



September 6, 2019

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1. September is Suicide Prevention Month: #BeThere is the VA campaign to prevent suicide. VA is encouraging everyone to help prevent suicide by showing compassion and a willingness to find a solution when the veteran may be unable to find the solution on their own. The VFW and Give An Hour will be doing just that on Sept. 14, 2019, by holding the fourth annual [A Day to Change Direction](#), a national day of service and action to change the dialogue on mental health for veterans and their communities. [Learn more](#) about the #BeThere campaign. [Pledge to participate](#) in A Day to Change Direction.

2. VFW Supports Relief Efforts for Hurricane Dorian: The VFW is accepting donations to help veterans, service members, and military families impacted by Hurricane Dorian. From hurricanes to raging wildfires, each year natural disasters leave many in desperate need of assistance. The VFW's Disaster Relief Fund provides our organization the opportunity to react quickly with immediate relief to those in the affected areas. You can [donate to the VFW Disaster Relief Fund](#). [Learn more](#) about the hurricane's impact on your respective VA facility.

3. 2020 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship Application is Open: The 2020 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship is now accepting applications! The program, which is in its sixth year, is for VFW members who attend an accredited institute of higher learning. Ten student veterans will be selected for the semester-long program that focuses on real policy issues faced by veterans, service members, and their families. The highlight of the program is participation in the VFW Legislative Conference, which in the past has included meetings at the White House and with senior officials from the Department of Veterans Affairs and Congress. Those selected also spend time with their VFW Department members on Capitol Hill pushing the VFW's legislative priorities. Alumni of the program have become more active in all levels of the VFW and have changed laws to improve care and benefits for veterans. [Learn more and apply for the fellowship](#).

4. On-Base Shopping Eligibility Expands Jan. 1: Beginning in the new year more than 3 million service-connected disabled veterans with VA ratings from zero to 90 percent will be authorized on-base exchange and commissary shopping privileges, as well as access to certain MWR facilities, but you must have a VA-issued Veteran Health Identification Card, or VHIC, to gain access. The VHIC is issued only to veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system.

You can [apply online](#), or in person at your local VA medical facility. Family members of the newly eligible veterans will not be authorized to shop, but will be permitted on-base as guests of the VHIC-carrying veteran. Veterans who do not reside near a military installation can still shop online at the four military exchanges. Search for stores at [ShopMyExchange](#), [Marine Corps Exchange](#), [Navy Exchange](#), and [Coast Guard Exchange](#). Caregivers will be processed differently, initially, since they have no military or VA affiliation. The VA will post a memo to [VA.gov](#) for caregivers to be used for access at the front gate, along with a driver's license. This process is expected to transition to a caregiver-type ID card, which will have scanning swipe capability. One hundred percent disabled veterans, their spouses, and eligible dependents already have access because they are issued military identification cards.

5. DOD to Divert \$3.6 Billion to Fund Barrier Projects: On Wednesday, DOD announced that \$3.6 billion will be diverted from 125 military construction projects in both the U.S. and overseas to fund 11 fencing and barrier projects along the southern U.S. border. In total, this reprogramming will suspend programs in 23 states, three U.S. territories, and 19 nations. These projects include schools, dining and maintenance facilities, upgrades to flight line infrastructure, and upgrades to ballistic missile defense infrastructure. See the [full list of projects](#) slated for deferment. Read the [official DOD press release](#).

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identifications of four American servicemen who had been missing and unaccounted for from the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Army Cpl. Gerald N. Wilson** Company F, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He was last seen July 25, 1950, while participating in the defense of Yongdong, South Korea. His remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Wilson](#).

-- **Army 1st Lt. Robert C. Styslinger** Battery B, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported to have been killed in action Nov. 29, 1950, while fighting enemy forces near Hagaru-ri, Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. His remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Styslinger](#).

-- **Army Pfc. Harold K. Knight** was a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, 31st Regimental Combat Team. His unit was engaged in intense fighting with the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces, near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea, from Nov. 27 - Dec. 1, 1950. Witness accounts noted that Knight was killed in action Nov. 25, 1950. His remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Knight](#).

-- **Army Sgt. Donald L. Murphy** was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, 31st Regimental Combat Team. The 31st RCT was east of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, enduring repeated attacks from the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces, before withdrawing from their positions on Dec. 1, 1950. Murphy could not be accounted for by his unit, and he was subsequently declared missing in action as of Dec. 2, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Murphy](#).

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>.