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**1. The VFW Podcast Premieres Oct. 7:** The widely-anticipated, [The VFW Podcast](#), will air its first broadcast on Wednesday, Oct. 7. The first guest of the podcast is VFW National Commander Harold “Hal” Roesch II, who will discuss his 20/20 Vision For Veterans and the VFW’s major influence on Capitol Hill. You won’t want to miss this new show that will provide our veterans, service members, and military families with current information on key veteran legislation, educational and financial assistance programs, national veterans services, critical initiatives from our Commander-in-Chief, and much more. We look forward to you tuning in and continuing the conversation on social media. [Listen to the podcast](#) or subscribe at Spotify, Pandora, Stitcher, TuneIn and Deezer. Look for the podcast on Google Play and Apple Podcasts very soon.

**2. VFW Testifies on VA Wait Times:** This week, VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray testified before the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health regarding patient wait times and VA’s payment process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Murray joined the VFW [Independent Budget](#) partners, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Disabled American Veterans, to convey concerns about incorrect billing and canceled appointments. “In uncertain times such as these, communication is paramount,” said Murray. “Our members need more information now more than ever from VA regarding rescheduled appointments in order to ease some of the burden veterans are experiencing right now.” Recent implementation of the *VA MISSION Act of 2018* has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the VFW and our Independent Budget partners urge VA to keep communicating with its patients during these difficult times. [Watch the hearing](#).

**3. VA Caregiver Expansion Launched:** On Thursday, the first phase of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) went live on VA’s website. PCAFC offers education and training, access to health care insurance, mental health counseling, financial stipends, respite care, among other benefits for caregivers who care for an eligible veteran. As part of the *VA MISSION Act of 2018*, PCAFC will expand in two phases. The first phase is for

caregivers of veterans who were injured in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. The second phase is for those injured in the line of duty between May 7, 1975, and Sept. 10, 2001, which go into effect Oct. 1, 2020. [Learn more.](#)

**4. VFW, Sport Clips to Host Virtual Walk for Veterans:** The VFW and Sport Clips Haircuts are teaming up to host the first-ever virtual VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero Walk, offering supporters a new way to engage with Sport Clips' annual Help A Hero campaign. The annual Help A Hero campaign, which kicks off in-store on Oct. 12, helps raise awareness and bolster funds for the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program. The program provides student veterans with post-secondary scholarships so they are able to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. To date, \$8 million in scholarships have been awarded. Participants in the virtual walk may register and fundraise individually or as a team, and the walk offers the flexibility to participate where and when it is convenient. All participants are invited to join the VFW and Sport Clips for the Celebration Finale on the VFW's Facebook page on Dec. 5, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. EST. The pandemic has presented many challenges, and the virtual Help A Hero Walk offers patriotic Americans with a safe and healthy way to show their support to our nation's veterans. [Learn more.](#)

**5. VA Can Assist Veterans Resolve Community Care Debts:** VA's Office of Community Care (OCC) contact center can help veterans fix issues with credit reports or debt collection actions that are the result of an authorized VA community care claim. Once a veteran contacts VA's OCC contact center, with their information regarding debt collection, staff will work one-on-one with the veteran to research and resolve collection-specific issues. [Contact VA Office of Community Care.](#)

**6. Complete the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry:** All veterans who served in eligible locations should include their information in the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry](#). Participation in the registry is very important as it will allow VA to track burn pit exposure and draw inferences regarding associated adverse health effects. Exposure to burn pits may be associated with respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD). Recently, VA stated that veterans with underlying respiratory conditions [may be at greater risk](#) for developing complications related to COVID-19. Service members and veterans who have already signed up for the registry should make sure that their contact information, phone number, address, and email are up-to-date.

**7. MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 1 new identification and six burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:  
-- **Air Force Maj. Paul A. Avolese**, 35, was a radar navigator assigned to the 4133rd Bombardment Wing. That day, he was part of the crew of a B-52D Stratofortress bomber conducting a bombing mission from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, to a target in Vietnam. During a maneuver over the South China Sea, Avolese's bomber collided with another B-52, causing both aircraft to fall into the sea. Four of the crew members from his aircraft were rescued, but Avolese was never recovered. He was declared dead on July 24, 1967. Interment services are pending. [Read about Avolese.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pvt. Howard E. Miller**, 22, of San Mateo, California, was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 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, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Miller died on the third day of battle, Nov. 22, 1943. Miller will be buried Nov. 6, 2020, in his hometown. [Read about Miller.](#)

-- **Navy Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Alton W. Whitson**, 22, of Seattle, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Whitson. Whitson will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, in October 2021. [Read about Whitson.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. John P. Langan**, 18, of Columbus, Nebraska, was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 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, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, while the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Langan died on the third day of battle, Nov. 22, 1943. Langan will be buried in Platte Center, Nebraska. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Langan.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Jesse "Johnnie" D. Hill**, 20, of Highland Park, Michigan, was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Hill will be buried in Holly, Michigan. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Hill.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Louis J. Tushla**, 25, of Atkinson, Nebraska, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Tushla. He will be buried July 17, 2021, in his hometown. [Read about Tushla.](#)

-- **Navy Hospital Apprentice 1st Class John M. Mulick**, 21, of Elma, Iowa, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Mulick. The date and location for Mulick's burial have yet to be decided by the family. [Read about Mulick.](#)

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