



The Post Journal

UPCOMING POST 76 ELECTIONS



An item of importance is the upcoming election of officers at our April Meeting.

YOUR POST NEEDS YOU TO VOLUNTEER TO FILL POST OFFICER POSITIONS FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR [MAY TO THE FOLLOWING APRIL]

There are 7 elected officers and 6 appointed officers. If any member in good standing seeks a position within the post, notify the Adjutant at the email address provided at the side.

Regardless if any officer wishes to stay on, anyone can seek the position. Any member in good standing can be considered for offices of Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Sergeant-At-Arms, and, the 3 year term as Executive Committee Director. The election and swearing in will be held at the 19 April 2020 General Membership meeting.

Each elected officer may be reconsidered for office by the Nomination Committee, should they continue to express and interest in continuing in that position. All existing Officers and Directors, as well as those wishing to be considered for an office, need to present their intentions in writing. or email, to the Nomination Committee before 9 April 2020.

Our Post welcomes new ideas and new directions. Won't you consider continuing to serve and volunteer to fill one of our Post offices for the upcoming year that begins in May 2020 and concludes in April 2021.

POST CONTACTS:

COMMANDER: Mike Shephard
Phone: (702) 256-3106
shephardsparks@aol.com

1st VICE CDR.: Tony Mascari
Phone: (702) 218-0689
bm1mascari@yahoo.com

2nd VICE CDR.: Walter Cheatham
Phone: (702) 741-4415
buzzcheatham@gmail.com

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:
Richard Hoffer
Phone: (702) 768-9022
richardh360@cox.net

ADJUTANT: Thomas Mahon
Phone: (702) 619-2873
pilot121@yahoo.com

FINANCE OFFICER: Barry Bashist
Phone: (702) 210-3098
bbvegas@yahoo.com

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Rick Foulon
Phone: (702) 427-7185
rickfoulon@yahoo.com

COLOR GUARD:
Walter Cheatham
Phone: (702) 741-4415
buzzcheatham@gmail.com

HISTORIAN:
Gary Parriott
Phone: (702) 269-7823
garyparriott@gmail.com

VETERANS ADVOCATE:
Bobi Oates
Phone: (702)498-3045
boates4616@aol.com

DIRECTORS:
Paul Hestand, PPC
Phone: (702) 401-8089
p4979h@gmail.com

Jack Ford, PDC
Phone: (702) 228-4810
acchief@aol.com

Joel Forman
Phone: (702) 360-5833
akan00001@gmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST COMMANDER & CHAPLAIN
Mike Percival
Phone: (702) 901-9413
mgpercival7@gmail.com

SERVICE OFFICER:
Open

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Roger Henning
Phone: (702) 595-1795
NVPost76@gmail.com

2020 POST 76 MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY



Please Attend the 18th Annual Lakes Memorial Day Ceremony
Saturday May 23th, 2020

Solemnly and Promptly at 9:30 AM

Refreshments and the Patriotic Flute Choir begins at 9:00 AM

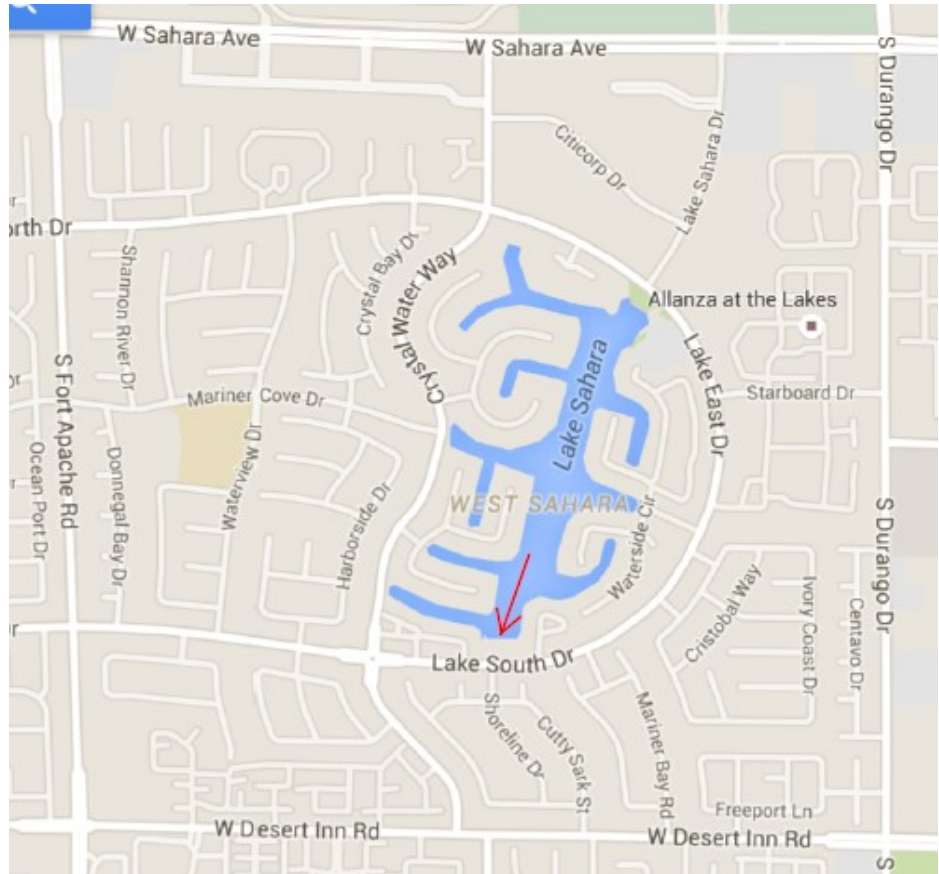
Held at The Lakes South Park
[APPROXIMATELY 3300 Lake South Drive]
[between Sahara / Desert Inn North-South and Durango / Ft. Apache East -West]

Facilities and support provided by The Lakes Association and the City of Las Vegas. Because of the City of Las Vegas, we will have shade tents, additional on-street reserved parking, our memorial wreath, a professional audio setup, and refreshments.

On Memorial Day, we remember and honor our fallen heroes.

This year because many of our VIPs have other obligations on Monday, we will hold our ceremony on the previous Saturday, 23 May 2020.

Join Nevada Post 76 Spirit of Freedom Legionnaires, Post 14 Legionnaires, JROTC Students from Centennial and Palo Verde High Schools, our neighbors from The Lakes, The City of Las Vegas and our distinguished speakers on this remembrance ceremony just prior to the important National Holiday to honor those who gave all to defend the way of life for us.



PAST COMMANDER AND DIRECTORS REPORT

Now that the winter hibernation season is over and renewals have slowed down, a bit, it is time to gear up for another busy, Post 76 year! Our membership continues to grow at a department leading pace, thanks to our hardworking membership team. We have many scheduled events coming up before the school awards begin. As 1 March we had 15 Legion related events scheduled, so far in March alone, and expect the trend to continue into the early Summer. Color Guards, Resource Table invitations, meetings, etc. We need your help to continue helping our Veterans and being seen throughout Southern Nevada. If you are interested in helping us out, contact either 2nd Vice Commander Walter Cheatham or me, PDC and Past Post Commander Joel Forman. Our information contact information appears on the front page of this publication.

The Post was invited to have a resource/information table at the Women Veteran Conference at Texas Station on Leap Day. Our thanks to Post Member Bobi Oates and Post Member, and NDVS Deputy Director Fred Wagar for extending the invitation to us. It was an opportunity for over 200 women veterans to stop by and talk with us about The American Legion and Post 76. It was also a wonderful opportunity to network with other groups and organizations and to renew old friendships, and to sign up new members.

We ask for your help during meeting days. Sergeant at Arms Richard Hoffer is tasked with making sure the room is prepared for the meeting. He is usually the first one there and the last to leave after everyone has gone. If you can come early and help him set up the room, and or stay after the meeting and help him to leave the room as we found it, would be a great contribution to the Post. This **does not include** moving tables or lifting chairs, Humana frowns upon us doing that, as it is a liability issue for them. The Officers are busy preparing for the meeting and helping members with questions, and the Greeter is busy making sure everyone signs in and has an opportunity to donate to our 50/50.

