



October 5, 2018

In This Issue:

- 1. Special Forces Medic Receives Medal of Honor**
- 2. VA to Host Economic Development Events in Puerto Rico**
- 3. Compare 2019 FEDVIP Dental and Vision Plans**
- 4. On-Base Shopping Privileges to Expand**
- 5. Trump Donates His Salary to Veteran Entrepreneurs**
- 6. HonorBound Foundation Awards VFW a Grant to Help Service Officers**
- 7. MIA Update**

1. Special Forces Medic Receives Medal of Honor: President Trump presented the Medal of Honor on Monday to former Army Special Forces medic Staff Sgt. Ronald J. Shurer II for fighting his way through an enemy ambush to render aid to wounded Special Forces soldiers and Afghan commandos in an April 6, 2008 battle in Shok Valley in northeastern Afghanistan. Shurer was initially awarded the Silver Star for his role in the operation, but a Pentagon review of all valor medals awarded since 9/11 resulted in the award being upgraded to the Medal of Honor. Shurer is currently a special agent with the U.S. Secret Service. [Watch the White House presentation ceremony.](#)

2. VA to Host Economic Development Events in Puerto Rico: In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria and the devastating impacts on Puerto Rico last year, there are still many veterans who are attempting to get back to normal. On Nov. 8, VA's Office of Transition and Economic Development will host an event offering multiple services at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. The centerpiece of the event will focus on a veteran economic themed roundtable from 9 a.m. to noon where attendees can learn of some of the programs they might be eligible for. During this event there will also be an all-day large scale claims clinic available to veterans from the surrounding area. On Nov. 14 at Fort Buchanan there will be a Hiring Our Heroes job fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The VFW is glad to see VA is making sure to take care of the veterans from Puerto Rico in their times of need.

3. Compare 2019 FEDVIP Dental and Vision Plans: Starting in 2019, dental and vision insurance plans for military retirees and their families will be available through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). If you're eligible, the first opportunity to enroll in a plan is during the Federal Benefits open season, which will take place from Nov. 12 to Dec. 10. [Compare FEDVIP plans and rates](#) before open season begins.

4. On-Base Shopping Privileges to Expand: The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019* includes a provision to open on-base commissary, exchange and MWR privileges to stateside Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, and those with service-connected disabilities and their caregiver spouses. Once implemented on Jan. 1, 2020, the new beneficiaries will be allowed to use these facilities on the same basis as any service member, dependent or military retiree, although a new user fee might be created for this population to offset additional expansion expenses. The delay to enact is to give the military services, exchange systems and Defense Commissary Agency time to ensure the launch is seamless. Gate access and shopping privileges will be based on the new VA-issued Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC), which identifies the holder as having a service-connected disability. The DOD's electronic physical access control system, to be completed by Sept. 2019, will accept the VHIC to enable streamlined access to installations. The VFW will monitor and report back as expansion efforts progress.

5. Trump Donates His Salary to Veteran Entrepreneurs: President Donald Trump is donating his second quarter salary to a Small Business Administration program that will help veteran entrepreneurs. At a White House briefing on Wednesday, SBA Administrator Linda McMahon accepted a \$100,000 check from the president. "This money is going to be used in our veterans program. We're going to establish a seven-month intensive training program called 'Emerging Leaders.' It's an adaptation of that program for our veterans, helping them transition from military life into private sector if they desire to start their own jobs and their own companies, and be entrepreneurs," McMahon said. "We thank the president very much for this and it will be put to very good use." Trump donated his first quarter salary for 2018 to the Department of Veterans Affairs for caregiver programs.

6. HonorBound Foundation Awards VFW a Grant to Help Service Officers: HonorBound Foundation has awarded the VFW a \$55,263 grant to help offset a larger initiative that will begin equipping VFW service officers with new laptops and tablets so that they can more efficiently and effectively help veterans file disability claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VFW has nearly 2,000 VA-accredited service officers across America and abroad, and reliable Internet connectivity is key to helping veterans process their claims. The HonorBound Foundation grant will help jumpstart a larger \$300,000 VFW initiative to ensure all service officers have the ability to provide the same service to all veterans anytime, anywhere. "The VFW is in business to help as many veterans and their families as possible, and part of our success relies on technology," said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. "We're thankful for the HonorBound Foundation's generosity, which will help ensure our professional advocates can process more VA claims wherever and whenever needed."

