

January 5, 2024

VETERANS

MONTHLY INFORMATION PACKAGE

FLAGLER COUNTY

DAVID LYDON

County Veterans Service Officer

PHONE: (386) 313-4014; FAX: (386) 313-4114;

Email: DLydon@flaglercounty.org

Feel free to make copies and distribute throughout your organization.

VA NOW OFFERS ONLINE ORDERING FOR CPAP SUPPLIES

Veterans who rely on CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines to manage sleep-related breathing disorders, including sleep apnea, now have a new [streamlined online ordering system for CPAP supplies](#).

VA has added the CPAP supply ordering feature as part of the online tool that's already in place, same as how Veterans [order hearing aid supplies](#) on VA.gov. The addition improves how Veterans order, manage and efficiently receive health care supplies. It's a notable improvement to the previous CPAP supply ordering process, which was by phone call or traditional mail order forms sent to VA's Denver Logistics Center (DLC).

Last year, VA's Logistics Center shipped nearly 5.5 million apnea care products, with the majority being supplies such as masks, tubing, filters and more. These are some of the items Veterans can now conveniently request directly online. Within one week of launch for the new online CPAP supplies ordering feature, 24.1 percent of CPAP supply orders were placed on VA.gov, and we anticipate the number will grow to be twice as many daily orders as hearing aid supplies. In the future, VA's Office of Information and Technology will add more ordering supply types to the VA.gov tool.

A seamless ordering experience

When Veterans sign in to their VA.gov accounts for ordering, the VA.gov platform allows for a more efficient ordering experience by prefilling certain order details based on the user's account information. Veterans can even start an order, save it as a work in progress, and return later to complete it. This feature grants a generous 60-day window to finalize and submit orders, providing a flexible approach to ordering CPAP supplies.

How to place an order

To get started with a supply order, Veterans should have the following details ready:

- Shipping address

- Email address

- Information about your hearing aids

Information about your CPAP machines

What to expect when ordering

The ordering process involves several key steps:

- Confirmation of personal information
- Confirmation or editing of shipping address and email address
- Selection of hearing aids requiring batteries
- Selection of necessary hearing aid accessories
- Selection of essential CPAP supplies
- A final review and submission of the order

Once a Veteran successfully submits an order, they'll receive a confirmation message, which can be retained for records.

Track and receive your order

Within 1 to 2 days of order submission, Veterans will receive an email containing an order tracking number. This number allows for easy monitoring of the order's status. Orders typically arrive within 7 to 10 business days.

Need assistance? Reach out!

Should any Veteran require assistance during the ordering process, please contact the Denver Logistics Center Customer Service Section at 303-273-6200, or email dalc.css@va.gov. The dedicated customer service team is ready to provide guidance, support and information.

VA HAS SCREENED 5 MILLION VETERANS FOR TOXIC EXPOSURES, PAVING THE WAY FOR EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT OF HEALTH CONDITIONS

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The screening takes five to 10 minutes and begins with VA health providers asking Veterans if they believe they experienced any toxic exposures while serving in the armed forces. Veterans who answer yes are then asked follow-up questions and offered connections to information on benefits, registry-related medical exams, and other clinical resources, as indicated. Their responses to the screenings are then added to their VA medical record to be included as part of their future care.

This milestone comes just 13 months after the screening [launched](#) at VA medical centers and clinics nationwide as a part of the PACT Act. The PACT Act expanded VA health care and benefits to millions of Veterans, paving the way for VA to deliver [more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before](#) in 2023.

“By screening Veterans for toxic exposures, we can improve their health care and detect potential health challenges as early as possible,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This leads to better health outcomes — and better quality of life — for these heroes who were exposed to toxins while serving our country.”

“We have made significant progress toward our goal to screen all Veterans enrolled in VA health care for toxic exposures at least once every five years,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D. “But most importantly, this milestone means we’ve had 5 million opportunities to provide Veterans with the exposure-informed care they deserve.”

