



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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VFW Statement on Budget Agreement

VFW National Commander Bill Thien said Wednesday's compromise to reopen the government was appreciated, but the short-term funding package brings little assurance to America's veteran and military communities that what just ended won't happen again in three months. The VFW once again calls on Congress to prepare and pass a VA and Defense Department budget that is long-term, forward focused, and designed to properly care for those who return home wounded, ill or injured, as well as to meet and defeat all current and future threats to our nation. The VFW also wants an end to the mandatory sequester that continues to impact readiness across all the services. "Our nation's 22 million veterans, 2.3 million service members and all their families have risked everything for this country," said the Chief. "We demand that same commitment from our elected leaders in Washington." [Read](#) his full statement. To voice your opinion on the budget debate and take action, [click here](#).

VA Benefits Paid on Time

Now that appropriations have been enacted to reopen the federal government, the Department of Veterans Affairs is resuming normal operations, and that means benefits payments to 5 million disabled veterans, survivors, families and student-veterans will be paid as scheduled on Nov. 1. It also means all 56 VA Regional Offices have reopened, and previously furloughed claims processors have returned to work and will resume working mandatory overtime to help reduce the disability claims backlog. "We will fight hard to regain ground lost as a result of the government shutdown," said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. "We remain committed to eliminating the disability claims backlog in 2015."

Independent Budget Releases Critical Issues

The four *Independent Budget* (IB) partners have released their critical issues for FY 2015. The IB, which the VFW co-authors with AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America, provides the Administration and Congress a veterans' view of the most important issues as it pertains to VA healthcare, benefits and infrastructure, as well as issues facing service

members as they transition from uniform to veteran status. The IB is in its 28th year of publication and has been praised by Congress as an honest and accurate view of what VA needs to take care of all veterans. The full IB will be released in conjunction with the President's proposed budget earlier next year. [Read](#) the critical issues.

Army Captain Receives Medal of Honor

President Obama presented a long-awaited Medal of Honor to former Army Capt. William D. Swenson in a White House ceremony Tuesday for his heroism during a six-hour battle in Afghanistan four years ago. Swenson is the first Army officer to receive the nation's highest military honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan, and the 13th overall recipient of the medal after 12 years of war. [Read more](#) about the presentation.

Korean War MIA Identified

The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains belonging to Army Pfc. Norman Dufresne, 20, of Leominster, Mass. He is scheduled to be buried in his hometown tomorrow. In July 1950, Dufresne and elements of G Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, were deployed astride hills along the Chinju-Hadong Road, just west of the Nam River deep within South Korea. The North Koreans launched a massive attack against their positions, forcing the Americans to fall back. Dufresne was reported as missing in action on July 30, 1950.

Congratulations to the following Departments who signed up more than 100 new advocates to join our team: Arizona, Florida, California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Texas, Virginia and Washington. Many others are not far behind, so keep up the good work!

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.

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