



## Disabled American Veterans Department of Florida Newsletter



**By Al Linden, Executive Director**

**Mar 31, 2015**

As of March 31, 2015 our membership was 60,348. The goal for life membership for this year is 406 more.

### **Commander Andy Marshall Message**

#### **National DAV Disaster Relief Program**

DAV's Disaster Relief Program supports veterans, service members, surviving spouses and their families during times of great need in the aftermath of disasters.

We have recently updated the program and have attached for your information, an overview. As many of you have experienced first-hand, providing disaster relief to veterans and their families in times of great need is a top priority to our organization. Veterans, service members and their families are often faced with overwhelming loss and it is vital we remain steadfast in fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served.

Some of the recent changes made to the program include:

- Increasing maximum draft amounts from \$500.00 for food, clothing and lodging to \$500.00 for food and clothing only and \$1,000.00 for food, clothing and lodging
- Depending on the time of year and location of the disaster area, relief may include blankets, hygiene kits and book bags.
- Authorizing travel expenses for DSOs/CSOs who aid in providing disaster relief alongside NSOs.
- Lessening the criteria for an applicant and their family to receive a DAV disaster relief grant.

Should you have any questions regarding the Disaster Relief Program or the recent changes, please contact your local National Service Office for assistance.

Also be reminded that **Chapter Annual Financial Reports are due by September 30 each year.**  
**Chapter Officers Reports** are due within 10 days after installation each year or when changes are made.

	<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	
	As Of Mar 31, 2015	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,350,862	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$80,561
	-----	
TOTAL LIABILITIES&FUND BALANCES	\$1,350,862	

Bay Pines VAVS	\$100
Gainesville VAVS	0
Tampa VAVS	\$0
Lake City VAVS	\$333
WPB VAVS	\$0
Miami VAVS	\$200
Orlando VAVS	\$0
Eglin CBOC	\$0

**It doesn't cost much  
to show you care**



**about  
Disabled  
American  
Veterans**

**☒ on your next  
drivers license application,  
then they know you care!**

I have left employment with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs to accept the role of Executive Director of Florida is for Veterans Inc. Colleen Krepstekies is the interim Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director for the department and can be reached at [krepstekiesc@fdva.state.fl.us](mailto:krepstekiesc@fdva.state.fl.us) or 850-487-1533.

If you need to reach me in my new role with Florida is for Veterans you can contact me at [bobby.carbonell1@gmail.com](mailto:bobby.carbonell1@gmail.com) or 850-321-6010.

BOOKS. VERY FEW CHAPTERS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE LEE GREENWOOD GIFT BOOK "GOD BLESS THE USA". WHAT AN EASY WAY FOR YOUR CHAPTER TO MAKE MONEY. YOU MUST HAVE BOOKS ON HAND AT YOUR CHAPTER, AND USE THEM EVERY TIME YOU HAVE A FUNCTION AT YOUR CHAPTER OR COMMUNITY. THE BOOKS WILL SELL IF YOU PRESENT. BOOKS COST YOUR CHAPTER \$1.50 AND CAN EASILY BE SOLD FOR \$5.00. 100 BOOKS SOLD WILL NEW YOUR CHAPTER \$350.00. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GET APPROVAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT OR PAY 10%. PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL ME AT [dav150jack@gmail.com](mailto:dav150jack@gmail.com), Or 352-250-4743. I ALSO HAVE ABOUT 600 OF HIS BIOGRAPHY, SAME DEAL.

## **Online Prescription Tracker Gives Veterans 24/7 Online Access to Status**

*02/04/2015 01:55 PM EST*

### **Online Prescription Tracker Gives Veterans 24/7 Online Access to Status**

Veterans can now track the status of most of their prescriptions online, thanks to an innovative idea by a Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) employee. The new 24/7 service allows online tracking for most prescriptions mailed from the VA Mail Order Pharmacy.

