



December 5, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20000

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Auxiliary, I am writing with a heavy heart regarding the tragic November 26 attack in Washington, D.C., that claimed the life of West Virginia National Guard Spc. Sarah Beckstrom and critically wounded Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe. Our thoughts and prayers remain with their families, loved ones, and fellow members of the National Guard during this unimaginably difficult time.

As federal authorities continue their investigation, early reports suggest that the assailant may have been influenced or radicalized by individuals or networks tied to extremist organizations. If it is determined that this attack was motivated by extremist or terroristic ideology, we believe that both soldiers should be eligible for recognition under existing Purple Heart criteria.

Congress has already established precedent for such incidents as this recent shooting. When service members are attacked on U.S. soil by individuals inspired or directed by foreign terrorist organizations, as tragically seen at Fort Hood (2009) and Chattanooga (2015), those incidents were rightfully recognized under the law as acts of terrorism. The same standard should apply here if the evidence supports that finding.

We understand the importance of a full and thorough investigation and make no presumption about the final determination. The VFW's only request is that, should federal investigators conclude this was an act of terror, the Administration be ready to ensure these members of the National Guard receive the recognition their sacrifice deserves.

The VFW has always defended the integrity of the Purple Heart; it must remain reserved for those wounded or killed resulting from hostile enemy or terrorist action. Our position applies only when the facts clearly meet that definition under law.

Mr. President, this tragedy cuts deeply across the veteran community – especially considering the circumstances, and what it means for veterans of Afghanistan whose lives were saved by local Afghan allies who escaped prosecution during the fall of Kabul. Many veterans are wondering how this could have happened and are seeking appropriate justice.

Spc. Beckstrom and Staff Sgt. Wolfe answered their nation's call and wore the same uniform as every American who has been called away from their families to stand a post, whether at home or abroad. If this investigation confirms terroristic intent, recognizing them under the Purple Heart is not just a matter of law, it is a matter of honor.

Thank you for your time, compassion, and continued commitment to those who serve. The VFW stands ready to assist in any way as this matter moves forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carol F. Whitmore", is positioned above the printed name and title.

CAROL WHITMORE  
Commander-in-Chief

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**WASHINGTON OFFICE**