The screening covers a variety of different types of toxic exposures, but the two most reported exposures are burn pits and Agent Orange, which together make up more than 60% of Veteran responses. More than half of the Veterans screened (2.6 million) are 65 years old or older, with Veterans under 45 making up just over

900,000 of those screened. Of the nearly 650,000 Women Veterans who regularly use VA care, more than 535,000 have been screened for toxic exposures.

While the toxic exposure screening does not play a role in determining disability compensation, it does provide an opportunity to connect Veterans with the resources they need to file a claim. Each Veteran who reports a potential exposure receives a letter with information about how to apply for benefits.

To fulfill the goal of screening every Veteran enrolled in VA health care at least once every five years, VA is exploring new and innovative ways to reach out to Veterans, including those who are vulnerable or don't routinely access VA care. The Department is also in the pilot stages of developing a self-screening tool that will make the initial question of the screening even more easily accessible to Veterans with access to web-based electronic communications.

The PACT Act has expanded and extended access to VA health care for Veterans. Thanks to the PACT Act and other new laws, many groups of Veterans are now able to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits – including World War II Veterans, Vietnam Veterans, Gulf War Veterans, Veterans who deployed to a combat zone and transitioned out of the service less than 10 years ago, and [more](#). As President Biden directed, all remaining toxic-exposed Veterans will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care next year under the PACT Act – including any Veteran who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other combat zones during the Persian Gulf War or after 9/11. Veterans who aren't currently enrolled can [submit an application](#) and receive their toxic exposure screening after enrollment.

The PACT Act also expanded VA benefits for millions of Veterans, making more than 300 health conditions “presumptive” for service connection. This means that if an [eligible](#) Veteran has one of these health conditions, VA automatically assumes that the condition was caused by the Veteran's service and provides compensation and care accordingly. VA encourages Veterans and their survivors to apply for these benefits now at [VA.gov/PACT](#).

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping Veterans and their survivors, visit VA's [PACT Act Dashboard](#). To apply for care or benefits today, visit [VA.gov/PACT](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411.

CRACKDOWN ON STOLEN VALOR BY BUSINESSES INCLUDED IN DEFENSE BILL SET TO BECOME LAW



Military.com | By [Rebecca Kheel](#)
Published December 12, 2023 at 3:55 pm

The sweeping defense policy bill poised to pass Congress this week seeks to crack down on stolen valor among businesses by making it harder for some of them to win federal contracts intended for veterans.

The compromise National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, includes an amendment that would stipulate that small businesses that self-certify as being service disabled and veteran owned could not count toward the government's target for how much contracting goes to such businesses.

The goal is to disincentivize stolen valor by motivating federal officials to award contracts to businesses that are formally certified as being veteran owned.

Read Next: [Coast Guardsman to Receive Distinguished Flying Cross for Daring Vessel Boarding and Rescue](#)

"For too long, loopholes have allowed imposters to self-certify as service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses and take advantage of government benefits set aside for our nation's heroes," Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, an [Army National Guard](#) veteran who sponsored the amendment, said in a statement to Military.com.

"There is no room for error when it comes to our men and women who served, and service-disabled veterans should know that our grateful nation is doing everything in its power to support their success."

A separate provision of the bill would also increase the goal of how many contracting dollars go to veteran-owned small businesses from 3% to 5%. Including the provisions in the compromise NDAA, the result of months of negotiations between House and Senate lawmakers, makes it all but certain to become law. The NDAA is anticipated to pass the Senate as soon as Wednesday and the House by the end of the week, sending it to President Joe Biden's desk for his expected signature.

Ernst's provision centers on the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Program, which allows the federal government to restrict competition for some contracts to just businesses owned by veterans with service-connected disabilities.

The 2021 NDAA required the Small Business Administration, or SBA, to set up a process to certify veteran-owned and service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. Previously, the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) certified whether a business was owned by a service-disabled veteran for the purpose of awarding VA contracts, but businesses needed only to self-certify for contracts awarded by any other federal agency.

When the SBA announced the rules for the formal certification process in late 2022, it did not entirely end the ability to self-certify. Rather, the agency allowed self-certified businesses to continue to count toward the government's goal of 3% of contracting dollars going to small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans.

