



November 17, 2025



VFW Meets with VA Secretary: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci met with VA Secretary Doug Collin during a visit to VA headquarters in Washington, D.C. Many topics were discussed during the meeting, including the government shutdown's impact on VA services, the progress on the VA claims backlog and the recent reporting by The Washington Post on VA benefits. Secretary Collins reassured the VFW that VA will always place veterans first.



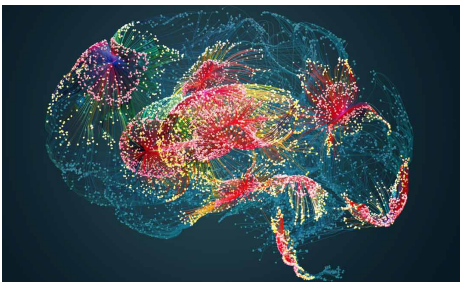
VFW Participates in Veterans Day Events: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore, VFW Auxiliary National President Lois Callahan and VFW Washington Office staff took part in Veterans Day ceremonies in and around the Washington D.C., area at Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean War Memorial. As part of the ceremonies, delegations presented wreaths honoring veterans past and present.



VFW National Commander Visits Pax River Test Center: VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci visited the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division at Patuxent River, Md., to learn more about ongoing Navy flight test operations. During the visit, Whitmore toured the Atlantic Test Range Headquarters and experienced an MV-22B Osprey aircraft in the center's advanced flight simulator, gaining insight into the training and evaluation processes that support naval aviation readiness.



Government Shutdown Ends: After a record 43-day federal shutdown, the government has reopened and restored funding to critical programs supporting service members, veterans and their families. Military pay and benefits will continue uninterrupted, with separation and permanent changes of station delays now being resolved as personnel offices reopen. VA health care, disability compensation and GI Bill benefits, which were largely protected during the shutdown, are now fully funded for the year, ensuring stability for millions of veterans. Federal civilian spouses of service members will receive back pay as agencies restart operations. Programs vital to military families, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Small Business Administration veteran business loans, are quickly resuming. The coming days will focus on restoring services, clearing backlogs and returning federal support networks to full strength.



VFW Speaks Out on Hemp Ban: In an open letter to the leaders of the House and Senate, VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore and Adjutant General Dan West urged bipartisan support for responsible, scientifically grounded research into hemp cannabinoid-based alternative treatments for veterans suffering from conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and chronic pain. The VFW has a resolution supporting research into alternative medical treatments for veterans whose symptoms have gone unresolved by traditional medications, which have left some veterans physically, mentally and emotionally worse off. [Read the letter.](#)



TRICARE Enrollment Now Open: TRICARE Open Season began Nov. 10 and will run through Dec. 9, giving eligible beneficiaries the chance to enroll in or change health plans for 2026. Active duty members and those with TRICARE For Life are not affected. Beneficiaries can make changes online through milConnect, by phone or by mail, and should verify their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System information. Changes

made during this period will take effect on Jan. 1.
[Read more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced no identifications or burial updates this week.

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