



ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



May 10, 2021



VFW Testifies Before House on Toxic Exposure:

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on pending toxic exposure legislation. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Kristina Keenan testified on three key bills that, if combined, would solve many of the issues facing veterans who were exposed to burn pits and other toxic hazards during their military service. "It took decades to achieve benefits for veterans of the Vietnam era. We want the same for veterans of all generations, without making them wait for years, and without having to reinvent the process again and again. Now is the time to develop a comprehensive and permanent solution," said Keenan. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).



Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program

Open Now: Veterans who are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic now have the opportunity for education or training for high-demand jobs with the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP). Veterans can use VRRAP for assistance with programs approved under the GI Bill and Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses to include associate degrees, non-college degrees, and certificate programs. If eligible, veterans can receive up to 12 months of tuition and fees, and a monthly housing allowance based on Post-9/11 GI Bill rates. VRRAP will stop making payments on Dec. 11, 2022, or when the funding limit or the participant limit is reached. [Learn more](#).



New VA.gov Website for All Benefits and Services: Veterans can now access all their VA benefits and services through one website, [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov). All the functions previously found on eBenefits are now available on the new website, however, eBenefits will remain functional until March 31, 2022. According to VA, the site usability and security has been improved, especially with the addition of two-factor authentication. Veterans are encouraged to log on and explore the new site. [Learn more.](#)



May is Mental Health Awareness Month: To spotlight mental health in May, VA is sharing [10 ideas](#) to help improve mental health and overall well-being. VA encourages veterans to use one or more of these ideas to bring about a better quality of life. Veterans can find more mental health resources [online](#). Caregivers can connect with VA mental health resources by contacting the Caregiver Support Line (855.260.3284). For any veteran in crisis you are not alone, you can contact the [Veteran Crisis Line](#) at 1.800.273.8255, press 1.



COVID-19 Vaccines Available at VA: Almost 2.4 million veterans have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at VA, but there are millions more who have not. Herd immunity is vital to slow the spread of COVID-19, [vaccine hesitancy](#) stops us from getting there. Thanks to the passage of the [SAVE LIVES Act](#), more veterans, caregivers, and spouses may receive the COVID-19 vaccine at VA. For more information please see VA's answers to frequently asked questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine in [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update for a service member who has been missing and unaccounted-for from Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors is:
-- **Army Cpl. Henry L. Helms, 24**, of Collbran, Alabama, was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, when his unit was attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the battle, his remains could not be recovered. Helms

will be buried May 22, 2021, in Ringgold, Georgia.
[Read about Helms.](#)

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