



IOWA HEART BEAT

Department of Iowa Military Order of the Purple Heart Newsletter

Jan 2017

Tax Season (23 Jan to 18 Apr)

Everyone should be getting their documents together to "mail" off to the IRS. Here are some commonly asked questions.

Military pay (Retirement and CRSC) - Military pay comes from DFAS and information can be found on MyPay, including statements showing that your retirement pay is exempt from taxes if your retirement is combat related. If your pay is tax exempt, you will NOT receive a 1099-R (retirement W-2) from DFAS. If you were on duty at any time during 2016, your W2 is available on MyPay. CRSC monthly statements are also on MyPay. While in MyPay, ensure your mailing address is correct - DFAS has no way of knowing if you moved unless you tell them, the VA does not tell them, nor does Tricare/DEERS.

VA Disability Pay (compensation & caregiver) - ALL pay from VA is tax exempt. You will NOT receive any type of statement for filing taxes because you did not pay taxes. Payments from VA usually show up as deposits from US Treasury - VA. (CP stands for compensation & pension, CH 31=Voc Rehab, Ch 33=Post 9/11 GI Bill, and Ch 30 is the Montgomery GI Bill). Do not include VA payments as part of your **gross** income.

Social Security Disability (SSDI) - SSDI is not always tax-exempt, it depends on taxable income of the household. You WILL receive a Form SSA-1099 from Social Security. If you did not get one, you need to ensure they have your right address. You can also create an online social security account.

**You can list tax-exempt income on your taxes as "nontaxable income"; in some situations I am told it is beneficial.

"The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Helpful links for taxes

DFAS: <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/manage/taxes.html>

VA: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/>

Social Security: <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/taxes.html>

IRS (Military and Retired Military): <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/military>



In This Issue

- Tax information
- Purple Heart Law
- Crisis Line Update
- Purple Heart Reunited
- JASTA and Vietnam

Young Requests Update from VA on Veterans Crisis Line Improvements

Young Requests Update from VA on Veterans Crisis Line Improvements

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Iowa Congressman David Young today sent a letter to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert A. McDonald requesting an update on the department's efforts to develop and submit a plan to improve the Veterans Crisis Line, which is the hotline for veterans seeking suicide prevention and crisis resources help from VA responders.

Forty five days have passed since the president signed into law the [No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act](#), bipartisan legislation Congressman Young authored seeking necessary responsiveness and performance improvements to the Veterans Crisis Line. This law requires the VA to create a quality assurance process to address responsiveness of the hotline, and develop a plan to ensure communications to the hotline are answered. The law also requires the plan to be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs within 180 days of enactment.

"The VCL was created to be a resource to veterans in crisis and their family and friends, with the goal of providing them with assistance during a very critical time," **Congressman Young wrote.** "Yet, there have been too many documented cases of veterans who have been unable to reach a VCL or backup responder, including Iowa veterans in my district."

"I look forward to receiving an update from the VA regarding how it is complying with the law and better serving our nation's veterans," **Congressman Young continued.**

Congressman Young also recognized the VA's establishment of a new Veterans Crisis Line call center in Atlanta, Georgia, and expressed his intent to schedule a tour of the new facility and the facility in Canandaigua.

Text of Congressman Young's full letter is below:

Dear Secretary McDonald:

On November 28, 2016, President Obama signed the *No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act* into law, beginning the 180 day window for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit a report to Congress documenting clear performance measures and timelines to enhance Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) operations and responsiveness to veterans in need and their families and friends.

In this nation, we lose a heartbreaking number of veterans to suicide each and every day. The VCL was created to be a resource to veterans in crisis and their family and friends, with the goal of providing them with assistance during a very critical time. Yet, there have been too many documented cases of veterans who have been unable to reach a VCL or backup responder, including Iowa veterans in my district. This and other problems were documented in two separate investigations conducted by the VA Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office.

The sad fact is many of the problems identified were caused by a lack of processes and accountability. So, I introduced the *No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act* to address these deficiencies and ensure the VA demonstrates to Congress how it is correcting the identified problems in order to serve veterans and their families and friends. I look forward to receiving an update from the VA regarding how it is complying with the law and better serving our nation's veterans.