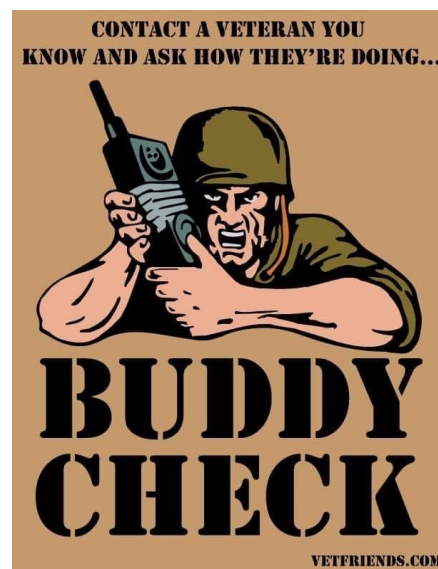
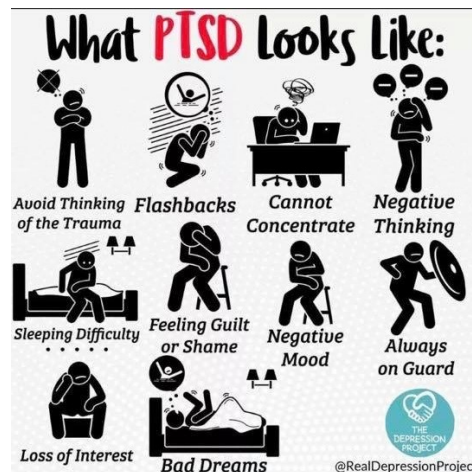
Joel Forman — Past Department Commander and Director.

BUDDY CHECK!

Our **SERGEANT-AT-ARMS**, Richard Hoffer has made more **BUDDY CHECK** phone calls that we can count! If you see the following phone number come up on your caller ID, (702) 768-9022, answer it, it is Richard!

If you were someone who did get a call from him, how did it make you feel? You are important to us and we strongly respect the service you provided to our Country. A BUDDY CHECK is one way we can continue to stay in touch with each other and ensure that no one slips through the cracks. Anyone who has experienced or witnessed a situation that involves the possibility of death or serious injury, or who learns that a close family member or friend has experienced a traumatic event, can develop post-traumatic stress disorder, although most people don't. It's still not completely understood why some people who are exposed to traumatic situations develop PTSD while others don't. See the article from the VA about the challenges of aging, and yes, we are all aging. Also look at the graphic above that illustrates some of the more common manifestations of PTSD.

Take some time right now and make it part of you regular schedule to reach out to a fellow vet and do a BUDDY CHECK. If you think this is something that you would volunteer to do, contact Richard at (702) 768-9022. He would love to have some help reaching out to our membership and also to those Veterans who are American Legion members but not a member of a specific Post. You can make a difference for a fellow vet.



MESSAGE FROM THE 1st VICE COMMANDER

Greetings All !!!

As my term as your 1st Vice Commander comes to an end, I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you, and the post for the past year.

I want to extend a huge thanks to the incredible members of the membership team. So much was accomplished this year, and it was all thanks to their dedication and hard work. As of the writing of this message, we are #1 in the department for percentage over goal!! With close to 1000 members, that was not an easy feat. We were able to do hundreds of "Buddy Checks" on members we haven't seen in a while, and hopefully, we will get to see them at a meeting soon. Additionally, we helped so many members make Post 76 their new post home. It was a lot of work, but well worth it.

I would also like to thank all the Officers in the Post for their guidance and help while I was learning this position. Each and every one of you taught me something on how I could do my job better, and more efficiently to serve the post, and The American Legion.

Mostly, I want to thank all of you, our members. Your dedication to The American Legion is why we have, what I believe, to be the most successful and active post in Nevada.

This year saw many changes. We have a new post meeting location, and Humana has been an incredible partner to work with. An Auxiliary unit is formed, and we are looking forward to working side by side with them. Many exciting changes to be sure, and more on the way.

So, once again, I say THANK YOU!!

Tony Mascari, 1st Vice Commander

POST 76 AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

As many of you may know, Post 76 has an Amateur Radio Station right in the Humana Community Outreach Center where we hold our monthly meetings. IN CASE YOU MISSED IT— below is extracted from the most recent edition of the American Legion Magazine. If you are interested, everyone is welcome. If you don't have a license, no problem, our club has the personnel to help you study and take the exam to obtain a license and begin to communicate and share with Legionnaires all over the country.



Join an American Legion ham radio net. The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) conducts monthly network operations, or nets, run by officers' and members' net control stations from National Headquarters in Indianapolis and homes across the nation.

Amateur radio nets are conducted for purposes formal and informal, ranging from facilitating emergency operations in disaster situations to discussing specific items of interest to a variety of operators, TALARC monthly nets are a regular gathering of American Legion Family hams for conversation and information-sharing over the airwaves. With more than 4100 TALARC members across the country, the nets are an opportunity to learn what other members are doing in different parts of the country and world.

A schedule of regular TALARC events is posted online at legion.org/ham-radio/monthly-net-schedule. Current formats include both traditional radio bandwidths and digital ones via the internet. An FCC license is required to access most nets, but the TALARC page on the national website (legion.org/hamradio) has links to help interested American Legion Family members take the first steps to getting a license - and then, hopefully, joining the club.

— Marty Justis, TALARC president [extracted from MARCH2020 | THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE p.43]

WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY!

The ALA (American Legion Auxiliary) was founded in 1919 to support The American Legion, the largest organization of U.S. wartime veterans. Our mutual purpose is to make life better for our veterans, military and their families. We work steadfastly, side by side, promoting patriotism and national security while supporting youth and advocating for those who have served our country.

The ALA is a remarkable organization with over 100 years of service. In addition to the rewards and personal gratification gained in voluntary service, there are many tangible benefits for members of the ALA including the quarterly magazine and numerous discounts on services on supplement insurance products, vehicles, prescriptions restaurants and much more.

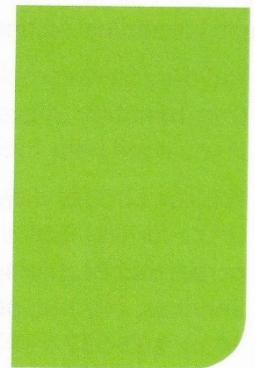
Our ALA is called Spirt of Freedom Auxiliary Unit 76 as we are attached to the Legion Post. We will meet at the same time and place as Spirt of Freedom Post 76 meets:

3rd Sunday of the Month – 1:30 pm – Humana Office on Craig Road

Come join us and get to know a great group of people. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself Gail Percival, President at 480-320-8623 or email mgpercival7@gmail.com. Please note that an application to join us is included on the next page.



WHAT'S HAPPENING



Humana.

You are cordially invited to:

VETERAN'S COFFEE CLUB

Every Tuesday 9 - 11 a.m.

Join us and your fellow veterans for coffee and snacks. You can also learn about community resources, veterans programs, and benefits!

4830 W. Craig Rd.

Las Vegas, NV 89130

7023806172 (TTY: 711)

humana.com/humana-neighborhood-centers

For more information, visit your neighborhood Humana location Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.



American Legion Auxiliary MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name (First) _____ (M.I.) _____ (Last) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Email Address _____

Date of Birth (Required) _____ Birth - 17 18 and over _____ Unit # _____ Location _____

Have you been a member previously? Yes No (If yes, fill in below.)

