



# ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



March 25, 2024



## **House Subcommittee Hearing on Pending Legislation:**

VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan testified at a hearing on pending legislation before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. Among the proposals was the expansion of eligibility for the VA Home Loan Guaranty program to members of the National Guard and Reserves who have performed active duty for training, and the addition of co-op housing units to this program. Keenan also expressed support for key provisions of proposed legislation to improve service member transition. She stated, "The VFW strongly supports the provisions that would improve the transition to VA, including requiring accredited claims representatives be included in the Transition Assistance Program. This would enable service members to have a point of contact to begin their pre-separation claim. We also support the bill's inclusion of pre-enrollment in VA medical care during transition. This would provide veterans with their earned benefits the day they leave the military." [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 12:27 mark.



## **VFW Testimony on VA Notice Letters:**

VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli testified at a hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs on the need for simplifying VA's disability claims and appeals letters. In his written testimony, Figlioli explained that like the Veterans Benefits Administration, the Board of Veterans' Appeals also has its challenges with decision notices and explanations that can be too long and unclear. "Letters received by appellants are redundant in nature, generic in scope, and missing critical

information specific to the appeal,” he wrote. In his conclusion he offered, “The VFW is always willing to lend our assistance in making the claims process more seamless and accessible for all veterans, family members, and survivors. We are committed to working with VA across all departments and business lines to continue to develop notifications with a commonsense approach.” [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 11:16 mark.



**VFW Meets with Senior Enlisted Advisor:** In his first visit since becoming the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, SEAC Troy E. Black joined VFW Washington Office directors for a candid conversation about recruiting challenges, the meaning of service, transition, and veterans’ issues. SEAC Black assumed his current post following his service as the 19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.



**VFW Welcomes DPAA Principal Deputy Director:** Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Principal Deputy Director Fern Sumpter Winbush provided a briefing on the status of the DPAA mission to VFW National Adjutant General Dan West and Kansas City Headquarters staff. Winbush emphasized the valued partnership between the two organizations. This meeting was one of several events leading up to the 2024 Kansas City Family Member Update, a periodic event designed to keep families of missing Americans informed about the mission, and to share information about their specific losses. *(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Blake Gonzales)*



**MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced ten burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:  
-- **Army Sgt. Richard G. Hammond, 24**, of Northwood, New Hampshire, was assigned to Company A, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion. He went missing in action on Feb. 17, 1943. With no further evidence found, he was declared non-recoverable on June 1, 1949. He will be buried in his hometown on May 27, 2024. [Read about Hammond.](#)

-- **Pvt. Harold O. Poulter, 23**, of Charleston, Illinois, was assigned to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 318th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division. He was reported killed in action on Feb. 8, 1945. He will be buried in Lerna, Illinois, on June 4, 2024. [Read about Poulter.](#)

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Michael Malek, 17**, of Chicago, Illinois, 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. He was among 429 crewmen killed that day. He will be buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), Honolulu, Hawaii, on June 6, 2024. [Read about Malek.](#)

-- **Army Air Force 1st Lt. Richard J. Kasten, 24**, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, was assigned to the 68th Bombardment Squadron, 44th Bombardment Group. He was killed in action on Jan. 21, 1944. He will be buried in Battle Creek, Michigan, on a date to be determined. [Read about Kasten.](#)

-- **Army Air Force 2nd Lt. Robert L. E. Porter, 23**, of Chicago, Illinois, was assigned to the 703rd Bombardment Squadron, 445th Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force. He was killed in action on Feb. 24, 1944. He will be buried in Elmwood, Illinois, on a date to be determined. [Read about Porter.](#)

-- **Army Cpl. Julius G. Wolfe, 20**, of Liberal, Missouri, was assigned to Company B, 149th Engineer Combat Battalion. He was killed in action en route to Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. He will be buried in his hometown on a date to be determined. [Read about Wolfe.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Jackson M. Barbour, 19**, of Memphis, Tennessee, was assigned to the 401st Bombardment Squadron, 91st Bombardment Group, Eighth Air Force. He went missing in action on Dec. 20, 1942, and the War Department issued a finding of death on Dec. 20, 1943. He will be buried in his hometown on a date to be determined. [Read about Barbour.](#)

-- **Army Pfc. Noah C. Reeves, 26**, of Moulton, Alabama, was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 8th Infantry Division. He was reported killed in action on Dec. 6, 1944, and declared non-recoverable in November 1951. He will be buried on a date and location yet to be determined. [Read about Reeves.](#)

-- **Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Paul F. Eshelman Jr., 21**, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was assigned to

the 344th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. He was killed in action on Aug. 1, 1943. He will be buried in Allison Park, Pennsylvania, on a date to be determined.

[Read about Eshelman.](#)

-- **Army Corporal Ray K. Lilly, 18**, of Matoaka, West Virginia, was a member of L Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He went missing in action on Nov. 2, 1950, and died while a prisoner of war in January or February 1951. He will be buried in Princeton, West Virginia, on a date to be determined. [Read about Lilly.](#)

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