The SBA kept self-certification alive despite receiving numerous public comments calling for its elimination over concerns about fraud. But the SBA maintained that allowing self-certification for veteran-owned businesses was consistent with other programs, such as the Women-Owned Small Business Program, that allow for self-certification.

Still, the agency said it plans to do a comprehensive review of all self-certification programs and anticipated sunseting any self-certification in five years.

The SBA estimated that applying for and maintaining formal certification would take businesses about three hours and cost \$280.32 per applicant.

"Self-certification defeats the purpose of guaranteeing that service-disabled certified and veteran-certified firms are fairly represented in federal contracting as per the law," Ronald Washington, an executive committee member of a veterans entrepreneurship group called VET-Force, said in a statement shared by Ernst's office supporting her amendment. "Thousands of veteran-owned companies, and at an expense, have complied with becoming certified first through the VA and now with SBA."

"It is only fair that everyone be held to the same expectations and standards," he said.

VA ANNOUNCES HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS IN GRANT FUNDING TO HELP HOMELESS VETERANS AFTER NEW DATA SHOWS AN UPTICK IN HOMELESSNESS

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced two grant opportunities that will help Veterans experiencing homelessness and advance the Biden-Harris administration's broader efforts to [reduce homelessness](#) through:

[Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Grants](#): Within the coming year, VA will award hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to organizations that help rapidly rehouse Veterans and their families, prevent the imminent loss of a Veteran's home, or identify new, more suitable housing situations for Veterans and their families. The exact funding amount will be determined by VA's budget.

[Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grants](#): Within the coming year, VA will award more than \$26 million in funds to organizations that help homeless Veterans with legal representation, assistance with court proceedings, defense in criminal cases related to homelessness, and more.

This announcement comes shortly after the Department of Housing and Urban

Development released the results of the 2023 Point-in-Time Count, the annual effort to estimate the number of Americans — including Veterans — experiencing homelessness. The data shows that on a single night in January 2023, there were 35,574 Veterans who were experiencing homelessness, a 7.4% increase over 2022. This uptick mirrors the increase in homelessness among all Americans, which increased by 12% over 2022.

Ending Veteran homelessness is a top priority for VA and the entire Biden-Harris administration. In total, the estimated number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the U.S. has decreased by 52.0% since 2010 and by 4.5% since 2020.

“One Veteran experiencing homelessness will always be one too many — and we will do everything in our power to ensure that Veterans get the safe, stable housing they deserve,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “These new grants are a critical part of that effort, empowering VA and our partners to provide more housing and wraparound services to more homeless and at-risk Veterans than ever before. Together, we will not rest until Veteran homelessness is a thing of the past.”

“Every American deserves a safe and affordable home. Like air, water, and food, housing is a basic human need required for the health of individuals, communities, and nations,” said U.S.

Interagency Council on Homelessness director Jeff Olivet. VA is a critical part of USICH's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. “The Biden-Harris administration's plan calls on all parts of the federal government, as well as mayors, landlords, developers, and everyone involved to help us build a future where no one experiences the tragedy of homelessness, and everyone has a safe and affordable home.”

From day one, the VA has taken aggressive action to combat Veteran homelessness. VA has [permanently housed 38,847 homeless Veterans](#) thus far in 2023, surpassing [the calendar year goal to house 38,000 Veterans](#) two months early. This year, VA has also [expanded access to health](#)

[care](#) for homeless Veterans, expanded [access to legal assistance](#) for homeless Veterans, helped [more than 145,000 Veterans and their families retain their homes and avoid foreclosure](#), and [awarded more than \\$1 billion](#) in grant funding to help homeless Veterans. In partnership with HUD, VA also convened 10 national HUD-VA Supportive Housing bootcamps, in which local VA homeless program staff with public housing agencies from across the country participated in intensive two-day workshops to improve coordination to more quickly rehouse Veterans through the HUD-VASH program. During 2023, the HUD-VASH program helped over 13,000 Veterans exit homelessness and obtain permanent affordable housing with supportive services.

There are many possible reasons for the increase in homelessness among Veterans and all Americans in January 2023, including the cost of housing and the end of COVID-related supports.