The Prescription Tracker was recommended by VA employee Kenneth Siehr, a [winner](#) of the President's 2013 Securing Americans Value and Efficiency ([SAVE](#)) Award. Siehr's idea focused on the use of technology as a way to save money and improve the services VA provides to its patients.

"Our nation's Veterans deserve a first-class pharmacy and quality customer service as a part of the exceptional health care available from VA," said Siehr, the National Director for Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacies. "It is an honor to be part of serving Veterans and to have been recognized for an idea that enhances our services to them."

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today Chairman Miller released the following statement regarding President Obama's [Fiscal Year 2016 VA budget request](#).

"I am committed to providing the Department of Veterans Affairs with the resources it needs to take care of our nation's veterans. But if there's one thing we've learned over the last year, it's that VA's numbers cannot be trusted. Furthermore, whether it's funding, staffing, or information technology tools, Congress has given this administration nearly everything it has asked for to increase access to VA health care and overcome perennial challenges such as the department's mountain of backlogged disability benefits compensation claims. For its part, VA has left hundreds of millions in health care funding unspent since 2010 as thousands of veterans languished on waiting lists and squandered more than \$1 billion on a host of botched construction projects, acquisition failures and extravagant employee conferences. That's why we will ensure President Obama's Fiscal Year 2016 VA budget request receives the scrutiny it is due over the coming weeks. Additionally, the president's idea to reallocate a portion of Veterans Choice Program funding to other areas of VA is a complete non-starter, which I will not support. When a near-unanimous Congress worked with President Obama last year to create the choice program, we made a promise to veterans to give them more freedom in their health care decisions. I will not stand idly by while the president attempts to renege on that promise. — **Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman,**

# INCOME / EXPENSES VS BUDGET

## Mar 31, 2015

	Actual	Budget	Difference
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
6001 • Convention Income	3,845.00	7,500.00	-3,655.00
6030 • Midwinter Income	6,885.00	10,200.00	-3,315.00
6050 • Dues from National	146,931.00	150,000.00	-3,069.00
6100 • Donation fr Service Fd-Principl	0.00	332,510.00	-332,510.00
6140 • National Fund Raisers	181,033.50	200,000.00	-18,966.50
6200 • Chapter & Unit 10%	36,232.15	15,000.00	21,232.15
6300 • Department Publication	0.00	200.00	-200.00
6315 • Orange City Income	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
6330 • Lake Panosofkee	3,075.12	4,100.00	-1,024.88
6331 • Lakeland Bldg Mortgage	14,831.71	17,000.00	-2,168.29
6333. • Orange City Mortgage	12,000.00	18,000.00	-6,000.00
6334.1 • Sarasota Bldg Mortgage Payment	1,833.28	11,000.00	-9,166.72
6350. • Drivers License Income	31,047.10	60,000.00	-28,952.90
6410 • 2015 Service Officer's	11,650.00	12,000.00	-350.00
6411 • Service Program Donations	273.96	2,500.00	-2,226.04
6412 • NSO Office Donations	6,400.00	0.00	6,400.00
6413 • Service Income	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00
6450 • VAVS Donations	14,622.00	14,000.00	622.00
6800 • Miscellaneous	44,535.87	5,000.00	39,535.87
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>531,695.69</b>	<b>874,010.00</b>	<b>-342,314.31</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>531,695.69</b>	<b>874,010.00</b>	<b>-342,314.31</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Testimonial Expenses	120.60	0.00	120.60
7000.2 • Convention Expense	15,084.37	16,500.00	-1,415.63
7030.1 • Midwinter Expenses	18,699.96	19,000.00	-300.04
7040.1 • Service Expenses	460,140.80	682,300.00	-222,159.20
7570.1 • Legislative Expenses	1,161.20	3,900.00	-2,738.80
8000.3 • VAVS Expenses	12,350.70	20,000.00	-7,649.30
8260 • Headquarters Expense	27,240.05	131,310.00	-104,069.95
9500.1 • Foundation expenses	590.00	1,000.00	-410.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>535,387.68</b>	<b>874,010.00</b>	<b>-338,622.32</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>-3,691.99</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-3,691.99</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Other Income</b>			
11001.4 • Testimonial Income	6,100.00	4,500.00	1,600.00
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>6,100.00</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>1,600.00</b>
<b>Other Expense</b>			
11000.4 • Testimonial Expenses 2015	5,472.50	4,500.00	972.50
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>5,472.50</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>972.50</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>627.50</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>627.50</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-3,064.49</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-3,064.49</b>



