

# February 28, 2014

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2. Reports of sexual assault in the military climbed in FY 2013.
3. Lawmakers hold hearing on deadly 'Extortion 17' helicopter crash in Afghanistan.
4. US-South Korea relations strengthened by North's actions, report says.
5. Senate blocks Dems' bill boosting vets' benefits.
6. Veteran benefits clear initial Senate hurdle.
7. Senate Republicans Kill a Bill to Expand Veterans' Benefits.
8. Omnibus VA bill falls in Senate.
9. Republican Bill Excludes Fertility Treatments For Vets With Genital Wounds.
10. VA's time to resolve disability appeals shoots up, lagging department's goals.
11. The facts about VA health care and benefits.
12. Legislation would overturn IVF ban for vets.
13. Congress harms veterans' medical access.
14. In the face of PTSD, we all have roles to play.
15. The First Step in VA Reform: Accountability.
16. Did the VA destroy EHR data to reduce appointment backlog?
17. I-Team 8 story sparks VA benefits legislation.
18. Veterans court gives troubled vets help in turning things around.
19. Veterans NOW Coalition On Track To House Over 400 Homeless Veterans In D.C. By March 31.
20. Colorado Homeless Veteran Population Declining.
21. Air Force rules Minn. veteran's cancer caused by base accident.
22. PTSD victim's wife recalls bad experience with new VA Medical Center.
23. New VA center's emergency room already being expanded in North Las Vegas.
24. V.A. Clinic on the Way to Marfa.
25. Sen. Murray cuts ribbon at VA clinic.

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**26. Congress questions Petzel on VA accountability.**

**27. Mobile clinic underscores strength of veterans' determination.**

**28. Female veterans luncheon planned for March 8 at University of Redlands.**

**29. South China man pleads guilty to collecting \$53,000 worth of dead  
mother's veterans benefits.**

**30. VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as February 28, 2014:**

**31. Today in History:**

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1. [Hagel, NATO chief urge all sides to stay cool as Russia drills on Ukrainian border.](#) Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and NATO's top official on Thursday called on Russia to avoid an escalation along its border with Ukraine, where a surprise Russian military exercise has stoked concerns about a possible armed conflict.
2. [Reports of sexual assault in the military climbed in FY 2013.](#) About 5,400 instances of sexual assault or "unwanted sexual contact" were reported within the U.S. military last fiscal year, a 60 percent rise from 2012, the Pentagon said Wednesday.
3. [Lawmakers hold hearing on deadly 'Extortion 17' helicopter crash in Afghanistan.](#) Was the mission doomed from the start? Were Taliban fighters tipped off? Were fallen servicemembers treated with dignity and respect?
4. [US-South Korea relations strengthened by North's actions, report says.](#) North Korea's continued desire to push the military and diplomatic envelope has only helped to strengthen ties between the U.S. and South Korea, a new congressional report says.
5. [Senate blocks Dems' bill boosting vets' benefits.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Yahoo! News (AP):** A divided Senate on Thursday derailed Democratic legislation that would have provided \$21 billion for medical, education and job-training benefits for the nation's veterans. The bill fell victim to election-year disputes over spending and fresh penalties against Iran.
6. [Veteran benefits clear initial Senate hurdle.](#) [Hyperlink to Video](#) **MSNBC.com (Video):** In this 6:20 video, Sen. Tom Coburn focuses on the lack of oversight and accountability at VA while talking with Andrea Mitchell about a Senate bill that deals with Veterans benefits.
7. [Senate Republicans Kill a Bill to Expand Veterans' Benefits.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Esquire:** There was a time, and not so long ago, when both parties would fall all over themselves to help America's veterans. How many platitudes are we going to hear on the stump between now and November about America's Heroes and Our Wounded Warriors? This bill was a put up or shut up moment. [It failed.](#)

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8. [Omnibus VA bill falls in Senate. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Washington Post:** A broad Veterans Affairs bill that would have expanded benefits for former service members and repealed a military pension cut for future troops stalled out in the Senate on Thursday.
  
9. [Republican Bill Excludes Fertility Treatments For Vets With Genital Wounds. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Huffington Post:** Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) has pushed hard to overturn the Department of Veterans Affairs' longstanding ban on covering treatments like in vitro fertilization for wounded vets and their spouses. While the Democrats' bill included her provision, Murray said her Republican colleagues "specifically excluded it" from theirs.
  
