



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY



alt=Arrow ">

July 12, 2013

[Post on Facebook](#)

The VFW Testifies at Joint Economic Hearing on Vet Employment

This week the VFW testified before the House and Senate Joint Economic Committee on the current employment situation for veterans. The Joint Economic Committee is a bicameral committee equally comprised of Republicans and Democrats charged with studying the U.S. economy, and Wednesday's hearing was the committee's first since 9/11 that specifically addressed veteran unemployment. VFW Deputy Legislative Director Ryan Gallucci presented the VFW's thoughts on issues like military transition, civilian licensing and credentialing, and higher education, alongside leaders from the Texas Veterans Commission and Xcel Energy, a top veterans' employer. [Learn more](#) about the hearing and view an archived webcast.

The VFW Testified on House Healthcare Bills

On Tuesday the VFW testified before the House VA Health Subcommittee on a series of pending veterans' healthcare related bills. Bills of particular interest included the Veterans Transportation Service Act which would provide transportation to seriously disabled vets for VA rehabilitation, examination, treatment, and counseling; the Safe Housing for Homeless Veterans Act which would require that veterans' transitional housing facilities meet local building codes; and the Tinnitus Research and Treatment Act which would prioritize the study of tinnitus by VA. All the bills now move to subcommittee mark-up, which your VFW will watch closely. To view a full list of witnesses, read their prepared remarks, and watch an archived webcast of the hearing, [click here](#).

White House Kicks Off Mental Health Summit

The VFW was on hand yesterday as the White House announced its upcoming veterans and military mental health summit. The summit looks to bring together mental health professionals, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), Military Service Organizations (MSOs), military family organizations, and representatives from DoD and VA to discuss how to better serve veterans and service members in regards to mental health. Denis McDonough, White House Chief of Staff, provided opening remarks on the importance of participation in the upcoming summits,

acknowledging that mental health services within VHA have risen in the past seven years. He also discussed partnerships with DoD and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration alongside VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. The White House and VA are asking for support from communities, VSOs, MSOs and others to make the summit successful. Kick off for the summit will be July 24 and will run through September 15, 2013. More information can be found on the [White House website](#) or by visiting the [VA website](#).

House Armed Services/VA Committees Discuss Transition Issues

The House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs' Committees held a rare joint hearing this week to discuss efforts to ease the transitioning process for service members. The hearing brought together the committees who often collaborate on issues in which both have authority to make change. The main topic discussed was the status of a single, joint integrated electronic health record (IEHR). Committee members expressed frustration with the progress on the system and its effect on the ongoing backlog of disability claims. Witnesses included leaders from both VA and DOD in the areas of IT, health, personnel and benefits. Discussion centered on implementation and increased accountability and oversight within both Departments and a sense of urgency to get a system in place as more and more service men and women leave the military. VA Committee Chairman Jeff Miller and Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon both commented that they are tired of hearing excuses from both departments every year as to why it's taking so long to get the project finished. The House Armed Services Committee has included an amendment in their annual defense authorization bill mandating completion of an integrated health record by October 2016. The VFW will continue to monitor progress on all aspects of the transitioning process and the IEHR and will keep our readers updated. For complete statements by all the witnesses and the recorded webcast of the hearing, [click here](#).

VA Releases Second Women Veterans Sourcebook

The Department of Veterans Affairs has released Volume 2 of their Women Veterans Sourcebook. Some details:

- Healthcare Usage: The number of women VA healthcare nearly doubled over the past decade, from 175,698 in fiscal year 2001 to 316,903 in FY10. Women veterans now comprise 6% of VA patients. They also use outpatient care more than men.
- Age Distribution: A decade ago, the age distribution of women veterans showed two peaks, at ages 44 and 77. In FY10, a third peak appeared, at age 27. In FY10, 42% of women veteran patients were 18-44 years old, 45% were 45-64 years old, and 13% were older than 65.
- Residence: More women veterans resided in urban areas than rural areas in FY10 (urban 64%; rural 36%). The 78-page sourcebook is now available in PDF format on the [VA website](#).

Salute the Korean War 60th

VFW Posts nationwide can help commemorate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the armistice by hosting a "Pancakes for Patriots"-type event on July 27 to salute the service and sacrifices made by so many of our VFW members and their families. The 10 a.m. (Eastern) ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial will be carried live on the national networks, with coverage of pre-ceremony events beginning as early as 8 a.m. on the Pentagon Channel, as well as stream live on their [website](#). The Korean War Commemoration Committee is especially interested in VFW Posts hosting the breakfast events in Washington, D.C.; the Hampton Roads area of Virginia; La Crosse, Wis.; and in Austin, Birmingham, Louisville, Minneapolis, Nashville, San Antonio and Tucson. A breakfast planning guide is on the [VFW website](#). [Learn more](#) about the 60th anniversary.

Every Name Needs a Photo

“Call for Photos” is a national campaign by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation to collect at least one photograph of all 58,000 men and women whose names are inscribed on The Wall. To date, only 26,000 individual photographs have been submitted for display in the new Education Center at The Wall, as well as online on The Virtual Wall. For more information or to submit photos, [click here](#).

Vietnam MIA Identified

The Defense POW/MIA Office has announced the identification of remains belonging to Air Force Maj. Larry J. Hanley, 26, of Walla Walla, Washington. On Nov. 4, 1969, Hanley was attacking an enemy anti-aircraft position when the F-105D Thunderchief he was piloting crashed in Khammouan Province, Laos. The crash location was unknown because his wingman and a forward air controller did not see the crash. [Read more](#) about his recovery.

As always, we want to share your advocacy stories on the VFW Capitol Hill blog. To share your stories, [fill out our online form](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

Was this *Washington Weekly* forwarded to you by a friend? [Sign up](#) to get your own free issue each week.



[Find a Post](#) | [Contribute](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Tell A Friend](#)
© 2001 - 2013. All rights reserved.