



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**

# WASHINGTON WEEKLY



**December 7, 2012**

## **The VFW Remembers Pearl Harbor**

VFW National Commander John Hamilton and Ladies Auxiliary National President Leanne Lemley are in Hawaii to lay a wreath at the USS Arizona memorial to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. They also discussed veteran and military healthcare with Dr. James Hastings, director of the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System, and Army Brig. Gen. Dennis Doyle, commander of Tripler Army Medical Center. They were also scheduled to discuss the VFW's full support of MIA recovery efforts with the commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Air Force Maj. Gen. Kelly McKeague, and military troop and family issues with Army Maj. Gen. Kurt Fuller, commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks. Accompanied by Hawaii Department Commander Ben Acohido and Ladies Auxiliary President Anita Acohido, they also laid a wreath at the National Cemetery of the Pacific to commemorate the opening of a new Vietnam War mural. For photos and highlights from Commander Hamilton's visit, check back with the [Capitol Hill blog](#) next week. Also check out the VFW's Pearl Harbor Day [message](#).

## **Senate Passes NDAA**

This week, the Senate passed their version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) with a vote of 98-0. The bill does not contain any TRICARE fee increases, which were a part of the House-passed version. The House and Senate now meet in conference to iron out differences in the bills. Some of the items the VFW is advocating that remain in the final bill include:

- Requiring DOD to report on changes to TRICARE Prime coverage areas.
- TRICARE beneficiary coverage for certain autism treatment disorders.
- Revised Stolen Valor Act – making it a federal crime to falsify military decorations for personal gain.
- A comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention program within DOD.
- Improvements in the transition process for active duty.
- CRSC payments to combat-disabled retirees forced into medical retirement

The bill also included a VFW-supported provision which requires DOD to provide Congress a comprehensive policy on sexual harassment and to keep copies of restricted reports on sexual assaults on file for 50 years. The conference committee is set to begin working out differences early next week with a final bill expected to be voted on before Christmas. For more information on the bill and the roll call vote, [click here](#).

### **TRICARE Fees Not Included in Senate NDAA**

Absent from the Senate-passed NDAA bill were any increases to TRICARE premiums and pharmacy copayments, which the VFW vehemently opposed. However, the issue of TRICARE fee increases is not quite over. The House-passed NDAA included a provision calling for increases in pharmacy co-pay fees, and the Pentagon has claimed that healthcare costs are unnecessarily burdening the defense budget. The VFW disagrees with this premise, and has been one of the few veterans' organizations in Washington fighting to prevent any increases in military healthcare premiums, encouraging other cost-cutting measures that will not burden military families or break faith with military retirees. Now we want to know your opinion. Visit our blog for more information and to add your voice by voting on the most responsible way to handle the situation. To learn more and to find our online poll, [click here](#).

### **Congressman Michaud Appointed Ranking Member on VA**

Congressman Michael Michaud of Maine was named the Ranking Member on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee this week. Michaud takes the gavel from retired member and new Mayor of San Diego, Bob Filner (D-CA). Michaud has been on the committee for over 10 years and, most recently, was the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health. Michaud has consistently served as a vocal advocate for rural and remotely-located veterans who face significant barriers to receiving the care they are entitled to. The VFW looks forward to working with him to improve the care and benefits of all veterans in the 113th Congress. To read Michaud's press announcement regarding his new appointment, [click here](#).

### **House Committee Discusses VA/DOD Claims**

Earlier this week, the House VA Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held an oversight hearing entitled, "Wading through Warehouses of Paper: The Challenges of Transitioning Veterans Records to Paperless Technology." The Subcommittee has had many hearings on the subject of joint claims and had asked witnesses to discuss innovative ways to move the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) into the 21st century. During the hearing, Subcommittee Chairman Jon Runyan (R-NJ) expressed the need for better collaboration between the VA and DOD to aid veterans who are transitioning out of the service. The VFW will continue monitoring the process as we move into the 113th Congress. To view the recorded webcast or to read witnesses testimony, [click here](#).

### **Two MIAs Recovered**

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains belonging to two soldiers who had been missing in action from their wars in Korea and Vietnam. Identified are:

- Army Sgt. Bobby R. King, 19, of Seymour, Texas. In August 1950, King and his unit, Battery A, 90th Field Artillery Battalion, were fighting against North Korean forces in a

battle known as the “Bloody Gulch,” near Pongam-ni, South Korea. King was listed as missing in action after the battle.

- Army Sgt. John R. Jones, 22, of Louisville, Ky. On June 4, 1971, Jones was working with indigenous commandos to defend a radio-relay base, known as Hickory Hill, in Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam. When enemy forces attacked the site, Jones and another serviceman took up a defensive position in a nearby bunker. The following morning, Jones was reportedly killed by enemy fire and the other soldier was captured and held as a POW until 1973.

[Read more](#) about their individual stories.

Was this *Washington Weekly* forwarded to you by a friend? [Sign up](#) to get your own free issue each week.

—



[Find a Post](#) | [Contribute](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Tell A Friend](#)  
© 2001 - 2012. All rights reserved.