**HARVEY GJESDAL**  
EAST WENATCHEE, WASH.

*Editor's Note: The article Military Services 'Fight for Relevance' appeared in the October issue. It concerns those military branches funded by the Department of Defense. The U.S. Coast Guard is not part of the Department of Defense.*

## Berlin Wall Fell

This was an excellent account of the end of the Cold War. Jim Servi's passion for military history is apparent in his enthusiastic account of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. I especially enjoyed the quotes from retired Army Command Sgt. Maj. Del Hoskins about the dramatic rush of refugees from East Germany once the wall fell. I felt that I also was a witness to the actual events.

**KEVIN PERRY**  
ORNEVILLE, MAINE

The article brought back memories of when I was stationed with A Co., 3rd Bn., 6th Inf., Berlin Brigade. We were on a support detail bringing troops from Augsburg to Berlin. On the way back to Berlin on the Hanover Berlin Autobahn, we were detained by Soviet personnel at our checkpoint. That was on Oct. 12, 1963, for a period of 51 hours. It was a time during the Cold War that could have caused a major incident. I left Berlin in 1966 and joined the "hot war" in Vietnam.

**WILLIAM ROBB**  
ROCHESTER, IND.

I was stationed at Fulda Downs barracks in 1972 with the 11th ACR. I was there when we had a red alert. About 250-300 tanks appeared on radar. They came out of tunnels in the mountains. It was a scary and unpleasant experience

**PHIL SCHUCK**  
DEERFIELD, KAN.

I was very disappointed in this attempt to reflect on the Berlin Wall by means of a more distant strategic NATO stronghold at the Fulda Gap when the occupied American sector of Berlin was elsewhere. The Berlin Brigade — sacrifices made and the people it served — ultimately won democracy and freedoms for Europe and beyond to win the Cold War. It has been consistently snubbed by politicians and buried as a historical footnote. I just didn't expect to see that here.

**DAVID MARIANO**  
MADISON, ALA.

Thanks for a wonderfully written article and the road down memory lane. I belonged to the 7350th Air Base Group stationed at Tempelhof Central Airport in Berlin from June 1976 to December 1978. I stood next to the Berlin Wall on numerous occasions and twice went over into East Berlin with my girlfriend who had family there outside of East Berlin.

**JOANNE CLAYTON**  
HERRIN, ILL.

(Continued on page 8.)



"Mail Call" features letters from our readers in nine issues per year. If you have questions, comments or concerns about any subject or article from our most recent issue, letters can be emailed to [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org), with the subject line, "Mail Call," or mailed to: VFW magazine, Mail Call, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111. Letters must be no more than 200 words, and VFW magazine reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length and accuracy.

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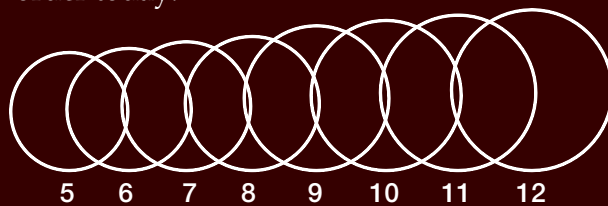
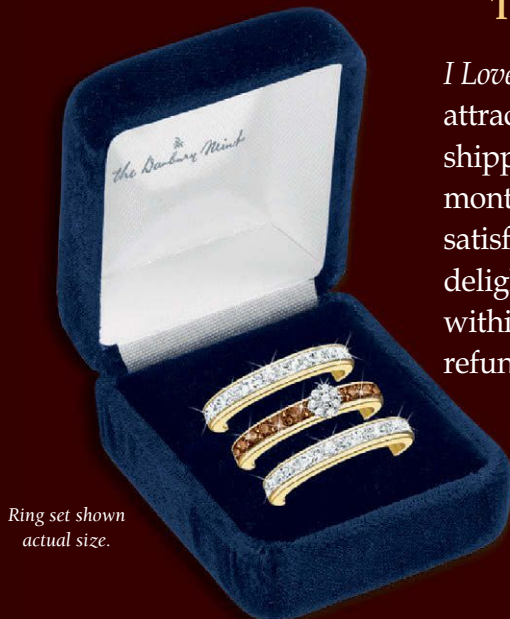
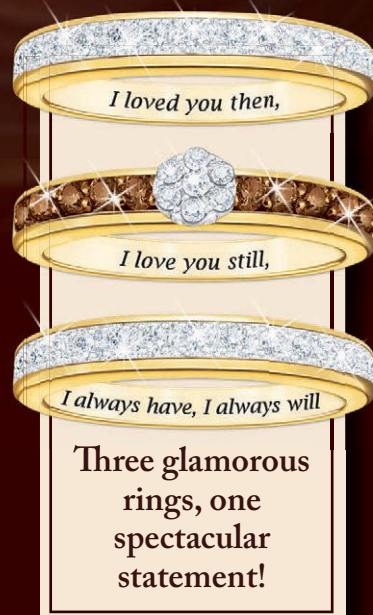
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## 2020 Census Wants Military Spouses



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Census Bureau officials believe military spouses and veterans are prime candidates for those jobs.

Positions include census takers, recruiting assistants, office staff and supervisory staff. To be eligible, applicants must be at least 18, have a valid Social Security number, be a U.S. citizen, have a valid email address, complete an application and answer assessment questions.

To apply, visit <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs/how-to-apply.html> or call 1-855-JOB-2020 and select option 3. Salaries vary depending on the job and location.

## Deadliest Day in Iraq 15 Years Ago

U.S. troops suffered their single deadliest day of the Iraq War 15 years ago this month. On Jan. 26, 2005, 30 Marines and a Navy corpsman were killed when their CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopter crashed during a sandstorm near Rutba in western Iraq. Of those aboard, 27 were from the 1st Bn., 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Div. The flight crew was from Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

That same day, four other Marines from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force were killed during combat operations in Anbar province. Two soldiers, one from the 1st Infantry Division near Ad Duluiyah and one from the 1st Cavalry Division south of Baghdad, died that day, too. The 37 fatalities were the most for U.S. troops on any day of the Iraq War.



The National Medal of Honor Museum will be built in Arlington, Texas, and its board of directors expects it to open in 2024. The site is in the city's entertainment district near the stadiums of the Texas Rangers and Dallas Cowboys and will feature a pentagon-shaped building housing the museum.

## Medal of Honor Museum to be Built Near Texas Sports Stadiums

The board of directors for the National Medal of Honor Museum announced in October that it had selected a permanent site for the museum's new facility, expected to open in 2024. It will be located in Arlington, Texas, in the city's growing entertainment district.

Arlington won out over bids by Denver and Mount Pleasant, S.C. The latter is the museum's current location

aboard the *USS Yorktown* at Patriots Point near Charleston. Even after the museum is moved to Texas, the *USS Yorktown*, which saw service in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, will remain the headquarters for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

The museum will honor the nation's 3,507 Medal of Honor recipients, of whom 71 are still living.

## Post Office Issues Purple Heart Stamp

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) began selling the *Purple Heart Medal 2019* stamp in October. Featuring an update to its 2012 design, the stamp honors "the sacrifices of the men and women who serve in the U.S. military," according to the USPS.

The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces who are wounded or killed in combat.

The stamp is part of the USPS's Forever series, meaning its value will always be equal to the value of the USPS first-class mail 1-ounce rate.



The U.S. Postal Service began selling the Purple Heart Medal 2019 stamp in October. It is part of the USPS Forever series.

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I was stationed in Berlin when the wall came down. It felt good to have contributed to the breakup of the Warsaw Pact/USSR. I remember living on the road from Checkpoint Bravo when the border was opened. All the Trabants (East German-made automobiles) from the East were coming through, and there was an immense fog radiating from those two-cycle engines. Berlin was how I entered into the VFW.

**ROY GERTIG**  
BELLEVUE, NEB.

## Christmas Star

I was in Chu Lai over Christmas 1965 and among the 200,000 in country who benefited from *Operation Christmas Star*. A very belated thank you to all those who made it possible for some of us to have a Christmas touch from home.

**TERRY ELLIS**  
COARSEGOLD, CALIF.

I was in Da Nang in 1965, and there were no gift packages that came our

way. I was with the 1st of the 8th Cavalry frontline unit. The only ones who shared something with us at Christmas were the news reporters who shared their whiskey.

**WALT GAMACHE**  
SAINT PETERS, MO.

## Wars Not Worth Fighting For

It was a great article until it introduced 'not worth fighting' statistic by political party. It would have been much, much better with no political party information and with a bar chart for Vietnam and a bar chart for Korea.

**PHIL SOUTHWORTH**  
ODENTON, MD.

I agree with President Trump when he says he is tired of being the world's police and fighting in combat forever and accomplishing very little. In order to win a war, don't start it unless you are willing to go all out to win and then

end it ASAP with minimal financial and human losses. The last war we "won" was WWII. The reason we won was because losing was simply not an option. Keep politics out of wars!

**ALBERT W. WEIR**  
SEAFORD, DEL.

## Targeting Dependent Children Born Overseas

I do hope that VFW is using all its influence to stop the actions of an Administration that says it supports our service members and vets. In truth, they do little more than give lip service.

**TERRY CUNNINGHAM**  
COWEN, W. VA.

These children are having their citizenship challenged because President Trump hated John McCain, who was born in Panama while his father was a Naval officer serving in that country.

**WILLIAM BURNS**  
BUDA, TEXAS



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# VFW Study Reveals VA Health Care Is Improving

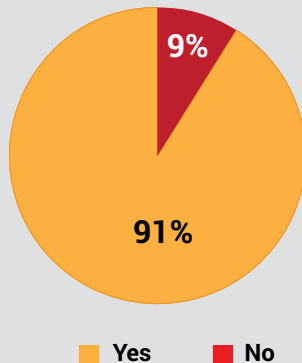
Nearly 7,000 veterans participated in a VFW-conducted survey about VA health care. In its seventh report, VFW announced that veterans are having “positive experiences” at VA facilities.

BY DAVE SPIVA

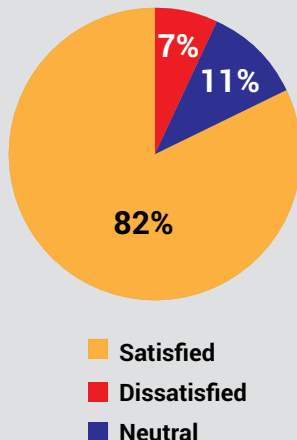


Here's a sample of results from VFW's 2019 survey of VA patient satisfaction.

Would you recommend VA health care to your fellow veterans?



How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your VA health care experience?



Veterans believe VA health care is getting better, according to results of a VFW study released in September.

The VFW report, titled *Our Care 2019: A Report Evaluating Veterans Health Care*, sampled opinions of 6,902 veterans. Of those, about 96 percent, or 6,762 total veterans, responded that they were eligible for VA care. Of the eligible veterans, more than 78 percent reported that they utilize VA health care.

Most veterans who use VA health care said they have “positive experiences” related to the quality of care at their local VA facility. About 82 percent of veterans reported being satisfied with their VA health care experiences. Nearly 7 percent reported being dissatisfied, and about 11 percent reported being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their VA health care experiences.

VFW Commander-in-Chief William “Doc” Schmitz said that the reason so many veterans are satisfied with the VA is because of the “high-quality, individualized” treatment provided by the nation’s largest health care system.

“But there is always room for improvement, especially in the areas of access to quality care inside VA medical facilities and outside in the communities,” Schmitz said. “That’s why such surveys are so important, because the only way to improve any service is to

routinely take the pulse of the customers the VA exists to serve.”

Veterans who reported that they did not use VA health care (about 4 percent) said they either had additional options for health care, had a bad experience with the VA or were put off by “bad stories” related to the VA’s health care system.

Overall, female veterans said they were less likely to use VA health care than male veterans, according to the VFW report.

Veterans between ages 60 to 79 years old were the most likely to use VA care. Some 82 percent of veterans ages 60 to 69 years old and 84 percent of those 70 to 79 years old said they used VA health care. Vietnam War veterans were the most likely of any age group to report using VA health care compared to veterans of other service periods.

