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# V.E.T.S. News Bulletin 12-19-24

Veteran, VA and VA Law News Roundup



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## V.E.T.S. NEWS BULLETIN

 VA NEWS •  EVENTS •  TRENDS •  SUCCESS

### The V.E.T.S. News Bulletin

**Edition: Thursday, December 19th, 2024**

A VA News Roundup for Veterans by [Hill & Ponton](#).

Thanks for reading & enjoy!

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What's in this month's V.E.T.S. News Bulletin?



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-  **VA NEWS** – News and updates from the VA
-  **EVENTS** – This Date in Military History
-  **TRENDS** – Updates on policies and programs with VA law
-  **SUPPORT** – Highlighting support for issues in VA law topics

**Welcome to the December V.E.T.S. News Bulletin! We're back with the latest VA updates, bringing you essential news and guidance to navigate your benefits.**

This month, we explore new developments in caregiver support, groundbreaking health initiatives for veterans, and legislative actions addressing critical issues like blast pressure injuries and VA appointment delays. Let's dive into the details that could impact you and your loved ones.

## VA NEWS

### **VA Sets New Records in Benefits and Healthcare, Pledges Even More Support for Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced plans to expand its caregiver support services, opening eligibility to more families and reducing disruptions for those already enrolled.

#### **Key highlights:**

- The eligibility bar will lower to include veterans receiving "individual unemployability" benefits, broadening access to thousands.
- Families' eligibility checks will now occur only every two years.
- Discharges from the program are postponed until late 2026 or beyond, offering greater stability for caregivers.

"These changes aim to support caregivers with resources, respite care, and education they need to care for their veterans," VA Secretary Denis McDonough stated.

Currently, around 90,000 caregivers receive VA benefits, and officials expect thousands more to qualify once guidelines are finalized after public comments.

The VA is also working closely with advocates to ensure the updated rules better meet the needs of caregivers and veterans, learning from past challenges in reforming the program.

Public comments on the proposal are open for 60 days, with final adjustments expected after February. Legislative efforts to expand home-based services for veterans are also underway in Congress.

For more details or to share feedback, [visit the Federal Register →](#)



Think your VA disability rating doesn't fully reflect your condition? Don't go it alone. Our dedicated team exclusively helps veterans with VA disability cases and is ready to advocate for your rightful benefits.

Call us at **(855) 494-1298** to speak with our team now, or [send a request for a free case evaluation](#) today and we'll reach out within 30 minutes during business hours to get started.

 EVENTS





*Reproduction of a painting from "Annual Record of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachussetts" By Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachussetts. (1900)*

## The Great Swamp Fight: A Pivotal Moment in King Philip's War

### This Day in Military History: December 19th, 1675

On December 19, 1675, during one of the harshest winters of the 17th century, colonial militia forces from Plymouth, Connecticut, and Massachusetts launched a brutal assault on the fortified village of the Narragansett tribe in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. Known as the **Great Swamp Fight**, this battle marked a turning point in King Philip's War—a conflict between Native American tribes and English settlers that would shape the future of colonial New England.

### The Context of the Battle

Tensions between the settlers and Native tribes had been building for decades, primarily over land disputes and cultural clashes. In 1675, these tensions erupted into King Philip's War, named after the Wampanoag chief Metacomet, also known as King Philip. The Narragansett tribe, initially neutral, came under suspicion of aiding King Philip's forces. Colonial leaders, fearing

an alliance, decided to preemptively strike the Narragansett to eliminate any potential threat.

## The Assault

Led by an Indian guide known as "Indian Peter," the colonial militia discovered the Narragansett's stronghold deep within a frozen swamp. The fort, occupying five acres, sheltered over 1,000 people, including women and children, along with the tribe's winter supplies. Despite the stormy weather and the icy terrain, the militia launched a relentless attack.

The battle was ferocious and bloody. The English eventually breached the fort's defenses, setting it ablaze and destroying the tribe's food stores. Many Narragansett warriors and non-combatants were killed—estimates suggest around 300 fatalities. Survivors fled into the swamp, where the freezing conditions and lack of provisions caused further suffering and death.

## Aftermath and Legacy

The Great Swamp Fight devastated the Narragansett people. Those who survived joined King Philip's forces, abandoning their previous neutrality. However, the battle also inflicted heavy losses on the colonists, with over 70 dead and 150 wounded, including many officers. Despite their victory, the colonists paid a steep price in both lives and resources.

The destruction of the Narragansett fort intensified the war's brutality and set a precedent for future conflicts between settlers and Native tribes. The war ultimately ended in 1678, leaving Native resistance in southern New England shattered and clearing the way for colonial expansion.

