

VFW Leaders Prepare for Diplomacy, Troop and DPAA Site Visits

Commander-in-Chief and Auxiliary leaders depart for East and Southeast Asia

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WASHINGTON — On the heels of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Washington Conference, two official delegations comprised of senior VFW and Auxiliary leaders and supporting staff depart this weekend for separate command visits in East and Southeast Asian countries.

Accompanied by VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci, and together with VFW Auxiliary National President Brenda Bryant, Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt will embark on a six-day tour of Taiwan to meet with government leaders and the Veterans Affairs Council to bolster our longstanding friendship grounded in shared democratic ideals, mutual learning and a commitment to caring for those who sacrificed in defense of our respective nations. Among the activities planned is a diplomatic engagement with the President of Taiwan, Lai Ching-te, as well as tours of the PanChiao Veterans Home and Taipei Veterans General Hospital.

"The VFW has long enjoyed a robust relationship with our veterans' affairs counterparts in Taiwan," said Lipphardt. "And this year, I am honored to meet with President Lai Ching-te to discuss our nations' common pursuit of and dedication to freedom, peace and democracy. It's through the selfless acts and courage of our nations' defenders, and the fulfillment of our duty to honor and care for them, that these ideals are able to be realized."

Meanwhile, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tim Peters, together with Assistant Adjutant General Brian Walker and VFW Washington Office Public Affairs Director Rob Couture, will spend two weeks traveling to Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) field sites in Thailand and Vietnam and meeting with U.S. military personnel, veterans and VFW members in South Korea and the Philippines.

"DPAA's mission has always been near and dear to my heart," said Peters, "that's why I'm

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excited to meet with the teams in Thailand and Vietnam to see their work firsthand. Their dedication to accounting for every service member missing in action is truly remarkable."

The VFW's annual overseas missions fulfill critical organizational national security and foreign affairs objectives. Travel missions abroad enable senior leadership to strengthen ties with host nation governments, witness field operations and understand the needs of the DPAA and gauge the welfare of U.S. troops and veterans stationed and living outside the United States and its territories. Leveraging the VFW's powerful advocacy platform in Washington, D.C., lessons learned from each visit are brought to administration officials and members of Congress to ensure the DPAA is fully funded each year and troops and veterans, including those working as Department of Defense (DOD) civilians, are properly taken care of, able to execute their missions, and can access the benefits and services afforded to them.

Thanks to VFW advocacy after past overseas visits, legislation to overhaul the Department of Veterans Affairs' Foreign Medical Program was introduced by Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-N.J.) during the 118th and current Congresses, while the DOD decided in 2024 to continue providing mail privileges to military retirees living abroad.

For updates as the missions kick off and throughout, be sure to follow the VFW on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#) under @VFWHQ and on [Facebook](#) under @VFWFans.