



# ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



May 23, 2022



**VFW Commends Senators on PACT Act Deal:** The VFW commends the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee leadership following the [announcement](#) of a bipartisan deal on the *Honoring Our PACT Act*. "Today's announcement from Senators Tester and Moran is a strong show of good faith to the veteran community," said VFW National Commander Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic. The PACT Act passed the House in March and is expected to be brought to the Senate floor in the coming weeks. If the amended bill passes the Senate, it will head back to the House for lawmakers to vote again. House leadership pledged to immediately take up the amended legislation and deliver the bill to the president's desk for signature. "This is no time to ease up on our efforts to get the PACT Act passed in both houses of Congress. We will not rest until our nation's promise to address toxic exposure is signed into law," said Mihelcic. Staff from the VFW Washington Office have and will continue to visit Senate offices to garner support for the PACT Act.



**VFW ACTION ALERT**



**NEW Action Alert:** Contact your senators and tell them to vote **YES** when the *Honoring our PACT Act* is brought to the Senate floor. Toxic-exposed veterans cannot afford to wait any longer for health care and benefits. [We must act now!](#)



**Pass the PACT Act Rally DC:** On Saturday, May 28, at 1:00 p.m. EDT, veteran advocate Jon Stewart, VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic, and a coalition of veteran organizations will hold a “Pass the PACT Act Rally DC” at the Rolling to Remember demonstration to highlight the urgent need for the Senate to pass the *Honoring Our PACT Act*. Learn more about the [PACT Act Rally DC](#).



**Subcommittee Hearing on Pending Legislation:**

The House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing on several proposed bills. Housing stability, food insecurity, consumer protections, and rapid retraining programs were among the topics discussed. VFW National Legislative Associate Director Emily DeVito submitted a statement for the record. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).



**House Passes 19 Veteran Bills:** The House passed 19 veteran bills, including nine supported by the VFW. [H.R. 2724](#), [H.R. 5738](#), [H.R. 5754](#), [H.R. 6052](#), [H.R. 6064](#), and [H.R. 6604](#) now head to the Senate. One of the advanced bills — H.R. 5754, *Patient Advocate Tracker Act* — stemmed from a proposal by 2021 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow Cameron Zbikowski. Previously passed by the Senate, [S. 2102](#), [S. 2533](#), and [S. 2687](#) now head to the president’s desk for signature. [Read more](#).



**Memorial Day Weekend Activities in Washington:**

There are a host of activities and events planned for Memorial Day weekend in our nation’s capital on May 27-30. The VFW-supported and USAA-sponsored Poppy Wall, located near Constitution Gardens northeast of the Lincoln Memorial, will be open to the public on May 27-29 from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Those unable to visit the Poppy Wall can visit [online](#) to dedicate a digital poppy to a fallen loved one or as a gesture of appreciation for those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The VFW will also have a benefits information tent set up just east of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on May 27-30. On Monday, VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic will lay a wreath during the National Memorial Day Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery at 12 p.m. Other

Memorial Day weekend events include: a concert on Sunday evening at 8 p.m. that will air on PBS stations nationwide; Rolling to Remember that begins at 12 p.m. on Sunday and will travel from RFK Stadium past the National Mall to West Potomac Park; National Memorial Day ceremonies on Monday at the National WWII Memorial at 9 a.m., at the Vietnam War Memorial on the National Mall at 1:00 p.m., at the Military Women's Memorial at 3:00 p.m., and at the Korean War Veterans Memorial at 4 p.m. The National Memorial Day Parade begins at 2 p.m. on Monday along Constitution Avenue.



**MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced two burial updates and three new identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors are: -- **Army Pfc. Merl W. Holm, 22**, of Lake City, Iowa, was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Division. On Nov. 26, 1942, he was reportedly killed while his unit attempted to flank the enemy defensive line to Port Moresby in present day Papua New Guinea. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Holm was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. He will be buried in his hometown, on July 9, 2022. [Read about Holm.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Adolph "Leonard" Olenik, 19**, of Detroit, was assigned to the 345th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Olenik was serving as a gunner crashed as a result of anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, on a date yet to be determined. [Read about Olenik.](#)

-- **Marine Reserve Cpl. Jack S. Brown, 22**, was a member of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, which was part of the invasion force of the island of Saipan in a larger operation to secure the Mariana Islands. On July 8, 1944, he was reported as killed in action, and posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Following the war, his remains were declared non-recoverable. Interment services are pending. [Read about Brown.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. William O. Wood, 25**, was assigned to 328th Bombardment Squadron, 93rd Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Wood was a gunner crashed as a result of anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending. [Read about Wood.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. David M. Lewis, 20**, was assigned to 345th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Lewis was piloting crashed as a result of anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lewis.](#)

[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).