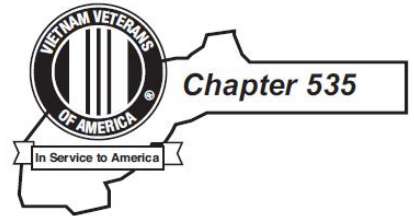




INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 535



Website: www.vva535.org

Volume 29 Issue 12

December 2019

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 535
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
December 2019**

Like many of you we spent at least one Thanksgiving and Christmas in Vietnam. I can recall reflecting on what my family was doing at certain times of the day both Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was a lonely time for many, especially those who were married and with children. There were a number of suicides during that time. So we kept close watch over our buddies and tried to uplift them whenever we saw they were going downhill. I can't remember the year; it was either 71 or 72 the pentagon announced that a major ceasefire would occur on Christmas. Well someone forgot to spread the word. All of our special operations FAC's/Psyops planes and gunships flew at least two missions on Christmas Eve and Christmas. Mostly working at night, we flew several close in combat support missions those nights. I was working with a FAC's and Psyops crew and remember orbiting several bases playing Christmas music over the huge speakers mounted on our plane. The troops on the ground loved it! Very uplifting for everyone. It was not uncommon for us to play country western music while taxiing to the runway. Always got a thumbs up from the ground crew. Well, we all made it back but still carry memories of those times.

Now for some housekeeping business.

Ric Sheridan and Frances will bring sodas and water to our Christmas Potluck on December 5 but if you like, bring whatever you want to drink that evening. The bar should be open since there is bowling next door. My wife and I are hosting the bar for our members (if the American Legion permits); it is our Christmas present to you. I will be bringing the coffee. In order to use the kitchen I am required to do a walk through of the kitchen on December 4 and get the combination. Please let me know what time you need the kitchen open the evening of our party.

We still need Victorian Christmas sign-ups. Please let Bart know what days you can work. If we do not have enough members participate we may have to cancel some of our days or evenings. This is our major fundraiser of the year. Please help out!

One outstanding issue: We will need help moving our chocolate products from upstairs to the downstairs cabinet in the dining room. Probably take about an hour. Maybe the morning of December 2, otherwise we will have conflicts with others using the building.

Many thanks to Dave Middleton and Dick Corn for working on our banners for our pop up.

I hope you all have a great Thanksgiving and wonderful Christmas. Pres. Keith

Toys for Tots

If you are so inclined to bring an unwrapped toy to our Christmas Potluck dinner for distribution by the Marine Corps League. Ric Sheridan is coordinating the VVA-535 toy effort.

VVA Chapter 535 Mission Statement

To foster camaraderie among members and assist those with disabling mental and physical injuries, to promote the welfare of our brethren affected by the war, and to engender public understanding of the sacrifice, patriotism and bravery of those who served, those who gave all, and those left behind.

Attention

If you do not drive and need a ride to a meeting or any VVA-535 function, please contact Bart Ruud or any local VVA -535 member and we will do our best to arrange transportation for you.

Guest Speaker for December 5, 2019

No guest speaker will be scheduled for December 2019. Our Christmas potluck will be the focus.

Tom Woollard works hard to coordinate and arrange for guest speakers. Lend a hand and pass along any ideas you may have for future guest speakers.

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Upcoming Events

- NCCVC Meeting – December 5, 2019
- General Meeting/Potluck – December 5, 2019
- Director’s Meeting – December 5, 2019
- Victorian Christmas – Dec. 8,11,15,18, 22, 2019

Chapter 535 Officers

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Dave Middleton 205-9375
Bart Ruud 823-1368
Ric Sheridan 274-1413
Mike Underwood 925-759-2924

Tom Woollard 432-1212

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FinanceRalph Remick & Dave Johnson
Parade and Honor Guard Dick Corn
Membership AffairsRic Sheridan
Newsletter Interim editor Bart Ruud
Victorian Christmas Underwood & Ruud
Nominations Ralph Remick
Veterans Assistance Keith Grueneberg
NCCVC Dick Corn
Speakers Bureau Tom Woollard
Web Master Ralph Remick
Quartermaster Dick Corn
Facebook Master Mike Laborico
Nevada County Fair Dave Middleton
CA State Council Rep. Mike Underwood

Nevada County Veterans Service Officer

VSO Officer -David West II (530) 265-1446 office
(530) 913-5046 cell
988 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley 95949
ncvso@co.nevada.ca.us
Thursday, 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00 is a
“Walk-In” day.

Placer County Veterans Service Officer

Derrick Oliveira ... 916-780-3290.
1000 Sunset Blvd, Suite 115, Rocklin, CA
Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 5:00
p.m.

Matters of interest as outlined at Board Meeting of November 7, 2019

Thanks are extended to Dale Epps who has coordinated the raffling of a M-1 replica pellet gun. Tickets are \$20 each and will be available at our General Membership Meetings through April 2020.

