



# ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



March 27, 2023



**VA Budget Hearing:** The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing on VA's budget request for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Both Chairman Mike Bost (IL-12) and Ranking Member Mark Takano (CA-39) expressed the need for proper funding. VA Secretary Denis McDonough discussed some details of the budget request such as an increased focus on infrastructure and toxic exposure care. [Watch the hearing.](#)



**Military Recruiting Challenges Hearing:** The Senate Committee on Armed Services held a hearing on the recruiting challenges confronting the military. Recent DOD data revealed that only approximately nine percent of Americans between the ages of 16 and 21 are interested in serving. Factors such as a strong labor market, reduced high school access for military recruiters during the COVID-19 pandemic, fear of injury, death, or PTSD, and not wanting to leave families and friends were cited as contributing to the recruiting problem. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 16:04 mark.



**More Affordable Housing for Native American Veterans:** VA announced it has lowered the interest rate from 6% to 2.5% for the Native American Direct Loan (NADL) program, making housing more affordable for Native American veterans or veterans who are married to Native American non-veterans. Through the NADL program, direct loans are provided to help buy, build, or improve a home on trust land. By law, VA is authorized to provide direct loans only through the NADL program. However, VA is able to help all eligible veterans obtain housing through [VA-](#)

[backed home loans](#). The 2.5% interest rate was in effect as of March 13 and will be available for no more than 24 months. Native American veterans who are interested in the [NADL program](#) can contact an NADL coordinator by emailing [NADL@va.gov](mailto:NADL@va.gov) or calling 888.349.7541.



**MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced five burial updates 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 Tech. Sgt. John Holoka Jr., 25**, of Cresson, Pennsylvania, was assigned to the 844th Bombardment Squadron, 489th Bombardment Group, Eighth Air Force. On June 22, 1944, he was an engineer on a B-24H Liberator that was struck by anti-aircraft after a bombing raid on a German airfield in Saint-Cyr-l'École, near Versailles, France. The pilot was able to fly the damaged aircraft over the English coast, but then crashed in West Sussex, England. Holoka will be buried in Portage, Pennsylvania, on May 1, 2023. [Read about Holoka](#).

--**Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Francis V. Montemurro, 25**, of New York City, New York, was assigned to the 345th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator bomber on which Montemurro was the navigator was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and crashed during Operation Tidal Wave north of Bucharest, Romania. His remains were not identified following the war. He will be buried in San Diego, California, on June 2, 2023. [Read about Montemurro](#).

-- **Army Pvt. Myron E. Williams, 29**, of Dixon, Illinois, was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Hürtgen, Germany, in the Hürtgen Forest, when he was reported missing in action on Nov. 16, 1944. His body was unable to be recovered, and he was never reported as a prisoner of war. The War Department issued a presumptive finding of death on Nov. 17, 1945. He will be buried in Killeen, Texas, on a date yet to be determined. [Read about Williams](#).

-- **Army Sgt. Lawrence J. Robidoux, 22**, of Cumberland, Rhode Island, was a member of B Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action

on Nov. 27, 1950, after his unit's withdrawal from Ipsok in North Korea. Subsequent reports indicated he had been a prisoner of war and died in May 1951 at Prisoner of War Camp #5. He will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, on a date yet to be determined. [Read about Robidoux.](#)

--**Army Cpl. Delbert L. White, 20**, of Ottumwa, Iowa, was a member of D Company, 2nd Engineer (Combat) Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division. On Dec. 1, 1950, White and many other soldiers were captured by the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces as they attempted to block the enemy advances and allow the rest of 2nd Infantry Division to escape south. Following subsequent conflicting reports, the Army declared his date of death was March 18, 1951. He will be buried in his hometown on date yet to be determined. [Read about White.](#)

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