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1. Public Comment Sought for Desert Storm Memorial Location: The National Park Service is seeking public comment about where the new VFW-supported National Desert Storm Memorial should be located in Washington, D.C. Of the three proposed locations, the VFW joins with the Desert Storm Memorial Foundation to place it at the end of Constitution Avenue near 23rd Street, NW, which is within eyeshot of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the yet-to-be-built Vietnam Veterans Education Center and the Lincoln Memorial. The other two locations being considered are next to the Potomac River or on the other side of the U.S. Department of State — both sites being nowhere near the Vietnam Wall. At a Commission of Fine Arts hearing yesterday, the commissioners voted to locate the new memorial next to the Potomac River, totally ignoring the voices of many veterans and VFW members in the room. America's Desert Storm leaders honed their teeth in Vietnam, where among many things, they learned how not to fight the next war. The nexus between Vietnam and Desert Storm is perfect, so [make your voice heard today here](#).

2. The VFW Testifies on VA's Budget Request: On Thursday morning the VFW testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health regarding VA's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request. The VFW partners with Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America to produce the *Independent Budget*, which provides Congress a stakeholder's perspective on the resources VA needs to ensure it provides veterans and their families with the benefits and service they have earned. VFW's National Legislative Service Associate Director Patrick Murray urged the subcommittee to prioritize VA's capital infrastructure needs to effectively close future gaps in construction. Later that same day the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) and Economic Opportunity (EO) also held a joint committee hearing on VA's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request. The two subcommittees discussed the various programs offered through the Veterans

Benefits Administration. Chairman Jody Arrington discussed the importance of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program and expressed concerns that VR&E staffing levels have remained flat over the past six years while usage of the program has gone up 12 to 16 percent over that same time. Watch the Health Subcommittee hearing [here](#). Watch the joint DAMA and EO Subcommittee hearing [here](#). Read the [Independent Budget recommendations](#).

3. Veterans Legislation Roundup: This week, the House passed two VFW-supported bills — [H.R. 506](#), the *Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2017* and [S. 324](#), the *State Veterans Home Adult Day Health Care Improvement Act of 2017*. The *Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2017* would close an existing loophole which allows individuals and businesses to target veterans seeking to file disability compensation, pension, and aid and attendance claims, and charge them exorbitant fees for little to no actual assistance. H.R. 506 now moves to the Senate, where the VFW hopes it will receive swift consideration and passage. The *State Veterans Home Adult Day Health Care Improvement Act of 2017* would require VA to enter into agreements with state veterans homes to provide adult day care options for veterans. S. 324 now moves to the White House for the president’s signature. Also this week, the president signed into law two pieces of legislation that were passed by Congress earlier this month — [H.R.3122](#), the *Veterans Care Financial Protection Act of 2017* and [H.R.1725](#), the *Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017*.

4. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Testifies on VA Budget Request: On Wednesday, VA Secretary David Shulkin testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. During the hearing, subcommittee members asked Secretary Shulkin about his priorities to expand access to care at VA medical facilities and through private-sector doctors, reduce the rate of suicide among veterans, and efforts to adopt the same electronic health care record as DOD. [Watch the hearing](#).

5. Vietnam Helicopter Memorial Dedication April 18: Visitors to the nation’s capital on April 18 might want to head over to Arlington National Cemetery for a 4 p.m. dedication of the VFW-supported Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument. Almost 5,000 American helicopter pilots and crew died during the Vietnam War. A reception will follow at the Women In Military Service For America Memorial near the cemetery’s Welcome Center at the west end of Memorial Avenue. All Vietnam veterans and Gold Star Families are invited to attend. [Learn more here](#).

6. VA Expands GI Bill Reporting Transparency: This week, VA released information about GI Bill tuition and fee payments to institutions of higher learning. The database contains information about the number of students using GI Bill funds and total payouts to institutions from 2009 to 2017. The GI Bill is known for its popularity and success for millions of veterans and eligible family members. “Though there’s no dispute about the success of the program, Veterans and taxpayers still have a right to know where and how much money is being spent at these institutions,” said VA Secretary David Shulkin. The VFW values the importance of programs like the GI Bill and applauds Secretary Shulkin for making transparency a priority. [Learn more or read the data here](#).

7. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for six American service members who had been missing in action from WWII and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Marine Corps Pvt. George F. Patrick**, 22, of Dallas, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried March 17 in his hometown. Patrick was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Patrick's unit was one of those tasked with securing the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll. Encountering fierce resistance by the Japanese, almost 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and another 1,000 were wounded in the battle. Patrick was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943, and initially buried in a battlefield cemetery. [Read about Patrick.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class Harry E. Harkness**, 22, of Lansing, Mich., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried March 17 in his hometown. Harkness was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. In November 1950, Harkness' unit was participating in combat actions against Chinese forces in the vicinity of Unsan, North Korea. Harkness was reported missing in action as of Nov. 2, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. During a post-war operation known as "Operation Big Switch," prisoners of war were returned and Americans who had been held reported that Harkness had been captured and held at POW Camp 5, where he died in early 1951. [Read about Harkness.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Manuel Menendez**, 20, of Elizabeth, N.J., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried March 22 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Menendez was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Division. Menendez' unit was one of those tasked with securing the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll. Encountering fierce resistance by the Japanese, almost 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and another 1,000 were wounded in the battle. Menendez was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943, and was initially buried in a battlefield cemetery. [Read about Menendez.](#)

-- **Army Staff Sgt. David Rosenkrantz** was assigned to Company H, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. In September 1944, his unit participated in Operation Market Garden, a ploy by Allied planners to break German defensive lines on the western front by capturing a highway route through the Netherlands. On Sept. 28, 1944, Rosenkrantz' platoon occupied Heuvelhof, a farm located south of the town of Grosbeek, when German tanks and infantry attacked. The paratroopers hid among sparse trees and buildings. Rosenkrantz was killed by enemy gunfire when he rose from his position. Due to the proximity of the enemy, his remains could not be recovered at the time. Interment services are pending. [Read about Rosenkrantz.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. James I. Jubb** was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. In August 1950, his unit sustained heavy losses while fighting against Korean forces in the vicinity of the Naktong River, South Korea. Jubb was declared missing in action on Aug. 10, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. Interment services are pending. [Read about Jubb.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Julius E. McKinney** was a member of Heavy Mortar Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. In late November 1950, his unit was assembled with South Korean soldiers in the 31st Regimental Combat Team on the east side of the Chosin River, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by Chinese forces. McKinney was among more than 1,000 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing on Dec. 2, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about McKinney.](#)

To sign up new veterans' advocates, click here: <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.