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1. Veterans Day in Washington: On Monday, VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz and VFW Auxiliary National President Peggy Haake, along with several other VFW members, participated in the National Veterans Day Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The Veterans Day Ceremony keynote speaker was Vice President Michael Pence. Following the ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, the VFW contingent laid a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial. The VFW is proud to participate in these events so that we may continue to honor all veterans who have served our great nation.

2. Deborah Sampson Act Passes in the House: On Wednesday, the VFW-supported H.R. 3224, *Deborah Sampson Act*, which would expand the availability of women’s health services at VA to include expanding and improving counseling and treatment services for women who have experienced sexual trauma and providing training on women veterans health care providers, was passed in the House. The Senate version, S. 514, still awaits consideration by the full Senate. The legislation takes a forward-looking focus by examining changes VA must implement to improve services for women veterans. [Learn more.](#)

3. House Passes Multiple Veteran Bills: This week, the House overwhelmingly passed more than a dozen veteran-centric bills. “It was good to see the House come back after Veterans Day and immediately pick back up working for veterans,” said VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Pat Murray. The bills passed improve education benefits, address VA overpayment issues, and address gaps for rural and underserved veterans. The VFW urges the Senate to quickly pass important VFW-supported legislation still awaiting Senate consideration. [Read the press release.](#)

4. House Holds Hearing on Disinformation on Social Media: This week, the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing to discuss the effect of social media disinformation on veterans. Due to the influence they have within their communities, veterans are targeted for scams and propaganda at high rates. While disinformation and other malicious online behavior is on the rise, policing conduct on social media remains incredibly difficult and

more work is needed to guarantee that veterans and their families remain secure. At the hearing, Ranking Member Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) stated, “We want to shed light on the issues impacting veterans, help them understand the risks associated with using social media and direct them to resources to empower them to protect themselves and their families online.” [Watch the hearing.](#)

5. Some Veterans Will Not Have Access to Military Installations by Jan. 1, 2020: The *Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018* expanded eligibility for commissary, military exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) services to include Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, and veterans with VA documented service-connected disability ratings of 0-90 percent. Veterans who are 100 percent service-connected already had access to commissary and MWR services. Eligible persons will need to have a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHID) from VA in order to gain entry to Department of Defense and/or Coast Guard installations. Those who are covered under this act and do not have a VHID will not be allowed access to the installations on Jan. 1, 2020, but will have access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel. Caregiver eligibility will be limited to caregivers who are designated as the primary family caregiver of an eligible veteran under the [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) and will need to show an acceptable credential, along with their eligibility letter. [Learn more.](#)

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one new identification and six burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from WWII and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **U.S. Army Cpl. Jackey D. Blosser**, 21, was a member of Dog Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action Dec. 2, 1950, in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Blosser.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Kenneth E. Ford**, 18, of Albia, Iowa, was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ford.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Max. W. Lower**, 23, of Lewiston, Utah, was assigned to the 345th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 aircraft on which Lower was the radio operator crashed as a result of enemy anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave, the largest bombing mission against the oil fields and refineries at Ploiesti, north of Bucharest, Romania. Lower will be buried Nov. 23, 2019, in his hometown. [Read about Lower.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Joe T. Avant**, 20, of Greenwood, Mississippi, was a member of Heavy Mortar Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, 31st Regimental Combat Team, engaged in intense fighting near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. He was reported missing and unaccounted for on Nov. 30, 1950. Avant will be buried Dec. 13, 2019, in his hometown. [Read about Avant.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Karl L. Dye**, 17, of Marion, Ohio, was a member of Battery B, 52nd Field Artillery Battalion, 24th Infantry Division, engaged in combat operations against North Korean forces, near Taejon, South Korea. In July 1950, he was seriously wounded by an enemy mortar shell and placed in an ambulance. The ambulance allegedly encountered an enemy roadblock.

Dye was reported missing in action on July 16, 1950. Dye will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. The date has not been set. [Read about Dye.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Leon E. Clevenger**, 21, of Durham, North Carolina, was an infantryman with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on July 11, 1950, while involved in combat operations against the North Korean People's Army in the vicinity of Chonui and Choch'iwon, South Korea. The Army amended his status to deceased in December 1953 when there was no updated information regarding his status. Clevenger will be buried in Mims, Florida. The date has not been set. [Read about Clevenger.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Jack B. Van Zandt**, 22, of Danville, Illinois, was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. Van Zandt landed on the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed, including Van Zandt on the third day of the battle, Nov. 22, 1943. Van Zandt will be buried in Danville, Illinois. The date has not been set. [Read about Van Zandt.](#)

To sign up new veterans' advocates, visit: <https://votervoicenet.org/VFW/register>.

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.

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