7. MIA Update: This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 7 new identifications, and the burial dates and locations for 12 previously identified servicemen. Returning home with full military honors are:

-- **Navy Reserve Cmdr. Charles B. Goodwin**, 25, of Haskell, Texas, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 12 in Abilene, Texas. Goodwin was the pilot of an RF-8A aircraft, assigned to Detachment D, VPF-63, CVW-15. On Sept. 8, 1965, Goodwin was conducting a combat reconnaissance mission over the Democratic Republic of Vietnam when he reported that he had encountered thunderstorms en route to the target area. That was the last

transmission heard from him. Search efforts over the target area and adjacent coastal waters were unsuccessful, and Goodwin was declared missing in action as of Sept. 8, 1965. [Read about Goodwin.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Eugene W. Yost**, 18, of Milaca, Minn., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 5 in Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Minn. Yost was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. In September 1950, his unit participated in a defense of the Pusan Perimeter, a large defensive line west and north of Pusan, South Korea. Yost was reported to have been killed in action on Sept. 3, 1950, but his remains could not be located following the battle. [Read about Yost.](#)

-- **Army Pvt. Donald E. Brown**, 24, of Thompson, Iowa, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 6 in his hometown. Brown was a member of Company A, 745th Tank Battalion, fighting in support of the 1st Infantry Division in the European Theater in World War II. Brown was killed in action on July 28, 1944, when his M-4 Sherman tank was destroyed by enemy fire near Camberton, France. [Read about Brown.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Melvin C. Anderson**, 31, of Omaha, Neb., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 12 in his hometown. Anderson was a member of Company C, 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, participating in intense fighting in the Hürtgen Forest. On Nov. 25, 1944, his company was deployed as direct-fire support of American infantrymen attacking the town of Grosshau. The M10 tank destroyer Anderson was commanding was knocked out in the fighting. He was killed during the battle, though his status was initially listed as missing in action. On Dec. 21, 1944, his status was amended to killed in action. [Read about Anderson.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. William F. Cavin**, 19, of Ewing, Va., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 13, in Hancock County, Tenn. Cavin was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. On Nov. 19, 1943, Cavin's unit landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll against stiff Japanese resistance. Cavin was killed on the first day of the battle, one of approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors killed in the intense fighting. [Read about Cavin.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Tech. Sgt. Harry A. Carlsen**, 31, of Brookfield, Ill., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 13, in Elwood, Ill. Carlsen was a member of Company A, 2nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Carlsen died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. [Read about Carlsen.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve 2nd Lt. Elwood R. Bailey**, 22, of Parma, Mich., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 13 in his hometown. On Aug. 24, 1942, Bailey was a member of Marine Fighting Squadron 223 (VMF-223), Marine Aircraft Group 23. Bailey was piloting an F-4 Wildcat in aerial combat with Japanese Military Air Forces over Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, when he was reported missing in action after being shot down. [Read about Bailey.](#)

-- **Navy Water Tender 1st Class Stephen Pepe**, 43, of Bridgeport, Conn., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 8 in Bourne, Mass. Pepe was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Pepe. [Read about Pepe.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class William V. Campbell**, 20, of Elizabethton, Tenn., whose remains were previously recovered, will be buried on Oct. 10 in his hometown. Campbell was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Campbell. [Read about Campbell.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Natale I. Torti**, 19, of St. Louis, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 12 in Jefferson Barracks, Mo. Torti was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Torti. [Read about Torti.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Harold L. Head**, 20, of Browning, Mo., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 10, in Laclede, Mo. Head was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Head. [Read about Head.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Bernard V. Doyle**, 19, of Red Cloud, Neb., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried on Oct. 13 in Lake City, Iowa. Doyle was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Doyle. [Read about Doyle.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class James L. Boyce** was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, engaged in combat operations against the North Korean People's Army south of Chonui, South Korea. Boyce could not be accounted for and was declared missing in action on July 11, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Boyce.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Allen R. Turner** was a pilot assigned to the 1330 Army Air Force Base Unit, Air Transport Command. On July 17, 1945, his aircraft crashed in a remote area en route from Jorhat, India, to Hsinching, China. All four passengers were declared deceased after an extensive search effort failed to identify the crash site. Interment services are pending. [Read about Turner.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Pfc. Joseph I. Natvik** was a flight engineer assigned to the 1330 Army Air Force Base Unit, Air Transport Command. On July 17, 1945, his aircraft crashed in a remote area en route from Jorhat, India, to Hsinching, China. All four passengers were declared deceased after an extensive search effort failed to identify the crash site. Interment services are pending. [Read about Natvik.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. James R. Lord** was a P-47D pilot assigned to the 66th Fighter Squadron, 57th Fighter Group, 12th Tactical Air Command. On Aug. 10, 1944, his aircraft crashed a mile off the coast of Anghione, Corsica while returning from combat operations near the French border. No witnesses reported seeing any parachute sightings. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lord.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Marvin E. Dickson** was a member of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. Dickson was allegedly killed in the early morning hours of Nov. 13, 1944, when he and other Soldiers moved to the front lines to reestablish broken telephone lines. Surviving members could not confirm Dickson's death, nor provide the exact location to where he was killed. He was subsequently listed as missing in action. In Nov. 14, 1945, his status was amended to killed in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Dickson.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Herbert J. Poindexter** was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Poindexter. Interment services are pending. [Read about Poindexter.](#)

-- **Chief Pharmacist's Mate James T. Cheshire** was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941, when the ship sustained multiple torpedo hits and quickly capsized, resulting in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Cheshire. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cheshire.](#)

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.