10. [VA's time to resolve disability appeals shoots up, lagging department's goals. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Sacramento Bee (McClatchy):** The average time for a denied claim to work its way through the cumbersome Department of Veterans Affairs appeals process shot up to more than 900 days last year, double the department's long-term target.
  
11. [The facts about VA health care and benefits. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Tampa Tribune:** America's veterans deserve the very best this nation can offer to honor their service and sacrifice. The 337,000 employees of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — nearly one-third of whom, like me, are veterans themselves — care deeply for every veteran we are privileged to serve.
  
12. [Legislation would overturn IVF ban for vets. Hyperlink to Video](#) **MSNBC.com (Video):** In this 4:05 video, Sen. Patty Murray talks with Andrea Mitchell about her legislation that would overturn a ban on providing In-Vitro Fertilization services as part of VA medical care.
  
13. [Congress harms veterans' medical access. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Hill:** As a physician, I find it unacceptable to see brave military veterans going without needed care within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
  
14. [In the face of PTSD, we all have roles to play. Hyperlink to Article](#) **Arizona Daily Sun:** The suicide death of former Marine Lance Davison is a tragedy that should bring home to the Veterans Administration that post-traumatic stress syndrome is a condition that demands proactive attention. Waiting for a veteran or his family to make the first call may be too late.

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15. [The First Step in VA Reform: Accountability. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Blaze:** From data breaches to backlogs to Obamacare style health care, one thing is certain; the current status of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is nothing short of disastrous.
16. [Did the VA destroy EHR data to reduce appointment backlog? Hyperlink to Article](#) **EHR Intelligence:** As if the Department of Veterans Affairs didn't have enough to deal with, the *Daily Caller* purports to have evidence that operational inefficiencies within the VA system, which led to a significant backlog in patient exam requests, also led to the deletion of hundreds of patients who logged request more than half a year prior.
17. [I-Team 8 story sparks VA benefits legislation. Hyperlink to Article](#) **WISH-TV (Video):** If a veteran dies before getting their benefits, the new legislation would award those benefits to family members even if the children are over 18. Right now it only goes to dependent spouses and children under 18.
18. [Veterans court gives troubled vets help in turning things around. Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Gainesville Sun:** Veterans courts began appearing around the country in 2008. A few circuits in Florida have such courts, but the 8th Circuit Court is the first in North Central Florida to offer it.
19. [Veterans NOW Coalition On Track To House Over 400 Homeless Veterans In D.C. By March 31. Hyperlink to Article](#) **DCist:** A coalition of nine government and non-profit agencies, working toward the federal goal of ending veteran homelessness in D.C. by 2015, say they're on track to house over 400 homeless veterans by the end of March.
20. [Colorado Homeless Veteran Population Declining. Hyperlink to Article](#) **KREX-TV (Video):** Colorado is experiencing a decrease in the number of homeless veterans, the second largest drop in the nation.
21. [Air Force rules Minn. veteran's cancer caused by base accident. Hyperlink to Article](#) **FOX 9 News** Morris has spent years trying to get the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to pay for his treatment and prepare for the possibility that his wife and ...

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22. [PTSD victim's wife recalls bad experience with new VA Medical Center.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Las Vegas Review-Journal:** When veteran Alexander Nogales arrived Feb. 9 at the North Las Vegas VA hospital with breathing problems, he was taken Mountain View Hospital's emergency room.
  
23. [New VA center's emergency room already being expanded in North Las Vegas.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Las Vegas Review-Journal:** Less than 1½ years after the Department of Veterans Affairs opened its \$1 billion VA Medical Center in North Las Vegas, earthmovers have begun churning the site again to expand the hospital's emergency room because the existing one is inadequate
  
24. [V.A. Clinic on the Way to Marfa.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **KWES-TV:** The small town of Marfa is getting a V.A. clinic. The clinic will be staffed with a registered nurse, a licensed vocational nurse and a medical clerk.
  
25. [Sen. Murray cuts ribbon at VA clinic.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Sequim Gazette:** For military veterans living on the Olympic Peninsula, a trip to the doctor often meant an all-day journey to Seattle or Tacoma. With the recent expansion of the Veterans' Affairs North Olympic Peninsula Clinic in Port Angeles, health care officials hope those long trips are over.
  
