

Seminole County Veterans Newsletter



SEMINOLE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT | VETERAN SERVICES OFFICE

March 2021

Seminole County Veteran Services Newsletter

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

Orlando VA Healthcare System Offering COVID-19 Vaccines for All Veterans who receive care at VA regardless of Age. The Orlando VA Healthcare Center is offering COVID-19 vaccines for all Veterans who receive care at VA regardless of age. The vaccine is being offered at four sites of care through a combination of appointments and walk-ins until supply is exhausted. Location specific information:

Lake Nona: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments and Walk-Ins

**Orlando VA Medical Center, Lake Nona Campus, 4th Floor Auditorium
13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL 32827**

Lake Baldwin: 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Appointments and Walk-Ins until 1 p.m.

**Lake Baldwin VA Medical Center, Auditorium B
5201 Raymond St.
Orlando, FL 32803**

Viera and Daytona Beach VA Clinics: Appointments only for 65+, frontline essential workers, and veterans with underlying medical conditions, as determined by the CDC.

- 1. Seminole County Veterans' Services – Rusty Sends –** Veterans' Services has a new phone number, it is **(407) 665-2347**. We are seeing Veterans by appointments, however if you walk in we will see you as well. Please try to schedule an appointment instead of walking in, generally we will be able to get an appointment scheduled within 2-3 days.
- 2. Records Requests –** If you need copies of DD-214's or other records, please visit <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>.
- 3. New diseases added to the list of presumptive associated with herbicides –** Bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism, or Parkinson-like symptoms have been added to the list of diseases associated exposure to herbicides in the Republic of Vietnam. Please contact our office to file a claim.

4. **VA's Complicated Vaccine Priority System Causes Disparities, Confusion** - The Department of Veterans Affairs may be out ahead of many states and federal entities in vaccine administration, but the complexity of deciding who is eligible for the vaccine and when has still left many confused and frustrated. [Read more](#)
5. **AAFES Will Offer Chiropractic Services at Select Locations** - The Army and Air Force Exchange Service, or AAFES, is opening more dental and medical equipment service centers on military installations in 2021. And in a first, it will also bring chiropractic services to selected locations in the U.S. [Read more](#)
6. **COVID-19 Death Rate at VA Nursing Homes Is 13 Times Lower Than National Average** - If you're in a nursing home operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, data shows you're about half as likely to contract COVID-19 as you are in a non-VA senior living facility, and 13 times less likely to die from the disease. In the past year, 1,679 residents of VA nursing homes, which it calls community living centers or CLCs, contracted COVID-19, and 143 died "within 30 days after a positive test," according to the department. [Read more](#)
7. **Top Enlisted Airman Says She'll Keep Connecting Online After Social Media Blunder** - Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne Bass would share every airman's story if she could. Knowing an individual's backstory helps people connect on a deeper level, be open to different points of view and find shared experiences, she believes. [Read more](#)
8. **VA Under New Leadership: How the New Secretary's Priorities Align With MOAA's** - Denis McDonough's confirmation Feb. 8 as the new VA secretary received overwhelming bipartisan support – an 87-7 vote reflecting the collaborative and consultative relationship the administration and Congress want to foster between the executive and legislative branches. [Read more](#)
9. **VA Advisory Committee Seeks Feedback From Gulf War Veterans** - Veterans who were part of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm can share their health concerns with the VA's Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. The committee uses feedback to make recommendations to the secretary of Veterans Affairs for proposed research studies, plans, and strategies to analyze how the war has affected health. [Read More](#)
10. **Army Special Operations School Drops 'III' Logo Adopted by Extremist Group** - Just last week, the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School advised all of its personnel to avoid using more than a dozen symbols linked by law enforcement to extremist activity. [Read more](#)
11. **Sig Sauer Delivers Final Next-Generation Squad Weapon Prototypes to Army** - Sig Sauer Inc. announced Tuesday that it has delivered its final prototype weapons to the Army as it competes for the chance to replace the M4A1 carbine and M249 squad automatic weapon in infantry units. [Read more](#)
12. **Idaho National Guard Identifies 3 Soldiers Killed in Black Hawk Crash** - The Idaho National Guard on Thursday released the names of three soldiers killed Tuesday night when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed in bad weather over mountainous terrain. [Read more](#)
13. **Army War College Commandant Suspended Pending Investigation** - The two-star commandant of the U.S. Army War College has been suspended until the completion of an investigation, the Army announced Tuesday [Read more](#)
14. **For the First Time in 2 Decades, the US Has Gone a Year Without a Combat Death in Afghanistan** - KABUL, Afghanistan — No U.S. troops have died in combat in Afghanistan for a year as of Monday, but the Taliban have threatened to target them again if Washington opts to keep international forces in the country after a May withdrawal deadline. [Read more](#)
15. **CEO Says He Won't Let USS The Sullivans Sink** – *"We've got a National Historic Landmark here. She needs some help," Paul Marzello, president and CEO of the naval park, said, promising, "I'm not going to let the ship go down on my watch."* [Read more](#)
16. **Fort Hood Restricts Base Access After Shooting Incident** - Army officials at Fort Hood, Texas tightened the base's gate security to restrict access after an on-base shooting early Saturday morning. No one was injured in the shooting, but Fort Hood has suspended its Trusted Traveler Program that allowed military personnel with valid military identification to "escort or vouch for adult passengers ... in their vehicle," according to a Fort Hood news release. [Read more](#)
17. **TRICARE Waives Referrals for Prime Enrollees Seeking COVID-19 Vaccine** - The Defense Department has waived a requirement that Tricare Prime patients have a referral from their primary care doctors to get the

