



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



December 5, 2014

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Attack on Pearl Harbor Remembrance

VFW Posts nationwide will be commemorating the 73rd Anniversary of the Attack on Pearl Harbor on Sunday. VFW National Commander John Stroud and Ladies Auxiliary National President Ann Panteleakos will be at the Pearl Harbor ceremony along with survivors, family members and fellow comrades, and will present a VFW wreath aboard the USS Arizona Memorial. In Washington, D.C., another ceremony will be held at the National World War II Memorial at 1:53 p.m. According to the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, which officially disbanded in 2012, an estimated 84,000 servicemen and women survived the attack, of which just a few thousand are still alive today.

Carter Nominated as New SECDEF

The VFW was in the White House today for the President's nomination of Dr. Ashton B. Carter to succeed outgoing Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. Carter has vast Pentagon and national security experience, having served earlier as the Deputy Secretary of Defense and as the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. He has been a Professor and Chair of the International Relations, Science and Security faculty at Harvard's Kennedy School, and a member of the Defense Policy Board, the Defense Science Board and the Secretary of State's International Security Advisory Board. In the 1990s, he served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, where he was responsible for policy regarding the former Soviet states, strategic affairs and nuclear weapons policy. The Senate Armed Services Committee is expected to begin his confirmation hearing soon. [Read more.](#)

Caregiver Expansion Hearing Held

On Wednesday the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Heath held a hearing regarding veteran caregiver expansion. Currently, only qualifying veterans from the current conflicts are eligible for the caregiver program. The VFW contends that all eras of war-time veterans should qualify for this benefit, making the case that money should never be the sticking point when it comes to taking care of veterans. In testimony, VFW Deputy National Legislative Director Aleks Morosky writes why expanding the caregiver program to all generations of veterans provides better health outcomes and often makes more financial sense as well. The Committee took notice of Morosky's remarks and made it a topic of discussion during the hearing. Watch the full hearing [here.](#)

New Military Sexual Assault Report Released

This week, the Defense Department released the results of its latest survey regarding sexual assault prevention. While the results reflect a drop from 2012 in the prevalence of sexual assault on military installations, the report does suggest that more work needs to be done to prevent social and professional retaliations against alleged victims who report the crime. The report also showed that while the reporting of sexual assaults by female military members is continuing to increase—which suggests support for those who report is improving—the majority of male sexual assault victims are not reporting. As a result of these findings, DOD is implementing the following four initiatives:

- Commanders will be required to ask about retaliation from first responders in individual cases of sexual assault;
- Additional training will be required for first-line supervisors and civilian supervisors to recognize and prevent retaliation behavior;
- DOD will continue to study ways to prevent sexual assault; and
- DOD will provide direct feedback to service members about sexual assault prevention and response.

[Read](#) the full report.

Expansion of VA's MST Program

The *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act* (VACAA) expanded VA's military sexual trauma (MST) program to include veterans who experienced military sexual trauma during inactive duty training. Starting this week, Guard and Reserve veterans will have the opportunity to seek free-of-charge mental health services through VA's extensive network of MST coordinators in its 150 medical centers, 820 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) and 300 vet centers throughout the country. Veterans seeking MST services are not required to be service-connect or enrolled in the VA health care system. The VFW strongly supported the VACAA and the expansion of VA's MST program. We will continue to work closely with VA to ensure the expansion continues as planned and that veterans are provided the care they need. [Learn more](#) about VA's MST program.

No Copayments for Mental Health Peer Support Services

This week, VA issued a direct final rule to exempt mental health peer support services from copayment requirements. Starting on January 27, 2015, veterans will be able to participate in VA's successful mental health peer support program without a financial burden. [Learn more](#) about the direct final rule.

Two Korean War MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains of two Americans who had been missing-in-action since the Korean War. Identified are:

- **Army Pfc. Paul L. Tingle**, of San Francisco, was lost on Nov. 26, 1950, in North Korea, where he later died as a prisoner of war. He was assigned to Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He was accounted for on Nov. 12, and will be buried with full military honors at a location yet to be determined.
- **Marine Corps 1st Lt. Raymond O. Ball**, from Ohio, was lost in North Korea on Nov. 27, 1950, and accounted for on Nov. 13. He was assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and will be buried with full military honors at a location yet to be determined.

As always, we want to share your advocacy stories on the VFW Capitol Hill blog. To share your stories, [fill out our online form](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

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