



December 7, 2018

Today is National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

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1. VFW Remembers President Bush: “President George H.W. Bush was highly admired within the veteran community and beyond,” said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. “He served as a Navy fighter pilot in the World War II Pacific Theater, as a U.S. congressman, U.S. ambassador, as CIA director, then vice president to President Ronald Reagan for eight years before being elected president, where he would win a resounding war against Iraq and end the Cold War. Our 41st president was also the last of eight presidents to earn the title of VFW member,” he said. President Bush was a Life member of the VFW Department of Texas. “On behalf of the entire 1.6 million-member VFW family, our deepest condolences go out to the entire Bush family, and we thank them for their strength and support that enabled him to continue serving our great nation for so long. Bravo Zulu.”

2. Pearl Harbor Day 2018: VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence and VFW Auxiliary National President Sandi Kriebel joined hundreds of veterans, active-duty military, their families and supporters at the Pearl Harbor Visitors Center to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the attack. During the ceremony, they presented a VFW wreath in memory of the 2,403 military service members and civilians who were killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and took a moment to reflect on this year’s commemorative theme, “Forging the Future,” which pays tribute to President Roosevelt’s famous 1943 “Unconquerable Spirit” speech. [Learn more.](#)

3. VFW Leadership Visits DPAA: On Tuesday, VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence and VFW Auxiliary National President Sandi Kriebel attended a briefing hosted by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii. The briefing included updates from DPAA Director Kelly McKeague and Deputy Director Rear Adm. Jon Kreitz regarding ongoing remains repatriation missions in Southeast Asia, as well as information about upcoming investigative and recovery operations in 2019. The VFW delegation also toured the DPAA operational headquarters and identification laboratory, where they had the

opportunity to view several sets of remains that were repatriated back to the U.S. from North Korea on Aug. 1. [Learn more about the DPAA.](#)

4. VFW Attends Deputy Secretary of Defense Roundtable: On Monday, the VFW and other veterans and military organizations met with senior DOD leadership to discuss the department's priorities and how to improve benefits and care for our nation's service members and their families. Items discussed included the need for a strong DOD budget to implement the National Security Strategy; success and expansion of the [Military Health System GENESIS](#) electronic health care record; [open enrollment for TRICARE Prime and Select](#) which ends Dec. 10; open enrollment for retirees who would like to transition from the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program to the [Federal Employee Dental and Vision Program](#); informing service members of the need to elect whether or not to opt into the [Blended Retirement System by Jan. 1, 2019](#); and how to reduce the number of service members who die by [suicide](#).

5. VA to Provide Telehealth at VFW Posts: During the Anywhere to Anywhere Telehealth Summit, VA announced Project ATLAS, which is a partnership between VA, the VFW, Philips, and the American Legion to provide VA telehealth at VFW and Legion posts in rural areas. The first Project ATLAS location, VFW Post 6786 in Eureka, Montana, is set to begin offering VA mental health care to veterans soon. The VFW is proud to partner with VA, the Legion and Philips to expand access to care for veterans. Learn more about VA's telehealth ["Anywhere to Anywhere" initiative](#).

6. Coast Guard Needs More Icebreakers: The VFW was at the National Press Club yesterday to hear Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz say that if the United States wants to protect its national security interests in the Arctic, it needs to fund more ships for the U.S. Coast Guard, especially icebreakers. Schultz said the rise of Russian and Chinese influence in the region is troubling, given the rich natural resources like natural gas, oil, minerals and fish, as well as the two countries' accelerated building of icebreakers. China is estimated to have seven icebreakers in commission or under construction. Russia is estimated to have more than 40 in service or under construction. Canada, which is second only to Russia in landmass inside the Arctic Circle, has 17. A Department of Homeland Security analysis in 2013 concluded that the Coast Guard needs six icebreakers — three heavy and three medium ships. The U.S. Coast Guard today has only two icebreakers — one heavy and one medium. Coast Guard funding is currently in a part of the fiscal 2019 budget that has yet to be finalized. [Read more here.](#)

7. Another For-profit School Closes Suddenly: This week, a major for-profit college system announced it will be closing its doors at the end of the current semester. The Birmingham, Alabama-based Education Corp. of America said it was closing schools operating as Virginia College, Brightwood College, Brightwood Career Institute, Ecotech Institute, and Golf Academy of America in more than 70 locations in 21 states. This move surprised students attending these schools and left their futures unknown. There are approximately 4,000 GI Bill students who could be affected by these closures and the VFW is working with VA in order to make sure these students are taken care of as soon as possible. If you are a student attending one of these schools and have questions or need help, please reach out to the VFW's education assistance program at 1studentveteran@vfw.org.

8. Top Questions from Veterans, Answers from VA: VA has compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions from a State of VA community town hall event hosted by Secretary Robert Wilkie last September. The top questions pertained to Blue Water Navy, Agent Orange, dental care, access to medical cannabis, and non-VA health care programs such as Choice. The compiled list includes answers to these questions and links to navigate veterans for further assistance. [Read the questions and answers or watch the town hall.](#)

9. MIA Update: This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced eight new identifications. Returning home with full military honors are:

-- **Army Pfc. John A. Taylor** was a member of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. On Aug. 11, his regiment encountered a Korean People's Army unit near the village of Haman. Taylor's company was ordered to move southwest, where they were ambushed and forced to disperse. After several days of checking adjoining units, aid stations and field hospitals, Taylor was reported as killed in action on Aug. 12, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Taylor.](#)

-- **Army Master Sgt. Carl H. Lindquist** was a member of Headquarters Company, 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. Lindquist was reported missing in action on Nov. 29, 1950, when he could not be accounted for after the withdrawal. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lindquist.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Ottaway B. Cornwell** was a member of the 4th Fighter Squadron, 52nd Fighter Group, Twelfth (XII) Air Force. On Jan. 27, 1944, the Supermarine Spitfire aircraft he was piloting was shot down over Pierrefeu-du-Var, France, during a dog fight with a German Messerschmitt. After Allied forces liberated the area, they were unable to locate Cornwell's remains. Interment services are pending. [Read about Cornwell.](#)

-- **Navy Radioman 3rd Class Jack R. Goldwater** 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, including Goldwater. Interment services are pending. [Read about Goldwater.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Leonard R. Geller** 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, including Geller. Interment services are pending. [Read about Geller.](#)

-- **Navy Reserve 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, including Mason. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mason.](#)

-- **Navy Shopfitter 3rd Class John M. Donald** 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, including Donald. Interment services are pending. [Read about Donald.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class George A. Thompson** 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, including Thompson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Thompson.](#)

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.