

# Avery Veterans Corner

✎ By Mike Halus Special to The AJT

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## Real estate scam aimed at Veterans

So far, more than 15,000 veterans have been scammed out of millions of dollars on a scam that promises to make veterans wealthy. The scammers prey off the current wave of patriotism and support many veterans receive from well-wishers, corporations and small businesses. The real estate scam involves scammers posting bogus rental property on a classified ad websites (e.g., Craigslist, Backpage, etc.) offering huge veteran discounts or free property altogether. All the veteran has to do is wire transfer a security deposit or provide their debit card information to cover costs of an alleged “processing fee” to the landlord of each property. **Do not fall for this scam.**

## Thieves After Your Cards

The process of stealing your information for personal gain has never been easier and cheaper to pull off than it is right now. High-tech thieves are using much more powerful versions of identity scanners to steal your information with relative ease. According to Anti-Theft companies, stealing data from your credit card or any card equipped with a radio-frequency identification (RFID) chip is accomplished very easily by using technologically advanced devices that can be purchased online for under \$100. The crooks use the devices to steal your credit card information right through the air, with incredible ease and without you ever knowing it.

More than 150 million Americans are currently at serious risk. Unfortunately, millions have already felt the strain of being ripped off from scammers using one of these new devices. Authorities believe millions more will be affected in the future. It's not a matter of “if,” but “when” you will be ripped off by these technologically advanced robbers.

Without requiring a physical swipe, the device can collect account numbers, expiration dates, security codes, social security numbers, credit card numbers and other information from cards that contain RFID chips.

Electronic pickpocketing, or “crowd hacking” as it is referred to has been linked to millions of Americans being ripped off. If you have a “chipped” credit card, the chip can be scanned at stores, restaurants, sporting events, the airport, or as you sit in your automobile at a traffic light. The new scanners can reach outwards 25 to 30 feet to grab your information from cards containing RFID technology.

So far, it appears as though the criminals are targeting RFID credit/debit cards, military CAC cards, military ID cards, VA medical cards, access cards to buildings, school ID cards, U.S. passports issued after 2006 and Enhanced Driver's Licenses. There are currently an estimated 250 million chipped RFID cards in use in the United States.

## What to Do to Protect Yourself

The BBB suggests cutting two pieces of cardboard the size of a credit card and wrap each with aluminum foil. Then place the chip-containing card between the foil-wrapped pieces to block data transmission from the scanners. Some people are finding success in purchasing wallets containing aluminum linings that block scanner transmissions.

For Internet assistance, go to your local county library.

For questions concerning veteran's benefits and to obtain needed forms call Georgia Henry, Avery County Veterans Service Office, at (828) 733-8211.

Comments and suggestions on the Veterans' Corner or Disabled American Veterans can be emailed to Mike Halus at [averycountyveterans@gmail.com](mailto:averycountyveterans@gmail.com) or call (828) 260-0620.