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**1. VFW Commemorates 75th Anniversary of V-E Day:** The VFW commemorates Victory in Europe Day, or V-E Day, which marks the day Nazi Germany surrendered to the Allied forces ending fighting in Europe in 1945. “This is a day of celebration and remembrance that marks 75 years since the Nazis surrendered at the hands of the Allied forces ending World War II in Europe,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “This was, and will always remain, a significant day in our nation’s and our allied partners’ histories.” The VFW encourages you to celebrate V-E Day with its comrades by sharing stories of triumph to social media over the weekend using #VEDay75.

**2. VFW and House Leadership Hold Virtual Meeting:** Last week, the VFW Washington Office Executive Director B.J. Lawrence met virtually with the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA) to discuss VFW priorities, and to tell the chairman what our members are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the discussion Lawrence thanked the chairman for his efforts in leading the charge to secure financial stability for student veterans during this crisis. In turn, Mr. Takano applauded the VFW’s role in helping hold together our local communities, “Your chapters have been answering the call — delivering food and caring for their communities. This is the pride of our country, that sense of service. So I want to extend my deep gratitude to all of your VFW members for what they’re doing for our country.” The VFW would like to thank Chairman Takano for taking the time to personally listen to our concerns. We look forward to working hand in hand with the chairman, and all the members of the committee, to uphold our promise to always take care of veterans, service members, and their families. [Watch the meeting.](#)

**3. VFW Adds Comment to VA’s Proposed Rule:** This week, the VFW added comment to the Federal Regulation for the Proposed Rule for the *Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Improvements and Amendments under the VA MISSION Act of 2018*. The

VFW-supported [VA MISSION Act of 2018](#), gives VA the authority to expand the caregiver program to veterans of other generations. The expanded population that can take advantage of the caregiver program needs to receive services now, not later. The most significant concern regarding the proposed rule is the disregard for service-connected illness and condensing the three-tier to a two-tier schedule. The *VA MISSION Act of 2018* outlines a timeframe that envisioned VA starting the expansion in the summer 2019. Family members of WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans should not have to wait any longer to access training, respite care, and the support services that the program offers. [Read the VFW's comment](#).

**4. Complete the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Immediately:** All veterans who served in eligible locations should include their information in the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#). Participation in the registry is very important as it will allow VA to track burn pit exposure and draw inferences regarding associated adverse health effects. Exposure to burn pits [may be associated with respiratory conditions](#) such as asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD). Recently, VA stated that veterans with underlying respiratory conditions [may be at greater risk](#) for developing complications related to COVID-19. Service members and veterans who have already signed up for the registry should make sure that their contact information, phone number, address, and email are up-to-date. [Learn more about the registry](#).

**5. Face Covering Guidelines Set Forth by VA to VISNs:** Last week, a letter was distributed to network directors at the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) regarding mask usage at VHA facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. A snapshot survey of community living centers and spinal cord injury units found several asymptomatic COVID-19-positive individuals amongst the staff and veterans. VA requires staff, trainees, volunteers, veterans, inpatient residents, and visitors to wear either their own or a VA-provided face covering. VHA will supply VA staff who deliver direct patient care, evaluate suspected COVID-19 positive individuals, or conduct home visits with proper respiratory protection and PPE. [Learn more](#).

**6. More Veterans Have Unlimited Data for Telehealth:** VA has announced that veterans using [VA Video Connect](#) on their TracFone mobile phones through the T-Mobile network, will no longer pay for data while using video telehealth technology to connect and meet with their VA health care teams. [TracFone Wireless, Inc](#) is the fourth major wireless carrier, after T-Mobile, Sprint, and Verizon to partner with VA to support veterans who are using VA Video Connect. VA Video Connect enables veterans to video conference with their VA providers on their smartphone, tablet or computer from any location with an internet connection. [Read more](#).

**7. Download COVID Coach App:** The COVID Coach app was created for everyone, including veterans and service members, to support self-care and overall mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Features include education about coping during the pandemic, tools for self-care and to improve emotional well-being, trackers to check your mood and measure your growth toward personal goals, and graphs to visualize progress over time. COVID Coach can be used as a stand-alone tool or as a supplement to professional mental health care. [Download the COVID Coach app](#).

**8. Eligible Alaska Native Veterans Can Receive Acres of Federal Land:** Due to the [\*John D. Dingle, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act\*](#), the Alaska Native Veterans Program of 2019 will provide the opportunity for eligible Vietnam-era veterans or their heirs to select 2.5 to 160 acres of federal land in Alaska. Eligible veterans cannot apply yet, but they can **act now** to ensure they receive applications later this year. [Learn more.](#)

**9. MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced four new identifications 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:

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Robert D. Jenks**, 20, was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Jenks died on either the third or fourth day of battle, Nov. 22-23, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Jenks.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Maurice V. Spangler**, 20, 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 Spangler. Interment services are pending. [Read about Spangler.](#)

-- **Naval Reserve Seaman 1st Class James C. Williams**, 20, 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 Williams. Interment services are pending. [Read about Williams.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Samuel C. Steiner**, 20, 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 Steiner. Interment services are pending. [Read about Steiner.](#)

To sign up new veterans' advocates, visit: <https://votervoice.net/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](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).

[Click here to view this week's edition.](#)

For past editions of the VFW Action Corps Weekly, please visit: [www.vfw.org/actioncorpsweeklyarchive](http://www.vfw.org/actioncorpsweeklyarchive).