Schmitz said that even though there are more non-VA health care options available to veterans than ever before, they still are enrolling in VA for their health care needs.

“Community care has always had a role in caring for our nation’s wounded, ill and injured veterans,” the Vietnam veterans said. “But its purpose is to augment, not replace, the continuity and continuum of care that only the VA can provide. And with our seventh report, our nation’s veterans agree.”

EMAIL [dsпова@vfw.org](mailto:dsпова@vfw.org)

To follow VFW Action Corps Weekly, visit <https://www.vfw.org/actioncorpsweekly>.

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# VFW Demands Answers on Agent Orange Diseases

VFW in October called on VA to answer for the delayed decision to add more Agent Orange-linked diseases to VA's presumptive diseases list. This came after an October *Military Times* report that said White House officials are responsible for the delay in adding four diseases to the list.

"The VFW is extremely upset and dissatisfied with the backdoor political games that are being played in Washington, as the lives of our veterans are at stake," VFW Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz said. "The health and welfare of our nation's veterans should, and must, be our number one priority."

The *Military Times* reported hypertension, bladder cancer, Parkinson's-like symptoms and hypothyroidism were the conditions that VA officials wanted to add to the presumptive conditions list in 2017. But as of Nov. 1, VA has not added these conditions.

"Every time we send our men and women to war, we end up deliberating for decades as to whether or not they were exposed to toxic chemicals," said Patrick Murray, deputy director of VFW National Legislative Service. "This type of absurdity must stop."

Schmitz, a Vietnam War veteran, said VA "must do the right thing" by approving additional Agent Orange presumptive conditions.

"We cannot, and will not, stand by and allow another veteran to lose their life because of the bureaucracy of Washington," Schmitz said. "The time for waiting is over."

VFW encourages veterans who served in or off the coast of Vietnam or Thailand or their caregivers to contact a VFW service officer to discuss whether they are eligible to file a VA claim for Agent Orange exposure.

Visit [www.vfw.org/nvs](http://www.vfw.org/nvs) to find a near-by VFW service officer.

## 14 Presumptive Agent Orange Conditions

To qualify for Agent Orange-related benefits, a veteran must have one or more of the 14 conditions VA presumes to have been caused by exposure, which are:

- Chronic B-cell Leukemia
- Hodgkin's Disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory Cancers
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas
- AL Amyloidosis
- Chloracne
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Early onset Peripheral Neuropathy
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

# 41 MIAs Identified from North Korea Remains Return



Personnel from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command conduct an honorable carry ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Aug. 1, 2018, in Hawaii. North Korean officials returned 55 boxes of remains and artifacts to the U.S. in July 2018.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has identified more than 40 U.S. troops of the remains returned from North Korea last year, according to *Stars and Stripes*.

"We are up to 41," DPAA spokesman Air Force Lt. Col. Kenneth Hoffman told *Stars and Stripes* in an email. "We can't speculate at this point about how many more soldiers may be identified."

In July 2018, North Korean officials returned 55 boxes of remains and artifacts to the United States. This came after the first meeting between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore during the summer of 2018.

As of Nov. 1, a total of 7,607 U.S. troops remain unaccounted for from the Korean War, with about 5,300 of them expected to be north of the Korean demilitarized zone. In addition to those missing from the Korean War, more than 100 Cold War losses are in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about specific legislation or VA benefits, contact VFW's Washington Office at [vfw@vfw.org](mailto:vfw@vfw.org). A member of VFW's National Veterans Service staff will respond as soon as possible.

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## VA Refunds \$400 Million to Veteran Homeowners

Tens of thousands of disabled veterans received a total of about \$400 million in refunds from the VA due to an error in charging extra fees for buying homes.

The refunds come after an inspector general's report that stated there were about 53,000 veterans who were improperly charged a fee that typically is waived if a veteran has a VA disability rating. Currently with VA, veterans and service members have to pay a fee of up to 3.3 percent of the loan's cost. Those who are waived from paying the fee are:

- Veterans receiving VA compensation for a service-connected disability.
- Veterans entitled to compensation for a service-connected disability if they did not receive retirement or active-duty pay.
- Surviving spouses of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected disability.

VA reviewed about 130,000 claims this year for potential errors. Refunds ranged from a few thousand dollars to more than \$20,000 for some individuals, according to VA.

"This effort included loans dating back nearly 20 years," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said. "Our Administration prioritized fixing the problems and paid veterans what they were owed."

For more information, veterans can call the VA's loan center office at 1-877-827-3702. Information about VA home loans and fees can be found at <https://benefits.va.gov/homeloans>.



PHOTO BY TERENCE HAYES/VFW

Kelly McKeague, director of the Defense POW/MIA Accountability Agency, and VFW Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence discuss the ongoing POW/MIA mission in October at VFW's Washington Office. VFW is asking all Vietnam vets to return any Vietnamese artifacts they may have collected from the Vietnam War. Such artifacts could help determine the fate of 300,000 missing Vietnamese.

## VFW Helps Return Artifacts to Vietnam

VFW returned six artifacts and personal items to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in October.

During VFW's National Convention in Orlando, Fla., in July, Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence asked Vietnam veterans to provide any information they have that could help determine the fate of 300,000 missing Vietnamese and also return personal effects, such as photos and letters, to Vietnamese families.

Lawrence said VFW is fulfilling its promise to DPAA to help advance the POW/MIA mission. He added that a goodwill gesture on the part of U.S. veterans can foster a sense of cooperation that can ultimately help the U.S. cause.

"Our VFW members, and their families, continue to answer the call in this very important effort to bring closure to those who lost loved ones during the

Vietnam War," Lawrence said.

Lawrence said it is "vital" for Vietnam veterans to return any artifacts, documents and personal items back to the Vietnamese government.

"The Vietnamese have continued to foster a good relationship with the U.S. as we diligently search for our missing servicemen," Lawrence said. "This display of diplomacy will only help in our efforts to reach our true goal and promise to our families affected by the Vietnam War – and that's to achieve the fullest possible accounting of those Americans missing from the Vietnam War."

Items collected from Vietnam veterans and their families will be given to DPAA. Those interested in turning over items to DPAA can mail artifacts and personal effects to: *VFW Washington Office; Attention: Public Affairs; 200 Maryland Avenue, NE Washington, D.C. 20002.*

## McCarthy Confirmed as Army Secretary



Former Army ranger Ryan McCarthy officially became the new Army Secretary in September. McCarthy is the former Army undersecretary.

McCarthy was selected and then confirmed for the position by the Senate after Mark Esper, a life member of the VFW Department of

Pennsylvania, became the Secretary of Defense in July.

McCarthy, who was in the Army from 1997 to 2002, served with the 75th Ranger Regiment in the beginning of the Afghanistan War. McCarthy was a special assistant to former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates during the George W. Bush Administration. He also was a staff member for the House International Relations Committee.

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A man with a beard, wearing a black wetsuit, is surfing on a blue and white surfboard. A golden retriever named Ricochet, wearing a pink life vest, is standing on the surfboard next to him. They are riding a wave in the ocean.

# GOLDEN RETRIEVER HAS HEALING POWERS AND A SURFBOARD

**FOR SURF DOG RICOCHET, HELPING VETS WITH PTSD IS HER CALLING. AND IF THEY HAPPEN TO WANT TO HIT THE WAVES, SHE'S MORE THAN HAPPY TO GET ON BOARD.**

**BY JANIE DYHOUSE**

## **WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

**[www.surfdogricochet.com](http://www.surfdogricochet.com)  
[www.puppyprodigies.org](http://www.puppyprodigies.org)  
[www.k9sforwarriors.org](http://www.k9sforwarriors.org)  
[www.pawsteams.org](http://www.pawsteams.org)**

**I**raq War vet Randy Dexter remembers when he thought about suicide all the time. But then he met a golden retriever named Ricochet, who would forever change his life.

A certified therapy dog living in southern California with her owner, Judy Fridono, Ricochet met Dexter during a six-week Canine Inspired Community Re-integration (CICR) session. Fridono and Ricochet are CICR volunteers.

CICR is run through Pawsitive Teams in conjunction with the Recreation Therapy Department at Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego. At the beginning of a typical six-week session, a service dog is introduced to a military veteran to see

what it's like to have a therapy animal.

"After the first meeting with Ricochet, I knew I wanted a service dog," Dexter said. "I went from someone who wouldn't talk, to someone who wouldn't shut up. Before Ricochet, I thought about suicide all the time. She was my last hope."

A member of VFW Post 3783 in Ramona, Calif., Dexter served 10 years, nine months and two days in the Army. As a combat medic, he did two tours in Iraq with Special Troops Bn, 3rd Inf. Div. (2005 and 2007).

Just a few months into his first deployment on April 5, 2005, his unit hit an improvised explosive device,

and Dexter suffered a traumatic brain injury. It wasn't until four years later he received a PTSD diagnosis.

Dexter's last 14 months of service were with Balboa's Army Warrior Transition Unit. There, he bonded with Ricochet on outings to places such as parks or shopping centers. Dexter even had the opportunity to surf, as Ricochet is a renowned surfer, assisting people in the waves.

Fridono said that Ricochet provides "healing energy" for people suffering invisible trauma. Dexter said that was his experience with Ricochet.

"Being hyper vigilant is a symptom of PTSD," said Dexter, who grew up going

**LEFT: Afghanistan War veteran Persons B. Griffith IV surfs with therapy dog Ricochet in 2019 in San Diego. Griffith met Ricochet through a partnership with Canine Inspired Community Re-Integration and Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego.**

**RIGHT: Veterans José Martinez and Griffith enjoy some beach time with Ricochet in 2019 before hitting the waves in San Diego.**

**BELOW: Judy Fridono, Ricochet's owner, volunteers with the golden retriever to help combat PTSD in veterans. Fridono said there is more to Ricochet than her surfing abilities — Ricochet has a "healing" side.**

to VFW dinners with his grandpa, a veteran of both the Korea and Vietnam wars. "Service dogs allow us to not be that way. They do it for us."

Fridono said it is remarkable to watch Ricochet with a person experiencing PTSD. With no training, the golden retriever will keep vets away from crowded locations or situations that may elevate anxiety.

"She mirrors the emotions of the veteran she is with at the time," Fridono said. "She communicates on a level that we cannot."

Together, Fridono and Ricochet raised \$10,000 so that Dexter could get his own service dog named Captain, who is a "white mutt" rescued in South Carolina by K9s for Warriors.

Incidentally, Dexter was offered a position at K9s for Warriors at its new facility in Alachua, Fla., in 2018. He is the campus director, which includes overseeing the school's operations at the 67-acre campus and making sure the veterans get there on time for training with service dogs.

Before that offer was made, though, Dexter was preparing for graduate school and had been selected as a VFW-SVA fellow for the 2018 year. He had accepted but had to later decline because of the career opportunity before him.

Dexter said K9s for Warriors is a three-week residential program which pairs a veteran with a service dog.

"We teach everything from laws to grooming to health care," he said. "We show what it means to integrate your dog into your life."

Dexter said that K9s for Warriors has



PHOTO BY BARB MCKOWN



PHOTO BY DALE PORTER/KITLERIMAGE.COM

rescued 1,089 dogs since it began in 2011. He and Captain advocate daily on behalf of veterans.

"Judy and Ricochet helped me find my purpose in life," Dexter said. "I promised I would 'paw it forward.'"

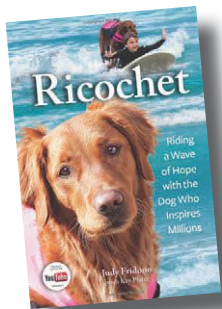
## A 10-YEAR SURFING DOG

Back in California, Fridono has had Ricochet since she was a puppy. The

idea was for Fridono to train her to be a service dog for someone else.

It didn't take long for Fridono to see that Ricochet wasn't a typical service dog. At nine months old, Ricochet was easily distracted by birds.

