



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY



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September 7, 2012

Fall Legislative Conference to Convene

VFW leaders from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will be in town next week to urge their elected members to Congress to ***Finish Strong for Veterans***. Building on several critical issues remaining in the 112th Congress, VFW members will ask them to protect VA and DoD from across-the-board sequestration cuts, enhance military transition issues, improve veteran employment, education and job creation opportunities, and protect military healthcare and retirement benefits. As a part of the conference, VFW Legislative Committee members will also discuss and vote on VFW's priority goals for the upcoming year. Also in town will be VFW Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton, Senior Vice Bill Thien and Junior Vice John Stroud, who will meet with student veterans and wounded warriors, as well as senior officials in the Defense POW/MIA Office, Reserve Affairs, and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Check our [blog](#) next week for coverage.

VFW Attends Democratic Convention

The VFW legislative staff was on hand at the Democratic National Convention this week to speak with delegates, listen to keynote speakers, and sit in on a Veterans and Military Families Council meetings as part of a three-day event that culminated with an arena-wide "thank you" to the troops. As the convention season comes to a close, we will continue to focus our attention on how both parties plan to address critical issues like veterans' employment, suicide, military downsizing and the VA claims backlog. We want to ensure the voice of veterans, service members and their families remains a key priority during Campaign 2012. To read all our blog postings from both the RNC and DNC, [click here](#).

Stop Loss Retroactive Pay Deadline is Oct. 21

The deadline to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay has been re-instated and extended to October 21, 2012. Service members and veterans whose military service was involuntarily extended under the "Stop Loss" program between the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Sept. 30, 2009, are eligible for special retroactive pay for the hardships the involuntary extensions caused. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service to receive \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status. Because the majority of those

eligible had separated from the military, many eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries are not aware of the benefit. [Find out more.](#)

Registry to Provide Japan Response Radiation Info

They say no U.S. Defense Department personnel or families were exposed to radiation following last year's violent earthquake and subsequent tsunami off the coast of Japan that caused extensive damage to the Fukushima nuclear power plant. But erring on the side of safety, DOD is now building an Operation Tomodachi registry for the 70,000 U.S. service members, family members, DOD civilians and DOD contractors who were in Japan from March 12 to May 11, 2011, as well as some 4,000 U.S. disaster responders. [Read more.](#)

Proof of Payment Required for Overseas TRICARE Claims

Since Sept. 1, 2012, TRICARE beneficiaries must now send proof of payment with all overseas medical claims, including claims for care received when traveling overseas. [Read more.](#)

National Suicide Prevention Month

September is National Suicide Prevention Month and VA is highlighting their Veterans Crisis Line as an important reminder that you can make a difference in the life of a veteran. VA is asking organizations and individuals across the country to educate their communities to raise awareness about the confidential support available on their Veterans Crisis Line. Since its launch in 2007, the crisis line has answered more than 640,000 calls and made more than 23,000 life-saving rescues. [Learn more](#) about suicide risk and the toll-free crisis line.

Three Korean War MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains of three soldiers who had been missing in action since the Korean War. Identified are:

- Army Pfc. Casimir F. Walczak, 18, of Harvey, Ill. On Aug. 17, 1950, Walczak and B Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, came under attack as they took a hill near the town of Waegwan, South Korea. Walczak was reported missing in action after the battle.
- Army Master Sgt. Clifford L. Ryan, 27, of Muscatine, Iowa. On Nov. 1, 1950, Ryan's unit, the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, were forced to make a fighting withdrawal after Chinese attacked their defensive positions along the Kuryong River in North Korea. Almost 600 men, including Ryan, were reported missing or killed in action following the battle.
- Army Cpl. Francis J. Reimer, 19, of St. Cloud, Minn. In late November 1950, Reimer and elements of the 31st Regimental Combat Team, known as "Task Force Faith," were advancing along the eastern banks of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea when they came under attack. Reimer was declared missing during a fighting withdrawal.

[Read more](#) about their individual stories.

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