



DEMOCRATS ABROAD

## Veterans and Military Families Caucus

# Read White & Blue

December 2021

Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 10

To view this in Browser, go [here](#).

To view this in pdf, click [here](#).

### *Greetings from a leader of the VMF Steering Committee, Erin Watson*

#### ***Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome!***

The seasons are changing, the 2021 elections have finished, and we learn to take the good with the disappointing. In the Northern Hemisphere, we're getting ready for cold winters and the holiday season. In the Southern Hemisphere, we're preparing for the fire season and summer vacations. In Democrats Abroad, we're celebrating our victories as we prepare for the 2022 midterms.

While losses are always easier to see, we did have important wins. Congratulations to Representative Shontel Brown (OH-15), Governor Phill Murphy (NJ), Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver (NJ), Mayor Eric Adams (NYC), Mayor Ed Gainey (Pittsburgh), Mayor Michelle Wu (Boston), and Mayor Tim Keller (Albuquerque). Our votes count, and our vote matters. Next year it will be time to put our money where our mouths are and get more Democrats elected to protect our country and the planet.

But for now, in December, we're taking small actions, and you can join us.

1. Join our Commander-in-Chief Cup fundraiser! A small donation goes a long way to reaching and registering overseas voters. [To access, click here](#).
2. Talk about our GI Bill advocacy with your families and friends. Family gatherings are a chance to find out if someone isn't getting the support they earned.
3. Talk about our Veteran Deportation advocacy. No family deserves to be separated, especially during the holidays.
4. Rest and stay healthy. The 2022 midterms are critically important, and we want all our volunteers to be healthy, stay healthy, and be fighting fit for our democracy.
5. After January arrives, register to vote here: [votefromabroad.org](https://www.votefromabroad.org). The best holiday present is being assured of receiving a ballot for the November 8th elections.

We thank you for all of your support throughout 2021. It means the world to us as we keep up the good fight. From all of us at DA-VMF to you, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Erin Watson, Global Military GOTV Coordinator

**UPCOMING GLOBAL VMF CAUCUS MEETINGS**

The Global VMF Caucus Steering Committee meets once a month. All Democrats Abroad members are welcome to attend. The next VMF meeting will be December 12th & Rotation B.

Vancouver PST UTC-8	Guatemala & Mexico City CST UTC-6	United Kingdom GMT UTC+0	Central Europe CET UTC+1	Greece EET UTC+2	Turkey EEST UTC+3	Vietnam ICT UTC+7	South Korea/Japan KST UTC+9	East Australia AEDT UTC+11	New Zealand NZDT UTC +13
2100 (day before)	2300 (day before)	0500	0600	0700	0800	1200	1400	1600	1800

Here is the login info for the Zoom Meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6298521858>

To receive the agenda or minutes from our meetings, contact us by emailing us [here](#).



## The Final Battle for the Commander-In-Chief Trophy 2021

**Army** beat **Air Force** on November 6th 21-14 with an overtime touchdown.

Air Force led 3-0 at the half, but Army came on strong with two TDs in the 3rd quarter, the second one on a 79 yd pass. In the 4th quarter Air Force scored a TD w/2 pointer and made another field goal to tie it 14 -14 at the end of regulation. Luckily, Army in OT recovered an Air Force fumble and scored. AF was unable to reply and Army took the win.

This gives Air Force one win, Army one win and Navy awaiting its chance!

The famous Army/Navy game will take place at MetLife Stadium (NJ) on December 11th at 3pm ET. Tickets are SOLD OUT. It is live streamed [here](#), and REMEMBER you can show support for your favorite team [here](#).



**YOUR SUPPORT GOES FOR VOTER OUTREACH  
TO FIND FIRST-TIME VOTERS AND HELP WITH  
REQUIRED ANNUAL REGISTRATION**

# ON MILITARY BASES AND FOR AMERICANS AROUND THE WORLD!

## WHO WILL CLAIM The Commander-in-Chief Trophy 2021?

Your contribution is greatly appreciated!  
Let your friends and family know they can help too!

For more details, a bit of interesting history, and the **DONATE** button, [click here](#).

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## DECEMBER EVENTS

### *December is Universal Human Rights Month*

Human rights are rights that we have by virtue of being human beings. They are not granted, they are innate. In its 30 articles, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (adopted in 1948 by the UN General Assembly) lists them as the right to food, health, education, work and liberty. After the Bible, it is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages!!! [You can click here to read it!](#)

**December 1 - Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxiliary) Birthday** Various civilian aviation units began to form as people worried about the war in Europe in the late 1930's. With support from Fiorello LaGuardia, then mayor of NY City, Gill Wilson of NJ proposed the CADS - Civil Air Defense Services. The Commerce, Navy and War Departments approved a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and its headquarters opened on December 1, 1941 under the command of Maj. Gen. John F. Curry. For more click [here](#) and [here](#).