Previous Unit City/State _____ ALA ID # (if known) _____
/ /

Signature of Applicant (or legal guardian if under 18) _____ Date _____

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Through—Name of Veteran (Female Veterans: List Your Own Name) _____

If Living: American Legion Member ID # _____ Post # _____ City _____ State _____

Deceased—If veteran is deceased, contact ALA unit about the necessary military records.
For Veteran's DD214 Discharge Papers: www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records

Veteran Served:

WWI (4/6/1917-11/11/1918)

Anytime After 12/7/1941 (check all that apply):

Global War on Terror Panama Vietnam WWII

Gulf War Lebanon/Grenada Korea Other Conflicts

Applicant's Relationship to the Veteran:

Male Spouse Female Spouse Mother Grandmother Sister Self

Daughter Granddaughter

To Be Completed By The American Legion Post Adjutant/Officer

I certify that the above named individual served at least one day of active duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or is still serving honorably.

Post Adjutant/Officer Membership Verification _____ / / _____ Date _____

HELP US GET YOU CONNECTED!

I am interested in learning more about:

Volunteering for Veterans, Military, and Their Families

Youth Activities, Including ALA Girls State, Junior Member Programs, and Scholarships

Member Discounts and Services

Other

Please contact the following individual about volunteering or joining the American Legion Auxiliary:

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Recruiter's Name _____ Unit/Post # _____ City _____ State _____

Submit this application to the ALA unit you wish to join. If unit is unknown, contact National Headquarters at (317) 569-4500 for assistance. Annual dues must accompany completed application. Ask local contact for amount due. **Membership pending approval of application.**

VA taking on the challenges of aging with PTSD

Strategies that help older Veterans

[From <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/category/health/inside-veterans-health/>]

New challenges appear with age. Those challenges can make the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) more noticeable, cause them to come back after many years or even to occur for the first time.

“It really wasn’t until after I retired and moved to be with my family that the [PTSD] symptoms began to be bothersome and disrupt my life, disrupt my family’s life,” says Mary Martin, an Air Force Veteran.

Don’t assume that these changes are a given or that it’s just what happens with getting older. Memories or impacts of trauma can be addressed at any age. You’re never too old to get help, and older adults can benefit from effective PTSD treatments, even for people who experienced trauma decades ago.

It’s common for older adults to minimize and deny the pain they experience from past traumas. They’re more likely to try to cope with these issues by themselves instead of seeking mental health treatment. However, strategies that once seemed to help with PTSD symptoms can be more difficult to maintain as people get older.

Common challenges and strategies

Dr. Elissa McCarthy, clinical psychologist at the National Center for PTSD, and Dr. Joan Cook, associate professor of psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, shared some common challenges faced by older adults and strategies for how to deal with those challenges:

- **CHALLENGE:** More free time. Increased amounts of free time can make unpleasant memories more frequent.
STRATEGY: Create structure and maintain a routine or organized schedule. Spend more time on hobbies or doing other enjoyable activities that you may not have made time for earlier in life. For example, learn to play an instrument, bake, start a blog or make a scrapbook with old photos.
- **CHALLENGE:** Loss of purpose. Retirement can be challenging if work was a large part of your identity.
STRATEGY: Learn new skills or volunteer. For example, many older Veterans enjoy giving back by mentoring Servicemembers or younger Veterans.
- **CHALLENGE:** Loss of loved ones.
STRATEGY: Having a network of supportive people is important. Maintain relationships with people you care about and make new friends, too. For example, look for social groups who enjoy your hobbies or an activity you want to learn.
- **CHALLENGE:** Changes in physical ability.
STRATEGY: Replace hobbies with other similar activities. For example, if poor eyesight makes reading difficult, try audiobooks or podcasts instead. For those who are homebound or have limited mobility, there are other options, like telehealth, for receiving counseling and care from home.
- **CHALLENGE:** Medical problems. Living with untreated PTSD can make other mental and physical health issues worse.
STRATEGY: Don’t assume this is how aging needs to be, be proactive in managing health conditions and get treatment for PTSD symptoms that arise.

Symptoms may worsen

As people age, their PTSD symptoms may suddenly appear or become worse, causing them to act differently. It may be unsettling to see these changes in a loved one, but it’s nothing to fear. Changes are common and treatment can help. If a loved one is living with PTSD, these tips can help:

- Take time to understand what friends or loved ones went through and what they’re now experiencing as they live with the symptoms of PTSD.
- Be supportive and nonjudgmental. Think about how to respond better if a loved one says they’ve experienced trauma or may have PTSD. Responding negatively, even unintentionally, can shut someone down. Thank them for sharing their personal story with you.
- Connect them with care. If being the main support person for a loved one becomes too much to handle, connect them to help and remain in a loving, supporting role. Don’t forget that loved ones need help and support, too.

Give hope. Understand that symptoms can come and go throughout different times in a person’s life. Remind loved ones that they’ve successfully coped in the past, and can do it again.

Visit the National Center for PTSD website for information, videos and tools to help manage PTSD. For more information on older adults with PTSD, download the Understanding PTSD and Aging booklet.

If you care about someone with PTSD, download the Understanding PTSD: A Guide for Family and Friends booklet to learn more about how to support your loved one and take care of your own needs.

Joan Cook, Ph.D., is a psychologist at the National Center for PTSD Evaluation Division and an associate professor in the Yale School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. Elissa McCarthy, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and PTSD Consultation Program consultant with the National Center for PTSD.



American Legion Post 76
P.O. Box 34012
Las Vegas, Nevada 89133-4012

UPCOMING MEETING DATES :

E Board Meeting — 9 April 2020, 4:30 pm Summerlin Trails Community Center

GENERAL MEETING — 19 April 2020, 1:30 pm at Humana 4830 W. Craig Rd. Suite 130

E Board Meeting — 14 May 2020, 4:30 pm Summerlin Trails Community Center

GENERAL MEETING — 17 May 2020, 1:30 pm at Humana 4830 W. Craig Rd. Suite 130

E Board Meeting — 11 June 2020, 4:30 pm Summerlin Trails Community Center

JUNE MEETING MOVED DUE TO FATHERS DAY ON THE THIRD SUNDAY

GENERAL MEETING — 14 June 2020, 1:30 pm at Humana 4830 W. Craig Rd. Suite 130



Post Officers will be elected during the 19 April 2020 General Meeting. If you are interested in volunteering for a Post office, submit your request present you intentions in writing. or email, to the Adjutant would will pass it on to the Nomination Committee before 29 February 2020. Please be there and cast your vote.

Membership in The American Legion is based on a calendar-year from 1 January to 31 December **IF You have not yet paid 2020 dues, you are now expired.** By paying your dues, you help our Post have the resources to support programs that benefit both veterans and families in our area.

**Something
Special**



© Can Stock Photo

EMAIL ONLY VERSION —

FULL COLOR EXPANDED CONTENT

From here on until the end, this is an expanded version of Post Newsletter #32, sent only via email. The previous eight pages were printed in black and white and sent to those that had expressed they either did not have or use email, and preferred a paper version.

You are saving the Post resources that can be programmed to other beneficial uses.

THANK YOU!

Do you have a story you want to tell? Email it to Post76@gmail.com

Making Connections

Bobi Oates

Saturday — 29 February 2020; more than 150 Women Veterans and exhibitors gathered at the Texas Station for the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) Women Veterans Conference.

This was the first conference held in several years. It was a chance for Women Veterans and Active Duty Women to come together.

Beth Hemmila, the new NDVS Women Veterans Service Officer was the emcee, she is based out of Reno but will be traveling though out the state.

Anne E Doran, Executive Director, Office of Patient Advocacy Veterans Health Administration was the keynote speaker. She shared some of her challenges while serving in the Navy and transitioning to the civilian sector. There were three panel, Connecting to Healthcare and Benefits, Connecting through Volunteerism and Connecting to Employment. The last event was Conscious Connections presented by Annie Emprima-Martin, a member of the Women Veterans Advisory Committee. Kat Miller, NDVS Director closed out the conference by challenging us all to continue Connecting with each other.

March is “Women’s History Month” and Barbara Cegavski, NV Sec of State presented on behalf of the Governor a proclamation naming the month of March as “Women’s Military History Month in Nevada. This was met with a huge applause from the Women.

