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Seminole County January Veteran of the Month - Ed Sends -On January 14th Specialist 4 James R. Cawthon was named the Seminole County Veteran of the Month for January 2020, enlisted the U.S Army On January 29, 1968 and was medically retired on July 28, 1969, he was an Infantryman and spent four months, nineteen days in Vietnam; on October 31st, 1968 while conducting combat operations against the Viet Cong, he was wounded in the right shoulder and spent two hours awaiting Medivac due to the heavy ground fighting. Upon medical retirement and rehab, he returned to Michigan where he became a shoe salesman and returned to college. Relocating to South Florida in 1976, he remained in the shoe business and eventually became an Employment Specialist with the Department of Corrections assisting prisoners, who were Veterans that were being released to re-acclimate back into society and was later designated a Disabled Veteran Outreach and Placement with the Florida Department of Labor. He went to Bible College in North Florida in 1992 and interned in a prison for three years, ultimately he served over 27 years in Seminole County as part of Jails and Prison Ministries retiring on June 30, 2019; he continues today as the Specialized Services Chaplain with the Seminole County Sheriff' Office. Specialist 4 James R. Cawthon awards and decorations include the National Defense Service

Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Sharpshooter M16 badge; additionally on May 30, 2019, he was presented a national award as the Distinguished Ministry of Excellence Award from the Good News Jail and Prison Ministry. Specialist 4 James R. Cawthon, we honor you.

Veterans Appreciation Lunch, 2020 - Ed Sends – The 2020 Veterans Appreciation Lunch will be held on Wednesday March 25, 2020, for the Veteran and one guest. It will be held in the Sanford Civic Center, 491 E Seminole Blvd, Sanford, FL 32771. Doors open at 11:00 am, the activities will begin at 11:30 am., and should be concluding at 1:00 pm. To reserve your spot, email Jholder@seminolecountyfl.gov and provide your name, telephone number and if you are bringing a guest. Seating is limited to the first 300. I look forward to seeing you there. Ed

American Legion Post 53 reopens - Ed Sends- Campbell-Lossing, American Legion Post 53, Sanford, FL will finally re-open for business after a four month long refurbishing of its building and grounds with 10 brand new air-conditioners, new kitchen equipment, two new gas hot water heaters, new lounge furniture, refurbished ice machine, two refurbished walk in refrigerators and a full time professional chef to pamper our members, their family and guests with the finest dining experience one can enjoy for a price that can't be matched by your local eateries. Join Chef Sennet for lunch Tuesday through Friday beginning at 1100 hours, and come in for a Candlelight Breakfast on Sundays beginning at 0800 hours, full menu available. We are a non-smoking, non-vaping family friendly post so bring the kids and enjoy all that your post has to offer. Contact Commander Emory "Bo" Speir at 407-322-1652 or come visit the Post at 2874 S. Sanford Avenue, Sanford, FL for current hours of operation. See you soon.

Still time for a Flu Shot, Veterans Health Matters, Winter 2019. Flu season usually lasts into March or April. It takes about two weeks to get full immunity protection once you get the shot. Veterans enrolled in VA Health care can get a free flu shot at your VA health care facility or, you can get a free shot at the nearest Walgreens until March 31, 2020. [Read more.](#)

Army Suicide Trends Have Changed in Forever Wars Era, New Study Finds Military.com, December 19, 2019, the largest historical study to date of suicide in the U.S. Army was [published](#) last week in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open. Two professors and a student from the University of Hawaii at Hilo conducted the study in conjunction with the Department of Defense. Researchers relied on the U.S. Army Surgeon General Office's data and used other government records for their findings. [Read more.](#)

Ousters, New Deployments and Supercarrier Woes: The Top Military Stories of 2019 Military.com, 18 Dec 2019, In a year that began with the stunning [departure of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis from the Pentagon](#), it's perhaps unsurprising that the dominant themes have been turnover and conflict -- internal as well as external. [Read more.](#)

