David Walker never gave up in his quest to right a wrong against veterans that began six decades ago. In 1942, Los Animas County took possession of Fort Wootton Memorial Square, a seven-building facility originally dedicated to veterans in Trinidad, Colo.

“After World War II broke out, the county just took everything over and evicted the veterans groups,” said Walker, commander of American Legion Post 11 in Trinidad. “In 1937, the county agreed to a 50-year lease, and each of the veterans organizations were supposed to pay $1 a year for the lease period. The county was supposed to furnish electricity, water, plumbing, maintenance, a caretaker for the property, trash hauling, snow removal. They were supposed to do everything, plus the maintenance of all the individual buildings. They didn’t do any of that.”

Instead, the county used the ornate facility for various purposes. The county Department of Human Services used it for a while. The Sheriff’s Department was housed there at another time. But it was not until Walker and others started working with city and county officials in 2009 that there was any movement to return the facility to veterans groups.

Negotiators had to overcome numerous hurdles including major repair of an elevator. Finally, in 2017, the building was returned to veterans groups — essentially Post 11 since it is the only active veterans service organization in Trinidad. Technically, the Los Animas County Veterans’ Council owns the property.

“It’s exciting to finally have what we’re going to do with the property here. I would like to see it come back to what it was originally intended to be as a center for community activities in Trinidad and the county, recognizing veterans in the process. Having a place where veterans could be involved with and feel that they could come for assistance is something we’re working on.”

Post 11 isn’t wasting any time using the building to honor veterans.

Visitors are often mesmerized by the facility.

On one recent morning, Bill Phillips noticed a couple enchanted by the building and let them in to view the property.

“They were a husband and wife here from Arizona just visiting Trinidad,” said Phillips, who served 24 years in the Air Force. “He was living here by himself. And they wanted something done so we put on a memorial service for him in Holloway Auditorium. And then we sent all the information to the family.”

The “fortress of memory” was (Continued on Page 10 See Dedicated)
Still Serving America
Do you have an ongoing program or
activity that serves your community?
Do you have a friend or relative that
goes above and beyond the call of duty
to help others?
Drop us a line and tell us what your
story is or how you or this person is
demonstrating that they are Still Serving
America, but must be received by the
10th of the month, the month prior.
In submitting your information, please
be sure to include your full name,
address and telephone number. There’s
a good chance the information you send
us will make it into The Observer. Please
send to: Still Serving America, The
American Legion, 7465 East 1st Ave.
Ste D Denver, CO 80230.

The American Legion
Internet Observer

The American Legion Internet Observer is an official
publication of The American Legion, Department of
Colorado, and is owned exclusively by the Colorado
Department. Published Monthly at the Department
Headquarters, 7465 East 1st Ave, Ste D Denver, CO 80230.
(303) 366-5201.

Send correspondence to the above address. Visit us
at www.coloradolegion.org or e-mail to observer@
coloradolegion.org

Publisher/Editor-in Chief:
Charles P. Smith

Contributors:
The American Legion
Dispatch

Design and Layout and Editor:
Darrell Myers
I have now had the great pleasure of visiting four U.S. Coast Guard stations since The American Legion provided more than $1 million in non-repayable Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) grants that assisted 3,120 children of 1,173 active-duty Coast Guard servicemembers who were affected by the government shutdown in January. My visits have been important to The American Legion to have some perspective on how Coast Guardsmen were affected by the government shutdown and their lack of pay.

In the middle of May, I visited U.S. Coast Guard Station Calumet Harbor in Chicago during my official visit to the Department of Illinois. During our tour there, appreciation for our support was heard. Machinery Technician First Class Chris Roggy said, “Thank you for all your help with the (TFA) grants for our junior members. It was a big help; it was awesome. It was a hard time for younger people who don’t really have savings accounts.”

Roggy is an Iraq veteran and a Paid Up for Life member of American Legion Post 748 in Anitoch, Ill. “I joined The American Legion for the camaraderie, the brotherhood and taking care of other servicemembers, making sure that they’re OK. If I ever need help a perfect example is when the TFA grant came out. I didn’t end up needing it, but a lot of our junior members did. If the shutdown would have went on for two more months I would have needed it as well. (The American Legion) is just a great organization.”

The station has 42 active duty on staff and 25 reservists that operate like a firehouse with two days on, two days off and sliding weekends. No one lives full time on base. There are many Coast Guardsmen who live off base and that was one of the things we had to take into consideration when we offered them Temporary Financial Assistance is the fact that a lot of them still had to pay their mortgage. They have financial responsibilities.

The American Legion was able to help the Coast Guard through TFA, which continues to provide grants to children of eligible veterans in financial need. These grants are funded through the Legion’s Veterans and Children Foundation. Donate to the foundation at www.legion.org/donate to ensure TFA grants continue to support our veterans and their families in need.

### Spring 2019 Sweepstakes Winners Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Stephen Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Leland Mehsling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Randal Graeser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Reginald Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Joseph Alston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>George Brunnemer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Donna Gates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Randy Sievert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>David Stark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Audie Storey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There should be no Child left behind with our programs!!

By: Dean Noechel, Department Commander

Colorado American Legion Family,

Thank you for electing me as your 2019-2020, 100th Department Commander. We have some great Legionnaires in Colorado and I know that this year we will be rocking our programs and our membership.

My theme this year is Re-Ignite Patriotism, Yes, it is time that we as American Legion Members get out in our communities and get them old flags replaced with bright new ones, take charge and show everyone that we Believe in our Country and our Flag. I need your help to RE-Ignite Patriotism in our state. Let’s show everyone that we are proud to be an American!

My “Commanders Project” this year is the Colorado Veteran Assistance Fund. This fund gets immediate assistance to the Veterans in need. This Fund is managed and distributed by our Department HQ, this makes it simple, but there is a drawback, it is underfunded. We ran out of funds several times a couple years ago and it’s heartbreaking to turn away a Veteran that’s already swallowed their pride to even ask for help. We must do better, so I made it my project and I ask every post to conduct one fundraiser to go directly to the CVAF. Just one, it will make a considerable impact for our very own Colorado veterans.

