



VETERAN TALON



USI Holds First Annual Veterans Honor Society Induction

USI has gained national accreditation from the SALUTE Honor Society based on a partnership with the Student Veterans Association of USI.

The Student Veterans Association of USI advocated for this initiative based on the best practices of other universities from around the country as gained from the 2018 Student Veterans of American National Conference.

“As outlined in our strategic plan, we strived to take our recognition to the next level by aligning military service with academic achievement. The National Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST) has

shown that veterans continue to exemplify their peers in and out of the classroom,” said Chaze Patrick, immediate past president of the SVA chapter. SALUTE will hold its Veteran Induction ceremony on Friday, April 20, 2018 in the Traditions Lounge.

SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society is the only nationwide organization which recognizes the academic success of our nation’s military veterans and serving more than 100 colleges and universities, and nearly 5,000 students nationwide.

To become a member of the honor society, you must meet

the following requirements: Actively serving in the armed forces, or have been honorably discharged, have a 3.0 GPA or higher and pay a \$20 one-time membership fee

These requirements must be verified by transcript and a copy of your DD-214

For those who may be interested in joining SALUTE, please email Dr. Vaughn DeCoster at vadecoster@usi.edu.

To learn more about SALUTE, visit <http://www.salute.colostate.edu/home>.

Tri-State Womens Veterans Organization ‘Unites in Service’ to the Community *By Barbara Kortz, Commander, Tristate Women Veterans*

Tri-State Womens Veterans (TWV) is a growing community of women veterans in the Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky tri-state organized to reach out and meet the unique needs of women who have served in the Armed Forces.

As young women, we joined to serve and were introduced into a military culture previously and currently dominated by male leadership and ideals.

We were trained side-by-side with our male counterparts on missions around the world.

We learned strict adherence to military regulations and thrived in challenging and, at times, life threatening roles unique to the demands of service in the Armed Forces.

As veterans, we returned to our communities ready to serve and found ourselves wearing many hats. We are daughters, sisters, mothers, wives, students, employees, entrepreneurs, CEO’s, soccer moms and now, veterans often lost to our military comrades while meeting the demands of

multiple roles.

The Tri-state Women Veterans are learning more with each new member of the unique challenges facing our returning women veterans. Our monthly meetings provide opportunities to share our past experiences and current challenges. We also share resources available to our returning veterans.

Lastly, and not surprisingly, we have also found new and lasting friendships among our fellow veterans.

We invite you to join us, laugh and learn with us, and help us grow as we “Unite in Service” to our communities.

Tri-state Women Veterans hold monthly meetings the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the VFW Post

1114, 110 N. Wabash Avenue, Evansville, Indiana.

For more information on this organization, please contact Barbara Kortz at tristatewomenvet@aol.com or 812-568-4274. You can also visit their facebook page by entering Tri-state Women Veterans in the search field.



Court Determines Military Burn Pits Caused Lung Disease in Service Members - By Perry Chiaramonte | Fox News



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The thousands of U.S. military personnel and private contractors whose health was compromised by the dense black smoke of burn pits - and who were then denied proper treatment - may finally be vindicated by a recent court ruling.

A judge under the U.S. Department of Labor's Office for Workers' Compensation Programs decreed last month that open-air burn pits -- where thousands of chemicals were released into the air after trash and other waste were incinerated at American military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan -- are connected to lung disease, Fox News has learned.

The decision marks a victory for the nearly 64,000 active service members and retirees who have put their names on a Burn Pit Registry created by the Veterans Administration, bringing them one step closer to getting adequate medical coverage, something that has never been guaranteed. Private contractors who were also exposed to the burn pit toxins also have been denied coverage.

"This case has legitimized the disease," former contractor Veronica Landry of Colorado Springs, whose case was a part of the recent ruling, told Fox News. "There are many people out there who are still not getting the treatment they need.

"This ruling changes that."

Soldiers have fallen gravely ill or even died from exposure to burn pits in Afghanistan and Iraq, but they are not the only ones who have gotten sick. Civilian workers and private contractors like Landry are also suffering an array of maladies including cancer, respiratory problems and blood disorders and, like military victims, they say they are being ignored.

But private employees don't even have the Veterans Administration to lean on. Landry filed her case with the Labor Department for this very reason.