**December 3, 1775 - Grand Union Flag first flown** The *USS Alfred* became the first vessel to fly the Grand Union Flag (the precursor to the Stars and Stripes). This flag was flown for all of 1776 and early 1777. Click for more [here](#).

**December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day** Called "A day which will live in infamy" by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii in 1941. The US suffered 3,435 casualties and loss of or severe damage to 188 planes, 8 battleships, and 3 light cruisers in a number of hours. The next day President Roosevelt signed the declaration of war. For a great description of what happened, go [here](#).

**December 10 - Human Rights Day** One of the important international bodies to protect human rights is the ICC, the International Criminal Court, created by the Rome Statute in 2002. It is housed in The Hague, in The Netherlands. A great deal of human rights work is also done by the Paris-based *FIDH*, the International Federation for Human Rights, founded in France in 1922, with 192 member organizations in 120 countries and where one of our own VMF members is a translator and interpreter! [More here](#). Also informative is this [link](#).

**December 11 - Army/Navy Game** Check above for more info and your opportunity to contribute to VMF Global GOTV -- midterm elections are 333 days from TODAY! (Dec. 1)

**December 12 - Global VMF Caucus Steering Committee meeting** All Democrats Abroad members are welcome to attend. See schedule of international hours and ZOOM link above.

**December 13 - National Guard Birthday** The National Guard begins in 1636 as a militia formed to protect the colony of Massachusetts, making this it's 383rd birthday. Four regiments of the Massachusetts Army National Guard are the oldest in the nation. For more, click [here](#).

**December 16 - The Boston Tea Party** Celebrates its 248th anniversary. In 1773 members of the Sons of Liberty dumped hundreds of crates of tea into the Boston harbor as a protest against the Tea Act. [Click here](#) for a YouTube and [here](#) for more history.

**December 18 - National Wreaths Across America** In respect for those who paid the ultimate price, wreaths are laid at over 2500 veterans cemeteries across the nation and world. If you would like to participate or sponsor a wreath. Check it out [here](#).

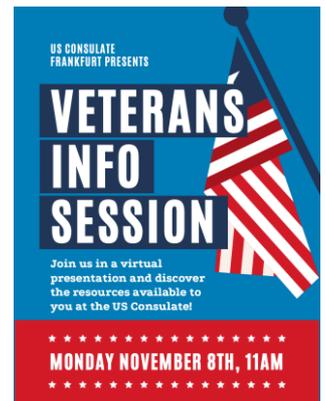
**December 28 - Anniversary of the Army Chaplain Assistant/Religious Affairs Specialist** As far back as 1866 the Army endeavored to create a position for assistants to chaplains. On this date in 1909 the Military Occupation Specialty of chaplain assistant was established by a War Department General Order. The status and training changed multiple times and in 2001 became a stand alone position in the military. For more, go [here](#) and [here](#).

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Last month the DA Germany VMF Caucus collaborated with the U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt to present a virtual Veterans Info Session. The Consulate covered topics of special interest to our veterans, military families, DoD civilians and all Americans overseas. (Click [here](#) to see the 10 powerpoint slides.)

Representatives from the Consulate's American Services Unit and from the Federal Benefits Unit discussed important topics including Passport Renewals, the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), Social Security, and Voting. The DAG VMF Caucus presented an overview of the caucus goals and programs that have been offered this year and discussed our non-partisan voter registration efforts. There was a greatly appreciated Q & A section. The 80 participants, including veterans and civilians from all parts of Germany, highlighted that there is great interest in hearing directly from the U.S. Consular Officers and in connecting with staff in the American Services Unit and the Federal Benefits Unit. More info sessions are being planned. You can click [here](#) to let us know your topics of interest.



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**Veterans Day Ceremony at Luxembourg American Cemetery**



Lt Col Haven, USAF, Retired, organized a study trip for 41 AFJROTC cadets to the wreath laying ceremony at the Luxembourg American Cemetery on Veterans Day. He commented that the ceremony served as a great tribute to the sacrifice of American military personnel who have, and will continue to serve, across the globe. Several of the cadets wrote the following summary of the trip:

### **Day of Reflection, by AFJROTC Cadets from Ramstein High School**

On Veterans Day the AFJROTC went to the Luxembourg American Cemetery, where 5,074 fallen soldiers of WWII are buried. Forty-one cadets representing Ramstein High School's AFJROTC attended the ceremony to honor their sacrifice as well as those who've served throughout history. After a 2-hour bus ride, Senior Aerospace Science Instructor Lt Col Haven, USAF, Retired, tasked each cadet to find an individual from the state we most identified with and research them. We were also tasked with learning the differences in tombstones for people of different religions. We noted Christian soldiers had tombstones with a cross on the top of their tombstones and Jewish soldiers had the Star of David. We also had to find and research the two Medal of Honor recipients, Private William D. McGee and Sergeant Day G. Turner.