We have a great set of Committee Chairpersons to lead us this year, I know that you will engage with them and work our programs for our Veterans, Children & Youth, National Security and Americanism. If you need any assistance with programs please reach out and we will get the resident expert to help you. There should be no Child left behind in our programs.

We have a very dedicated slate of Department officers and Department Staff ready to lead and assist, but the true leaders of this organization wear the BLUE cap and that is you at the Post. Working together we will have a great year of Re-Igniting Patriotism. This year we will have a lot of fun and we will face some challenges, but with the dedicated Legionnaires that Colorado has we will advance to reach new milestones. Thank you for all that you do and will continue to do For God and Country!

In Closing, thank you Colorado for this great opportunity to lead us into the future, I know that you will help us RE-IGNITE PATRIOTISM

A Message From Department Historian Davis

History is the one thing you can count on to never change

By: Deb Davis, Department Historian

The only thing that changes is people’s perception of it. History is me and you and everyone else. We are the history of the future. History does mean a series of events; history also means stories and pictures; history means people, and history means much, much more.

So which posts submitted Post History Books this year? Not to brag but my Post didn’t either. But you will be happy to know that again this year the Department of Colorado is submitting a History (Scrapbook) Book to compete in the National History Competition in October. Last year we took Third Place, hoping for First this year. Although I will be grateful for at least placing.

Enough about History Books. My thoughts on the holiday we celebrate this month. American Independence Day. Our American forefathers successfully worked through strife, fears, and the bullies of their time to succeed in establishing this great country. We live in such a great country, and we should be encouraged to work together to resolve our problems and differences in order to maintain the integrity and values that the great and famous document, the Declaration of Independence was founded upon.

We should not be so absorbed in creating the perfect picnic. We should recognize what we, as Americans have done, and how we can learn from our history and current situation to make our country even better. We get so caught up in the unimportant or distracting details of the world, and get too overwhelmed by politics or bad news, that we do forget about the good things in life. America was given to us by great leaders, to cherish and we need to return to that way of thinking.

History can never be changed but it can be interpreted as one sees fit. Let’s look to forward our future as our forefathers did.
**Team Work and Patriotism**

By: Department Sr. Vice Commander

**Greg Jackson**
Department Sr Vice Commander

July is when we celebrate the Independence Day. July is the start of our 2019 - 2020 year. July is when many towns hold festivals and outdoor community events.

I have had a very busy June and am eagerly looking forward to a very busy year ahead. I have had the privilege to see many great things happen in June and many of these great things will begin to develop and take shape in the months come. But good things and great things that happen in our department isn’t an individual thing, it is a TEAM thing.

As we celebrate the 4th of July let us focus on the fact that it took many citizens of our infant nation working long and hard together and even paying the ultimate sacrifice to secure our freedoms that we enjoy today. Every confrontation our great nation has endured over those years has involved many volunteers, plus those who that did not volunteer but answered the call to serve our nation. These Americans have insured our freedoms and prevented those who want to take that freedom from reaching our shores.

I would not have accomplished as much this year, had I not received support and assistance from many other legionnaires from the post level all the way up to department. I have relied on advice, opinions and open discussions from many of my American Legion peers. Again did you notice the pattern?

Our Legion founders wanted to provide for those that have defended and served our great nation. They also had the vision of taking care of families, and programs to develop Americanism and our youth. The Legion today is strong but will only remain strong as long as we work as a unified team and continue to accomplish what it takes to promote our mission and goals. Again notice that pattern?

The pattern is team work at all levels. I believe that each post should never be so proud as to ask for assistance or help from another post, the district or their department. If you notice a post close by needing help, ask them, offer assistance to them. As part of the Colorado team help is available. Our biggest asset is a being able to freely communicate from the lowest member to the highest. I would ask everyone to not be to shy, but to ask and get involved in helping out our team members. After all, we can see how team work will solidify and grow our organization.

I hope that posts and districts will communicate with each other and help our neighbors to become strong. Strong posts are often very appreciated by the community.

I have noticed in my travels to many posts in my assigned districts that there does seem to be a lack of communication between post leaders and members. I will not lie, as sad as it is, I am guilty of this lack of communication. Every now and again we need to reach out to our members that do not attend meetings and keep them abreast of what is happening both at the meetings and activities and events we are participating in. We assume that if they don’t or can’t make the meetings that they don’t care. I have found that may be true of some but not all. There is many members that can’t make the meeting do to time conflicts and other reasons, but would love to be involved. So those phone calls can become every bit as important. Did I mention that it now makes them feel important and involved as a team member. I have found that if I communicate verbally with these members either in person or by phone that we strengthen our team and support. If each and every one of our members was to reach out to another team member, who lives near them, each month, just imagine the impact those conversations could have with helping increase the active members totals.

Team work, is a very powerful thing, it can accomplish great things. Always remember “United we stand, Divided we fall.”

I would like to thank all that supported me to become your 100th Sr.Vice Commander. I will continue to get out to as many posts and districts all year long and as often as I can throughout all of Colorado and help make a difference and re-ignite the Patriotism that drives us to support The American Legion and all of it’s four pillars. I encourage each and every member to not hesitate in asking for Senior Department Officer visits.

I believe in being visible to our members and participation in as many of our programs as I possibility can.

---

**You Too Can Join The World’s Largest War Time Veterans Service Organization And Advocate For Veteran’s Benefits Too!**

**Call 303-366-5201**
The convention delegates elected 5 Jr Vice Commanders to serve with Dean. Michael Crow from Simla Post 77 served in the U S Army during the Lebanon/Grenada conflict. He served last year as a Jr Vice Commander. Gary Force from Louisville Post 111 served in the U S Navy during the Vietnam conflict. Gary has been our Legislative Chairman for several years and will bring that experience with him in his new office. Lee White from Olathe Post 24 served in the U S Army during the Vietnam conflict. Lee has served as a Jr Vice Commander previously. Chip Kossow from Falcon Post 2008 served in the U S Army during the Lebanon/Grenada conflict. He was a Jr Vice Commander last year and does double duty as our National Security chairman. Tony Jones from Denver Post 1 served in the U S Army during the Vietnam conflict. Tony served last year as a Jr Vice and is our representative to the United Veterans Council.

