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1. [Karzai says Afghanistan doesn't need US troops](#). In his final address to Afghanistan's parliament Saturday, President Hamid Karzai told the United States its soldiers can leave at the end of the year because his military, which already protects 93 percent of the country, was ready to take over entirely.
2. [Defense: Sinclair's plea deal drops sex assault charge](#). Defense attorneys said Sunday that an Army general has agreed to a plea deal that includes the dropping of sexual assault charges against him.
3. [Reflecting on the long war and the toll it has taken](#). Since 2001, servicemembers have left their families to serve in dangerous hot spots. Thousands have paid the ultimate price and thousands more have come home damaged. Families back home have endured untold hardships as deployments drag on during a war in Afghanistan that long ago became the longest in U.S. history.
4. [Wounded warrior returns to Afghan mission](#). 1st Lt. Josh Pitcher put his fear on the back burner as he climbed back through the ranks, earning the U.S. Army's Expert Infantry Badge — something not easily obtained even by soldiers with two legs.
5. [Marine Corps Trials reveal wounded warriors' capabilities](#). When Marine Staff Sgt. Dorman Bilbrey was first encouraged last year to participate in the Marine Corps Trials, he figured swimming would be his sport. But, he wasn't so sure about how far he could swim.
6. [Obama backing bad budget for military](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Clarion-Ledger:** Almost 5.5 million veterans received care in Veteran Administration health care facilities in 2008 (va.gov), yet we know that the VA is understaffed and incapable of handling all the ailing veterans, especially the many with (1) mental illnesses and (2) injuries and conditions that will need a lifetime of treatment.
7. [Ariz. college may face freeze on veteran enrollments](#). [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Stars and Stripes (The Arizona Daily Star):** The federal Department of Veterans Affairs has asked the state agency that oversees veterans' education to determine if the college should be allowed to keep serving such students... The VA made the request this week after its latest audit showed PCC still isn't complying with laws aimed at protecting the tax dollars that fund education benefits for veterans.

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8. [Agent Orange talk prompts memories, emotion.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Hays Daily News:** More than 100 people were at the town hall meeting for Vietnam veterans to discuss Agent Orange. So many people showed up, extra chairs had to be brought in. Healthy veterans gave up their seats and stood so others could sit.

9. [VA program serves needs of female veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Globe Gazette:** The Veterans Affairs Central Iowa Health Care System, which includes the Mason City Outpatient Clinic, has a program to serve the increasing numbers of female veterans.

10. [Military sexual trauma therapy group meets at VA Clinic in MC.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Globe Gazette:** A military sexual trauma therapy group has been meeting at the Mason City Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic since October 2012... The group, which currently has six members, is for women who were sexually assaulted while serving in the military.

11. [Collateral damage: The mental health issues facing children of veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **CBSNews.com (Video):** The stories of veterans' lives upended by PTSD are all too familiar to us -- the struggles of their children practically unknown... It's estimated that as many as five million kids have had a parent or sibling serve in Iraq or Afghanistan since 9/11... veterans' kids who have psychological issues are largely on their own, if they get help at all.

12. [VA says "Diabetes is a silent epidemic".](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **KMA-AM:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs calls diabetes a silent epidemic among those who have served in the military and is dedicating resources to better management of the disease.

13. [Hospital Alarms Pose Risk For Patients: Study.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Science World Report:** Hospital alarms that are meant to improve patient safety and prevent harm are a potential health hazard to patients who spend a great amount of time in the facility. A new study suggests that redesigning the hospital alarm may lower the risk for patients.

14. [Exploring therapeutic effects of MDMA on post-traumatic stress.](#) MDMA has been banned by the federal government since 1985 as a dangerous recreational drug with no medical value. But interest is rising in its potential to help people suffering from psychiatric or emotional problems.

