



**June 1, 2018**

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**1. The VFW Participates in Wreath Laying at Arlington:** On Monday, VFW National Sr. Vice Commander B.J. Lawrence and VFW National Security and Foreign Affairs Director John Towles attended the annual Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony held at Arlington National Cemetery. In attendance were President Donald Trump, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford and Secretary of Defense James Mattis. Following the completion of the official ceremony, Sr. Vice Commander Lawrence and Mr. Towles had the honor of laying a wreath in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on behalf of the VFW, and were escorted by members of the VFW National Honor Guard. [View pictures from the ceremony.](#)

**2. White House Approves Interagency Plan on Suicide Prevention:** President Donald Trump recently approved an interagency plan to implement an executive order offering support to veterans with mental health care and suicide prevention resources for one year during their transition from military to civilian life. VA, DOD, and the Department of Homeland Security were required to develop the plan by an executive order signed by President Trump in January, which directed the agencies to collaborate in efforts to reduce the rate of suicide among recently discharged veterans. Research has shown that veterans are at a higher risk of suicide and mental health crisis during the first year of their transition to civilian life. [Learn more about the Executive Order Supporting Mental Health Care for Transitioning Service Members.](#)

**3. DOD Expands Travel Policy for Dignified Transfers at Dover AFB:** This week, DOD released supplemental guidance regarding the travel of surviving family members to Dover AFB to attend Dignified Transfer ceremonies. The new guidance expands the authority under which the military departments may provide government-sponsored transportation to surviving family members, and allows the secretary of a military department to authorize the payment for travel

and transportation when a service member or DOD civilian dies overseas and the armed forces medical examiner requires that the deceased service member or DOD civilian be brought to Dover Air Force Base for examination. Government-sponsored transportation was previously limited to survivors of service members who died in a theater of combat operations. The VFW believes this important change in policy will allow DOD to better honor and serve the needs of surviving family members. [Read the expanded policy.](#)

**4. Medical Images Available on MyHealtheVet:** Medical images such as mammograms, CT scans, MRIs and X-rays can now be viewed, downloaded, and printed through [MyHealtheVet](#), under VA Medical Images and Reports. [Learn more.](#)

**5. Certain Adoption Expenses Reimbursable:** VA has amended its regulation to provide reimbursement of qualifying adoption expenses incurred by veterans with a service-connected disability that results in infertility. Covered veterans may request reimbursement for qualifying adoption expenses incurred for adoptions finalized after Sept. 29, 2016. With this rulemaking, funds are authorized to provide reimbursement for qualifying adoption expenses incurred by a covered veteran in the adoption of a child under 18 years of age. [More information is available here.](#) VA Form 10152, Reimbursement Request for Qualifying Adoption Expenses, can be [downloaded and printed here.](#)

**6. GI Bill Comparison Tool:** For any service member or veteran looking to pursue their educational goals through the use of the GI Bill, there is an important tool offered by VA. The [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#) allows users to compare different programs and institutions that accept the GI Bill. In the past few years, some student veterans have been impacted by the abrupt closures of the schools they were attending. These schools were using predatory business practices and had numerous complaints against them. The GI Bill Comparison Tool gives users the ability to check on the schools they wish to attend, and provides up-to-date data received from current and past students, helping GI Bill users make better, more informed decisions about where to attend school, and hopefully avoid programs that offer little to no value. [For help choosing a school, click here.](#)

**7. D-Day Commemoration:** On Wednesday, June 6 at 11a.m., the Friends of the National World War II Memorial will host a ceremony at the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C., to recognize the service of the some 160,000 Allied troops that landed on the beaches of France 74 years ago. In attendance will be approximately 10 D-Day and WWII veterans who will place wreaths to honor the sacrifice of the 9,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who were killed during the invasion. [Find more information about the ceremony here.](#)

**8. MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for one American service member who had been missing in action from WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors is:  
-- **Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Marvin B. Adkins** was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. Interment services are pending. [Read about Adkins.](#)

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](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).