At 11:11, the ceremony officially began, and several people spoke about what Veterans Day meant to them and how we were gathered to honor the fallen soldiers. Following the ceremony, the cadets walked quietly and respectfully around the cemetery, while completing the rest of our assignments and trying to take it in. Then it was time to go to our next cemetery.

This next cemetery honored the German soldiers who passed from the war as well. We noticed that the German cemetery was very different. The majority of the men who died were in their 20's and the German cemetery had 4 people to a tombstone. Also, if the men were unknown, they would just engrave "German Soldier." The American cemetery had tombstones spread out, with names, dates of their death, where they were from, and their religion.

Overall, it was a great trip with a lot to reflect on, appreciate, and respect. All of the cadets had fun being together, and at the same time we learned some valuable lessons.



## NEWS

**Infrastructure Bill Signed by President Biden** President Biden on November 15 signed a sweeping \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill to upgrade the nation's roads, bridges, water systems, airports, seaports, electric grid, and broadband, emphasizing the measure's passage as evidence for his insistence that bipartisanship can work even in a bitterly polarized time. Biden said "The bill I'm about to sign into law is proof that despite the cynics, Democrats and Republicans can come together and deliver results." The signing fulfilled a campaign promise and notched a significant achievement that had eluded former president Trump. The event was large and celebratory, and even congressional Republicans who helped negotiate the bill were throughout the hundreds of guests at the White House ceremony.

### **Max Cleland, Vietnam War Veteran, Led VA and Served in Senate, Dies at 79**

Max Cleland, an Army captain whose injuries during the Vietnam War left him a triple amputee and propelled his career in public service, including leadership of the Veterans Administration and one term in the U.S. Senate, died of congestive heart failure Nov. 9 at his home in Atlanta. He was 79. Mr. Cleland, a moderate Democrat from Georgia, was elected to the Senate in 1996 after heading the VA under President Jimmy Carter and serving as Georgia's secretary of state. He was an impassioned advocate for veterans and their families, launching counseling programs and championing services for PTSD, which the VA began to recognize as a legitimate condition during his tenure. President Biden called Mr. Cleland, with whom he had served in the Senate, "a lifelong champion of the dignity and rights of working people and America's wounded veterans. His leadership was the essential driving force behind the creation of the modern VA health system, where so many of his fellow heroes have found lifesaving support and renewed purpose of their own thanks in no small part to Max's lasting impact." The Senate passed S. Res. 451 recognizing Cleland, and you can read it [here](#). Also, check out this Instagram [here](#).



## Will Descendants of Black WWII Veterans Get What the GI Bill Promised?

**The GI Bill Restoration Act** was brought to the house and senate on Veterans Day by Majority Whip Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts and Senator Rev. Raphael Warnock of Georgia. The GI bill first created in 1944 failed to be fairly implemented especially in southern states where black veterans were often denied and harassed for requesting or using services that were available to white veterans. The new bill would especially help by providing educational benefits to descendants of denied veterans. Click [here](#) for more information.



**The Freedom to Vote Act** a comprehensive voting rights bill crafted by a group of Democratic Senators built off of a chassis proposed by Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) did not receive enough votes in the Senate to come up for discussion last month. The bill ([click here to read it](#)) is vital for maintaining democracy and a number of organizations are attempting to raise the profile of this bill and get it passed. [Click here](#) for a link to a new **TV commercial featuring John Legend**. And click [here](#) for a **VERY** amusing ad put out by a group called Represent Us, with Mark Ruffalo and Jonathan Scott. Share these with those you know and feel free to call your senator at: 1-202-224-3121. This number works 24 hours a day; often you speak to a person if you call 9-5 ET.

## Updates on the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

A [USA TODAY analysis of 254 new laws in 45 states](#) passed since the beginning of 2021 shows that in total, about 55 million eligible voters live in states with changes that will give them less access. This has happened because the Supreme Court did not defend parts of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. This bill, which had been reauthorized and passed in the house and the senate by overwhelming bipartisan votes **FIVE TIMES** over 40 years, failed by a 50-49 vote on November 3rd. In 2006 it was reauthorized by a 98-0 vote in the Senate and 10 of those republicans are still present. If you vote in North Carolina, Maine, Texas, South Carolina, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Alabama, or South Dakota, feel free to inquire why your senior senator no longer believes voting rights are necessary! Only Lisa Murkowski of Alaska had the integrity to vote again to support this vital legislation. (To talk with your Senator, call 1-202-224-3121.)

**January 6 House Select Committee:** November has been a big month for the January 6 Select Committee. Nearly 30 new subpoenas have been issued and dozens of people who volunteered information have been interviewed. The courts continue to process the more than 600 cases already charged. This month two rioters received 41 month sentences, the longest to date. Every week the FBI puts out more videos of people they are still searching for. If you or anyone you know recognizes someone in their videos, the FBI has an anonymous hotline. [Check their current "Wanted" here](#). Steve Bannon has been indicted and arraigned for his failure to appear or provide documents to the committee. He has not yet been detained in custody, although he faces a possible 2 year prison term. The committee has given Mark Meadows an extension to reconsider his failure to comply. If he still resists, he will also be indicted. All this seems to move a bit slowly, but it **is** moving.

