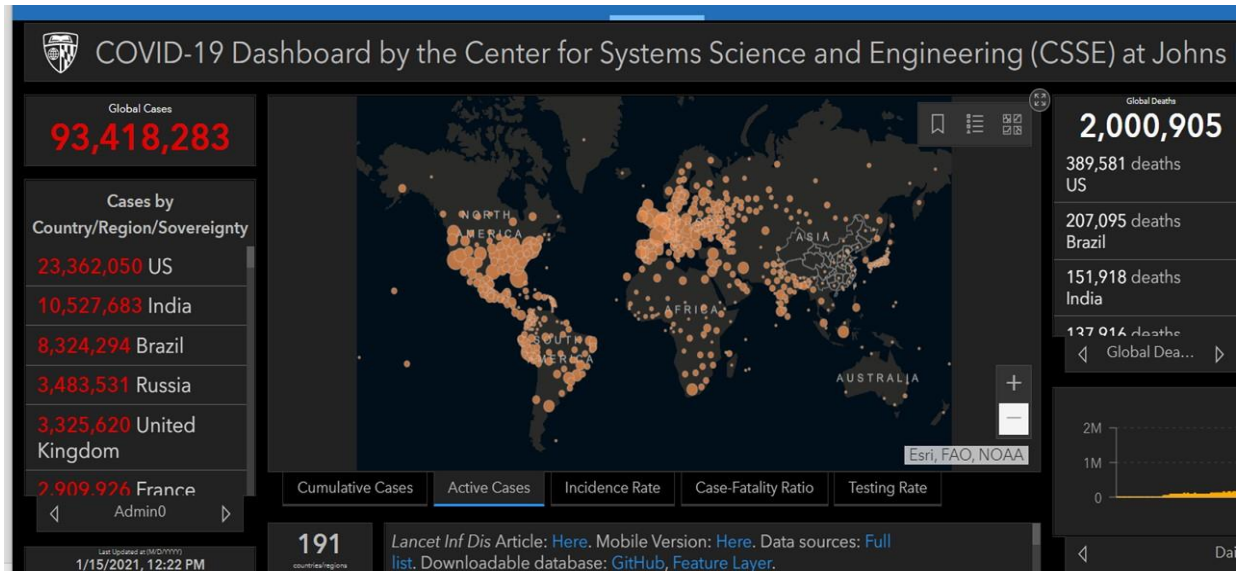
National Security Division Report
Week ending 15 January 2021

US COVID Death Toll Rapidly Approaching 400k, Says Johns Hopkins



The numbers for the coronavirus pandemic continue upward, with more than 93 million global infections and nearly 2 million worldwide deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center.

The U.S. remains at the top of the list with the most cases and deaths. Johns Hopkins reports more than 23 million COVID-19 cases in the U.S., with a death toll rapidly approaching 400,000.

Some states, having vaccinated their frontline workers, have opened vaccinations to older people, but have been overrun with requests. Medical facilities are on the verge of running out of vaccines. In many instances, the technology used to take the requests has crashed.

President-elect Joe Biden announced a nearly $2 trillion American Rescue Plan for the pandemic and the U.S. economic crisis Thursday, with $400 billion of the package slated for the COVID-19 outbreak.

Click Here To Read More

Resolution No. 10 Support of the Veterans Creed (safeguard)

Buddy Check: Wellness check-ins with veterans

As American Legion members, our most sacred responsibility is to look out for each other and our fellow veterans. Connect with veterans who may need assistance but don't know where to go or who to ask. These contacts may be made by phone or email, or a combination. The important part is to reach out to veterans in your community to let them know you care and can provide whatever assistance they may need. It's what we do for our battle buddies.

How do I organize a Buddy Check? (abbreviated version)

1. **Gather up a team** if possible, to call or email members and former members of The American Legion. If each member in a team of 10 contacts just 10 Legionnaires or former Legionnaires, 100 veterans can be reached in one sitting.

2. **Leave contact information** in case the member or former member can't take the call or needs anything in the future.