In addition to the speakers there were about 30 different organizations with tables sharing their information with the attendees.

Lastly a huge thank you to the Blue Star Mothers, they provided childcare throughout the day so the Moms could attend the event.



Members of the NV Women Veterans Advisory Committee.

Marlene Merck, Elko, Chair, Dr Anne Davis, Reno, Vice Chair, Bobi Oates, LV, & Annie Emprima-Martin, LV

Humana®



For your service,
for your sacrifice,
we honor you.

The United States of America Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration was established in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act to thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, highlight their service and pay tribute to their contributions. Humana, in partnership with Vietnam Veterans of America, will be hosting a Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Ceremony to honor Vietnam-era veterans.



The War Commemoration Ceremony is part of an ongoing national effort to honor all Vietnam-era veteran military service members who were on active duty between November 1, 1955, and May 15, 1975, regardless of where they served. These veterans are eligible to receive a Vietnam Veteran lapel pin at the ceremony.

Please join us for a Vietnam War Commemorative Pinning Ceremony



When:

Friday March 27, 2020 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Where:

4830 W. Craig Rd. Suite 130. North Las Vegas, NV 89130

Please call your neighborhood Humana office to RSVP:

725.726.9112 (TTY: 711), Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

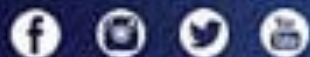
Humana is a Medicare Advantage HMO, PPO and PFFS organization and a stand-alone prescription drug plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in any Humana plan depends on contract renewal. For accommodation of persons with special needs at sales meetings call 1-877-320-1235 (TTY: 711).

Humana is proud to support veterans and their families.



WOUNDED WARRIOR
carebeyond duty

www.woundedwarrior.af.mil
800-581-9437



The Air Force Wounded Warrior Program (AFW2) invites you to present at the March 27, 2020 CARE Fair.

This is an opportunity to demonstrate & educate wounded, ill, and injured Airman about your program.

RSVP now to reserve your table

Westin Las Vegas Hotel | 27 Mar 1 - 4PM | SET UP IS 1200

WARRIOR CARE FAIR

CONTACT ROBERT PUCKETT AT 210-565-5643
OR EMAIL ROBERT.PUCKETT.9@US.AF.MIL
FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

160 E Flamingo Rd
Las Vegas, NV 89109
Bristlecone Room



Speak up and be heard!



2020 Nevada Veterans Legislative Symposia

The Nevada Veterans Legislative Symposia provides a platform to identify and prioritize veteran issues important to veterans and their families. Your participation will help shape veteran issues that will be brought before Nevada lawmakers in the 2021 Legislative Session.

These symposia, hosted by the Nevada Department of Veterans Services and the United Veterans Legislative Council, occur every other year, when the Nevada Legislature is not in session. Coffee starts at 8:00 AM.

RENO

March 14, 2020

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Washoe County Senior Center

1155 East 9th Street

Multi-Purpose Room

Register here:

<http://bit.ly/SymposiaReno>

NORTH LAS VEGAS

March 28, 2020

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare

System

6900 North Pecos Road

Auditorium

Register here: <http://bit.ly/SymposiaLV>

Any questions call Fanny Rizo at 775-825-9748 email: rizof@veterans.nv.gov

My HealthVet—VA's Online Personal Health Record

My HealthVet is VA's award-winning online Personal Health Record (PHR), located at www.myhealth.va.gov. It offers users anywhere, anytime internet access to trusted and secure health care information, resources, and tools. My HealthVet is the gateway to web-based tools that empower Veterans to become active partners in their health care. With My HealthVet, users access trusted, secure, and informed VA health and benefits information at their convenience.

Register Today!

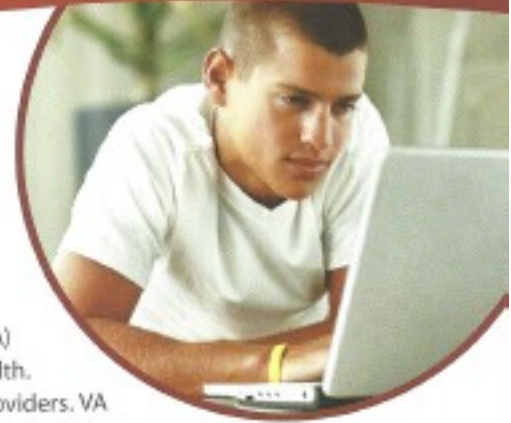
Start Here 

- 1 Type www.myhealth.va.gov in the address bar on your web browser, and press Enter. This takes you to VA's My HealthVet website.
- 2 On the right-hand side of the screen, click the [Register Today](#) button. Complete the registration page, and review and accept the Terms & Conditions and the Privacy Policy for using the My HealthVet website.
- 3 Log into your My HealthVet account and begin to create your PHR.
- 4 Begin using My HealthVet to access VA health care and services at your convenience to better manage your health. If you are a VA patient, take some time to watch the In-Person Authentication (IPA) video online.
- 5 Bookmark www.myhealth.va.gov as a favorite. If you are a VA patient, get an upgraded account during your next VA clinic visit to get the most out of your PHR.

Wellness Reminders

VA Wellness Reminders provide patients customized, online health reminders. VA patients, who have completed the one-time In-Person Authentication (IPA) process, can also use this My HealthVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) feature to partner with their VA health care providers. VA Wellness Reminders follow current guidelines and recommendations for good care and also provide links to related patient education materials on My HealthVet.

To access all of the new My HealthVet features that will enhance your Personal Health Record, take a few minutes to complete In-Person Authentication called IPA at your local VA facility. IPA is required to get VA Wellness Reminders. With IPA, you get the most out of your My HealthVet Personal Health Record. Your information is safe-guarded according to VA privacy regulations, and you will receive new online My HealthVet features when they become available.



VA Wellness Reminders include:

- ▶ Colorectal cancer screen
- ▶ Influenza (Flu)
- ▶ Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)
- ▶ Hypertension (High blood pressure)
- ▶ LDL control (Cholesterol)
- ▶ Lipid measure (Cholesterol)
- ▶ Body Mass Index

For people with diabetes:

- ▶ Diabetes foot exam
- ▶ Diabetes hemoglobin A1c
- ▶ Diabetes retinal exam

For women:

- ▶ Cervical cancer screen
- ▶ Mammogram screen

What are the benefits of using My HealthVet Wellness Reminders?

- ▶ Alerts you to important tests, examinations, or other medical procedures to protect your health
- ▶ Helps you remember important health information
- ▶ Allows you to be more involved in your own health care

- ▶ Allows you to view your VA Wellness Reminders
- ▶ Provides detailed VA Wellness Reminder information
- ▶ Provides health information to help you understand your Wellness Reminders
- ▶ Allows you to share your Wellness Reminders with non-VA health care providers

How VA Patients can access VA Wellness Reminders:

- ▶ Register as a My HealthVet user and complete the In-Person Authentication process
- ▶ Login to your My HealthVet account
- ▶ Click on the red "GET CARE" tab
- ▶ Click on the light blue "Wellness Reminders" tab





Veterans Administration Southern Nevada Healthcare System COVID-19 Information for Veterans:

Veterans, who have flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath, should call us at 702-791-9000 (Press Option 3) or 877-252-4866 before they visit the VA medical center or local VA clinic. In addition to calling first, consider using virtual care options such as telehealth or My HealthVet Secure Messaging.

Visitors, if you do not feel well, please postpone your visit.

Veterans and the public are encouraged to take every day preventative actions to avoid being exposed to the virus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you are sick or becoming sick.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- If you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with symptoms, call the VA before going to the facility.

For more information about the Coronavirus, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or read VA's latest information on the new coronavirus at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/>

Symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath can be caused by the flu and the common cold as well as COVID-19. At this time, the flu presents a greater risk in the United States than COVID-19, however, that could change if COVID-19 starts circulating widely. VA encourages everyone to get a flu shot if they have not yet received one to protect against flu and to help minimize demand on health care services.