**You Can Help Support the Resettlement of Our Afghan Allies** The **Department of Homeland Security**, in an effort to coordinate efforts to resettle Afghan refugees, has created **Operation Allies Welcome**. [Click here](#) for an article and a link to creating "sponsor

circles” in your community.

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## ADVOCACY & HEALTH

**Having Trouble Using Your GI Bill benefits?** Please reach out to us if you or someone you know is having trouble using their GI Bill benefits at a foreign school or university. We have been in contact with several congressional offices over the past few months, urging every senator and representative to immediately address this issue. GI Bill and/or VR&E educational benefits are EARNED benefits, and we will not rest until the Dept. of Veterans Affairs' policies are changed to work in favor of veterans, servicemembers, and military family members - not against them. [Here](#)

**Federal Virtual Benefits Fair 2021, now through December 13** Attend the Virtual Benefits Fair to chat with FEDVIP carriers, review 2022 plan details, and get the information you need to help make the right decisions. Click [here](#) for more info and enrolling.

### Live Chat Dates:

December 1 & December 8. Click here to register: [Here](#)

### Review Your 2022 Plan:

Log in anytime during the Federal Benefits Open Session, now through December 13, 2021. Download 2022 plan brochures, visit individual carrier booths, and watch informational videos.

### Live Answers To Your Questions:

Representatives from all participating carriers will be available to take your questions:

Wednesday, December 1 10am – 5pm (ET)	Wednesday, December 8 10am – 5pm (ET)
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### Plus Two Webinars for Uniformed Service Members:

<p><b>Navigating Your Health Care Options in Retirement</b> December 10</p> <p>What is TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Select, and TRICARE For Life and the benefits of each? What does the VA provide in terms of medical care? Join a panel of benefit experts as we discuss the health care coverage options available to you post-retirement, as well as eligibility for retired uniformed service members and their families to enroll in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).</p>	<p><b>Maximizing Your Federal Benefits after Military Service</b> December 13</p> <p>Are you a federal employee with military service or plan on full military retirement? Are you considering federal employment next? Learn all the ways your military service coupled with federal civilian employment can maximize your benefits. Join James Marshall of Federal Retirement Planning and Will Foley, BENEFEDS representative and U.S. Army Special Forces Retired, as they discuss the retirement benefits available to you and provide tips for designing a big-picture strategy.</p>
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**VA Extension of Presumptive Period for Qualifying Chronic Disabilities**

The VA has extended the presumptive period to Dec. 31, 2026 for qualifying chronic disabilities rated 10% or more resulting from undiagnosed illnesses in Persian Gulf War Veterans to ensure benefits established by Congress are fairly administered. Click [here](#) for more details.

**Genitourinary and Cardiovascular Regulations in the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities** The VA announced its changes were made to ensure that these portions of the rating schedule contain current medical terminology and provide detailed and updated criteria for the evaluations. Visit VA benefits [here](#) for more information.

**Take Advantage of New Resources Through the TRICARE Overseas Program** [For information, click here](#)

- MyCare Overseas for a secure and user-friendly Beneficiary App and Portal [Click here](#)
- TOP 2021 Contract Updates: [Here](#)
- Changes to the TRICARE Overseas Program: [Here](#)

**VA Benefits For Veterans Living Abroad Are Not the Same As For Veterans Living Stateside.** The **FMP**, Foreign Military Program, is a healthcare program run through the US Department of Veterans Affairs for specific veterans who live in or are traveling in a foreign country. These foreign medical services are only available to those with a VA-rated, service-related disability, or a condition that's related to or aggravates a service-related disability. For information, [click here](#). The disability benefits are listed [here](#). The FMP is managed by the FHA's Office of Community Care in Denver, Colorado. You can contact the VHA CC at 877-345-8179, or Foreign Medical Program (FMP) VHA Office of Community Care/ P.O. Box 469061, Denver, CO 80246-9061. Applications can also be faxed to 1-303-331-7803.

Veterans who plan on moving abroad or traveling abroad should notify the VA even if they're unsure of their eligibility status. The application itself is very straightforward and you only need to enter basic information about yourself and your status as a veteran since it will be double-checked against existing records within the VA. All applicants will need to fill out VA Form 10-7959f-1 which can be found online, filled out electronically, and then printed. At this time, there is no way to submit this form electronically. Since the FMP is a separate program from regular VA benefits, you do not have to be part of the VA healthcare system to enroll in the FMP. Some veterans can also become eligible for the program if they are currently part of the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program (part of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) department).

For a 24-page Guide, [click here](#), for a Claim Form, [click here](#), and for a Fact Sheet, [click here](#).