Patricia Graves, Ralph Remick and Bart Ruud met with the Nevada Union High School scholarship coordinator and have reported that the Harold Graves Memorial Scholarship is on track for distribution in Spring 2020.

Ralph Remick will undertake the reprinting of a supply of VVA-535 brochures as well as a new supply of VVA-535 business cards.

The shadow-box in the basement hallway has been completed and with that, determinations need to be made as to what to display in the shadow-box. Mike Hauser, owner of Grass Valley Blueprint, will make a backdrop for the shadow box. Thank you, Mike.

5 QUESTIONS WITH PLACER COUNTY’S NEW VETERANS SERVICES OFFICER

Published Nov. 8, 2019



Derrick Oliveira, a Navy veteran, has joined Placer County as the new veterans services officer, leading an office that helps connect veterans with the benefits they deserve, from healthcare to pensions, and navigate the system. Oliveira took some time to speak about his work and what community members can do to honor Veterans Day.

Tell us a little about your background.

I entered the U.S. Navy right after high school in July 2000. I wanted to serve my country. My grandparents served in the Army during World War II. I wasn’t ready for college at the time, and wanted to do something different. I signed up for the Navy, wanting to get away and see the world.
I signed up for five years years. I got more than I could have asked for during that time — camaraderie; education; and a greater sense of

purpose, service and sacrifice. I really grew up fast.

After basic training I was sent to the Naval School of Health Sciences in San Diego to complete a 13-month program in medical technology. Then, I was assigned to the clinical laboratory at Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I was tasked with training junior technicians to become technical experts in field laboratory procedures, such as blood banking. I was honorably discharged from the Navy in 2005 as a hospital corpsman third class.

And what compelled you to keep working with veterans after that?

Well, being in the Navy, ‘once a sailor always a sailor.’ There’s really a sacred bond that is created when you join, and that bond is never severed. I’ve always had the desire to help my community and help people. That’s why I wanted to become a Navy corpsman.

I went to college and double majored in philosophy and literature, and then went to Rome where I completed my master’s degree in theology. I came back to California where I served as a minister for four years, providing counseling to veterans and their families.

From there I continued on to veterans services. I enjoyed pastoral ministry, but wanted to do more, and working for a county gave me that opportunity. I worked for Merced County as a supervisor and acting VSO.

It’s a great feeling to help connect a veteran with his or her benefits. The Department of Veterans Affairs has a rating scale that gives veterans access to health and other benefits. When a veteran comes in and you’re able to help them get 100%, it’s really fulfilling. And it’s a veteran helping a veteran.

What would you want people to know about the services your office provides?

The Veterans Services Office provides assistance to veterans and their dependents, as well as widow(er)s. We connect veterans to all their

eligible benefits — everything from healthcare to education. Our staff is knowledgeable, and provides optimal services to veterans and family members who walk into our lobby.

We’re dedicated and care about each veteran. We have approximately 27,000 veterans in Placer County, and we want to help each one. Even if a veteran feels that he or she may not be eligible, we encourage them to come to our office to learn about the programs. They’ll be surprised to see what’s available. When I got out of the military, no one told me about the county Veterans Services Office. So one of my goals is to get the word out there.

What’s been your impression of Placer County and our veteran community thus far?

The veteran community in Placer is thriving and very active. I’ve been here just a week and already heard from many veterans service organizations, and I’m excited to participate and meet more people. I believe in the philosophy of providing veterans services through service and partnership. We collaborate with our community partners to provide services — we’re not in this alone. I’m very impressed with the spirit of giving and service among the veterans in Placer, and excited to work with them toward a common goal.

How can people express their appreciation on Veterans Day?

First and foremost, Veterans Day is a time to honor and thank veterans. It goes a long way to say ‘thank you’ and ‘welcome home’ - especially for our Vietnam veterans, who were not welcomed when they came home from war. Those feelings still exist. If you see any veterans, say thank you.

Saying thank you is important, but it must also lead to serving and helping our veteran community beyond Veterans Day. It’s not just a one-day event; it needs to be every day throughout the year. That commitment should be reflected in our policies and in our county —

especially when veterans walk through our doors at the Veterans Services Office.

Medicare for All

Threatens Veterans Health Care

Source: The Hill | Opinion - Darin Selnick |
November 4, 2019

For years, efforts to provide veterans more health care outside the Department of Veterans Affairs have been described by critics as a plot to dismantle the VA medical system. While the recent improvements in delivery of veterans' health care have proven those claims false, a real threat has emerged to care for veterans and military families. "Medicare for All" proposals in Congress would establish a single-payer health care system run by the government. They would prohibit the sale of private health plans while ending employer-sponsored insurance coverage and private and public sector retiree health plans. Although Medicare for All would leave the government-run portion of the VA system intact, it would eliminate the Department of Defense's TRICARE program, a network of private providers and military hospitals that provide health care for 9.4 million U.S military personnel, retirees, their families and some members of the reserves.