Rounding out the list of elected officers is Deb Davis Historian, Stan Hamamoto Chaplain and Tony Abbott as Sgt-at-Arms. This year was also the election for our National Executive Committee - man and Alternate National Executive Committeeman. The NEC is Tom Florez and the ALNEC is Jay Bowen. Charles Pat Smith remains as Adjutant and Tom Bock as Deputy Adjutant. Marvin Weaver Jr remains as the Finance office for another year. Dean Casey remains as your Department Service Officer.

The delegates considered 7 resolutions at the convention. Of those, 4 will be sent to our national organization for consideration at our National Convention in August in Indianapolis. Those 4 resolutions are on our web page at www.coloradolegion.org under the About tab, Department Convention. If you want the complete text of the resolutions just email us and we will be glad to forward them to you.

We know that our leaders will face many challenges this coming year. We need to keep the organization strong so that we can continue our excellent history of taking care of veterans. Be sure to pay your dues early and sign up a new member as often as you can.
Woodland Park Post 1980’s Flag Day tradition

By: Larry Ingram

On June 14, Flag Day, it is a tradition for Post 1980 of Woodland Park, CO to retire all flags collected from the community that have become weather worn and tattered. In strict accordance with American Flag traditions, the flags are inspected and judged eligible for the ceremonial burning. Then the flags are burned with respect.

No information was provided, telling the who, what and when for each photo.

Woodland Park Post 1980 visits McCandless Veterans Home in Florence, CO

Cindy Meyer, Dan Williams, Al Pickup, Yvonne Wilson and Vern Wilson visit with World War II Veteran.

Dan Williams visits with Vietnam Veteran.
A Message From  Department Jr. Vice Commander Kossow

The Post’s New Year!

By: Chip Kossow, Department Jr. Vice Commander

The Department convention is over and the new Post leadership has taken charge for their year. Even if this is a continuation of last year, the new Executive Board, this year’s Executive Board, must evaluate the Post programs.

Programs are the heart beat of the Post. If the programs are vibrant and strong, work to keep them that way. If the programs are not satisfying a need in the community or participation is lacking, decide how to reinvigorate them or let them go.

Programs follow the 4 pillars. A good Post program will also answer a need in your community and gets participation from the membership. Programs should also be fun and rewarding. Taco Tuesday is not a program. It is a means of raising cash to support your programs. Remember that always.

National American Legion College has a class on Organizational Life Cycle. The life cycle phases include infancy, growth, prime, aging, and dying. Think of your Post in these terms. Where are you? The Post executive board must recognize these phases to make adjustments and guide the Post to the future.

Infancy is marked by high morale and maximum participation toward the mission of the 4 pillars resolving needs within your community. The problem here is little conflicts can cause extreme harm to the budding organization. Focus on the mission (programs) and squash drama.

Growth takes the enthusiasm of infancy and gets it organized. Programs are adjusted to keep the mission first and new programs are started to work on other needs in your community. Falling victim to drama is still a concern. The Executive board must maintain focus on the mission. Training is crucial to growing.

Prime is when the Posts operates like a well oiled machine. Post programs are vibrant and visible in the community. Enthusiasm is good throughout the membership. The Executive Board develops future leaders while maintaining the vision of the Post. Prime requires constant review of each program’s effectiveness adjusting them to changing circumstances. Without this attention, complacency creeps in and decline starts.

Aging is characterized by a decline the Posts commitment to the 4 pillars. Programs suffer as does membership involvement. Social activities may become more important than service to the community. The Executive Board also struggles to maintain the will to continue.

Dying – well, enough said.

Good news is, that with a little motivation and vision, aging and dying can be turned around or even prevented. Programs are the key to all of it. Assess every year as a minimum to ensure the program is effective. “That’s the way we always do it” will hurt the Post. Change is required to keep the Post heart beating.

Work the programs!

Collaboration and human-centered design are keys to new digital Disability Compensation Claim Tool

Filling out long paper claim forms can be a tedious, frustrating experience. That’s why VA is continually looking to streamline processes for Veterans who apply for VA benefits.

In March of this year, VA rolled out an online Disability Compensation Claim Tool to make it more efficient and easier for Veterans to submit disability claims. In that first month alone, Veterans submitted 3,000 benefits compensation claims using this new tool.

The most important measure of success is how Veterans feel about this tool—and what they are saying is positive. During usability testing, Veterans told Ms. Andrea Schneider, Product Lead, Digital Services at VA (DSVA) and her team of developers that “the new tool is straightforward and not drawn out.” One Veteran remarked, “[The Disability Compensation Claim Tool] gives the advice that’s needed when trying to figure out what information to provide.”

The Disability Compensation Claim Tool is the result of a two-year long collaboration between the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), VA’s Office of Information and Technology (OIT), DSVA design and engineering experts, and hundreds of Veterans who provided feedback during the development process.

“Our organizations worked side by side on daily standup calls and iterative requirements sessions to ensure we were building the right tool,” said Ms. Schneider of her working relationship with VBA.

Designed with Veterans, for Veterans

Designed based on Veteran experiences, the tool features new
interactive questions to automatically populate the claims form. The form is now more transparent, which lets users review their responses before submitting the form online. Users can then track their claim’s applications and progress.

The tool’s ease of use is possible because of VA’s human-centered design principles that focus on the human experience—how a Veteran uses or interacts with technology—before development occurs. We consulted Veterans at key points in the development process and used their feedback to shape the tool.

The new tool is also tracking a range of important metrics, such as the amount of time users spend on each page and where users abandon the application.

VA uses these observations and ongoing user feedback as part of our agile development and delivery approach. This allows VA to deliver new tools into the hands of users quickly, and then continue to evolve and improve those tools over time.

### Built-in Process Efficiencies

The tool checks for an already established Intent-to-File (ITF) date and records a new ITF date if one doesn’t already exist. VA uses this date to award retroactive benefits to the start of a medical diagnosis or treatment. In the past, submitting claims could result in duplicate and inaccurate ITFs on each Veteran’s record.

The automated ITF will shorten the timeline for claims adjudication, and is one of several new features to improve the Veteran’s experience of filing for disability compensation benefits.