**MEMBERSHIP**  
**FOR**  
**Mar 31, 2015**



Chapter		Last yr	trial	part life	full life	total	Goal	% goal	goal var	chapter name 2/28/2015
001		1,904	3	218	1,689	1,910	1,742	96.96%	-53	JACKSONVILLE #1
002	G	11,423	##	638	8,407	10,311	8,383	100.29%	24	EVERGLADE STATE #2
004		2,512	1	159	2,358	2,518	2,380	99.08%	-22	JOHN C MCCARTHY II #4
005		560	0	68	498	566	520	95.77%	-22	THE TALLAHASSEE #5
006		274	0	19	248	267	249	99.60%	-1	ST AUGUSTINE #6
007		609	0	240	481	721	548	87.77%	-67	W WASHINGTON #7
011		1,664	0	95	1,574	1,669	1,580	99.62%	-6	CLEARWATER #11
012		1,458	0	95	1,366	1,461	#	98.91%	-15	CORAL GABLES #12
013		2,480	0	118	2,356	2,474	2,360	99.83%	-4	BAY PINE HLDY ISL #13
014		306	0	25	282	307	285	98.95%	-3	JOHN D STROUD #14
016		2,741	0	219	2,514	2,733	2,563	98.09%	-49	CENTRAL #16
017	G	707	0	34	692	726	683	101.32%	9	PANAMA CITY #17
018		1,648	0	153	1,520	1,673	1,549	98.13%	-29	MANATEE COUNTY #18
020	G	345	0	20	324	344	324	100.00%	0	LAKE CITY #20
022		313	0	16	290	306	296	97.97%	-6	JACKSON COUNTY #22
023		2,131	1	93	2,023	2,117	2,039	99.22%	-16	AL GRAY #23
029	G	571	1	42	542	585	542	100.00%	0	PEMBROKE PINES-MIRAMAR #29
030		1,274	0	96	1,198	1,294	1,203	99.58%	-5	SEMINOLE #30
032	G	1,301	1	88	1,241	1,330	1,232	100.73%	9	J L GOLIGHTLY #32
038		1,509	0	256	1,255	1,511	1,355	92.62%	-100	ORANGE PARK #38
042	G	1,790	0	92	1,707	1,799	1,706	100.06%	1	WEST PALM BEACH #42
049		305	0	23	288	311	290	99.31%	-2	RIDGE #49
050		228	0	10	221	231	222	99.55%	-1	CENTRAL BREVARD #50
057	G	411	0	29	393	422	390	100.77%	3	CRESTVIEW #57
063	G	167	0	9	157	166	154	101.95%	3	TRI-COUNTY #63
065		531	0	31	506	537	508	99.61%	-2	ZEPHYRHILLS #65
067		1,287	0	105	1,156	1,261	1,190	97.14%	-34	HERNANDO COUNTY #67
070		665	0	33	574	607	582	98.63%	-8	GERALD A SHONK #70
073	G	347	2	22	329	353	325	101.23%	4	TAMARAC #73
078	G	1,202	1	54	1,141	1,196	#	100.00%	0	NEW PORT RICHEY #78
082		1,084	0	70	1,019	1,089	1,030	98.93%	-11	R L COCHRAN JR #82
083		893	0	121	814	935	826	98.55%	-12	C W BYERS SR #83
084		1,325	0	73	1,239	1,312	1,245	99.52%	-6	GREATER DAYTONA #84
085		568	0	13	539	552	542	99.45%	-3	SOUTH MARION #85
086		580	0	61	534	595	542	98.52%	-8	JIM BOOE #86
087		751	0	39	697	736	703	99.15%	-6	SGT WM E HILL #87
090		844	0	78	796	874	806	98.76%	-10	GATOR #90
094		1,056	0	48	1,010	1,058	1,013	99.70%	-3	-3 C GUSTAFSON #94
97	G	530	0	31	511	542	511	100.00%	0	BEE RIDGE #97
098		247	0	11	231	242	233	99.14%	-2	EUCHEE VALLEY #98
101		785	0	45	746	791	751	99.33%	-5	VENICE GULF #101
108		555	0	46	530	576	532	99.62%	-2	JAMES D RADER #108
109		498	0	28	466	494	470	99.15%	-4	TITUSVILLE #109
110	G	448	0	27	444	471	437	101.60%	7	SUN CITY CENTER #110
111	G	92	0	2	87	89	86	101.16%	1	PEACE RIVER #111
112	G	743	1	31	713	745	701	101.71%	12	BAY AREA #112
113		679	1	41	641	683	644	99.53%	-3	PORT ST LUCIE #113
119		385	0	11	370	381	372	99.46%	-2	ANTHONY P DADDI #119
122	G	441	0	49	436	485	421	103.56%	15	MARATHON #122
123	G	607	0	15	601	616	591	101.69%	10	SPACE COAST #123
125	G	534	0	20	516	536	514	100.39%	2	CPL P D LYON JR #125
126	G	173	0	10	163	173	163	100.00%	0	SUWANNEE MEM #126
129		373	0	24	340	364	348	97.70%	-8	SO BREVARD BCHS #129
133		909	0	82	830	912	855	97.08%	-25	THE GOLD COAST #133
144	G	94	0	5	86	91	85	101.18%	1	LA BELLE #144
148		778	0	78	704	782	726	96.97%	-22	AGNES M TAYLOR #148
149	G	573	0	32	558	590	556	100.36%	2	GREATER S OCALA #149
150	G	596	0	33	731	764	664	110.09%	67	ORANGE BLOSSOM GDNS #150
152	G	697	0	32	652	684	650	100.31%	2	SOUTH PALM BEACH #152
155	G	369	0	10	358	368	357	100.28%	1	SEBASTIAN RIVER AREA #155
158		35	0	35	77	112	79	97.47%	-2	CRYSTAL RIVER #158
		60,905	1,278	4,301	54,769	60,348	55,175	99.26%	-406	Dept Total



