

Seminole County Veterans Newsletter



SEMINOLE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT | VETERAN SERVICES OFFICE

November/December 2020

This Veterans Newsletter is compiled and provided by the Seminole County Veteran's Services Office. Its intent is to keep Seminole County Veterans informed about their rights, benefits, and news of interest. It is non-political and, except where noted, all articles are excerpted from outside sources. Local events honoring/supporting Veterans will be included as made available. You are encouraged to provide feedback and recommendations, as this is your Newsletter. Together with my small Team, I hope you find it both valuable and interesting.
Rusty Keeling, Seminole County Veterans Services Officer

Veterans' Services wishes each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy Holiday Season!

1. **Seminole County Veterans' Services – Rusty Sends** – If you need assistance, please call and schedule an appointment. We can do appointments both face to face and in person. Keep in mind we can provide assistance for most issues over the phone. Please try to schedule an appointment rather than just walking in, we are still social distancing!
2. **Records Requests** – If you need copies of DD-214's or other records, please visit <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>.
3. **Trump Signs Bill Authorizing Alwyn Cashe to Receive Medal of Honor** - A bill that would clear the way for a legendary fallen hero of the Iraq War to receive the [Medal of Honor](#) is now a law. [Read more.](#)
4. **'An Unprecedented Man:' Medal of Honor Recipient Ron Shurer Laid to Rest at Arlington** - Ron Shurer's life was remembered Tuesday as a many-chaptered love story of selfless giving -- to his wife and family; to his faith; to those who battled with him against cancer; and to his country in the Secret Service, and as a soldier who earned the Medal of Honor. [Read more.](#)
5. **Remains of Four Pearl Harbor Sailors ID'd as Nation Marks 79th Anniversary of Attacks** - Officially, the U.S. death toll in the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor is 2,403. But the books have yet to be closed on identifying the available remains of more than 150 of those killed on what President Franklin D. Roosevelt called a "day that will live in infamy." [Read more.](#)
6. **The Military Is Developing a 'Close Combat Assault Ration' Up to 40% Lighter than an MRE** - As the U.S. military prepares for future fights that may see units dispersed and on their own for extended periods of time, it needs new, lighter rations that will keep troops fueled for the mission. [Read more.](#)
7. **Army Receives First Infantry Squad Vehicles for Carrying Foot Soldiers into the Fight** - The Army now has its first four lightweight Infantry Squad Vehicles that are specially designed to carry infantry foot soldiers into battle. [Read more.](#)
8. **'Soldiers' Careers Depend on It': Senators Want to Halt Army Combat Fitness Test Rollout** - Two senators are asking other lawmakers on Capitol Hill to support a push to pause implementation of the new Army Combat Fitness Test, which they say sets unrealistic standards for some soldiers. [Read more.](#)