"I'm really grateful that the Judge looked over our case," Landry said. "That's why this is so important. We wanted to make sure that others can get help."

Landry said in her testimony that she

was exposed to smoke from the burn pits "every day" while working at Mosul Air Force Base in Iraq for Kellogg, Brown, and Root [KBR], and that "every plastic water bottle that every soldier drank out of was also burned in the burn pits."

Landry was sent home early after developing PTSD and making matters worse, she started to develop problems with her lungs and other ailments such as migraines, chills and dangerously low blood pressure. She has been in out of hospitals for nearly ten years.

When symptoms flare up, Landry experiences severe pain and wheezing every time she takes a breath due to inflammation of her lungs. Tasks as simple as speaking can cause her to become light-headed when her condition acts up. She also suffers from fibrosis, which causes her to experience shallow breathing and swelling of her legs and feet from pitting edema.

KBR's insurance company, AIG, has refused to assist with her medical bills, but the recent judicial ruling made clear that AIG should be covering her expenses.

"This evidence is sufficient to establish Ms. Landry suffers from deployment-related lung disease," reads a line of the ruling obtained by Fox News. "Ms. Landry need not introduce affirmative medical evidence to show working conditions caused the alleged harm. She need only show working conditions which could conceivably cause the harm alleged."

The court's conclusion was that AIG and KBR should be covering Landry's expenses.

"Employer [KBR] and Carrier [AIG] are liable for all past, present, and future reasonable and necessary medical treatment related to claimant's work-related post-traumatic stress disorder and deployment-related lung disease," reads the order.

Officials for Kellogg, Brown, and Root declined to comment on the ruling, instead referring to a previous comment made to back in 2016 when Fox News first reported on Ms. Landry.

(Continued from Page 2) “At the limited number of bases where KBR operated burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, KBR personnel did so safely and effectively at the direction and under the control of the U.S. military,” read the written statement. “KBR complies with all applicable laws and contractual obligations, which includes providing the federally mandated and specified insurance coverage required for employees working overseas supporting the U.S. government.”

KBR insurance provider, AIG, did not respond to requests for comment.

Those in the military community feel that the ruling will help to shine an overdue light on the complications that have arisen for those exposed to burn pit fumes while serving their country.

“I believe this is a case of common sense and victory for military contractors and we can only hope that the same common sense is applied to our military war heroes and their widows,” Rosie Torres, founder of Burn Pits 360, an advocacy group for service members who have fallen ill, told FoxNews.com.

Torres, whose husband, LeRoy Torres, became ill almost immediately after his return from Iraq in 2008, said that the

federal ruling grants them evidence that determines that there is a strong association between lung disease and exposure to burn pits.

“Thousands of Veterans have lost their careers, some have taken their own lives and their widows are left without benefits,” Torres said. “The actual numbers are obscured by a broken system. Unless we address this honestly, unknown thousands even millions will fade into history as the invisible and unacknowledged casualties of our country’s longest war.”

“We are tired of being stuck in a system of bureaucracy. Being told your lung disease or cancer is psychosomatic, losing your job and being denied benefits is only something the VA can fix.”

While Landry has been able to keep her symptoms under better control through diet and constant care, she fears what the future may bring.

“The progression of my disease is scary for me,” she says. “Will the nodules on my lungs turn to cancer? We don’t know?”

“I knew what danger I was going to face when I went to Iraq, but I never imagined that I would bring it back home.”

VETERAN HOLDS—Veteran holds are placed on the Monday following the 100% drop/add period and run until priority registration. They are reestablished after the PR period ends and will come off during finals.

PRIORITY REGISTRATION— If you are currently using VA Benefits (GI Bill), you qualify for priority registration regardless your academic alignment (Freshman—Senior). Plan your next semester before this date and schedule an appointment with your advisor.

VA CERTIFICATE OF ENROLLMENT FORM DUE EACH SEMESTER you plan to use benefits. Find this form at <http://www.usi.edu/reg/ssl/vaformlogin.asp>. Complete yours as soon as you register for classes.

