



July 2, 2020

Happy Fourth of July!

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**1. Virtual July Fourth Celebrations:** Celebrate the Fourth of July with the 40th annual broadcast of [A Capitol Fourth](#) which will air on PBS on Saturday, July 4, 2020, from 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. ET. This year's concert performance was pre-taped without live audiences, as the concert will not be held on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. You can also celebrate with the National Archives' first-ever [virtual Fourth of July celebration](#). This year's festivities will include a reading of the Declaration of Independence, as well as other family-friendly programming.

**2. House Holds Hearing on VA Reproductive Health:** On Wednesday, members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee and Women Veterans Task Force conducted a hearing on veterans' access to reproductive health care. Chief Officer of Women's Health Services Dr. Patricia Hayes and Deputy Director of Reproductive Health Dr. Alicia Christy responded to questions regarding VA's policies and procedures on in vitro fertilization, maternity care, contraceptive care, termination of pregnancy under extreme circumstances, and research on the reproductive health of both men and women. In a statement submitted for the record, the VFW cited results from a VFW survey of women veterans on gender-specific services, expanding teleradiology to include mammography, extending newborn care coverage, and ensuring VA prioritizes veterans' reproductive health. [Watch the hearing.](#) [Read the VFW's testimony.](#)

**3. Legislation Introduced to Recognize Early Vietnam Veterans:** Sens. John Boozman (R-AR) and Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced VFW-supported [S. 4086](#), the *Forgotten Vietnam Veterans Act*. This important legislation is the Senate companion bill to [H.R. 6082](#), and would allow veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam from Nov. 1, 1955, to Feb. 27, 1961, to receive wartime benefits. "More than 3,000 veterans served in Vietnam from Nov. 1, 1955, to Feb. 27, 1961, 10 of whom were killed in action," said VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Matthew Doyle. The VFW thanks Sens. Boozman and Tester for their efforts to expand benefits for veterans. [Read more.](#)

**4. VA Launches COVID-19 Screening Tool:** On Monday, VA announced the launch of a digital [COVID-19 screening tool](#) to streamline veteran access to medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Veterans, their caregivers, and VA health care employees can use this tool on their mobile phones before entering facilities. It takes less than a minute to complete and ideally will help to reduce wait times. “This screening tool emphasizes the ongoing importance of VA’s investment in digital modernization, as it went from initial concept to national availability in less than two weeks,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “In addition to providing a broad range of innovations and improvements that significantly benefit the veterans we serve; our culture of innovation allows us to respond quickly to urgent and evolving needs.”

**5. VA Simplifies Travel Reimbursement System:** VA is implementing a new system for veterans and eligible beneficiaries to submit and track transportation reimbursement claims using VA’s secure web-based portal, [Access VA](#). The Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS), which is accessible 24/7, 365 days a year, will simplify how [eligible veterans and beneficiaries](#) claim mileage reimbursement for travel and travel-related expenses. The roll out of this system is scheduled from July through November 2020. While BTSSS will replace the use of kiosks, in-person claims and hard-copy submissions will still be an option. [Read more.](#)

**6. DPAA Returns Remains of South Korean Service Members:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) repatriated the remains of 147 South Korean service members who died during the Korean War. The DPAA and South Korea’s Ministry of National Defense Agency for KIA Recovery and Identification worked together in a joint review of the remains. This is the largest repatriation of South Korean service members to date. [Read more.](#)

**7. MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has not announced any new identifications or burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for this week.

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