**Legislation  
FOR  
Mar 31, 2015**

# QUICK FACTS ABOUT YOUR VETERANS *CHOICE CARD*

VISIT [WWW.VA.GOV/OPA/CHOICEACT/](http://WWW.VA.GOV/OPA/CHOICEACT/) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Before your *Veterans Choice Card* can be used, you must first meet the following test of eligibility for *Choice Card* benefits. If, after following Step 1 of the test you are not eligible for benefits, just hold on to your Card - you do not need to call us.

## TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE:

### STEP

1

#### PERSONALLY ASSESS YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR *CHOICE CARD* BENEFITS.

Before you call us, ask yourself these four simple questions:

- 1) Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician? **OR**
- 2) Is your current residence more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care facility? **OR**
- 3) Do you need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home? **OR**
- 4) Does a geographic challenge, such as extensive distances around water or other geologic formations, such as mountains, present a significant travel hardship?

### STEP

2

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be eligible to use your *Choice Card*. **VERIFY YOUR ELIGIBILITY by calling 866-606-8198.**

When you call us, please be prepared to provide us with any other health insurance coverage you have, such as employer or union-provided health plans, so we can assess coverage responsibilities.

**IMPORTANT:** If you do not receive approval, you may be responsible for some or all of the costs of the non-VA treatment you receive.

