

VETERANS POST

Changes at the VA

Under the new presidential administration, and under the guidance of the new VA Secretary Doug Collins, the Department of Veterans Affairs has made several significant changes. The core mission: providing the best possible care and services to veterans, fam-

ilies, caregivers and survivors. As Secretary Collins said, "We have already stripped away many of the costly distractions that were coming between VA beneficiaries and the benefits they have earned."

Here are a few examples:

What Collins called "DEI and gender ideology" has been taken off the table, saying that the "VA should not be in the business of helping people try to change their sex." That's going to save the VA \$14 million.

Working from home is a no-no now, with a schedule being created to get everyone back in the office by summer. No more "phoning it in from home," per Collins. And I have to agree -- service on the phone is much better when employees are in the office within earshot of colleagues.

When it comes to duplicate and unnecessary contracts, so far the VA has identified "hundreds of millions of dollars" that they can divert back to services for veterans. They'll continue to take a look at the 130,000 VA contracts to see what further dollars they can save.

The modernization of the electronic health record program was something that stalled over the last two years, but already, just since March, they've worked to be able to bring nine more medical facilities online by next year and all of them by 2031.

In his opinion piece and video, Collins addresses the pushback he's gotten from various sources that only want the VA to keep going as before. Not going to happen, per Collins. His job is to work to put veterans first, and that's what he intends to do.

The video Secretary Collins made can be found on his X (formerly known as Twitter) account. Or if you prefer to read it, search for his opinion piece "First 100 Days at VA: Putting Veterans First" at DCJournal.com.



◆ There's been a lot of talk at my house about kitchen gadgets that do double duty, especially since I have made whipped cream for the first time - in my coffeemaker! I have a French press that I rarely use, until now. Add heavy whipping cream and a bit of sugar to the pot, and use the screen to whip the cream by rapidly bringing it up and down. Magic!

◆ "I love to eat pancakes, but I don't have time to make them every morning. I make a very large batch on Sundays and reheat them through the week. In order to re-create that fresh from the pan crisp (which you don't get if you microwave them), I use my toaster."

◆ Ice-cube trays can be handy for freezing portions of foods. Try freezing individual servings of baby food. Or clean and snip fresh herbs from your garden. Fill the ice-cube tray with tablespoons of olive oil and tuck the herb snippings into the oil. Then freeze. Whatever you freeze can be popped out and stored in a zipper-top bag for quick access.

◆ "Here's my tip: Use a muffin pan to make big ice cubes for drinks."

◆ Hashbrowns can be made on a waffle iron. Coat liberally with canola oil or butter-flavored non-stick spray, and add shredded potatoes and finely diced onion. Allow the iron to cook the potatoes to your desired level of crispness, and flip out both sides onto a plate. They will be both crisp and soft!

Strange BUT TRUE

◆ Benjamin Franklin never actually lobbied for the turkey to become the national bird, but he did write that the bald eagle was a fowl of "bad moral character" and that the turkey was "a much more respectable bird."

◆ The world's largest chocolate bar weighed 12,000 pounds.

◆ While digging up stones to build a house in 1885, Australian miner George Harrison found gold ore near Johannesburg, beginning the South African gold rush.

◆ In terms of galactic years, the sun is around 20.5 years old.

◆ Victorian floriography, the practice of assigning codes to flowers to send messages via bouquets and arrangements, associated basil with hatred! The curious link came from the ancient Greeks, who felt basil leaves resembled the opening jaws of a basilisk.

◆ In the 1800s, ducks were called "arsefeet," as their feet are so close to their posteriors.

◆ Painting designs and pictures on fingernails isn't just a modern trend. It was a familiar practice with the Incas, many of whom sported eagle motifs on their nails.

◆ One percent of people are born with a 13th rib.

◆ To preserve the quality of the U.S. Constitution, on display in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., its protective cases contain argon gas and are kept at 67 Fahrenheit with a relative humidity of 40%.

◆ In the U.K., fish and chips were traditionally wrapped in old newspapers, giving the meal a unique newspaper ink flavor. The practice eventually ended for health reasons.

◆ During the 1904 Summer Olympic Games, American athlete George Eyser won six medals in a single day, including three gold and two silver, in the vault, parallel bars and rope climbing competitions ... with a wooden prosthetic left leg.

...Thought for the Day: "Try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."
- Maya Angelou

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1. **ACRONYMS:** What phrase does the acronym URL stand for?
2. **MOVIES:** What is the name of the ghost that haunts the girls' bathroom at Hogwarts ("Harry Potter" series)?
3. **HISTORY:** Which decisive battle ended the Revolutionary War?
4. **LITERATURE:** What is the pseudonym of the author Eric Arthur Blair?
5. **GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** Which of the national parks is the most visited in the United States?
6. **TELEVISION:** Which med-

ical series is based at Princeton Plainsboro Teaching Hospital?

7. **GEOGRAPHY:** What is the capital of Denmark?

8. **U.S. STATES:** In which state is Glacier National Park located?

9. **U.S. PRESIDENTS:** Who was the first vice president to die in office?

10. **SCIENCE:** What are elements like neon, helium and radon called?

Answers

1. Uniform resource locator.
2. Moaning Myrtle.
3. The Battle of Yorktown.
4. George Orwell.
5. Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
6. "House, M.D."
7. Copenhagen.
8. Montana.
9. George Clinton.
10. Noble gases.

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