



June 8, 2018

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1. US-North Korea Summit: VFW National Commander Keith Harman, who just returned from South Korea, wrote President Trump this week to urge him to include as a discussion point the return of America's missing and unaccounted for servicemen when he meets with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on June 12. Should an agreement be reached, Harman recommended it include language that will enable Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency teams to safely access recovery sites and return our fallen Americans home. Of the 7,700 servicemen currently listed as missing in action from the Korean War, an estimated 5,300 are in North Korea, where no American-led recovery operations have been held since 2005 due to team safety and security concerns. During his fact-finding trip, Harman listened to the concerns of a number of American military leaders and troops, VFW members, and South Korean officials. Regarding denuclearization, no one trusts North Korea, so strong international verification language must be inserted before any agreement is signed. Regarding talks of potential reunification, younger South Koreans are concerned how it might impact their jobs, educational system and overall economy, whereas the older generation would like to reunite families who have been separated for nearly 70 years.

2. President Signs Historic Legislation to Improve Vets Health Care: On Wednesday, President Trump signed the VFW-championed *VA MISSION Act of 2018*. "The VA MISSION Act will help improve the care our veterans get at the VA while leveraging the capabilities of the private sector when needed. It will help recruit the best talent at the VA, which is what our veterans deserve, and it also extends caregiver benefits to every veteran who needs it," said Keith

Harman, national commander of the 1.7-million member VFW and its Auxiliary. The VA MISSION Act was the result of a bipartisan and bicameral effort led by Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Sen. Johnny Isakson, Ranking Member Sen. Jon Tester and House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Rep. Phil Roe, M.D. Learn more about the [VA MISSION Act](#).

3. VFW Calls on Congress, VA, and DOD to Act on Burn Pits: On Thursday, the VFW testified on the harmful effects of open air burn pits used in Iraq and Afghanistan. VFW Associate Legislative Director Ken Wiseman highlighted the impact on women veterans with particular regard to reproductive health concerns and how research needs a dedicated funding mechanism. The Department of Veterans Affairs testified on continuing research efforts and details of VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. The VFW supports several pieces of legislation that would strengthen the registry's efforts to collect data on those exposed to burn pits which could be used in future research. [Watch the hearing](#).

4. VFW Advocates for Mare Island Naval Cemetery: On Thursday, the VFW, along with the National Cemeteries Administration (NCA) and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), testified on the management of cemeteries and memorials for veterans. NCA manages memorials and cemeteries inside the United States and ABMC manages those mostly located in other countries where United States service members have fought. VFW Associate Legislative Director Ken Wiseman raised the need for an improved call center at NCA allowing for better processing of burial requests and the need to transfer the Mare Island Naval Cemetery — which is in disrepair and in desperate need of proper management — to NCA control so the 800 veterans buried at the cemetery receive the recognition they deserve. [Watch the hearing](#).

5. TRICARE Facebook Q&A Event: On Tuesday, June 12, at 3:15 p.m. (EST), TRICARE will host an online question and answer session for beneficiaries on its Facebook page. While this session will focus primarily on what new Qualifying Life Events (QLEs) will impact beneficiaries, such as moving, separating from active duty, getting married or adding a new dependent, there will be time for questions not directly related to QLEs. [Find out more](#) about the event.

6. VA Funds Efforts to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence: VA has committed to adding \$17 million in spending to strengthen the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Assistance Program across the nation. Research shows that IPV, which is physical, sexual or psychological harm by a current or former partner, may be a greater risk for veterans than for non-veterans. The current program is a holistic approach that includes understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of trauma with the goal to prevent further violence and promote healthy relationships. The program was established in 2014 and offers intervention through VA and community partners to address housing, education and employment needs. The increase in funding will expand the program from 115 facilities to all VA medical centers, and help to increase awareness of IPV as a serious issue within the veteran community. [Learn more about IPV](#) or the [IPV Assistance Program](#).

7. VA Launches LGBT Veteran Suicide Prevention: VA recently launched a campaign to address LGBT veteran suicide. LGBT veterans experience suicidal ideations at twice the rate of

heterosexual veterans, and are more likely to screen positive for PTSD, depression and alcohol misuse. VA is committed to reducing veteran suicide for all veterans, and with an estimated 1 million veterans identifying as LGBT, it is important that VA expand outreach to the community. Each VA facility currently has an LGBT veteran care coordinator. [Learn more](#) about coordinators or download posters. If you are thinking about suicide, visit the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#) or call 1-(800)273-8255.