## NOT ELIGIBLE RIGHT NOW? NO NEED TO DO ANYTHING! JUST KEEP YOUR CARD!

If you are not eligible to use the *Choice Card* right now, **keep your card in a safe and convenient location.** There is no need to call us.

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SERVICE TO  
OUR COUNTRY!**



## IRS Identity Theft Pilot Program

WASHINGTON – As part of an ongoing pilot program, all taxpayers who filed federal returns last year from Georgia, Florida or the District of Columbia are eligible for an Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) that will help protect them from tax-related identity theft, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

The pilot project is part of broader IRS efforts to combat tax-related identity theft. The IRS has an aggressive, multi-part strategy of prevention, detection and victim assistance. Stopping identity theft and refund fraud is a top priority for the Internal Revenue Service. For the 2015 filing season, the IRS continues to expand these efforts to better protect taxpayers and help victims.

Georgia, Florida and the District of Columbia were chosen for the pilot because they have higher levels of tax-related identity theft.

The IP PIN is a six-digit number that must be used on a tax return, in addition to the Social Security number, to verify the taxpayers' identity. Once a taxpayer opts into this program, they will need to use an IP PIN for future year filings. At this time, there is no way to opt out of the program once you sign up for an IP PIN. A new IP PIN will be mailed to the taxpayer each year before the filing season, and the current IP PIN must be used on the tax return before it will be accepted by the IRS for processing.

To opt into the program taxpayers who qualify should visit [www.irs.gov/getanippin](http://www.irs.gov/getanippin), to register and create an account. Taxpayers must also verify their identity as part of the process. You can get an IP Pin immediately even if you plan to file later in the year.

Once issued an IP PIN, taxpayers need to use it to confirm their identities on all federal income tax returns filed during the 2015 calendar year. Taxpayers will receive a new IP PIN by postal mail each year.

Eligibility for this program does not mean the taxpayers are already victims of identity theft. The main purpose of the program is to add an additional layer of protection to taxpayers who live in areas where tax-related identity theft is more prevalent.

Learn more about the IP PIN at [IP PIN FAQs for Individuals](#) and learn more about identity theft and what the IRS is doing to combat it at [IRS.gov/identitytheft](http://IRS.gov/identitytheft). You can also read IRS [Fact Sheet 2015-1, IRS Combats Identity Theft and Refund Fraud on Many Fronts](#), and IRS [Fact Sheet 2015-2, Identity Theft Information for Taxpayers and Victims](#).

### Choice Card Phone Number

This input comes from the VA Central Office and provides a number and website for addressing questions about Veterans Choice. I haven't had an opportunity recently to use or provide this number to somebody. Hopefully it will prove to be something reliable.

### How Can Veterans Get Help With Questions on VA Choice?

Call us Toll Free at 1-866-606-8198

**OR**

Visit our internet site at [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact)

### Orlando Hospital Update

During our MAC meeting in January we talked about the possibility of opening up less complex clinical services at the new hospital in Lake Nona this spring. I am happy to share that we will move our Lake Nona Annex, located at the northeast corner of Narcoossee and Moss Park Road, to the Lake Nona Campus clinic on Feb. 24. This day will mark the first primary care services offered, and the first Veteran seen for those services, at our Lake Nona Campus.

Today we are contacting our patients who have appointments at the Lake Nona Annex on Feb. 24, and future dates, to make them aware of this change. I am enclosing information in case you receive calls or questions. The brochure provides directions and a contact number for the scheduling transition team. I am also enclosing a map that provides different routes from the Lake Nona Annex to the hospital.

These brochures and maps will also be available at the Lake Nona Annex and the information will be posted on the Orlando VA website (<http://www.orlando.va.gov/>).

Also on Feb. 24 at 7:30 a.m. we will raise the United States Flag over the medical center to celebrate our first patients seen at the new facility. I will be sending out formal invitations to the MAC Committee and hope you will join us for this short ceremony to celebrate this milestone. A larger dedication ceremony will be held in the future, although we have not yet determined a date.