Through TRICARE, service members and retirees have 11 plans to choose from, allowing them to tailor their coverage to their unique needs. The dismantling of TRICARE would almost certainly hurt military morale, retention and recruitment. So even if the VA system remained in place, Medicare for All would still threaten the millions of veterans who have access to both the VA and TRICARE. Those who choose the latter, or a combination of both, would have fewer – or no -- options under Medicare for All. Worst of all, Medicare for All would undo the progress that has been made

improving veterans' health care — especially in regard to increased access outside the VA.

Although many supporters of "Medicare for All" cite the VA as a model government-run health care system, it has actually been moving toward a more free-market model. The VA has long relied on community providers to supplement the care it provides. However, since the 2014 wait list scandal, the VA has increased its use of outside health care by over 50 percent, helping reduce wait times and improve access to care. Today, about one-third of all appointments for veterans enrolled in the VA happen outside the VA system through community care. The recently launched Veterans Community Care Program created by the VA MISSION Act expanded access to care in the community for more veterans and created a network of local urgent-care providers that eligible veterans can visit without the burden of obtaining prior authorization from the VA bureaucracy.

Medicare for All would subvert these reforms by shrinking or eliminating community provider networks and restricting choices for veterans. It also would ignore the lessons learned from the VA over the past five years -- that more choice, access and competition improve veterans' health care by focusing on the needs of the veteran, not the bureaucracy. How might the future look for veterans and active-duty military families under a Medicare-for-All system? We have examples from other countries and they're not promising.

- In Canada, military veterans use their government-run health system, which ranked last among 11 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries in how quickly patients get to see their family physician.
- In Great Britain, all veterans have to use the National Health Service and are entitled to priority access only for

service-related conditions, but civilian clinical needs come first.

The United States should not go down this route. Instead, we should build on the reforms and policies that have increased health care choice and access for veterans. This will ensure VA health care will continue to improve while offering greater access to the care veterans need, when and where they need it — whether through the VA or in their own communities. Veterans, more than most Americans, have experienced firsthand the perils of government-run health care through past deadly VA scandals. For those who want to push a similar system on all Americans, our

veterans' experiences should offer a cautionary tale: Medicare for All ignores the lessons of the past and threatens not only the future of veterans' health care, but care for all Americans.

Vinh Son Orphanage website:

<https://www.friendsofvso.org>

Writing Your Story for INCOMING

(Ongoing repeat solicitation)

Ideas for your story:

- Think about what you appreciated about the Vietnam experience. There is surely a means to segue into that with very little reflection on the negative aspects of war.
- What did you appreciate about the Vietnamese people during your deployment?
- Can you steer away from the bad stuff and reflect on the best experience you had in the Nam?
- Surely you had a close buddy and you supported each other. Maybe there is a

story in that.

- What really got you through the day-to-day anxieties and fears? There might be a positive recollection in that regard.
- How did your experience instill in you a sense of patriotism that you possibly express every day of your life.

So far we have heard from Ruud, Epps, Chaix, Hamer, Chuck Holmes, current Marine LCpl. Jesse Hernandez, Kent Hawley, and Mike Laborico. (Thank you!)

No writer needs to dwell on the negatives of war. Each of us who was there lived the negatives, and all of us are better people for having served, especially when we look at how we matured as a result of our experiences. Each of us has derived a sense of being and an energy that is different from what it might have been had we not been sent across the pond.

Do share with us, in your own words, something of that chapter of your life. And, thank you for your service.

Forward your story to Bart Ruud at bruud45@gmail.com or hand deliver to Bart.

Military Pharmacies

H.R.4710 | Pharmaceutical Independence Long-Term Readiness Reform

Source: Federal News Network | Scott Maucione
| November 1, 2019

House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee Chairman John Garamendi (D-CA) and Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) introduced a bill last week to look into the military's dependence on China for pharmaceuticals. "It is very clear that the Chinese government controls fundamental pharmaceutical drugs that are essential for all of our wellbeing," Garamendi told Federal News

Network. “Drugs that deal with things like infection like doxycycline, drugs that deal with surgeries like heparin and many of the other generic drugs. All of them have ingredients that are made in China and almost exclusively in China.”

The bill, called the **Pharmaceutical Independence Long-Term Readiness Reform** bill, requires DoD to report on vulnerabilities faced by a dependence on Chinese drugs, and to only purchase American-made raw materials, medicines and vaccines for the military. The report would be due to Congress one year after the passage of the bill and would require DoD to identify raw materials necessary for the manufacture of medicine whose supply is at risk. The report would also identify shortages of drugs essential for combat readiness and to point out contingencies if the drug supply line is disrupted. “In 2007 and 2008, 246 Americans died as a result of a contamination that occurred with heparin,” Garamendi said. “That contamination was directly linked to the base product that came from China. There is a probability that it was deliberately contaminated in China. The Food and Drug Administration does not have any ability to look into the manufacturing of these foundational ingredients to a wide range of generic drugs.”