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15. [Army doctors examine bad habits.](#) Leaders at Fort Carson's Evans Army Community Hospital hope soldiers will take a smoke break as the war in Afghanistan winds down. Not a break to light up - commanders want soldiers to take a break from the bad habits that have festered in the ranks during 13 years of continuous combat, including tobacco, lack of exercise and lack of sleep.
16. [Paralyzed combat veteran uses bionic suit to stand, walk.](#) Just under three years ago, a powerful bomb blast ripped the earth apart along a remote road in Afghanistan, leaving Army Sgt. Dan Rose paralyzed from the chest down. Since then, Rose has plied Rocky Mountain powder on specially adapted skis, completed his first marathon in a wheelchair and surfed on ocean waves atop a longboard.
17. [Quick test could spot Alzheimer's, dementia earlier.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Star Tribune:** The Mini-Cog was developed at the University of Washington and was tested several years ago in more than 8,000 patients over age 70 in the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. None had a prior dementia diagnosis, but the Mini-Cog identified cognitive problems in nearly 26 percent of them.
18. [New USF counseling program helps veterans, families cope.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Bay News 9:** But not every veteran is as willing to seek treatment. It's why the USF Psychological Services center is starting a new program to encourage veterans and their families to get help... Dr. Jack Darkes, a veteran himself, helped spearhead the program called "Families Serve Too." The services range anywhere from marriage counseling to talking to kids about deployment.
19. [VAMC's Rural Health Team Tells Veterans About Their Benefits.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **WVVA-TV (Video):** The Beckley U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs's Rural Health Team traveled to Bluefield on Saturday to teach Veterans about the benefits of Veterans Administration Medical Centers.
20. [Neff: Providing legal assistance through veterans treatment dockets.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Richmond Times-Dispatch:** A resource that should be more readily available to veterans dealing with war-related health issues leading to a cycle of addiction, arrest, conviction, incarceration, relapse and re-arrest, is Veterans Treatment Courts (VTCs).
21. [Merrillville judge pursuing veterans treatment court.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Times of Northwest Indiana:** Town Court Judge Gina Jones said the town has been selected to participate in training necessary to form the court. The training, which starts in June, is provided by Justice for Vets and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Jones said.

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22. [Court offers new options for veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Times:** Debbie Mott, head of treatment services overseeing Hall County's Accountability Courts, said the county's Veterans Court began in January, and has eight veterans enrolled. Program directors are seeking funds from the state Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to continue for the 2015 fiscal year.
23. [Indiana Veterans' Home's new leader is eager to right the ship.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Journal & Courier:** Despite its large staff, ample grounds and hale camaraderie among veterans, the quality of care at Indiana Veterans' Home has consistently ranked near the bottom of Medicare's nursing home ranking system — two stars out of five possible.
24. [The Pipes Provisio: The VA Angle.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Power Line:** Although we are generally able to see patients for an initial visit in a somewhat timely manner, repeat visits are much harder to come by. A patient that I might see on a biweekly basis in private practice, I will see every few months at the VA.
25. [News you can use.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **The Garden Island:** Veterans can now speak directly via video conference with a VA benefits adviser in Honolulu to ask questions and discuss concerns involving their benefit claims.
26. [Claims appeals spike for Texas veterans State workers might help reduce latest VA claims backlog.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **Austin American-Statesman:** As the backlog of first-time claims plummeted nationally, the number of appeals of claims that were rejected or awarded at lower-than-sought levels has ballooned. At the same time, they are taking longer than ever to resolve, leaving veterans who depend on the money scrambling to make ends meet.
27. [Vermont's Lyndon State to host summit for veterans.](#) [Hyperlink to Article](#) **San Francisco Chronicle (AP):** Vermont's Lyndon State College is hosting a summit for veterans... The Department of Veterans Affairs will also be hosting a one-day "stand down," a community-based intervention program designed to help homeless veterans.
28. [Public bids farewell to wax figures at former American Civil War Wax Museum.](#) Abraham Lincoln: \$1,500. John Wilkes Booth: \$350. Bidding farewell to a piece of Gettysburg history: Priceless.