This is the first of several transitions we will undertake in 2015 as we bring medical services to the new facility. Thank you for your support and your continued commitment to Veterans in Central Florida.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Heather

**Heather Frebe**

Public Affairs Officer, Orlando VA Medical Center  
5201 Raymond Street, Orlando, FL 32803  
407-599-1301 office  
407-575-5836 blackberrv

### Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015, 5:54 p.m. **No Informal Claims after March 24, 2015**

*Updated 10 hours ago*

While the new Department of Veterans Affairs claims process uses forms that are simpler than income tax return forms, they have similar names and designs.

More importantly, they represent a shift that puts *more of the burden on veterans* for starting a claim and will end up hurting older veterans and those with traumatic brain injuries, spokesmen for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans said.

"In the end, the changes are being implemented for the convenience of the VA and not for the benefit of the veterans," said Gerald Manar, deputy director of the VFW's National Veterans Service.

The policy, which will take effect March 24, eliminates the informal claim process that allowed veterans to start a claim simply by making a written request.

Under the existing policy, the veteran then had one year to file a completed claim. Any benefits awarded would be backdated to the day of the request.

The new policy requires veterans to fill out a standardized form to start the claims process.

"They're not going to do anything until they receive the correct form, completed correctly," said Jim Marszalek, the DAV's National Service Director.

Consequently, veterans could lose months of benefits while waiting for the VA to notify them that they need to send in the correct form, and some are likely to simply give up, he said.

"There's nothing (in the regulation) to specify how long the VA has to respond to someone who doesn't use a standard form," Marszalek said.

### National DAV Disaster Relief Program

DAV's Disaster Relief Program supports veterans, service members, surviving spouses and their families during times of great need in the aftermath of disasters.

We have recently updated the program and have attached for your information, an overview. As many of you have experienced first-hand, providing disaster relief to veterans and their families in times of great need is a top priority to our organization. Veterans, service members and their families are often faced with overwhelming loss and it is vital we remain steadfast in fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served.

Some of the recent changes made to the program include:

- Increasing maximum draft amounts from \$500.00 for food, clothing and lodging to \$500.00 for food and clothing only and \$1,000.00 for food, clothing and lodging
- Depending on the time of year and location of the disaster area, relief may include blankets, hygiene kits and book bags.
- Authorizing travel expenses for DSOs/CSOs who aid in providing disaster relief alongside NSOs.
- Lessening the criteria for an applicant and their family to receive a DAV disaster relief grant.

Should you have any questions regarding the Disaster Relief Program or the recent changes, please contact your local National Service Office for assistance.

### **VA Eliminates Net Worth as Health Care Eligibility Factor**

*Elimination of Net Worth Makes More Veterans Eligible for Health Care* Washington – The Department of Veterans Affairs is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and copayment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with Secretary Robert A. McDonald's MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs.

"Everything that we do and every decision we make has to be focused on the Veterans we serve," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "We are working every day to earn their trust. Changing the way we determine eligibility to make the process easier for Veterans is part of our promise to our Veterans."

Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and copayment obligations, VA will now only consider a Veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year. Elimination of the consideration of net worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date. That change better aligned VA's health care financial assessment program with other federal health care organizations.

Veterans may submit updated income information at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/), or by visiting their nearby VA health care facility. For more information, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits) or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

