



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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Combating Suicides

An estimated 18 veterans commit suicide every day. In just one year, total suicide casualties exceeds total casualties from almost 11 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. The VA estimate doesn't reflect military suicides, which continues to frustrate senior leadership, despite increased mental health services and a tremendous push to remove the stigma associated with seeking help. More must still be done, especially after the Army announced this week that 38 active duty and Reserve Component soldiers took their own lives in July, up from 24 in June, and on pace to exceed last year's total of 283. If you know a veteran or service member who might need help, please refer them to the VA's Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, their [online chat](#), or text to 838255, for free, confidential support. VFW Posts can also help spread the word by ordering [free informational material](#).

Support for CRPD

As the Senate returns from their August recess, one item of importance to disabled veterans is the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). As of July 2012, 115 countries have ratified this non-binding document, which spells out the vision that disabled persons everywhere should have reasonable accommodations in public places, and should not be discriminated against. It will also give the United States more influence in providing guidance to nations seeking assistance in improving the conditions for disabled persons, and paves the way for disabled veterans to work, travel, and study in nations where their disability currently makes such decisions more difficult. For our Action Alert on the issue, [click here](#). For more information about the CRPD, visit the [U.S. International Council on Disabilities](#).

Field Report: VFW Leaders on Hand for Hearing to Discuss Orlando VA Hospital

This week, the House Veterans Affairs' Committee hosted a field hearing at the University of Central Florida to discuss the lack of progress on a new VA Medical Center in Orlando. VFW Past Department Commander David Harris was on hand to hear witnesses testify on persistent delays in the project. Construction on the new facility started in October 2008 and was scheduled for

delivery this October; however, numerous change orders to the contract, design issues, and other delays have pushed the opening to late 2013 or possibly into 2014. Local VFW officials will continue to monitor progress on the new VA medical center, holding public officials accountable for its completion. For more details about the hearing, visit our [Capitol Hill Blog](#).

U.S. Family Health Plan Enrollment Changes

The VFW just learned that eligibility requirements for new U.S. Family Health Plan (USFHP) enrollments change on Monday. New USFHP enrollees must submit their application before Aug. 20 to be enrolled when the requirements take effect Oct. 1. TRICARE beneficiaries who enroll after Aug. 20 will lose their eligibility for the program when they turn 65 and be transitioned into TRICARE for Life. Beneficiaries 65 and older will also not be able to enroll in USFHP after Aug. 20. All current USFHP members, including those who enroll over the weekend, can remain in USFHP, regardless of age, until they no longer qualify. All eligible TRICARE beneficiaries who reside within one of six designated USFHP locations may enroll, except for active duty service members or activated National Guard/Reserve members. [Read more](#).

Two Korean War MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced the identification of remains belonging to two Americans who had been missing-in-action since the Korean War. They are:

- Army Sgt. William T. Barker, 21, of Rockwall, Texas. In late November 1950, Barker and elements of the 2nd Infantry Division were attacked by Chinese forces near Kunu-ri, North Korea. Baker would be reported as missing as a result of the heavy fighting. In 1953, released American POWs said Barker had been captured but later died as a result of malnutrition.
- Marine Cpl. Clarence H. Huff, Jr., 20, of Brunswick, Ohio. In late November 1950, Huff and members of I Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, were attacked as they withdrew from the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea to Hagaru-ri, South Korea. Huff would be reported as missing a few days after the attack.

[Read more](#) about their individual recovery stories.

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