



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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President Signs Veterans Benefit Package

This week, the President signed into law H.R. 1627, the "Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act." The comprehensive legislation contains more than 54 provisions designed to enhance VA benefits and transform how VA does business in the 21st century. It also extends VA healthcare benefits to veterans and military families exposed to toxic water at Camp Lejeune between Jan. 1, 1957, and Dec. 31, 1987. VFW worked with members and staff to get the legislation passed so that it would have an immediate impact on the lives of veterans, their families and survivors. [Read more](#) about H.R. 1627 and the VFW's work to advance the bill.

Post Reports Pentagon Fudged TRICARE Numbers

This week, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that the Department of Defense requested nearly \$3 billion, over the past three years, be moved from funds dedicated to TRICARE into weapons programs and other accounts unrelated to healthcare. This was despite assurances from Pentagon officials that healthcare costs were "eating the U.S. military alive." This reprogramming has been happening at a time that VFW has worked tirelessly to prevent the Pentagon from arbitrarily raising healthcare fees. VFW has called on the Pentagon to stop its "bait-and-switch" tactics on Congress, and to improve its budget controls, instead of putting the burden on service members and retirees. To read the full report on reprogramming and to find out how you can make your voice heard on this issue, [click here](#).

VRAP Scam Alert

VFW was notified by VA of a potential scam targeting veterans who have either signed up or have been approved for the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). According to the VA, a veteran reported receiving a call from someone named "James" who congratulated him on his VRAP approval. He was advised that the exact amount of \$8,500 would be deposited directly into his account if he would first provide "James" his bank account and routing numbers, plus a \$205 service charge. This person is not affiliated with the VA, and the VA will never charge you to access your benefits or ask you to provide private information over the phone. Should you receive such a call, or any telemarketing call that you suspect may not be legit, please contact the [Federal](#)

[Trade Commission.](#)

Host a Town Hall Meeting

With the 2012 election fast approaching and members of Congress working in their state and district offices for the rest of August, now is a great time to host a Town Hall Meeting or Candidate Forum to discuss critical veterans' issues. Consider organizing a "Get Out the Vote" Drive to ensure VFW and Auxiliary members, families, friends and supporters' turnout to vote in a visible manner. Coordinate election events with local Posts and Auxiliaries and other civic organizations in your state. Provide them with the tools they need to ask the tough questions of the candidates. Let the candidates know that you are a voting constituent and are concerned about veterans and Quality of Life issues. For more information, check out our [Veterans Vote brochure](#).

Share Your Stories

Hosting or attending Town Hall meetings or visiting with your members in their district office is strong grassroots advocacy in action, and the VFW wants to highlight your Town Hall forum or congressional meeting and post it on our [Capitol Hill blog](#). It is the work you do in the community that has helped stop bad legislation while advancing good bills that improve programs and benefits for service members, veterans and their families. VFW's sustained voice in Washington, however, is only as strong as the voice of VFW members and our advocates around the country. With your support, VFW helped bring about the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, hiring preferences, advance healthcare appropriations and family caregiver benefits, among many other accomplishments. Help us publicize your local success stories. [Click here](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

Two Vietnam MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced the identification of remains belonging to Air Force Lt. Col. Charles M. Walling, 27, of Phoenix, and Maj. Aado Kommendant, 25, of Lakewood, N.J. On Aug. 8, 1966, Walling and Kommendant were flying an F-4C Phantom II that crashed while on a close-air-support mission over Song Be Province, Vietnam. Other Americans in the area reported seeing the aircraft crash but no parachutes. Search and rescue efforts were not successful in the days following the crash. [Read more](#) about their recovery story.

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