### **Mental Health Resources:**

#### **Ensuring Overseas Veterans Have Access To Mental Health Resources:**

- The **Real Warriors Campaign** aims to break down the stigma associated with mental health care and encourages service members to reach out for help when they need it. Find articles with support resources, video profiles with service member and veteran stories, and materials to download or order. [Here](#)
- The **Psychological Health Resource Center** is available 24/7 for service members, veterans, and family members with questions about psychological health topics. Trained mental health consultants can help callers access mental health care and

community support resources in their local area. Click on the link or call 1-866-966-1020 for assistance. [Here](#)

- The **inTransition Program** is a free confidential program that provides specialized coaching and assistance for service members, National Guard members, reservists, veterans, and retirees who need access to mental health care when relocating to another assignment, returning from deployment, transitioning between active duty and reserve component, preparing to leave military service, or any other time they need a new mental health provider, or need a provider for the first time. Click [here](#) or call 1-800-424-7877.
- The **Military Crisis Line**, text-messaging service, and online chat provide free VA support for all service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and all veterans, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. Click [here](#) to chat, call: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, or text: 838255.
- **TRICARE** offers mental health care to all its enrollees. Click [here](#) to find out how and to find other links to mental health providers through the TRICARE network.
- **Military Medical Treatment Facilities** often provide mental health services, including integrated behavioral health clinics. Contact your primary care manager to see if this resource is available for you. If it is, you can schedule an appointment the same day. Click [here](#).
- **Military OneSource** can provide access to confidential Military Family Life Counselors in your community. Call 1-800-342-9647 or click [here](#).
- **Military OneSource** also provides resources so you can manage stress and access benefits and tools that will help you stay strong in body and mind. [This page](#) provides access to self-care mobile applications developed within the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and other partners.
- **Military Health System** You can also visit these [Health.mil](#) and [Tricare.mil](#) web pages for more information.
- **PTSD** The VA runs the PTSD Center and it is the foremost resource for research on PTSD For more information check this [link](#).

**Have Any Questions About Tricare?** Go [here](#) for answers to all your Tricare questions.

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## JOB!

**Jobboard: Transitioning out of the military and looking for a job?** Click [here](#) for listings from companies looking for vets.

**Want to Advance Your Career, Start a Business or Further Your Education?** Transitioning from military to civilian life is a unique and uncertain time for military members and their families. It's a time when figuring out what you want to do is just as difficult as figuring out how to do it. Here is one way for veterans and spouses to do both. For a free **Find-a-Future** program developed by Walmart to serve the veteran community, click [here](#).

**Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government** In 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13518, Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government, which establishes the Veterans Employment Initiative. The Initiative is a strategic approach to helping the men and women who have served our country in the military find employment in the Federal Government. The Executive Order states the Federal Government will help lead by example in promoting veterans' employment, "creating advocates for veterans' employment within each federal agency." All 24 agencies have established a Veterans Employment

Program. You may contact the U.S. Department of State Veterans Employment Program Manager at [vets@state.gov](mailto:vets@state.gov).

To further support the Veterans Employment Initiative, the U.S. Department of State launched the Veterans Innovation Partnership (VIP) Fellows Program, a public-private alliance platform that serves America's veterans and separating service members by preparing them for diplomacy and development careers through a one-year fellowship experience. For more information, please visit [www.vipfellowship.org](http://www.vipfellowship.org).

All federal jobs are posted on [USAJOBS](https://www.usajobs.gov) and linked [here](#). You may search quickly for job postings — by skill, Department component or state. Use the advanced search options on USAJOBS to further expand or refine your search for Department careers. To view all jobs open to preference eligible veterans, select "Yes" under "Applicant Eligibility."

If any DA member's child is applying for a job or internship through his/her member of Congress, please reach out to us first. That way, we can provide a short "virtual internship" / provide a volunteer opportunity in order for VMF to provide a letter of recommendation along with the student's application. i.e. "Children and dependents of overseas active-duty service-members are especially encouraged to contact us!"

### **Overseas Active-Duty Service-Members and Dependents (Or Their Children) Can Intern with the VMF Caucus and Receive Community Service Experience and Letter of Recommendation**

If any DA member or child is looking for an internship or community service experience, please consider reaching out to us. We can provide a short "virtual internship" which would provide a volunteer a valuable work experience. For more information, and to learn what kind of work experiences are available, [contact us here](#). VMF could also provide a letter of recommendation.

