



ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



June 14, 2021



VFW Testifies on VA Infrastructure: This week, VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on behalf of the VFW and our The Independent Budget partners, DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The hearing focused on President Biden's national infrastructure plan, which includes a proposed \$18 billion for VA capital infrastructure needs. Murray stated, "We are very appreciative of this proposal and given the gap in funding identified by VA's Strategic Capitol Investment Planning process, such an infusion is certainly justified." Murray also stressed the need to refocus hiring initiatives within VA in order to increase the capacity for critical VA construction. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at 18:15 mark.



VFW Testifies on VA Budget: This week, VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on behalf of VFW and with our The Independent Budget partners, DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The hearing focused on President Biden's budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs. "While VA has received increased funding levels, a persistent lack of regular oversight and IT development continues to negatively impact access for an increasing number of veterans," said Murray. Additional hearing witnesses also called for robust oversight of critical education and employment programs within VA. [Watch the hearing](#).



VHA Webinar for Gulf War Veterans: On June 22, 2021, VA will hold a virtual class on Gulf War exposures and health concerns. Topics to be covered are potential exposures, research findings, health effects, available resources, and steps to manage symptoms. [Read more.](#)



VA to Help with Digital Divide: Veterans who may not have a video-capable device or broadband connection for telehealth appointments can contact the [VA Digital Divide Consult](#) for assistance. Through this program, a social worker will help determine if the veteran is eligible for either VA's Connected Devices Program, Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Lifeline program, Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program, or a local ATLAS site. Telehealth allows for a continuum of care between a veteran and health care provider, eliminates extensive travel and wait times, and permits the veteran to choose a safe space for their appointment. [Learn more.](#)



Direct Child Tax Credit to Begin in July: Part of the American Rescue Plan Act provides for an enhanced 2021 child tax credit. Many veteran households with children under 18 years old will soon be eligible for direct monthly payments per month from July to December 2021. Eligible households will receive \$300 per child 5 years old and under, and \$250 per child 6-17 years old. It is also possible to qualify for a one-time \$500 payment for children who are between 19-24 years old and full-time college students. These direct payments should help with the issue of hunger in the veteran community as veteran groups have found nearly 40 percent of American military families have been in need of food during the pandemic to include 1 in 4 Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans. [Learn more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced five burial updates and four new identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

-- **Navy Radioman 3rd Class Earl M. Ellis, 23**, of Hope, Arkansas, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Ellis. He will be buried on Oct. 23, 2021, in Sutter Creek, California.

[Read about Ellis.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Neal K. Todd, 22**, of Akeley, Minnesota, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Todd. He will be buried on July 10, 2021, in his hometown. [Read about Todd.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Lloyd A. Alumbaugh, 21**, of Jasper, Missouri, was a member of Ambulance Company, 7th Medical Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 28, 1950, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Alumbaugh will be buried June 25, 2021, in Reeds, Missouri. [Read about Alumbaugh.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. John J. Sitarz, 19**, of Weirton, West Virginia, was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Germeter, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, when he was declared missing in action on Nov. 2, 1944. Sitarz could not be recovered because of the on-going fighting, and his status was changed to killed in action on Nov. 3, 1945. Sitarz will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, at a date yet to be determined. [Read about Sitarz.](#)

-- **Army Staff Sgt. Raymond C. Blanton, 19**, of Richmond, Virginia, was assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German

forces near Germeter, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, when he was killed in action on Oct. 14, 1944. Blanton could not be recovered because of the on-going fighting. He was declared non-recoverable in 1951. Blanton will be buried July 1, 2021, in his hometown. [Read about Blanton.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Kenneth R. Foreman, 19**, was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, after his unit was attacked by enemy forces as they attempted to withdraw near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Foreman.](#)

-- **Army Sgt. Elwood M. Truslow, 20**, was a member of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 12, 1950, after his unit was attacked by enemy forces as they attempted to withdraw near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Truslow.](#)

-- **Army 1st Lt. Myles W. Esmay, 21**, was a member of Company B, 236th Engineer Combat Battalion, reinforcing the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), also known as Merrill's Marauders. Esmay's battalion arrived at the recently captured airfield in Myitkyina, Burma, on May 28, 1944, where they were tasked with holding the airfield and taking part in the siege of Myitkyina. On June 4, the battalion attacked Japanese forces at Namkwi village northwest of the airfield. The fighting lasted until June 7. Esmay was reported to have been killed on the last day of fighting. Interment services are pending. [Read about Esmay.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Walter R. Pentico, 17**, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Pentico. Interment services are pending. [Read about Pentico.](#)

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