



ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



October 24, 2022



VA Mission Statement Survey: In accordance with the Deborah Sampson section of VFW-supported *Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020* that became law last year, VA needs to engage with veterans and gain an understanding of their perception of VA's mission statement. As a result, VA recently released a follow up to its March 2022 survey asking for feedback on possible alternatives that are more inclusive. [Take the survey now](#) and share your ideas before Oct. 29, 2022.



PSLF Waiver Deadline: The Department of Education (ED) is allowing student loan borrowers seeking financial relief through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program to submit a DD-214 to certify periods of eligible employment. Many individuals with outstanding federal student loans may be eligible for PSLF, including eligibility from time served on active duty. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ED is offering a limited-time waiver to allow borrowers to receive credit for past periods of repayment on loans that would otherwise not qualify. Individuals must have been working full time for a qualifying employer. This waiver is available through Oct. 31, 2022. [Learn more and check your eligibility.](#)



SVA Releases Annual Census: Student Veterans of America (SVA) has released a demographic survey to gather data on the needs of veterans, active-duty military, and their dependents. You do not have to currently be attending school or involved with an SVA chapter to take part. The VFW encourages as much participation as possible so we can use this data alongside SVA to best advocate for policies on education benefits for veterans. [Take the survey](#) before it closes Nov. 1, 2022.



President Signs Veterans Legislation into Law: President Biden signed into law two VFW-supported bills. The [Solid Start Act](#) requires the VA to reach out to newly separated veterans three times within their first year of separation to check in and help connect them to VA programs and benefits. It is open to all newly separated veterans regardless the type or characterization of service. Finally, [Supporting Families of the Fallen Act](#) will increase the automatic maximum coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and Veterans' Group Life Insurance from \$400,000.00 to \$500,000.00.



VA Closes Gap for LGBTQ+ Veterans and Survivors: The VA will now allow certain survivors of LGBTQ+ veterans to apply for survivor benefits, such as Survivors Pension or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Due to past bans on same-sex marriages and previous VA marriage requirements, many survivors of LGBTQ+ veterans were not eligible for survivor benefits. Surviving spouses can now establish they had a “marriage-type” relationship by providing documents such as joint banking statements, joint purchase of a house, tax returns, insurance forms, lay statements, and more. These benefits are not retroactive, but those eligible who apply in the next year will receive benefits backdated to Oct. 11, 2022. Contact a [VFW Service Officer](#) for assistance filing for benefits. [Learn more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced four burial updates 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:

-- **Army Cpl. David N. Defibaugh, 18**, of Duncansville, Pennsylvania was assigned to C Company, 3rd Engineer Combat Battalion, 24th Infantry Division. He went missing in action on July 20, 1950, while his unit was forced to retreat near the vicinity of Taejon, South Korea. Following the war, his remains could not be recovered and there is no evidence that he was a prisoner of war. The Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953. Defibaugh will be buried in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on Nov. 4, 2022. [Read about Defibaugh.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. William M. Zoellick, 18**, of Des Plaines, Illinois, was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He was captured on Nov. 30, 1950, after his unit was attacked by the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces. Zoellick was reported to have been a POW in Camp #1, and died on Feb. 27, 1951. He will be buried in Belvidere, Illinois, on Nov. 10, 2022. [Read about Zoellick.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Sgt. Zelwood A. Gravlin, 21**, was assigned to 343rd Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Gravlin was the armorer-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 Avon, Maine, on Nov. 11, 2022. [Read about Gravlin.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Floyd F. Clifford, 20**, of Mulvane, Kansas, 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 Clifford. He will be buried in Douglas, Kansas, on May 2, 2023. [Read about Clifford.](#)

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