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**1. TRICARE Open Season Coming Soon:** TRICARE Open Season is the period every year when you can enroll or change your health plan if you are eligible for TRICARE coverage. If you want to stay in your current TRICARE plan, you do not need to do anything. However, if you are eligible, you can switch between the Prime or Select option or switch between individual and family plans. [Learn more.](#)

**2. VA, Partners Offer Flu Shot:** Veterans enrolled in VA and in need of a flu shot can receive it for free at their nearest VA health care facility or at their local [Walgreens](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, VA, and doctors suggest all individuals get their flu shot during the fall. This is particularly true for individuals over the age of 65, pregnant women, caregivers of infants or family members with health problems, health care employees, and people with heart problems and other chronic illnesses or conditions. [Learn more](#) about the flu shot or [locate your nearest Walgreens](#).

**3. DOD Annual Suicide Report:** On Monday, the Department of Defense (DOD) released its first-ever Annual Suicide Report. The report provides data on service members and their families, provides an overview of the department's suicide prevention strategy and governance, and describes current and future initiatives underway to combat suicide. The military is showing similar trends to the suicide rates in civilian populations, which have increased over time. In calendar year 2018, there were 541 service members across the military's active and reserve components who died by suicide – 325 active duty, 81 reservists, and 135 National Guardsmen. The most common factors that are linked to suicides in the military are relationship and/or financial stressors, and administrative or legal difficulties. [View full report.](#)

**4. Legislation Introduced for Rural Veterans Transportation Grants:** This week Representative T.J. Cox (D-Calif.) introduced VFW-supported H.R. 4589. Rep. Cox introduced this bipartisan bill with Representatives Amua Amata (R-American Samoa), Susie Lee (D-Nev.), and Greg Steube (R-Fla.). This important legislation would indefinitely extend the VA grant program to organizations that assist veterans in rural areas travel to and from VA medical facilities, instead of having to be renewed every two years. The VFW thanks all original cosponsors for their efforts to improve access to medical treatment for rural veterans. [Learn more.](#)

**5. MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced six new identifications, and five burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from WWII and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Ray P. Fairchild** was a member of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. He was killed in action on Nov. 27, 1950, near the town of Yudam-ni, west of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. His remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Fairchild.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Jack B. Van Zandt** was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. Van Zandt landed on the 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, including Van Zandt on the third day of the battle, Nov. 22, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Van Zandt.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Norman A. Buan** was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. Buan landed on the 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, including Buan on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. Interment services are pending. [Read about Buan.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Marley Arthurholtz** was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. On Dec. 7, 1941, Arthurholtz died in the attack along with 429 of his shipmates. Interment services are pending. [Read about Arthurholtz.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class Riley Burchfield** was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. Burchfield was captured by enemy forces near Kunuri, North Korea. He reportedly died while in custody of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces, at Prisoner of War Camp 5, in February 1951. Interment services are pending. [Read about Burchfield.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. John A. Shelemba** was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. Shelemba was reported missing in action while defending Taejon, South Korea on July 20, 1950. Interment services are pending. [Read about Shelemba.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. John T. Burke**, 18, of Newton, N.C., whose identification was initially announced in May, will be buried on Oct. 26 in Hickory, N.C. Burke was a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. In November 1943, his unit 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. Burke died on Nov. 20, 1943. [Read about Burke.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Jerry M. Garrison**, 21, of Lamar, Ark., whose identification was initially announced in August, will be buried on Oct. 22 in his hometown. Garrison was a member of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, when enemy forces attacked his unit near Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. [Read about Garrison.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Gerald B. Raeymacker**, 21, of Dunkirk, N.Y., whose identification was initially announced in August, will be buried on Oct. 19 in his hometown. Raeymacker was a member of Battery B, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, 31st Regimental Combat Team. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 6, 1950, in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. [Read about Raeymacker.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. David C. Wilkes**, 20, of Saline, Mo., whose identification was initially announced in July, will be buried Oct. 19 in Lakewood, Wash. Wilkes was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. Approximately 2,500 U.S. and 700 South Korean soldiers assembled into the 31st Regimental Combat Team, which was deployed east of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, when it was attacked by overwhelming numbers of Chinese forces. Wilkes was initially reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, when he could not be accounted for after the withdrawal, but his status was later amended to killed in action. [Read about Wilkes.](#)

-- **Coast Guard Lt. Thomas J.E. Crotty**, 30, from Buffalo, N.Y., whose identification was initially announced in September, will be buried Nov. 3 in his hometown. Crotty served aboard the USS Quail in the Philippines as part of the 16th Naval District-in-Shore Patrol Headquarters, during the onset of World War II. Crotty was among those reported captured after the surrender of Corregidor and held at the Cabanatuan POW camp, where he died on July 19, 1942. [Read about Crotty.](#)

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](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).

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