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29. [Gun Show features Vietnam War era helicopters, veterans assistance.](#) [Hyperlink to Article AL.com:](#) The Alabama Gun Collectors Spring Gun Show is this weekend at the BJCC... Several veterans organizations are on hand to answer questions and provide services for veterans. A van from the VA Hospital is also on site to provide answers to veterans' medical questions.
30. [Students' D.C. trip inspires fundraising to send WWII veterans on Honor Flights.](#) The eighth-graders from Grizzell Middle School were likely to see World War II veterans on their trip to Washington, D.C., their teachers told them.
31. [A nose for trouble.](#) [Hyperlink to Article WSOC-TV:](#) One of the main reasons Storm was brought to the Salisbury VA was for her tracking capability; her ability to find a person in a short amount of time can be crucial depending on the condition of the patient... People at the Salisbury VA know her, and Police Chief Jason Harrington gave his take on how Storm fits in.
32. **VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as March 17, 2014:**
- **March 25, 2014.** SAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.
 - **March 25, 2014.** HVAC, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity will hold a hearing on Veterans Affairs Bills.
 - H.R. 2942 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 - H.R. 3056 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the provision of outreach and support services to veterans pursuing higher education under the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 - H.R. 3614 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to improve the recognition by states of skills learned in the military by a Veteran when issuing licenses and credentials.
 - H.R. 4031 — Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act of 2014.
 - H.R. 4037 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to training and rehabilitation for Veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes.
 - H.R. 4038 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain improvements in the information technology of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to process claims more efficiently, and for other purposes.
 - H.R. 4147 — Student Veterans IT Upgrade Act.
 - H.R. 4150 — Veterans Employment and Training Service Longitudinal Study Act of 2014.

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- H.R. 4151 — Veterans Education Survey Act of 2014.
- **March 25, 2014.** HVAC O&I will hold legislative hearing with issues related to construction, health, and other matters.
 - *HR 3593* – Mandating arrangement with US Army Corps of Engineers for three major construction projects
 - *Draft bill* – informed consent for psychotropic drugs
 - *Draft bill* – oversight of contracts with service-disabled veteran owned small businesses
 - *Draft bill* –Gulf War Illness
 - *Draft bill* –Improve information security by implementing actions to improve transparency and governance
 - *Draft bill* –Biological implant protocol and procurement
- **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 26, 2014:** HVAC DAMA will hold a Legislative Hearing on bills related to NCA and VBA.
 - HR 2018 – Honor Those Who Served Act
 - HR 2088 – Centers for Excellence
 - HR 2119 – Veterans Access to Speedy Review (Video Hearing)
 - HR 2529 – Veterans Spouse Equal Treatment Act
 - HR 3671 – NCA Medallion Bill
 - HR 3876 – Burial with Dignity Act
 - HR 4095 – Annual COLA
 - HR 4102 – Require Payment for Accrued Benefits to Veterans Estate
 - HR 4141 – Expand Enhanced Use Leases to Cemeteries
 - HR 4191 – Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act (REVISED)
- **March 27, 2014.** HAC-MILCON-VA FY15 Budget Hearing.
- **March 27, 2014.** HVAC Health intends to hold a Legislative Hearing on health related bills.
 - H.R. 183 – The Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act
 - H.R. 2527 – Veterans counseling and treatment for sexual trauma that occurred during inactive duty training
 - H.R. 2661 – The Veterans Access to Timely Medical Appointments Act
 - H.R. 2974 – To provide for the eligibility for beneficiary travel for veterans seeking treatment or care for military sexual trauma in specialized outpatient or residential programs at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes

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- H.R. 3387 – The Classified Veterans Access to Care Act
- H.R. 3508 – Qualifications of hearing aid specialists
- H.R. 3180 – To include contracts and grants for residential care for veterans in the exception to the requirement that the Federal Government recover a portion of the value of certain projects (Kaptur)
- H.R. 3831 – The Veterans Dialysis Pilot Program Review Act of 2014 (Roe)
- H.R. 4198 – The Appropriate Care for Disabled Veterans Act
- DRAFT – To authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014 and for other purposes. (VA FY14 Construction Package)