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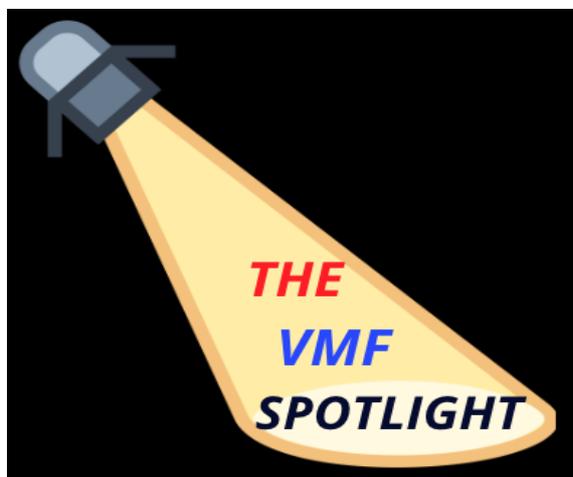
## **WHAT'S CONGRESS UP TO?**

### ***VMF Bill Tracking Page:***

*The VMF Caucus has a  
new tracking page for  
more detailed descriptions of the legislation we are following,  
including status updates on each bill.*

***[Click here](#) to check it out!***

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## Leave No Man Behind

By Karen Kenny and Tilly Gaillard (DA-VMF France)

Too severely injured by the German anti-aircraft fire to save himself, the pilot of the B-17, 1st Lieutenant George "Frankie" Wilson, Jr., 601st Bomber Squadron, 398th Bomber Group Heavy, was on a mission to destroy a German liquid oxygen factory and a rocket launch site in a gigantic bunker in Siracourt, Pas de Calais, northern France near Monchy-Cayeux. The pilot managed to keep his burning plane flying high long enough for his 8-man crew to parachute to safety. He died as his bomber exploded in a farmer's field in Monchy-Cayeux, Vallée Blanche. This Army Air Corps pilot from Utah was declared dead while missing in action. The date was July 8, 1944. He was 23 years old.



Decades passed and in July 2018 Wilson's great niece, Sonni and her husband Air Force Sergeant Erik Bornemeier, on a humanitarian mission to Morocco and influenced by the TV series *Band of Brothers*, decided they wanted to look for the legendary great uncle 'Frankie' and therefore contacted Pierre Vion, a journalist running an online newspaper near the crash site.

Sonni had heard very little about her grandmother's brother, just that he was a pilot who died during WWII. Erik, who was armed with newly declassified military records and maps showing crew names, destination, objective and location, went to Monchy-Cayeux to start exploring the crash site of the great-uncle's B-17 bomber.

Journalist Pierre Vion had written a series of articles about the crash in his online newspaper *Le Gobelin du Terrois* and called for witnesses on social media. Besides the strong immediate responses Vion received, there were other sources of information. Documentation, observation and discussions uncovered reports from the actual crew members. The first one to have parachuted had been Sgt. Ferguson, the only one not captured. He was found by a French lieutenant who arranged for him to be taken out of France by the British. The other crew members were captured by the Germans and held as POWs until the end of the war, when they all returned home. According to crew member Gerald Dye, once the bombs were ready to be dropped, the plane had overshot the targeted German bunker and had to circle around a second time. That is when the Germans shot it down.

Other crew members said that after the plane was hit, Pilot Wilson tried to keep it flying, but he knew he would not be able to return to England. He had been wounded in the stomach, slumped on the instrument panel and lost a lot of blood...and then the B-17 sped towards a field at the edge of a waking village. The right wing of the plane hit the ground, and the aircraft burst into flames. The B-17, its pilot and its load of bombs disappeared in a tremendous explosion.

Several bombers had been shot down in this area. According to Adrian Ponchant who was 10 at the time and saw the crash, "It looked like a giant had picked up the plane, smashed it and threw it to the ground". Adrian, his brother and friends cut up the fuselage and sold it as scrap metal around the end of 1945 and early in 1946.

In July 2018, on their first day of searching with a metal detector, Erik, his colleague Colonel David and local people found the wreckage site, including a piece of plexiglas with melted edges, a fragment of a propeller, a large piece of aluminum and a 50-caliber bullet used by B-17s. The questions were: What happened after the plane exploded? Was Pilot Wilson buried at the site of the crash by the villagers or by the Germans? Was he cremated and removed to another location? Could any part of his body be retrieved after so many years?

Mr. Legrand, an elderly man we met near the site, said that the soil on the crash site had become lighter and the wheat crop "grew differently". He said that the fuselage was in the field for several months or even years before being salvaged by the locals and sold as scrap metal in bits and pieces.

Michel Tilleul, now in his 80s, remembers the crash well and said '*bullets were flying*' and that after a third turn, the plane '*crashed, and exploded on the ground*'. He said that the Germans recovered the remains of the body and that he saw '*a piece of flesh with brown hair*'.

Mr. Massart, who lives down the street from the site and will turn a sprightly 90 in December, was sleeping in a shelter with bunk beds (as was often the case in those days), when the plane crashed; he said that three planes had been shot down around that area. His future wife, who was 12 at the time, was hit in her leg and shoulder by shrapnel from the crash. In another bomber crash site nearby, the pilot apparently survived the crash and opened a bistro together with a French lady in the nearby town of Auchel. All of the crews of the fallen bombers survived except for George Wilson.