Garamendi and Hartzler are concerned that since China is a main adversary of the United States that it may try to contaminate drugs, or cut important ingredients off for drugs, used by service members. “Put simply, China having control over the production of our military’s medicine poses a grave national security threat. Not only does it open the possibility of them deliberately manipulating our service member’s medical regimens and causing physical harm, but the Chinese government’s lack of proper oversight and regulatory standards on prescription drugs is also deeply alarming to me. We need to ensure that our military’s medicine is American-made,” Hartzler said in a

press release. Garamendi said forcing DoD to buy only American-made ingredients and drugs may be more expensive, but it will be worth it considering the possible risks.

DoD is already looking into supply chain issues with China in other areas. The Pentagon is looking into how it can get rare earth minerals that it needs to build electronics and other systems, since China has a stranglehold on the market. DoD is also looking into what electronics it buys. The military already cut out ZTE and Huawei over fears that the Chinese companies might place instruments that could spy on the United States within their electronics.

USS Carl Vinson

To Be F-35’s First Home at Sea

Source: Breaking Defense | Paul McLeary |
November 05, 2019

The Navy is upgrading one of its oldest aircraft carriers to be the first to fly the service’s newest plane, the F-35C, giving it a capability the service’s brand-new \$13 billion carrier, the delayed and trouble-prone USS Gerald R. Ford, won’t have for years once it deploys. Navy officials say the Ford and its follow-on carrier, the USS John F. Kennedy, are not being built to carry F-35s, and will have to undergo upgrades years after they’ve deployed. The plan is in keeping with a complicated maintenance and upgrade schedule the service has devised to marry ships with the Joint Strike Fighter as both become available. The plane couldn’t have been included in the designs for the first two of four planned Ford carriers, one Navy official said, because the F-35C’s final form was still a work in progress when the final design for the Fords was wrapping up.

That means the 36-year old USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70), which started its build under the Nixon administration and launched in 1983, will

be the F-35s first home at sea. The ship is currently undergoing a \$34 million refit in Bremerton Wash. until July 2020, followed by a 2021 deployment. While both Nimitz and Ford-class aircraft carriers can operate with F-35Cs aboard, Navy spokesman Capt. Danny Hernandez said in an email, there are modifications to both carrier classes that are required in order to use all the data and information the F-35s can push out and receive, along with the addition of “additional classified spaces, some robustness of the ship for unique F-35 requirements (e.g. jet blast deflectors, etc.), but are not fundamental redesigns of any major components of the ship.”

Tabbed as the Navy’s first deployable F-35 air wing, Lemoore, Ca.-based VFA-147 Argonauts to deploy with the Vinson in 2021, accompanied by the Navy’s first squadron of Osprey tiltrotors, the Titans of Fleet Logistics Multi- Mission Squadron 30. The unit, created in December, is the Navy’s first shot at replacing its C-2A Greyhound fleet. Crucially, the Osprey is able to haul the F-35’s heavy engines out to the ship, something the Greyhounds can’t do. Breaking D readers will remember that the Marines tested the V-22’s ability to carry the Pratt & Whitney F135s from another ship or a base.

The Ford, which Navy Secretary Richard Spencer insists will deploy before 2024 despite a host of issues facing its weapons elevators and the new electromagnetic systems aboard, just wrapped up a five-day sea trial where things appeared to be on track, after a 15-month sit pier side to continue fix its buggy new technology. The ship has blown past previous cost caps Congress placed on it, and is more than a year past its scheduled sail-away date. The caps rose from about \$10 billion in 2007 to \$13 billion by 2018, all of which the ship has overshot, including a request in September for another \$197 million in order to fix seven non-working weapons elevators. The latest request pushed the ship’s cost to \$13.2 billion. Spencer

has blasted Huntington and questioned the company’s ability to fix the ship’s weapons elevators, of which only four of 11 currently work.

The “Knife Fighter” of Army Aviation

Not building in F-35 capability on the first two ships “has always been the plan,” Hernandez said, adding F-35 capabilities will be built into the next two Ford carriers; the USS Enterprise slated to deploy in 2028 and the yet-to-be-named CVN 81, which will go to sea in 2032. In January, the Navy awarded Huntington Ingalls Industries’ Newport News Shipbuilding a \$24 billion contract for the two ships, compared to a predicted cost of \$28 billion if the sea service had purchased them separately. “I have a demand for carriers right now that I can’t meet,” Navy Secretary Richard Spencer told reporters last week during a breakfast at the Heritage Foundation. “Every combatant commander wants carriers. So my job is to see how I can fulfill that requirement.”

The calls for carriers from commanders overseas has been a constant for decades, and the past two decades of back- to-back deployments to support ground wars in the Middle East have used up any spare capability the Navy had, leading to a situation like the one in Norfolk, where six carriers are undergoing refit at the same time. That includes the USS Truman, which is weeks past its planned deployment date due to electrical issues that has left the Navy and Huntington Ingalls scrambling to get the ship to sea. There are other options. The Navy and Marine Corps are warming to the “lightning carrier” concept, designed to pack amphibious ships with Marine Corps’ F-35Bs and sail them to the hotspots to cover places the big decks aren’t. “If, in fact, part of the mission of a carrier is presence, and forward deployability, 20 F-35s is a great option to augment what the requirement might be,” Spencer said.