9. **Tricare Young Adult Premiums to Rise Sharply in 2021** - Military dependents who use Tricare Young Adult for their health coverage will see a 12% to 22% rise in their premiums next year depending on which plan they select, according to rates published Monday by Tricare. [Read more.](#)
10. **Fort Sill Just Became the First Training Base to Get the New Army Greens Uniform** - Army privates at [Fort Sill](#), Oklahoma are the lucky first trainees to receive the service's new World War II-style dress uniform. [Read more.](#)
11. **He Was Convicted of War Crimes and Pardoned by Trump. Now He Wants to Reform Military Justice** - Former [Army](#) 1st Lt. Clint Lorange has a new mission: To become a lawyer and press for reform of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, under which he was convicted of war crimes in Afghanistan. [Read more.](#)
12. **Marine Commandant to Leaders: Quit The 'Soft Relief' of Fired Officers** - In a letter sent earlier this month to a wide swath of the Marine officer corps, commandant Gen. David Berger reminded everyone from general to lieutenant that they needed to hold Marines accountable with a paper trail. [Read more.](#)
13. **Enfield Man Charged with Defrauding the Department of Veterans Affairs to Receive Benefits** - John H. Durham, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut; Christopher Algeri, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of the Inspector General, Northeast Field Office; and James M. Noble, Special Agent in Charge, Coast Guard Investigative Service, Northeast Region, announced that DERRICK BREWER, 35, of Enfield, was arrested today on a criminal complaint charging him with offenses related to his submission of altered documents to the Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA"). [Read more.](#)
14. **2 Men Sentenced for Laundering \$750K from Military Dating Scam** - LEXINGTON, Ky. — Two men have been sentenced and a third has been convicted in an online dating scheme where a Kentucky woman was scammed out of more than \$750,000. [Read more.](#)
15. **This Key Indicator Offers a Glimpse at Your Future Pay Raise** - The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) unmasked its quarterly [Employment Cost Index \(ECI\) figures](#) Oct. 30, giving a glimpse at the pay raise military members likely will receive at the start of 2022. [Read more.](#)
16. **'Please Do the Right Thing': Commenters Weigh in on Proposed Arlington Cemetery Changes** - More than 1,100 commenters have weighed in on the Army's [planned changes to Arlington National Cemetery \(ANC\) eligibility criteria](#), and it's not too late to add your voice. [Read more.](#)
17. **Medicare Part B Rates Will Rise in 2021. Here Are the New Figures** - Your Medicare Part B bill will go up about 2.7% in 2021, with the rate of increase varying slightly depending on your income level. [Read more.](#)
18. **DoD Fails to Address Health Care Needs of Women Who Serve, Advisory Board Claims** - Despite more than three decades of studies and recommendations on military women's health, the Defense Department fails to provide female service members the medical care and equipment needed for their well-being -- a deficiency that costs millions and hurts operational readiness, a Pentagon advisory board has concluded. [Read more.](#)
19. **New DoD Adviser Has Made Controversial Proposal: Get Rid of the Marine Corps** - Retired [Army](#) Col. Douglas Macgregor, newly-appointed as a senior adviser at the Pentagon, has a track record of making controversial statements. But his most provocative of all might be a proposal to do away with the U.S. Marine Corps. [Read more.](#)
20. **VA Won't Fight Court Ruling Awarding Payments to 'Blue Water Navy' Vietnam Vets** - The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) has no plans to challenge a court ruling last week ordering it to make retroactive payments to a small class of "Blue Water Navy" Vietnam veterans and their survivors who were wrongly denied benefits for exposure to [Agent Orange](#), the head of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) said Wednesday. [Read more.](#)
21. **Soldiers Camp Out at Airport Waiting for Flights Home. This Holiday Season, Officials Are Worried** - NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — It's a Peninsula tradition — several hundred soldiers

camping out, sometimes for days, at the Newport News airport, waiting for flight home for the holidays — and it's got people around the facility worried. [Read more.](#)