There is not yet a vaccine or medication to treat COVID-19. The best way to prevent an infection is to avoid being exposed in the first place by taking everyday preventive actions. Anyone with symptoms of respiratory illness should avoid visiting the medical center except to receive care. Visitors who display respiratory symptoms, should request a mask, wash hands with soap and water or sanitizer, and postpone their visit until they are symptom-free. Stay informed of the COVID-19 outbreak. Visit VA's Public Health Website to learn how to protect against an infection and when to seek care. Monitor the number and location of confirmed COVID-19 cases within the United States at CDC's COVID-19 Website.

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT
1

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

FACT
2

Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19.

People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure.

FACT
3

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

FACT
4

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you

- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

FACT
5

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.





BALANCE

LIFE



**SNVCEB
Wellness & Health
Fair Town Hall
(W/ Topic Panel
Discussions)**

**Date: Saturday, April 4th
VA Medical Center
6900 N. Pecos Rd
9:30 AM—2:30 PM
Open to Active Duty,
National Guard, Reserves,
Veterans, Caregivers and
Their Families**

FOOD

AND

**REFRESHMENTS
WILL BE AVAILABLE**

Whole Health For Life

Connecting with a New Approach to Health and Well-Being through the VA

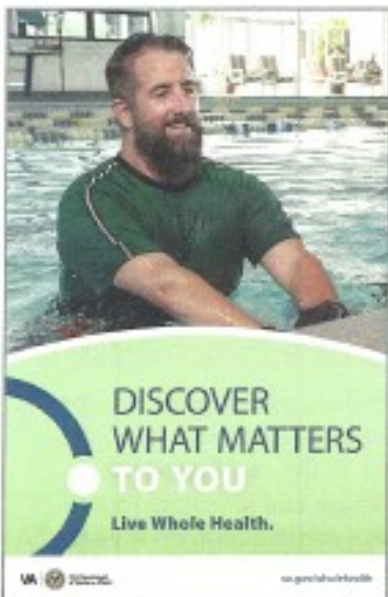
Monica Smith, VASNHS, Chief of Veterans Experience Services

"There is a new VA initiative called Whole Health, which is about changing how the VA healthcare system approaches Veteran's health and wellbeing. These additions include by looking at the whole person and what matters to each individual (reference the circle of health graphic). This will support the partnership between Veterans and their health care teams, to help each person take charge of their health and well-being, based on what matters to them.

The way we care for our Veterans will determine if our Veterans Choose VA! As the VA move towards an interrogative approach to health care, many new illnesses and high patient demand for care are constantly evolving. The need to redesign health care exist. In the VA, the Whole Health approach is an answer to the call for ongoing improvement of health care offered to our nation's Veterans. The conversation on, "how do we manage chronic disease overall" is a conversation had by both our Veterans and our Clinicians.

Until we design a health care system that proactively manages risk and promotes health for the whole person and for all people, we will continue to ineffectively deal with chronic diseases and the next crisis to come along.

Whole Health - *Circle of Health*



Whole Health can change the conversation and VHA facilities are shifting from a system designed around points of clinical care, to one that is based in partnership in which the primary focus is on whole health. By putting our Veterans' health back into their hands and allowing our Veterans to focus on their goals.

Here at VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, our Whole Health Team assist with educating both our staff and our Veteran patients by ensuring Intro to Whole Health is offered for our Veteran patients to understand VA's Whole Health approach to care.

We also encourage our Veterans to move on to "Taking Charge of my Life" which is a longer-term group program where Veterans can dive deeper into self-exploration of areas in their lives they wish to enhance and to create goals with action steps that will help them to accomplish and attain these goals.

For our employees, we offer WH 101 for clinicians, which is an 8-hour experience designed to enable our clinicians with the tools and education to continue the Whole Health journey for the patients that they engage with daily. WH 102 is a 4-hour experience designed to guide participant in exploring Whole Health and considering how it can be used to improve one's own health and well-being.

For more information on Whole Health, please contact **702-791-9000 ext. 15436**

Service Animals

Understanding the Rules at VASNHS



VASNHS VA Police Chief Reginald Winbush

There have been concerns about "pets" being allowed on VA owned and leased property. Although it may appear that VA Police are allowing all animals on the property, we are being very diligent to follow proper directives. I'd like to explain what VASNHS staff members can and cannot do.

In accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, 28 C.F.R. 36.102 et. Seq. (1990), persons who require the use of a Seeing-Eye dogs and other Service Animals will be allowed access to common areas of the VASNHS where patients, visitors and employees are normally allowed.

The issue we face today is when we suspect that a pet is not a "Service Animal." We receive complaints of Veterans having two Service Animals or the animal is riding in a wheelchair. Service Animals are very valuable working animals because they are specially trained to accommodate that patient's specific disability.

They are trained not to bark at other animals, urinating on the floor, become uncontrollable by the owner, etc. If you see an animal that is behaving in any of those manners, contact the VA Security Police (Extension 14073) to address the situation.

The VA will always welcome bonafide Service Animals because we understand the important role they play, so Veterans can fully participate in everyday life.



*To Protect & Serve
Those Who Have Served.*

DID YOU KNOW...

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) emotional support animals are not considered Service Animals.



VA staff are only allowed to ask two questions:

- Is the animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Animals are *NOT permitted in areas where patient care, patient safety and infection control standards would be compromised by the presence of an animal.* For example: Operating Rooms, Hemodialysis, Intensive Care Units, Infusion Clinic, Procedure Rooms, Select Areas of SPD, Radiology, Microbiology Lab, Nutrition and Food Service Kitchen Areas and Pharmacy.

IMPORTANT:



Bring someone to watch your Service Animal. VA staff are *NOT* allowed to babysit dogs, whether or not they are a Service Animal. Also, it's unreasonable to ask any employee to accept liability should something happen to their animal.

**LOOKING FOR MORE WAYS TO HELP OUT?
MAKE A DONATION TO THE STAND DOWN STORE!**



#LVSD20

Community Drop-Off Locations:

Humana

**8885 W. Charleston Suite 140
Las Vegas, NV 89117**

**1000 N. Green Valley Pkwy, Suite 720
Henderson, NV 89074**

**4830 W Craig rd Suite 130 N
Las Vegas NV 89130**

Individuals in the community are encouraged to donate the following items to U.S.VETS - Las Vegas Stand Down:

- Non-perishable food items (preferable cans with pop-tops)
- New socks
- New undergarments (men and women)
- Backpacks & sleeping bag
- Gently used clothing (please have washed & cleaned)
- Shirts, jackets, jeans, business attire, etc.
- Men & women shoes





Paralyzed Veterans of America

Nevada Chapter

8th Annual

Walk, Run & Roll 5K/1Mile Fun Walk

Come out and enjoy the fresh air and have some fun while helping raise money for our chapter. Bunker Park's track allows wheelchairs and handcycles to enjoy a fun 5K once the runners have completed the course. The event raises funds to support Nevada Paralyzed Veterans of America and the disabled community sports & wellness programs.

April 18, 2020

Bunker Park

7351 W. Alexander Road

LV 89129

\$25 Entry Fee

Race Start Time 9:00 am

Course Info—Bunker Park—2x's around is 5K.

Parking—Parking lot or Alexander Road

Medals will be handed out.

To register go to raceentry.com or nevadapva.org

For more information or to volunteer call: 702/646-0040



Upgrade Your My HealtheVet Account to Premium Status

Wondering why you should consider upgrading your My HealtheVet account to Premium? A Premium account gives My HealtheVet users the highest level of access to My HealtheVet features.

My HealtheVet offers **three account types**: Basic, Advanced and Premium. Anyone registering on My HealtheVet starts with a Basic or Advanced account. A Basic account provides access to medical libraries and allows you to enter personal data into journals and other tools to track your health measures.

When you register and select **Veteran** and **VA Patient** on the registration form, your profile information is linked to VA/DoD records. When this happens, your account is automatically upgraded to the Advanced level.