COVID-19 vaccine outside the military health system. The waiver, to be published in the Federal Register Tuesday, allows Prime enrollees to receive the vaccine at any non-military facility, including non-network pharmacies or providers, without incurring any fees. [Read more](#)

18. **Dependents of Some Disabled Veterans Can Now Fly Space-A** - A recent regulations change allows dependent family members of permanently and totally disabled veterans to fly on space-available, or Space-A, flights. On Oct. 23, 2020, a change to DoDI 4515.13 updated the eligibility requirements for Space-A travel, adding dependents of permanently and totally disabled veterans. [Read More](#)
19. **TRICARE Emergency Refill Procedures in Place After Texas Winter Storm** - Emergency prescription refills will be available to all TRICARE beneficiaries in Texas through March 1 as the state recovers from a deadly winter storm. The move allows TRICARE beneficiaries to take their empty prescription bottle to any in-network pharmacy to secure a refill. Find out which pharmacies are in the TRICARE network at this link or by calling 1-877-363-1303. [Read more](#)
20. **Air Force's First Overseas F-35 Fighter Squadron Gets Crowdsourced New Name** - The U.S. Air Force will call its first U.K.-based F-35 Lightning II fighter squadron the Valkyries. The 495th Fighter Squadron, part of the 48th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath, will take on the title, according to a release. The service announced the nickname for its first overseas Joint Strike Fighter squadron Monday; the name beat other crowdsourced choices, including Archangels, Sabres, Sentinels and Swordsmen. [Read more](#)
21. **Take a First Look at the Awesome New Air Force One** - National Geographic Channel has just premiered a new documentary special called "The New Air Force One: Flying Fortress" about the brand-new \$5.3 billion Boeing 747 that's about to go into service for President Joe Biden [Read more](#)
22. **Maj. Richard Star, a Voice for Disabled Veterans, Loses Battle to Cancer** - Maj. Richard Star, USAF, an Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran who spent his final months fighting for servicemember benefits while also fighting stage 4 lung cancer, has died. Star, a combat engineer, passed away early Saturday morning with his loving wife Tonya and his therapy dog Otis at his side. [Read more](#)
23. **VA Extends Moratorium on Foreclosures, Evictions** - VA's moratorium on evictions and foreclosures will extend through at least June 30, the department announced Feb. 16, lengthening pandemic-related protections that were set to expire March 31. [Read more](#)
24. **FIVE Essential Movies and Shows About the Battle of Iwo Jima** - The Battle of Iwo Jima gave us the most iconic image of World War II and represents the moment when Allied victory over Japan became inevitable. The February 1945 invasion was brutal and hard-fought, but the victory gave the United States a staging ground for the coming invasion of Japan. [Read more](#)
25. **VA Secretary: 'Urgent' Review Planned for Agent Orange Benefit Expansion** - For tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans entitled to long-sought benefits connected to toxic exposure, recent statements from VA Secretary Denis McDonough hold promise, but offer few specifics. As reported by Military Times and Military.com, McDonough on Feb. 23 pledged an "urgent" review of the process that will extend benefits to tens of thousands of veterans suffering from bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism – conditions added to the list of those connected to Agent Orange exposure as part of the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). A presumptive condition means that if a claimant's exposure to Agent Orange is validated, then the disease is presumed to be service-connected.