"I didn't feel comfortable putting her with a person with a physical disability because I couldn't guarantee that she wouldn't go after a bird," Fridono



Be sure to check out “Ricochet” by Judy Fridono with Kay Pfaltz. It chronicles Fridono’s journey with her service and therapy dog, Rina, and how they ended up with Ricochet, a dog that one veteran says “sees” into a person’s soul.

said. “It was frustrating for me because it was as though she shut down and just wouldn’t train anymore.”

What Fridono would soon realize is that Ricochet was “destined” to be not only a service dog, but a therapy dog.

For more than 10 years, Ricochet has been surfing. She has won multiple contests and participated in fundraisers for people and causes. It seems everyone wanted to watch her surf.

Ricochet’s first fundraiser was for Patrick Ivison, a quadriplegic child who is an adaptive surfer. That’s the first time Ricochet hopped off her own surf board and onto Ivison’s in order to assist him on his board.

While Fridono said there is a definite technique to train a dog to surf, Ricochet wasn’t trained for this.

“She’s the one who wanted to surf

with people who are disabled,” Fridono said. “I let her manipulate herself. I didn’t tell her where to stand or how to balance. She actually assists people on the board. She takes it very seriously when she is surfing.”

Through Ricochet’s surfing abilities, Waves of Empowerment was born. It brings veterans together with children who have special needs. The goal is to reduce social anxiety for all participants.

Fridono said it gives the vets an opportunity to be of service again and provides the child with a hero for a day.

Fridono developed the program in honor of her own service and therapy dog, Rina, who died at 13 in 2016.

While riding the waves is what made Ricochet famous in the dog surfing world, Fridono wants people to see the healing side of her companion.

That’s why Fridono agreed to let Ricochet star in the Imax movie “Superpower Dogs.” One of five dogs featured in the movie, Ricochet demonstrates how she helps alleviate PTSD symptoms in veterans and assists children with special needs.

Ivison has a cameo in the movie, but it’s Afghanistan War veteran Persons B. Griffith IV, or Griff as he’s known, who was by Ricochet’s side during the film.

## RICOCHET HAS ‘SOUL VISION’

With the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Griff served twice in Afghanistan — once in 2010 and again in 2014. After his first deployment, he was diagnosed with PTSD.

Griff believes the onset of his PTSD came from the death of Marine Lt. Col. Mario Carazo, under whom he served. Griff drove Carazo to a helicopter, which was later shot down.

Griff said he buried that grief and pushed onward, never dealing with Carazo’s death.

“I was diagnosed with PTSD when I came home, and I just shrugged it off,” Griff said. “You know, fake it until you make it. I bottled it all up and put on my game face. I wasn’t aware how it was affecting me.”

In 2015, Griff started going to therapy for his PTSD. He said he went consistently, but that it wasn’t helping him. While he didn’t feel worse, he also didn’t feel any better. Griff said it didn’t seem to be helping.

A year later, he met Fridono and Ricochet at CICR at Balboa and was

Iraq War vet Randall Dexter and his therapy dog, Captain, attend Dexter’s graduation from San Diego Miramar College in 2016. Dexter worked with therapy dog Ricochet while he was assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit at Naval Station San Diego. Ricochet helped raise money for Dexter to get Captain.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDALL DEXTER

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"I BELIEVE EVERY DOG IS BORN WITH A SENSE OF EMPATHY. BUT WITH RICOCHET, IT'S LIKE A SUPERPOWER. SHE HAS SOUL VISION, LIKE SUPERMAN HAS X-RAY VISION."

PERSONS B. GRIFFITH IV

Afghanistan War vet Persons B. Griffith IV with therapy dog Ricochet after surfing in San Diego in 2019. Griffith, who has PTSD, said while he was skeptical a dog could help him, Ricochet has changed his life. "Ricochet pulled out of me what was going on inside and encouraged me to be kind to myself," Griffith said.

reluctant. He said he was a "hard charger" and by that point had convinced himself that he had no problems at all.

"I was so skeptical before I met them," Griff said. "I scoffed at the notion that a dog could help me."

When he showed up for the fifth week of the program, he took Ricochet's leash from Fridono and started to walk through the park. Ricochet laid down on the path in front of Griff and wouldn't move.

"I sat down and Judy asked me if I was OK," Griff recalled. "At that moment, the wheels came off and it was all right there in my face. Ricochet pulled out of me what was going on inside and encouraged me to be kind to myself. She under-

stood me better than I understood myself before I had met her."

For Griff, it was the beginning of a deep connection and the pathway to healing. It also was the beginning of his love of surfing.

Griff had previously tried to surf through CICR, but it took him five weeks to get chest deep in the water. Once he met Ricochet, he knew he wanted to give it another go.

"If I could, I'd do it every day," said Griff, who lives in Arlington, Texas.

Griff said filming "Superpower Dogs" was "challenging and stressful," but he did it because he wanted to give back to Fridono and Ricochet.

"Judy is an amazing human being," said Griff, who stays in touch with Fridono. "There's no way I can repay her and Ricochet for the life I'm going to have."

While Griff doesn't have a therapy dog right now, he is working through his struggles with weekly therapy sessions and is honest with himself — something, he admits, he was not able to do until Ricochet looked inside him.

"I believe every dog is born with a sense of empathy," Griff said. "But with Ricochet, it's like a superpower. She has soul vision, like Superman has X-ray vision." ✨

EMAIL [jdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:jdyhouse@vfw.org)



To view more photos of Ricochet and friends, as well as the YouTube video that went viral making the golden retriever famous, check out <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmagazine>.

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(From left to right) VFW Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz meets Medal of Honor recipient and Army veteran Don J. Jenkins at the Pappy Hoel Campground and Resort near Sturgis, S.D. Jenkins earned the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War and is a life member of VFW Post 5837 in Morgantown, Ky.

# VFW Revs Up Outreach at Sturgis Rally

Since 1938, motorcycle enthusiasts from around the world have gathered in the Black Hills of South Dakota for a week of celebrating their favorite pasttime.

While many people at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally were there to ride, race and meet others who enjoy motorcycles and music, VFW recruiters and service officers were there to help veterans and their families.

Located in Sturgis, S.D., about 30 miles northwest of Rapid City, the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is one of the largest and best-known motorcycle events in the world.

VFW Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz said because of VFW's presence in Sturgis, more than 100 new members signed up

for VFW memberships. Also, veterans were able to take the first step in submitting VA disability claims, and VFW Headquarters staff collected donations for VFW programs, such as *Unmet Needs*.

"The bikers at the Sturgis Motorcycle

Schmitz said. "We tried to drive veterans to one of our three locations in downtown Sturgis, near the Full Throttle Saloon and at the Sturgis Buffalo Chip."

Schmitz added that VFW had a "larger presence" at this year's rally compared to last year and added VFW increased its membership team from the previous year.

VFW National Veterans Service Deputy Director Dawn Jirak said she and other service officers from VFW's state and national levels met with many veterans who had questions about VA benefits and wanted to start the claims process.

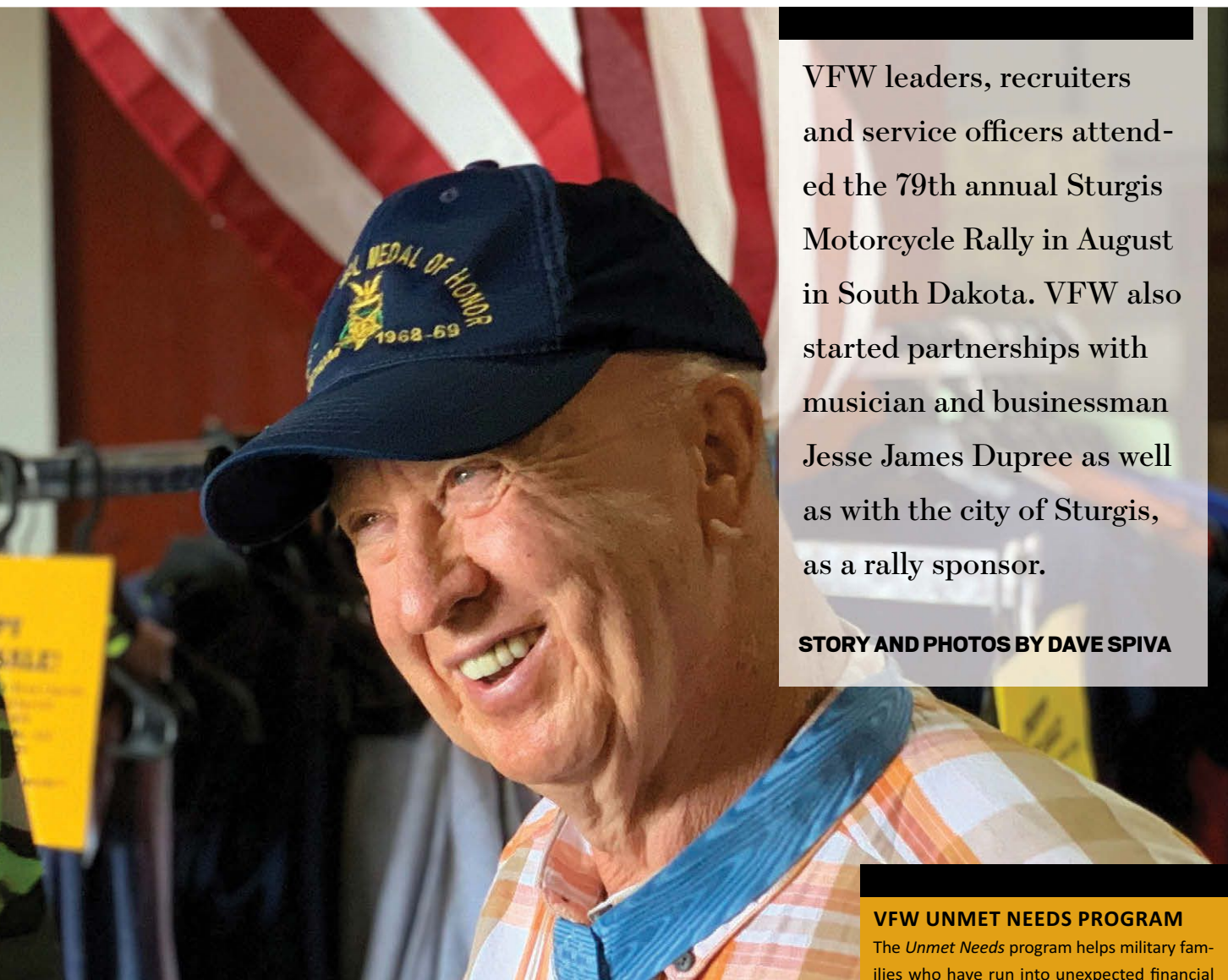
"It's not like anyone had their medical records with them on vacation," Jirak said. "But we

helped them start the process by arranging an intent to file."

"VFW is a force to be dealt with. I want to help get the word out that the VFW is more viable now than ever before."

Jesse James Dupree, musician and businessman

Rally are very patriotic and appear to have a high percentage of veterans,"



VFW leaders, recruiters and service officers attended the 79th annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in August in South Dakota. VFW also started partnerships with musician and businessman Jesse James Dupree as well as with the city of Sturgis, as a rally sponsor.

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE SPIVA**

## REACHING OUT TO NEW MEMBERS

Rick McKenna, deputy director of VFW's Membership Department, said VFW volunteers, service officers and recruiters from the Department of South Dakota and National Headquarters were "ready and willing" to represent the organization in Sturgis and help veterans.

"Our team was the main reason for VFW's success at this year's motorcycle rally," McKenna said. "We were able to sign up 106 new VFW members in Sturgis. That wouldn't have happened without their professionalism and dedication to serving veterans and their families."

VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch said it wasn't only VFW national employees and recruiters working at VFW's booths during the rally. Many local Post and Auxiliary members helped out, too, he noted.

"We had members from multiple Posts feeding the riders and community, and we had VFW and Auxiliary members helping us out at our booths for recruiting and answering questions," Roesch said. "Everyone is helping get our name out there."

Roesch added that there was no other veterans service organization that had the "footprint and services provided" like VFW.

