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**VFW WASHINGTON WEEKLY**  
**August 23, 2013**

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**1. Take Action on DOD Budget:** With less than two weeks remaining before Congress returns to Washington, now is the time for all VFW members and supporters to let your congressional delegations know where you stand on DOD budget cuts. Add your voice to the thousands of messages already sent to Congress from voting constituents in every congressional district and state across the country. Tell Congress that you stand with the VFW when we demand a budget agreement that will not gut our nation's military or put service members or national security interests at risk. It is the responsibility of all lawmakers to do the job they were elected to do. Urge them to pass a responsible budget agreement before the new fiscal year begins on Oct. 1. Take Action Today by clicking here: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/issues/alert/?alertid=62796221>.

**2. Military Eligibility Shrinking:** The VFW Washington Office received a briefing at the Pentagon this week about an Army in transition after 12 years of nonstop war, an ongoing budget battle, and the fact that America and her allies will still need a strong and flexible Army after our forces exit Afghanistan in 2014. Approximately 130,000 soldiers separate from the Army annually, and even though budget decisions have yet to decide how much smaller the future Army will be, recruiters are facing one harsh reality today: The pool of eligible 17 to 24-year-old recruits is shrinking on a national scale. There are 33.1 million Americans aged 17 to 24, according to the 2012 U.S. Census, but according to the Army, only 7.7 million were eligible to join the Army. The three-fourths ruled ineligible were principally due to health, medical and/or aptitude reasons, which means military recruiters have to compete with industry as well as colleges and universities for America's top youth.

**3. DOD Caregiver Resources Guide:** The Defense Department's Office of Warrior Care has compiled a Caregiver Resource Directory specifically for the caregivers of recovering service members. It includes contact information on more than 300 supportive government and non-profit organizations, to include the VFW. The directory is sorted by the most common, everyday needs, and is available in print and downloadable electronic-versions. The e-version can be found at <http://warriorcare.dodlive.mil/files/2013/08/Caregiver-Directory-Printer-Friendly-8-5-x-11.pdf>. To provide feedback on the Caregiver Resource Directory, or to request a printed copy of the directory, please e-mail [info@nrd.gov](mailto:info@nrd.gov).

**4. WWII Marine Identified:** The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains belonging to Marine Corps Pfc. Manley F. Winkley, 20, of Indianapolis. In November 1943, Winkley landed on the Pacific island of Tarawa as a member of the Marine Corps 2nd Division. After several days of intense fighting, Winkley would be reported as one of approximately 1,000 Marines killed-in-action. In the immediate aftermath of the battle, many U.S. casualties were buried in battlefield cemeteries, a number of which could not be relocated after the war. Read more about Winkley's recovery at [http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/news/news\\_releases/](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/news/news_releases/).

**As always, we want to share your advocacy stories on the VFW Capitol Hill blog. To share your stories, either fill out our online form by clicking here, <http://www.vfw.org/Forms/Capitol-Hill-Blog-Submissions/>, or simply email photos and stories directly to [vfwac@vfw.org](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).**

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