Your Questions Answered: New Commissary Access for Vets and Caregivers Military.com, Week of January 06, 2020, While some made their New Year's resolutions, about four million veterans and caregivers made shopping lists as they gained access to commissaries and exchanges on Jan. 1. After months of planning, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Defense Department have worked out several of the challenges involved in letting these newly eligible customers on base to shop in 2020. [Read more.](#)

People Are Panicking About Military Draft, Stop-Loss and IRR Activation. Here's the

Reality Military.com, 7 Jan 2020, the day after a U.S. airstrike [took out a prominent Iranian general](#) in Iraq, the Selective Service System's website crashed. "World War III" was trending on Twitter. Young people on social media were wondering whether ignoring that fine print on their federal student loan applications was going to land them in boot camp. "We fat guys are safe. For now," one person joked on Twitter. Some apparently flooded the Selective Service's website to see if they'd registered for the draft. [Read more.](#)

Can You Really Be Recalled to Active Duty at Any Time? Military.com, Week of January 13, 2020, Did you know that, once you join the military, Uncle Sam may keep you there longer than you have planned -- or that you can be recalled to active duty once you get out or retire? There are several ways that can happen. [Read more.](#)

TRICARE Expands List of Drugs It Won't Cover MOAA, January 14, 2020, Thousands of TRICARE beneficiaries are losing coverage for their medication as more drugs are dropped from the list of those approved for TRICARE coverage. [Read more.](#)

Space Force Has Its First Launch: An Official Website Military.com, 23 Dec 2019, The U.S. [Space Force](#) has launched its official website, giving prospective service members a glimpse into the military's newest branch and how they can join the space mission. [Read more.](#)

NDAAs Explained: What's changing for you, and Your Benefits, in 2020 and Beyond MOAA, January 22, 2020, President Donald Trump signed the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act into law on Dec. 20, 2019. The \$738 billion piece of legislation authorizes funding and provides authority for the military and other federal agencies. The law [contained a number of important changes to military benefits](#), but not all of them took effect immediately. Here are a few of the changes already in place, and a few dates that should be on your radar. [Read more.](#)

President Trump Unveils New Space Force Seal, Military.com, 24 Jan 2020, The U.S. [Space Force](#) seal has arrived. A month after the newest military branch was formally signed into existence, President Donald Trump unveiled its official seal in a tweet. "After consultation with our Great Military Leaders, designers, and others, I am pleased to present the new logo for the United States Space Force, the Sixth Branch of our Magnificent Military!" Trump tweeted Friday alongside a picture of the seal. [Read more.](#)

The Navy Once Called Him an 'Unknown Negro Sailor.' Now It's Naming a Carrier After

Him Military.com, Week of January 27, 2020, Nearly 80 years after the Navy declined to even name the hero black sailor who displayed extraordinary bravery during the attack on Pearl Harbor, the service's acting secretary is breaking with tradition to name a powerful aircraft carrier in his honor. The family of Navy Cross recipient Doris "Dorie" Miller said that acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly's decision to name a carrier for their uncle is an honor. [Read more.](#)

Bill Would Cover Cost of Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD Military.com, Week of December 23, 2019, Lawmakers and veterans advocacy groups are ready for change after waiting nearly a decade for the Department of Veterans Affairs to change its policy on not reimbursing the cost of service dogs for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The Puppies Assisting Wounded Service members, or PAWS, Act would require the VA to offer \$25,000 vouchers to veterans suffering with PTSD for use at qualifying nonprofits. Currently, the VA supports service dogs only for use in mobility issues, not in cases that only involve mental health conditions. [Read more.](#)

Banking for Those Who Served, Veterans Benefits Newsletter, January 2020, VA's new partnership with the Association of Military Banks of America (AMBA) allows Veterans to safely and reliably receive and manage their benefits through participating banks. Learn what the [Veterans Benefits Banking Program \(VBBP\) can offer you.](#)

Most Popular VetResources of 2019, #VetResources, January 16, 2020, Since we began VetResources last year, you've opened it more than 100M times and clicked on resources more than 12M times. That's hundreds of thousands of free event tickets, premium subscriptions, audio books, National Park passes, video games, Walgreens Flu shots, Amazon Prime membership discounts, and so much more! Thousands of you have already shared VetResources, and if you haven't already please share it with your Veteran friends and supporters. Our goal is share VA and non-VA resources with all Veterans, their Families, Caregivers, and Survivors. [Read more.](#)