8. Army Launches New Pet-focused Mobile App: The Army Public Health Center's Veterinary Services and Public Health Sanitation Directorate have teamed up with the Public Health Communication Directorate to create a new mobile app for Military Pet Education called milPetEd. The app provides soldiers, family members and retirees with animal health information, an interactive Veterinary Treatment Facility finder, and even a section where users can submit pictures of their pets. It includes extensive animal health information, ranging from general information about the importance of preventive care to species-specific information, such as preventing dog bites. In addition to physical health, the app offers information about helping animals who are experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulties. [Find out more](#) about the app.

9. VFW Convention to Host Women Veterans Information Fair: The VFW will host a women veterans information fair entitled "Women Veterans: Strong & Growing" during this year's 119th VFW National Convention. The fair will be held on July 24 at 2 p.m. Information pertinent to the veterans' community with a focus on women veterans will be provided, and all veterans are encouraged and welcome to attend. Participants will include the VFW's Women Veterans Advisory Committee; representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs' offices of women's health, women veterans, research and development, and veteran experience; the Department of Labor; the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans; and congressional staff from the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. There will be a raffle with prizes, as well as other giveaways. Learn more about the [119th VFW National Convention](#).

10. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for 10 American service members who had been missing in action from Vietnam, Korea and WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Army Cpl. Ernest L.R. Heilman**, 19, of Greenup, Ky., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 8 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Heilman was a member of Battery B, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division and was declared missing in action when his unit was breaking a roadblock in the vicinity of Hoengsong, South Korea, on Feb. 13, 1951. [Read about Heilman](#).

-- **Army Sgt. Julius E. McKinney**, 23, of Clay, Ark., whose identification was previously announced, was buried June 8 in Corinth, Miss. 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. [Read about McKinney](#).

-- **Army Pfc. Oscar E. Sappington**, 19, of Dawson, Okla., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 9 in Tulsa, Okla. Sappington was a member of 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 309th Infantry Regiment, 78th Infantry Division. On Jan. 10, 1945,

the 309th Infantry launched a number of attacks in the Hürtgen Forest of Germany. At some point during the two days of action, Sappington stepped on a landmine. Though he was mortally wounded, no soldiers from his unit could reach him during the vicious fighting to render aid or confirm his death. He was reported missing in action as of Jan. 11, 1945. [Read about Sappington.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert R. Keown**, 24, of Scottsboro, Ala., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 15 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Keown was a P-38 pilot assigned to the 36th Fighter Squadron, 8th Fighter Group. On April 16, 1944, Keown and three other aircraft escorted a B-25 medium bomber on an aerial search near the mouth of the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea. The fourship encountered heavy overcast conditions after charting their course home. Heavy rain forced them to turn toward the open ocean, where Keown and his wingman became separated from the other aircraft. His last known location was listed as more than a mile north of Yalu Point. None of the four aircraft returned from the mission. [Read about Keown.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Tech Sgt. John S. Bailey**, 28, of Woodstock, Va., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 13, in Winchester, Va. Bailey was a member of the 38th Bombardment Squadron, (Heavy), 30th Bombardment Group, stationed at Hawkins Field, Helen Island, Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands. On Jan. 21, 1944, Bailey's B-24J bomber crashed shortly after takeoff. [Read about Bailey.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pvt. Charles A. Drew**, 29, of Coalinga, Calif., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 11, in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Drew was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Drew's unit landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll on Nov. 20, 1943, against stiff Japanese resistance. Drew was killed on the first day of the battle. [Read about Drew.](#)

Navy Seaman 1st Class Henry G. Tipton, 20, of Imboden, Ark., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 8 in Ravenden, Ark. Tipton 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. [Read about Tipton.](#)

-- **Naval Reserve Lt. Cmdr. Larry R. Kilpatrick** was a member of Attack Squadron One Hundred Five (VA-105) on board the USS Saratoga (CVA-60). During a night armed reconnaissance mission over northern Vietnam, Kilpatrick's wingman lost radio contact with him outside of Ha Tinh City shortly after he announced he had sighted a target and was commencing an attack. After daybreak, search and rescue aircraft observed remnants of a parachute near Kilpatrick's last known location, but could not identify it as Kilpatrick's. Interment services are pending. [Read about Kilpatrick.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Sgt. Alfonso O. Duran** was a nose gunner on a B-24H Liberator, assigned to the 724th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 451st Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force. On Feb. 25, 1944, the final day of Operation Argument, Duran's aircraft came under attack by German fighters and anti-aircraft fire while he was on a bombing mission targeting Regensburg, Germany. Nine of the 10 crew members were able to bail from the aircraft before it crashed, but were later captured and told one body had been found in the aircraft wreckage. Interment services are pending. [Read about Duran.](#)

-- **Navy Musician 1st Class Henri C. Mason** 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 Mason.](#)

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.