



ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



May 22, 2023



VFW Testifies Before Senate: VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray testified at a Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing to review VA's budget request for fiscal year 2024 and 2025 advance appropriations. "We urge this committee and the appropriations committee to look at the actual needs for infrastructure and provide VA the resources it needs instead of what it's asking for," said Murray. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 13:30 mark.



House Subcommittee Hearing on Military Transition: VFW National Security and Foreign Affairs Associate Director Brittany Dymond testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding the military Transition Assistance Program. She conveyed the critical importance of removing barriers for transitioning service members (TSMs) to the VA Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program. "Receiving expedited claims decisions means BDD participants are better able to minimize gaps in essential care like mental health counseling and medication management," said Dymond. Also discussed was the need for DOD to connect TSMs to community resources as required by law. The heightened suicide risk among new veterans can be mitigated by connecting them to their benefits and community-based organizations where they can find the social support and camaraderie that often is lost after leaving military service. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 19:43 mark.



PACT Act Implementation Hearing: The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on VA's implementation of the PACT Act. The committee covered issues related to VA's processing of PACT Act claims, automated decision technology, and communications to veterans about their benefits. VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray submitted a statement for the record outlining numerous observations VFW staff have made through assisting thousands of veterans with their claims. "In early 2023 the VFW launched www.pactactinfo.org to help guide veterans through the benefits process for free, with no strings attached. We have assisted with 2,500 claims for hypertension, more than 2,000 related to sinusitis/rhinitis, 1,800 on respiratory issues, and more than 1,800 gastrointestinal issues. While the burden of proof for service connection has been relaxed, hurdles still remain," Murray wrote. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 15:04 mark.



USAA Poppy Wall of Honor: In observance of Memorial Day, the VFW-supported and USAA-sponsored Poppy Wall will be available for viewing on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., May 26-28. The display will be situated between the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and the Korean War Veterans Memorial. Comprised of 645,000 poppies, it represents the number of service members since World War I who made the ultimate sacrifice. [Learn more](#) about dedicating a digital poppy or sharing a tribute in appreciation. For those who gave all, we remember.



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

- **Army Cpl. Joe A. Vinyard, 23**, of Loudon County, Tennessee, was assigned to Company A, 774th Tank Battalion, as a crewmember on an M4 Sherman tank. He went missing in December 1944 after his unit was engaged in battle with German forces. The War Department issued a presumptive finding of death in April 1946. He will be buried in Maryville, Tennessee, on a date yet to be determined. [Read about Vinyard.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Robert C. Elliott, 24**, of Plains, Kansas, was assigned to the 343rd Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the aircraft on which Elliot worked as an assistant engineer was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and crashed during Operation Tidal Wave. He will be buried in his hometown on Aug. 1, 2023. [Read about Elliott.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Willard H. Brinks, 24**, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Division. Brinks was reported as killed in action on Nov. 22, 1942. He will be buried in his hometown on May 19, 2023. [Read about Brinks.](#)

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