The USS America was recently photographed sailing in the Pacific with 13 F-35s on its deck, something that the services want to do more of as the so-called Gator Navy reinforces more decks to handle the fifth generation fighter. (The Navy refuses to call the smaller Marine ships aircraft carriers, although they are larger than carriers built in World War II and are, well, in plain English, aircraft carriers. Instead, they are known as amphibious ships, or LHAs.) The Marines and Navy are working on a new strategy to more closely align their operations, which would allow both to provide more punch, and give the Marines the ability to launch from both ships and from small ad-hoc land bases to support the fleet.

The Vinson's first underway with the F-35 also tracks with the Royal Navy's HMS Queen Elizabeth, which is slated to head to the Mediterranean and Middle East in 2021 with its own air wing of F-35Bs, along with a wing of US Marine Corps F-35Bs, a major first in deployability between the two longtime allies. The QE is currently underway off the US East Coast, where just last month it began launching and recovering British F-35Bs for the first time.

Cancer Q&A

Source: American Cancer Society |
November 15, 2019

(Q) How do vegetables and fruits impact on cancer?

Answer. Because people are interested in the possible links between specific foods, nutrients, or lifestyle factors and specific cancers, research on health behaviors and cancer risk is often reported in the news. No one study, however, provides the last word on any subject, and single news reports may put too much emphasis on what appear to be conflicting results. In brief news stories, reporters cannot always put new

research findings in their proper context. Therefore, it is rarely, if ever, a good idea to change diet or activity levels based on a single study or news report. The following address common concerns about vegetables and fruits in relation to cancer:

• *Do vegetarian diets reduce cancer risk?*

Vegetarian diets can include many health-promoting features. They tend to be low in saturated fat and high in fiber, vitamins, and phytochemicals, and do not include eating red and processed meats. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that vegetarian diets may be helpful in lowering cancer risk. Whether vegetarian diets offer any special benefits against cancer over diets that include smaller amounts of animal products than are typically eaten in Western diets is less clear.

Strict vegetarian diets that avoid all animal products including milk and eggs, referred to as "vegan" diets, can benefit from supplementation with vitamin B12, zinc, and iron, especially for children and women before menopause. These diets should also include enough calcium, as people eating vegan diets with fairly low calcium content have been shown to have a higher risk of bone fractures compared with people eating vegetarian or meat-containing diets.

- **• *Does cooking affect the nutritional value of vegetables?*** Boiling vegetables, especially for long periods, can remove their water-soluble vitamins. Some potentially beneficial phytochemicals are fat soluble, so sautéing in oil may increase the availability of these compounds. Cooking in general may break down plant cell walls and make nutrients and other phytochemicals more readily absorbed. Microwaving and steaming are the best ways to preserve the nutritional content of vegetables. Eating raw vegetables, such as in salads,

also preserves nutritional content. Along with the general recommendation to eat a wide variety of vegetables, using different cooking methods may also enhance the availability of many nutrients and phytochemicals.

- • ***Should I be juicing my vegetables and fruits?*** Juicing can add variety to the diet and can be a good way to get your vegetables and fruits, especially if chewing or swallowing is a problem. Juicing also helps the body absorb some of the nutrients in vegetables and fruits. But juices contain less fiber and may be less filling than whole vegetables and fruits. Fruit juice in particular can account for quite a few calories if a person drinks a lot of it. Commercially juiced products should be 100% vegetable or fruit juices. They should also be pasteurized to kill harmful germs.
- • ***Will eating vegetables and fruits lower cancer risk?*** Yes. The strength of the evidence that eating vegetables and fruits lowers cancer risk has weakened recently as more studies have found no or only weak effects, but the overall evidence suggests some lowering of risk for several types of cancer. This includes cancers of the lung, mouth, throat (pharynx), voice box (larynx), esophagus, stomach, colon, and rectum. The types of vegetables and fruits that may reduce the risk of certain cancers may differ. It is not known which of the many compounds in vegetables and fruits are most likely to protect against cancer, and different vegetables and fruits may be rich sources of different phytochemicals that may lower cancer risk.

Recent studies suggest that eating more vegetables and fruits may also help lower the risk of developing obesity, and thus is likely to have an indirect effect on cancer risk. The best advice is to eat at least

2 1/2 cups of a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits each day.

- • ***Is there a difference in the nutritional value of fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruits?*** Yes, but they can all be good choices. Fresh foods are usually thought to have the most nutritional value (and often the best flavor as well). But frozen foods can actually be more nutritious than fresh foods because they are often picked ripe and quickly frozen (whereas fresh foods may lose some of their nutrients in the time between harvesting and eating).