---

**A Message From Department Chaplain Hamamoto**

**Priorities**

*By: Stanley Hamamoto, Department Chaplain*

**Has God Been Good To You!!!!!!!**

Thank you for allowing me to be your Department Chaplain again. I pray that I have been doing a good job for all of you and have brought the word of God you? I always pray before I do my writing, this way I know that God is leading me in the right direction. Many times I do it over because after reading it, I do not like it at all and redo the article. If there is anything that I can do for you, your post or district, please let me know and I will try my very best to be there for you.

I pray that all of our newly elected officials will set their priorities in the right direction and that it will be of benefit to all of our post, districts, veterans and their families, our communities and most of all to God and Country. Let’s all support what they have put before us and make it work. Let’s all keep working the programs!!!!

Here are a few scriptures to consider: Proverbs 22:4 “Respecting the Lord and not bring your wealth, honor and life.” Titus 2:7-8 and 12-13: “In every way be an example of doing good deeds. When you teach, do it with honesty and seriousness. Speak the truth so that you cannot be criticized-----Grace teaches us to live now in a wise and right way and in a way that shows we serve GOD. We should live like that while we wait for our great hope and the coming of the glory of our Great GOD and Savior our Lord.

I pray that all of our newly elected officials will have the responsibility to make sure that all that they do will be all for the Legion. Here are a few scriptures to think about. Matthew 5:13-16: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its salty taste, it cannot be made salty again. It is good for nothing, except to be thrown out and walked on. You are the light that gives to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. And people don’t hide a light under a bowl. They put it on a lamp-stand so the light shines for all the people in the house. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and will praise your Father in Heaven.” Hebrews 6:10-12: “God is fair, he will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for him by helping his people. And HE will remember that you are still helping them. We want each of you to go on with the same hard work all your lives so you will surely get what you hope for. We do not want you to become lazy. Be like those who thought faith and patience will receive what GOD had promised.

I know that all of our newly elected officers will be working for your benefit and all the things that they do will be of benefit for all. We should all be thankful that we have a loving GOD and that HE always forgives us for all of our sins. When our newly elected officers speak, please allow them the courtesy to listen to them first before you say anything. They are all trying to do what is best for the legion and all of us.

My last three words to all of you are: **GO TO CHURCH!!!!!!**
Good day Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Colorado.
I want to personally thank you for electing me as Detachment Commander for the 2019-2020 year.
I am excited to move our organization forward. With your help, I believe we can have a great year as we help Veterans and Their Families across the great state of Colorado.
My mission statement is “you can make a difference”. Please join me in making a difference for God and Country. I have chosen The American Legion “Child Welfare Foundation” for my fund-raising project. I know I can count on you to support my efforts.

Looking further down the road, Walker estimates it will be a 10-year to 20-year project costing a couple of million dollars to get the facility to meet his vision.

Trinidad Mayor Phillip Rico played an instrumental role in the transfer.
“When they approached the city council for some money, it was a very easy decision for us to make,” Rico said. “We realized how valuable of an asset this place is.”

Luis Lopez is among the county commissioners who approved the transfer. As the grandson of a World War II veteran, Lopez did not need much persuasion.

“Having a grandfather as a World War II veteran, it was very special,” he said about the project. “I made a promise to the Veterans’ Council that within my first term, we would see this to fruition. We did it within two years. I’m very proud of that. Thank you all very much for what you do for our country, for what you’ve done for our country, and for what you to continue to do our country.”

The government officials, veterans and others are eager to see the facility’s potential.

“It’s come full circle,” Lopez said. “There was a lot of animosity over the years regarding this and it shouldn’t be. Whatever happened back in the 1940s had nothing to do with what happens now, but at least we were able to reciprocate and get this back into the hands of the veterans.”
AMERICAN LEGION 100TH ANNIVERSARY
Ruger 1022, 50 yr Commemorative 22 cal. Rifle Raffle
“One of a Kind”

Sponsored by American Legion Post 2 Young Guns
Junior Shooting Sports Program

$5.00 each or 5 for $20.00

Drawing on July 11th, 2019 at Post 2

Help keep our program going
For more info contact Mr. Ron, mrron14@yahoo.com or coaches, members, and families of Young Guns

LIC.2019-13906
Legion wins Bladensburg memorial Supreme Court case

By: Henry Howard

The Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial isn’t going anywhere.

In a landmark victory for The American Legion, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 on June 20 that the 40-foot memorial can remain on public land in Prince George’s County, Md., where it has stood since 1925.

“This was not just about a single cross,” American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad said. “This was about the right of a community to honor its fallen heroes. And that’s why the World War I veterans of Bladensburg sacrificed their lives, to protect the freedom of others.”

In 1925, The American Legion and Gold Star Mothers erected the memorial as a tribute to 49 Prince George’s County veterans who died during World War I. The cross shape was selected by the Gold Star Mothers to represent their sons’ resting place in Europe.

For decades, the memorial stood peacefully until the American Humanist Association (AHA) filed suit, claiming the memorial violated the First Amendment. The Bladensburg memorial was funded privately and the property where it stands was in private hands when it was erected. However, now it sits on land owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a governmental agency.

“The American Legion does not consider these crosses which honor so many veterans to be religious memorials,” Reistad explained. “But even if it were, freedom of religion is also a cherished right protected by our First Amendment. Americans can feel more confident today that veterans memorials, cemetery headstones and patriotic monuments throughout our country are safer as a result of this ruling.”

The American Legion was represented at the Supreme Court by the legal teams at First Liberty Institute and Jones Day. Aligning with them was the state of Maryland, which owns and maintains the memorial.

“This is a landmark victory for religious freedom,” said Kelly Shackelford, the president, CEO and chief counsel to First Liberty. “The days of illegitimately weaponizing the Establishment Clause and attacking religious symbols in public are over. Our founders would have been appalled at this attempt to make the government hostile to our religious heritage, history and symbols. The attempted perversion of our Constitution is now over, and every American now has more freedom than they have had in decades, with a government no longer hostile to people or expressions of faith.”

Michal Carvin, lead counsel for The American Legion, partner at Jones Day and First Liberty network attorney, said, “We are grateful for this historic victory for the First Amendment. This decision simply affirms the historical understanding of the First Amendment that allows government to acknowledge the value and importance of religion.”

Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. wrote the majority opinion.