26. [Congress questions Petzel on VA accountability.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The American Legion:** The lone panelist at a Feb. 26 congressional hearing was the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. For more than an hour, he and four of his lieutenants defended VA's responses to Capitol Hill concerns over accountability issues in the department.
  
27. [Mobile clinic underscores strength of veterans' determination.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Bluefield Daily Telegraph:** Last week a Veterans Administration mobile clinic arrived in Bluefield. Veterans are the ones who need that clinic, and they are the people who made it happen.
  
28. [Female veterans luncheon planned for March 8 at University of Redlands.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Redlands Daily Facts:** The luncheon will honor veterans in attendance and thank them for their military career, while presenting an opportunity for women to network with other vets and learn about programs and services offered to them through federal and local levels.

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**29.** [South China man pleads guilty to collecting \\$53,000 worth of dead mother's veterans benefits](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Republic (AP)**: Federal prosecutors say a South China man has pleaded guilty to continuing to collect his mother's veterans' benefits for four years after she died.

## **30. VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as February 28, 2014:**

- **March 5, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- **March 6, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentations of Veterans Organizations: BVA, JWV, MOPH, AMVETS, TREA, MOAA, VVA, NGUAS and NASDVA.
- **March 12, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentations of Veterans Organizations: PVA, IAVA, GSW, WWP, FRA, AFSA, NCAO, AXPOW.
- **March 12, 2014.** SVAC, Full Committee, "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015."
- **March 13, 2014.** HVAC, Full Committee, "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015."
- **March 25, 2014.** SAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.
- **March 25, 2014.** SVAC, Full Committee, "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015."
- **March 26, 2014.** House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee will hold a joint hearing to receive the legislative presentations of The American Legion.
- **March 27, 2014.** HAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.

## **31. Today in History:**

- **1710** – In the [Battle of Helsingborg](#), 14,000 Danish invaders under [Jørgen Rantzau](#) are decisively defeated by an equally sized Swedish force under [Magnus Stenbock](#). This is the last time Swedish and Danish troops meet on Swedish soil.
- **1811** – [Cry of Asencio](#), beginning of the Uruguayan War of Independence
- **1827** – The [Baltimore & Ohio Railroad](#) is incorporated, becoming the first [railroad](#) in America offering commercial transportation of both people and freight.
- **1838** – [Robert Nelson](#), leader of the [Patriotes](#), proclaims the independence of [Lower Canada](#) (today [Quebec](#))

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- [1844](#) – A gun on [USS Princeton](#) explodes while the boat is on a [Potomac River](#) cruise, killing eight people, including two [United States Cabinet](#) members.
- [1849](#) – Regular [steamboat](#) service from the west to the east coast of the United States begins with the arrival of the [SS California](#) in [San Francisco Bay](#), 4 months 22 days after leaving [New York Harbor](#).
- [1867](#) – Seventy years of [Holy See-United States relations](#) are ended by a [Congressional](#) ban on federal funding of [diplomatic envoys](#) to the Vatican and are not restored until [January 10, 1984](#).
- [1870](#) – The [Bulgarian Exarchate](#) is established by decree of [Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz of the Ottoman Empire](#).
- [1874](#) – One of the longest cases ever heard in an English court ends when the defendant is convicted of [perjury](#) for [attempting to assume the identity](#) of the heir to the [Tichborne baronetcy](#).
- [1883](#) – The first [vaudeville](#) theater opens in [Boston](#)
- [1885](#) – The [American Telephone and Telegraph Company](#) is incorporated in [New York State](#) as the subsidiary of American Bell Telephone. (American Bell would later merge with its subsidiary.)
- [1893](#) – The [USS Indiana](#), the lead ship of [her class](#) and the first [battleship](#) in the [United States Navy](#) comparable to foreign battleships of the time, is launched.
- [1897](#) – [Queen Ranavalona III](#), the last monarch of [Madagascar](#), is deposed by a French military force.
- [1900](#) – The [Second Boer War](#): The 118-day "[Siege of Ladysmith](#)" is lifted.
- [1914](#) – The [Autonomous Republic of Northern Epirus](#) is proclaimed in [Gjirokastër](#), by the Greeks living in southern [Albania](#).
- [1922](#) – The United Kingdom ends its [protectorate](#) over [Egypt](#) through a [Unilateral Declaration of Independence](#).
- [1925](#) – The [Charlevoix-Kamouraska earthquake](#) strikes northeastern North America.
- [1933](#) – [Gleichschaltung](#): The [Reichstag Fire Decree](#) is passed in Germany a day after the [Reichstag fire](#).
- [1935](#) – [DuPont](#) scientist [Wallace Carothers](#) invents [nylon](#).
- [1939](#) – The erroneous word "[dord](#)" is discovered in the [Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition](#), prompting an investigation.
- [1940](#) – [Basketball](#) is [televised](#) for the first time ([Fordham University](#) vs. the [University of Pittsburgh](#) in [Madison Square Garden](#)).
- [1942](#) – The heavy cruiser [USS Houston](#) is sunk in the [Battle of Sunda Strait](#) with 693 crew members killed, along with [HMAS Perth](#) which lost 375 men.
- [1947](#) – [228 massacre](#): In [Taiwan](#), civil disorder is put down with the loss of an estimated 30,000 civilians.
- [1953](#) – [James D. Watson](#) and [Francis Crick](#) announce to friends that they have determined the chemical structure of [DNA](#); the formal announcement takes place on [April 25](#) following publication in April's [Nature](#) (pub. [April 2](#)).
- [1954](#) – The first [color television](#) sets using the [NTSC](#) standard are offered for sale to the general public.
- [1958](#) – A school bus in [Floyd County, Kentucky](#) hits a wrecker truck and plunges down an embankment into the rain-swollen [Levisa Fork River](#). The driver and 26 children die in what remains [one of the worst school bus accidents](#) in U.S. history.



