



ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



February 15, 2021



VA Secretary Confirmed: Last week, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs voted 87-7 to confirm [Denis R. McDonough](#) for the position of Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He will be the second non-veteran to lead VA. While McDonough has not served in the armed forces, he is a public servant with wide-ranging experience including as White House Chief of Staff for former President Obama. "The VFW believes today's confirmation of Mr. McDonough will allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to leverage his years of government leadership experience to rebuild trust and confidence in quality VA care throughout the veteran community, especially during these uncertain times," said VFW National Commander Hal Roesch. "The VFW looks forward to working closely with Mr. McDonough to ensure the VA can continue its aggressive fight against COVID-19, and to improve the delivery of care and benefits to our nation's heroes."



House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees Announced: Both the House and the Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs have announced all their committee members. The [Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#) will be chaired by Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) with Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) as the ranking member. The [House Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#) will be chaired by Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) with Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL) as the ranking member. The VFW looks forward to working with all the committee members on the important issues facing service members, veterans, and their families.



VA COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout: This week, VA, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, and Phillips held a [webinar](#) focused on how veterans and caregivers can access the COVID-19 vaccine. VA offers COVID-19 testing and [vaccinations for caregivers](#) participating in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. The panel discussed [how eligible veterans and their caregivers can receive their COVID-19 vaccinations](#) at any VA facility and should be immunized at the same time. Veterans who never used their VA benefits can contact their local VA office for information regarding the vaccinations, and VA's distribution plan. Veterans and caregivers can [sign up](#) for updates and express their interest in receiving a vaccine, which will help VA with their vaccine supply.



DPAA Family Meeting Soon: On Feb. 20, 2021, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) will be conducting two virtual family update meetings in Los Angeles & Honolulu. These meetings are intended to keep family members updated on DPAA's mission. The meetings will include formal presentations, question and answer sessions, and one-on-one discussions between government officials and family members. [Learn more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update and five 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 Cpl. Paul W. Wilkins, 19**, of Bellwood, Pennsylvania, was a member of B Company, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on July 11, 1950, when his unit was fighting enemy forces near Choch'iwan, South Korea. He was never found, nor were any remains recovered that could be identified as Wilkins. The Army declared a presumptive finding of death for Wilkins on Dec. 31, 1953, and he was declared non-recoverable on Jan. 16, 1956. Wilkins will be buried in his hometown. The date is yet to be determined. [Read about Wilkins.](#)

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class James W. Davenport, Jr., 21**, 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 Davenport. Interment services are pending. [Read about Davenport.](#)

-- **Navy Ship's Cook 3rd Class Robert Goodwin, 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 Goodwin. Interment services are pending. [Read about Goodwin.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class David Clark, Jr., 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 Clark. Interment services are pending. [Read about Clark.](#)

-- **Navy Boilermaker 1st Class William E. Blanchard, 24**, 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 Blanchard. Interment services are pending. [Read about Blanchard.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class Wallace G. Mitchell, 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 Mitchell. Interment services are pending. [Read about Mitchell.](#)

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