

November 6, 2023



House Subcommittee Hearing on Pending Legislation: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity regarding pending legislation related to education and other benefits. She conveyed the VFW's support to expand the monthly housing allowance to student veterans taking online courses during summer semesters. She also spoke about a bill to remove the red tape that has caused some schools to drop out of the GI Bill program. "This would modify the requirement for schools to provide personalized information about costs and financial assistance. The new language would give schools more flexibility by lessening the barrier to receiving VA education funding," Keenan said. She also stated the VFW's support for a bill to reimburse the VA Home Loan funding fee to service members who apply for VA disability but receive a rating decision after finalizing the purchase of a home. Read the testimony or watch the hearing, which begins at the 6:55 mark.



Annual Military Suicide Report Released: The Department of Defense (DOD) released its *Annual Report on Suicide in the Military Calendar Year 2022*. In total, 492 service members across components lost their lives to suicide in 2022, which is a decrease from 2021. In addition, a total of 168 family members died by suicide in 2021, which is the most recent year data is available. Among service members, suicide rates (deaths per 100,000) for active duty, Reserve, and National Guard components were 25.1, 19.1, and 22.2, respectively. While the rates among Reserve

and National Guard personnel continue to show neither upward nor downward trends, the rate of active duty members dying by suicide has continued to trend upward from 2011-2022. The 2021 suicide rates among family members appeared to be lower than in 2019 and 2020, though no time-based trends have been established. Importantly, the report outlines DOD's ongoing and planned actions to curb suicide numbers including implementing recommendations from the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC). Read the DOD suicide report. Read the SPRIRC report.



Veterans Day Discounts and Freebies: As a display of gratitude and appreciation, community partners have joined together for Veterans Day, Nov. 11, to honor service members, veterans, and their families for their sacrifice and dedication to our nation. VA has compiled and will continue to update a list of nationally available Veterans Day discounts to give back to our veterans.



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update for a service member who had been missing and unaccounted for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors is:

--Army Air Force Pvt. Doyle W. Sexton, 23, of Salt Lake City, Utah, was a member of the Headquarters Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group. He died as a prisoner of war on July 19, 1942. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, on a date to be determined. Read about Sexton.

Click here to view this week's edition.

Click here for past editions of the VFW Action Corps Weekly.

Click here to sign up new veterans' advocates.

As always, we want to hear your advocacy stories. To share your stories or photos with us, simply email them directly to vfwac@vfw.org.