

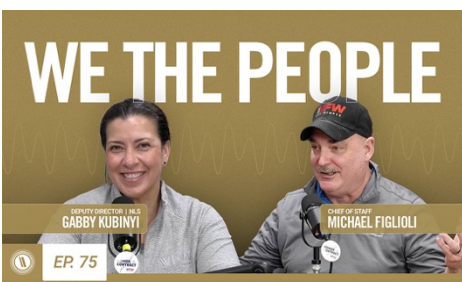


October 19, 2026



Senate Holds Roundtable on VA Toxic

Exposure Process: Staff from the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a roundtable with veteran groups and officials from VA on its process for establishing presumptive conditions related to military toxic exposures. VFW National Legislative Service Director Kristina Keenan called for greater transparency from VA as the VFW continues to receive numerous inquiries from members about the process and their specific conditions. Keenan specifically mentioned the need for the establishment of a VA Office of Toxic Exposure dedicated to targeted outreach on research and process updates. She also called for a stakeholder advisory committee so veterans service organizations like the VFW could participate in regular and substantive discussions on toxic exposures, share veteran insights and report on trends that our accredited representatives observe to assist with guiding VA's efforts. If you are a veteran who needs help with a VA claim related to toxic exposures, contact the VFW for [free assistance](#).



Podcast Spotlights VFW Training Conferences, Conflict Casualty Recovery:

VFW Washington Office Chief of Staff Michael Figlioli and National Legislative Service Deputy Director Gabby Kubinyi sat down with cohosts Rob and Brittany for a recap on the VFW's recent VFW NVS Accredited Representative Skill Level and Basic, and Junior Vice Commander training conferences, detailing how each respective conference helps the VFW achieve its overarching mission of serving veterans. Then, as a nod to the VFW's enduring commitment to leave no service member behind on the battlefield, Rob and Brittany spoke with

regional delegation leaders from the International Committee of the Red Cross to learn about their role in humanitarian recovery in conflict zones across the world, and how their work compliments that of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Listen to episode 75, “We the People,” on your favorite podcast platform or watch it on [YouTube](#).



Pentagon Announces Increases to Hostile Fire and Imminent Danger Pays: The Department of Defense has increased rates for Hostile Fire Pay (HFP) and Imminent Danger Pay (IDP) effective Oct. 1, 2026, which is the first major adjustment to these special duty pays that have been at a flat monthly rate of \$225 since 2002. Now HFP is \$450 per month for service members exposed to hostile fire, and IDP is \$275 per month for those serving in imminent danger areas. HFP is paid at the full monthly rate when a qualifying hostile fire event occurs, while IDP is prorated based on the number of days spent in a designated area. Service members cannot receive both payments for the same period of service. These increases are intended to better reflect the varying levels of risk faced by service members during military operations. [Read more](#).



Veterans' Opportunity to Voice Concerns About Los Angeles VA Campus: Veterans concerned about the future of the West Los Angeles VA campus have an opportunity to make their voices heard during a virtual public meeting on October 21. The VA Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board will discuss the campus master plan and other concerns affecting veterans in the Los Angeles area. The meeting will run from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. PDT. While the meeting is open to the public, advance registration is required to provide a public comment. [Learn more](#).



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update for a service member who has been missing and unaccounted for from the Korean War.

Update:

-- [Korean War Army Pvt. Joseph E. Boyd](#),
Maryland

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