



# ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



October 28, 2024



**New VFW Health Care Survey:** The VFW has developed a new survey to evaluate your health and your experiences navigating health care. Your feedback is vital to our advocacy efforts and to compile a report on this important topic. Help the VFW hold VA and Congress accountable by taking this short survey no matter where you receive care. [Take the survey.](#)



**VFW, SVA Announce 2024/2025 Student Veteran Fellowship Class:** The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) have selected six student veterans for the 2024/2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. In its 11th year, the fellowship is an academic experience during which students advocate for a policy proposal that addresses a legislative issue important to both organizations. The issue of focus for this class is parity of GI Bill benefits for members of the National Guard and Reserve. The fellows have the opportunity to attend SVA's National Conference in January and the VFW's Washington Conference in March. The 2024/2025 legislative fellows are:

- Jose Ayon, Army veteran, University of Southern California
- Jennifer Ross, Air Force veteran, Cornell University
- Noah Sorseth, Army veteran, George Fox University
- Casey Stege, Army veteran, Baylor University
- Terry Traylor, Marine Corps veteran, North Dakota State University
- Polina Washington, Army veteran, The University of Texas at Austin



### **President Signs Veteran Education Bill Into Law:**

President Biden has signed VFW-supported [S.656](#), *Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023*, into law. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan provided testimony on this legislation to both the [House](#) and [Senate](#). To address the nationwide shortage of commercial truck drivers, this law will reduce unnecessary red tape and allow veterans to use their GI Bill benefits at more commercial driver license (CDL) schools. Prior to now, certain for-profit CDL schools with programs already approved by VA were restricted from accepting the GI Bill at newly established branches for a period of up to two years. Allowing new branches of VA-approved schools to receive education benefits will ensure veterans can attend these programs as soon as they are offered. [Read more.](#)



**In Case You Missed It:** The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. An important VFW legislative priority, S.2888 / H.R.3933, *TAP Promotion Act*, is currently in the House version (Section 563) only. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition, and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide. [Tell Congress](#) to keep the *TAP Promotion Act* in the final version of the defense bill to make permanent VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives in TAP classes.



**VA Expands Gravesite Benefit:** An outer burial receptacle (OBR) is typically placed in a gravesite before a casket is lowered. This contributes to safe and well-maintained cemeteries by preventing the sinking of headstones and the surrounding soil. VA already furnishes OBRs for casketed burials in national cemeteries, but beginning on Nov. 9, 2024, it will implement a new authority to provide OBRs in VA grant-funded cemeteries. Eligible beneficiaries may apply for a monetary allowance for OBRs that are privately purchased or provided by a grant-funded cemetery if the OBR is placed at the time of interment. [Read more](#) about this benefit expansion.



**Korean War MIA Milestone:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) marked the identification of the 700th missing personnel from the Korean War. The achievement is a significant milestone for the agency which has increased identifications through several strategic initiatives including technological and process improvements, the use of multi-disciplinary teams, DNA analysis, and prioritizing the disinterment of remains of service members buried as "unknowns" in cemeteries. In the first quarter of 2024, DPAA identified 21 individuals, including 17 from World War II, three from the Korean War, and one from the Vietnam War. [Read more.](#)



**MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced four identifications and one burial update for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam War.

Identifications:

- [World War II Army Pvt. 1st Class Gordon N. Larson](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. William W. Bradner](#)
- [Korean War Army Cpl. John Brooks Miller](#)
- [Vietnam Army Warrant Officer Albert R. Trudeau](#)

Update:

- [World War II Army Tech Sgt. Thomas O. Moss](#)

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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).