



ACTION CORPUS WEEKLY



January 13, 2025



VFW 2025 Priority Goals: The 119th Congress is now in session. Fortunately, the *Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act* was passed and signed into law in the final days of the previous Congress. This bipartisan, bicameral legislative package was a significant and long overdue victory for transitioning service members, veterans, caretakers, and survivors. However, there was much unfinished work on other important legislation. The [VFW 2025 Priority Goals](#) include many issues that still need to be addressed. We will continue to advocate diligently to ensure the newly seated Congress provides the resources and care our nation's veterans and their families have earned and deserve.



Accepting Nominations for VFW Volunteer

Service Award: Nominations for VFW's Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) of the Year award are open until Jan. 27, 2025. Nominees must participate in VAVS assignments, serving as regularly scheduled volunteers. Contact your VFW National VAVS Representative at vavs@vfw.org for more information.



Veterans May be Eligible for Additional Education

Benefits: VA announced that it will begin authorizing additional education benefits resulting from the April 2024 *Rudisill v. McDonough* Supreme Court decision. The court ruled that veterans who served at least two periods of service — one that qualified for the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and another that qualified for the Post-9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) — may be able to receive additional GI Bill benefits up to 48 months instead of the previous limit of 36 months. Prior to the

Supreme Court's decision, though eligible for both benefits, beneficiaries using their PGIB benefits had to forfeit using any remaining MGIB benefits, even when eligibility was based on separate periods of service. Additionally, beneficiaries who previously used MGIB had their months of entitlement for PGIB limited to the number of remaining MGIB months of entitlement. Approximately 1,040,000 individuals with at least two periods of service may be impacted by these changes. [Learn more.](#)



VA Establishes Additional Presumptive Service Connections: As of Jan. 2, 2025, VA has established presumptive service connections from exposure to particulate matter 2.5 for urinary bladder, ureter, and related genitourinary cancers. Eligible veterans must have served on active military, naval, air, or space service in Somalia or the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after Aug. 2, 1990; or in Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, or Yemen on or after Sept. 11, 2001. This interim final rule will ease the evidentiary burden for VA disability compensation claimants with these conditions. [Read more](#) or find an [accredited representative](#) for claims assistance.



Medal of Honor Presented to Army Soldiers: President Biden recognized seven Army soldiers from the Korean and Vietnam Wars, emphasizing their heroic actions that went above and beyond the call of duty. Five soldiers of the Korean War and one soldier from the Vietnam War were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor. One Vietnam veteran was presented with the award in person. This recognition is part of an ongoing effort initiated in 2021 by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin to review military decorations awarded to minority veterans, aiming to ensure that their actions were properly acknowledged. [Read more.](#)



VFW Attends SVA NatCon 2025: VFW members were recognized for their outstanding commitment to the student veteran community during the Student Veterans of America (SVA) 17th Annual National Conference (NatCon), held this year in Colorado Springs, Colorado. VFW accredited service officers, led by VFW National Veterans Service Assistant Director of Field Operations Cindy Noel, assisted hundreds of student veterans at a claims clinic on site. VFW National Legislative Associate Director Joe Grassi participated in the event's Meet Your Veteran and Military Service Organizations panel discussion. VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan addressed the conference's general session noting, "Even though I wear this hat and these ribbons, I constantly get asked if it was my father or husband who served." She concluded her remarks by saying, "For all you student veterans out there who no longer wear the uniform, for those who aren't always seen as "real" veterans, know that your voices need to be heard and your stories need to be told, even to Congress."

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows for the 2024-2025 class 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



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced nine identifications and six burial updates 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. Leonard R. J. Jackson](#)
- [World War II Navy Mess Attendant 3rd Class Neil D. Frye](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum](#)

- [World War II Army Air Forces Pvt. Herbert E. McLaughlin](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces 1st Lt. George F. Bradbury](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. John H. Mann](#)
- [World War II Army Tech. Sgt. Joseph R. Moore](#)
- [Korean War Army Master Sgt. Luther Grace](#)
- [Vietnam War Air Force Lt. Col. Donald W. Downing](#)

Updates:

- [World War II Marine Corps Sgt. Robert F. Van Heck, Illinois](#)
- [Korean War Army Pfc. Arthur A. Clifton, Texas](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Tech4 Lloyd R. Bruntmyer, California](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Hubert Yeary, Virginia](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Pvt. 1st Class David C. Hansen, Wisconsin](#)
- [Korean War Army Pfc. James C. Bowman, West Virginia](#)

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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.