File Your DD214 for FREE: Vanderburgh County Chief Deputy Recorder at 1 NW Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Rm 231 Evansville IN 47708 812.435.5215

Spaghetti Dinner
APRIL 20, 2018

VETERANS FOR PEACE

Unitarian Universalist Church
2910 E. Morgan Avenue
Evansville, IN

Doors open at 6 pm;
Dinner served at 6:30.
Recommended donation \$12 per person

Contact Caroline Nellis at
812-424-6832 or
vfpchapter104@gmail.com

LIVE READING VIETNAM SPEECH -
MARTIN LUTHER KING
LIVE AUCTION

NEW LOCATION! GIBSON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

TAILGATE REVIVAL
with Special Guest
BLUE COLLAR

Portion of every ticket supports Soldier Dogs for Independence

Blue Collar

MARCH 31st 2018
8:00PM

Toyota Event Center
709 N Embree
Princeton, IN

Presented with Help of:
Gibson County Fairgrounds, Coors LIGHT, BackStage

Military Discharge Upgrade Tool Now Available Online - By James Oxford, Legislative Commission chairman



American Legion National Education and Employment Division Assistant Director John Kamin testified on pending and draft legislation during a House Economic Opportunity Subcommittee hearing on March 20 in Washington, D.C. Kamin gave the Legion's position regarding three pieces of legislation including House Resolution (H.R.) 4830, the Servicemembers Improved Transition through Reform For Ensuring Progress (SIT-REP) Act; H.R. 5044, the Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act; and H.R. 4835, the Job Training through Off-Base Opportunities and Local Support (TOOLS) for Veterans Act.

SIT-REP Act

Kamin said that since the enactment of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, veteran and dependent beneficiaries have been

subject, on occasion, to payment delays. As a result of either slow processing at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), mistakes or tardiness by school-certifying officials, some schools have put beneficiary accounts on hold or forced them to initiate payment of tuition and fees through student loans until payment from the VA is received.

"On a personal note, I remember a late VA payment when I was in school, leading to questions about whether I could still attend my classes," said Kamin. "My student veterans' organization at the time, (American University) AU Vets, was able to successfully lobby our institution to update their internal policies to allow myself and other veterans to continue to attend classes.

"But (the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) TAPS deserves credit for championing

this bill by recognizing that this should not fall to student veterans to lobby for; it should be mandated by principle."

By Resolution No. 318, Kamin said The American Legion supports any legislative proposal including H.R. 4830 that improves education benefits so servicemembers, veterans and their families can maximize its usage.

"This bill would require schools to adopt policies that disallow them from imposing late fees or other penalties to beneficiaries due to late payments from VA," Kamin said. "The American Legion applauds Congressman (Gus) Bilirakis for addressing this important issue." these actions.

For more information on this, the Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act and the Job TOOLS for Veterans Act, visit <https://www.legion.com>

Local Veterans for Peace Chapter 104 to Host Benefit

The local Chapter of Veterans for Peace 104 will host it's "Peace on Earth Day" fundraising event on April 20, 2018

This is a combined spaghetti dinner, multi-person reading of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Vietnam speech and live auction to be held at Unitarian Universalist Church, 2910 E. Morgan Avenue, Evansville.

Doors open at 6 pm; dinner served at 6:30.



Recommended donation \$12 per person. Advance registration preferred, but tickets also sold at the door. To register, call Caroline Nellis at 812-424-6832 or email vfchapter104@gmail.com.

If you have gift certificates, artwork, merchandise, services or other items you are willing to donate for the auction, please contact Caroline at the aforementioned information.

VA and U.S. Digital Service Launch New Web Tool to Help Veterans Track their Benefits Appeals - Department of Veterans Affairs - www.va.gov

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S Digital Service announced their launch of an improved Appeals Status tool to increase transparency and enable Veterans to track the progress of their benefits claims appeals.

"It's important that our Veterans have the opportunity to track their

appeals process in a timely and efficient manner," said VA Secretary David Shulkin. "For the first time ever, Veterans can see their place on the Board of Veterans' Appeals' docket, including the number of appeals that are ahead of them."

The tool, which went live March 21 on VA's Vets.gov website, will allow Veterans to access detailed

information about the status of their benefits appeals and will include alerts about needed actions, as well as estimates of how long each step of the process takes.

Some Veterans who have previewed the new tool said it had given them hope and helped them understand that the process might take longer than expected.



5TH ANNUAL PAWS FOR VETS



APRIL 28TH 1-7 P.M.

