

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Department of Wisconsin

Legislative Bulletin – December 2019/January 2020

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As a follow-up to the interest and requests I received regarding my October bulletin on Burn Pits, I am including Congressional Legislator contact information with this bulletin to assist members who wish to get in touch with their legislators regarding this important issue. This may be especially useful for those who do not have or use computers, so please copy and share this reference sheet with your fellow Auxiliary members and encourage them to call or write to their Congressional Legislators.

Lawmakers Introduced Bipartisan Legislation To Bring Wisconsin Missing-In-Action Service Members Home

More than 1,500 Wisconsin service members are still Missing-In-Action since World War II. On September 18, 2019, a bipartisan group of legislators introduced **AB 452** – a bill that would provide funds to find and repatriate MIAs from our state. If approved, the state would pay \$180,000 annually to the University of Wisconsin MIA Recovery and Identification Project, which has recovered the remains of three service members killed in Europe in WWII. Those recovered were from other states, but the UW group will begin focusing on finding and bringing Wisconsin MIAs home. The funding would help the group conduct missions to find one to three MIAs each year, as well as provide closure to families who have been waiting all these years.

Wisconsin is the first state to undertake such a project and it is hoped that other states will follow suit.

On October 29th, the WI Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs held an executive session on **AB 75** – relating to “**Local Regulation of Honorary Firearm Discharges.**” This bill prevents local municipalities from restricting honorary discharges, which use blanks, for current and former members of the military, law enforcement and fire departments, or of military honors provided at a cemetery on Memorial Day or Veterans Day or at a Veterans memorial site. In other words, city and town governments will not be able to ban the firing of honorary rifle salutes at funerals for military, police and fire department members, or at memorial sites. Thus far, the bill passed in committee with unanimous support.

Bill **HR 4194** – “**National Suicide Hotline Designation Act**” has been introduced into the House and the Senate. The bill would direct the Federal Communications Commission to designate 9–8–8 as the universal telephone number for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system, which incorporates the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line. The current suicide crisis lines are 10-digits, which may discourage or act as a barrier to Americans in crisis seeking support. More to come.

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