



April 13, 2018

In This Issue:

- 1. Confirmation Hearing Held**
- 2. Grave Robber Historian Sentenced**
- 3. VA to Host Nationwide Baby Shower**
- 4. VFW National Home for Children**
- 5. MIA Update**

1. Confirmation Hearing Held: The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a confirmation hearing this week for two individuals nominated by President Trump. Paul R. Lawrence was nominated to serve as the under secretary for benefits and lead the Veterans Benefits Administration at VA. This is the agency that adjudicates claims for disability compensation, disburses monthly compensation checks, administers the GI Bill and much more. Joseph L. Falvey, Jr., was nominated to serve as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, which hears appeals filed by veterans after they have been adjudicated by the Court of Veterans Appeals. [Read the testimony or view the hearing](#), which begins at the 3:13 mark. The committee will vote on the two pending nominations next week.

2. Grave Robber Historian Sentenced: The VFW was one of only two organizations invited by the federal government to speak at the sentencing hearing of Antonin DeHays, a French historian and archivist, who over a five-year period sold more than 430 World War II items he had stolen from the National Archives. Representing the other organization — the National Archives — was Archivist of the United States David Ferriero. Stolen were 297 dog tags and 136 other items, to include ID cards, a Bible, photos and personal letters. The items were originally obtained from the bodies of dead or captured Americans, mostly as the result of military aircraft crashes in Nazi-held territory. The Germans kept meticulous records, which were later seized by the Allies after the war. On Monday, U.S. District Court Judge Theodore Chuang in Maryland sentenced DeHays to 364 days in prison for the theft of government records and ordered him to pay more than \$43,000 in restitution to the unwitting buyers who purchased the stolen goods. Said VFW spokesman Joe Davis, "DeHays isn't just a thief, he's a grave robber who abused the professional courtesies extended to fellow historians as a means to steal for personal gain." About 95 percent of the stolen items have been recovered so far.

3. VA to Host Nationwide Baby Shower: Throughout the month of May, in celebration of Mother's Day, VA will host baby showers at 60 different sites across the country. VA also plans

to provide more than 2,400 veterans — who are new parents or expecting — with baskets that will include a diaper bag, new baby toiletries, hair brush and comb set, bib, layette, blanket and hat. VA is currently accepting donations for these baskets which cost \$50 each. Individuals and groups who are interested will also be able to volunteer at the baby shower sites. [Learn more](#) about how to volunteer, donate or find baby shower locations.

4. VFW National Home for Children: Please help connect families to the VFW National Home for Children. If your VFW Post or District runs a newsletter, website or Facebook page, please [share this ad](#).

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

-- **Air Force Col. Roosevelt Hestle, Jr.**, 38, of Orlando, Fla., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried April 13 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Hestle was a pilot assigned to the 388th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On July 6, 1966, he led a flight of four F-105s on a strike mission against surface-to-air missile sites in northern Vietnam. As they approached the target, Hestle issued a missile launch warning and all aircraft began evasive action. Hestle's maneuvers took him close to the ground near the town of Thai Ngyuen, where the plane came under anti-aircraft fire and was believed to have crashed. [Read about Hestle](#).

-- **Army Master Sgt. George R. Housekeeper, Jr.**, 28, of Lansdale, Pa., whose identification was previously announced, was buried April 11 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Housekeeper was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 31st 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. Housekeeper was among more than 1,000 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing on Dec. 12, 1950. [Read about Housekeeper](#).

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Frank Wood**, 25, of Jackson, Ohio, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried April 14 in Franklin, N.C. Wood was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. 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 Wood. [Read about Wood](#).

-- **Navy Reserve Lt. j.g. Irwin E. Rink**, 25, of Wichita, Kan., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried April 16 in his hometown. Rink was an F4F-4 Wildcat pilot assigned to Fighting Squadron Twenty Seven (VF-27). On Aug. 4, 1943, he and seven others took off on an escort mission to New Georgia Island when they were attacked by Japanese fighter aircrafts. Rink did not return to base and would be reported missing in action on Aug. 4, 1943. [Read about Rink](#).

-- **Navy Steward Mate 1st Class Ignacio C. Farfan** was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when Japanese aircraft attacked his ship on Dec. 7, 1941. Farfan was one of 429 crewmen killed in the attack. Interment services are pending. [Read about Farfan](#).

-- **Navy Chief Machinist's Mate Dean S. Sanders** was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when Japanese aircraft attacked his ship on Dec. 7, 1941. Sanders was one of 429 crewmen killed in the attack. Interment services are pending. [Read about Sanders.](#)

-- **Air Force Col. Peter J. Stewart** was a member of Headquarters, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, and the pilot of a two-seater F-4C aircraft, the second in a flight of two on an armed reconnaissance mission over northern Vietnam. Stewart was assumed to have been shot down on March 15, 1966, along with his aircraft commander, Col. Martin R. Scott, whose remains were identified in June 2017. [Read about Stewart.](#)

-- **Army Staff Sgt. Marshall F. Kipina** was assigned to the 131st Aviation Company, serving as an observer aboard an OV-1C aircraft, on a night surveillance mission from Phu Bai Airfield over Attapu Province, Laos People's Democratic Republic. Radar and radio contact were lost with the aircraft which did not return as scheduled. Search efforts were initiated, but no crash site was found. [Read about Kipina.](#)

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 yfwac@vfw.org.