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- [1959](#) – [Discoverer 1](#), an American [spy satellite](#) that is the first object intended to achieve a [polar orbit](#), is launched. It failed to achieve orbit.
- [1972](#) – [Sino-American relations](#): The United States and People's Republic of China sign the [Shanghai Communiqué](#).
- [1975](#) – In London an underground train [fails to stop](#) at Moorgate terminus station and crashes into the end of the tunnel, killing 43 people.
- [1985](#) – The [Provisional Irish Republican Army](#) carries out a [mortar attack](#) on the [Royal Ulster Constabulary](#) police station at [Newry](#), killing nine officers in the highest loss of life for the RUC on a single day.
- [1991](#) – The first [Gulf War](#) ends.
- [1993](#) – [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms](#) agents [raid](#) the [Branch Davidian](#) church in [Waco, Texas](#) with a warrant to arrest the group's leader [David Koresh](#). Four BATF agents and five Davidians die in the initial raid, starting a 51-day standoff.
- [1997](#) – An [earthquake](#) in northern [Iran](#) is responsible for about 3,000 deaths.
- 1997 – The [North Hollywood shootout](#) takes place, resulting in the injury of 19 people and the deaths of both perpetrators.
- 1997 – [GRB 970228](#), a highly luminous flash of [gamma rays](#), strikes the Earth for 80 seconds, providing early evidence that [gamma-ray bursts](#) occur well beyond the [Milky Way](#).
- [1998](#) – First flight of RQ-4 [Global Hawk](#), the first [unmanned aerial vehicle](#) certified to file its own flight plans and fly regularly in U.S. civilian airspace.
- 1998 – [Kosovo War](#): [Serbian](#) police begin the offensive against the [Kosovo Liberation Army](#) in [Kosovo](#).
- [2001](#) – The [Nisqually Earthquake](#) measuring 6.8 on the [Richter Scale](#) hits the Nisqually Valley and the [Seattle](#), [Tacoma](#), and [Olympia](#) area of the U.S. state of [Washington](#).
- [2002](#) – During the [religious violence in Gujarat](#), the 97 people killed in the [Naroda Patiya massacre](#) and 69 in [Gulbarg Society massacre](#).
- [2004](#) – Over 1 million [Taiwanese](#) participating in the [228 Hand-in-Hand Rally](#) form a 500-kilometre (310 mi) long human chain to commemorate the [228 Incident](#) in [1947](#)
- [2005](#) – A [suicide bombing](#) at a police recruiting centre in [Al Hillah, Iraq](#) kills 127.
- [2013](#) – [Pope Benedict XVI resigns](#) as the pope of the [Catholic Church](#) becoming the first pope to do so since 1415.