Resolution No. 18 Buddy Check

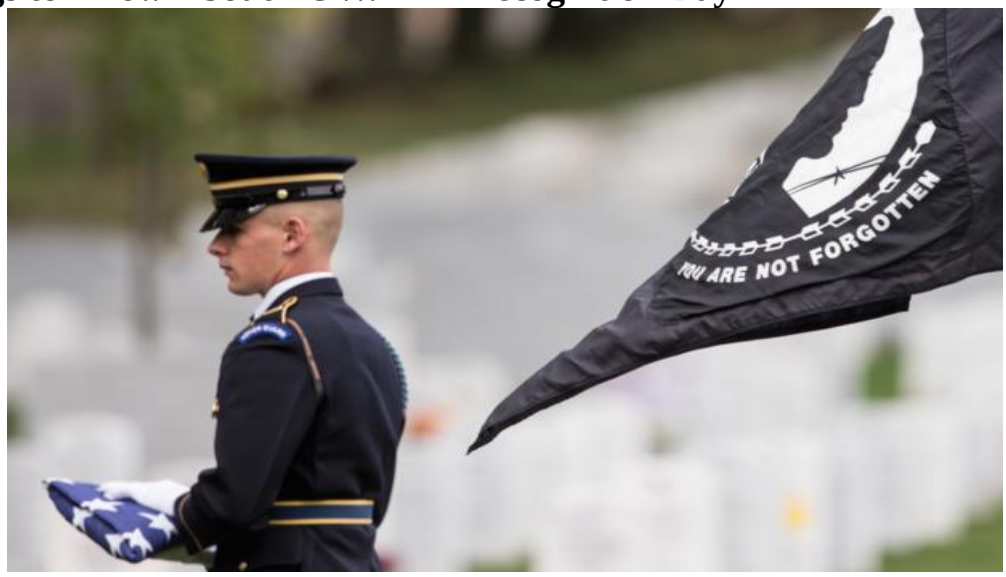
Finding the right support to ease the stress of navigating daily COVID-19-related challenges can be a challenge itself. ~ health.mil

Veterans Crisis Line

POW/MIA Update:

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency released the following announcements. Click on the links to read more:

4 Things to Know About POW/MIA Recognition Day



You Are Not Forgotten – that's the central phrase behind the POW/MIA remembrance movement which honors America's prisoners of war, those who are still missing in action and their families.

Many of our service members suffered as prisoners of war during several decades of varying conflicts. While some of them made it home, tens of thousands more never did.

Here are four things to know about how this important movement got started, what it means and how you can help recognize it.

POW/MIA Recognition Day is commemorated on the third Friday of every September, a date that's not associated with any particular war. In 1979, Congress and the president passed resolutions making it official after the families of the more than 2,500 Vietnam War POW/MIAs pushed for full accountability.

- 130,201 World War II service members were imprisoned; 14,072 them died
- 7,140 Korean War service members were imprisoned; 2,701 of them died
- 725 Vietnam War service members were imprisoned; 64 of them died
- 37 service members were imprisoned during conflicts since 1991, including both Gulf wars; none are still in captivity

Click Here To Read More

Announcement

Announcing TRICARE's New Lower Back Pain and Physical Therapy Demonstration

Please visit the link below to access a new toolkit with important beneficiary information about TRICARE's new Lower Back Pain and Physical Therapy Demonstration, available in 10 demonstration states. The demonstration is available to beneficiaries who live and receive care in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia.

This toolkit contains information and turn-key products to spread awareness about the no-cost physical therapy visits for low-back pain:

TRICARE Low Back Pain & Physical Therapy Toolkit
Eligible beneficiaries must:

- Reside in and receive care in one of the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, or Virginia
- Have a new primary diagnosis of low back pain, made after the demonstration starts
- Have a referral from a TRICARE-authorized provider. The referral must be to an in-network TRICARE-authorized provider (Beneficiaries using TRICARE For Life will only need to see a TRICARE-authorized provider)

The demonstration runs from Jan. 1, 2021 through Dec. 31, 2023.
TRICARE may terminate or extend the demonstration.

Legislative Issues

- Quality of Life for Servicemembers and their Families – We owe our military men and women a debt of gratitude we can never repay for all that they — and their families — sacrifice to serve our country. The American Legion supports a fully funded quality of life (Resolution No. 85, 2016)
- Ensure the Coast Guard is paid – The American Legion supports a fully funded United States Coast Guard (Resolution No. 23, 2016)
- Expedited Citizenship through Honorable Military Service – The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed prior to discharge (Resolution No. 15, 2018)
- Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure – The American Legion supports refined processes and policies that will enhance interagency cybersecurity…and promulgation of best practices and standards, and to ensure the protection of critical infrastructure from cyber and other electronic attack. (Resolution No. 20, 2017)
- End the Forever Wars – The American Legion advocate for elevating diplomacy to build a better safer world (Resolution No. 22, 2020)

Staff Activity:

- Staff correlated with Spirit of Service Award recipients and the National Law Enforcement Officer and Fire Fighter of the year to attend next week's Spirt of Service Award and Law Enforcement and Fire Fighter of the Year Award Ceremony. Each member of their respective branch and service have excelled at their job and MOS (military occupational specialty) as well as contributed numerous hours in various forms of community service. The American Legion takes pride in presenting these awards to each member every year.
- Staff participated in the Defense Health Agency MSO/VSO meeting consisting of multiple briefers to include Mr. Guy Kiyokawa, Deputy Director, Defense Health Agency and Mr. Mark Ellis, Chief Policy and Programs, Tricare Health Plan, Defense Health Agency. Key take-aways centered around top priorities addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs) during its transition of authority to the Defense Health Agency while providing and ensuring all beneficiaries maintain access to quality healthcare. Health of the force significantly contributes to readiness of the force.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division, rpowell@legion.org, 202-861-2700
Week ending 01/15/2021