An Advanced account offers Veterans and VA Patients a higher level of access than the Basic account to My HealtheVet features including:

VA Prescription Refill

VA Prescription Tracker

VA Allergies

For Veterans and VA patients, a Premium account includes all the features of a Basic and Advanced account, plus these services:

Copies of key portions of your VA electronic health records

VA Health Summary

Secure Messaging

VA Appointments

VA Medical Imaging and Reports

Department of Defense (DoD) Military Service Information (MOS codes)

The **VA Blue Button** is a feature available to all My HealtheVet members. Access to VA Blue Button reports is based on your account level.

Consider **registering** if you do not have a My HealtheVet account.

Interested in upgrading to a Premium account? Let's get started!

To upgrade a My HealtheVet account to Premium status, you will need to:

- Be a VA patient and have an active My HealtheVet Advanced account
-
- Accept the current My HealtheVet Terms and Conditions
-
- Provide a primary government-issued photo ID
-
- Provide a secondary form of ID when your primary ID does not match your official VA medical record (such as a recent name change)
-

There are two ways to upgrade your My HealtheVet Advanced account to Premium. You can upgrade your My HealtheVet Advanced account online (DS Logon Premium Account and ID.me) or in person (face-to-face and video conference) at a local VA facility:

- Log in with a Sign-in Partner (online)
- Upgrade in person at a VA Facility



Department of Defense Expanding Access to Military Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities

More veterans and caregivers to have eligibility.

The Department of Defense is proud to expand commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation retail eligibility to:

- Purple Heart recipients
- Former prisoners of war
- All veterans with service-connected disabilities
- Individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The DoD, VA and the Department of Homeland Security are collaborating to implement the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 for those who will be eligible for this benefit on Jan. 1, 2020.

Facilities like these will be open to the newly eligible patrons starting Jan. 1, 2020:

- Commissaries*
- Military service exchanges
- Golf courses
- Bowling centers
- Recreational lodging
- RV campgrounds
- Movie theaters
- And more!

**DoD is required to charge a small fee to new users who are eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, to cover any increase in costs to the U.S. Treasury for processing commercial credit and debit cards.*

Want to know more? Check out the FAQs on the following pages.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Q: Are disabled veterans eligible for privileges at commissaries, military exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation activities?

A: Yes. Veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating will be eligible for Department of Defense and Coast Guard commissary, exchange and MWR retail privileges beginning Jan. 1, 2020, under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans eligible solely under this act (Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, or veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 0-90 percent) who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and MWR retail activities to complete their transactions. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange, and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

Q: If I don't have a service-connected disability, but I meet one of the other new user categories, will I be eligible for privileges?

A: Yes. If you don't have a service-connected disability, but you are a veteran who was awarded the Purple Heart, a veteran who was a former prisoner of war, or an individual approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, you will be eligible for privileges provided for under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans who are Purple Heart recipients or former prisoners of war who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities to complete their transactions. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange, and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

Primary family caregivers must present an eligibility letter to facilitate Department of Defense and Coast Guard installation and privilege access. Eligibility letters will be mailed to enrolled primary family caregivers from the VA's Office of Community Care.

Q: What's the definition of a service-connected disability?

A: A service-connected disability is an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service, as determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Q: I was in the Reserves, am I included?

A: Yes. Reserve members who are veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart, veterans who are former prisoners of war, or veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability will be eligible for privileges provided for under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans eligible solely under this act (Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, or veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 0-90 percent) who have been issued

a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to Department of Defense and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities to complete their transactions, The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange, and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

Q: Are veterans of the U.S. Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration eligible for these privileges?

A: Yes. If a commissioned officer of the regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service or a commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration meets the requirements for being considered a veteran under Section 101 of Title 38, United States Code, and was awarded the Purple Heart, is a former prisoners of war, or has a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability, they are eligible for privileges provided for under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans eligible solely under this act (Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, or veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 0-90 percent) who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to Department of Defense and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities to complete their transactions, The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange, and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

Q: Does an authorized caregiver have to be the disabled veteran's spouse?

A: No. An authorized caregiver eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 does not have to be the disabled veteran's spouse. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, an authorized caregiver must be the individual approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/family-caregiver-benefits/comprehensive-assistance/> for information regarding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. When the VA formalizes approval and designation of general caregivers under the Program of General Caregiver Support Services, the Department of Defense will consider expansion of caregiver privileges to this group.

Q: Do caregivers who get these privileges have to be enrolled in a specific program?

A: Yes. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, a caregiver eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, must be the individual approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to receive these privileges. Visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/family-caregiver-benefits/comprehensive-assistance/> for information regarding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. When the VA formalizes approval and designation of general caregivers under the Program of General Caregiver Support Services, the Department of Defense will consider expansion of caregiver privileges to this group.

Q: Are all veterans eligible for in-person commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation privileges on Department of Defense installations?

A: No. Unless otherwise authorized commissary, exchange and MWR access, only veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war or veterans who have a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating of 0-90 percent are authorized in-person privileges beginning on Jan. 1, 2020, as provided for in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans eligible solely under this act who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissaries, exchanges and MWR retail activities to complete their transactions. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

While not all veterans are eligible for in-person privileges on DoD and Coast Guard installations, all honorably discharged veterans are eligible for online military exchange shopping through the Veterans Online Shopping Benefit. To access your online shopping benefit, veterans not eligible for in-person privileges should follow the instructions to establish an account at any of the following military exchange websites, or the VA's Veterans Canteen Service:

- Army and Air Force Exchange System: <https://www.shopmyexchange.com>
- Coast Guard Exchange: <https://shopCGX.com>
- Marine Corps Exchange: <http://www.mymcx.com>
- Navy Exchange: <https://www.mynavyexchange.com>
- Veterans Canteen Service: <https://shopvcs.va.gov>

Q: Why can't all veterans get these privileges?

A: The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 recognizes the service of those who endured captivity during conflict, were wounded in combat or sustained a service-connected disability and the individuals approved and designated as their caregivers under a formalized Department of Veterans Affairs caregiver program.

While not all veterans are eligible for in-person privileges on DoD installations, all honorably discharged veterans are eligible for online military exchange shopping through the Veterans Online Shopping Benefit. To access your online shopping benefit, veterans not eligible for in-person privileges should follow the instructions to establish an account at any of the following military exchange websites, or the VA's Veterans Canteen Service:

- Army and Air Force Exchange System: <https://www.shopmyexchange.com>
- Coast Guard Exchange: <https://shopCGX.com>
- Marine Corps Exchange: <http://www.mymcx.com>
- Navy Exchange: <https://www.mynavyexchange.com>
- Veterans Canteen Service: <https://shopvcs.va.gov>

Q: Will family members of the eligible veterans and caregivers also have the same privileges?

A: No. Only the veterans and caregivers eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 will have these privileges. The veterans and caregivers eligible are veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart, veterans who are former prisoners of war, veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating of 0-90 percent and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Eligibility for these privileges is tied to eligibility for and enrollment in specific VA programs. Family members of these eligible veterans and caregivers who are not eligible for these privileges in their own right are not authorized privileges.

Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with a VA-documented service-connected disability rating of 100 percent, as well as their authorized family members are eligible for privileges in previously established Department of Defense policy.

WHY?

Q: Why do these veterans get these privileges regardless of time served?

A: The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 recognizes the service of those who endured captivity during conflict, were wounded in combat or sustained a service-connected disability and the individuals approved and designated as their caregivers under a formalized Department of Veterans Affairs caregiver program.

Q: Are these new users being authorized to help the Department of Defense boost retail store profits?

A: No. The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 recognizes the service of those who endured captivity during conflict, were wounded in combat or sustained a service-connected disability and the individuals approved and designated as their caregivers under a formalized Department of Veterans Affairs caregiver program.

