



Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc. ®

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VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Chairman's Remarks

Hey Congress! We're Baaaaccckkkk! Even as I write this I am winging towards Washington, DC, where we will spend 4 days on the Hill. We have 26 appointments lined up and will be pushing toxic exposure legislation covering Agent Orange herbicide, radiation, and burn pits. Accompanying me will be Chief of Staff Mike Kvintus, Legislative Director Earned Dillard, Vice-Chair Sgt. Major Jim, Kuiken with his service dog Freedom, and Litigation Director Brian Lewis. We will be accompanied by the Legislative Director for the Association of the United States Navy, Casin Spiro and the outreach coordinator for the Union of Concerned Scientists, Lilly Adams.

If you receive this newsletter before May 20th, it's not too late to buy a raffle ticket for our 4th annual Rif-Raf (Rifle Raffle). This year we are raffling off a Remington 870 shotgun, a Model 1911 .45 caliber pistol, a steel target (donated by Brian Moyer), and \$250.00 cash. The drawing will be held on May 21, 2022 at the annual MVA™ "Breakfast with the Best." Tickets are available at: <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/> under the Events tab. May 21, 2022, Armed Forces Day, is the date of the second annual "Breakfast with the Best." The breakfast will be held at T. LeBlanc's Creole Kitchen, 797 Robert Blvd., Slidell, LA 70458. For those of you living along the Gulf Coast, you may find the travel worth your while. Look folks, Chef Warren makes a french toast casserole that is to die for. Space is limited, so sign up now at www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org under the Events tab. Sponsorships are also available.

I traveled to The Villages in Central Florida, along with Brian Moyer, Mike Kvintus, and Tom Walden to give an update on our legislation and litigation strategies. We had over 100 people attend and the reception was good. The next day we provided a similar presentation to the American Legion at Mount Dora. Thanks to Brian Moyer for setting up both presentations. Education is part of MVA's™ core mission and we will travel to make presentations to groups. For more information contact me at <mailto:john.wells@mvadvocacy.org>.

One of the suits we are supporting at the Supreme Court held oral argument.

Mel Bostwick, of the Orrick law firm argued the case of George v. McDonough. Mel is the attorney who argued the final argument in the Procopio case. The matter in George concerns Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE). The VA contends that if they relied upon a regulation that was later found to be invalid, that this did not constitute Clear and Unmistakable error. Mr. George disagrees. MVA™ supported Mr. George in this case arguing that Congress intended the application of an invalid regulation, especially one that conflicts with a statute, to be clear and unmistakable error. The critical factor is that CUE is retroactive of the date of the first claim. Winning this case will result in a windfall of retroactive benefits for tens of thousands of veterans.

A special thanks to Linda Jo Heffner, author of Tainted Seas - My Sailor's Story. I was honored to write the forward for her book and a portion of the proceeds were donated to MVA™.

The PACT Act remains mired in Committee. We still have sufficient legislative days to get it passed, but as of this date, we do not have sufficient votes to bring it to the floor. Please contact your Senators and ask them to support the PACT Act. It affects Guam, American Samoa, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, radiation veterans, and burn pits.

No word yet on the promised appointment with the VA Secretary. Still waiting.

I want to thank everyone who has donated to MVA™ or purchased a raffle ticket. Your support is appreciated.

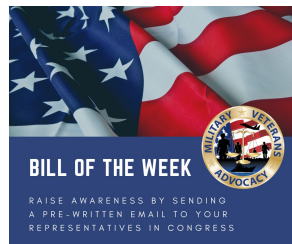
We currently have over 1700 members IF everyone would send in their renewal for 2022. This will bring us closer to that magic 2000 number.

If you know of a veteran's widow, they are eligible for a free membership. Contact <mailto:Robin.Barr@mvadvocacy.org>. If you are having financial issues, Robin also has gift memberships available. Any membership questions - contact Robin.

Please check out the MVA Marketplace on our website.

So until next month, stay steady on course.

