



# ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



March 7, 2022



## **VFW Commander-In-Chief Testifies Before Congress:**

VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. The VFW delivered its top priority of toxic exposure reform, telling Congress to pass comprehensive legislation for veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals during their time in service. “For generations, veterans have returned home from war with an array of unexplained health conditions and illnesses associated with the toxic exposures and environmental hazards they encountered in service. Today is no different, and toxic exposure has become synonymous with military service. For this reason, the time is now for Congress to change the way veterans receive health care and benefits to help save our lives.” [Watch the hearing.](#) [Read the testimony.](#)



## **House Passes the Honoring our PACT Act:**

The House passed VFW-supported [H.R. 3967](#), the *Honoring our PACT Act of 2021*. The passage of this comprehensive toxic exposure bill came the day following VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic’s speech at a press conference at the U.S. Capitol in support of this legislation and his testimony in front of a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. The VFW now calls on the Senate to pass comprehensive toxic exposure legislation. [Watch the press conference.](#)



### **VA Proposes New Presumptive Conditions for**

**Burn Pits:** VA is proposing a rule to add nine rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumptive conditions for particulate matter exposure from service in Southwest Asia. The VFW sees this as a step in the right direction to help veterans exposed to burn pits, but remains committed to passing legislation such as the *Honoring our PACT Act* and the *COST of War Act* to codify VA's presumptive process. [Read more.](#)



### **VA's Mission Statement Survey:**

In accordance with the Deborah Sampson section of the VFW-supported *Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020* that was passed last year, VA needs to engage with veterans and gain an understanding of their perception of VA's mission statement. As a result, VA recently released a survey asking for feedback on possible alternatives that are more inclusive. [Take the survey now](#) and share your ideas before March 11, 2022.



### **MIA Update:**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update and one new identification for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

- **Navy Chief Water Tender White, 40**, of Yorkville, Tennessee, 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 White. He will be buried on April 19, 2022, in Dyer, Tennessee. [Read about White.](#)

- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Eugene P. Chauvin, 25**, was assigned to the 95th Troop Carrier Squadron, 440th Troop Carrier Group. On Sep. 17, 1944, the C-47 Skytrain aircraft he was piloting was shot down over Belgium. The four-person crew, including Chauvin, and five paratroopers died in the crash. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending. [Read about Chauvin.](#)

[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](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).