Q: If the commissary is required to deliver groceries at a discount over commercial grocery stores and it relies on appropriated funds to do that, wouldn't it take more appropriated funds to serve more people?

A: While the Department of Defense recognizes that implementation of the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 will likely increase operating expenses at commissaries, the Department will comply with this act. The Department will analyze the impact on the commissary system and make adjustments as needed to minimize any negative consequences.

SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Q: How is this going to affect the service experience of previously authorized patrons?

A: Commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation retail facilities are preparing to welcome home these patrons without disrupting the current service experience for authorized patrons. Most locations will experience little to no impact on current operations. Installations in high cost-of-living areas may experience low to moderate impact. We are committed to delivering a high-quality experience for all patrons.

Q: What level of priority will newly-eligible veterans and caregivers be afforded when accessing commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation retail privileges?

A: New users eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, will receive the same priority and service levels as military retirees for activities authorized under this law. These new patrons may be prioritized lower than military retirees if authorized access to additional MWR activities by the Department of Defense.

GAINING ACCESS

Q: Can I use a Veterans Identification Card to get on an installation to access my privileges?

A: No. The VIC is not an acceptable form of identification to facilitate installation or privilege access at Department of Defense and Coast Guard installations. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, veterans eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war and veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating of 0-90 percent) who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of

sale at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities to complete their transactions. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED).

Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enroll in VA health care, or who are enrolled in VA health care, but do not possess a VHIC will not have access to DoD and Coast Guard installations for in-person commissary, exchange and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

Upon the first visit to an installation, these eligible veterans must stop at the visitor control center. Depending on the type of installation, veterans may be enrolled for recurring access, which would allow them to proceed to the gate for entry upon subsequent visits without having to stop again at the visitor control center.

As with all other individuals seeking access to DoD installations, all eligible veterans must pass a basic on-the-spot background check prior to enrolling and an automated check each time they enter the installation. Veterans with felony convictions, felony arrest warrants or other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will not be permitted entry.

Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 100 percent are eligible for a DoD-issued identification card that will facilitate installation and privilege access.

Q: How do I get an identification card that will get me on installations to access my privileges?

A: Veterans eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war, veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating of 0-90 percent) who are eligible to obtain a Veteran Health Identification Card must obtain a VHIC from the VA to facilitate Department of Defense and Coast Guard installation and privilege access. The VHIC must display the eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW, SERVICE CONNECTED). These eligible veterans must present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail facilities to complete their transactions. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, caregivers eligible solely under this act will receive a letter from the VA Office of Community Care that indicates they are approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers and are eligible for these privileges. For installation access, entry to some commissary stores and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and MWR retail facilities, eligible caregivers will need to show an acceptable credential, along with their eligibility letter. Acceptable credentials may include:

- DoD common access card (when otherwise eligible)
- DoD uniformed services identification card (when otherwise eligible)
- REAL ID-compliant driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia
- REAL ID-compliant non-driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia
- Enhanced driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia
- U.S. passport or passport card
- Foreign passport bearing an unexpired immigrant or non-immigrant visa or entry stamp
- Federal personal identity verification card (when otherwise eligible)
- VHIC
- Transportation Worker Identification Card

Upon the first visit to an installation, eligible veterans and caregivers must stop at the visitor control center. Depending on the type of installation and the acceptable credential presented, veterans and caregivers may be enrolled for

recurring access, which would allow them to proceed to the gate for entry upon subsequent visits without having to stop again at the visitor control center.

As with all other individuals seeking access to DoD installations, all eligible veterans and caregivers must pass a basic on-the-spot background check prior to enrolling and an automated check each time they enter the installation. Veterans and caregivers with felony convictions, felony arrest warrants or other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will not be permitted entry.

Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 100 percent are eligible for a DoD-issued identification card that will facilitate installation and privilege access.

Q: How do I get a Veteran Health Identification Card, or VHIC?

A: The Department of Veterans Affairs currently issues the VHIC to veterans enrolled in VA health care. Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

Q: If my only eligibility for these privileges is my zero percent Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected condition, but I am not eligible to obtain a Veteran Health Identification Card, can I bring another form of VA-documentation to access these privileges?

A: No. On Jan. 1, 2020, only veterans with a secure, scannable VA-issued VHIC will be authorized access to in-person commissary, military exchange and morale, welfare and recreation privileges on DoD and Coast Guard installations. When DoD and VA identify a credentialing solution for all Veterans eligible under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, DoD will roll out a new phase of access to accommodate current veterans who are not eligible to obtain a VHIC but are eligible for these privileges.

Until a credentialing solution is identified, you are eligible for online military exchange and American Forces Travel privileges.

Q: What's the difference between a Veteran Identification Card and a Veteran Health Identification Card?

A: The VIC is issued to any honorably or generally discharged veteran. The VHIC is only issued to those veterans who are enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care and displays the veterans' eligibility status on the card (e.g., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW, SERVICE CONNECTED).

Q: If I meet one of the new eligibility requirements, but I don't have a Veteran Health Identification Card, how can I get on an installation to access these privileges?

A: During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, only eligible veterans who have been issued a VHIC from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and to access commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED). Visit <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic> for information regarding eligibility for the VHIC and the application process.

During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, caregivers must obtain a letter from the VA Office of Community Care that indicates they are the approved and designated primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers and are eligible for these privileges. These letters will be automatically mailed to eligible primary family caregivers before Jan. 1. For installation access and at point of sale, caregivers will need to show an acceptable credential (e.g., REAL ID-compliant driver's license or U.S. passport) and their eligibility letter.

Veterans eligible for DoD and Coast Guard installation and privilege access through previously established DoD and Coast Guard policy (i.e., Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 100 percent) may obtain a DoD identification card to facilitate installation and privilege access.

Q: How will newly eligible veterans and caregivers get access to installations?

A: To access the installation, veterans eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, who have been issued a Veteran Health Identification Card from VA can present their VHIC to gain entry to DoD and Coast Guard installations and some commissary stores; and at point of sale at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities to complete their transactions. The VHIC must display the veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED). Upon the first visit to the installation, eligible veterans must present their VHIC at the visitor control center.

During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, eligible caregivers of veterans will receive a letter from the VA Office of Community Care that indicates they are the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers and are eligible for these privileges. Upon the first visit to the installation, caregivers will present this letter paired with an acceptable credential at the visitor control center. Acceptable credentials may include:

- DoD common access card (when otherwise eligible)
- DoD uniformed services identification card (when otherwise eligible)
- REAL ID-compliant driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia
- REAL ID-compliant non-driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia
- Enhanced driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia
- U.S. passport or passport card
- Foreign passport bearing an unexpired immigrant or non-immigrant visa or entry stamp
- Federal personal identity verification card (when otherwise eligible)
- VHIC
- Transportation Worker Identification Card

Depending on the type of installation and the acceptable credential presented, veterans and caregivers may be enrolled for recurring access, which would allow them to proceed to the gate for entry upon subsequent visits without having to stop again at the visitor control center.

As with all other individuals seeking access to DoD installations, all eligible veterans and caregivers must pass a basic on-the-spot background check prior to enrolling and an automated check each time they enter the installation. Veterans and caregivers with felony convictions, felony arrest warrants or other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will not be permitted entry.

Q: How do I access my online exchange and morale, welfare and recreation retail privileges?

A: Veterans already have online exchange privileges through the Veterans Online Shopping Benefit. Online MWR retail access (American Forces Travel) will be available Jan. 1, 2020, for veterans eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018.

Individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers will also be eligible for online exchange and MWR retail privileges beginning Jan. 1, 2020. Primary family caregivers will be able to access these online privileges within 30 days of receiving their eligibility letter from the VA Office of Community Care.

To access these online privileges, visit:

- Army and Air Force Exchange System: <https://www.shopmyexchange.com>
- Coast Guard Exchange: <https://shopCGX.com>
- Marine Corps Exchange: <http://www.mymcx.com>
- Navy Exchange: <https://www.mynavyexchange.com>
- American Forces Travel: <https://www.AmericanForcesTravel.com>

WHAT FACILITIES AND SERVICES CAN BE USED?

