In This Issue:
1. VFW Calls on President to Help Blue Water Navy Veterans
2. Take the VFW Survey on TRICARE
3. Veterans Legislation Roundup
4. Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Act of 2017
5. Blended Retirement System Training
6. MIA Update

1. VFW Calls on President to Help Blue Water Navy Veterans: During a markup on
Thursday, the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs discussed H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy
Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017, and ways to offset the more than $1 billion cost. Committee
Chairman Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Tim Walz (D-Minn.) talked about a
recommendation to round down annual cost-of-living increases to the next whole percentage
point, which was rightfully dismissed because it would take from one veteran to give to another,
which the VFW has strongly opposed in the past. Due to Congress’ inability to pass the Blue
Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, the VFW sees an order by the president to change regulations to
include Blue Water Navy veterans under the presumptive conditions list as the best course of
action to right this injustice. These are not new benefits, but a restoration of benefits taken away
in 2002 after a change in regulations. VFW National Commander Keith Harman wrote to
President Trump asking him to intervene. Read the VFW’s statement and letter to the president.

2. Take the VFW Survey on TRICARE: The VFW’s survey on the upcoming TRICARE
changes will close on Wednesday, Nov. 8. Last year’s National Defense Authorization Act
contained a number of changes to TRICARE, most of which take effect on Jan. 1, 2018. The
VFW believes service members, veterans and their families must be able to voice how these
changes will impact them. To ensure your views and preferences are heard, the VFW has
developed a survey to gauge our members’ awareness of these changes and how they will affect
beneficiaries. The data collected will be used to advocate for policy and legislative changes that
are based on the needs of TRICARE beneficiaries. Take the survey.

3. Veterans Legislation Roundup: This week the House advanced several pieces of legislation
to improve veterans’ benefits and services. On Thursday, the House Committee on Veterans’
Affairs passed H.R. 1133, the Veterans Transplant Coverage Act of 2017, which would authorize
VA to provide all care and services needed for a veteran to receive an organ transplant from a
live donor, regardless of whether the donor is eligible for VA health care or whether the health
care facility is part of VA; H.R. 1900, the National Veterans Memorial and Museum Act, which would designate the Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, as the National Veterans Memorial and Museum; H.R. 2123, the VETS Act of 2017, which would give the secretary of VA the legislative authority to allow VA providers to practice telemedicine across state lines; H.R. 2601, the VICTOR Act of 2017, which would ensure veterans who need an organ transplant are not required to travel too far to receive the care they need; H.R. 3634, the SERVE Act of 2017, which would make housing stipend documentation available online to all veterans using the GI Bill; H.R. 3705, the Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act of 2017, which would require that VA use certified mail to send debt notices written in plain language to provide a clear explanation of why VA is alleging that the veteran owes such a debt; H.R. 3949, the VALOR Act, which would allow companies to register their apprenticeship programs with one central approval agency; and H.R. 4173, the Veterans Crisis Line Study Act of 2017, which would require VA to conduct a study on the outcomes and efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line. Stay tuned to the Actions Corps Weekly for updates on these bills and other veterans legislation being considered by Congress.

4. Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Act of 2017: Representatives Steve Pearce (R-NM) and Walter Jones (R-NC) introduced H.R. 4146, the Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Act of 2017. This VFW-supported legislation would amend title 38 of the United States Code to update the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) tables to reflect the 2017 inflation rate, increasing the current cap from $10,000 to $95,000 and would create a process for adjusting the cap based on inflation each year. Additionally, this bill would increase the filing and enrollment limitation from two years to 10 years and include enrollment waiver options, thereby fixing many of the issues that exist within the S-DVI program.

5. Blended Retirement System Training: In preparation for the Jan. 1, 2018 implementation of the new Blended Retirement System (BRS), Military OneSource will host two webinars in November focusing on the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Unlike the current system, which consists of a single, defined benefit, the BRS will include a defined benefit portion as well as contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan. The first webinar, which will focus on TSP’s role in the BRS and how to use TSP financial calculators, will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 7, 9-10 a.m. EST. The second webinar, which will break down how TSP’s investment funds work, will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 8, 1-2 p.m. EST. Register for the Nov. 7 webinar and the Nov. 8 webinar.

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification of remains and burial updates of one American serviceman who had been missing in action from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:
   -- Navy Seaman 1st Class Edward F. Slapikas was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, when Japanese aircraft attacked his ship on Dec. 7, 1941. Slapikas was one of 429 crewmen killed in the attack. Interment services are pending. Read about Slapikas.

To sign up new veterans’ advocates, click here: 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.