



The Knox County Joint Veterans Council are looking for **volunteers!!!**

The Knox County Joint Veterans Council is located at the Knox County Veterans Service Office located at 105 E Chestnut St. Mount Vernon, Ohio. The post conducts regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meeting time is 7:00 P.M. **Contact Carol Riley @**

[740-504-3264](tel:740-504-3264) if you are interested in volunteering. Thank you!



They stand guard silently, vigilantly through whatever Mother Nature dares throw at them. They do so with great pride to honor one of their own. And they do this without thought of payment. For them, honoring a fallen brother-in-arms is compensation enough.

For the families of the deceased soldier, they are the ever-watchful sentinels, and their selfless act is a much-appreciated tribute.

Meet the Samoan unit that fought barefoot during WWII

During World War II, Pago Pago, on Tutuila, was a lightly-manned base in the Samoa Islands vital to preserving communications between the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Though the U.S. Navy was tasked with holding it, the 7th Marines were ordered to fortify the garrison. But they didn't do it alone.

"The Samoans, who were American nationals, would help the 7th defend Tutuila's 52 square miles of mountainous and jungled terrain," according to [records](#) from the National Park Service.

Thus, the 1st Samoan Battalion, Marine Corps Reserve, was founded in 1941. And they didn't wear shoes.

The 500-man reserve unit that patrolled and defended the beaches of Tutuila became known as the "Barefoot Marines."

Their uniform featured a kilt-like khaki wraparound which was called a "Lava-Lava" with the Marine Corps insignia sewn on the lower end along with rank chevrons. The Marines would pair this with a khaki covering and a white shirt.

"Marine uniforms are often appreciated for their history and refined simplicity," [according to](#) the National Museum of the Marine Corps. "But, when it comes to the uniforms of the World War II era, it would be hard to find a more stripped-down or simple ensemble than that of the 1st Samoan Battalion."

The battalion was dismantled near the end of the war, and in the summer of 1945, Pago Pago resumed peacetime operations like serving as a port for refueling, ship repair, weather forecasting, and supply depot.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2022/01/24/meet-the-samoan-unit-that-fought-barefoot-during-wwii/>

Troops would automatically be enrolled in VA health care under House plan

House lawmakers on Thursday advanced legislation that would automatically enroll separating service members into the Veterans Affairs medical system, an effort to streamline their access to that care if they need it. The move has for years been championed by advocates as a potential way to increase veterans' use of VA care and reduce some of the confusion connected to the massive health system. Past research has shown that veterans enrolled in VA medical care are less likely to die by suicide than their peers outside of the system.

The measure would affect about 60,000 individuals a year. Instead of formally applying for VA medical services, department officials would automatically add them to the system if they met the requirements for eligibility. "We shouldn't be trying to hide VA care from those who earned it," said House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., the sponsor of the measure. "We know that the months following transition out of the military can be very stressful and particularly risky for those new veterans in terms of mental health. ... This [measure] helps simplify the process and prevents veterans from potentially missing out on lifesaving care."

White House officials have backed the measure, although they have noted that implementing it and adding thousands of new names to the VA medical system could strain operations. The department currently provides medical services for about 9 million veterans, about half of the veteran population in America today. Service members are typically eligible for some medical services for the first few years after separating and remain able to access the care after that if they have service-connected injuries or financial challenges.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the measure would cost about \$3.1 billion over the next five years, with individual veterans saving an average of about \$3,900 in health care costs. The measure received opposition from some House Republicans who said the costs and impact of the changes have not yet been fully addressed and who complained that the moves amount to federal overreach. "This act enrolls separating service members into the VA healthcare system without their knowledge or consent," said Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill. the ranking member of the veterans committee. "We shouldn't be signing veterans up for a government program they aren't asking for and may never need without at least letting them know first. And we shouldn't be telling them that if they don't like it, they can figure out how to disenroll themselves. That's backwards. Veterans deserve better than that."

But Takano and supporters argued that the move is about making accessing the system simpler, not forcing individuals to use VA services against their will. The final vote on the measure was 265-163, with 44 Republicans joining all of the present chamber Democrats in supporting the plan. The measure now heads to the Senate, where it faces an uncertain timeline for potential consideration. Several veterans reform measures passed by the House are pending before the chamber, which has been focused on voting rights and federal spending measures of late.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2022/01/20/troops-would-automatically-be-enrolled-in-va-health-care-under-house-plan/>

Representatives

Senator (R)	Rob Portman 448 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510 (202) 224-3353
Senator (D)	Sherrod Brown 503 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510 (202) 224-2315
Congressman	Bob Gibbs 2217 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20510 (202)225-6265

Pictures of the Month



Army cadets snowshoe to a bivouac site during a cold weather operations course near Fort McCoy, Wis., Jan. 13, 2022. (Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood/Army)



The Air Force Thunderbirds practice during the team's inaugural winter training trip Jan. 20, 2021 at Spaceport America, New Mexico. (Tech. Sgt. Nicolas Myers/Air Force)



The littoral combat ship Tulsa conducts an archipelagic sea lane passage through the San Bernardino Strait, crossing from the South China Sea into the Philippine Sea, Dec. 23, 2021. (MCS Devin M. Langer/Navy)