

## **Borne the Battle Bonus Episode: Coronavirus Update - 3/25/2020**

[00:00:00] **Tanner Iskra:** Hey, good morning or, or afternoon, depending on when you get this. It's about noon on Tuesday, March 24th, 2020. At the time of this recording. This is coronavirus update number three on *Borne the Battle*.

I am your host Marine Corps veteran Tanner Iskra. First of all, I hope you're doing well. I know as many more folks are getting the virus are contracting the virus, that many more of us are coming closer to said virus. Maybe it's someone you know, maybe it's someone very close.

And if you know someone that has contracted the virus, I pray that they make a speedy recovery.

I also know for many of the isolation is setting in due to social distancing. Remember that social distancing does not mean mental distancing.

What do I mean by that? I mean reach out to your friends and family during this time. Even maybe that battle buddy that you check up on Facebook, but you haven't had an actual conversation with since you picked up that DD-214. Catch up, let them know that you're thinking about [00:01:00] them and that they're not alone as well.

As her new information from the VA. first off, I want to say that there is a quicker URL to use for the VA coronavirus update website that I talked about in the previous, in the previous coronavirus update episode. It's now just [va.gov/coronavirus](https://va.gov/coronavirus) all one word. That's where you can get all things coronavirus in relation to the VA.

Some updates this week, I've seen a lot of comments asking about GI Bill benefits as students were being forced online, were they also going to be forced to go to the online housing allowance. As you can imagine, this had the potential to hurt almost everyone depending on the housing allowance to make their rent payment, especially for those in major cities.

We're talking about thousands of dollars a month. Well over the weekend. On Saturday, March 21st President Trump signed S 3503 which enables VA to continue to provide the same level of education benefits to students having to [00:02:00] take courses online due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Thanks to this law, GI Bill

students will continue to receive the same monthly housing allowance payments they received for resident training until December 21st or until the school resumed in person classes. This law also gives a VA temporary authority to continue GI bill payments uninterrupted in the event of any national emergency. This allows for

continued payment of benefits even if the program has changed from resident training to online training. Students receiving GI bill benefits are not required to take any action.

Benefits will continue automatically. That's it. That's all that's in this release. If you have any questions regarding the GI bill, for example, if you're looking to start school say in, April.

Call the education call center at +1 888-442-4551 they're open between 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday through Friday Alright and second, the National Cemetery Administration has released that [00:03:00] all national cemeteries are currently open and will continue to provide interments for veterans and eligible individuals.

However, effective as of yesterday, March 23rd, in response to the coronavirus, committal services and rendered of military funeral honors will discontinue until further notice immediate family members of the deceased, but limited to no more than 10 people may witness the interment if requested.

Families choosing to continue with interment may schedule a committal service for a later date. Families wishing to postpone and already scheduled and term it to a later date should contact the cemetery as soon as possible to convey their wishes. And although VA national cemeteries remain open to visitors, guests are strongly urge to obey local travel restrictions and avoid unnecessary travel.

Certain portions of a cemetery typically open to public, such as public information centers or chapels may be close to the public. Contact your local cemetery for any updates regarding closures. For more information, you can also contact the national cemetery administration [00:04:00] at (202) 891-9987. Additionally, you can call the national cemetery scheduling office at +1 800-535-1117.

Third, and I want to make you aware of this, is that the VA is inviting retired medical personnel back to work. I first saw this call on VA's Twitter on VA career's Twitter page. They have their own page at VA, @VAcareers. Then I found the news release. Says that the office of personnel management approved a request from VA on March 19th to be to waive a section of federal law that governs retired VA workers.

This waiver will make it easier for VA to rehire retired VA health care workers, and we'll help the VA healthcare facilities bolster the medical staffs during the coronavirus pandemic. VA plans to use this waiver authority to begin hiring actions. As early as this week. [00:05:00]

VA is looking for retired VA physicians, nurses, pharmacists, lab techs, respiratory therapists, and other medical professionals. If interested, they're encouraged to register online at all. Alright get your pens out. jobs.kontakt intelligence, contact with a k, dot com forward slash veteran admin, all one word forward slash apply

question Mark one seven zero D as in Delta seven zero B as in Bravo eight B as in Bravo, two F F as in Foxtrot, two Charlie zero two nine nine. Nine B as in Bravo, E as in echo, two zero nine two [00:06:00] seven seven E as in echo, eight F as in Foxtrot A as in alpha, F as in Foxtrot. If you Google VA news releases, all the news releases will be on the top link and you can find the link to this.

When rehired, retiree salaries are normally reduced to reflect the retirement annuity that they are already receiving. However, this waiver eliminates that salary reduction. This is the authority will expire in one year.

And finally, as more of us are losing, our jobs during this crisis, it's not as much as a news release, but I wanted to point you to a resource

if you're facing economic hardship and you own a home. The VA has tools to help you with your home loan if you're going to have trouble making your mortgage payments. Go to [va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans-trouble-making-payments](https://va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans-trouble-making-payments), [00:07:00] or you can call one eight seven seven eight two seven.

Three seven zero two that's +1 877-827-3702.

On the site. It says that there are six general ways that you can avoid a foreclosure. One. For those that have already missed a few mortgage payments, there are repayment plans to get you back to making your regular payments. Two, there are special forbearances that give extra time to repay

missed mortgage payments. Three, loan modifications, which add the missed payments and any other legal costs to your loan balance. Then they come up with a new payment schedule. Four, extra time to arrange a private sale. Five, there are short sale options. And six, deed in lieu of foreclosure options, which basically lets you avoid foreclosure by signing over the deed to the home, to your servicer.

You're led through these options by loan technicians [00:08:00] who you will get assigned to as your, as soon as you reach out. The site is again, [va.gov /housing/assistance/home-loans-trouble-making-payments](https://va.gov/housing/assistance/home-loans-trouble-making-payments). And they're not. Again, again, Their number is +1 877-827-3702.

That's all I got for this update. Again, for all things coronavirus and VA, go to [va.gov/coronavirus](https://va.gov/coronavirus), all one word. And if you'd like the information on here, don't forget to subscribe to this podcast as I think I'll be doing more and more of these in the near future.

For this and much more, look up [blogs.va.gov](https://blogs.va.gov) and follow the VA on social media, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, RallyPoint. Also look up your local VA medical facility on Facebook or Twitter. Most have one or the [00:09:00] other or both.

As for us, it's either [deptvetaffairs](https://www.deptvetaffairs.gov) or the US Department of Veterans Affairs, no matter the social media. You can always find us, with that blue checkmark. Stay safe, stay healthy, and we'll see you back at our regular scheduled programming on Monday. Take care.