



# ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



September 30, 2024



**House Committee Oversight Hearing:** The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing titled *Everyday Heroes: Supporting the Veteran Caregiver Community*. In a statement submitted for the record, VFW National Legislative Associate Director Meggan Coleman commented on the selflessness of family members and friends who become caregivers to give their veterans the best quality of life. Ensuring caregivers have essential training, resources, and mental health coverage would reduce the barriers of burnout and economic hardship. The VFW strongly urges Congress to pass [H.R. 8371](#), *Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*, which would enhance and reform the delivery of services at VA by prioritizing veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors. [Read the testimony.](#)



**VFW Participates in Alternative Therapies Roundtable:** VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray took part in a roundtable regarding alternative therapies for various mental health conditions. The event was led by Reps. Derrick Van Orden and Morgan Luttrell, both of whom are VFW members. The discussion centered around different treatments such as cannabinoids, psychedelics, hyperbaric oxygen, and faith-based options. The VFW supports research for alternative therapies for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is grateful these members of Congress and fellow veterans are making it a priority. [Watch the roundtable.](#)



### **VFW Supports TAPS Gold Star Families Advocacy**

**Week:** The VFW Washington Office hosted the 2nd Annual Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Gold Star Families Advocacy Week Event. Together with partner veteran organizations, volunteers advocated for legislation to improve benefits and services for survivors. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan participated in meetings with members of Congress to show the VFW's strong support for [S.414](#) / [H.R.1083](#), *Caring for Survivors Act of 2023*, to extend CHAMPVA and TRICARE coverage for surviving children to age 26, and update the definition of surviving spouse. [Read more.](#)



### **Veterans Service Organizations Collaborate on Toxic Exposure Study:**

VFW Washington Office staff attended a joint Disabled American Veterans and Military Officers Association of America briefing about timeliness in identifying, cataloguing, and establishing presumptive conditions for adverse health cases attributed to environmental toxins. Their *Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans* report describes the years-long process to recognize toxic exposure related to an event. According to their research, veterans generally wait 34.1 years for the full suite of earned health care services and benefits to treat the effects of toxic exposures. The report also offers suggestions to overhaul the process and ensure prompt access to this lifesaving care. [Read the report](#), [learn more](#) about toxic exposure benefits, or find an [accredited representative](#) to assist in filing a claim.



### **VA Expands Tele-Emergency Care Options:**

VA has announced tele-emergency care (tele-EC) is now available nationwide, which is a service that aims to improve access to virtual emergency care options. Veterans enrolled in VA health care can now contact tele-EC via [VA Health Connect](#) by phone or the VA Health Chat app. They can also find contact information for [VA locations](#) in their local areas. [Learn more](#) about eligibility or how to apply for health care benefits.



**MIA Update: MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced 13 identifications and three burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Identifications:

- [World War II Army Air Forces Pvt. 1st Class David C. Hansen](#)
- [World War II Marine Corps Cpl. John E. Edwinson Jr.](#)
- [World War II Army Cpl. Malcolm S. Webb](#)
- [World War II Army Sgt. Norman H. Drewes](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Eugene J. Darrigan](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Donald W. Sheppick](#)
- [World War II Army Pvt. 1st Class Robert L. Bryant](#)
- [World War II Navy Pharmacist's Mate 3rd Class Gilmore V. Rix](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Loring E. Lord](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Sergeant Edward S. Kovaleski](#)
- [World War II Army Sgt. Howard L. Hasselkus](#)
- [Korean War Army Pvt. 1st Class Jack M. Cash](#)
- [Korean War Army Pvt. 1st Class William A. Wheeler](#)

Updates:

- [Vietnam War Marine Corps Capt. Ronald W. Forrester](#)
- [Korean War Army Cpl. Eriverto Ortiz](#)
- [World War II Army Pvt. 1st Class Charles R. Reiser](#)

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