

**VFW WASHINGTON WEEKLY**  
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**1. VFW Releases 2012 Priority Goals:** The VFW's 2012 legislative priority goals are now available for download on the VFW website. The brochure lists critical areas that VFW believes must be addressed by Congress and the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense and Homeland Security. The priority goals include creating, improving or protecting services and programs provided to America's veterans, service members and their families, as well as advocating for secure borders and shorelines. Also included is the "10 for 10" plan, which are 10 services and benefits that VFW believes may be eliminated or reduced to help pay for 10 years of war. Download your copy of the VFW's 2012 priority goals today at [http://stage.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFW.org/VFW\\_in\\_DC/2012%20Priority%20Goals%20Brochure.PDF](http://stage.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFW.org/VFW_in_DC/2012%20Priority%20Goals%20Brochure.PDF).

**2. VA Extends Emergency Care Policy:** A change in regulations this week extends VA's authority to pay for emergency care provided to eligible veterans in non-VA facilities. More than 100,000 veterans are estimated to benefit by the new rule. "This provision helps ensure eligible veterans continue to get the emergency care they need when VA facilities are not available," said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. VA currently operates 121 emergency departments across the country that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, plus 46 urgent care units, which provide care for patients without scheduled appointments. For more information, go to [www.nonvacare.va.gov](http://www.nonvacare.va.gov).

**3. VGLI Insurance Increases to \$400K:** Some veterans covered under the Veterans Group Life Insurance program now have the opportunity to increase their coverage to \$400,000, which matches the current maximum coverage available to military members under their Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program. To be eligible for the additional coverage, veterans must:

- \* Have active VGLI coverage;
- \* Have less than the current legislated maximum coverage of \$400,000;
- \* Request the additional coverage during the 120-day period prior to each five-year anniversary date; and
- \* Be less than 60 years of age on the five-year anniversary date of his or her coverage.

Read more at <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2244>.

**4. AER Adds New Assistance Categories:** Army Emergency Relief recently added four new loan eligibility categories. They are:

- \* Family member dental care: Family dental care is not available for families located in the U.S.,

which can put a significant financial burden on soldiers. Assistance is up to \$4,000.

\* **Basic furniture needs:** To assist soldiers and families moving into unfurnished quarters, as well as those who lost their furniture as a result of a natural disaster. Assistance is up to \$4,000.

\* **Rental vehicles:** To help soldiers on emergency leave or who are waiting repairs on their primary vehicles. The rental period would normally be seven to 10 days.

\* **Replacement vehicles:** To help soldiers when the cost to repair their current vehicle is greater than the vehicle's value. Assistance is up to \$4,000.

The VFW's Unmet Needs grant program complements AER programs in that Unmet Needs eligibility extends to up to 36 months after an honorable discharge, whereas a separating soldier must have enough "time in service" remaining to repay a AER loan. Read more about VFW's Unmet Needs program at <http://www.vfw.org/Assistance/National-Military-Services/>. More information about AER's four new categories is at <http://www.aerhq.org/dnn563/News/ArmyEmergencyReliefAnnouncesAdditionalCategor.aspx>.

**5. Reading of Names at The Wall:** Veterans, military, their families and concerned citizens are encouraged to sign up early for the reading of names at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. As it did five years ago on the 25th anniversary of The Wall, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is organizing volunteers to participate in the reading of all 58,272 names on The Wall. The reading will take place over a four-day period prior to Memorial Day 2012. Due to the large number of expected participants and planning for other Memorial Day events, VVMF will only accept volunteers through its website at <http://vvmf.org/ROTN>. Groups can also be accommodated.

**6. Three MIAs Return Home:** The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains of three servicemen who had been missing in action from World War II and Korea. Returned home are:

\* **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Hilding R. Johnson, 20, of Sacramento, Calif.** On Dec. 25, 1944, Johnson was flying a bombing mission near St. Vith, Belgium, when his P-47D Thunderbolt aircraft crashed after being struck by German anti-aircraft fire. No parachute was seen.

\* **Cpl. Robert J. Tucker, 27, of Princeton, Ind.** On Nov. 25, 1950, Tucker and the 2nd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division, were deployed in a defensive line across the center of North Korea when they were attacked by Chinese forces. After the war, surviving POWs said Tucker had died of a gunshot wound two days after the attack.

\* **Army Sgt. 1st Class Charles A. Roy, 42, of Henderson, Ky.** On Nov. 5, 1950, Roy was reported missing in action after his unit, Battery A, 61st Field Artillery Battalion, was overrun by Chinese forces near Pakchon, North Korea. After the war, surviving POWs said Roy had been captured but died in April 1951 from malnutrition and lack of medical care.

Read more about their recovery and return at [http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/news/news\\_releases/](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/news/news_releases/).

**7. Foreign Service Photos Needed:** The State Department is inviting current and former military and civil service foreign service officers to submit photographs from their service abroad (since the year 2000) for consideration in its Art in Embassies program. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 20, after which up to 1,000 photographs will be chosen by a jury and displayed at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, among other national and international locations. More information