“The cross is undoubtedly a Christian symbol, but that fact should not blind us to everything else that the Bladensburg Cross has come to represent,” he wrote. “For some, that monument is a symbolic resting place for ancestors who never returned home. For others, it is a place for the community to gather and honor all veterans and their sacrifices for our nation. For others still, it is a historical landmark. For many of these people, destroying or defacing the cross that has stood undisturbed for nearly a century would not be neutral and would not further the ideals of respect and tolerance embodied in the First Amendment.”


The ruling was cheered by Amber Longoria, a post-9/11 Navy veteran who is a member of American Legion Post 5208 in Denver. “We have bigger fish to fry than where a monument is located,” she said. “This shouldn’t have been an issue to begin with.”

The Supreme Court victory means that Legionnaires from that area can continue to hold Memorial Day and Veterans ceremonies at the site. In November, Phillip Holdcraft, past commander of Post 131 in Colmar Manor, Md., will be there, along with a strong contingent of Legionnaires from the Department of Maryland.

“There will be a sense of relief,” he said earlier this year of what a victory would mean. “It will be a sense of relief for veterans here in Maryland and all over the United States.”
3rd Annual
American Legion Post 206
18 Hole Scramble Golf Tournament Fundraiser

A Colorado 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization
Proceeds will be used for American Legion Veterans and Children's programs.

Date: Saturday, August 24, 2019
Time: Check-in 11:45 a.m. Range balls are FREE — Come Early. Shotgun start 1:00 p.m.
Type of Tournament: 4 Person Scramble (No Handicaps)
Location: Heritage Eagle Bend Golf Course, 2355 E. Heritage Pkwy, Aurora, CO 80016
Phone: 303-693-7788

Cost: $85.00 per player — Includes greens fees, cart, range balls, goodie bag and prizes. ***All net profits are for the Helen K. Osmundson American Legion Post 206 Veterans and Children's Programs.

Food & Beverages: Available for sale at the clubhouse and beverage cart.

Prizes: Longest Drive Men & Women, and 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

Mulligans: $10 for 1 ($20 for 4, 2 are FREE) — max 4 per player

☐ I cannot attend, but wish to make a contribution in the amount of

$ ______________________

Name of sponsor for recognition ______________________

Heritage Eagle Bend Golf Course
American Legion Post 206 Golf Fundraiser Registration Form

1. __________________________ 2. __________________________ 3. __________________________ 4. __________________________

Player’s Name  Address  Phone  E-Mail

Please return registration form with payment to guarantee reservation. Fee is $85 per player and should be made payable to American Legion Post 206. Form and fees should be forwarded to Angie Johnson, Post Member, 1689 S. Ensenada St., Aurora, CO 80017. DEADLINE IS AUG. 10, 2019.
New research affirms critical need for caregivers in Veteran care

New research published in the June 2019 edition of the journal Health Affairs shows the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation are working collectively to better integrate caregivers into a Veteran’s health care treatment.

The report, titled “Including Family Caregivers in Seriously Ill Veterans’ Care: A Mixed-Methods Study,” was led by Duke University researchers and emphasizes caregiver inclusion identified in the VA - Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s Campaign for Inclusive Care, which strengthens health care and is a model for improving care in the private sector. The Campaign for Inclusive Care is one of several initiatives and programs through which VA supports Veterans’ caregivers.

The study, led Duke University researchers, “Including Family Caregivers in Seriously Ill Veterans’ Care: A Mixed-Methods Study,” emphasizes caregiver inclusion identified in the VA - Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s Campaign for Inclusive Care, which strengthens health care and is a model for improving care in the private sector. The Campaign for Inclusive Care is one of several initiatives and programs through which VA supports Veterans’ caregivers.

VA is pleased to partner with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, whose commitment to caregiver support mirrors our own,” said VA Secretary, Robert Wilkie. “The ‘Campaign for Inclusive Care’ is a groundbreaking model integrating Veteran caregivers into the fabric of our organization, ensuring Veterans’ health care needs are met.”

VA and White House launch Veteran suicide-prevention task force

WASHINGTON — As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and White House initiative to curb Veteran suicide, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie and Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council Joe Grogan will launch a cabinet-level task force June 17 to develop a national roadmap.

The President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End the National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) task force will include a community integration and collaboration proposal, a national research strategy and an implementation strategy.

Efforts supporting the development of the roadmap are already well under way and are on target for the March 2020 delivery to the White House.

“This is a call to action,” Wilkie said. “In order to decrease the rate of Veteran suicide, we need to engage our local and community partners in addition to leveraging the resources of the departments. We need an all-hands on-deck approach to preserve the lives of our Veterans who have served our country. As such, I am thrilled to announce that Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, the founder and president of Give an Hour, has agreed to serve as executive director of the critical PREVENTS work. Dr. Van Dahlen is widely recognized for changing the culture surrounding mental health and suicide and is an expert and thought leader in large-system change. We are proud to have her leading this effort.”

On March 5, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order (EO) titled “National Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End Suicide.” The EO directed the Secretary of VA and the director of the White House Domestic Policy Council to co-chair and stand up an interagency task force to develop a plan implementing a roadmap for the prevention of Veteran suicide at the national and community level.

As part of the effort to ensure the broadest stakeholder input in the development of the national research strategy, the task force is releasing a Request for Information (RFI) to gather feedback on how to improve research and the use of research to radically reduce Veteran suicide. Input may be provided at www.research.va.gov/PREVENTS.

“In signing this Executive Order, President Trump demonstrated that once again he is putting a high priority on the needs of our
Veterans,” Grogan said. “Through the standup of a collaborative task force, the development and implementation of a public health approach and enhanced research, we will increase our efforts to prevent Veteran suicide with the aspirational goal of zero Veteran suicides.”

To learn more about VA’s suicide prevention resources and programs, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.

Media covering this issue can download VA’s Safe Messaging Best Practices fact sheet or visit www.ReportingOnSuicide.org for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

The American Legion

President signs Blue Water Navy Veterans Act into law

The decades-long fight for Blue Water Navy veterans to receive VA disability benefits for illnesses linked to exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War is over.

