



ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



October 11, 2021



VFW Testifies Before House: VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Technology and Modernization regarding pending legislation. Murray testified on important IT funding and transparency-related bills and expressed support for a draft bill to collect demographic data on users of VA benefits. He stated, "Having a better understanding of the veteran population utilizing VA care and benefits will help better inform how and where to direct resources." The VFW is grateful for the subcommittee's attention to these issues and hopes these bills will quickly advance and become law. [Read the testimony.](#)



VA Resumes Overpayment and Medical Copayment Collections: VA is resuming overpayment notifications for new debts and debts that were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic from Apr. 6, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2021. Although debt collections and collections on medical copayments restarted on Oct. 1, 2021, VA will not begin to deduct debts from benefits payments until Jan. 2022. Options to request debt relief due to financial hardship will be included in debt notification letters that will be sent to veterans. [Learn more.](#)



Veterans Legacy Memorial Adds Webpages for 500,000 Veterans: VA recently expanded their [Veterans Legacy Memorial](#) website by adding 93 VA grant-funded state, territorial, and tribal veterans cemeteries. This expansion includes individual pages for nearly 500,000 veterans interred at these cemeteries, providing a way to honor and remember their service. Family members and friends may submit photos and stories to be reviewed and potentially added to these pages. [Read more.](#)



VA #FightFlu Initiative: VA has expanded flu vaccine availability to more than 70,000 in-network community providers. Eligible veterans can now receive at no cost a standard, high dose, or preservative-free flu shot at their local VA health care facility, in-network community retail pharmacy, or an urgent care location without prior authorization. If you are eligible, you need to present a valid, government-issued ID at a covered location. [Learn more](#) about eligibility and location options.



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced six 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:

-- **Army Air Forces Sgt. Francis W. Wiemerslage, 20**, of River Grove, Illinois, was assigned to the 549th Bombardment Squadron, 385th Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force, serving in Germany. He was the ball turret gunner on a B-17G Flying Fortress bomber that was shot down during a mission over Dresden on March 2, 1945. Two of the nine crew members survived the incident, while the rest, including Wiermerslage, were killed. He will be buried in his hometown on Oct. 23, 2021. [Read about Wiemerslage.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Jack K. Wood, 24**, of Wichita Falls, Texas, was assigned to 344th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Wood was serving as a navigator crashed as a result of enemy anti-aircraft fire. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. He will be buried Oct. 23, 2021, in Madill, Oklahoma. [Read about Wood.](#)

-- **Navy Machinist's Mate 1st Class Harold F. Carney, 23**, of New Diggings, Wisconsin, 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 Carney. He will be buried on Nov. 6, 2021, in Benton, Wisconsin. [Read about Carney.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Charles L. Saunders, 18**, of Winnie, Texas, 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 Saunders. He will be buried on Dec. 7, 2021, in his hometown. [Read about Saunders.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Denis H. Hiskett, 20**, of Nebraska City, Nebraska, 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 Hiskett. He will be buried on Dec. 11, 2021, in Mission Hills, California. [Read about Hiskett.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Gabriel J. Eggud, 25**, of New York, was assigned to 110th Reconnaissance Squadron, 71st Reconnaissance Group. He was piloting a P-39 Airacobra fighter over Wewak, New Guinea, on July 6, 1944, when a released bomb exploded and destroyed his aircraft. Following the war, Eggud's remains were declared non-recoverable. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, on a date yet to be determined. [Read about Eggud.](#)

-- **Army Pvt. Robert J. Herynk, 27**, was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Division. His unit participated in a coordinated attack against Japanese defenses on Nov. 26, 1942. Early casualty reports listed Herynk as killed in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Herynk.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Marvin D. Actkinson, 18**, was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in

action Dec. 2, 1950, after a fighting withdrawal near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Interment services are pending. [Read about Actkinson.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Joseph M. Robertson, 18**, 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 Robertson. Interment services are pending. [Read about Robertson.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Billy Turner, 20**, 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 Turner. Interment services are pending. [Read about Turner.](#)

[Click here to view this week's edition.](#)

[Click here for past editions of the VFW Action Corps Weekly.](#)

[Click here to sign up new veterans' advocates.](#)

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.