"For too long, VFW has been its own worst enemy for not boasting about the wonderful programs, from veterans' scholarships to grants for families in need, that we provide," Roesch said.

At the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, VFW started a partnership with musician and businessman Jesse James Dupree. Best known as the lead singer and guitarist of the rock band Jackyl, Dupree also is

## VFW UNMET NEEDS PROGRAM

The *Unmet Needs* program helps military families who have run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity or injury. The VFW program provides financial aid grants of up to \$1,500 to assist with basic life needs in the form of a grant — not a loan — so no repayment is required. To further ease the burden, the *Unmet Needs* program pays the creditor directly.

*Unmet Needs* awarded more than \$941,000 in financial assistance grants to about 871 military and veteran families during its 2018-19 program year.

Supported by donations from VFW members and supporters, the *Unmet Needs* program, which began in 2004, has provided nearly \$5 million in financial assistance to some 3,368 military and veteran families.

Visit [www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants](http://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants) for more information.



A crowd at the Sturgis Buffalo Chip near Sturgis, S.D., cheers while VFW Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz is on stage during the venue's Freedom Celebration on Aug. 8, 2019. Schmitz said VFW had a "larger presence" at this year's motorcycle rally compared to the previous year.



(From left to right) VFW Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz answers questions from Jim White, Bo Roberts and Randy James of Lone Star 92.5, which broadcasts in Dallas. Schmitz's interview was at the Pappy Hoel Campground and Resort near Sturgis, S.D., during the 79th annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Schmitz talked on air about VFW programs, such as *Unmet Needs*, *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen*.

the founder of Jesse James Spirits and Mighty Loud Entertainment, a record and marketing company.

VFW Foundation Assistant Director of Corporate Relations Kevin Jamison said Dupree will work with VFW to help raise money for the VFW Foundation and awareness of VFW as a whole.

"He didn't realize what VFW had to offer for veterans and their families," Jamison said of Dupree. "He wants to help us let others know about what we do, too."

Dupree said that during his career, he has been "fortunate" to be involved with many military-related organizations.

"I have been involved with everything from veteran charity motorcycle rides to working with member organizations,"

Dupree said. "But I am truly impressed with VFW. I was introduced to VFW through its partnership with the city of Sturgis. I was told that I was going to be really impressed with VFW. I really was, and to be honest, I did not realize the magnitude of what VFW is."

Dupree said he "respected" how efficient VFW as an organization is run and the attitudes of those who work at the organization's National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo.

"VFW is a force to be dealt with," Dupree said. "I want to help get the word out that the VFW is more viable now than ever before."

Dupree said that is a sentiment that he hopes he can help foster during his partnership with VFW.

"So many of our young men and women coming home and trying to get acclimated to civilian life need to know about the *Unmet Needs* program," Dupree said. "It's amazing to me how VFW is able to deliver those grants to those who need it."

To learn more about the *Unmet Needs* program, visit [www.vfw.org/jjd](http://www.vfw.org/jjd).

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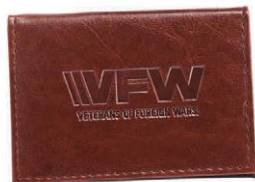
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# RACKING UP SUCCESS

An Iraq War veteran wanted his campaign medal when he returned home. When he learned that he had to drive six hours to get it, he started an online company that has helped more than 3 million fellow vets get their medals, too.

BY STEVE ALVAREZ

A man in a grey sweater and dark pants is walking down a long aisle in a warehouse. The aisle is lined with tall stacks of green plastic storage bins. The floor has yellow and black striped safety markings. The ceiling is high with exposed wooden beams and some wiring.

Jared Zabaldo, CEO of USA Military Medals, checks inventory as he walks through the company's warehouse last year in Milwaukie, Ore. The company stores thousands of military uniform insignia onsite and builds made-to-order medal and ribbon racks for its customers.

**U**.S. Army Sgt. Jared Zabaldo was serving as a military journalist in 2004 in Baghdad's Green Zone. Propelled by patriotism, he had enlisted a few days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Three years later, he found himself in the middle of another terrorist attack, one of the worst enemy mortar assaults to hit the Green Zone that year.

"We were attacked with alarmingly accurate indirect fire in July 2004," said Zabaldo, who was serving with the Multinational Security Transition Command Iraq at the time. "Indirect fire with accuracy is a real dreadful experience because it feels like you're in a death lottery, and you're a number in the basket."

That summer, portions of the Green Zone where Zabaldo worked and lived lacked reinforced bunkers or sand bags, and personnel slept in soft-sided aluminum trailers with no protection. The enemy launched its attacks at night.

"It seems kind of embarrassing or silly in retrospect, but in reality the smartest decision I could have made in the split seconds I had to make then was to jump in the little wooden standup locker we all had in those trailers," Zabaldo said. "We were all just hoping for good luck that night, and that was really a kind of dreadful, helpless feeling. There were many attacks like that, but that was real accurate fire for once."

## AN IDEA FORMS FOR AN ONLINE STORE

As an Army Reservist in Iraq, Zabaldo was often required to drive up to six hours to reach other U.S. military bases. His deployment also drove him to establish a successful online armed forces military medals provider.

"Our company was started, very simply, owing to the fact that I had received an award for being in Iraq, but it was that common type of award that you never really tangibly receive, like the Iraq Campaign Medal," Zabaldo said. "Everyone gets it on their paperwork, but if you really want it, you go to clothing sales to buy it."

In 2005, a few months after coming home from Iraq, Zabaldo was in Oregon and did not want to make the six-hour roundtrip drive to Fort Lewis, Wash., simply for a medal and a ribbon. There were few options for him to purchase the award online.

"I wasn't really able to get around that trip," Zabaldo said. "And the idea for an online source for military personnel to obtain uniform items was born."

Today, USA Military Medals, or USAMM, is an e-commerce armed forces superstore that has fulfilled more than 5 million orders for more than 3 million

customers worldwide. It was founded in 2005 by Zabaldo and his brother, Nathan, as a reaction to an inconvenience. But that reaction led the ZabalDOS to grow the military insignia powerhouse to 100 employees housed in a 25,000-square-foot-facility in Milwaukie, Ore.

"It was a real struggle building the business," Jared said. "To grow an inventory is a tremendous burden on a new company. We got it all done, but it was always this feeling of a plane not having enough lift to make it over the mountain peak. You would dump just enough weight at the last moment and scrape the belly on the rocks and glide to the next one."

## MADE-TO-ORDER RIBBON RACKS

That is no longer the case, and the company has seen steady growth since 2014. USAMM has 290,000 followers on social media and a virtual storefront ([usamilitarymedals.com](http://usamilitarymedals.com)). The company also has 143 self-service kiosks located on military bases all over the world where service personnel can order and customize their ribbon racks. USAMM keeps about 30,000 items in its inventory, in addition to a robust supply of items employees manufacture themselves.

"We're not just a superstore for uniform paraphernalia," Jared said. "We've also become extremely well-known as the EZ Rack Builder people. We build made-to-order military medal and ribbon racks for customers. They have to be so precisely constructed with great care and attention to detail, and they are all one-offs, made-to-order. A military ribbon rack is like a thumbprint. No one is the same. Every time I see one out there being worn, I know there is a very high likelihood that we made it, and it always gives me a great thrill."

The company embroiders garrison uniform nametapes and branch tapes, manufactures dog tags, engraves name plates and tailors military uniforms. Employees also build traditional slide-on military ribbon racks onsite.

While Jared's tour in Iraq consequently led him to establish USAMM, his experiences in the war zone also helped him form the company's culture. He credits his military service for much of his success.

"Military service and training is difficult and challenging, both mentally and

physically," Jared said. "The benefits of that carry over into all follow-on challenges service members encounter later in life. That learned resilience has been highly useful to me in everything I've done in life afterward."

## VETERANS ADD VALUE TO WORKFORCE

Although Jared hung up his boots and put away his staff sergeant stripes in 2012, as the company's CEO and president, he still



U.S. Army Sgt. Jared Zabaldo relaxes with members of the Iraqi army in November 2004 in Fallujah, Iraq. Zabaldo, a military journalist who was based in Baghdad's Green Zone in 2004, said his military training and combat experience has been "highly useful" to him in his business career and life in general.

believes a leader's responsibility is to his people, individuals he considers partners, not subordinates. And veterans, he adds, are an integral part of that group.

"I think it's very important for all companies to employ veterans because so often they have a life perspective that just adds so much to the work environment," Jared said. "They're like checks on unreasonableness, if you will, especially combat veterans. A good veteran presence can introduce a more accurate glimpse of the world and be a stabilizing factor on people that maybe don't have that real-life experience yet."

Entering his 14th year in business, Jared says the key to business is keeping customers happy.

"Always concentrate on that, and you'll figure out the rest as you go," Jared said. ★

EMAIL [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org)

*Steve Alvarez is a VFW life member at large. A retired Army Reserve officer and Iraq War veteran, Alvarez is author of *Selling War: A Critical Look at the Military's PR Machine*.*

A group of people, including several men in red martial arts uniforms and one woman in a dark patterned top, are practicing martial arts in a large room with a patterned carpet and a wall of mirrors. They are in various poses, some with arms extended and heads tilted back. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lights and a row of chairs along the back wall.

# IRAQ WAR VETERAN 'SPREADS KNOWLEDGE' OF MARTIAL ARTS

**R**e-introducing a Vietnam War veteran to martial arts set the course of one future veteran's life and spurred his desire to help others.

Clay Worley, who discovered the ancient art form in his youth, served in the Army from 1997-98 with the 1st Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division in Bosnia and from 2003-04 with the 82nd Airborne Division and 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq. The interaction with the Vietnam vet gave Worley a new perspective and motivation.

"To be on the floor with this Vietnam vet, as he was telling me a little bit about his story — and those guys tend to be kind of close hold in terms of their experience — they don't go around boasting about it, I just thought to myself, 'I don't know what he faced, but I am awed that

I'm even teaching him anything because he ought to be teaching me,'" recalled Worley, a life member of VFW Post 8587 in Georgetown, Texas.

Worley, an 80 percent disabled combat veteran, started his own martial arts business, Dekimasu Karate Studio, at 18 years old. It has since grown into an alliance with five schools. He also owns a business consulting company called Fit Fighters Club of Central Texas. He taught martial arts to Marine Corps reservists during field exercises in the early 1990s.

While deployed to Bosnia and Iraq, Worley taught martial arts and said his sessions attracted people from all ranks and job fields — cooks and refuelers to pilots and paratroopers.

"We're all bammin' and jammin' and nobody's being formal with each other,"

Worley said. "Nobody was being disrespectful, but the social barriers and the occupational barriers just went away."


In the mid-1990s, after earning his commission as a lieutenant, Worley instructed "platoon-level" classes during physical fitness training. From 2001-03, while a member of the Texas National Guard, he instituted hand-to-hand combat training.

The sport, he said, is his passion and he wants to make sure it is "always affordable and accessible" to those interested in pursuing it.

"I want to share the knowledge," Worley said. "I don't want anybody to think that they got to crawl up some mountain in far east Asia and only after 30 years can they scratch the surface on what it's all about."

In addition to his work while on active

Visit VFW magazine's Facebook page for more photos from Clay Worley's session during the Universal Martial Arts Hall of Fame weekend.



A LIFE MEMBER OF A  
VFW POST IN TEXAS  
TAUGHT THE SKILL TO  
FELLOW VETS WHILE  
DEPLOYED. HE ALSO  
HOSTS FUNDRAISERS FOR  
MILITARY MEMBERS AND  
TEACHES COURSES WITH  
VETERANS IN MIND.

**STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY KARI WILLIAMS**

duty, Worley has spent more than 10 years hosting fundraising seminars for veterans and their families, and teaching veterans individually and in group settings.

### A 'UNIQUE APPROACH'

Working with veterans takes a "unique approach" that includes collaboration, patience and encouragement, according to Worley.

"You have to watch, listen and help each veteran find their own personal victory," he said. "You can't push and pull and drag a bunch of veterans across the floor when they're coming from different age levels, skill levels and fitness levels. You can't take the one-size fits all approach. It just doesn't work."