On Tuesday, June 25, President Trump signed into law H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. The American Legion-supported legislation will extend disability benefits covering medical conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure to those who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam, known as “Blue Water,” Navy veterans.

Veterans who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange if diagnosed with a medical condition associated with the herbicide, according to the Agent Orange Act of 1991. Presumptive diseases of exposure to the herbicide include certain cancers, Parkinson’s disease and diabetes. However, this act applied only to veterans who served on land and in Vietnam’s inland waterways. H.R. 299 extends these benefits to any military personnel who served on any vessel during the Vietnam War that came within 12 nautical miles of the coastlines of Vietnam.

H.R. 299 further expands coverage and includes the provision that every veteran exposed to herbicides like Agent Orange should receive the same presumptive benefits. A provision in H.R. 299 states, “A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975,” will be eligible for disability compensation for presumptive conditions of herbicide exposure. This will allow veterans who fall into that category and whose claims have been denied or held in pending status to gain access to VA medical care for conditions on the presumptive list.

H.R. 299 will afford spouses of certain veterans whose death was caused by a service-connected disability access to pension benefits. The bill also provides the children of veterans of covered service in Thailand who suffer from spina bifida access to health care, vocational training and rehabilitation, and monetary allowance.
Senate resolution calls for ‘American Legion Week’

On June 26, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators introduced a Senate resolution honoring The American Legion’s 100th anniversary of serving veterans, their families and communities.

Sens. Mike Braun (R-Ind.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Todd Young (R-Ind.) introduced a resolution designating August 23-29 as “American Legion Week” to coincide with the Legion’s 100th anniversary convention in its home city of Indianapolis.

In a press release, Braun said, “The American Legion has been a cornerstone of American life from the local to the federal level since the beginning, and serves as a constant reminder of the enormous contributions America’s armed service members have made to enrich our nation during and after their military service. Indiana is proud to be home for the American Legion, and I’m proud to congratulate them on 100 years of service.”

Tester, Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, also praised the organization. “For generations the American Legion has played an undeniable role in strengthening the veteran community,” he said. “Since its inception, The American Legion has provided support to veterans and their families in Montana and across the country by helping them navigate the VA system to get the care and benefits they earned. During American Legion Week, we celebrate their accomplishments, honor their 100 years of service, and thank them for their continued advocacy.”

Praise also was offered by Brown. “Throughout the decades, The American Legion has remained dedicated to veterans and their families who have served and sacrificed so much for our country,” he said. “I’m proud to honor The American Legion on their 100-year anniversary of serving veterans of the armed forces, their families and our communities.”

Young, lead sponsor of The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, said, “For 100 years, the American Legion has advocated for our veterans. As an American Legion member myself, I can attest to the important work the Legion does to improve the lives of veterans across America. That’s why I was proud to help create The American Legion 100th Anniversary commemorative coin, and it’s why I’m proud to help introduce a resolution celebrating this milestone.”

U.S. Rep. André Carson (D-Ind.), who represents Indianapolis, is expected to introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

“The strong civic spirit found in Indianapolis is largely thanks to the enduring presence of the American Legion, which is headquartered here,” Carson said in a press release. “For 100 years, it has set an example of patriotism and service that has strengthened our community and many more across the nation. I’m pleased to congratulate the American Legion on its centennial and honored to lead the resolution celebrating this milestone in the House of Representatives.”

VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS)

VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS) will be moving the remaining seven primary care teams from the Denver VA Medical Center to their new space, the Denver VA Clinic located at 4545 E. 9th Ave., Suite 0100, Denver, Colorado 80220.

The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program will remain in building 38 on the DVAMC and will continue to offer service uninterrupted.

Regards,

Khristie Barker, MBA
Public Affairs, Community Outreach
VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System
AURORA VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

STAND DOWN DAY
AN EVENT SUPPORTING LOCAL VETERANS EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Thursday, Oct. 24, 2019
8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Heritage Christian Center • 14401 E. Exposition Ave.

We are seeking help to provide the following resources:

- Registration
- Mental health
- Haircuts
- Veteran’s assistance
- Clothing distribution
- Toiletry distribution
- Bike repair
- Mobile health care unit
- Mobile showers
- Employment
- Food court
- Blood pressure checks
- Veterinarian services
- Chaplain services
Unwanted Bicycles Needed!

We are looking for any of your unwanted bicycles for donations to Veterans, Homeless and Kids.

We can pick up bikes in Metro Denver Area or can be dropped off at our shop in Aurora. Please call Ernie Clark for pick up details etc. @ 720-270-5731.
Address: 4122 S Parker Road Aurora 80014
Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 8-3 pm
Thanks for everyone’s support of SCBS!
How will you pay for expenses that Medicare doesn’t cover?

With the high cost of healthcare today, Medicare Supplement insurance is becoming a necessity for more and more Americans. That’s why it’s good to know that you now have a choice of competitive, standardized Medicare Supplement plans, offered to members like you. And, all plans are underwritten by a company known for its prompt, personal, responsive service.

Other features include:

- The freedom of choosing your own doctors and hospitals who accept Medicare
- Outstanding Customer Service available from courteous representatives ready to answer your questions
- Hasty-free claims processing in about 7 days
- Excellent service from a company with an A+ (Superior, 2nd out of 16 ratings) A.M. Best rating for financial stability as of 10/20/2014

Make sure you can pay for the expenses that Medicare doesn’t cover and help protect your family’s retirement savings. Apply today for the greater peace of mind you want at competitive Legionnaire Insurance Trust member rates.

Complete and Return The Reply Card. Or, Call 1-800-247-1771

(Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST)

Underwritten by Transamerica Life Insurance Company (Des Moines, IA), and Transamerica Financial Life Insurance Company (Harlingen, TX)

Not connected with or endorsed by the U.S. Government or Federal Medicare Program.

Legionnaire Insurance Trust Members
Medicare Supplement Reply Card

For your FREE information kit on the Medicare Supplement Insurance Plans complete and return this coupon.

Name: ___________________________ DOB: ________________

Spouse Name: _____________________ Spouse’s DOB: ________________

Address: ___________________________ ___________________________

City: __________________ State: __________ ZIP: __________

Telephone: _________________________

Send to: Medicare Supplement Processing Dept.
P. O. Box 1361
Valley Forge, PA 19482-9946
Ensure the legacy of membership.

