



January 20, 2026



VFW Attends SVA NatCon 2026: VFW members were recognized for their outstanding commitment to the student veteran community during the Student Veterans of America (SVA) 18th Annual National Conference (NatCon), held this year in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Past VFW National Commander Brian Duffy addressed the conference's general session noting, "Education prepares you for tomorrow. Advocacy protects it." He concluded by stating, "Together, the SVA and VFW are still serving. We are still leading. And we can never stop thinking about tomorrow, because the next generation of warriors depends on us." VFW National Veterans Service Assistant Director of Field Operations Cindy Noel and VFW National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative Rick Boring assisted student veterans at a claims clinic on site. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Gabby Kubinyi participated in the event's "Meet Your Veteran and Military Service Organizations" panel discussion.

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows for the 2025-2026 class 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 Testimony for Subcommittee Oversight

Hearing: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli submitted a statement for the record for a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hearing on efforts to modernize disability benefits. The hearing did not include any witnesses from organizations with VA accredited representatives, allowing misconceptions of the rating schedule to go unchallenged before the committee. In his statement, Figlioli commented on VA's ongoing modernization of the Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD), which is a critical component of VA's disability compensation system. His statement describes VA's plan, its progress to date, and obstacles impeding its completion. Since establishing this schedule in April 1945, VA has continually updated the VASRD to ensure fair and accurate compensation based on current medical science and labor market conditions. Rather than acting as a safety net, the current structure offers a more objective evaluation based on the veteran's "average impairment of earnings capacity," compared with that of similarly situated civilian workers. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 22:27 mark.



Health Subcommittee Hearing on Pending Legislation

Hearing: VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Meggan Coleman submitted a statement for the record for a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health pending legislation hearing. Regarding H.R. 6652, U.S. Vets of the FAS Act, Coleman stated, "Geography should never determine whether a veteran can access timely, high-quality health services." The VFW urges that this effort be viewed as part of a broader commitment to veterans within the Freely Associated States, rather than as a limited or temporary solution. Telehealth and pharmacy access are critical first steps. These must be paired with long-term strategies to address specialty care, emergency services, and treatment continuity. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 33:56 mark.



Women Veteran Committee Hill Day: The VFW and 12 other veteran organizations spent a day of advocacy on Capitol Hill aimed at garnering support and co-sponsorship for five specific pieces of legislation. These proposals would evaluate existing research on menopause, focusing on care quality and access. They would also improve outreach for women veterans, integrate gender-specific risk factors into mental health services, mandate annual sensitivity training for all VA employees and contractors handling claims related to military sexual trauma (MST), and extend MST-related mental health counseling to former National Guard and Reserve members. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Meggan Coleman commented, “These pieces of legislation are important because they offer an opportunity for equal benefits for all who have selflessly sacrificed to defend our country.”



VA Class on Airborne Hazards & Burn Pit Exposure: On January 22, 2026, the Department of Veterans Affairs will be offering a session for veterans titled “Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits: What You Need to Know”, [register here](#). VA offers education classes for veterans via telehealth to provide veterans with the most current information and education on deployment related health concerns. VA offers a variety of classes throughout the year to keep veterans informed about research, access to integrative health services, and more to optimize their wellbeing. [Learn more](#).



VFW Podcast discusses Major Richard Star Act, Updates for New Year: On the latest episode of #StillServing: The VFW Podcast, guests VFW Assistant Adjutants General Brian Walker and Ryan Gallucci and VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Joy Craig team up with host Rob Couture for the first show of 2026. Join them as go in depth on the Major Richard Star Act, the latest National Defense Authorization Act, potential threats to VA disability compensation, VFW resolutions, the U.S. military operation in

Venezuela and more. Listen to episode 57, "Absolute Resolutions," on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on the VFW's [YouTube](#) channel.



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced four identifications and nine 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 1st Lt. Thomas W. Frutiger](#)
- [World War II Army Air Forces Cpl. Joseph A. L. Richer](#)
- [Korean War Army Pfc. Otmer F. Hodges](#)
- [Korean War Army Cpl. Orestus M. Stewart](#)

Updates:

- [World War II Army Pfc. Wilbert G. Linsenbardt](#), Missouri
- [World War II Army Pvt. Ira Warren](#), West Virginia
- [World War II Army Staff Sgt. Dayton Polvado](#), Texas
- [World War II Army Pvt. Condia Lynch Jr.](#), Tennessee
- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Chester A. Johnson Jr.](#), Texas
- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Nicholas J. Governale](#), New York
- [World War II Army Lt. Col. Louis E. Roemer](#), Pennsylvania
- [World War II Army Staff Sgt. Paul A. Gregg](#), Illinois
- [Korean War Army Sgt. William L. Harper](#), West Virginia

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