**Subject:** Dear Vietnam Veteran

LETTER TO ANYONE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM! Dear Hero, I was in my twenties during the Vietnam era. I was a single mother and, I'm sad to say, I was probably one of the most self-centered people on the planet. To be perfectly honest...I didn't care one way or the other about the war. All I cared about was me—how I looked, what I wore, and where I was going. I worked and I played. I was never politically involved in anything, but I allowed my opinions to be formed by the media. It happened without my ever being aware. I listened to the protest songs and I watched the six o'clock news and I listened to all the people who were talking. After awhile, I began to repeat their words and, if you were to ask me, I'd have told you I was against the war. It was very popular. Everyone was doing it, and we never saw what it was doing to our men. All we were shown was what they were doing to the people of Vietnam. My brother joined the Navy and then he was sent to Vietnam. When he came home, I repeated the words to him. It surprised me at how angry he became. I hurt him very deeply and there were years of separation—not only of miles, but also of character. I didn't understand. In fact, I didn't understand anything until one day I opened my newspaper and saw the anguished face of a Vietnam Veteran. The picture was taken at the opening of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.. His countenance revealed the terrible burden of his soul. As I looked at his picture and his tears, I finally understood a tiny portion of what you had given for us and what we had done to you. I understood that I had been manipulated, but I also knew that I had failed to think for myself. It was like waking up out of a nightmare, except that the nightmare was real. I didn't know what to do. One day about three years ago, I went to a member of the church I attended at that time, because he had served in Vietnam. I asked him if he had been in Vietnam, and he got a look on his face and said, "Yes." Then, I took his hand, looked him square in the face, and said, "Thank you for going." His jaw dropped, he got an amazed look on his face, and then he said, "No one has ever said that to me." He hugged me and I could see that he was about to get tears in his eyes. It gave me an idea, because there is much more that needs to be said. How do we put into words...all the regret of so many years? I don't know, but when I have an opportunity, I take...so here goes. Have you been to Vietnam? If so, I have something I want to say to you—Thank you for going! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please forgive me for my insensitivity. I don't know how I could have been so blind, but I was. When I woke up, you were wounded and the damage was done, and I don't know how to fix it. I will never stop regretting my actions, and I will never let it happen again. Please understand that I am speaking for the general public also. We know we blew it and we don't know how to make it up to you. We wish we had been there for you when you came home from Vietnam because you were a hero and you deserved better. Inside of you there is a pain that will never completely go away...and you know what? It's inside of us, too; because when we let you down, we hurt ourselves, too. We all know it...and we suffer guilt and we don't know what to do...so we cheer for our troops and write letters to "any soldier" and we hang out the yellow ribbons and fly the flag and we love America. We love you too, even if it doesn't feel like it to you. I know in my heart that, when we cheer wildly for our troops, part of the reason is trying to make up for Vietnam. And while it may work for us, it does nothing for you. We failed you. You didn't fail us, but we failed you and we lost our only chance to be grateful to you at the time when you needed and deserved it. We have disgraced ourselves and brought shame to our country. We did it and we need your forgiveness. Please say you will forgive us and please take your rightful place as heroes of our country. We have learned a terribly painful lesson at your expense and we don't know how to fix it. From the heart, Julie Weaver  
Danny,

I wrote the letter in 1990 during Desert Storm and it has been "out there" for the last 25

years being passed from person to person. You definitely may use the letter if it will help others. God bless you.

FROM: J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant

**RE: DAV EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (EINs)**

DATE: March 25, 2015

As we all know, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has recently implemented regulations requiring all non-profit organizations, regardless of their income, to file some version of an IRS Form 990. The implementation of the requirement initially caused some chapters and a few departments to lose their tax-exemption. I'm glad to report that although it required a lot of work on the part of those affected chapters and departments, an overwhelming majority of those entities have reestablished their tax-exempt status, with only a handful still in limbo awaiting reply from the IRS. It is very important to understand that every DAV subordinate entity including departments, chapters, DAVA state departments and DAVA units has their own individual Employer Identification Number (EIN) to be used for the purpose of filing their IRS Form 990. A large number of subordinate entities that experienced problems with their filing came as a result of using the incorrect EIN assigned to them by the IRS. The entity's EIN should also be used when providing donors with an acknowledgement letter for their donations. This will ensure the donor is able to adequately claim their tax-deductible gift to your chapter or department. All bank accounts held in the name of a chapter or department must also use the correct EIN in relation to those accounts.