Your Honorable discharge means that you are eligible for USAA membership — and that your children and grandchildren can become eligible as well, no matter what age! Begin your USAA legacy with an auto or property insurance policy, and take advantage of USAA’s commitment to serving you and your eligible family members for years to come.

Share your USAA legacy. Get a quote.

1-877-699-2654 | usaa.com/legion

Insurance • Banking • Investments • Retirement • Advice

USAA means United Services Automobile Association and its insurance, banking, investment and other companies. USAA products are available only in those jurisdictions where USAA is authorized to sell them.

Use of the term “member” or “membership” does not convey any eligibility rights for auto and property insurance products or legal or ownership rights in USAA. Ownership rights are limited to eligible policyholders of United Services Automobile Association. “Honorably served” means a discharge type of “honorable.” Membership and product eligibility and underwriting restrictions apply and are subject to change. Eligible former dependents of USAA members may purchase auto or property insurance if the member obtained USAA auto or property insurance. Purchase of a product other than USAA auto or property insurance, or purchase of an insurance policy offered through the USAA Insurance Agency, does not establish eligibility for or membership in USAA property and casualty insurance companies. Property and casualty insurance provided by United Services Automobile Association, and its affiliate property and casualty insurance companies is available only to persons eligible for P&C group membership. Each company has sole financial responsibility for its own product. The American Legion receives financial support from USAA for its sponsorship. © 2015 USAA. 214064-0115
ID RESOLVE
A New Program to Help Legionnaires Fight Back Against Identity Theft

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America and has affected more than 16.7 million victims, with veterans being especially vulnerable targets. Data breaches are becoming more frequent and, when an identity thief strikes, most victims are left to clean up the mess themselves, unsure of where to turn to first. We’ve heard Legionnaires’ concerns around the growing threats of identity theft and are proud to provide a new service to address this concern.

ID Resolve focuses solely on the aftermath of identity theft and resolving the issue. With call centers located in the U.S., Legionnaires can activate an important set of services to fix the situation and restore their name. ID Resolve’s Identity Resolution Specialists are certified in identifying and repairing any type of identity theft such as medical fraud, Social Security identity theft, and financial theft.

ID Resolve is available to Legionnaires at a special member-only rate and provides resolution services for a full year. Plus, Legionnaires can take up to 30 days to review ID Resolve and decide if it’s right for them; if not, a full refund is available as long as the services have not been used.

There are two annual memberships available:

Member: $79/year  
Couple: $99/year

To learn more or enroll in ID Resolve, visit www.theLit.com/IDResolve

ID Theft by the numbers

Claims a new victim every 2 seconds  
16+ mill. victims targeted in the U.S.  
$16 billion in losses  
Veterans are 50% more likely to be the victim of identity theft  
There were 1,579 data breaches last year  
40+ hours spent resolving an identity theft case

Services provided by Generali Global Assistance. Generali Global Assistance has been a leading provider of identity and digital protection solutions, travel insurance, and other assistance services for more than 35 years. Generali Global Assistance is part of the multinational Generali Group, which for over 185 years has created a presence in 60 countries with over 74,000 employees. Generali’s success has been built on the foundation of trust that clients have placed in their ability to provide assistance in the most difficult of circumstances.

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST PROGRAM

Offered by Worldwide Rescue & Security, Inc.
EXCLUSIVE: Loophole may not allow you from suing the VA!

James Clark, June 13, 2019, Task and Purpose News

A
fter the VA missed a spine-eating infection, a loophole kept him from suing. A new bill would change that for other vets.

It’s been three years since doctors misdiagnosed an infection that was devouring the spine of Marine Corps veteran Brian Tally.

It’s been two years since his hopes for damages from the Department of Veterans Affairs were dashed when he was informed that the doctor who made the mistake was a contractor — and the statute of limitations for legal action against the care provider had passed just weeks before he got the news.

And it’s been a little under a year since he drafted the first “Tally Bill,” a piece of legislation that he and a handful of vets and advocates stitched together — before that first bill died quietly in Congress in Sept. 2018.

Now, Tally might finally have a chance for closure.

This month, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) is planning to introduce the Brian Tally VA Medical Care and Liability Improvement Act, a spokesman for his office confirmed to Task & Purpose. The bill is aimed at fixing how the Department of Veterans Affairs handles instances of medical malpractice, particularly when the care provider is a contractor.

Task & Purpose obtained a draft copy of the new “Tally Bill,” so named for the 42-year-old vet who was left without legal recourse to sue for medical malpractice that occurred at the VA.

As it stands, the draft version of the new legislation aims to make the following changes to the Federal Tort Claims Act, the law which governs how citizens can sue the government for negligence or wrongdoing:

In the event of medical malpractice, the Department of Veterans Affairs must notify a veteran patient of their care provider’s employment status. If the individual is a non-VA care provider — meaning a contractor — then the department must inform the veteran of his or her state’s laws, including the statute of limitations for malpractice claims.

If the Department of Veterans Affairs fails to do this within a 30-day window, then the department becomes liable, and can be sued for the actions of the non-VA care provider.

Finally, the bill adds that if a non-VA care provider is involved in “three separate covered cases during a five-year period” that the VA will revoke his or her ability “to provide health care or treatment at a facility of the Department; and may not enter into any contract or agreement that authorizes the provider to provide health care or treatment at a facility of the Department.” In other words, a health care contractor involved in three medical malpractice incidents in five years would be barred from working at the VA.

‘I was being eaten alive for just over four months’

The bill is designed to protect other veterans from the same situation Tally found himself in three years ago.

In Jan. 2016, Tally was suffering daily from chronic pain in his back. He’d awaken every night to sweat-soaked sheets, and move to the bathroom where he’d lay down on the cold floor, hoping for relief that wouldn’t come. The former Marine sergeant, who left active duty in 1999, couldn’t walk, so he would low crawl if he needed to get around his house.

Multiple trips to the emergency room brought no end to the pain, and even fewer answers — just a diagnosis that he had a sprain in his lower back and a prescription for what he described as a “cocktail” of pain pills.

