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**1. VFW-Supported Vet Center Expansion Act Becomes Law:** Last week, the VFW-supported [H.R. 1812](#), the *Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act*, was signed into law. This law expands Vet Center counseling and related mental health services for veterans and service members of the National Guard, Reserve, or Coast Guard, who took part in drug interdictions or responded to national disasters or emergencies. Participating in these high-stress situations can have serious mental health consequences. Expanding access to Vet Centers will provide an opportunity for those who served in these situations to have access to the mental health services they earned and deserve.

**2. Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Bill Becomes Law:** Last week, [H.R. 2372](#), the *Veterans' Care Quality Transparency Act*, was signed into law. The law requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to assess suicide prevention and mental health services of non-VA entities who have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with VA. The GAO assessment will include the size of the catchment area, staffing structure, staff accreditations or licensures, program limitations, trackable outcomes, and breakdown of specific demographics, such as women veterans, minority veterans, and age and location of veterans.

**3. Legislative Update on Agent Orange Conditions:** On July 23, 2020, the Senate passed [S. 4049](#), the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021* (NDAA). The Senate NDAA contains a provision to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism to the list of presumptive conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange. The House-passed version of the NDAA, [H.R. 6395](#), does not contain this provision. The differences between the House and Senate versions of the NDAA will be reconciled by a conference committee comprised of members of both chambers, expected to be formed sometime next month. The VFW is fully committed to ensuring that the final NDAA adds these three conditions to the Agent Orange presumptive list. Stay tuned to the VFW Action Corps Weekly for updates and any possible VFW call-to-actions on this important legislation.

**4. Need Help With Voting?:** The general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020, is less than a week away. If you or anyone you know needs assistance with voting, please visit the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's website. The website has information on voting accessibility for disabled Americans, as well as other important topics such as voting by mail, in-person voting, and election security. [Learn more.](#)

**5. MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one new identification for a service member who has been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors is:

-- **Navy Fireman 1st Class Howard D. Hodges**, 20, was assigned to the battleship USS West Virginia, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS West Virginia sustained multiple torpedo hits, but timely counter-flooding measures taken by the crew prevented it from capsizing, and it came to rest on the shallow harbor floor. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 106 crewmen, including Hodges. Interment services are pending. [Read about Hodges.](#)

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