He also conducts a "needs evaluation" with vets to determine their goals.

"Especially in that first lesson, I'm watching and I'm listening," Worley said. "I'm not talking nearly as much. I'm giving them something to do according to



**ABOVE:** Iraq War veteran Clay Worley explains martial arts techniques to participants in a seminar during the Universal Martial Arts Hall of Fame weekend in August 2019 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel at the Hobby Airport in Houston. Worley's mission to help fellow veterans began in his youth when he was paired up with a Vietnam War veteran.

**LEFT:** Clay Worley (left), a VFW member and martial arts instructor, leads a class through a cool-down period after his session at the Universal Martial Arts Hall of Fame weekend in August 2019 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Houston.

their interest level."

Worley currently has 200 clients worldwide, and one instructor in his alliance runs a veterans program in Washington state.

Kathrin Sumpter, who is not a veteran, has worked with vets since 2007. She has been involved in martial arts for 28 years, and met Worley in 2008.

Sumpter incorporates Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) into her approach. EMDR is a form of psychotherapy that uses eye movements to help manage symptoms of diagnoses such as PTSD.

She said martial arts movements require "left-brain, right-brain switching," such as performing five punches with one arm, then switching to the other. That "volley," she said, creates an isolation of the movements.

"I've seen the effects of this dynamic exercise," Sumpter said. "[In these] very controlled, combative techniques, you can channel the combat into a logical ... with purpose exercise, but it's combative."

### DELIVERING A 'GOOD EXPERIENCE'

Worley said he has seen veterans leave sessions feeling better about themselves.

"You get smiles. You get looks of relief," Worley said. "And you know without them having to say, 'Thank you,' that you

delivered a good experience for them."

Sumpter said she tailors her programs based on the individual needs of her participants.

One Vietnam War veteran, she said, came to class "in the throes of a panic attack." She helped him through the sessions by using a partner drill called the Hubud, which involves "three-count, hand-to-hand tactical and tactile" movements using elbows and forearms.

"I saw this guy go from bouncing off the walls, his shoulders dropped, the tightness in his voice left him right before my eyes," Sumpter said, adding that he became a "grounded person."

Vietnam War veteran and fellow martial artist Steven Jimerfield began his martial arts training in 1966, prior to his deployment. He served with the Coast Guard from 1967-68 on the *USCGC Gresham* and 1968-69 and 1970 on the *USCGC Taney* as a boatswain's mate 1st class.

While never officially diagnosed, Jimerfield said fellow vets have told him he shows signs of PTSD. He said he has felt guilt over not seeing "the action a lot of guys did" in Vietnam, but also believes symptoms stem from his experiences in his law enforcement career.

Jimerfield worked in Coast Guard Intelligence as a criminal investigator and later for the Alaska Department of

Public Safety. He retired after 30 years with the Alaska State Troopers, the last seven spent overseeing one-on-one control tactics training.

As the years go by, he said, he has noticed symptoms more frequently.

"When I was coming out of my last knee surgery, I had a flashback," Jimerfield said. "When I was coming out of anesthesia, I had a nurse who has worked with veter-

"pushing" his PTSD symptoms in a different direction.

"I believe that takes your focus off and away, so we bury a lot of that, I think," Jimerfield said. "I have put [up] a barrier, and I just don't think about it, so it's not there."

As a one-on-one tactics control instructor, Jimerfield said, he does not have a lot of veterans attending his class. However, his personal interest in martial arts has helped him connect with fellow Vietnam-era comrades.

"I have a friend who's a professor at Idaho State who's a Vietnam veteran," Jimerfield said. "We met through

the martial arts and, amazingly, we served around the same time. He was an F-14 pilot at the siege of Khe Sanh as a forward observer."

The two discovered that they are the same age and were in country at the

same time.

"It's kind of funny because we fold our money exactly the same," Jimerfield said. "All of our little habits are the same. We just became great friends in training."

Sumpter said the work Worley has done for his fellow veterans like Jimerfield is inspiring. She reaches out to him when her students face PTSD symptoms. Worley can "speak a language" she cannot, Sumpter said.

"I've gotten a lot of good advice from Clay," she said. "You've got to know where these guys are at, where they're coming from. So I've been able to change my approach and maybe reach people that I couldn't reach before."

Worley has met fellow veterans like Jimerfield and connected with people like Sumpter to further the mission from a "bug that was planted" in his teen years.

"That planted a seed in my mind and my spirit that grew into this gigantic tree," Worley said. "And I've never lost it." ★

EMAIL [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org)

*Kari Williams is a freelance writer based in Kansas City, Mo.*

## "You have to watch, listen and help each veteran find their own personal victory."

Clay Worley, martial arts instructor and life member of VFW Post 8587 in Georgetown, Texas

ans, and she held my hand and she talked to me and told me I was home. I was OK. I was safe. It was really touching."

Jimerfield, who has been practicing martial arts for 50 years, said when he teaches classes and helps others, he is



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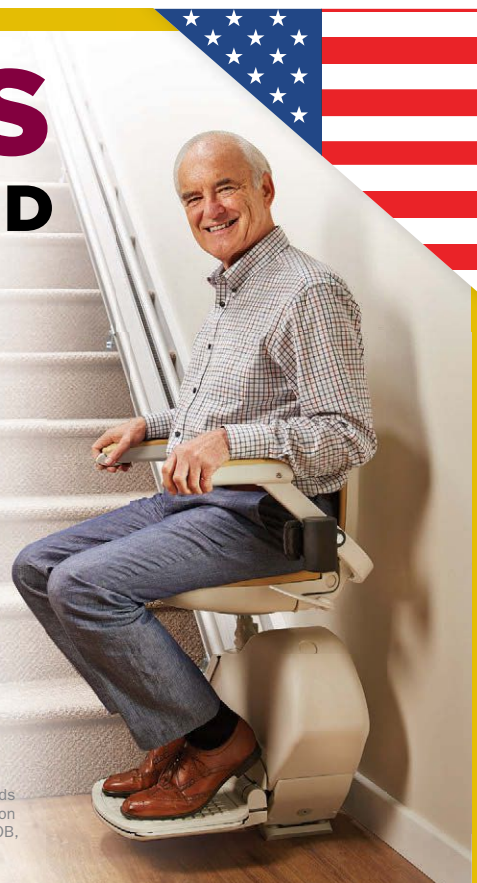
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# VETERANS WELCOME AT OHIO STATE

At one of the nation's largest universities, more than 3,600 veterans are students or teachers. This mindset has made its Student Veterans of America chapter a vital resource for the school's student vets.

BY DAVE SPIVA

Since its formal partnership in 2013, VFW and the Student Veterans of America (SVA) have worked to advocate for improvement to benefits for student veterans around the world.

Both veterans' organizations are led by veterans serving their communities and other veterans. The Ohio State University SVA chapter Vets 4 Vets is just one of the more than 1,500 chapters helping to provide a cohesive environment for military veterans. Making campus life better for veterans and military-affiliated students is a top priority.

Lonny Heft, the Vets 4 Vets chapter president and Army veteran, said the organization's mission is to support veterans, service members and their families in their transition from service into higher education and beyond.

On Nov. 8, Vets 4 Vets organized Flags on the Oval. Volunteers distributed small U.S. flags to students, staff and faculty who are veterans. The flags were then displayed on the school's "Oval," a popular gathering place in

the heart of the Ohio State University campus.

"It's been going on for at least five years," said Heft, who served in Iraq twice with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Abn. Div. between 2006 and 2008. "Each flag represents a Buckeye, student or faculty, who is a veteran or currently serving in the military. We do this to give a visual representation of how many veterans there are on campus."

## OHIO STUDENT VETERANS CONFERENCE

Heft, who expects to graduate next year with a bachelor's degree in accounting, said there is a "high number" of veterans on campus.

According to Ohio State's Office of Military and Veterans Services, more than 1,800 veterans attend the school. Also, more than 1,400 of its faculty and staff are veterans, and some 400 students are enrolled in the ROTC program. This is one of the reasons why Vets 4 Vets is organizing its biggest event yet.

In the vein of SVA's National Conference, or NatCon, Ohio State

**LEFT: A student at Ohio State University in November 2018 places a U.S. flag in the “Oval,” a popular gathering place in the heart of the campus, for the Vets 4 Vets’ annual Flags on the Oval. Volunteers from Vets 4 Vets, a Student Veterans of America chapter at Ohio State, distributed flags to veterans of the university. The most recent Flags on the Oval event took place last year on Nov. 8.**

University will be the location in February for a state-wide student veterans’ conference. SVA NatCon, much like VFW’s national convention, brings student veterans from around the world together to learn about SVA and opportunities open to them.

“Last year was my first year at SVA’s NatCon, and I thought it was a great event,” Heft said.

Heft added the only “obstacle” about the event is the cost to go. He said it costs at least \$1,000 for a student to attend to SVA’s annual NatCon.

“After going to this, my thought was, ‘Why don’t we do one for Ohio?’” Heft said. “It will be a lot easier for students in Ohio to attend it and at a lower price. But, it will give the same benefits as if a student attends the national convention.”

On Feb. 1, student veterans from campuses all over Ohio will meet at Ohio State University for a “state conference,” according to Heft.

## VFW-SVA FELLOWSHIP

Marine Corps veteran and life member of VFW Post 7883 in Westerville, Ohio, Tom Wike is a student at Ohio State and an SVA member. He was selected as one of 10 student veterans to participate in a student veterans’ legislative fellowship with VFW. Wike joined the other vets in the semester-long academic fellowship that advocates on behalf of veterans.

### Are you a student veteran interested in the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship?

For more details, visit <https://studentveterans.org/programs/vfw-sva-legislative-fellowship>.

## VFW-SVA PARTNERSHIP

Student Veterans of America (SVA) is based in Washington, D.C. The organization is committed to the welfare of military veterans and ensuring they are supported in their transition into higher education. SVA supports 1,583 school chapters and more than 700,000 military-affiliated students.

These groups of college students across the country provide military-affiliated students with the advocacy and resources needed to be successful with their college education and post-graduation careers. SVA chapters advocate for improvements to student-veteran benefits while helping veterans navigate the complexities of academic life.

VFW and SVA have been official partners since signing a memorandum-of-understanding in 2013. The partnership has given student veterans the opportunity to promote causes important to veterans.

VFW believes the affiliation benefits both groups. VFW offers the experience, expertise and knowledge it has gained over its 120-year history. SVA members have the youthful energy and zeal college-age veterans possess, while offering VFW a pool of college-educated members who can lead the organization into the future.

While in Washington, D.C., in March 2019 for VFW’s annual Legislative Conference, Wike worked on an individual project, which is required of all VFW-SVA fellows. He proposed to add social workers to the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP, a collaborative program between the Pentagon, VA and the Department of Labor that prepares troops for the civilian world.

“In TAP, all the military basically does is help service members with their resumes and gives them a list of resources to use, and then tells them to seize the day,” said Wike, who was the Vets 4 Vets chapter president during the 2018-19 academic year. “And then veterans get out and everything falls apart. We have 20 veterans a day killing themselves and no one can figure out why.”

Wike, who served as a motor transport operator with Combat Logistics Battalion 4 in Afghanistan in 2012, believes that TAP needs to have social workers at the ready for any service member who needs help solving and coping with problems in their daily lives.

“Bases have social workers already,” Wike said. “TAP should start using social workers as a resource for the program.”

Wike said working with the VFW Washington Office on his proposal was an “overall great” experience.

“This opportunity with the VFW gave me the ability to make an impact on other veterans,” Wike said. ★

**EMAIL** [dspiva@vfw.org](mailto:dspiva@vfw.org)

## VFW-SVA LEGISLATIVE FELLOW PROGRAM

As a part of their partnership, VFW and the SVA leadership attend each other’s annual conventions. In addition, VFW selects 10 SVA members each year to participate in a fellowship program on Capitol Hill.

