



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**



**November 7, 2014**

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### **Veterans Day in Washington**

Visitors coming to the Nation's Capital on Nov. 11 will be able to attend many special and free events to celebrate Veterans Day, including formal observances at the World War II Memorial at 9 a.m.; at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknowns and Memorial Amphitheater at 11 a.m.; at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at 1 p.m.; and on the National Mall at 7 p.m. for the Concert for Valor. Representing the VFW at a White House breakfast will be National Commander John Stroud, who will also lay wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery and the Vietnam Wall. He will be accompanied by his wife, Mary, and VFW Ladies Auxiliary National President Anne Panteleakos.

### **VA Choice Program Rollout**

The *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act* required VA to start implementation of the Choice Program by November 5, 2014. Starting this week, veterans who live 40 or more miles away from a VA medical facility will have the opportunity to choose whether to receive their health care at VA or in their community, through non-VA doctors. Veterans who live within 40 miles of a VA medical facility, but are currently waiting longer than 30 days for VA care will begin receiving their cards later this month. VA expects that all veterans who were enrolled in the VA health care system on August 1, 2014, will receive their cards by January 2015. However, receiving a Veterans Choice Card does not instantly authorize you to start receiving health care from non-VA doctors. All care received through the Choice Program must be pre-authorized and coordinated by VA.

The VFW is working with VA and other stakeholders to ensure this program is implemented successfully. There is still much work to be done, and we will continue to keep you informed as we learn more. Please help spread the word and inform other veterans of their choice. [Learn more](#) about the Choice Program. [Determine your eligibility](#) for the Choice Program.

### **Veterans Win Seats in Congress**

Election Day 2014 was a huge victory for veterans running for Congress. With a few races still too close to call, at least 11 new veterans were elected to the House, bringing its total number to at least 81. Still, this is slightly down from the total of 87 at the beginning of last Congress. Only two incumbent veterans lost their House races on Tuesday. Four new veterans were elected to the Senate, bringing the total number of veterans up to 21 from 20. This marks the first election since 1982 in which the number of Senate veterans increased. Tom Cotton of Arkansas and Joni Ernst of Iowa won their races, making them the first two Iraq veterans ever elected to the Senate. If a

veteran was newly elected in your district or state, take the opportunity in the coming weeks to reach out to them. Share the VFW Priority Goals with them and their staff, and look for opportunities to host veterans' roundtables and town hall meetings with them at your posts. The *Military Times* compiled a [list](#) of current era veterans who were elected on Tuesday.

### **New SMA Announced**

The Army announced the selection of Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey to become the next Sergeant Major of the Army on Jan. 30, 2015, succeeding SMA Raymond Chandler who will be retiring after almost 33 years in uniform. Dailey is currently the senior enlisted soldier for the Army Training and Doctrine Command. He is a career infantryman and veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and four deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with V device and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. [Read more.](#)

### **Concert for Valor Update**

HBO and Starbucks are co-sponsoring a Concert for Valor on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on Veterans Day. The concert begins at 7 p.m. with entertainment from every musical genre. This is a free, open-air concert with no tickets, seating or reservations. The National Park Service is expected to open up the area around 10 a.m. for early birds to spread out their blankets as close to the stage as possible. Concert promoters expect to far exceed the half million who usually attend Independence Day fireworks. More details will be posted on the [Concert for Valor website](#) as they become available.

[Sign up](#) new veterans' advocates.

As always, we want to share your advocacy stories on the VFW Capitol Hill blog. To share your stories, [fill out our online form](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to [vfwac@vfw.org](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).

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