Your VA Bills Can Now Be Seen Online Military.com, Week of December 23, 2019, Veterans now have access to their patient statements through the AccessVA website, officials with the Department of Veterans Affairs announced Friday. The patient statement is what the VA calls your medical bill. Normally, you get one only when you receive treatment for non-service-connected conditions. [Read more.](#)

VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center, Veterans Health Matters, winter 2020 Last July the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8) launched an exciting and innovative service for Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. The new VISN 9 Clinical Contact Center allows Veterans to receive 24/7, virtual urgent care from the comfort of their homes or wherever they may be. Receive services by calling 1-877-741-3400, [VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center.](#) [Read more.](#)

VA IG Warns Long Wait Times Could Continue with Mission Act Reforms Military.com, Week of January 27, 2020, Department of Veterans Affairs patients seeking private-sector health care saw a nearly two-month delay for medical appointments in 2018, and the problem could worsen under the new Mission Act, the VA Office of Inspector General reported. The inspector general's report based its conclusions on the region of VA hospitals that includes 1.6 million veterans across Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. VA officials in that region referred more than 206,500 requests in 2018 for community care at clinics outside the VA network, with veterans facing a 56-day wait on average before receiving care, according to the report. [Read more.](#)

New VA Suicide Prevention Strategy: Talk to Vets 3 Times in First Year out of Uniform Military.com, Week of December 30, 2019, The Department of Veterans Affairs launched a new suicide prevention outreach program earlier this month to contact the more than 200,000 troops who leave the military annually. The goal is to reach out to each at least three times in the first year of transition to civilian life to inform them of the availability of VA mental health services. [Read more.](#)

Jon Stewart Vows to Help Veterans Affected by Burn Pit Exposure MOAA, January 17, 2020, After joining forces to successfully advocate for the renewal of a [9/11 victims' compensation fund](#), comedian Jon Stewart and activist John Feal have turned their attention to procuring justice for veterans affected by toxic exposure to burn pits. On Friday, Stewart and Feal met with members of the Toxic Exposures in the American Military (TEAM) coalition – including MOAA, [a founding member](#) – on Capitol Hill to discuss preliminary steps for developing a strategy to ensure service members exposed to toxins from burn pits will get the appropriate medical care they need for ensuing health problems. [Read more.](#)

SBP-DIC Offset Elimination: What We Know So Far MOAA, January 6, 2020, everyone is asking how the elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset — colloquially known as the "[widows tax](#)" — will affect them and how much money they will get. The law [just passed](#), and nothing happens in 2020. This year, lawyers will review and interpret the words. Policies, directives, and regulations will be written. Computer systems will be designed and tested to implement the processes and pay survivors. However, the actual pay implementation will not start until 2021. [Read more.](#)

Memory Care Resources for Veterans, MemoryCare.com, Receiving an Alzheimer's diagnosis can be devastating for both seniors and their loved ones. And while the news itself can be overwhelming, getting the right diagnosis is also the first step in receiving the right care. From therapies to medications, new and innovative treatments are being developed all the time to improve the quality of life of those living with memory impairment. Understanding the disease and getting the right treatment as soon as possible is the best way to ensure that patients lead the best lives possible. [Read more.](#)

Military Travel Ideas, VisitFlorida, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs - *Ed Sends* - If you're active **military or a veteran**, Florida salutes you. Check out these events, historical sites, monuments, museums, destinations, and resources of special interest to you and yours. You can also explore **military discounts** available for tours, auto rentals, flights, and at theme parks. Want to make Florida your permanent home? [Veterans Florida](#) can help. [Read more.](#)

Florida Veteran Legislation Florida Department of Veterans Affairs – *Ed Sends* -Regular sessions of the Florida Legislature begin on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March and continue for 60 consecutive days, which may be extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. Special sessions may be called by the Governor, or may be convened by joint proclamation of the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Special sessions may not exceed 20 days, unless extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. The Florida fiscal year starts July 1 of every year. You may track veteran-related legislation and appropriations during the 2020 Florida Legislative Session by visiting our [website](#) or contacting our legislative team at (850) 487-1533.

