



April 18, 2019

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1. VFW Hosts Roundtable on Elimination of Widow's Tax: On Tuesday, the VFW hosted veterans service organizations, survivor organizations, and congressional staff to discuss the demeaning Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset. The roundtable focused on joining forces to secure passage of [S. 622, the Military Widow's Tax Elimination Act](#) or [H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouse Act](#), which would eliminate the SBP/DIC offset. The group discussed raising awareness of the offset and encouraging members of Congress to co-sponsor the bills. Join the effort by contacting your members of Congress and asking them to co-sponsor S. 622 or H.R. 553. Join the conversation on social media by using the hashtag #AxeWidowsTax. Stay tuned to the Action Corps Weekly for updates.

2. Webinar on TRICARE Pharmacy Program: Join the "Make the Most of Your TRICARE Pharmacy Benefit" webinar on April 25, 2019, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET. The webinar will focus on how to fill and manage prescriptions, as well as pharmacy-covered services, costs, and more. A pharmacy expert will provide detailed information about the TRICARE Pharmacy Program and answer questions. [Learn More.](#)

3. Trump Picks Navy's Next CNO, VCNO: The president has selected Adm. Bill Moran to replace retiring Adm. John Richardson as the Navy's 32nd chief of naval operations, and Vice Adm. Bob Burke for promotion to full admiral and assignment as the Navy's new vice chief of naval operations. Moran, a native of the Hudson Valley town of Walden, N.Y., currently serves as the Navy's VCNO. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and National War College, and is a P-3 Orion pilot by trade. Moran previously served as the Navy's top personnel officer, a position the newly selected VCNO currently occupies. Burke, a submariner by trade, is a native of Portage, Mich., and a graduate of Western Michigan University and the University of Central Florida. Both selectees require Senate approval.

4. Retired General is New US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia: The Senate last week overwhelmingly confirmed retired Army Gen. John Abizaid as the new U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Abizaid, who commanded U.S. Central Command from 2003 to 2007, was also the recipient of the VFW Armed Forces Award at the 108th VFW National Convention in

Kansas City, Mo., in 2007. The 34-year Army veteran served in Grenada, the Persian Gulf, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

5. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update and four new identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Army Cpl. Carlos E. Ferguson**, 20, of Dawson, W.Va., will be buried May 18 in nearby Grassy Meadows. Ferguson, whose identification was announced in February, was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, engaged against North Korean and Chinese forces near Kangye, South Korea, from May 16-20, 1951. Ferguson was reported missing in action on May 18, 1951. [Read about Ferguson here.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Richard J. Thomson**, 19, of League City, Texas, was stationed aboard the battleship USS Oklahoma when it sustained multiple torpedo hits and capsized as it was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmembers, including Thomson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Thomson here.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Ernest R. West**, 22, of Runnells, Iowa, was stationed aboard the battleship USS Oklahoma when it sustained multiple torpedo hits and capsized as it was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including West. Interment services are pending. [Read about West here.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Raymond H. Middlekauff**, of Baltimore, Md. In late 1944, Middlekauff was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, which was engaged against German forces near the town of Grosshau in Germany's Hürtgen Forest. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 4, 1944. Interment services are pending. [Read about Middlekauff here.](#)

-- **Army Capt. Rufus J. Hyman**, 23, of Memphis, Tenn., was an infantry officer with Company A, 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, which was engaged against the North Korean People's Army in the vicinity of Kwonbin-ni, South Korea. He was declared missing in action on July 30, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Hyman here.](#)

To sign up new veterans' advocates, visit: <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.

To view this week's and previous editions, visit: <http://www.vfw.org/actioncorpsweekly>.