VA will investigate these barriers and do everything in its power to help Veterans overcome them. VA's efforts to combat Veteran homelessness are grounded in reaching out to homeless Veterans, understanding their unique needs, and addressing them. These efforts are built on the evidence-based "[Housing First](#)" approach, which prioritizes getting a Veteran into housing, then providing them with the wraparound support they need to stay housed, including health care, job training, legal and education assistance, and more. This initiative is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's broader efforts to [prevent and end homelessness](#). President Biden has also called on Congress to triple the number of Veterans who receive housing vouchers — a critical tool to help prevent Veteran homelessness.

For more information on the SSVF grant opportunity, visit [here](#). For more information on the legal services for homeless Veterans grant opportunity, visit [here](#). For more information about VA's comprehensive efforts to end Veteran homelessness, visit [VA.gov/homeless](#).

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2023: END-OF-YEAR VETERAN BENEFITS UPDATE

Happy holidays! As we head into the new year, we wanted to give you a quick update on VA's non-health benefits for Veterans. Partly thanks to the historic [PACT Act](#), Veterans like you have applied for benefits at record rates over the past year—surpassing the previous all-time record by 39%—and that's a great thing. As a result of your benefits applications, we at VA have been able to deliver [more earned benefits to more Veterans than ever before](#), including \$150 billion in benefits during 2023 alone. That's exactly what Veterans like you deserve.

Because of this record increase in applications, there has also been an anticipated increase in the number of claims applications that take longer than 125 days to process (otherwise known as the backlog), which is currently at 378,000 claims. While the total claims inventory has been decreasing over the last several weeks, the backlog is expected to grow in 2024 before returning to normal levels. We have been taking aggressive steps to address this increase and to ensure timely processing of your claims.

Here's what this means for you:

Although the backlog has increased, you will likely receive a benefits decision more quickly than during previous surges: Right now, the average claim is processed by VA in 149 days, which is 198 days faster than in 2013 (the last time applications were [nearly this high](#)). We also process some parts of your claims faster than others, so if part of your claim is granted, you may get a first payment before your full claim is finished.

We are granting benefits at higher rates: Whenever you file a claim, our goal is to work with you every step of the way to get to "yes." As a result of this approach, we were able to grant benefits for 65% of claims filed in 2023—including 76% of PACT Act claims, which is a sharp increase from previous years.

We are processing more claims than ever before: In fiscal year 2023, VA processed nearly 2 million of your benefits claims—beating the previous all-time record by 16%—and we're on pace to break that record again in fiscal year 2024.

Most importantly, we want you to [apply for benefits](#): We want every Veteran, family member and survivor to get the care and benefits they deserve, so we want you to apply today. We've hired thousands of claims processing employees in

anticipation of this surge in applications, and we have 1,400 more coming onboard soon. So don't worry and don't wait: [submit your claim today](#) and we will process it for you as soon as possible.

We are proud to serve you each and every day. Thank you for applying for your VA benefits at record rates in 2023 and for encouraging your friends and family members to do the same.

As we head into the new year, please keep spreading the word. Let's break the applications record again in 2024—and in doing so, ensuring that as many Veterans as possible get the health care and benefits that they so rightly deserve.

TO IMPROVE CARE FOR VETERANS, VA TO FUND STUDIES ON NEW THERAPIES FOR TREATING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

New research would determine the benefit of psychedelics for treating PTSD and depression in Veterans

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs issued a request for applications (RFA) for proposals from its network of VA researchers (in collaboration with academic institutions) to study the use of certain psychedelic compounds in treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression.

Through this new research opportunity, VA intends to gather definitive scientific evidence on the potential efficacy and safety of psychedelic compounds such as Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) and psilocybin when used in conjunction with psychotherapy to treat Veterans with PTSD and depression. This is the first time since the 1960s that VA is funding research on such compounds.

“Our nation’s Veterans deserve the very best care, and VA is constantly supporting innovations to deliver that,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough. “This is an important step to explore the efficacy of a potential new set of promising treatments that could improve the health and quality of life for Veterans.”