Canning is more likely to reduce heat-sensitive and water-soluble nutrients because of the high heat that must be used. Be aware that some fruits are packed in heavy syrup, and some canned vegetables are high in sodium (salt). Choose vegetables and fruits in a variety of forms.

- • ***Can soy-based foods reduce cancer risk?*** As with other beans or legumes, soy and foods derived from soy are an excellent source of protein and a good alternative to meat. Soy contains several phytochemicals, including isoflavones, which have weak estrogen-like activity and may help protect against hormone-dependent cancers. There is growing evidence that eating traditional soy foods such as tofu may lower the risk of cancers of the breast, prostate, or endometrium (lining of the uterus), and there is some evidence it may lower the risk of certain other cancers. Whether this applies to foods that contain soy protein isolates or textured vegetable protein derived from soy is not known. There is little data to support the use of supplements of isolated soy phytochemicals for reducing cancer risk.

- • ***What are folate and folic acid, and can they lower cancer risk?*** Folate is a B vitamin naturally found in many vegetables, beans, fruits, whole grains, and fortified breakfast cereals. Some studies from the 1990s suggested that a lack of folate might increase the risk of colorectal and breast cancers, especially in people who drink alcohol. But since 1998, enriched grain products in the United States have been fortified with folic acid, a manmade form of this vitamin, so most people get enough folate in their diet.

Some studies suggest that folic acid supplements may increase the risk of prostate cancer, advanced colorectal polyps, and possibly breast cancer. Because of this, and the fact that most people get enough folate in their diet, the best way to get folate is by eating vegetables, fruits, and enriched or whole-grain products.

- • ***What is dietary fiber, and can it lower cancer risk?*** Dietary fiber includes a wide variety of plant carbohydrates that humans cannot digest. Good sources of fiber are dried beans, vegetables, whole grains, and fruits. Specific categories of fiber are "soluble" (such as oat bran, peas, beans, and psyllium fiber) or "insoluble" (such as wheat bran, fruit peels and skins, nuts, seeds, and cellulose).

Recent studies suggest dietary fiber is linked with a lower risk of some types of cancer, especially colorectal cancer. But it is not clear whether it is the fiber or another component of high-fiber foods that is responsible for the link. These findings are one of the reasons that the ACS recommends eating high-fiber foods such as whole grains, vegetables, and fruits to help reduce cancer risk, but does

not expressly recommend the use of fiber supplements.

- • ***What's the difference between Wheat bread and whole-wheat bread?*** Whole-wheat bread has more fiber and is better for you. If it just says "wheat bread," the bread is probably made with refined white flour. Look for "whole grain" as the first ingredient on labels for bread, cereal, and crackers. Choose whole grains over processed (white) grains when possible.
- • ***What are genetically modified foods, and are they safe?*** Genetically modified or bioengineered foods are made by adding genes from other plants or organisms to increase a plant's resistance to insects; slow spoilage; or improve flavor, nutrient content, or other desired qualities. In recent years, there has been growing use of genetic engineering to produce certain foods. In the United States, for example, most soybeans and corn are grown from seeds that have been modified to resist herbicides, and in the case of corn, to make a natural insecticide.

Concerns have been raised about the safety of using genetically modified seeds. In theory, these added genes might create substances that could cause allergic reactions in some people, or could result in higher levels of compounds that cause health effects. On the other hand, genetic modification might also be used to improve public health. For example, there is interest in increasing the folate content of various plant foods through genetic modification.

There is no proof at this time that the genetically modified foods that are now on the market are harmful to human health or that they would either increase

or decrease cancer risk because of the added genes. But the lack of proof of harm is not the same as proof of safety, and because these foods have been around for a fairly short time, the possible long-term health effects are not known. It is important that the safety of genetically modified foods continues to be assessed to be sure of their genuine safety as well as to increase confidence that their use is worthwhile.

Examples of genetically modified foods approved for sale in the United States include varieties of carrots, corn, tomatoes, and soy. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) all share oversight of these foods.

VA Medical Records

iPhone Access Now Available

Source: Military Times | Patricia Kime |
November 7, 2019

Veterans with iPhones can now view their Department of Veterans Affairs medical records through their phone's Health app. VA and Apple began rolling out the capability during the summer but issued formal announcements this week, just ahead of Veterans Day. "We have delivered veterans an innovative new way to easily and securely access their health information," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said 6 NOV in a release. "Veterans deserve access to their health data at any time and in one place, and with health records on the Health app, VA has pushed the veterans experience forward."

Veterans will see an aggregated view of their VA health care information such as lab results, medical history, procedures and medications. Information from private medical providers also

is available if that provider participates in the Apple Health program. More than 400 companies are on board, including Johns Hopkins, University of California San Diego, Quest Diagnostics and Allscripts. Jeff Williams, Apple's chief operating officer, said helping veterans further understand their health is a way to show the company's gratitude for their service. "By working with the VA to offer Health Records on iPhone, we hope to help those who served have greater peace of mind that their health care is in good hands," Williams said in a release.