The local memory grows dimmer but the search for the US MIAs is certainly not over.

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## POETRY CORNER

**november 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
by Isa Kocher

november 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
our quiet side street  
no one knows Day of the Dead

balmy sunny day  
laundry waving back  
november breezes

sitting on the stoop  
sky flying sprightly by  
ah! yes...Virginia

one lone turtle dove  
up on the telephone wires  
empathy

cat's gotten so fat, hmm

more mouths to feed  
before Thanksgiving

November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1968  
Humphrey defeated  
DNC retreated  
inside the beltway DC citadel  
so the crime of the century  
all got pardoned  
treason by a president hidden  
behind classified walls  
so several presidents follow  
their crimes too denied  
the turn of the century  
a new tradition  
executive hanky panky  
the most painful day of my life  
september 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
inaugurates the endless war  
after Ohio, back out into the country  
and a new speaker in the house

November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
the happiest night of my life  
cried and cried till the sun came up  
then the crying stopped  
all the way up to  
November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

sitting on the stoop  
cat happy  
fat with kittens

sitting on the stoop  
light cold wintry rain  
on the garden still all green

sitting on the stoop  
quiet side street  
thinking of Thanksgiving

Please send poetry submissions for the January issue to: [VMF-  
Editors@democratsabroad.org](mailto:VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org)

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## PODCASTS, NEWSLETTERS & SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

- On the podcast front, I listened to all 7 of the series *The Line*, about the actions and the trial of Navy Seal Eddie Gallagher, who faced charges of murder brought to the

attention of superiors by members of his Seal team. The series is intense and addresses literally “Where is the line?” [Here's a link.](#)

- ***This Land*** is focused on the constant struggles of Native Americans to hold onto the rights they supposedly have retained and is wonderfully narrated by Rebecca Nagle, a citizen of Cherokee Nation. There are two seasons of programs now. [Here's a link.](#)
- A short daily podcast (under ½ hour) that covers the basics of the day with talented hosts who make it a bit lively: ***What A Day***, produced by Crooked Media. [Here's a link.](#)
- Two weekly podcasts I thoroughly enjoy are ***Prevail***, and ***Clean Up on Aisle 45***. Greg Olear, the host of ***Prevail***, is a writer and an excellent interviewer of very interesting and well informed people. [A link](#) On ***Clean Up***, Allison Gill and Andrew Torrez (former federal employee/lawyer) really dig into what is going on with the evil messes left by the “former guy” and highlighting all the new and qualified people being added to the Biden administration. [A link](#)
- Two newsletters worth mentioning: Mary Trump, author of [Too Much and Never Enough](#) and [The Reckoning](#), one a bit nauseating about the “former guy” her uncle! and the other is excellent but a heavy lift. MSW Media has a book group series on [The Reckoning](#) which is a great way to process it. She has now started a Substack and newsletter called ***The Good In Us***. [Here's a link](#) which I am hopeful is going to help us fight back with kindness! I have been receiving ***GovExec Today*** in my mailbox for months and find it has amazing headlines and links to the nitty gritty of what is going on in various government departments. [Here is the link.](#)

These links may not work for you. Listen wherever you get your podcasts. Enjoy!

- And if you want to follow or socialize with the DNC, here are some links:

On Facebook

[Like the Democrats on Facebook](#)

[Like the DNC War Room on Facebook](#)

[Click here if you want to join the Democratic National Community](#)

On Twitter

[Follow @TheDemocrats on Twitter](#)

[Follow @DNCWarRoom on Twitter](#)

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## FILM RECOMMENDATIONS

**Charlie Wilson's War:** Charlie Wilson's War is a 2007 American biographical comedy-drama film, based on the story of U.S. Congressman Charlie Wilson and CIA operative Gust Avrakotos, whose efforts led to Operation Cyclone, a program to organize and support the Afghan mujahideen during the Soviet–Afghan War. The film was directed by Mike Nichols (his final film) and written by Aaron Sorkin. Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Philip Seymour Hoffman starred, with Amy Adams and Ned Beatty in supporting roles. It was nominated for five Golden Globe Awards, including Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy.

**Wag The Dog:** (1997) When the president of the United States is about to get caught in a sex scandal 14 days from the election, it is time to create a war. Perception and reality, life and death all flow from 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Starring Dustin Hoffman, Robert De Niro, Anne Heche, and Woody Harrelson.