“[Veterans and VA researchers have told us](#) about the potential promise of psychedelics to treat mental health conditions for some time,” said VA’s Under Secretary for Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal. “Now is our chance to study this potential method of treating Veterans with PTSD and major depression across the country.”

VA and the Biden-Harris Administration are committed to exploring all avenues that promote the health of our nation’s Veterans. As with all other VA studies, research conducted on psychedelic compounds will be completed under stringent safety protocols. While these compounds are controlled substances, tightly restricted under federal law, research on these compounds may be conducted with appropriate regulatory approvals, including those from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The FDA granted breakthrough therapy status for MDMA for treating PTSD and psilocybin for treating depression in (2018 and 2019, respectively) based on promising preliminary research evidence.

In September, more than 75 VA and other federal clinicians, scientists and policy makers gathered in Denver to assess the state of existing scientific evidence regarding psychedelic-assisted therapies. This meeting's working groups provided advice to VA leadership, including the recommendation for VA to begin funding its own studies into these compounds. This guidance was based on [previously published studies](#) that have found promising results but included few or no Veterans. For example, [researchers at Johns Hopkins have shown](#) that psilocybin therapy, given with supportive therapy, can ease symptoms of depression for up to 12 months. Additionally, 86% of participants in a [recent peer-reviewed study](#) achieved a “clinically meaningful benefit” from using MDMA to treat PTSD.

VA researchers have already conducted a limited number of small studies on psychedelics in VA facilities using non-VA funding. This new RFA will permit the important next step of directly assessing effectiveness and safety of using MDMA and psilocybin-augmented psychotherapy in Veterans.

Expanding research on psychedelics to address Veteran mental health is also in line with calls from Veterans Service Organizations such as the [American Legion](#) and [Disabled American Veterans](#), as well as [mental health provider groups](#). The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2024 also authorized the study of psychedelics within military populations by the Department of Defense.

With this new announcement, VA will join the National Institutes of Health in supporting research that will yield insights for treating PTSD and depression. Psychedelic drugs are a class of substances that alter consciousness or awareness and may be organically or synthetically produced. VA does not recommend psychedelics for use as part of a self-treatment program.

If you're a Veteran struggling with a mental health or substance-use disorder, the VA can help. Find out about available resources [here](#).

FIREARM-RELATED SUICIDES AMONG WOMEN VETERANS ARE RISING. WE MUST DO MORE ON SECURE GUN STORAGE.

Military.com | By Nancy G. Espinosa and Russell Lemle
Published January 05, 2024 at 10:16am ET

The opinions expressed in this op-ed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Military.com. If you would like to submit your own commentary, please send your article to opinions@military.com for consideration. As gun ownership among women veterans has surged, so, too, have suicides where firearms are used.

In the recently released [Department of Veterans Affairs'](#) (VA) [2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), between 2020 to 2021, the suicide rate among women veterans jumped 24.1% -- far greater than the 6.3% increase among male veterans. Firearms were used in 51.7% of women veterans' suicides, more often than all other methods combined. The rate of women veterans dying by firearm suicide was nearly three times higher than for non-veteran women.

These grim statistics should serve as a wake-up call for the need to pay close attention to the risk of firearm suicide for women veterans. This work requires a hard look at how ready access to firearms during dark moments [correlates](#) with deadly outcomes.

There are wide-ranging reasons why rates of firearm suicides for women veterans are rapidly rising. Gun ownership among women in general has [doubled](#) over the past 15 years. Half of women veterans either personally own a firearm or live in a household with one, far [more](#) than non-veteran women. Those firearms are [stored unsafely](#) approximately 43% of the time, [more so](#) among those with thoughts of suicide.

Pair that with the surge of firearm purchases at the onset of COVID-19, especially among [women](#). During the pandemic, veterans in general reported increased social distress, with younger and women veterans [demonstrating](#) the greatest increases. Women veterans with histories of post-traumatic stress or military sexual assault -- both of which correlate with suicide attempts and suicide mortality - [- reported](#) higher levels of perceived pandemic-related threats and increased access to firearms.