Veterans in the VA health system have had access to their medical records through the [eBenefits](#) and the [MyHealthVet](#) websites. The VA's "Blue Button" records sharing system also gives community care providers access to VA records. According to Apple, all information is encrypted and protected by the user's iPhone passcode, Touch or Face ID. The data is downloaded via an encrypted connection directly from the VA to the app and does not "traverse Apple's network during this download," according to the company's [website](#). Once on the app, the information is encrypted by the iPhone's HealthKit database.

Every iPhone has the Health app, one of the standard applications provided under the iPhone's operating system. It can be used to track activity, nutrition, sleep, vital signs and other information pertaining to fitness and health. Veterans wishing to access their records must open the app, and under "Access Your Records," tap "Get Started." They can then select the Department of Veterans Affairs under the search page. For the time being, veterans who use Android devices cannot access their VA medical records via their phones. VA has not said whether it plans to partner with Google to make the option available.

Federal Tax Law Changes

7 Ways Your Taxes Will Change in 2020

Source: MoneyTalksNews | Karla Bowsher | November 11, 2019

The impact of tax reform is still playing out. A few more changes are in store for your next tax return — in addition to the usual inflation adjustments. The 2019 tax year — for which your return is due by April 2020 — is rapidly coming to an end. If you want to make the most of everything from tax deductions to retirement accounts this year, now is the time to learn the rules that will apply to your next federal income tax return. Once the new year dawns, it will be too late. Many key dollar figures — from standard deductions to retirement account contribution limits — can change every year due to inflation. Additionally, some aspects of the federal tax reform law of 2017 didn't take effect until this year. So, following is a look at some of the biggest ways in which the federal tax return you file by April 2020 will differ from the last one you filed.

1. No individual mandate penalty

Most of the tax code changes stemming from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 took effect in 2018. One exception is the change to the shared responsibility payment, which takes effect this year. The [shared responsibility](#) payment — commonly referred to as the individual mandate penalty — has applied to folks who are required to have health insurance under the Affordable Care Act but who didn't get coverage and didn't qualify for an exemption. If you owed the penalty, it was due when you paid your

taxes. Starting this year, however, there is no penalty. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act zeroed it out effective in 2019. So, folks who don't have health insurance this year will not owe the penalty when they file their taxes in 2020.

2. Higher medical expense deduction threshold

Another way in which the Affordable Care Act impacted taxes was by raising the threshold for deductible medical and dental expenses from 7.5% to 10% of adjusted gross income. That made it harder to qualify for the deduction. If you itemized your tax deductions, you could deduct eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses if they exceeded 10% of your income, rather than the previous 7.5%. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act gave taxpayers a brief reprieve from that change, lowering the threshold back down to 7.5%, but only for the 2017 and 2018 tax years. Starting this year, it returns to 10%. In other words, as the IRS puts it in [Publication 5307](#), which details how tax reform affects individuals: *"If you plan to itemize for tax year 2019, your unreimbursed medical and dental expenses will have to exceed 10% of your 2019 adjusted gross income in order to be deductible."*

3. No alimony deduction

Elimination of the alimony deduction is another Tax Cuts and Jobs Act change that took effect in tax year 2019 rather than 2018. For divorce and separation agreements made or modified this year or thereafter, alimony payments will not be deductible, says IRS Publication 5307. So, a spouse who gets divorced this year and pays alimony this year cannot write the payments off on a tax return in 2020.

That also means that a spouse who gets divorced this year and receives alimony this year cannot count the payments as income.

4. Higher retirement account contribution limits

This year, you can stash more cash in various types of retirement accounts, as we detail in [“Limits for 401\(k\), IRA and Other Retirement Plans to Rise in 2019.”](#) Contributions that you make in 2019 to such accounts — including traditional 401(k) plans and traditional individual retirement accounts (IRAs) — could be deductible on your next tax return. The 2019 contribution limits include:

- • 401(k) base contribution: \$19,000 (up from \$18,500 last year)
- • 401(k) catch-up contribution (for taxpayers age 50 and older): additional \$6,000 (unchanged)
- • IRA base contribution: \$6,000 (up from \$5,500)
- • IRA catch-up contribution (for taxpayers age 50 and older): additional \$1,000 (unchanged)

The increases to IRA contributions limits for 2019 are a particularly big deal, as this is the first year since 2013 that IRA limits have budged. Some contribution limits will also rise again for tax year 2020 — the one for which your return is due by April 2021 — as we recently [reported](#).

5. Higher HSA contribution limits

Health savings accounts are another type of tax-advantaged account for which the contribution limits generally increase as the years roll along. HSAs are not strictly for retirement savings, although you can effectively use them as retirement accounts, as we explain in [“3 Reasons to Get a Health Savings Account.”](#) The [2019 contribution limits](#) for people who are eligible for an HSA and have the following types of high-deductible health insurance policies are:

- • Self-only coverage: \$3,500 (up from \$3,450 last year)
- • Family coverage: \$7,000 (up from \$6,900)

HSA limits also [will rise](#) again for tax year 2020.

