



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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Time Remains for Absentee Voting

If you don't register, you can't vote. That's the message Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) officials are spreading throughout the military, regardless of where they are stationed. Most but not all 50 states and the District of Columbia have complied with the four key reforms identified by the VFW-supported Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act of 2009, which requires a minimum 45-day transmittal period for absentee paper ballots, the e-transmission of blank absentee ballots, removes the notary or witness requirement from absentee ballots, and expands the use of Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots for state and local elections. All service members, spouses and voting-age family members who haven't already done so need to visit the [FVAP website](#) to register, double-check home state requirements and deadlines, and request an absentee ballot.

Military Coalition Honors Legislators and Hill Staff

This week, the VFW was on hand at the headquarters of the Reserve Officers Association, as The Military Coalition (TMC) honored two legislators and two Capitol Hill professional staff members for their efforts to better serve our military, veterans and their families over the past year. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Patty Murray (D-WA) and House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon (R-CA) were honored with TMC's award for legislators. Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee staff member Carrie Wofford and House Armed Services Committee staff member Jeanette James were honored with TMC's award for professional staff. [Learn](#) about how each recipient worked to serve our nation's heroes, and [see](#) photos from the award ceremony.

Campaign Season in Full Swing

Members of Congress have left Washington and will be working and campaigning in their district and state offices until after the election. We encourage all of you to set up appointments, attend town hall meetings and other campaign stops and ask the tough questions. For our guide to *Hosting Town Hall Meetings* or *Get Out the Vote* activities [click here](#). View our current [legislative priority goals](#). Make sure to read and discuss our talking points on critical issues like mental and

behavioral health, employment rights, education benefits and the VA claims process. We also track how your members vote on those issues when they reach the floor of the House and Senate. With the election just a short month away, now is the time to take a look at what your members have done and ask them how they plan to improve the lives of veterans, our active duty service members and their families. To view our vote analysis, visit the [VFW website](#) and use the "Connect to Congress" box on the bottom right. To share your stories of advocacy for publication on the VFW's Capitol Hill blog, [click here](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

New TRICARE Prime Rates Begin

On Oct. 1, some military retirees saw their TRICARE Prime enrollment fees increase to \$269.28 for singles and \$538.56 for families. This reflects the 3.6% cost-of-living adjustment retirees received in 2012, when applied to the FY 2012 enrollment fee of \$260 (single) and \$520 (family). Most retirees enrolled in TRICARE Prime prior to Oct. 1, 2011, saw a more significant increase because their enrollment fees were held at previous levels of \$230 and \$460, respectively. Survivors of active duty deceased sponsors and medically retired members and their dependents are exempt from annual fee increases as long as there is no break in their TRICARE Prime enrollment. Active duty service members and their families have no enrollment fee. [Read more.](#)

Stop Loss Special Pay to End

The deadline to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay will end October 21. Service members and veterans whose military service was involuntarily extended under the "Stop Loss" program between the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Sept. 30, 2009, are eligible for special retroactive pay, but you have to apply. The special pay is compensation for the hardships the involuntary extensions caused, officials said. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service to receive \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, many eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries are not aware of the benefit. Please forward this information to all VFW members, Posts and friends. [Click here](#) for more information or to apply.

New Web Address for VFW Capitol Hill Blog

Last month, the VFW's Capitol Hill blog experienced technical difficulties, during which time our registration for the name "vfwonthehill.org" expired, only to be scooped up by a cybersquatting company. The technical issues have been resolved, and the blog can be found [here](#).

Ten MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains belonging to eight Marines and two soldiers who have been missing in action since World War II, Korea and the final battle of the war in Southeast Asia. Identified are:

- Marine Corps 1st Lt. Laverne A. Lallathin, 22, of Raymond, Wash.; 2nd Lt. Dwight D. Ekstam, 21, of Moline, Ill.; 2nd Lt. Walter B. Vincent, Jr., 21, of Tulsa, Okla.; Tech. Sgt. James A. Sisney, 19, of Redwood City, Calif.; Cpl. Wayne R. Erickson, 19, of Minneapolis; Cpl. John D. Yeager, 23, of Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Pfc. John A. Donovan, 20, of Plymouth, Mich. On April 22, 1944, the Marines were aboard a PBJ-1 aircraft that failed to return from a night training mission over the island of Espiritu Santo, in what is known today as Vanuatu.
- Army Capt. Turnace H. Brown, 28, of Lawton, Okla., and Pfc. Arthur W. Hopfensperger,

18, of Outagamie, Wis. In late November 1950, Brown, Hopfensperger and elements of the 31st Regimental Combat Team were advancing along the eastern banks of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea when they were attacked and forced into a fighting withdrawal to positions south of the reservoir. Both would go missing during the withdrawal.

- Marine Corps Pfc. James J. Jacques, 18, of Denver. On May 15, 1975, Jacques was a member of the ill-fated rescue attempt of the American container ship S.S. Mayaguez, which had been hijacked along with her crew three days earlier by Khmer Rouge forces. During their assault on Koh Tang island, one of the Air Force rescue helicopters was shot down and crashed into the surf with 26 men on board. Half were rescued at sea, leaving Jacques and 12 others unaccounted for.

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

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