The VA is responding to these trends with a multipronged approach. It has placed ad campaigns to reach all veterans, including those who have no contact with VA's health or benefits services. The [programming](#), which has been viewed hundreds of millions of times, focuses on locking up one's firearms or temporarily transferring them to friends, family or storage facilities during crises.

Further, the VA's entire clinical workforce is now trained in safety counseling for at-risk veterans who value firearm ownership. That's been a crucial initiative, since [surveys](#) indicate that therapists are the most frequently cited resource that women veterans identify when asked whom they turn to when experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Both the Trump and Biden White Houses also joined this mission. At the start of the pandemic, the Trump administration issued a task force report of the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End the National Tragedy of Suicide ([PREVENTS](#)). It emphasized that suicidal impulses often subside quickly, and that regardless of preexisting mental health conditions, voluntarily reducing one's access to firearms saves lives. The Biden administration amplified that [strategy](#) to encourage increased time and distance between suicidal thoughts and a trigger.

Yet, the dramatic increases highlighted in VA's annual report prove that much more is needed. The VA can't do this alone, and greater involvement from the firearm community will be essential.

In September, the VA joined with the [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#) and firearm trade advocates, manufacturers, retailers and range owners to advance joint efforts to promote secure firearm storage for suicide prevention. The industry's active engagement will be indispensable. [Research](#) confirms that messages advising citizens to store their firearms securely are accepted only when delivered by credible messengers through trusted channels. Specific attention to women veterans' reasons for gun ownership and storage practices must be tailored in this messaging. Women's gun organizations, such as A Girl & A Gun and Armed Women of America, are two natural avenues for reaching women.

Cable-style gun locks are currently provided gratis to any veteran who wants one, but [surveys](#) have determined that gun safes and lock boxes are preferred. A [third](#) of veterans who store their firearms loaded and unlocked don't own a lockbox or safe. A VA pilot program is offering these larger devices, cost free, to veterans who request them. Congress should make this program national, permanent and well-funded.

[Studies](#) show that suicidal patients have a four-fold reduction in attempts and/or death when care providers inquire about their access to firearms. This fact puts extra responsibility on the contracted pool of one million community [providers](#) and [grantees](#) who supplement VA's care. The annual report found that veterans treated by those providers were more likely to die by suicide than if care was furnished from the VA.

The VA's report concludes, "Veteran suicide rates will likely not significantly improve until there is increased collective engagement regarding the relationship between Veteran suicide and firearms." Indeed, it will take an all-of-nation effort -- firearm and veteran constituencies, along with the VA -- to protect the freedom to own firearms while also strengthening safe storage practices, especially during periods of crisis. That pathway forward will save lives.

Early History of Naval Aviation

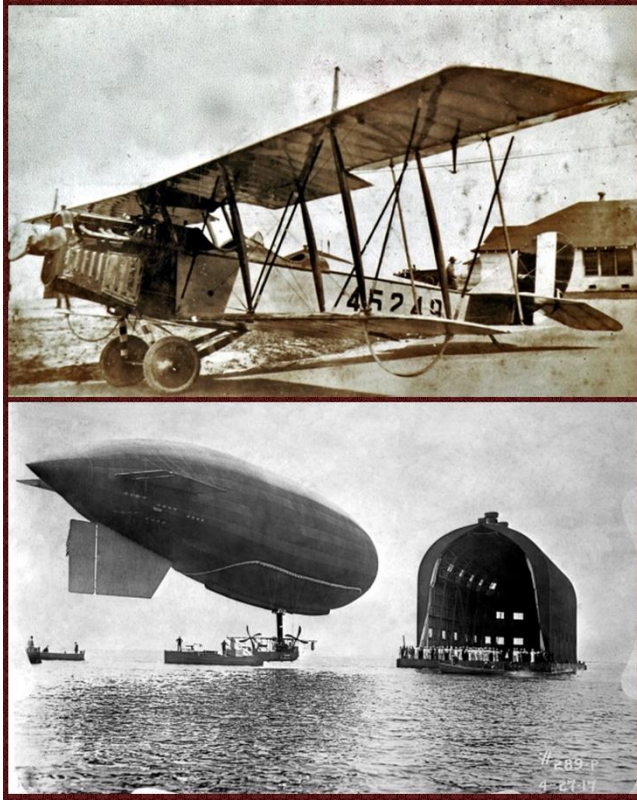
Date/Time: Saturday, January 6, 2024 @ 10:00 am

Place: Anderson-Price Building, 42 North Beach Street, Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Presented By: Leo Murphy, Ph.D.

