



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 10, 2015

## VA Backs Down on Threat to Take Idaho Veteran's Guns

When Idaho State Representative Heather Scott learned that the Veterans Administration (VA) was about to descend on a veteran living in her district and confiscate his firearms, she enlisted the power of the Internet. [Writing on her Facebook page](#) last Thursday, she announced,



Time to Stand against Gun Confiscation in North Idaho!

Based on an assessment of a letter I received, I believe that the Department of Veterans Affairs is coming to a veteran's home in Priest River today to check for and confiscate his guns based on nothing more than a stroke which has left him with some mild physical impairment.

If you feel, as I do, that our veterans should not be treated like 3rd class citizens or common criminals, please join me between 9am and noon at the Congregational Church parking lot on HWY 2 to stand with this Veteran and show that the citizens of Bonner & Boundary County will stand firm on this issue.

By noon more than a dozen of Priest Lake, Idaho's 1,700 residents walked over to veteran John Arnold's home and waited for the officials from the Department of Veterans Affairs to show up. Those in the crowd besides Representative Scott included Representative Matt Shea from just over the border in Washington State and Bonner County Sheriff Daryl Wheeler.

When the VA official arrived, Sheriff Wheeler confronted him, telling him that he would stop any inspection or attempt to confiscate Arnold's firearms. He told the press:

I took an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution and uphold the laws of Idaho. This seemed appropriate to show my support. I was going to make sure Mr. Arnold's rights weren't going to be breached.

The VA official left the scene, leaving VA spokesman Bret Bowers to try to provide cover for his retreat, claiming that the agency doesn't have the power to confiscate weapons. He added, "We don't send officers to confiscate weapons. We are about providing health care to veterans."

This assertion was baseless, as revealed by a statement from another VA spokesman, Bryan Holt, with the Bonner County VA office:

This does happen sometimes, where the VA sends out a letter, especially if a veteran has dementia ... and a fiduciary has to be appointed to manage finances like a pension and income.

You wouldn't want that person to be in possession of a gun.

In that single statement Holt revealed the mindset of the VA. The agency — which represents the illegal



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and dangerous recombination of the separate powers of government: lawmaking, law interpreting, and law enforcing — believes that it can avoid the niceties of the Fourth Amendment's ban against illegal searches and seizures, the Fifth Amendment's demand that due process be followed, and the Second Amendment's guarantee of a citizen's right to own a firearm in the first place.

In Obamaworld, the VA has adopted the totalitarian concept that it alone makes, interprets, and enforces the rules and then announces from on high just who, in their opinion, may or may not be permitted to own weapons.

In Arnold's case, it all started when he had a stroke a year ago. He did not then, nor does he now, suffer from "dementia." He doesn't need anyone to "manage" his finances, but is able to do very nicely on his own.

When his VA healthcare provider notified the NCIS (the national gun registration system that some still deny exists) of Arnold's stroke, his Second Amendment rights were automatically abrogated, without due process. He wasn't even aware of that abrogation until he received the letter from the VA (a copy of which Representative Scott obtained, thus triggering the confrontation) informing him that the VA was coming to his home to get his guns.

Now the VA is claiming that though the report to the NCIS was filed in error, it is now up to Arnold himself to prove to the VA that he is competent in order to get his name removed from the NCIS.

Arnold is not alone, by any means. Disabled veteran Henry Wrobel, during a conversation with a VA counselor, asked to receive his benefits by direct deposit rather than in the mail, in order to simplify his life. He was then put on the NCIS registration list.

A Vietnam War widow had her name placed on NCIS after she asked the VA for assistance in finding someone to help her with her household chores after she had a mild stroke.

In fact, the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action has stated,

The Department of Veterans Affairs overreaching policies have resulted in the names of well over 100,000 veterans and dependents on the FBI's National Instance Criminal Background Check System as prohibited from possessing firearms.

The NRA and its allies have attempted to push through the "Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act," which would require the VA to follow the Fourth Amendment's due process. However, nothing in the bill addresses the illegal actions of the agency itself, nor is there any attempt to quash funding for those actions. Some observers have criticized the bill for confirming the VA's role while attempting to force it to follow the rules requiring a judicial finding of incompetence before taking the guns away.

Getting the VA to start paying attention to peoples' rights — including those of veterans — guaranteed to them under the Bill of Rights is a good start, however. Especially that part about not "infringing" people's rights under the Second Amendment.

*A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [www.LightFromTheRight.com](http://www.LightFromTheRight.com), primarily on economics and politics.*



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