Q: What morale, welfare and recreation activities will these newly eligible veterans and caregivers be authorized to use?

A: Newly eligible veterans and caregivers under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, will have access to Department of Defense and Coast Guard MWR retail activities, including: entertainment, clubs, recreational lodging/resorts, special interest activities, bowling, golf, restaurants, marinas, equipment rental, movie theaters, vehicle storage, kennels, AmericanForcesTravel.com and more. Use of MWR activities primarily funded by appropriations and child development programs are not authorized.

Q: Why won't these newly eligible veterans and caregivers be allowed to use all of the morale, welfare and recreation activities?

A: Different categories of MWR activities receive appropriated funds to operate, in relation to their necessity for meeting the military mission and the needs of military families. The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 authorizes access to MWR retail activities, because these activities are generally self-sustaining and do not rely on appropriations to operate.

Q: Will commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation retail privileges be available at overseas installations?

A: Although new patrons eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, will have in-store commissary, military exchange and MWR retail privileges in the United States and in the U.S. territories and possessions, such access is not guaranteed at installations in foreign countries. Status of forces agreements and other host nation and international laws and agreements may limit or prevent access in foreign countries.

Q: Will eligibility extend to newly eligible veterans and caregivers no longer living in the United States?

A: Access cannot be guaranteed for patrons eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, outside of the United States and outside of the U.S. territories and possessions due to status of forces agreements, local laws and other agreements with host countries.

Q: Will newly eligible veterans and caregivers also be allowed to shop the military exchange online stores?

A: Yes. Veterans and caregivers who are eligible for exchange benefits under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, will be eligible for all exchange shopping venues, in-store and online.

Q: Will newly eligible veterans and caregivers be eligible for a MILITARY STAR card?

A: Veterans and caregivers who are eligible for commissary and exchange privileges through the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, are eligible to apply for a MILITARY STAR card, based on the terms of eligibility for this credit program.

Q: Can caregivers apply for a MILITARY STAR card?

A: Yes. During the first phase of rollout of these privileges, individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers are eligible for commissary and exchange privileges through the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, and are eligible to apply for a MILITARY STAR card.

Q Will newly eligible veterans and caregivers be able to use AmericanForcesTravel.com?

A: Yes. AmericanForcesTravel.com is a morale, welfare and recreation retail program, so veterans and caregivers who are eligible for MWR retail privileges under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, are eligible to use this exclusive travel-booking website.

PATRON AWARENESS

Q: Will there be a user fee charged to these newly eligible veterans and caregivers at commissaries, exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation activities?

A: No additional user fees or surcharges will be added to military exchange or MWR purchases for new patrons eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018.

The Defense commissary system is congressionally mandated to charge all current and new patrons a five percent surcharge on all purchases to pay for commissary construction, equipment and maintenance. Even with the surcharge, patrons receive an average worldwide savings of 23.7 percent over commercial grocery stores.

In addition to the five percent surcharge, and in accordance with the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, veterans and caregivers who are eligible for commissary privileges solely under this Act (Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, veterans with Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability ratings of 0-90 percent and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers) and who use commercial credit and debit cards to make commissary purchases, will be charged a small user fee to offset any increased expenses incurred by the Department of the Treasury associated with the use of credit or debit cards. Patrons making commissary purchases with a commercial credit card or Signature debit card, which is accepted and processed as credit, will be charged an additional 1.9 percent user fee, while purchases with a personal identification number (PIN) debit card will be charged a 0.5 percent user fee. The rates for these fees may be adjusted annually. The user fee will not be refunded for product returns. Patrons who use electronic benefit transfer cards (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or the MILITARY STAR card in the commissary will not be charged a user fee.

Q: When does the shopping benefit start?

A: Jan. 1, 2020.

Phase one includes access to commissaries, military exchanges and morale, welfare and recreation retail activities (in-person and online) for:

- Veterans eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, and veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability rating of 0-90 percent) who possess and present a Veteran Health Identification Card
- Individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers who possess and present a letter from the VA Office of Community Care that indicates eligibility for these privileges, paired with an acceptable credential (e.g., REAL ID-compliant driver's license or U.S. passport)

Future phases of rollout will address acceptable credentials for eligible veterans and caregivers and consideration and criteria for other eligible caregivers.

Q: Are any items off limits to new users?

A: Other than military uniform items at military service exchanges, child development programs, and morale, welfare and recreation activities that primarily rely on appropriations to operate, there are no restrictions on commissary, exchange or MWR privileges for new patrons authorized access under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018. Veterans and caregivers who are eligible for commissary, exchange and MWR retail privileges under this act will be allowed access to the same products, services and activities that active duty service members and military retirees may access in the United States and in the U.S. territories and possessions. In foreign countries overseas, restrictions may apply based on status of forces agreements, local laws, or other agreements with the host country.

Q: Will the exchange charge a surcharge for shopping?

A: No surcharges or user fees will be added to military exchange purchases.

Q: Why does the commissary charge a surcharge for shopping?

A: The Defense commissary system is statutorily required to charge a five percent surcharge on all purchases to pay for commissary construction, equipment and maintenance. Even with the surcharge, patrons receive an average worldwide savings of 23.7 percent over commercial grocery store shopping.

In addition to the five percent surcharge, the Defense commissary system has been statutorily required to charge an additional user fee to veterans and caregivers who are eligible for commissary privileges solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, veterans with Department of Veterans Affairs-documented service-connected disability ratings of 0-90 percent, and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers) to offset the increased expense to the Department of the Treasury for processing commercial credit and debit cards used at commissary stores as a result of this act.

Q: Is there a fee associated with using the MILITARY STAR card?

A: No. There will not be a point of sale fee assessed when customers use the MILITARY STAR card to pay for their purchases. As with any credit card, however, interest charges will apply whenever a balance is carried over on the card month-to-month.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Will opening military installations up to these new users compromise the safety and security of our installations?

A: The Department of Defense has processes and procedures in place to vet all visitors to Department of Defense installations including regular workforce personnel, residents and other visitors. The individuals included in the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 will have to comply with the same installation access processes and procedures as any visitor to a DoD installation.

Q: How could obtaining a Veteran Health Identification Card impact me?

A: If you receive financial assistance for a health plan purchased in the health insurance marketplace established by the Affordable Care Act (including premium assistance tax credits), enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system could impact the financial assistance you receive. The VHIC is a secure identification card issued to and used by veterans enrolled in VA health care to check in to appointments at VA medical centers. This secure identification card keeps your personal information safe while giving VA the information needed to easily access your VA health record. To obtain a VHIC, veterans first need to enroll in VA health care. If you're not already enrolled, find out how to apply for VA health care at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/>.

EFFECT ON OTHER RETAIL OUTLETS

Q: What impacts will this initiative have on the Veterans Canteen Service or the Department of Veterans Affairs?

A: Veterans Canteen Service users who also qualify for this Department of Defense privileges under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 will have additional choices for their shopping needs. The financial impact to the Veterans Canteen Service should be minimal, if any.

The VA may see an increase in the number of veterans requesting consideration for service-connected disability ratings and applying for VA health care benefits in order to obtain a Veteran Health Identification Card.

I HAVE DONE THINGS
THAT HAUNT ME AT NIGHT
SO YOU CAN SLEEP IN PEACE

I HAVE BEEN AWAY
FROM MY FAMILY A LONG TIME
SO THAT YOURS CAN BE SAFE

I HAVE SACRIFICED
A LOT IN MY LIFE
SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE FREE

I HAVE DONE THESE THINGS
BECAUSE I HAVE SWORN AN OATH
TO MY COUNTRY

AND I WILL LIVE BY THIS OATH
UNTIL THE DAY I DIE
BECAUSE I AM AND ALWAYS WILL BE A

U.S. VETERAN