John B. Wells
CDR USN (ret)
Chairman



BILL OF THE WEEK

Please support the MVA™ bill of the week. It takes a minute to register and seconds to send the pre-written email to your Member of Congress and Senators. This allows you to provide your input to Congress, support MVA™, and support your fellow veterans. Please scroll through and support all or some of our bills of the week.

<https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/bill-of-the-week.html>

Your MVA Board has put in over 1500 hours so far in 2022

Legislation In Congress

Two House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittees held a joint hearing focusing on the quality of representation in the VA disability claims process. The hearing discussed the ethical standards concerning VA-accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSO) claim representatives, attorneys, and agents. The Committees also addressed claim consultants who are unaccredited, unregulated, and who also are alleged to charge unreasonable fees and offer inferior service. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has stated that this problem of predatory claims practices has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office of General Counsel does a substandard job of regulating VSOs and often seem more interested in form than substance. But there is at least some regulation. These unaccredited companies receive no oversight. Military-Veterans Advocacy® has submitted written testimony recommending regulation of these organizations and wider choice for veterans including involvement of attorneys at the Regional Office level.

VA Pension for Survivors

This Memorial Day, as we honor the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military, we also remember the families they left behind. If you're the surviving spouse or child of a deceased wartime Veteran, you may be eligible for VA's Survivor Pension program. Memorial Day recognizes those who died in combat but also those who suffered lingering death from herbicide. Check out eligibility requirements. <https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension/>

Housing Grants for Disabled Veterans

Veterans and service members with certain service-connected disabilities can receive housing grants from VA to buy, build, or modify a home to meet their needs and live more independently. Find out if you're eligible for a disability housing grant and how to apply. <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/>

VA compensation and pension (C&P) exams, which are sometimes also called claim exams, are an important part of your claims process. C&P exams help VA rate your disability, which affects how much disability compensation you'll receive. Watch what to expect in your C&P exam. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKjNuR1fwRM&list=PLrrh23QvVYhAJ6t3vr81YvDypkezZ2yl&index=2>

Editor's note: This article by Jim Absher originally appeared on Military.com, a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.

The Air Mobility Command has announced that Space Available (Space-A) travel on military aircraft has returned for travelers to pre-pandemic availability.

According to a [Press Release](#), as of April 22, 2022, all restrictions on Space-A travel had been lifted. The Air Force aims to restore full service by May 13, 2022, according to the release.

[RELATED AT MILITARY.COM: [Who Is Eligible For Space-A Flights?](#)]

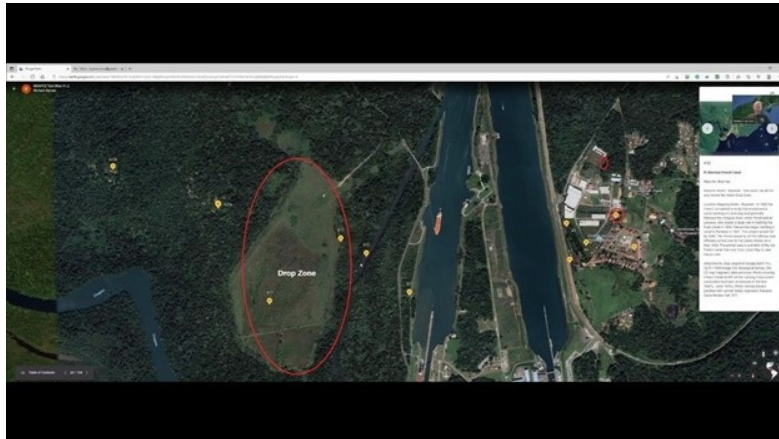
Restrictions put in place early in the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, effectively shut down all Space-A travel on Air Mobility Command and contracted aircraft for anyone not traveling for medical care or on emergency leave. Now, those blocks will be completely lifted.

While all passengers are required to follow current federal COVID-19 travel procedures, those traveling OCONUS may have additional testing requirements and restrictions for travel to specific countries; those interested may find details on country-specific requirements in the Department of Defense's Electronic Foreign Clearance Guide.