**[Want to learn more? Check out this article. →](#)**

## TRENDS

### VA to Inform Veterans of Appointment Delays, Offer Private Care Options Under New Legislation

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking steps to improve

disclose appointment delays, explain cancellations, and provide veterans with options for care, whether within the VA system or through private-sector providers.

## Addressing Wait Times and Care Access

The Complete the Mission Act builds on the 2018 Mission Act, which gave veterans the option to seek care outside the VA if they faced long wait times or other barriers to treatment. Under this new proposal, veterans will now receive detailed information about:

- **Estimated wait times** for appointments.
- **Reasons for cancellations** when appointments are delayed or disrupted.
- **Rescheduling options**, including referrals to community care providers when VA services are unavailable.

These requirements aim to empower veterans with the knowledge and flexibility to make informed decisions about their health care.

## Rising Demand for Community Care

Since the implementation of the Mission Act, demand for private-sector care has surged. In 2023, approximately 40% of all VA-provided health care services occurred outside VA facilities, with demand increasing by an average of 15% each year. This trend highlights the need for robust systems to manage and communicate care options to veterans efficiently.

## A Focus on Transparency and Support

The Complete the Mission Act seeks to address persistent challenges in delivering timely care. By mandating that the VA share wait times and care options proactively, the legislation prioritizes transparency and ensures that veterans are not left waiting indefinitely for necessary treatment.

“We believe this measure is an important step in fulfilling the promise of the Mission Act and enhancing care for our veterans,” a VA representative stated.

## What’s Next?

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee is scheduled to review the bill on **December 17**, with discussions expected to focus on how the VA can implement these changes effectively and further improve care access.

This legislation underscores the VA's commitment to better serving veterans by ensuring they are informed, supported, and provided with timely access to health care services, whether within the VA system or through community care options.

Veterans and their families can stay informed about this legislation and other developments by visiting the VA's official site or consulting their local VA offices.



## Feeling overwhelmed by VA?

We invite you to take our new FREE course, **Master the VA Disability Claims Process**, that offers advice, tips and tricks from our team.

This course covers every single step of the VA disability claim process and answers the questions veterans ask most. Best of all—**it's FREE!**

[Start Now](#)

**Please note, you will need to make a free account for the course but it will allow you to take additional courses we are planning to offer, too!**



## Lawmakers Push for Long-Term Study on Blast Pressure Injuries

### Understanding Blast Injuries and Veterans' Mental Health

Two prominent senators, Jerry Moran (R-Kansas) and Angus King (I-Maine), are championing new legislation to address the effects of repetitive low-level blast injuries on veterans' mental health. Their proposed [\*\*Precision Brain Health Research Act\*\*](#) calls for a 10-year study to uncover how these injuries impact service members, with the goal of implementing better protections for troops handling heavy artillery.

### Why It Matters

Low-level blast injuries, often sustained during training or combat, create high-pressure waves capable of damaging sensitive organs like the brain. Research already links these injuries to serious conditions such as headaches, insomnia, depression, memory loss, and even heightened suicide rates.

"This legislation will help us better understand how these exposures are impacting [service members] and veterans," said Sen. Moran, emphasizing the importance of finding solutions to protect the mental health of America's military community.

### Ongoing Efforts

The Department of Defense recently introduced new safety measures to address blast overpressure risks, including firing range restrictions and cognitive assessments for all troops by 2025. This legislation builds on those efforts, focusing specifically on veterans by analyzing VA data to identify trends among individuals with similar military roles.

### What's Next?

Although the current legislative session is ending soon, this proposal sets the stage for critical reforms in the next session. Moran is expected to chair the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, positioning this issue as a priority for the

This initiative underscores a shared commitment to understanding and mitigating the long-term effects of service on veterans' health. Stay tuned for updates as lawmakers work to bring this important legislation forward.

For more resources on veterans' health and safety initiatives, visit [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov).

## What did you think of the newsletter?

It was great!

It was OK.

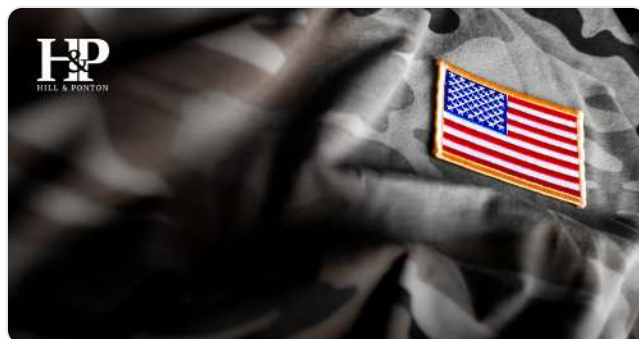
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**V.E.T.S. News Bulletin 11-7-24**  
Veteran, VA and VA Law News Roundup



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