Event Type: In-Person

Free Admission: (Open to the Public)



In January 1914, an old battleship and a sea-sworn collier arrived at the abandoned Pensacola Navy Yard in western Florida. Embarked were the entire US Navy Flying Corps and their fragile flying boats, and their mission was to establish the first Naval Air Station and advance the development of Naval aviation. Dr. Murphy's program will discuss the many mysteries, tragedies, adventures, and record-breaking achievements associated with the early history of Naval Aviation in Pensacola.

Leo Murphy, Ph.D. had a 30-year Naval aviation career which began with flying P-3 Orion's from NAS Barbers Point and ended with his final assignment as Director of the Aviation Training School at NAS Pensacola. Currently, he is a Professor of Aeronautical Science employed at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. In 2008 he was selected as the 23rd recipient of the prestigious Christa McAuliffe Award as the National Aerospace Teacher of the Year and he is

a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. He is the author of four books on aviation history, including his most recent, the biography of a Tuskegee Airman, which was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal in formal recognition of its contributions to American history. He also authored and staged a play on the Battle of Midway and wrote and narrated a television documentary on the early history of Naval aviation.

Funding for this program was provided through a grant from the Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the Florida Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Ormond Beach Historical Society - 2024 Speaker Series Season

* This is the last edition of the Action Corps Weekly for 2023. The next edition will be on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. We wish you a wonderful holiday season! *

December 18, 2023



Holiday Message: A very special VFW holiday message from the VFW Washington Office Staff to you and yours. [Click here.](#)



Defeating the Holiday Blues: For many veterans, the holiday season intensifies feelings of stress, depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Creating a community and building connections are ways to combat the holiday blues and provide a sense of purpose. For those unable to meet in person with family and friends, you can schedule video calls, online game nights, or virtual dinners, workouts, and watch parties. You can also volunteer with local VFW Posts and veteran support organizations in your area. [Read more.](#)



Free Connections to Resources: The National Resource Directory (NRD) gives service members, veterans, family members, and caregivers the ability to find and connect with organizations that can assist with specialized recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration needs. The NRD is the product of a partnership with DOD, VA, and the Department of Labor. This program is meant to facilitate free connections between individuals and stringently vetted resources that provide support in many areas such as employment, education, veteran benefits,

caregiver support, housing, and the Military Adaptive Sports Program. [Read more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced two burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Vietnam War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

--**Army Pfc. Hood E. Cole, 26**, of Atlanta, Georgia, was assigned to L Company, 3rd Battalion, 276th Infantry Regiment, 70th Infantry Division. He was killed in action on Jan. 14, 1945. He will be buried on Jan. 15, 2024, in Canton, Georgia. [Read about Cole.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Capt. Ronald W. Forrester, 25**, of Odessa, Texas, was assigned to Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 533, Marine Attack Group 12, 1st Marine Air Wing. He was killed in action on Dec. 27, 1972. Interment services are pending. [Read about Forrester.](#)

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[Click here to sign up new veterans' advocates.](#)

As always, we want to hear your advocacy stories. To share your stories or photos with us, simply email them directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

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Vietnam Veterans

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In Recognition of the Signing of the Vietnam Peace Accord on January 27, 1973.

**All Vietnam Veterans are cordially
invited to a free lunch at the
VFW Post 8696**

**Lunch:
BBQ pulled pork
sandwich w/ potato
salad**

**January 28, 2024
11am-2pm
Friends/Family \$9.50**

*"Agreement on Ending the War and
Restoring Peace in Viet Nam"*

*This copy of the Peace Accord was
release, including the original. Robbie Risner,
Gift of Lee Hamiston.*

"NamPOW Friend and Keeper of the Flame"