In order to assist DAV subordinate entities in correctly identifying their own EIN, and in an effort to prevent future misfortunes when filing your IRS Form 990, the National Organization will begin including the EIN on each piece of unique correspondence sent directly to chapters and departments. In the interim, should you need assistance identifying your entity's specific EIN, please do not hesitate to contact the National Membership Department for assistance.

Sincerely,

J. MARC BURGESS

National Adjutant

JMB:

## VA clinic opens in Orlando's Medical City in Lake Nona

By Robert Sutton FOX 35 News ORLANDO, Fla. (WOFL FOX 35 ORLANDO) -- A new veteran's clinic is now open in Lake Nona. After years of delays and hundreds of millions of dollars in cost overruns, the V.A. medical center in Orlando is opening. Seven years after the facility's groundbreaking, doctors are finally seeing patients. Mike Strickler is one of Central Florida's 400,000 plus veterans and the spokesperson for the hospital and says fellow veterans can come for primary care. "Dealing with blood pressure, dealing with physicals, dealing with any aspect that you might have in your normal health care," said Strickler. The clinic sees about 800 veterans per month, but is a small part of what will eventually come to the location. "We're opening the areas we've been able to certify and make them ready for veterans," said Strickler, "and we're just going to keep it going from there." The hospital and emergency room are yet to open, but more clinics will open soon

I just wanted to share that we will begin seeing some of our dental patients tomorrow at the new dental clinic in Lake Nona. I also wanted to let you know that in the next week we will be transitioning some of our optometry, audiology and four primary care doctors from Lake Baldwin to the new medical center. Please note that while we are moving some providers these services will still be offered at Lake Baldwin. These moves will enable us to provide additional access to Veterans in many of these high demand clinics.

The current schedule for our upcoming moves is:

Dental –March 26

Optometry –March 30

Four additional primary care providers –March 31

Audiology –April 6

Recruitment Center –in the next week or so –will let you know when I have an exact date

I wanted to provide you this information since our Scheduling Transition Team has been contacting patients when their provider is scheduled to move. We have also been contacting patients to ask his/her preference with respect to moving to Lake Nona or staying at Lake Baldwin.

### *Eligibility criteria for 40 miles calculation would change to driving distance*

Washington -- In order to expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it will change the calculation used to determine the distance between a Veteran's residence and the nearest VA medical facility from a straight line distance to driving distance. The policy change will be made through regulatory action in the coming weeks. The Veterans Choice Program was authorized by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA).

"VA has worked very quickly to implement the Veterans Choice Program and we appreciate the constructive feedback shared by Veterans and our partners to help us improve service to Veterans," said Secretary Robert McDonald. "We've determined that changing the distance calculation will help ensure more Veterans have access to care when and where they want it. VA looks forward to the ongoing support of our partners as we continue to make improvements to this new program."

The method of determining driving distance will be through distance as calculated by using a commercial product. The change is expected to roughly double the number of eligible Veterans.

The Veterans Choice Program is a new, temporary benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program should call 1-866-606-8198 to confirm their eligibility and to schedule an appointment. Since the Choice Program went into effect on November 5, 2014, more than 45,000 medical appointments have been scheduled.

Using expanded authorities from VACAA, VA continues to expand access to care through increased staffing and enhanced collaboration with both the Indian Health Service and Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems. See the VACAA progress fact sheet here:

VA is enhancing its health care system and improving service delivery to better serve Veterans and set the course for long-term excellence and reform. VA has made significant progress in various areas of the legislation, such as extending the Assisted Living/Traumatic Brain Injury Pilot program and Project Arch, to expand timely access to high-quality health care for Veterans.

For more details about the department's progress and related information, see [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets\\_and\\_details.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets_and_details.asp) and [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/FactSheets/Progress-Report-March-2015-Fact-Sheet.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/FactSheets/Progress-Report-March-2015-Fact-Sheet.pdf).

A fact sheet on the 40-mile-rule change can be found at [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/FactSheets/March-2015-40-mile-rule-change-factsheet.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/documents/FactSheets/March-2015-40-mile-rule-change-factsheet.pdf)