22. **Navy's Newest Ship to Be Named for Marine Sgt. Maj. John Canley, Vietnam War Hero** - Another [Navy](#) expeditionary sea base will be named for a [Marine Corps](#) hero who earned the [Medal of Honor](#) for heroism in Vietnam. [Read more.](#)
23. **Don't Let Your TRICARE Select Coverage Lapse, Officials Warn Retirees** - Just 14 percent of the [military retiree households](#) who must start paying enrollment fees for Tricare Select have set up their payment process, Tricare officials said. [Read more.](#)
24. **VA Disability Claims Backlog Spiked to 300,000 During Pandemic** - The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a backlog of about 300,000 new disability claims at the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), the head of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) said Tuesday. [Read more.](#)
25. **Air Force Will Now Offer Enlisted Troops a Path to Pilot Training** - The U.S. [Air Force](#) is giving enlisted airmen a chance to earn their wings through a program for aspiring pilots and crew. [Read more.](#)
26. **Maverick's Favorite Fighter Jet Is Getting Its Own Monument** - A new monument dedicated to the U.S. [Navy's](#) F-14 Tomcat fighter, made famous by the movie "Top Gun," will be unveiled in Pensacola, Florida, on Wednesday. [Read more.](#)
27. **For Now, US Troops Won't Be Required to Get New COVID-19 Vaccine** - As the U.S. Food and Drug Administration weighs whether to issue an emergency use authorization for a coronavirus vaccine, Defense Department officials say the inoculations will remain voluntary once the FDA gives the OK. [Read more.](#)
28. **US Military Aircraft Are Nowhere Near as Ready as They Should Be — Here's How Bad the Situation Is** - A lot of US military aircraft have fallen short of their readiness goals for the better part of a decade, including America's arsenal of fighter jets, according to a new government watchdog report. [Read more.](#)
29. **What Tricare for Life Enrollees Should Know About Medicare Advantage Plans** - As a Medicare/Tricare for Life (TFL) enrollee, you get to choose which type of Medicare you want: Original Medicare Parts A and B or Medicare Advantage Plans Parts A and B. [Read more.](#)
30. **Is the Commissary Surcharge Going to Increase?** - There's good news and bad news. First, the good news is that the surcharge is definitely not going up. And in case you don't believe me, here's a quote straight from the commissary headquarters: [Read more.](#)
31. **This Junior Coastie Accidentally Bought Dinner for the Premier of Greenland -- And Earned a Medal** - No, the man eating alone in a diner in Nuuk wasn't Fezzik -- a friendless, brainless, helpless, hopeless giant, unemployed in Greenland. [Read more.](#)
32. **Carrier Nimitz Returns to Gulf as Iran Makes Threats** - The aircraft carrier Nimitz and its strike group have returned to the Persian Gulf region amid rising tensions with Iran over the killing of a top nuclear scientist, the Pentagon and the U.S. 5th Fleet said Friday. [Read more.](#)
33. **As Pearl Harbor Was Attacked, a Navy Band Finished 'The Star-Spangled Banner'** - As ships exploded and bullets rained down on the *USS Nevada*, sailors and Marines scrambled to their battle stations. But for the military band aboard the ship that day, their station was right where they already were, playing the national anthem of the United States. [Read more.](#)
34. **USS John S. McCain Challenges Russia's Claims to Peter the Great Bay in Sea of Japan** - YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan -- The [Navy](#) on Tuesday sent another warship to challenge maritime claims in the Western Pacific, this time in an area claimed by Russia, according to a 7th Fleet spokesman. [Read more.](#)
35. **SBP –DIC offset** - As you may know, Congress enacted changes to the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) that will eventually eliminate the offset for surviving spouses who are also receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The changes will take place in three phases. January 1, 2021 begins the first phase. In 2021, surviving spouse SBP annuity payments issued by DFAS will be reduced (offset) by no more than two-thirds of the amount of DIC (issued by the VA) rather than by the entire amount of

DIC, even though eligible surviving spouses will continue to receive the full amount of DIC from the VA. Beginning January 1, 2022, the second phase, surviving spouse SBP annuity payments will be reduced (offset) by no more than one-third of the amount of DIC (issued by the VA) rather than by the entire amount of DIC, even though eligible surviving spouses will continue to receive the full amount of DIC from the VA. On January 1, 2023, the SBP-DIC offset will be fully eliminated. That means, beginning in 2023, SBP payments will no longer be offset by DIC. Spouses will receive full SBP (issued by DFAS) and full DIC (from the VA). For more details and frequently asked questions, see our special SBP-DIC News webpage: <http://go.usa.gov/xGfgd>

36. **See Your 2021 VA Disability Pay Rates** - The following tables show the 2021 VA disability rates for veterans with a rating 10% or higher. (Effective Dec. 1, 2020). [Read more.](#)
37. **Former Navy SEAL, Wife Sue VA Over New Caregiver Program Rules** - A former [Navy SEAL](#) has filed a lawsuit against the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) over new restrictions that make it harder for caregivers of post-9/11 veterans to receive VA benefits. [Read more.](#)
38. **Airman Who Directed Danger-Close Airstrikes in 'Ferocious Firefight' Will Receive Medal** - The U.S. [Air Force](#) will award a special tactics combat controller the second-highest military award for calling in danger-close gunship airstrikes while under siege in Afghanistan. [Read more.](#)
39. **Army Hits Back Against False Claim that Soldiers Died in CIA Op to Nab Election Servers** - A retired [Air Force](#) three-star general reignited baseless conspiratorial claims about U.S. troops' involvement in clandestine missions in the wake of the presidential election -- claims an Army official said are 100% false. [Read more.](#)
40. **Space Force Won't Be Forced to Use Navy Ranks, Lawmakers Decide** - Lawmakers have ditched a provision that would require [U.S. Space Force](#) to use naval ranks for its service members, according to the conference report of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. [Read more.](#)