Navy Warns Mail-In DNA Kits Could Bring 'Unwelcome' Family News Military.com, Week of January 27, 2020, Navy personnel should consider the unintended consequences of learning who they're related to, a new service wide message states. "Some genetic tests inform participants of a network of likely siblings and parents," wrote Andrew Haeuptle, director of Navy Staff. "While in most cases this is good and interesting, in some situations this new information could negatively affect your family." [Read more.](#)

MOAA's Legislative Mission for 2020 MOAA December 23, 2019, this will be a tumultuous news year of partisan politics, with the focus on the upcoming presidential election as well as the 33 Senate seats and 435 seats in the House of Representatives up for election. MOAA will continue to remain decidedly nonpartisan. Our team works with every elected official, seeking positive change for the members of the seven uniformed services, our nation's veterans, and all military families and survivors. In January, the 116th Congress begins its second session, and MOAA continues to stay focused on our mission. We've spent the past year meeting with members of Congress and their staffs to discuss pay equity, military medicine, survivor benefits, and other issues affecting service-members and veterans and their families. [Read more.](#)

Disabled Veterans eligible for free National Park Service Lifetime Access Pass Good for entry into 400+ National Parks and over 2,000 recreation sites across the country Vantage Point, December 2019, Many Veterans, with a service connected disability rating, are entering Federal recreation lands

and national parks for free with an [America the Beautiful-the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands lifetime Access Pass](#) through an interagency partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. Good for entry into thousands of federally managed recreation sites across the country, the Lifetime Access Pass is another way a grateful nation says thank you for the service and sacrifices of U. S. Veterans with disabilities. [Read more.](#)

The Honda Classic Patriots Outpost, Thursday, Feb. 27 to Sunday, Mar. 1, 2020, Press Release, Ed Sends - The Honda Classic (February 24 - March 1, 2020) - PGA National Resort & Spa, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, In honor of the men and women who have and are currently serving our great nation, The Honda Classic, in partnership with United Technologies, offers complimentary tickets for Active Duty, Military Reservists, Military Retirees, and Non-Retired Military Veterans, Thursday through Sunday of tournament week. [Read more.](#)

Arlington Cemetery Implements 100% ID Checks Amid Iran Fears Military.com, Week of January 06, 2020, Arlington National Cemetery is tightening its security protocols and warning visitors to report suspicious activity in the wake of a U.S. strike that killed Gen. Qasem Soleimani, head of Iran's elite Quds force. In a series of tweets Jan. 3, Arlington staff announced that the cemetery, located by the Pentagon and across the Potomac from Washington, D.C., is implementing 100% identification checks at all entrances. [Read more.](#)

Eight Essential Tips to Help You Land a VA Loan Military.com, December 2019, Buying a home using your hard-earned VA loan benefits can be one of the most rewarding financial experiences of your life. These government-backed mortgages have more flexible and forgiving requirements than other loan types. Significant benefits like \$0 down payment and no mortgage insurance open the doors of home ownership to scores of veterans and service members who might otherwise be left out. [Read more.](#)

Credit Requirements for VA Loans Explained Military.com | December 2019, In the past when a veteran wanted to use the VA home loan benefit in order to buy and finance a home with nothing down, the VA would ultimately approve the loan application. The VA would not just issue the approval but order the appraisal and set the VA interest rate for the loan. You can imagine the time it would take just to get a loan approval from the VA and one of the reasons many sellers at times would refuse an offer on a home if the buyer was using a VA loan for the purchase—it simply took too long. [Read more.](#)

Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?

Did you know that VA offers same day services in Primary Care and Mental Health at 172 VA Medical Centers across the country? [Make the Connection Resource Locator](#)

Contact the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) (1-800-273-8255 and press 1, [Chat](#), or Text 838255.)