



# ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



July 4, 2022



**VFW Remembers Woody Williams:** The VFW is mourning the loss of the last living WWII Medal of Honor recipient [Hershel “Woody” Williams](#), who passed away at the age of 98 years of age. After WWII, he continued to serve the veteran community through his work at VA, his nonprofit the Woody Williams Foundation, and his tireless advocacy efforts for Gold Star families. Williams was a Gold Legacy member of VFW Post 7048, which bears his name, located in Fairmont, West Virginia. “On behalf of the entire 1.5 million-member VFW family, our deepest condolences go out to Woody’s entire family, and we salute one of the last greatest of the ‘Greatest Generation,’” said VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic. [Read more.](#)



**Halt to VA’s Asset and Infrastructure Review Process:** The Independent Budget Veterans Service Organizations (IBVSOs) — the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — supported the *VA MISSION Act of 2018*, which established the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) process, including the independent AIR Commission. We have testified numerous times about our concerns with the AIR process and the need for oversight. Success would depend upon complete buy-in and full transparency. The IBVSOs believe the best course of action is to stand down the process rather than to proceed with a half-measured attempt at a major overhaul of VA’s infrastructure. While the AIR process appears over, it spotlighted the urgent need to prioritize VA facilities. This reenergized conversation cannot be allowed to crumble apart, like too many of the VA buildings this commission was meant to address.



**Fraud Alert Issued by VA:** The VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) has issued a [fraud alert](#) regarding VA being billed for care veterans did not receive. This alert advises veterans and their representatives to help detect health care fraud by carefully reviewing benefit explanations and bills they receive from VA. If you see potential evidence of fraud or have concerns about patient care, please contact the VA OIG office at [va.gov/oig/hotline](http://va.gov/oig/hotline) or 800.488.8244. [Read more.](#)



**Learn Where the VFW Stands on Legislation:** The National Legislative Service staff regularly testifies before Congress on behalf of our VFW members. Our testimonies cover issues that are critically important to veterans from all eras. While comprehensive toxic exposure legislation is currently our number one priority, we actively advocate on a wide array of issues concerning veterans' earned benefits, care options, and delivery. The VFW currently supports 171 veteran bills and opposes one pending before the 117th Congress. [View current legislation.](#)



**MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced three burial updates and eight new identifications 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:

-- **Navy Shopfitter 3rd Class Francis L. Hannon, 20**, of Middletown, Indiana, 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 Hannon. He will be buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl) in Honolulu, on Oct. 13, 2022. [Read about Hannon.](#)

-- **Navy Fire Controlman 3rd Class Robert T. Stout, 21**, of El Reno, Oklahoma, 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 Stout. He will be buried in Cottonwood, California, on a date yet to be determined. [Read about Stout.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. William O. Wood, 25**, of Valdosta, Georgia, 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. He will be buried in Tallahassee, Florida, on Aug. 1, 2022. [Read about Wood.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Robert L. Alexander, 27**, was assigned to 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division. On July 7, 1944, Alexander was killed when the Japanese general on Saipan ordered his forces into a mass suicide attack against the 105th's lines. Interment services are pending. [Read about Alexander.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. George B. Walker, 25**, was assigned to 369th Bombardment Squadron, 306th Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force. On Feb. 3, 1944, the B-17G Flying Fortress bomber on which he was serving as an engineer and turret gunner experienced general mechanical failure following anti-aircraft fire while part of a bombing mission near Oldenburg, Germany. While the crew bailed out over water, several were captured by German forces, including Walker who was sent to Stalag Luft 6, prisoner of war camp in Heydekrug, Germany. He died on April 28 when he was shot while trying to escape. Interment services are pending. [Read about Walker.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Worley D. Jacks, 21**, was assigned to 232nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Lichtenberg, France, when he was wounded and reported missing. With no body recovered and the Germans never reporting him as a prisoner of war, on Oct. 4, 1945, the War Department declared Jacks killed in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Jacks.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Francis P. Martin, 25**, was assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Lichtenberg, France, when he was wounded and reported missing. With no body recovered and the Germans never reporting him as a prisoner of war, on Jan. 17, 1946, the War

Department issued a finding of death. Interment services are pending. [Read about Martin.](#)

--**Marine Corps Sgt. Arthur B. Ervin, 22**, was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division. His unit was part of the invasion force when American forces participated in the battle for Saipan, which was part of a larger operation to secure the Mariana islands. On July 5, 1944, Ervin was shot and killed by a sniper while trying to assist a wounded comrade. His body was unable to be recovered due to the ongoing battle. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ervin.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Lowell D. Smith, 24**, was assigned to Company F, 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. On Jan. 21, 1945, he was part of a Browning Automatic Rifle squad when his company attacked German forces near Reipertswiller, France. Smith was missing following the unit withdrawal. In May that year, captured German records included a death report for the date he went missing. [Read about Smith.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Edward J. Reiter, 17**, was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on July 7, 1950, after his unit sustained heavy casualties while defending against the North Korean army near Ch'onan, South Korea. With no body or remains found, the Army declared him non-recoverable and issued a presumptive finding of death after the end of the war in January 1956. Interment services are pending. [Read about Reiter.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Donald M. Born, 19**, was assigned to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. On July 30, 1950, Born went missing while his unit was attacked by the North Korean People's Army near Chinju at the southern end of the Korean peninsula, but he was not officially reported missing until a month later. He was never listed as a prisoner of war, and the Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953. Interment services are pending. [Read about Born.](#)

[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).