



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.**

# WASHINGTON WEEKLY



**November 16, 2012**

## **COLA Passes Senate**

Returning to work this week, the Senate quickly passed a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for VA. The 1.7 percent increase affects VA compensation for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. The COLA bill ties the rate for veterans' COLA to the increase in Social Security compensation, which is determined each year by the consumer price index (CPI). The House passed their version in July. The President is expected to sign the bill soon. The increase in benefits for 3.9 million veterans and their families will take effect December 1, 2012. Since benefits are paid retroactively, the first check to reflect the increase is due on or about January 1, 2013. For more on the COLA bill, visit our [Capitol Hill blog](#).

## **House Committee Discusses Employment Initiatives**

The House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing to discuss ongoing veterans' employment initiatives. The committee members asked representatives from VA and the Department of Labor to evaluate their programs. Most of the hearing focused on persistent high unemployment among Iraq and Afghanistan-era veterans, the VA's implementation of the new Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) and the Department of Labor's goal to refine the roles of Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives. The VFW will continue to monitor and advocate for comprehensive veterans' employment solutions and hold agencies accountable for the programs they have implemented to serve our nation's heroes. For complete coverage of the hearing, [click here](#).

## **Commander Hamilton's Veterans Day in DC**

This weekend, VFW Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Stroud were in Washington, D.C., for national Veterans Day observances and the 237th Marine Corps birthday. To see highlights from Commander Hamilton's visit, including the White House Veterans Day breakfast and ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, [click here](#).

## **New Military Family Survey Begins**

The 2013 Military Family Lifestyle Survey is now available online for veterans, service members

and their families. The survey is open through December 3 and should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete, depending on your responses. Go to the [Blue Star Families website](#) to participate.

### Two Korean War MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identifications of remains belonging to two Korean War soldiers. Returned home are:

- Army Sgt. Stanley W. Bear, 19, of Greenup, Ky. On Sept. 4, 1950, Bear would be reported as missing after battling enemy forces near Haman, South Korea. He was assigned to F Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. Unidentifiable remains would eventually be recovered and interred as an “unknown” in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.
- Army Cpl. Elmer C. Kidd, 22, of Seneca Falls, N.Y. In late November 1950, Kidd and his unit, the 31st Regimental Combat Team, were advancing along the eastern banks of the Chosin Reservoir, in North Korea, when they were attacked by a massive enemy force. Kidd would be reported missing after a fighting withdrawal to positions south of the reservoir.

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

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