



September 25, 2023



VFW Urges Senator to Stop Hindering Military Promotions: The VFW is calling on Sen. Tommy Tuberville from Alabama to lift his hold on the routine promotion of military general and flag officers. VFW National Commander Duane Sarmiento said, “The line in the sand for the VFW is simple: Political disputes must be handled by politicians — not within the ranks of the all-volunteer force. Sen. Tuberville’s hold on these routine promotions has consequences up and down the active-duty force that will take years to fix.” [Read more.](#)



Senate Hearing on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention: The Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs held a hearing to evaluate mental health and suicide prevention measures for our nation’s veterans, including implementation of Chairman Jon Tester’s landmark Hannon Act (P.L. 116-171). In recognizing that September is Suicide Prevention Month, Tester indicated the latest data shows that 2020 had the lowest suicide rate since 2006. Sixty-four percent of these veterans were not using VA resources. VA is urged to continue making strides with suicide prevention for veterans, and to remember its own employees who have died by suicide. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 25:30 mark.



House Subcommittee Hearing on Education: The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held an oversight hearing on education benefits for veterans. Subcommittee Chairman Derrick Van Orden expressed his concern with the impact of risk-based surveys and other administrative requirements imposed on schools through legislation over the last few years. The VFW shares his view that requirements established to protect student veterans from predatory schools have gone too far and have had the unintended consequence of becoming too burdensome for schools with limited staff and resources. We are concerned with the number of schools that are opting out of VA education benefits, and will continue to monitor the situation. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 9:09 mark.



50th Anniversary of National Cemetery

Administration: VA commemorated the National Cemetery Administration's 50th anniversary in a ceremony at the newly renamed National Memorial Cemetery at Quantico. During the event, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough commented, "For the past 50 years, VA's National Cemetery Administration has provided our nation's heroes with final resting places that honor their service, keep their memories alive, and preserve their legacies long after they pass away. It's our privilege to serve these heroes with honor and respect, just like they served our country." VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci and National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli were in attendance. [Learn more](#).



Prevent Benefits Fraud and Hold Bad Agents Accountable

Accountable: The VA Office of Inspector General seeks your help in preventing Public Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) fraud schemes. These schemes include either unaccredited agents or unscrupulous health care providers charging unjustifiable fees with promises to exaggerate a veteran's medical condition to secure a higher rating than the evidence warrants. [Know the signs and take action](#).



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced two burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

--**Army Air Forces Tech. Sgt. Turner Y. Johnston, 21**, of Loraine, Texas, was assigned to the 415th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. He was killed in action on Aug. 1, 1943. He will be buried in Belton, Texas, on Oct. 21, 2023.

[Read about Johnston.](#)

--**Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Albert W. Stahl, 22**, of Buffalo, New York, was assigned to the 329th Bombardment Squadron, 93d Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. He was killed in action on Aug. 1, 1943. He will be buried in Kenmore, New York, in the Spring of 2024. [Read about Stahl.](#)

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