Suspecting the diagnosis from the Veterans Affairs hospital in Loma Linda, California, was incorrect, Tally and his wife, Jenny, paid out of pocket for an MRI in March. The scan showed structural damage to his spine, yet when Tally took the MRI back to the VA, he was told he’d have to wait until December for surgery.

Instead, Tally used Veterans Choice — a VA program which allows veteran patients to see private sector doctors — to go to Scripps Mercy Hospital in San Diego. There a surgeon discovered the cause of his pain: A bone-eating staph infection was attacking his spine.

The damage was so severe that it looked “moth eaten,” Tally told Task & Purpose. “I was being eaten alive for just over four months.”

The infection could have been detected far earlier had Tally’s VA doctors ordered a blood test and an MRI, he and his lawyer, Natalie Khawam, with Whistleblower Law Firm, told Task & Purpose.

In March 2017, Tally filed a claim for malpractice under the Federal Tort Claims Act, under which he had a two year window from the date of the incident before his statute of limitations passed.
The infection left Tally physically debilitated. Unable to work, he struggled to make ends meet — he was counting on a hefty payment for what appeared to be an open and shut case of medical malpractice. Tally said that he corresponded with the VA about his case for months and assumed everything was moving forward smoothly.

Then, in Nov. 2017, the other shoe dropped: Tally received a letter from the VA saying the department was not responsible because the clinician who made the mistake was not a Veterans Affairs employee, but a contractor. Because the care provider was not a VA employee, Tally could not pursue his malpractice case in federal court. This meant that his only chance was in state court. But by the time he was informed of the doctor’s employment status, it was too late: The one-year statute of limitations for California, where he lived, had passed.

“That was hard to swallow,” Tally told Task & Purpose. “We’d been fed so much false hope. I’ve got a family. I’ve got four kids and a wife and a house, and we had already lost so much trying to stay afloat, and then to hear that there would be no accountability, no course of legal action, I mean, our hearts just sank. We went into complete survival mode. We’re like, ‘How are we even going to survive this?’”

The damage to his spine is irreparable, Tally told Task & Purpose.

These days, he has trouble walking and using the restroom. He spends most of his time sitting — one of the few ways he can take the pressure off of his back — but the pain still comes in the form of sporadic shocks and spasms that feel like “ice picks going up and down your spine” he told Task & Purpose.

“When you are hurt due to no fault of your own, there needs to be accountability’

The Brian Tally VA Medical Care and Liability Improvement Act could offer a solution to cases similar to Tally’s by forcing the VA to explicitly identify whether medical malpractice occurred at the hands of a VA doctor, or a health care contractor.

“This is going to give legal recourse to all the veterans that not only got injured by malpractice but were also injured by the VA system and their failure to make our veterans aware of the legal nuances that no one would know unless they were actually told about this,” Natalie Khawam, Tally’s attorney, told Task & Purpose.

Susan Carter, a spokeswoman for the VA, told Task & Purpose that the department “has not yet taken a position on the bill.”

“VA always strives to provide Veterans with the very best health care available. When we don’t meet that standard, we hold ourselves accountable,” Carter said. “In this case, we worked with the veteran and his attorney in an effort to avoid litigation, and settled this unfortunate case in a way we hope is meaningful to Mr. Tally.”

The department did not elaborate on how Tally’s case was “settled,” but Khawam provided Task & Purpose a copy of an email Tally sent to the VA’s Office of General Counsel in Nov. 2018. According to the email, in May 2018, Tally was offered a $250,000 payout — far below the $2,175,000 he initially sought for damages in federal court. Under financial duress and about to lose his home, Tally negotiated with the VA through an attorney, and received $150,000. After legal expenses, he was left with roughly $125,000.

Separate from the bill, Tally said he intends to pursue legal action against the VA, alleging that the department deliberately waited until the state’s statute of limitations ran out before informing him of his doctor’s employment status, at which time they “strong armed” him into taking the payment, Tally said in the email.

Since his ordeal, Tally has made it his mission to change how the VA handles malpractice in cases like his. In June 2018, he formed his own ad hoc legislative team — made up of friends, fellow veterans, and a couple amateur legislative experts, including a high school government teacher — and drafted the Brian Tally VA Medical Care and Liability Improvement Act, or the “Tally Bill.”

In Sept. 2018, he took the “Tally Bill” to Washington where he met with lawmakers and veterans advocates, the military and veterans radio station Connecting Vets reported that summer. By the next month, the first “Tally Bill” was introduced, but it died with little fanfare in that session of Congress. Nearly a year later, Tally has a second chance with a slightly modified version of the Brian Tally VA Medical Care and Liability Improvement Act, expected to be introduced by Meadows’ later this month.

“Veterans’ care has been a top, long-time priority of [Mark Meadows] — part of that mission is a more accountable VA and improving access and resources for vets as they deal with navigating the VA system,” Ben Williamson, a spokesman for Meadows, told Task & Purpose.

Currently, veteran patients aren’t always aware whether they’re receiving care from a federal employee. After all, one person in a lab coat looks as official as the next, especially when they’re providing treatment at a government hospital. But that small distinction in employment status can have major implications when it comes to lawsuits.

“When you go into a VA hospital, you don’t always know who’s a contractor and who’s a VA employee — that’s not revealed to you, even when a wrong is committed,” Sherman Gillums, the chief advocacy officer for AMVETS, told Task & Purpose. “It’s in the federal government’s interest not to reveal that fact until the statute of limitations has run. In Brian’s case, they admitted the wrong only after the one year had run out for the time they would have had to sue the contractor.”

Though it’s too little, too late for Tally’s namesake legislation to help his case, there’s still a chance it could help others.

“When you are hurt due to no fault of your own, there needs to be accountability,” Tally said.

And that’s what keeps him going.

It helps him through the daily physical pain, and pushes him past the mounting fatigue as he takes on “the biggest bureaucracy in the country,” but it’s “been tough,” he added.

“I’m hoping that this bill passes soon so I can move on with my life. This is something I promised myself that I would see through, and it’s something that would give me some much-needed closure, knowing that this will never happen to another family again.”
Mike Shaw Subaru

Proudly Supports all

COLORADO VETERANS

1650 W 104th Avenue • Thornton, CO 80234 • (303) 438-7500

MikeShawSubaru.com