**The Battle at Lake Changjin**

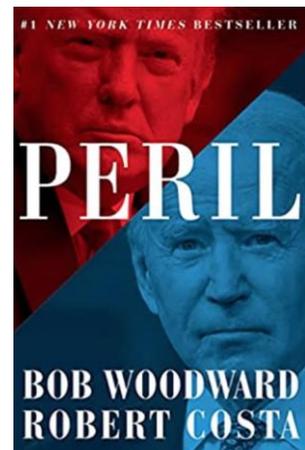
## A Korean War Movie Set to Be Biggest Box-Office Hit of 2021

The war epic “The Battle at Lake Changjin” has been a massive hit in China. In its first 10 days of release, it grossed \$633.2 million on its way to a projected final tally of \$830 million. That achievement would make it the world’s biggest movie in 2021, just based on its receipts in China. Known to American forces as the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, the November 1950 engagement turned the war from an American-led rout of North Korean forces into the decades-long stalemate that still exists on the Korean peninsula. Chinese forces surprised United Nations troops when a force of 30,000 was confronted by 120,000 Red Army soldiers. American military history portrays the battle and the defense by troops nicknamed the “Frozen Chosin” as a heroic tale of survival against incredibly long odds as U.S.-led forces successfully retreated to the port of Hungnam. There are two main reasons to watch a movie that portrays Americans as the bad guys in the Korean War. First, “The Battle at Lake Changjin” is a movie that’s winning the hearts and minds of the Chinese public. If our next potential conflict is with China, knowing exactly how and why their attitudes are changing will be critical to either preparing for or preventing war. The other reason is that Wu Jing is a great action star, an actor who’s as good as Sylvester Stallone or Bruce Willis at their “Rambo” and “Die Hard” peaks. Even at their most jingoistic, Wu’s movies never disappoint, and “The Battle at Lake Changjin” seems likely to be another winner from the actor. [Here](#)

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## BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Bob Woodward has done it again. This time paired up with Robert Costa, the duo have hit another home run. Want the backstory on the January 6th Insurrection? On John Eastman’s famous 6-point memo advising Trump and Pence how to “legally” block the January 6th counting of electoral ballots? All the deeply disturbing details on Trump’s last-ditch efforts at holding on to power? Want to read about Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, calling his counterpart in the Chinese military to assuage Chinese fears about Trump launching some sort of American attack? Woodward and Costa report this happened once in October before the election and once after the Jan. 6 riot.



## “S’EGG’GESTION” BOX

We welcome your input. What’s important to you? What are we missing? Any VMF experts you would like us to interview in a live webinar? Please use the link below to send us articles, poems, research, and anything else that is VMF-related: [VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org](mailto:VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org)



## BRAIN-ZONE MARINE CORPS KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1. Semper Fidelis is the motto of the Marine Corps. What does it mean?
  - a. always honorable
  - b. always ready

- c. always faithful
2. Where was the Marine Corps formed?
    - a. Tun Tavern
    - b. The Philadelphia Courthouse
    - c. Camp Lejeune
    - d. The US Congress
  3. What is the Marine Corps' recruiting slogan?
    - a. The few. The proud. The Marines
    - b. Be all you can be.
    - c. Aim high.
  4. What color were the first Marine uniforms?
    - a. Gray
    - b. Blue
    - c. Green
    - d. None of these
  5. Where was the first Marine Corps amphibious landing?
    - a. Nassau, Bahamas
    - b. Florida
    - c. South Carolina
  6. In what year were women first allowed to enlist in the Marine Corps?
    - a. 1918
    - b. 1943
    - c. 1905
  7. What year did the first female Marines take the combat leadership test?
    - a. 2010
    - b. 2011
    - c. 2012
  8. True or false: Currently, women make up 5 percent of the Marine Corps.
  9. What type of weapon does a Marine first gain proficiency as a marksman on?
    - a. M16 service rifle
    - b. M249 Squad Automatic Weapon
    - c. M9 Beretta
  10. How long is Marine Corps Recruit Training?
    - a. 8 weeks
    - b. 12 weeks
    - c. 16 weeks

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Answers:

1. "Semper fidelis", Latin for "always faithful," became the Marine Corps motto in 1883.
2. The first two battalions of Marines were formed at the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, PA.
3. The Few. The Proud. The Marines.
4. The first Marine Corps uniform jackets were green.
5. The first amphibious landing of the Marine Corps was during the Battle of Nassau on March 3, 1776. 200 marines landed and secured stockpiles of ammunition/gunpowder.

6. The secretary of the Navy allowed women to enroll for clerical duty in 1918.
  7. The first group of female Marines took the combat Leadership test in 2012.
  8. Women account for more than 7 percent of the Marine Corps, serving in 93 percent of all occupational fields and 62 percent of all facilities.
  9. No recruit earns the title Marine without first becoming a marksman with the M16.
  10. Marine Corps training lasts 12 weeks, for strength, weapons and combat training.
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## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

**Activity Grants for Our Military Kids** A grant program (up to \$300 per eligible child) to pay for extracurricular activities is available for children ages 3 -18. Deployed and stateside-activated National Guard and Reserve service members as well as severely injured veterans from any service branch may apply. [For details, click here.](#)

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[VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org](mailto:VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org)

Connect with us on      

*"I am concerned for the security of our great Nation;  
not so much because of any threat from without,  
but because of the insidious forces working from within."*

— General Douglas MacArthur

26 January 1880 – 5 April 1964