33. Today in History:

- [1452](#) – The [Battle of Los Alporchones](#) is fought in the context of the [Spanish Reconquista](#) between the [Emirate of Granada](#) and the combined forces of the [Kingdom of Castile](#) and [Murcia](#) resulting in a Christian victory.
- [1560](#) – [Fort Coligny](#) on [Villegagnon Island](#) in [Rio de Janeiro](#) is attacked and destroyed during the [Portuguese](#) campaign against [France Antarctique](#).
- [1677](#) – The [Siege of Valenciennes](#), during the [Franco-Dutch War](#), ends with France's taking of the city.
- [1776](#) – [American Revolution](#): British forces [evacuate Boston](#), ending the [Siege of Boston](#), after [George Washington](#) and [Henry Knox](#) [place artillery](#) in positions overlooking the city.
- [1780](#) – American Revolution: George Washington grants the [Continental Army](#) a [holiday](#) "as an act of solidarity with the Irish in their fight for independence".
- [1805](#) – The [Italian Republic](#), with [Napoleon](#) as president, becomes the [Kingdom of Italy](#), with Napoleon as King.
- [1860](#) – The [First Taranaki War](#) begins in [Taranaki](#), New Zealand, a major phase of the [New Zealand land wars](#).
- [1861](#) – The [Kingdom of Italy](#) is proclaimed.
- [1891](#) – [SS Utopia](#) collides with [HMS Anson](#) in the [Bay of Gibraltar](#) and sinks, killing 562 of the 880 passengers on board.
- [1939](#) – [Second Sino-Japanese War](#): [Battle of Nanchang](#) between the [Kuomintang](#) and [Japan](#) begins,
- [1941](#) – In Washington, D.C., the [National Gallery of Art](#) is officially opened by President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#).
- [1942](#) – [Holocaust](#): The first Jews from the [Lvov Ghetto](#) are gassed at the [Belzec](#) death camp in what is today eastern Poland.
- [1945](#) – The [Ludendorff Bridge](#) in [Remagen](#), Germany, collapses, ten days after its capture.
- [1947](#) – First flight of the [B-45 Tornado strategic bomber](#).
- [1948](#) – The [Benelux](#), France, and the United Kingdom sign the [Treaty of Brussels](#), a precursor to the [North Atlantic Treaty](#) establishing [NATO](#).
- [1957](#) – A [plane crash](#) in [Cebu, Philippines](#) kills [Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay](#) and 24 others.
- [1958](#) – The United States launches the [Vanguard 1 satellite](#).

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- [1959](#) – [Tenzin Gyatso](#), the 14th [Dalai Lama](#), flees [Tibet](#) for India.
- [1960](#) – U.S. President [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#) signs the [National Security Council](#) directive on the anti-[Cuban](#) covert action program that will ultimately lead to the [Bay of Pigs Invasion](#).
- [1963](#) – [Mount Agung](#) erupted on [Bali](#) killing more than 1,100 people.
- [1966](#) – Off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean, the [DSV Alvin submarine](#) finds a missing American [hydrogen bomb](#).
- [1968](#) – As a result of [nerve gas](#) testing in [Skull Valley, Utah](#), US, over 6,000 sheep are [found dead](#).
- [1969](#) – [Golda Meir](#) becomes the first female [Prime Minister of Israel](#).
- [1970](#) – [My Lai Massacre](#): The [United States Army](#) charges 14 officers with suppressing information related to the incident.
- [1973](#) – The [Pulitzer Prize](#)-winning photograph [Burst of Joy](#) is taken, depicting a former [prisoner of war](#) being reunited with his family.
- [1979](#) – The [Penmanshiel Tunnel](#) collapses during engineering works, killing two workers.
- [1985](#) – [Serial killer Richard Ramirez](#), aka the "Night Stalker", commits the first two [murders](#) in his Los Angeles, [California](#) murder spree.
- [1988](#) – A [Colombian Boeing 727 jetliner](#), [Avianca Flight 410](#), crashes into a mountainside near the [Venezuelan](#) border killing 143.
- [1988](#) – [Eritrean War of Independence](#): The Nadew Command, an [Ethiopian](#) army corps in [Eritrea](#), is attacked on three sides by military units of the [Eritrean People's Liberation Front](#) in the opening action of the [Battle of Afabet](#).
- [1992](#) – [Israeli Embassy attack in Buenos Aires](#): [Suicide car bomb](#) attack kills 29 and injures 242.
- 1992 – A [referendum to end apartheid](#) in South Africa is passed 68.7% to 31.2%.
- [2000](#) – 530 members of the [Ugandan](#) cult [Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God](#) die in a fire, considered to be a mass murder or suicide orchestrated by leaders of the cult. Elsewhere another 248 members are later found dead.
- [2003](#) – [Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Robin Cook](#), resigns from the [British Cabinet](#) in disagreement with government plans for the [2003 invasion of Iraq](#).
- [2004](#) – [Unrest in Kosovo](#): More than 22 are killed and 200 wounded. 35 [Serbian Orthodox](#) shrines in [Kosovo](#) and two [mosques](#) in [Belgrade](#) and [Niš](#) are destroyed.
- [2013](#) – The largest [meteorite](#) (since [NASA](#) started observing the moon in 2005) hit the [moon](#).