VETERANS & KIDS

FREE

OTHER GUESTS - \$5



LIVE MUSIC
BEER GARDEN
SILENT AUCTION
MAGICIAN
CLOWNS
BOUNCE HOUSE

[HTTPS://SOLDIERDOGS.ORG](https://soldierdogs.org)

SDI Headquarters - 4001 Vogel Road, Evansville IN
(812)550-5115 or wehaveyoursix@gmail.com

VFW Offers a Stage for Student Veterans - *By Lida Citroën, CEO, LIDA360*



Don't be surprised if at some point you're in a job interview and the recruiter asks, "What makes you special?" The recruiter is asking you to differentiate yourself from a sea of candidates who might all look and sound like you and have a similar experience.

Recruiters need you to have a clear value proposition because most job candidates spend so much time working on their resumes that they forget to focus on what makes them unique, valuable and attractive for the open position and employer.

When an employer publishes a job request, they typically list the skills, abilities, and experience required, such as "10+ years' experience as IT leader for global company in the security industry" or "senior-level expertise in UX/UI web design."

These job requests are designed to help identify

candidates who qualify for the job.

The hiring manager is looking to see if you are a good fit within the company or the team. Are you someone they'd enjoy working alongside? Do you work well with others? Are you a more social or independent worker? Can you handle stress?

As a veteran, you know the importance of building alliances and creating strong teams. You have worked under pressure where your ability to think and respond quickly was not only appreciated but crucial. Are you explaining this to the hiring managers? Are you listing this on your resume? You should!

While your uniqueness might be interesting and clever, it is critical that you make it easy for the hiring manager to see how your uniqueness is relevant and compelling for the position in which they are hiring.

WORKING FOR HOOSIERS - Indiana Elected Officials

HIRING OUR HEROES

Veterans have high-demand skills and talents. A new statewide initiative, Next Level Veterans, aims to connect our returning Hoosier heroes with high-paying jobs and helpful resources.

Get Connected | www.in.gov/veterans

JOBS >>>>

TRAINING >>>>

HOMEOWNERSHIP >>>>



LOCATE TO INDIANA >>>>

State Representative Ron Bacon

www.in.gov/h75 | h75@iga.in.gov | 317-232-9600 / 800-382-9841 | 200 W. Washington St. Indianapolis, IN 46204 | [/INHouseGOP](https://twitter.com/INHouseGOP) | [/INHouseGOP](https://facebook.com/INHouseGOP)



Indiana is home to **MORE THAN 500,000** veterans

www.in.gov/dva
Find your county veteran service officer who can assist you and your family with all veteran issues

DIAL 2-1-1 | Connect 24/7 for info on the unique benefits and services available to you

Equifax Responds to Donnelly/Heller Call to Provide Servicemember-Specific Tools for Those Impacted by Data Breach

Washington, D.C. – Following requests by U.S. Senators Joe Donnelly (D-IN) and Dean Heller (R-NV), Equifax has gone live with a website with tools specifically for servicemembers who may have been impacted by the recent data breach at the company. In September 2017, Donnelly and Heller sent a letter to Equifax asking the company to detail actions being taken to protect servicemembers’ personal information. The Senators requested specific measures to ensure the financial security of the roughly 1.3 million active-duty U.S. military personnel, including nearly 200,000 stationed overseas, some of whom serve in remote or high-conflict areas in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

In October 2017, after Equifax failed to respond to the Donnelly-Heller letter, Donnelly questioned the former CEO of

Equifax on the company’s commitment to protecting servicemembers. Subsequently, the Donnelly and Heller offices connected Equifax with the Department of Defense (DOD) and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s (CFPB) Office of Servicemember Affairs to provide input as Equifax sought to create a new website for servicemembers.

Donnelly said, “The Equifax data breach put at risk the personal information of more than 145 million Americans, potentially including 1.3 million military servicemembers. Our men and women in uniform deserve to have easy access to information on how they may have been negatively impacted and what tools are available to protect their credit files moving forward. I’m glad that my efforts to hold Equifax accountable will help servicemembers safeguard their personal

information.”

Heller said, “Nevada’s troops should not be in the dark when it comes to their financial security, especially while they are stationed overseas and defending our country. That is why I was proud to work with Senator Donnelly to demand that Equifax assist and protect our service members who were impacted by the September 2017 data breach. I expect the company to continue helping our men and women in uniform as they work to resolve the consequences of this massive data breach.”

For more information check with the IRS. This information was taken from IRS Publication 970: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf>