



October 19, 2018

**In This Issue:**

- 1. Vietnam War Marine Receives Medal of Honor**
- 2. Important Notice for Overseas Voters**
- 3. The Commission on Military, National, and Public Service Seeks Input**
- 4. VFW Speaks at Veterans Education Panel**
- 5. VFW Participates in Air Force Leadership Roundtable**
- 6. DHA MSO/VSO Working Group**
- 7. VA Provides Adoption, IVF**
- 8. Holiday Overseas Mail Deadlines Approaching**
- 9. MIA Update**

**1. Vietnam War Marine Receives Medal of Honor:** President Trump presented retired Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. John L. Canley the Medal of Honor at the White House on Wednesday before a crowd of Canley's fellow Vietnam veterans and senior military and civilian officials. The Marines who fought alongside Canley in the Battle of Huế had worked for years to see him receive the award – an upgrade of the Navy Cross he was awarded in 1970. Canley, now 80, is the 300th Marine to receive the Medal of Honor. On Jan. 31, 1968, with his company commander severely wounded, then-Gunnery Sgt. Canley took control of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, as it made its way toward the besieged city of Huế in central Vietnam. For the next six days, writes [Stars and Stripes](#), Canley would organize assaults on enemy positions, killing countless enemy fighters as his team retook buildings in the city, according to award citations. Twice he would brave fire to scale a wall in “full view of the enemy to pick up wounded Marines and carry them to safety,” said the president, adding that Canley had saved at least 20 Marines’ lives during the “house-to-house” fighting. [Watch recorded video of the presentation.](#)

**2. Important Notice for Overseas Voters:** The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) reports that some overseas voters have been unable to access their state’s online voter registration and election systems. FVAP believes that this is due to states blocking web traffic from foreign countries in order to increase the cybersecurity of their online systems. Since the midterm elections are less than 30 days away, FVAP encourages overseas voters to return their voted ballot now. If the state website to register to vote or access your ballot cannot be reached, contact your state’s election office for help. If you have already requested, but have not received a state ballot or cannot access your state website to download your ballot, visit [FVAP.gov](#) and use the [Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot \(FWAB\)](#), which all states accept as an official backup

ballot for federal offices. After filling out the backup ballot, you must print, sign, and send it to your election office using the instructions provided. If you live overseas and need help with the absentee voting process, please visit [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) for live chat assistance; call FVAP at 1-800-438-VOTE (8683) or DSN at 425-1584 (CONUS)/(312) 425-1584 (OCONUS); or email [vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov).

**3. The Commission on Military, National, and Public Service Seeks Input:** On Wednesday, the VFW attended a roundtable discussion with the Commission on Military, National, and Public Service to discuss whether women should register for the selected service and other proposals to increase the number of Americans in military and public service. The commission is charged with making recommendations to Congress on how to “inspire more Americans — specifically young people — to participate in military, national, and public service and to review the military selective service process.” Before making such recommendations, the commission is soliciting feedback from service members, veterans, and their families. Visit the [commission’s website to learn more](#) or [share your thoughts](#).

**4. VFW Speaks at Veterans Education Panel:** This week, VFW’s National Legislative Services Deputy Director Pat Murray spoke on a panel hosted by the National Association of Veterans’ Program Administrators (NAVPA) in Orlando, Fla. Murray spoke about some of the legislative priorities that the VFW and NAVPA have in common and how the VFW works to improve benefits for student veterans. Murray also highlighted the VFW’s numerous programs to assist student veterans, such as the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program and the Help A Hero Scholarship. The VFW continues to ensure VA educational programs are protected and expanded when needed. In particular, the VFW is closely monitoring the delays in processing of VA education benefit claims and is working with VA to expedite payments. If you are a student veteran facing financial hardship due to delayed GI Bill payments, please contact the VFW at: [1StudentVeteran@vfw.org](mailto:1StudentVeteran@vfw.org).

**5. VFW Participates in Air Force Leadership Roundtable:** On Tuesday, VFW’s Director for National Security and Foreign Affairs John Towles joined the Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson and Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David Goldfein at a roundtable. They were joined by Director of Air Force Public Affairs Brigadier General Ed Thomas; Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, Lieutenant General Brian T. Kelly; Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Shon Manasco; Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations Lieutenant General Brian T. Kelly; and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Darlene Costello. The three-hour meeting allowed for an intimate in-depth conversation with senior Air Force leaders on military readiness and personnel program improvements within the Air Force, future plans for community engagement, the status of Air Force readiness, Air Force current operations, and an update on storm damage to Tyndall Air Force Base.

**6. DHA MSO/VSO Working Group:** On Wednesday, the VFW participated in the monthly Defense Health Agency (DHA) MSO/VSO Working Group led by DHA Deputy Director Guy Kiyokawa. The meeting provided updates regarding TRICARE performance, TRICARE Select co-payments, the upcoming VA-DOD Joint Executive Commission purchased care feasibility study, and a proposed survey for TRICARE beneficiaries regarding implementation of the

FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act. Also discussed was the upcoming FEDVIP/TDRP changeover, which will take place on Dec. 31, 2018. If you are currently enrolled in TDRP and want to know how you will be impacted by this changeover, visit [BENEFEDS](#) for more information or [compare rates](#) for FEDVIP dental and vision plans.

**7. VA Provides Adoption, IVF:** Veterans who lost their ability to reproduce due to a service-connected disability may be eligible for adoption expenses to be reimbursed through VA or to receive coverage for in vitro fertilization (IVF). VA also provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to veterans enrolled in VA health care — regardless of service connection. Veterans interested in infertility services should contact their VA provider or their local VA Women Veterans Program Manager. [Learn about adoption reimbursement](#) and [VA's infertility services](#).

**8. Holiday Overseas Mail Deadlines Approaching:** Military and U.S. Postal Service officials have issued suggested mailing deadlines for holiday packages and letters to military locations overseas in time for Christmas. To get them there in time for Hanukkah, which starts on Dec. 2 this year, subtract 23 days from the deadlines. According to Military Times, the deadlines for various methods of shipping are the same for most APO/FPO/DPO (diplomatic post office) ZIP codes, with the exception of some mail going to APO/FPO/DPO Zip Code 093, which covers overseas contingency areas. Read the [Military Times article](#) for suggested mailing deadlines.

**9. MIA Update:** This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 5 new identifications, and the burial date and location for 8 previously identified servicemen. Returning home with full military honors are:

-- **Army Staff Sgt. Marshall F. Kipina**, 21, of Calumet, Mich., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 18 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Kipina was assigned to the 131st Aviation Company, serving as an observer aboard an OV-1C aircraft, on a night surveillance mission from Phu Bai Airfield over Attapu Province, Laos People's Democratic Republic. Radar and radio contact were lost with the aircraft which did not return as scheduled. Search efforts were initiated, but no crash site was found. [Read about Kipina](#).

-- **Army Lt. Col. Robert G. Nopp**, 31, of Salem, Ore., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 18 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Nopp was an OV-1C pilot assigned to the 131st Aviation Company. On July 13, 1966, Nopp flew a night surveillance mission from Phu Bai Airfield over Attapu Province, Laos. Flying through heavy thunderstorms, radar and radio contact were lost with the aircraft, which was not uncommon due to the mountainous terrain in that part of Laos. When the aircraft did not return as scheduled, search efforts were initiated, but no crash site was found. [Read about Nopp](#).

-- **Army Cpl. James I. Jubb**, 21, of Eastport, Md., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 17 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Jubb was a member of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. In August 1950, his unit sustained heavy losses while fighting against Korean forces in the vicinity of the Naktong River, South Korea. Jubb was declared missing in action on Aug. 10, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. [Read about Jubb](#).

-- **Army Pfc. Kenneth B. Williams**, 38, of Akron, Ohio, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 22 in Seville, Ohio. Williams was a member of Heavy Mortar Company, 32nd 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. Williams was among more than 1,000 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing Dec. 2, 1950. [Read about Williams.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Fred W. Ashley**, 22, of Emmett, Idaho, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 20 in his hometown. Ashley was a member of Troop C, 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Group, on a reconnaissance in the town of Paseka, Czechoslovakia. On May 4, 1945, German soldiers attacked Ashley's platoon. Ashley's unit reported him missing in action. Following the war, when Ashley was not among the American prisoners liberated from German captivity, the War Department amended his status to killed in action. [Read about Ashley.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Leslie E. Shankles**, 33, of Arcadia, Kan., whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 24 in Fort Scott, Kan. Shankles was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, when he was killed Oct. 14, 1944, by enemy fire in the Raffelsbrand sector of the Hürtgen Forest in Germany. Shankles' name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at the Netherlands American Cemetery, along with the others missing from World War II. A rosette will now be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. [Read about Shankles.](#)

-- **Army Pvt. John B. Cummings**, 22, of Hartford, Wis., whose remains were previously identified, was buried Oct. 13 in Hazelhurst, Wis. Cummings was a member of Company A, 276th Infantry Regiment, 70th Infantry Division, along the France and Germany border. On Dec. 31, 1944, German troops crossed the Rhine River into France. As darkness fell, two members of Cummings' company passed him in a foxhole near the riverbank. U.S. troops heard German machine gun fire and maneuvered their way back to the foxhole, but were unable to locate Cummings. Despite extensive recovery efforts, Cummings' remains were unable to be located. [Read about Cummings.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 2nd Class George C. Ford**, 25, of Lidderdale, Iowa, whose remains were previously identified, will be buried Oct. 20 in Glidden, Iowa. Ford 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. [Read about Ford.](#)

-- **Naval Reserve Lt. Richard C. Lannom** was the bombardier/navigator aboard an A-6A aircraft on a night strike mission over Quang Ninh Province, North Vietnam on March 1, 1968. The flight path to the target was over islands known to have light anti-aircraft artillery. When the aircraft failed to rendezvous with the carrier, a search and rescue effort was mounted. No evidence of the plane could be found. Lannom and his pilot were subsequently declared missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lannom.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Michael L. Salerno** was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 2nd 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. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Salerno died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Salerno.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Charles C. Gomez** 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 Gomez. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gomez.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class John A. Karli** 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 Karli. Interment services are pending. [Read about Karli.](#)

-- **Navy Buglemaster 2nd Class Lionel W. Lescault** 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 Lescault. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lescault.](#)

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](mailto:yfwac@vfw.org).