



# ACTION CORPS WEEKLY

**VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

April 25, 2022



**VFW Holds Toxic Exposure Press Event:** More than 120 people gathered outside the VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, to urge the Senate to pass the *Honoring our PACT Act*. “The cost of war must include the cost of taking care of our injured and sick veterans,” said VFW National Commander Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic to rousing applause from the crowd. “Every veteran that has been in harm’s way has earned the right to health care.” Featured speakers also included veteran advocate Jon Stewart, Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS), and representatives from Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Wounded Warrior Project, and Burn Pits 360. [Watch the video.](#)

**MilitaryTimes**

**Protecting Veterans from Claims Predators:** The VFW and Wounded Warrior Project have co-authored an op-ed for *Military Times* on how to protect our veterans from predatory claims practices. VA’s current process of applying for earned benefits can be confusing, and sadly some non-accredited businesses take advantage of the confusion and prey on vulnerable individuals. Veterans Service Organizations provide free assistance from VA-accredited representatives, and want to raise awareness of the fraudulent methods used by predators. [Read the op-ed.](#)



**DPAA Family Updates and Annual Briefings:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) conducts monthly updates for the families of American service members and annual government briefings on DPAA's worldwide mission. These meetings include formal presentations, question and answer sessions, and discussions between government officials and family members. Veterans Service Organizations are encouraged to attend. [Read more and register](#) or [view the Livestream archive](#).



**VA Provides Adoption and IVF Options:** The last week in April is National Infertility Awareness Week. Veterans who lost their ability to reproduce due to a service-connected disability may be eligible for [reimbursement of adoption expenses](#) or for in vitro fertilization (IVF) [through VA](#) or [community care](#). Infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services are also provided to veterans enrolled in VA health care regardless of service connection. Veterans interested in infertility services should contact their VA provider.



**MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced six burial updates and two 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 Seaman 1st Class David F. Tidball, 20**, of Independence, Iowa, 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 Tidball. He will be buried in his hometown on May 14, 2022. [Read about Tidball](#).
- **Army Pvt. Hillary Soileau, 23**, of Bunkie, Louisiana, was a member of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, when American forces went on the offensive to clear Guadalcanal of Japanese forces. Soileau was wounded on Jan. 14, 1943, during fighting on a group of hills nicknamed Galloping Horse. Following the battle, he could not be found. Soileau was declared

missing in action on Feb. 3, 1943, and officially declared killed in action on Dec. 13, 1945. He will be buried in Washington, Louisiana, on May 21, 2022.

[Read about Soileau.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Tceollyar Simmons, 18**, of Detroit, was assigned to the battleship USS California, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS California sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to catch fire and slowly flood. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 104 crewmen, including Simmons. He will be buried in Hacoda, Alabama, on June 14, 2022. [Read about Simmons.](#)

-- **Navy Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Everett R. Stewart, 22**, of Anderson, California, 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 Stewart. He will be buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl) in Honolulu, on June 18, 2022. [Read about Stewart.](#)

-- **Navy Musician 1st Class Joseph W. Hoffman, 24**, of Chillicothe, Ohio, 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 Hoffman. He will be buried on Aug. 26, 2022, but the location has yet to be determined. [Read about Hoffman.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Paul Mitchem, 20**, of Avondale, West Virginia, was a member of 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's advance near Ch'onan, South Korea. His body was not recovered because his unit was forced to retreat, and no remains found could be identified as Mitchem. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The date has yet to be determined. [Read about Mitchem.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Merl W. Holm, 22**, was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 126th Infantry Regiment,

32nd Infantry Division. On Nov. 26, 1942, he was reportedly killed while his unit attempted to flank the enemy defensive line to Port Moresby, in present day Papua New Guinea. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. Interment services are pending. [Read about Holm.](#)

--**Marine Corps Reserve Cpl. William R. Ragsdale, 23**, was assigned to Headquarters Company, 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. Ragsdale was initially reported as wounded, and later as deceased. Interment services are pending. [Read about Ragsdale.](#)

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