



August 9, 2019

In This Issue:

1. **Army Change of Responsibility**
2. **Potential Changes Coming to the Montgomery GI Bill**
3. **Join the Campaign to #AxeWidowsTax**
4. **Take the Veterans Health Care Survey**
5. **Hepatitis C Test and Cure Available Through VA**
6. **MIA Update**

1. Army Change of Responsibility: On Friday, VFW Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence attended the U.S. Army's Change of Responsibility from General Mark A. Milley, the 39th Chief of Staff of the Army, to General James C. McConville, the 40th Chief of Staff of the Army at Summerall Field on Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia. On July 25, the Senate voted overwhelmingly to confirm General Mark Milley to replace General Joseph Dunford as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The ceremony also included the Change of Responsibility from Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey, the 15th Sergeant Major of the Army, to Command Sergeant Major Michael A. Grinston, the 16th Sergeant Major of the Army.

2. Potential Changes Coming to the Montgomery GI Bill: This week Representatives Jack Bergman (R-Mich.) and Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.) introduced the VFW-supported *GI Bill Planning Act of 2019*. This bill would change the time to enroll in the Montgomery GI Bill from the first week of recruit training to after a service member has served six months on active duty. "The first few days of recruit training is a chaotic period, and it is not the time to discuss the specific differences between the Post 9/11, and the Montgomery GI Bill," said VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Pat Murray. "Many VFW members have stated if they knew more about the Montgomery GI Bill they may not have opted to pay \$1,200 for a program they would never use. This proposal would allow service members additional time to understand the nuances between the two chapters of the GI Bill, if both are still needed, and how to best utilize their education benefits." The VFW thanks Representatives Bergman and Rice for their continued bipartisan work to ensure the best outcomes for our service members, veterans and their families. [Learn more.](#)

3. Join the Campaign to #AxeWidowsTax: The House version of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020* (NDAA) would eliminate the Widow's Tax, which is a dollar-for-dollar offset of earned benefits for the surviving spouses of about 65,000 service members and veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Unfortunately, the Senate version of the NDAA does not. In the coming weeks, members of Congress will meet to resolve the differences between the Senate and House versions of the NDAA and determine if provisions to

end the Widow's Tax will make it into the final version. Since the provision to end the Widow's Tax is not in the Senate version of the NDAA, it is in jeopardy of being left out of the final conference agreement. [Contact your Senators and urge them to #AxeWidowsTax this year.](#)

4. Take the Veterans Health Care Survey: Major provisions of the VFW-supported VA *MISSION Act of 2018* were recently implemented, including the new Veterans Community Care Program and other improvements to the way VA delivers care to veterans. To gauge the effectiveness of changes and inform its advocacy, the VFW would like feedback on your experience receiving VA health care. Help the VFW hold VA and Congress accountable for fulfilling their mission to veterans by taking a short survey regarding your preferences when receiving health care. [Take the survey.](#)

5. Hepatitis C Test and Cure Available Through VA: To mark World Hepatitis Day, VA announced it has cured 100,000 veterans of Hepatitis C (HCV). VA recommends that all veterans born between 1945 and 1965 get tested for HCV. Thanks in large part to VA's aggressive outreach and treatment program, 85 percent of veterans at high risk of HCV had been tested by the end of 2018. Learn more about the [Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment Awareness Campaign.](#)

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identifications of five American servicemen who had been missing and unaccounted for from the Korean War and WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Army Sgt. Willie V. Galvan** was assigned to Medical Company, 7th Infantry Division, as part of the 31st Regimental Combat Team. On Dec. 1, 1950, his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Following the attack, he could not be accounted for by his unit. Interment services are pending. [Read about Galvan.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Norvin D. Brockett** was a member of Company A, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, 31st Regimental Combat Team. He was declared missing in action on Dec. 6, 1950, when enemy forces attacked his unit near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. His remains could not be recovered following the attack. Interment services are pending. [Read about Brockett.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Donald E. Mangan** was a member of 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Sept. 17, 1944, after his unit was attacked by enemy forces near Wettlingen, Germany. His remains could not be recovered after the attack. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mangan.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Cpl. Walter J. Kellett** was a member of the 17th Pursuit Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, when he was taken as a prisoner of war by enemy forces and interned at the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp. He was reported to have died July 19, 1942, and was subsequently buried in Grave 312, along with other prisoners who died on that date. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kellett.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Lyal J. Savage** was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Savage. [Read about Savage.](#)

To sign up new veterans' advocates, visit: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/mlm/signup.htm>.

As always, we want to hear your advocacy stories. To share your stories or photos with us, simply email them directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

To view this week's and previous editions, visit: <http://www.vfw.org/actioncorpsweekly>.