

Sent: Tue, 11 Nov 2003 12:32:44 -0500

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Subject: FACT SHEET: In Support of America's Veterans
[Fact Sheet Veterans Day 11-11-03.pdf](#)

In Support of America's Veterans

Today's Presidential Action

- Today, President Bush commemorated Veterans Day with a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to honor the veterans of our Nation's Armed Forces.
- America takes great pride in the achievements of the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States. Americans owe veterans and those on the front lines of freedom a great debt of gratitude. They have removed threats to America and our friends throughout our Nation's history. We mourn every American who has died in the line of duty.
- Today, the President also signed into law two bills to support our veterans and their families.
 - ✓ H.R. 3365, the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003, provides tax relief and other benefits to members of the armed services and their families.
 - ✓ H.R. 1516, the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003 establishes, within four years, six new national cemeteries in southeastern Pennsylvania; Birmingham, Alabama; Jacksonville, Florida; Bakersfield, California; Greenville/Columbia, South Carolina; and, Sarasota, Florida.
- President Bush has proposed record levels of support for America's veterans. Since 2001, the President has increased VA healthcare funding by more than 30-percent, and the proposed FY 2004 budget is the largest annual discretionary increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs ever requested by a President.

Administration Actions in Support of America's Veterans

Veterans and military retirees have made tremendous sacrifices for our Nation, and President Bush believes America must honor its commitments to our veterans. Because of the President's leadership, the VA is more responsive to veteran needs, and has

improved health care, medical treatment, and claims processing times. In recognition of the tremendous sacrifices veterans and their families make, last year the President also signed into law special benefits to existing military retirees who are Purple Heart recipients or were seriously injured under combat conditions, and he is pleased to see that Congress is acting this year to address the issue of concurrent receipt for military retirees in a fair and responsible manner.

Improving Access to Health Care for Veterans

- President Bush has provided America's veterans with unprecedented medical care budget increases – more in his first two years in office than in the period from 1995-2000. Since 2001, the President has increased VA health care funding by more than 30-percent.
- The President's record requests have enabled VA to improve on its core medical mission to provide high-quality health care to veterans with service-related disabilities, with low incomes, and with special healthcare needs.
- Under the President's leadership, VA will care for 1.4 million more veterans in 2004 than in 2000, and has opened 194 new community-based clinics to be more responsive to veterans' needs.
- The Bush Administration took action last summer to provide medicine prescribed by private physicians to some veterans who had been waiting more than 30 days for an appointment.
- The President's FY 2004 budget will enable VA to eliminate the waiting list by February 2004.

More Responsive to Veterans

- Since 2001, the average time to process a disability claim has been reduced by 30 percent, and the inventory of disability claims has been reduced from a peak of 432,000 to 253,000. VA has also established special teams to focus on long-overdue cases and has already cut by half the number of cases pending for more than 6 months.
- Under the Bush Administration, the Department of Defense and the VA have developed a proactive partnership to work together benefiting veterans, military beneficiaries, and taxpayers. The VA-DoD Joint Executive Council was formed to further improve quality and access for health care and to bring about a seamless transition for new veterans moving from military to civilian status.

Fulfilling our Nation's Promise

- Some 1,800 veterans die every day. Most of these are World War II and Korea veterans. The President's budget supports fulfilling our Nation's promise to provide veterans with a dignified final resting place.
- The families of veterans and military retirees have also made tremendous

sacrifices. Surviving spouses, children, and some parents of veterans who are either killed in action or die of service-related causes may receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

- Dependents' educational assistance is available to spouses who have not remarried and children of veterans who are either killed in action or die of service-related disabilities.

For more information on the President's initiatives, please visit www.whitehouse.gov

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