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In This Issue:

- 1. VFW Leadership Attending D-Day Ceremonies in France**
- 2. Electronic Health Record Modernization**
- 3. Choice Program Ending, Replaced by New Community Care Program**
- 4. Senate Addresses Military Housing Crisis in NDAA**
- 5. JCS Chairman Addresses Threats**
- 6. D-Day 75th Anniversary at National WWII Memorial**
- 7. USCG Opens Exchanges to DHS Employees**
- 8. MIA Update**

1. VFW Leadership Attending D-Day Ceremonies in France: VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence and VFW Auxiliary National President Sandi Kriebel will be representing the entire organization for the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landing next week. Joined by VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace and VFW Auxiliary National Secretary/Treasurer Ann Panteleakos, the VFW delegation will participate in ceremonies at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery, the Chateau-Thierry American Monument, the Arc de Triomphe, Pointe du Hoc, and the Normandy American Cemetery. They will also attend a French ceremony at Omaha Beach.

2. Electronic Health Record Modernization: On Wednesday, VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Kyle Kalman and National Veterans Service Deputy Director Dawn M. Jirak attended the Veterans Affairs Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization's (OEHRM) Industry Day in Arlington, Va. They heard from the acting Deputy Secretary of VA James Byrne, Executive Director for OEHRM John Windom, and key leaders from Cerner Corporation and Booz Allen Hamilton. VA will deploy the new EHR in waves over the next 10 years across the VA enterprise. Currently, VA is working to achieve its initial operating capability in the Pacific Northwest which will maximize efficiencies through DOD's lessons learned, and allow VA to leverage DOD's data hosting environment and enhance their cybersecurity protocols to facilitate interoperability. Stay tuned to the Action Corps Weekly for updates on VA's electronic health care record modernization.

3. Choice Program Ending, Replaced by New Community Care Program: Next week, the Veterans Choice Program is scheduled to be replaced by a new Veteran Community Care Program, which was created by the VFW-supported VA MISSION Act. Aimed at adopting lessons learned from the Choice Program and consolidating all community care (or non-VA care) programs, the Veterans Community Care program will have new criteria for accessing private-sector health care. The new program is intended to expand access to care for veterans, including urgent and walk-in care. [Learn more about eligibility changes.](#) [Learn more about VA MISSION Act changes to community care.](#)

4. Senate Addresses Military Housing Crisis in NDAA: On Thursday, the Senate Committee on Armed Services released the first draft of the National Defense Authorization Act. This version has important steps to address the military housing crisis to include creating a Tenant Bill of Rights, creating a dispute resolution process, and providing over \$300 million to ensure that every installation has the appropriate amount of government housing personnel to fulfill new comprehensive oversight and planning measures. Military families sacrifice daily for our country, at the very least they deserve to live in housing that is free from mold, pests and other hazards. [Read the Executive Summary.](#)

5. JCS Chairman Addresses Threats: The VFW attended a Brookings Institution event Wednesday with [VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Award](#) recipient Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford, who will be retiring later this year after completing his four-year tour as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The discussion focused primarily on the current and foreseeable threats emanating from Russia, China, North Korea, Iran and transnational violent extremism. Mitigating risk and miscalculations, not politicizing military-to-military relationships, and being ready to fight tonight were key to America's military strength and readiness going forward. He also said better defense budgets over the past three fiscal years has enabled the military to address shortfalls, as well as produce quantifiable investments in competitive advantages over advisories. [Read more or watch a video recording of the event.](#)

6. D-Day 75th Anniversary at National WWII Memorial: The Friends of the National World War II Memorial will be hosting three events beginning Wednesday to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. First up will be a discussion of the new book, "The First Wave: The D-Day Warriors Who Led the Way to Victory in World War II," at 10 a.m. at The Army and Navy Club at Farragut Square. This will be followed by a remembrance ceremony, candlelit vigil, and a reading of the names of those who are buried at the Normandy American Cemetery in France Wednesday afternoon at 4 p.m. The 75th anniversary ceremony begins at 10 a.m., Thursday. The National World War II Memorial has no public parking and very limited handicap parking. The closest two Metro stops (Federal Triangle and Smithsonian) are about a half mile walk, but taxis and other hired conveyances are plentiful. [Read more about the three planned events.](#)

7. USCG Opens Exchanges to DHS Employees: More than 200,000 civil service employees of the Department of Homeland Security are now eligible to shop at 64 Coast Guard exchanges as well as its [online store](#), according to a recent Military Times article. Previously, in-store shopping privileges were limited to active-duty military and retirees, reservists, their dependent family members and Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Coast Guard had already allowed current and retired Coast Guard civilian employees to shop with limited privileges — no tobacco, alcohol or military uniform items. That limitation now applies to DHS civilian shoppers. The article suggests the Defense Department is also considering expanding military exchange privileges to DOD civilians. The Coast Guard Exchange System, like the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps exchange systems, contributes a significant part of its profits to respective service morale, welfare and recreation programs. [Read the Military Times article.](#)

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

-- **Army Cpl. Earl H. Markle** was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, engaged against enemy forces near Unsan, North Korea. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 2, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit following the attack. Interment services are pending. [Read about Markle.](#)

-- **Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. John T. 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. Interment services are pending. [Read about Burke.](#)

-- **U.S. Navy Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Leo Blitz** 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. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmembers, including Leo and his twin brother. Interment services are pending. [Read about Blitz.](#)

-- **U.S. Navy Fireman 1st Class Rudolph Blitz** 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. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmembers, including Rudolph and his twin brother. Interment services are pending. [Read about Blitz.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Edward Wasielewski** 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. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmembers, including Wasielewski. Interment services are pending. [Read about Wasielewski.](#)

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>.