The VCL has also opened a new call center in Atlanta, Georgia since the enactment of the *No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act*. I am committed to remaining informed of the VCL's ongoing activities and I am requesting a tour of both the Atlanta and the Canandaigua facilities and a briefing on both facilities' operations. My staff will follow up with designated VA staff to facilitate this request.

I thank you for your prompt attention to my requests.

Sincerely,

David Young

Member of Congress



**PURPLE HEARTS
REUNITED**

Purple Hearts Reunited Inc. is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to return lost or stolen military medals of valor to veterans or their families, in order to honor their sacrifice to the nation. Founded in 2012 by combat-wounded veteran and active-duty Army National Guard officer, the organization has been able to locate and return medals to over 200 military families to date. Our organization returns what is often the last tangible piece of a veteran to his or her family. This is often the solace that is needed for a military family to commemorate their loved one's service and move on from the pain of his or her sacrifice. We believe all medals should go home to their rightful owners, or be preserved in a special place of honor.



(left)
MAJ
Zachariah
Fike



Purple Heart Would Receive More Protection With New Law

The Purple Heart is more than just a medal -- especially to the recipients who have sacrificed while fighting for their country.

"It gives me a distinguished feeling," said Sam Houston, who was awarded a Purple Heart in 1970 after his service in the Vietnam War. "No matter where I go, if I'm wearing a Purple Heart hat, people always stop me. There's that saying, 'all gave some and some gave all.' "

This year, a piece of legislation is expected to come up in Congress that could help protect the Purple Heart and preserve that distinguished feeling.

**Northwest Florida Daily News, Fort Walton Beach | Jan 17, 2017
by Jennie Mckeon**

[RELATED OP-ED: Symbols of Sacrifice Should Not Be for Sale](#)

Rep. Paul Cook, R-Calif., plans to introduce the Private Corrado Piccoli Purple Heart Preservation Act this session. The bill would penalize the sale of any Purple Heart awarded to a member of the Armed Forces by imprisonment up to six months or a fine, which would be determined by the Department of Justice based off the federal fine schedule.

"The purpose of the bill is to see the Purple Heart protected and to ensure medals find their way back to families or homes of honor," Cook, himself a veteran, said in an emailed statement to the News Herald in Panama City. "It's wrong to turn profits on the sacrifices of our service members. These medals are powerful symbols of selflessness in defense of our nation. They deserve to be cherished by families instead of being traded like a pack of baseball cards and auctioned to the highest bidder."

Piccoli's medal was purchased in an antique mall for \$100. The woman who purchased the medal gave it to her son, Capt. Zachariah Fike, who served in the Vermont Army National Guard. Fike then founded Purple Hearts Reunited, a non-profit that returns lost or stolen military medals of valor to veterans or their family.

Cook introduced the bill last year, but it was at the end of the congressional session, and no action was taken. He is optimistic it will pass this time and expects it to get referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations as it was last session.

Could the JASTA bill lead to suing of Vietnam War Veterans?

A former US Republican senator has described the current house of representatives and senate as the most “populist, xenophobic and fear-filled legislation” after their recent vote to allow the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act to stand.

“Congress must pass new legislation to reverse the override of Obama's veto regarding America suing Saudi Arabia. As a Vietnam combat Veteran, I could almost certainly be sued by the Vietnamese government or by a Vietnamese citizen,” Larry Pressler said in [comments published on The Hill](#).

He served in the Vietnam War in the United States army from 1966 to 1968 and then served nearly 21 years in both the US congress and Senate.

The US legislation passed by the Congress on Wednesday would allow families of victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks to sue Saudi Arabia for damages.



“The Gulf War, Iraq War and Afghanistan War veterans are more protected by Constitutional Congressional actions, but we Vietnam veterans will be raw targets if Americans can sue Saudi Arabia,” he said.

*Staff writer, Al Arabiya English
Friday, 30 September 2016*

Larry Pressler served in the Vietnam War in the United States Army from 1966 to 1968 and then served nearly 21 years in both the US Congress and Senate.



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