



ACTION CORPS WEEKLY



November 13, 2023



VFW Participates in Veterans Day Events: VFW National Commander Duane Sarmiento took part in activities in the Washington, D.C., area on Veterans Day, Nov. 11., beginning with a visit to the White House. From there Sarmiento headed to Arlington National Cemetery where he and VFW Auxiliary President Carla Martinez laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The VFW then hosted a reception at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, while VFW Washington Office staff laid a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial during an afternoon ceremony.



House Subcommittee Hearing on Pending Legislation: VFW National Legislative Associate Director Quandrea Patterson testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs regarding pending legislation related to fiduciary fraud and VA Board of Appeals processes. She conveyed the VFW's support to restore benefits to veterans and their families when they fall victim to abuse or fraud by fiduciaries. She also spoke about a bill to establish presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with firefighting. Patterson said, "This would prevent PFAS from becoming another situation like Blue Water Navy or Camp Lejeune in which veterans became sick and died waiting decades for their conditions to be properly recognized and appropriately treated." She stated VFW's support for a bill that limits the authority of VA to deny the claim of a veteran for benefits on the sole basis of failure to appear for a medical examination, commenting that "restarting a claim for this reason is unnecessary and veterans would benefit from a process that does not place so much

power in a missed appointment.” [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 7:17 mark.



Don't Feed the Sharks: The VFW has issued a Claim Shark factsheet for you to share with fellow veterans and social media communities. A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to “assist” or “consult” veterans with filing their VA benefit claims. This practice is illegal! Like the VFW said last year during testimony before Congress, “In our opinion, any group that fails to adhere to VA’s well-established standards of accreditation and fee arrangements should be met at the door by Capitol Police, not offered a seat at the same table as hard-working, VA-accredited advocates who are held to professional and ethical standards designed to protect veterans.” [Get the Factsheet](#).



VFW, SVA Announce 2023/2024 Student Veteran Fellowship Class: Eight Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) members and Student Veterans of America (SVA) leaders have been selected for the 2023/2024 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. In its tenth year, the fellowship is an academic experience during which students advocate for a policy proposal that addresses a VFW legislative priority issue. The fellows have the opportunity to attend the VFW Legislative Conference and participate with their VFW Department delegations during meetings with members of Congress and staff. The 2023/2024 legislative fellows are:

- Alex Ortiz, Army veteran, Inter American University of Puerto Rico – School of Law
- Alexander Thymmons, Army veteran, University of Hawaii – Manoa
- Bryce Kyle, Army veteran, University of Texas – San Antonio
- Jamie Springston, Navy veteran, Marshall University
- Jason Do, Air Force veteran, Samuel Merritt University
- Lyssa Losa, Army veteran, Texas A&M University – College Station
- Terren Wise, Navy veteran, Brown University

-- Jennifer Ray, Air Force veteran, Southwestern College



House Hearing on Veteran Businesses: VFW Department of Illinois District 15 Commander Chris Maynor testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs about the issues facing veteran-owned businesses. Maynor is an Army veteran and owner of Daniel Deans clothing store in Murphysboro, Illinois. He described the difficulty in finding veteran related programs to help launch small businesses, and shared his journey of getting his company off the ground. Many VFW members across the country are business owners, so having their voices represented before Congress is very powerful. [Watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 9:17 mark.



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 and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

--**Army Cpl. R. V. Leo Short, 19**, of Seminole, Oklahoma, was a member of George Company, 2nd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Eighth U.S. Army. He died while a prisoner of war in March 1951. He will be buried in his hometown on Dec. 9, 2023. [Read about Short.](#)

-- **Army Air Force Sergeant White S. Goings Jr., 22**, of Auburn, Nebraska, was a member of the 93rd Bombardment Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group. He died while a prisoner of war on July 19, 1942. He will be buried in his hometown in June 2024. [Read about Goings.](#)

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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**](mailto:vfwac@vfw.org).