

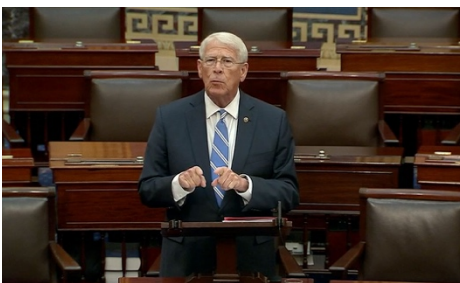


October 13, 2025



Top VFW Leader Condemns The Washington Post:

VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore sharply criticized The Washington Post's reporting in response to its recent article, "How some veterans exploit \$193 billion VA program, due to lax controls" (October 6, 2025). "Your article leans heavily on inflammatory anecdotes and edge cases, portraying veterans as system abusers, while ignoring the structural reality: Combat wounds are not the only occupational hazards of military service," said Whitmore. As an organization with a long history and memory, the VFW has seen the arguments and accusations portrayed by The Washington Post in decades past and responded in kind. Whitmore continued, "... let's not ignore what this article really reflects: Veterans make an easy scapegoat for the elites of this country ... It is politically and socially convenient to question the integrity of veterans rather than confront the true cost of 25 years of war." [Read the response.](#)



Major Richard Star Act Blocked in Senate:

Passage of [S.1032](#), *Major Richard Star Act*, has faced a setback. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) requested unanimous consent to pass this legislation that would finally authorize full concurrent receipt for veterans medically retired under Chapter 61. Currently, there is an offset that prevents more than 50,000 combat-injured retirees from receiving both their DOD military retirement pay and their VA disability compensation. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) objected, citing cost concerns and calling it a "double benefit." In response, Sen. Blumenthal emphasized that they are separate, earned benefits and urged Senate

leaders to allow a vote before year's end. The bill has 76 Senate and 304 House cosponsors, and it remains one of the VFW's highest legislative priorities. [Watch the video.](#)



VFW Calls for Restoration of Women's Advisory Committee: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore has called on Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to reinstate the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), which the Pentagon recently dissolved. Whitmore is the first woman to lead the VFW. In a letter to the Secretary, she emphasized that DACOWITS has strengthened the force for more than seven decades by improving recruitment, training and equipment for service women. She cautioned that disbanding the panel abandons the 400,000 women who serve today and urged the Department of Defense to reform and modernize, rather than eliminate, this key readiness advisory body. [Read the letter.](#)



Coast Guard Left Unpaid During Government Shutdown: Since the government shutdown began on Oct. 1, members of the U.S. Coast Guard have continued to stand watch without pay. Unlike other uniformed services funded through the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security, leaving its personnel without pay until Congress restores funding. This is the second time since 2019 that Coast Guard families have been forced to endure the financial strain during a lapse in appropriations that could cause thousands to face uncertainty over how to cover basic expenses such as rent, groceries and child care. Therefore, the VFW strongly supports [H.R. 5401](#), *Pay Our Troops Act of 2026*. This bipartisan legislation would ensure members of all branches of the armed forces continue to receive pay during any future government shutdowns.



VFW Attends Ceremonial Claim Sharks Bill

Signing: Rhode Island Governor Daniel McKee held a ceremonial signing for legislation aimed at curbing deceptive trade practices by unaccredited claims agents often referred to as “Claim Sharks.” McKee was joined by State Sen. Walter Felag, State Rep. Sam Azzinaro, VFW National Legislative Committee Member Matt McCoy, and immediate past VFW National Legislative Director Pat Murray, who championed this issue and were all instrumental in the law’s passage. Enacted on June 30, 2025, it makes Rhode Island the 11th state to protect veterans from predatory actors who charge improper fees for advising or assisting veterans in filing VA disability compensation claims. [Read more.](#)



VFW, SVA Announce 2025/2026 Student

Veteran Fellowship Class: The VFW and Student Veterans of America (SVA) have [selected](#) six student veterans for the 2025/2026 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. Now in its 12th year, the fellowship is an academic and hands-on experience during which students advance a shared VFW-SVA policy priority through community engagement and direct advocacy on Capitol Hill. This year’s fellows will attend the SVA Leadership Institute in October, the SVA National Conference in January, and the VFW Washington Conference in March, where they will meet with lawmakers alongside VFW delegations. The 2025/2026 legislative fellows are:

- Shadic Anderson, Marine Corps veteran, California State University
- Juanita Murillo Garcia, Army veteran, Northeastern University
- Giancarlo Gonzalez, Army veteran, St. Petersburg College
- Kimmie Kim, Navy veteran, Vanguard University of Southern California
- Austin Lawrence, Navy veteran, Harvard University
- Sarah Lively, Air Force veteran, Concordia University



VFW Staff, Special Guest Refute The Washington Post Article: The VFW's Honor the Contract campaign is at the core of the latest episode of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast, wherein host Rob Couture, Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci, National Veterans Service Director Mike Figlioli, National Legislative Director Kristina Keenan, and special guest Pat Murray delve in to the demerits of The Washington Post's recent article, "How some veterans exploit \$193 billion VA program, due to lax controls" (October 6, 2025). In addition to correcting falsehoods and misleading notions portrayed within, they highlight the parallels between the burgeoning rhetorical attack on veterans benefits and those of the 1930s and 1950s. Listen to Episode 51, *Honor the Contract*, wherever you get your podcasts or watch it on [YouTube](#).



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced seven identifications and four burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II and the Korean War.

Identifications:

- [World War II Army Pfc. Milo O. Whipple](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Donald A. Dorman](#)
- [World War II Army Pvt. Joseph A. Gala](#)
- [World War II Army Pfc. Richard P. Summers](#)
- [World War II Army Pvt. Philip J. Geary](#)
- [World War II Navy Seaman 1st Class Wayne E. Newton](#)
- [Korean War Army Cpl. Norman R. Levesque](#)

Updates:

- [World War II Army Technician Fifth Grade Ell T. Simantz](#), Michigan
- [Korean War Army Cpl. Donald J. Birmingham](#),
To be determined
- [World War II Army 2nd Lt. Charles S. Atteberry](#),
Idaho
- [World War II Army Pvt. Henry D. Bordner](#),
Montana

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