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program gives student veterans the opportunity to advocate with VFW on issues facing student veterans. Fellows get to meet the nation’s lawmakers and administrators responsible for implementing veterans’ policy in Washington. Last year’s fellows were:

- Chad Baer, Army veteran, University of Pennsylvania
- Tammy Barlet, Coast Guard veteran, George Washington University
- Matthew Deller, Army veteran, The American University of Paris
- Christopher Lamy, Air Force veteran, Louisiana State University
- Alcides Lugo, Army veteran, Auburn University
- Angela Peacock, Army veteran, Washington University-St. Louis
- Chanel Powell, Army veteran, University of Buffalo
- Lobsang Salaka, Army veteran, Northeastern University
- Amy Sleath, Army veteran, Minnesota State University-Moorhead
- Tom Wike, Marine veteran, The Ohio State University

Student veterans interested in the fellowship can visit <https://www.vfw.org/community/student-veterans-of-america/student-fellowship> for more information.

# New Hemp Technology Is 450% Better For Discomfort Relief Than Regular Hemp Oil

*Next generation hemp technology soothes joint discomfort, aches and sore muscles 5Xs better than hemp oil; now available in the U.S. without a prescription.*

Americans are rejoicing about a brand-new technology that gets the goods on the health benefits of hemp.

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**Canna LS** contains pure "full spectrum hemp," which works to relieve joint discomfort, restore sharp memory, and support a healthy normal inflammatory response, to name a few. And since it has no THC, it heals without the "high."

Exciting new scientific research shows that hemp contains special molecules called cannabinoids which bind to receptor sites in the brain and body. When taken orally, hemp activates these receptors

## Why This New Technology Is Better Than Hemp

Unfortunately, most hemp found on the market can't deliver a fraction of these results. "The problem is, most hemp formulas come in oil form," according to Chief Technologist Mi Hwa Kim of The Green Gardener. "Oil doesn't breach the cell membrane, which is where the real healing happens. Our body is 80% water, our cells 90%. And you know what they say about oil and water — they don't mix."

This is why **Canna LS** contains a unique "water soluble" system. The technology is shown to improve absorption in the cells by 450%, quickly boosting the body's cannabinoid levels.

"The other problem is that most of these formulas only contain a single compound extract," says Ms. Kim. "Hemp's full spectrum of cannabinoids are shown to work synergistically. In short, they work better together. It's called the "entourage effect." Most miss out on the full effects because they are missing some of the best rejuvenating compounds within the hemp plant. This is why we've made **Canna LS** with "full spectrum" hemp."

"Finally, most hemp formulas are made on foreign farms with pesticides, or grown using non-organic seeds and processes. We've grown the hemp in **Canna LS** at a 100% organic American farm, under strict agricultural guidelines. It's grown without pesticides or GMOs. And it's grown to contain no THC."

## How It Works

The key to hemp's health benefits is the Endocannabinoid System, a network of receptors in the cells. The system is there to maintain homeostasis (balance). In response to toxins in our body, it releases cannabinoids to set things back to their natural state.

"It's really an amazing God-given system that's been completely overlooked," says Ms. Kim. "Our bodies are practically designed to work with the compounds in hemp, which is why we needed a technology like **Canna LS** that unleashes its full potential."

Over time, with aging, the endocannabinoid system eventually burns out. Fewer cannabinoids are released, so the body's levels deplete. The result is, all sorts of symptoms of aging like age-related memory loss, blurry vision, joint discomfort, and much more.

"This is why there's almost nothing hemp can't do and no health concern it can't address," says Mi Hwa. "The trouble is, most hemp formulas are just not absorbable enough for the cell, so they fail to activate the endocannabinoid system. This is why they don't deliver anything close to the full range of potential results."

Fortunately, **Canna LS** is clinically shown to enter the cell membrane 450% more powerfully. This is how it boosts cannabinoid levels fast, helping to relieve joint discomfort... restore foggy memory... and support healthy blood sugar. And what most people really love is that the "pearl" gel is easier to take than taking a pill or oil.

## Not Yet Sold In Stores

Full-spectrum hemp, like **Canna LS**, is available nationwide. However, several major pharmaceutical companies are currently testing hemp in clinical settings, which means it may require a prescription in the future. It's advised to get **Canna LS** while you can.



## Taking All The Risk Off Consumers

A large percentage of men and women using **Canna LS** experience truly amazing results. That's why it's now being sold with a guarantee that goes way beyond the industry standard. "We can only make this guarantee because we are 100% certain our customers will be satisfied," says Ms. Kim. We want to take full risk off consumers. So in addition to offering substantial discounts for first-time customers, we also make them a huge promise that ensures they don't have to risk a cent."

Here's how it works: Take **Canna LS** exactly as directed, and you must be thrilled with the results! Otherwise, simply return the bottles and any unused portion within 90 days of purchase.

## Where To Find Canna LS

This is the official nationwide release of **Canna LS** hemp technology. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls. An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Canna LS** hemp extract. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE at 1-866-256-2857. The company will do the rest. Use Promo Code VFW0120CAN when you call in.

Important: Due to hemp's growing popularity and recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

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Pfc. Keith Shores, who worked in the S2 (intelligence) section of the 2nd Ranger Battalion, takes a break while interrogating a POW from a "Dignity Battalion" in January 1990 at Alcala Diaz, Panama, to speak with some local children. Dignity Battalions were militia units that operated in conjunction with Panamanian dictator Gen. Manuel Noriega's Panamanian Defense Forces.

# A 'JUST CAUSE' SUCCEEDS IN PANAMA

A DRUG-DEALING DICTATOR AND HIS TERRORIZING BAND OF THUGS WERE NO MATCH FOR U.S. TROOPS 30 YEARS AGO IN PANAMA. IN A MATTER OF DAYS, THE AMERICANS RESTORED DEMOCRACY AND PAVED THE WAY FOR A PEACEFUL TRANSITION OF CONTROL OF THE STRATEGIC PANAMA CANAL. **BY JIM SERVI**

U.S. Staff Army Sgt. Bill Foulk was happy to get home from another training exercise, turn in all his stuff and cut loose. In December 1989, as he was settling in at his home in Tacoma, Wash., just outside of Fort Lewis, he got the call.

"I thought it was a joke," Foulk said. "We had been doing rehearsal missions for Panama all year long and had just gotten home. I thought some guys were messing with me."

After a little convincing, he knew that this time was real.

"We all met back at base, got back on the airplane, headed to Fort Benning, and I was in the same tent that I had been in

less than 24 hours earlier," Foulk said.

But the feel was different now. More specifics emerged about the operation and preparations were already underway. As an Army Ranger, this is why Foulk had volunteered. In fact, he fought for the opportunity.

After serving in other roles, including a stint as a medic in the Army Reserve and as a recruiter, his passion was to be in special operations. He was 29 years old when he filled out his request to go to Ranger school.

"I found out who needed to approve it in [Washington] D.C.," Foulk said. "When I handed it to him, he said, 'I guess you really want to go' and approved the

training request."

Foulk made it through Ranger school on the first shot and found himself at Fort Lewis, where he "loved being a Ranger."

Now, the Army Rangers and other members of the special operations community, along with the 82nd Airborne Division, would be jumping into Panama. The Army's 7th Infantry Division, as well as elements of the Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force, would join the paratroopers and those already stationed in Panama.

Together, the more than 26,000-strong U.S. military force embarked on what was the largest U.S. military operation since the end of the Vietnam War. It would be known as *Operation Just Cause*.

## MARINES PROTECTED CANAL PROJECT

Nearly a century earlier, the futures of both the U.S. and Panama were forever intertwined when the Panama Canal was built. The endeavor bankrupted the French government in the late 1800s, and the U.S. took over the project in 1903 after a series of diplomatic efforts.

To protect the Canal and guarantee Panamanian independence from Colombia — a critical part of the treaty — the U.S. had several bases and a large number of military personnel garrisoned in Panama, including U.S. Southern Command, which traces its origin to the project. In 1977, a formal treaty between the two countries set Jan. 1, 2000, as the official date for transferring authority of the Panama Canal from the U.S. to Panama.

But in the years after the treaty signing, the relationship between the two countries began to unravel. First, in May 1989, Gen. Manuel Noriega, once an ally of the U.S., and his Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) ousted newly elected President Guillermo Endara. Noriega then declared himself leader of Panama.

Most of the rest of the world, including his own people, saw him as a dictator. Together, Noriega and the PDF grew increasingly hostile towards U.S. bases in Panama and U.S. civilians throughout the country. Noriega also was a major player in the drug trade.

Then, on Dec. 15, 1989, Noriega's makeshift government issued a rather confusing manifesto. It noted that "a state of war" existed between the two countries without actually declaring war on the United States.

The next day, Marine 1st Lt. Robert Paz was shot and killed and Marine Capt. Richard Haddad was wounded

after their vehicle was stopped at a PDF checkpoint just outside of Fort Clayton, a U.S. Army base in the Panama Canal Zone. A Naval officer and his wife who witnessed the event were taken by the PDF and severely beaten.

## 'IT WAS TIME' TO JUMP

Less than a week later, in the early morning hours of Dec. 20, 1989, Foulk and his fellow Rangers departed under the cover of darkness.

"Communication inside the air-

point, I decided that I'm either going to make it and do my job, or I'll die on the drop zone and it won't matter," Foulk said. "Either way, I knew I needed to stop worrying about it and just had to go."

With that realization, he stumbled to the back of the plane and in an instant, he was floating in the night sky.

"I knew that I had to lower my rucksack but couldn't see anything," Foulk said. "There was this voice that told me to wait, just wait, so I did. Before I knew it, I had drifted over some high-



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL FOULK

**Members of the Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion — Lt. Hamby, Staff Sgt. Grippe, Chaplain Capt. Frederick (with glasses), Spc. Johnson and Staff Sgt. Foulk — relax after a patrol in December 1989 in Rio Hato, Panama. After an "intense" first night of combat, U.S. troops wrapped up Operation Just Cause in only 42 days.**

craft was chaotic as we waited for jump commands," Foulk recalled. "I remember guys were taking everything — C-4, LAWs (light anti-tank weapons), grenades, claymores, extra ammunition — and I kept thinking that I didn't need anything else because I already had 10 tons of equipment on me."

Moving around, he recalled, was nearly impossible with everyone loaded down. Next, the defensive maneuvers began as the plane attempted to avoid anti-aircraft fire, causing "everyone and everything to be thrown in all directions." Then, the green light came on. It was time, Foulk remembered.

"You're initially scared, but at some

tension power lines and knew it was time. In an instant, I was on the ground. Had I not waited, I would have been twisted up in those power lines, and who knows what would have happened."

Sgt. Foulk found himself working in the tactical operation center (TOC) where the Rangers' mission was to secure an airfield at Rio Hato, while other Rangers secured the Omar Torrijos International Airport.

## AN 'INTENSE' FIRST NIGHT

U.S. troops attacked dozens of other strategic sites across the country simultaneously. Navy SEALs destroyed Noriega's private jet and gunboat, while

the 193rd Infantry Brigade captured the PDF headquarters at La Comandancia. Other units freed Kurt Muse, a wrongly imprisoned American, from Carcel Modelo prison and took Fort Amador, a strategic location on the Panama Canal.

"The night of the invasion was really intense," Foulk remembered, "and then there was only sporadic gunfire the day

"You're initially scared, but at some point, I decided that I'm either going to make it and do my job, or I'll die on the drop zone and it won't matter. Either way, I knew I needed to stop worrying about it and just had to go."

— U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Bill Foulk

or two after that."

Guillermo Endara was quickly returned to his elected post as president, and the PDF was officially abolished. Major combat operations ceased after only five days, but Noriega had still not been found.

"After the 7th Infantry came in, we

went to Howard Air Force Base (at the east end of the Canal Zone) and I remember looking up to the hillside and seeing it lined with Panamanians waving American flags. That was pretty cool to see," Foulk said.

"After that, I was working with PSYOPs (psychological operations) and civil affairs, and we would get reports from the locals. Sometimes it was about PDF guys and sometimes about Noriega. The people were very welcoming, so we didn't have to kick in doors. Every time we talked to someone, I got the feeling that Noriega wasn't getting much help

from the people. Usually they'd give us more intel to try to help."