Space-A flights, or military hops, are a unique privilege provided to service members, retirees and their families. Under the Space-A program, eligible passengers can fill unused seats on DoD-owned or -controlled aircraft once all the space-required (duty) passengers and cargo have been accommodated. Space-A flights are available to military members and their families, retirees and some disabled veterans.



VETERANS OF PANAMA CANAL ZONE™



Did you know?

We are posting more content on the YouTube channel [The Travels of Orange?](#)

Boy, Fort Davis area sure looks different with the new canal and bridge. I guess people don't have to wait hours for ships to get across Gatun Locks. It wasn't so bad getting stuck on the Fort Sherman side coming back from the beach thanks to the "hole in the wall."

Since there is Orange, CA, FL, Oranges, Orange parade, orange juice, it is most difficult to find. If you type in [czveterans.com](#) it will take you right there.

Our Panama veteran Richard Wyman who served with the 549th MPs and was all over Panama guarding our treasures, has been able, using Google Earth, to pinpoint locations on Google Earth of the old Canal Zone, where might be a

good place to test for FOREVER chemicals, should the U.S. Government need to do so.

Personally, with all the shipments we have, the pictures of old AO barrels, the VA Secretary grant, not sure the testing is needed. But should anyone want to, we are producing a map of locations based on a Tropical Test Center map given to me by a veterans' spouse. Her husband worked as a Clerk at the Tropical Test Center.

Many of us came upon these weird sites in the jungle where the jungle was devoid and there were weird things on pedestals testing the tropical sun. I remember one such area out in the jungle, it was the size of a football field and had what seemed to be concrete lecterns and on the top was some kind of something. Some had paint chips, some had parts, just didn't make any sense at the time. But one thing for sure, to me at least, chemicals were used to keep it clear of jungle.

So tune in to czveterans.com. I found the picture of Fort Davis with the new canal particularly interesting as it shows our house where we lived, and about five pinpoints of areas to test very near to our quarters and about 1.35 miles from the edge of the Drop zone. A field right behind our quarters was used for helicopter repelling training. That field was kept clear by spraying.

I asked them one day what they were spraying, and the fellow told me, "Don't worry, lady, it kills bugs, not humans." Sadly, he had no idea and is probably deceased by now. The picture shows the Drop Zone to the left. Our quarters are at the yellow pinpointed location to the right and the red circle without the pinpoint was my husband's office at back of the Motorpool next to the perimeter fence where the hand sprayers would come by often to keep the jungle back. As you can see, there are about five pinpoints for possible testing very close to where we lived! I worked at Communications across the parade field, which also has a yellow pinpoint.

As we see in the TM 632, 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T was used on parade fields to keep down the broadleaf weeds.

Let us hear your story!

Contact me so we can hear what you saw. Since we have posted Fort Davis; Mt. Hope and Ft Gulick; and Galeta Island and France Field, I am hearing from many Panama veterans on other sites about things they saw online.

Contact me and let us all hear from you. The more we produce about what we know, the more the world will know.

By the time you are reading this Newsletter, we hope to have the Ft. Sherman group of videos posted. There are many interesting points, both from the Tropical Test Center map and from veterans who have submitted their input. We are doing all points of interest, so subscribe to my channel so you don't miss new content. And if you want to be part of the content, let me know!

Membership...

Welcome new members!!! We appreciate your support! Thank you to all who continue to support our push to get Panama recognized as a place where dioxin was used.

We are all playing our part of History in the Making! Together we are changing lives!

Your membership means everything to us as we can't do it without you!

Help us get heard!!

It would be much, much easier to be heard by DC if we had the membership necessary to get Federally recognized. For that, we need members! And lots of them! We are doing all we can to get Panama's grant written into the CFR. Please help us by joining and/or donating today!

Donna Torno
Director, Veterans of Panama Canal Zone™
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc. ®

If you have questions about membership, contact Robin Barr at Robin.Barr@madvocacy.org

Be sure to visit our online marketplace. We offer a variety of products from all of our sections and are continuing to add new products. <https://military-veterans-advocacy.square.site/>