



VFW VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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Tuition Assistance Policy Change on Hold

On Jan. 1, 2012, the Department of Defense was scheduled to implement a new Memorandum of Understanding for schools to accept Tuition Assistance program dollars on behalf of enrolled service members. The VFW heard from several of the nation's most reputable academic institutions that they stood to lose their TA eligibility should the new MOU take effect, which is why VFW advocates called on Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to delay the MOU's implementation, pending further review. The Pentagon once again listened to the VFW by extending the signing deadline to March 12, 2012. [Learn more and read VFW's letter to Secretary Panetta about potential issues with the new MOU.](#)

Military Healthcare Access Expands

The final FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act included a VFW-supported provision that will enhance military and retiree access to mental and behavioral health care providers and services. The *Servicemembers' Telemedicine and E-Health Portability (STEP) Act* will provide flexibility in state licensing and credentialing by enabling qualified DOD healthcare professionals to use telemedicine and e-health services to treat service members. Current law only allows health care professionals to treat those in the state where they are licensed. VFW praised the passage of the provision in the NDAA as it provides National Guard, Reserve and military retirees, especially those residing in rural areas, more access to the care they need and deserve.

VA Completes Newborn Care Regulations

VA finalized regulations for providing care to newborn children of women veterans, as required in the *Caregivers and Veteran Omnibus Health Services Act* (P.L. 111-163). The provision, sponsored by Senate VA Committee Chairman Patty Murray (D-WA), will provide services for newborns up to seven days after birth if the child of the mother delivers in a VA facility or another facility contracted by VA for maternity care. [Click here for more information on VA services for](#)

[women.](#)

Google for Veterans

The VFW, actor Gary Sinise, and CBS affiliates nationwide have joined Google in a 30-second public service announcement to launch [Google for Veterans](#), which will enable military personnel, veterans and families to better connect, share and document their stories and lessons learned from deploying and redeploying to transitioning and job seeking. There is also a resume builder and a free video chat feature. The initiative is the result of military veterans and family members who work for Google, who understand the challenges of serving, coming home and transitioning to civilian life. [View the PSA.](#)

Two Korean War MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains of two soldiers missing in action since the Korean War. [Read more.](#)

Returned home are:

- Army Cpl. Agustin Alvarez, 22, of Los Angeles. In November 1950, Alvarez and soldiers from the Heavy Mortar Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, were forced to withdraw during a battle on the eastern side of the Chosin Reservoir, near Kaljon-ri, North Korea. Alvarez was captured but would die from his wounds and lack of medical care in December 1950.
- Army Pfc. Maximo A. Troche, 24, of New York. On Feb. 4, 1951, Troche and soldiers from the I Company, 3rd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, fought against Communist forces near Yangpyeong, Kyonggi Province, South Korea. After the battle, Troche was listed as missing in action. It was later learned that he was captured but died from dysentery in April 1951.

From the VFW Washington Office family to yours, please have a safe and joyous Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and holiday season!

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