## NORIEGA HIDES IN VATICAN'S EMBASSY

With Noriega on the run and his limited support waning, it was only a matter of time before he was captured or

surrendered. It did not take long. After a tip from a visiting diplomat, it was discovered that he was hiding in the Vatican Embassy in Panama City. Pressure from U.S. forces outside of the location and internal Vatican officials finally led Noriega to surrender on Jan. 3, 1990, 10 days after seeking refuge.

Some 42 days after it started, *Operation Just Cause* officially ended, and the peacekeeping mission *Operation Promote Liberty* began. U.S. troops who participated in *Just Cause* received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, a VFW-qualifying award.

A total of 23 U.S. service members died and 325 were wounded during *Operation Just Cause*.

*Operation Promote Liberty* ended in September 1994. Panama assumed full control of the Panama Canal Zone on Dec. 31, 1999. ✦

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*Jim Servi is a member of VFW Post 10203 in Hamburg, Wis. A veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Servi is a frequent contributor to VFW magazine.*

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### ARMY

4th Bn., 39th Inf. Regt., 9th Inf. Div., Vietnam, 1966-69, Bear Cat and Dong Tam: Jim Haines (303) 809-1815; [lzbearcat67@live.com](mailto:lzbearcat67@live.com)  
88th Trans. Co., An Khe, Vietnam: Butch Weston (219) 363-5374; [rhonda\\_weston@yahoo.com](mailto:rhonda_weston@yahoo.com)  
572nd Eng. Co.: Alex "Pigpen" Hanson (503) 930-4117; [monoski47@gmail.com](mailto:monoski47@gmail.com)  
Delta Co., 2nd/14th Inf., 25th Inf. Div., 1969-70: Tom Monahan; [tcn327b@comcast.net](mailto:tcn327b@comcast.net)

### MARINES

3rd Bn., 7th Marines, 1st Marine Div., I Co., All Wars and Peace-time: Dennis Deibert (717) 652-1695; [dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net](mailto:dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net)

### NAVY

MCB 40 Seabee: Kevin Carpenter (516) 732-1401; [collectorkc@aol.com](mailto:collectorkc@aol.com)  
USS Ault DD-698: Tony Fuentes (210) 364-3332; [fountain48@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fountain48@sbcglobal.net)  
USS Henry B. Wilson DDG-7, 1970-75: Terry Schmidt (815) 858-4905; [pncsret1@msn.com](mailto:pncsret1@msn.com)  
USS Walter B. Cobb APD-106: Kristi Adams (785) 364-9068

### PROPOSED

340th & 361st Public Affairs Detachment, 311th Military History Detachment: George Michaels (609) 802-2182; [geomichaels@aol.com](mailto:geomichaels@aol.com)  
USS Satterlee DD-626: K.B. Smith (479) 295-0839; [sliderule@arkansas.net](mailto:sliderule@arkansas.net)

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#### Air Force

Clark AFB, Philippines, 1997-98 – Seeking anyone who can substantiate exposure to Agent Orange claim. Sgt. William O. Kosanke, who was mentioned in a first-hand statement as to giving orders to use Agent Orange at the 6922nd Security Wing. Michael F. Wagner (209) 985-6702 [mikewagner@fire2wine.com](mailto:mikewagner@fire2wine.com)

#### Army

2nd Bn., 125th Bde., 1st Cav Motor Pool, Fort Hood, Summer/Fall, 1981 – Seeking anyone with knowledge of the fatal M-88 crash to substantiate a PTSD claim for Thomas Eads. Please contact: John W. Tilford, Service Officer (812) 219-8235 [johntilford@comcast.net](mailto:johntilford@comcast.net)

3rd Sqdn., 2nd Armored Cav Regt., Amberg, Germany, 1978-80 – Seeking anyone to substantiate an Army jeep crash with a civilian truck resulting in a soldier fatality. Rob Hill (479) 366-6484 [norma.hill.vfw@gmail.com](mailto:norma.hill.vfw@gmail.com)

4.2inch Mortar Plt., 2nd Bn., 38th Inf., Korea, DMZ, 1968 – Seeking anyone to substantiate an injury to my back while moving mortars. Roy Burns (812) 623-2156

9th Inf., 162nd Assault Helicopter, 5th Mechanized Inf., Jan. 1969-Jan 1970, & May 1970-Jan. 1972 – Seeking anyone who can help substantiate many surgeries, double pneumonia and COPD from helicopter crashes. Billy M. Haynes (704) 603-7815 [hanes-billy91@gmail.com](mailto:hanes-billy91@gmail.com)

24th Inf. Div., 34th Regt., H Co., 105 Plt., Nightmare Range, South Korea, Dec. 2, 1955 – Seeking anyone to substantiate me going over a 100-foot cliff as a jeep driver on guard duty during maneuvers causing injuries and a broken arm. Dayton Davis (269) 544-0171

(Continued on page 46)

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The Debtors have filed a Joint Plan of Reorganization (the "Plan") and a Disclosure Statement, a document that provides important information about the Plan. The Disclosure Statement has been approved and will be sent to individuals with asbestos-related personal injury claims so that they can vote whether to accept or reject the Plan. A hearing to consider confirmation of the Plan (the "Confirmation Hearing") has been scheduled for March 30, 2020 to April 4, 2020 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of North Carolina, 401 W. Trade St., Charlotte, NC 28202. Information on the Confirmation Hearing and all Plan-related documents is available at <https://cases.primeclerk.com/kaisergypsum>.

**Am I Affected by the Plan?**

If you claim to have been injured by asbestos in any of the Products, you are entitled to vote to approve or reject the Plan. The full Disclosure Statement and a ballot were sent to all lawyers representing individuals with current asbestos-related personal injury claims against the Debtors or directly to those individuals. A vote to accept or reject the Plan must be received by **5:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time, on February 20, 2020**. If you believe you have an asbestos-related personal injury claim against the Debtors and have questions, then you should contact your lawyer immediately.

**What does the Plan do?**

The Plan is the result of a settlement between the Debtors and court-appointed representatives of current and future asbestos claimants. The Plan preserves the Debtors' asbestos insurance coverage and permits asbestos personal injury claimants to pursue insurance recoveries in the tort system. The Plan also proposes to create a trust to pay asbestos-related personal injury claims to the extent the claims are not covered by insurance. If the Plan is approved, money can only be received from insurance and the trust; asbestos personal injury claimants will not be able to recover money from the Debtors or other protected parties listed in the Plan. If you have a pending lawsuit against the Debtors, you should talk to your lawyer about how the Plan may affect you.

**How to Obtain Documents.**

Copies of the Disclosure Statement, which includes the Plan, the voting materials and the notice of the Confirmation Hearing may be obtained by visiting this website: <https://cases.primeclerk.com/kaisergypsum>. You may also obtain copies of these documents by sending a request, in writing, to Prime Clerk, LLC, Kaiser Gypsum Company, Inc. Ballot Processing, c/o Prime Clerk, One Grand Central Place, 60 East 42nd Street, Suite 1440, New York, New York 10165 or by calling (855) 855-7644.

**What if I want to Object to the Plan?**

If you have a lawyer, you should talk to him or her about any concerns you may have about the Plan. You may object to the Plan if you do not like all or part of it. The deadline for filing and serving objections to the confirmation of the Plan is **5:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time, on February 20, 2020**. All objections must comply with the requirements set forth in paragraph 12 of the notice of the Confirmation Hearing, which is posted on the website below.

For more information, visit the website or call the toll-free number below.

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# Get Vaccinated to Prevent Shingles

**One in three Americans will develop shingles in his or her lifetime. Consider getting vaccinated to prevent this painful rash.**

**BY JANICE PHELAN**



**S**hingles, also known as herpes zoster, is an often painful rash that can result in serious complications. Around one in three Americans will develop shingles in his or her lifetime, with some having multiple outbreaks.

The condition, caused by the same virus as chickenpox, lasts a few weeks for most people, although more severe cases can possibly last months or even years.

Fortunately, the fight against shingles continues to advance thanks to a new

vaccine known as Shingrix, approved by the FDA in 2017. The older shingles vaccine, Zostavax, is still available.

“Shingrix is approximately 95 to 97 percent effective in preventing shingles and is approved for patients 50 and older,” said Dr. Todd Fristo of Saint Luke’s Physician Group in Independence,

first dose,” Califano added. “Within the VA, availability of Shingrix may vary by facility because of a shortage in the national vaccine supply.”

Fristo said shingles is likely to occur in those people who have had chickenpox in their lifetime, but can develop in others as well.

“Patients who have conditions that compromise their immune system also have a greater incidence of developing shingles,” he said.

Shingles first appears as an outbreak of rash or blisters on the skin, often resulting in burning or tingling pain, numbness or itching on one side of the body. Fluid-filled blisters usually appear within a few days, again on just one side.

“There are several antiviral medicines to treat shingles and shorten the length and severity of the illness,” said Dr. Gary Roselle, VA’s national director of infectious diseases services. “They work best when they are taken as soon as possible after the rash appears. A patient should contact their health care provider immediately to discuss treatment.”

Fristo added, “Additional therapies include pain medications, and there is some evidence that steroids can help reduce inflammation and pain.”

Among complications, one of the most common is postherpetic neuralgia/nerve pain.

“About one in 10 people who get shingles develop nerve pain that can last for months or years after the rash goes away,” Roselle added.

“Shingles also can lead to other more serious complications, including blindness, pneumonia, hearing problems and brain inflammation, although these are less common.”

The likelihood of shingles increases as people age, Fristo said. Among patients 65 years old, approximately 10 patients per 1,000 develop shingles in a year, he added, with 16 patients per 1,000 annually developing shingles among people who are 85 years old. ★

**EMAIL** [magazine@vfw.org](mailto:magazine@vfw.org)

Mo. “The Zostavax vaccine is approximately 50 to 60 percent effective.”

Although Shingrix is considered the better alternative, there is a national shortage of the newer vaccine.

“Currently, Shingrix is somewhat difficult to find, due to the supply being unable to keep up with the demand for the vaccination,” Fristo added. “This should improve over time.”

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that about 1 million cases of shingles develop each year.

Shingrix also is recommended for people who previously received the older vaccine, said Dr. Sophia Califano, VA’s deputy chief consultant for preventive medicine.

“You need two doses, so remember to make a plan to get your second dose of Shingrix two to six months after your

*Janice Phelan is a freelance writer based in Lee’s Summit, Mo.*

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## Time to Clean up Those Post Rosters

**Better communication and use of VFW's Online Membership System will help Post leaders keep track of members.**

**BY JANIE DYHOUSE**

**W**ith the start of a new decade, now is a good time for Post leaders to clean up their membership rosters. VFW Membership Deputy Director Rick McKenna reminds quartermasters that they have a “fiduciary responsibility” to annually keep track of all members.

“It’s critical to know where your members are living or whether some members have died,” McKenna said. “VFW shouldn’t be spending money on mailings going to an address where a member no longer lives.”

When a member is deceased, McKenna said, that information needs to be reported as soon as possible. VFW’s Donor Services Department sends a message of condolence to the family of the deceased veteran.

“There is nothing worse than not reporting when a member is deceased, and six months later it’s reported and the spouse of the deceased receives a card all those months later,” McKenna said. “We

need to try to be more considerate and be mindful of the spouse’s feelings.”

Furthermore, McKenna added, a lot of VFW members rely on the U.S. Postal System, not email for membership notifications. So if a member’s address is wrong, he or she will not receive those notifications in the mail.

While a Post quartermaster is ultimately responsible for the membership roster, McKenna said all members have a responsibility to communicate changes.

VFW’s Online Membership System (OMS) allows members to have direct control over their membership. They can renew their dues online and update their mailing address, phone number and email address in just a few moments. See this article’s accompanying sidebar for a refresher on how to access the OMS.

“Membership communication is key for other reasons,” McKenna said. “If a member is in the hospital, someone should go for a visit. It doesn’t take much to pick up a card and let that

### ACCESSING VFW’S ONLINE MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM

Here’s a primer on how to log into VFW’s OMS:

- Go to [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).
- Click “login” in the upper right corner.
- Log in with email address and password.

