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1. MIA Mission Included in US-North Korea Summit: The U.S. suspended its MIA recovery missions in 2005 due to team safety and security concerns. The VFW is now hopeful that the agreement reached earlier this week between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will finally bring peace to the peninsula, and help bring closure to thousands of families of missing American servicemen from the Korean War. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, there are 7,700 American MIAs from the Korean War, with 5,300 of them believed to be in the North. Including the MIA issue as a summit talking point was urged by VFW National Commander Keith Harman in a letter to the president last week. "The VFW salutes President Trump for bringing this issue to the table, and we thank the North Korean leader for agreeing to it. Now the hard work to bring the initiative to fruition begins," said Harman. Read the [Joint U.S./North Korean summit statement](#). Read [VFW's letter to President Trump](#)

2. VFW Testifies on VA Health Care Bills: On Wednesday, VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Kayda Keleher testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health. Keleher offered the VFW's support and concerns with pending legislation ranging from productivity metrics being used at VA, to establishing a database of potential new VA employees currently serving under DOD. [Watch the hearing](#). [Read the testimony](#).

3. VFW Endorses Veteran's Creed: On Thursday, the VFW joined 10 other veterans and military organizations in introducing a Veteran's Creed. VFW National Security and Foreign Affairs Director John Towles was in attendance and gave brief remarks regarding the importance of the core values he learned as an NCO in the Army, and how this new creed reflects many of those same tenants. The creed itself is based on many of those already present in various military branches, and uses similar terminology. While not a part of any formal requirement, it is meant to serve as a call to action for veterans, particularly those who have recently transitioned, to keep the values they learned in service at the front of their minds, and to inspire them to make good decisions post service. Find out more about the [Veteran's Creed](#).

4. Senate Committee Holds Nomination Hearing: This week, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a nomination hearing of John Lowry III to be the new Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training (DOL-VETS). If confirmed Mr. Lowry will take on a vital role within the Department of Labor that specifically handles veteran employment programs. The DOL-VETS program provides opportunities for veterans to receive training and education regarding employment services and career opportunities. Ranking Member John Tester said, "Mr. Lowry has a big task ahead of him, and I'll be holding him accountable to ensure every veteran has a good paying job. I look forward to quickly confirming another one of President Trump's nominees and putting him to work for our nation's veterans." Chairman Isakson announced that the committee plans to hold a meeting to vote on Mr. Lowry's nomination on June 19, 2019. [Watch the hearing.](#)

5. VA Inspector General Finds Staffing Shortage at 140 VA Hospitals: The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for VA released its annual occupational report Thursday. Until this year the report had only included staffing shortages for clinical staff. This year, the OIG included shortages for all staff, clinical and non-clinical. The OIG inspection determined that all VA medical centers it reviewed were experiencing staffing shortages. The most commonly cited challenges to staffing are a lack of qualified applicants, non-competitive salary, and a high staff turnover. These reasons were consistent with last year's report. The five positions with the highest staffing shortages are psychiatry, human resources management, primary care, psychology and medical technologists. Read the [OIG Determination of Veterans Health Administration's Occupational Staffing Shortages](#) report.

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for 11 American service members who had been missing in action from Vietnam, Korea, and WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Air Force Maj. James B. White**, 27, of St. Petersburg, Fla., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 19 in West Point, N.Y. White was assigned to the 357th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On Nov. 24, 1969, contact with White's F-105D was lost after a single pass attacking enemy troops in Laos. On Nov. 28, wreckage thought to be from White's aircraft was spotted by an Air America helicopter. A Laotian ground team searched the area and found only small pieces of wreckage. White was subsequently declared missing in action. [Read about White.](#)

-- **Air Force Col. Peter J. Stewart**, 47, of Glasgow, Scotland, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 18 in Winter Haven, Fla. Stewart was a member of Headquarters, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, and the pilot of a two-seater F-4C aircraft, the second in a flight of two on an armed reconnaissance mission over northern Vietnam. Stewart was assumed to have been shot down on March 15, 1966, along with his aircraft commander, Col. Martin R. Scott, whose remains were identified in June 2017. [Read about Stewart.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Donald L. Baker**, 20, of Thornton, Ark., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 19 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Baker was assigned to Company H, 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Sept. 6, 1950, as a result of fighting that occurred between his unit and enemy forces near Haman, South Korea. [Read about Baker.](#)

-- **Army Maj. Stephen T. Uurtamo**, 32, of Chicago, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 19 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C.

Uurtamo was a member of Headquarters Battery, 82nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, which was engaged in persistent attacks with the Chinese forces near the Ch'ongch'on River in North Korea. On Nov. 30, 1950, the unit was forced to withdraw south along the Main Supply Route, known as "The Gauntlet." Uurtamo could not be accounted for after the withdrawal and was declared missing as of Dec. 1, 1950. It was later determined that he had been captured and died at a POW Transit Camp. [Read about Uurtamo.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. John H. Walker**, 20, of Morning Sun, Iowa, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 20 in his hometown. Walker was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, when he was reported missing in action after his unit engaged in fierce fighting on Hill 207 near Schönthal, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest. With no evidence that Walker had been captured or survived combat, his status was changed to deceased on Nov. 25, 1945. [Read about Walker.](#)

-- **Navy Reserve Radioman 2nd Class Julius H.O. Pieper**, 19, of Esmond, S.D., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 19 at the Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France. Pieper was a member of Landing Ship Tank Number 523 (LST-523) off the coast of Normandy, France, on June 19, 1944. The ship struck an underwater mine and sank, killing Pieper. Pieper's twin brother, Radioman 2nd Class Ludwig J. Pieper, was also killed in the attack but his remains were recovered after the incident and buried at the Normandy American Cemetery in France. [Read about Pieper.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Sgt. Meredith F. Keirn** was a member of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. He was reported to have been killed Nov. 30, 1950, and buried at the base of "Fox Hill," in the Toktong Pass, a critical main supply route between the villages of Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni, North Korea. Interment services are pending. [Read about Keirn.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Morris Meshulam** was a member of Battery D, 82nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (Automatic Weapons,) 2nd Infantry Division. The Division suffered heavy losses to units of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces (CPVF) between the towns of Kunu-ri and Sunchon, North Korea. Meshulam was reported missing in action on Dec. 1, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Meshulam.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Paul D. Gilman** was assigned to Company M, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. Gilman's unit landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll on Nov. 20, 1943, against stiff Japanese resistance. Gilman was killed on the first day of the battle. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gilman.](#)

-- **Navy Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Charles H. Harris** 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. Interment services are pending. [Read about Harris.](#)

-- **Navy Reserve Fireman 1st Class Lewis F. Tindall** 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. Interment services are pending. [Read about Tindall.](#)

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.