Veterans Studies Interest Group Listserv
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This month’s Listserv includes veterans’ healthcare in civilian systems, the Desert Storm Memorial and Jeff Bezos’ $10 million donation to help veterans get elected to Congress.

The Veteran’s Creed
1. I am an American Veteran
2. I proudly served my country
3. I live the values I learned in the military
4. I continue to serve my community, my country and my fellow veterans
5. I maintain my physical and mental discipline
6. I continue to lead and improve
7. I make a difference
8. I honor and remember my fallen comrades

Note: The Veterans of Foreign Wars have officially endorsed Veteran’s Creed.

Veterans’ Healthcare in Civilian Systems
We have a social obligation to veterans for the service they have performed and this obligation is most notable in healthcare. We consider that the primary vehicle to pay the obligation is the Department of Veterans Affairs. But, civilian healthcare, which in fact provides most of the care that veterans receive, has the same social obligation. Also, since families provide crucial support for veterans, most notably as caregivers who assist 28% of VHA enrollees, they are part of this obligation.

Last July, I posted a blog in the health policy journal Health Affairs outlining my thoughts on how these social responsibilities should be fulfilled. The Veterans Choice Program allows VA enrollees to receive healthcare in the community when they need it and the VA MISSION Act has expanded this benefit. However, civilian healthcare makes little accommodation for veterans. For example, physicians usually do not ordinarily ask if a patient is a veteran, much less take a military history as part of the examination. A lack of attentiveness to veterans is widespread in civilian healthcare.

I outlined 12 steps for civilian healthcare systems to meet their social responsibility to veterans:
1. Ensure that leadership makes care of veterans a primary goal of all health systems
2. Ensure that physicians and other providers take military histories. A New York Times article discusses this important issue in detail. If doctors do not know that a patient is a veteran, they will not delve into such issues as PTSD, infectious diseases acquired overseas and others.
3. Train civilian health care workers specifically in veterans’ health.
4. Educate healthcare workers about military culture.
5. Provide incentives to ensure delivery of veteran-response care.
6. Provide navigators and social workers as well as IT and telephone backup to guide veterans and their families through healthcare systems and the healthcare benefits terrain.
7. Embed veterans care within broader healthcare systems over and above creating special stand-alone clinics.
8. Provide unified family care to veterans. A gap in the system is that the VA does not take care of veterans’ families.
9. Coordinate and communicate better between civilian and VA healthcare systems.
10. Provide veterans detailed information about the quality of care in particular conditions at particular sites.
11. Continue and expand the important role that Academic Medical Centers play in veterans’ health.
12. Undertake medical research on veteran-specific conditions throughout the healthcare system beyond the VA.

I have received considerable positive feedback about these suggestions. The best possible care for veterans is a responsibility for our entire healthcare enterprise and I hope these suggestions are of some help in this crucial endeavor.

**Desert Storm Memorial**
In June 2018, after three years of debate, a federal commission approved the National Desert Storm War Memorial to be located on the national Mall at 23rd St. and Constitution Avenue in DC near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. The Facebook site for the Memorial is [here](#). Desert Shield/Desert Storm (or “Gulf War I”), August 7, 1990 - February 28, 1991, is often considered a “forgotten” War” However, it “affected 700,000 people and was one of the most overwhelmingly successful military operations in history” according to Scott Stone a Desert Storm Marine veteran who spearheaded the memorial project as part of the National Desert War Memorial Association. Private donations are expected to provide the $25 million needed for the project and so far almost $2 Million has been raised. According to Stump, the team is on track for construction in 2021, the 30th Anniversary of Desert Storm. Though there are naysayers, the Memorial has been welcomed.

**Bezos donates $10M to Help Veterans Get Elected**
Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL), a veteran who lost both legs in an IED explosion in Afghanistan, is shown walking to a meeting with fellow Republicans. He will receive funding from Bezos’ political action committee. Rep. Mast was also one of the speakers at our rollout of the Veteran’s Creed on Flag Day.

Perhaps the richest man in the world, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and his family have donated $10 million to help veterans get elected to Congress. As his first major campaign donation, Bezos supported the “With Honor Fund”, a bipartisan advocacy group whose goal is to raise $30 million to “lower the financial barriers to entry for principled veterans from both parties”. The With Honor Fund is supporting 33 House candidates - 19 Democrats and 14 Republicans. At present, 19% of House Members and 20% of Senators are military veterans, much lower than in the past (See Listserv #19, April 2018). Another organization, HillVets has also done much to foster servicemen interested in governance.

The Listserv is available as an archive on the Georgetown University Library website under the title “Veterans Interest Newsletters”.

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Stats Section

U.S. Deployments overseas
Estimates of U.S. active duty Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force who were overseas as of Sept. 30, 2016 and changes over the years. This was the first time in at least 60 years that the
The number of active-duty U.S. troops overseas dropped below 200,000. Source: Defense Manpower Data Center via the Pew Research Center.