6. Higher standard deductions

Standard deductions are somewhat higher this year on account of inflation. The IRS [reports](#) that they are:

- • Married filing jointly: \$24,400 (up \$400 from last year)
- • Married filing separately: \$12,200 (up \$200)
- • Head of household: \$18,350 (up \$350)
- • Single: \$12,200 (up \$200)

The standard deduction reduces the amount of your income that's subject to federal taxes. So, if a married couple filing a joint tax return is eligible for and chooses to take the standard deduction on

their next return, they would not be taxed on the first \$24,400 of their taxable income from 2019.

7. Higher income brackets

Income tax brackets are also somewhat higher in 2019 than they were last year on account of inflation. The IRS reports that the tax rates and corresponding income brackets for 2019 are as follows for folks whose tax filing status is single:

- • 37% tax rate: Applies to incomes of more than \$510,300
- • 35%: More than \$204,100 but not more than \$510,300
- • 32%: More than \$160,725 but not more than \$204,100
- • 24%: More than \$84,200 but not more than \$160,725
- • 22%: More than \$39,475 but not more than \$84,200
- • 12%: More than \$9,700 but not more than \$39,475
- • 10%: \$9,700 or less

For complete 2019 tax rate tables for all tax filing statuses, see [IRS Revenue Procedure 2018-57](#). They start on Page 8 of the document. If you want to compare them with the 2018 tables, see

Internal Revenue Bulletin [2018-10](#).

Victorian Christmas Planning

Our preplanning for development of an operational strategy for our 2019 Victorian Christmas fundraiser is moving forward. The project will be co-chaired by Mike Underwood and Bart Ruud. Signups for kitchen duty and for booth duty are in progress; a number of positions are yet to be filled.. We are so grateful to **Patricia Graves** and **Jose Gonzales** for their volunteer efforts to make the brownies. Check with Bart Ruud to learn what slots must be filled over the course of the five-day run. Eleven slots are available for your volunteerism.

Brainstorming VVA-535 Social Activities (Repeat Query)

Mike Underwood has asked questions of interest:

- How many among us own or sometimes rent RVs?
- Is there interest in a weekend get-away RV/tent campout?
- How many like to shoot at gun ranges? Is there interest in scheduling a shoot?
- Is there interest in informal activities such as a come-as-you-will breakfast gathering, or even an informal dinner gathering wherein general camaraderie among members and significant others could be enjoyed.

VVA-535 Fundraiser 0.177 Caliber Air Rifle

This is a photo showing a display of the air rifle to be offered by VVA-535 for members only. Tickets, at \$20 each, will be available at the December VVA-535 meeting/potluck. A total of one hundred tickets will be available.



Application For Membership
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CHAPTER 535

P.O. Box 37, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or in **any duty location** between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____ Cell Phone: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____ Gender: _____

(Optional) Chapter Number: _____ Sponsor: _____

_____ I am already a VVA member and I want to become a Life Member. My VVA Number is _____.

Membership: Individual Life Membership: \$50. (Effective Oct. 20, 2018)

ATTENTION New members: You must submit a copy of your DD-214 form along with this application and dues payment.

Payment Method: ___ Check ___ Money Order ___ Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, Discover)

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Return your completed application, payment and a copy of your DD-214 to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter 535
P.O. Box 37
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Revised: January 2019

November

2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 All Saints Day Free Dental Clinic - Auburn	2 Free Dental Clinic - Auburn
3 Daylight Savings Time ends	4	5 Election Day	6	7 VVA General Meeting & Board Meeting	8	9
10 Marine Corps Birthday	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Thanksgiving	29	30

December

2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 VVA Christmas Potluck	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (1941)
8 Victorian Christmas	9	10	11 Victorian Christmas	12	13	14
15 Bill of Rights Day Victorian Christmas	16 Battle of the Bulge began (1944)	17	18 Victorian Christmas	19	20 Operation Just Cause (1989)	21 <i>First Day of Winter</i>
22 Victorian Christmas	23 Hanukkah	24 Christmas Eve U.S. began strikes on Laos (1964)	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Year's Eve Official end of WW II (1946)				

January

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day	2 VVA-535	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	14	15	16	17 Operation Desert Storm began (1991)	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)	28	29	30	31	

February

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6 VVA-535	7 Wear Red Day	8 Boy Scouts of America founded 1910
9	10 Columbus Day	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday 1809 Operation Homecoming began 1973	13	14 Valentine's Day	15 Sinking of USS Maine 1898
16	17 President's Day	18	19 U.S. Marines landed on Iwo Jima 1945	20	21	22 Washington's birthday 1732
23 Flag raised on Iwo Jima 1945	24 Operation Desert Storm ground war started 1991	25	26 Ash Wednesday	27	28 Persian Gulf War ceasefire 1991	29