



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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VFW Applauds White House Effort to Combat Suicide

Today, the President signed an executive order designed to curb military and veteran suicide and improve the delivery of mental health resources to our nation's heroes. The executive order, "Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members and Military Families," which President Obama is scheduled to announce during a visit to Fort Bliss in Texas, includes nearly a dozen specific initiatives designed to improve mental health resources and intervention tools. National Commander John E. Hamilton noted the VFW support for the President's vision to prevent military suicides and improve mental health care delivery, but also expressed concerns about potential funding shortfalls to accomplish the president's goals. [Click here for VFW's press release.](#)

VFW Active at Republican Convention

VFW Representatives attending the Republican National Convention (RNC) listened to keynote speakers and spoke with delegates on critical issues like veterans' mental and behavioral health, accurate claims processing and helping service members secure educational, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The VFW will also be represented at next week's Democratic National Convention in Charlotte to ensure the voice of veterans, service members and their families remains a key priority during Campaign 2012. Leading both delegations will be VFW Legislative Director Ray Kelley. Stay informed throughout by [reading blog postings.](#)

VA Increases Vets Retraining Assistance Program

This week, VA announced they have filled 36,000 of the 45,000 job training openings available under the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) passed as a part of the *VOW to Heroes Act*. An additional 55,000 openings will be available October 1, 2012. VRAP provides up to \$1,473 a month in GI Bill benefits for those taking full-time courses to learn the skills necessary to land a job. VFW was instrumental in getting the provision passed as a part of the comprehensive jobs bill and encourages eligible veterans to apply online. [Click here for more information.](#)

Combating Veterans' Homelessness

Veterans' homelessness is a national problem that is best solved at the local level. As such, the VA recently launched a new online ordering portal for communities and national partners to order

free informational material and promotional items ranging from brochures and posters to wallet cards, drawstring bags and hygiene kits, among other items. Share the portal link with your VFW members and Posts and with others in your community to help spread the word. [Click here for more information or to place an order.](#)

VFW Hears from Marine Corps Commandant

This week, VFW attended a Press Club event where Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James Amos spoke on a number of issues important to the Corps. Leading the list was the continuing success of combat operations in Afghanistan and the transfer of responsibilities over to Afghan national security forces. Following his remarks, Amos fielded questions from the audience on a variety of military quality-of-life and force readiness issues ranging from fiscal responsibility and budget constraints on the Marines Corps, to women serving in combat, suicide and sexual assault. When asked about potential across-the-board cuts to the Defense budget, Amos said he believed the Marine Corps would be hit disproportionately hard, considering the size of the force and the value it delivers to the U.S. military. Amos also said that the greatest challenge for the Corps moving forward would be ensuring the force remains balanced through a period of fiscal austerity. [Learn more about Amos' remarks and view C-SPAN's full coverage of the event.](#)

Army and NFL Discuss TBI

Earlier this week, Army representatives hosted NFL leaders at West Point to discuss how they can affect positive change surrounding Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and concussions. The military, alongside the NFL, have continued conversations regarding the Soldier-Athlete commitment to education and awareness of these serious injuries. [Watch the discussion.](#)

Five MIAs Return Home

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains belonging to one airman and four soldiers who had been missing in action since World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Returned home are:

- Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Harry W. Eck, of Minot Ward, N.D. On Sept. 13, 1944, Eck and eight other crewmembers were aboard a B-17G Flying Fortress that crashed near Neustadt-on-Werra, Germany. Only one of the nine crewmen is known to have successfully parachuted out of the aircraft before it crashed.
- Army Cpl. Kenneth R. Block, 22, of Ann Arbor, Mich. In late November 1950, Block 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. On Dec. 3, Block and many other Americans would be listed as missing in action as a result of the heavy fighting.
- Army Sgt. 1st Class William T. Brown, 24, of La Habra, Calif.; Sgt. 1st Class Donald M. Shue, 20, of Kannapolis, N.C.; and Sgt. 1st Class Gunther H. Wald, 25, of Palisades Park, N.J. On Nov. 3, 1969, the men and six Vietnamese soldiers were part of a Special Forces reconnaissance patrol that was ambushed while operating in Quang Tri Province near the Vietnam-Laos border.

[Read more about their recovery and identification.](#)

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