Once you are logged in (to verify, look at the upper right corner, and you should see “Hello,” followed by your name), you will see the My VFW page with a number of links.

If you have no account, click “Create an Account,” and then follow these prompts:

- Enter first name (as shown on your VFW membership card).
- Enter last name (as shown on your VFW membership card).
- Enter VFW membership number.
- Enter email address. This does not need to be the address you provided when you signed up for membership (if you provided one). You can use any email address you have access to for your website login.
- Enter a password. Be sure to select a strong password that you will be able to remember. If you lose your password, you can always use the “Forgot username or password” option to reset it.
- Re-enter your password, then click “Create Account.”
- If you have forgotten your password, click “Forgot username or password” or email [oms@vfw.org](mailto:oms@vfw.org).

member know the Post cares.”

Posts with larger memberships may find it more difficult to account for all members, but that’s why it’s all the more critical for communication, McKenna said.

“It is up to all members to keep tabs on each other,” McKenna said. “And if you don’t have an OMS account set up, you should really consider doing so.” ★

**EMAIL** [jdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:jdyhouse@vfw.org)

# VETERAN CHOOSES INNOVATIVE TREATMENT FOR HIS CHRONIC LUNG CONDITION

Alex is proud to have served in the U.S. Air Force. During those years, he protected his country and learned a lot about teamwork. Long after Alex's service, his Air Force training holds strong, and he is still committed to teamwork. Today, his team consists of his family and medical practitioners.

Like many people with chronic lung conditions, his symptoms crept up gradually. When he had difficulty breathing accompanied by uncontrollable coughing, Alex went to the doctor. He was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, a progressive condition that causes scarring in the lungs. Everyday chores became difficult, and walking to the mailbox tired Alex, even with supplemental oxygen.

## Searching for Options

In an effort to find effective treatment, Alex's daughter and her husband teamed up. During their research, they found an innovative option: cellular therapy from Lung Health Institute.

Alex chose cellular therapy early in his treatment journey because he wanted the best chance of slowing down the progression of his chronic lung condition. He also wanted the most aggressive option available, opting for 2 sets of 2-day treatments.

## Alex's Life After Treatment

Soon after his first treatment, Alex noticed improvements. He was able to take a walk and he had more stamina. His second 2-day treatment offered Alex compounded results. His family and medical team have seen the positive changes in him. He was able to visit a park with his grandchildren and didn't plan on using his walker. Not only is Alex able to walk with more ease and complete everyday tasks, he's able to do more with less oxygen.

Not one to be idle, Alex has even taken a job driving patients to and from a treatment center in his area. Recently, a client who's familiar with Alex was worried that he forgot to put his oxygen back on. He assured her that he was OK because he doesn't always need to use oxygen since receiving cellular therapy.

He also encourages others to try cellular therapy for themselves, saying, "As far as I'm concerned, the treatment has been very successful. And, I say go for it."

## Find Hope for Chronic Lung Conditions

Lung Health Institute focuses exclusively on treating chronic inflammatory lung disease and has provided more than 8,000 treatments. Our cellular therapy uses



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and actual  
Lung Health  
Institute patient^**



isolated cells from a patient's own blood to help reduce inflammation. While chronic lung conditions don't have a cure, 91.6% of our patients report positive outcomes at 3 months after treatment.\* There is hope for a better quality of life.



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Lung Health Institute uses cellular therapy to treat people with chronic lung diseases such as:

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As a small expression of our gratitude, Lung Health Institute offers a discount on our cellular therapy to veterans and active duty military members.

**Call 866-600-6708 for a free consultation or visit [theLungHealthInstitute.com](http://theLungHealthInstitute.com)**



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\*For more information, go to [theLungHealthInstitute.com/Results](http://theLungHealthInstitute.com/Results).

^Each patient is different. Results may vary.

(Continued from page 40)

**62nd Trans., 48th Grp., Vietnam, 1967-69** – Seeking anyone exposed to agent orange to substantiate a claim. David Russell McMichael (903) 316-6227 phillips50\_99@yahoo.com

**82 Artillery, Giessen, Germany, 1961-64** – Seeking anyone to substantiate a back and knee injury from handling 600 pound rounds as an ammo truck driver. Charles E. Davis (816) 806-0397 cedxx57@gmail.com

**MACV Phoenix (PRU) Advisor Team 16, Northwest of LZ Hawk Hill, Oct. 1968-Oct. 1969** – Seeking any members of A or B Trps, 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav Regt., Americal Div. who can substantiate injuries from Command ACAV hitting a mine that blew me off the track injuring my back and neck. James H. Cheatham Jr. (253) 267-5275 cheathamjh@gmail.com

**Coast Guard**  
**Sqdn. One, Div. 11, An Thoi, Vietnam, 1968-69** – Seeking anyone who served with me on an 82-foot patrol craft to substantiate me being there for a claim. My four tour record in Vietnam was lost in 1993. Ronald Hirth (860) 749-0475 coastguardveteran@cox.net

**Marines**  
**Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, October-November, 1953** – Seeking anyone who can substantiate a claim for thyroid cancer. Gerald D. Keffer (614) 877-4246

**Navy**  
**USS Arnold J. Isbell DD-869, Jan. 1952-Mar. 1955** – Seeking anyone who can substantiate exposure to asbestos, radiation, lead paint and arsenic used in fuel oil for boilers for a claim. Bobby W. Prather Sr. (270) 252-1668

**USS Manley, 1967-68** – Seeking PNC P. Gurney, PN3 R. Smith or anyone else that can substantiate damage to my left foot after dropping a 5/54 caliber projectile on it when moving ammo from one magazine to another. Duane R. Williams (507) 526-2866 williamstax@bevcomm.net



## Learn the Basics of Purchasing Life Insurance

Insurance comes with its own language that often can be confusing. To feel comfortable and confident about purchasing life insurance, people should learn the basic insurance terminology below and review the frequently asked questions.

- **Carrier or underwriter** — The insurance company that is providing the policy.
- **Level Term Life Insurance** — This policy provides the same coverage for the same price throughout the length of your term. Premium payments will never increase, and death benefits will never decrease.
- **Non-Level Term Life Insurance** — The policy changes over time in one of two ways: Either premium payments will go up or death benefits will decrease.
- **Whole Life Insurance\*** — The policy covers an entire lifetime so long as premiums are being paid. The cash value collects in a low-interest account.
- **Exclusions** — A cause of death that releases the insurance company from having to pay death benefits to the insured's beneficiary. Common exclusions include suicide and dangerous activity. Be sure to understand the terms of a policy.
- **Beneficiary** — The individual, charity or trust that receives the benefit in the event of an insured's death. The policy holder can designate one beneficiary to receive 100% of the benefit or designate multiple beneficiaries, splitting the total benefit into desired allocations to each.
- **Insurance limit** — This is the amount an insurance company will pay under a given policy.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT INSURANCE LIMIT

Determining how much and what kind of insurance to buy is an important financial decision. A basic rule for choosing a



limit is that it should be equal to 10 to 12 times your annual salary.

When evaluating life insurance limits, consider the income to leave to beneficiaries. From that sum, subtract all other income sources they have access to, such as their own income, savings, pensions or Social Security. The resulting number is the recommended limit for the purchase.

### SELECTING THE BEST CARRIER

There are thousands of insurance companies that offer various types of life insurance products, so finding the right one can be overwhelming. Key factors to consider when choosing a life insurance company include:

**Stability.** A company that is financially secure is recommended so that it's around to pay death benefits when the insured dies, whether that's in five years or 30. Research financial strength ratings from independent firms such as A.M. Best or Standard & Poor's.

**Track record.** Most state insurance departments post reports on their websites showing the number of complaints or issues for each insurer relative to its number of customers.

**Products.** Make sure the company offers the type of policy you want to buy.

**Rates.** Pricing and underwriting guidelines can vary significantly by company. If you get unaffordable rates from one carrier, you might get lower rates from another.

For more information, call the VFW Member Benefits Department at 1-833 VFW-VETS, option 3 (1-833-839-8387).

\*Not all products and services mentioned are available through member benefit programs.



Karen James is a noted  
journalist and expert  
in relationships

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**Love, Marriage, and  
Aging Well!**

# The Amazing Secret Of Older Italian Men!

*Now we know why men in Italy are famous  
for keeping their energy and passion well into their 80s!*

## A Secret Any Man Can Use...

This month, I got a letter from a reader in Texas about a "little secret" that's completely reignited her husband! (Texas women tell it like it is.)

**Tina writes: Dear Karen,**

For years my husband and I had a great marriage, but when he reached his 50s, he just lost his spark and really slowed down. Most days it seemed like he was just going through the motions. This is terrible, but I found myself thinking, "My strong, energetic husband has become a shell of himself!"

Well last month he came home from a business trip to Europe and shocked me with more energy and enthusiasm than he's had in years - and he's been like that ever since!

Bursting with energy, he's back in the gym, playing with grandkids, and living life to the fullest! We've even rekindled our romance, acting like a couple of teenagers again. So here we are closer, and more intimate than ever... in our late 50s!

On his trip, he stayed next to an older, but very energetic Italian couple. Every single day they were out riding bikes or playing tennis. At night, he'd see them at dinner and it was obvious they were still very enamored with each other.

Envious, one afternoon my husband asked their secret. The man, a nutritionist by trade, smiled and pulled a small pack of tablets from his leather satchel. He gave it to my husband and said "These come from a small village, north of my town. They're made from naturally pure extracts, packed with rich energizing nutrients. Believe me, they will give you



***"My husband shocked me with more energy  
and enthusiasm than he's had in years!"***

back all the energy, vitality, and passion you had as a young man!"

Karen, these past few weeks have been a dream. My husband is beaming with confidence and our marriage is stronger than ever! But the pack is almost empty and we desperately want more. Do you know about these European tablets and can we get some in the States?

Sincerely,

**Tina C., Fort Worth, TX**

Tina, you're in luck! Ever wonder why older men from Italy are famous for staying energetic and full of passion well into their golden years? For decades, they've relied on a unique blossom seed extract to stay invigorated and youthful.

Milled on the fertile northern plains, and sold under the brand name Provarin, these pure plant extracts have a legendary reputation throughout Europe. As Giovanni from Milan put it, "It's like a time machine - especially for us older guys!"

All-natural and safe to take, Provarin is a well-kept secret for those in the know. An old-school, family business, they still harvest product by hand and don't do any advertising. Long-term customers and word of mouth ensures their limited stock is sold out every year.

The good news is that Provarin is now available in the United States - and it's surprisingly inexpensive! A spokesman told me that to celebrate the U.S. release, any of my readers who call today will get a one-time 50% discount, plus free shipping, AND a bonus pack of 30 tablets - FREE!

Wow, so there you go, Tina - and the rest of you readers! This offer is only good while supplies last so just give them a call today. The number is **1-800-518-5632**.

Aren't you glad you asked?

*Karen*

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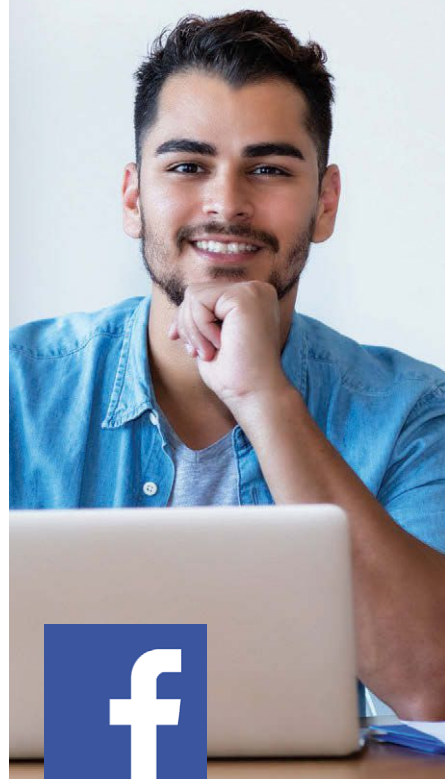
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