

VFW Signs MOU with Student Veterans of America

Jan 14, 2013

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien and Student Veterans of America Executive Director Michael Dakduk signed a memorandum of understanding between the VFW and SVA last week during the fifth annual SVA national conference in Orlando, Fla.

“This memorandum will provide opportunities for the VFW and SVA to pool their resources and help our veterans and nation’s service members overcome many challenges, find strength in camaraderie and provide expanded programs and services for veterans on college campuses nationwide,” said Thien, a Vietnam veteran who attended Indiana University Southeast after his military service. “The entire VFW and its Auxiliaries are extremely pleased to have this opportunity to work with the SVA in ensuring our student-veterans attain the education and benefits we promised them.”

The MOU further codifies the great relationship the VFW has enjoyed with SVA since the fledgling organization was founded in January 2008. The two organizations have stood side-by-side over the past few years to push for sound veterans' education policy on Capitol Hill, which includes the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, as well as numerous other student-veteran improvements, such as just-passed legislation that provides better consumer information for new student veterans.

The MOU will enable closer collaboration between the VFW’s nationwide network of 7,200 posts and 1,200 VA-accredited claims service officers, and SVA chapters now located on more than 700 college and university campuses. VFW will also establish an e-mail address exclusively for student-veterans who need acute assistance with VA education issues or disability claims.

VFW Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier from Texas has been tapped by the VFW to spearhead student-veteran outreach efforts to ensure that SVA and the VFW can enjoy a synergistic relationship, helping to mold the next "Greatest Generation" of American leaders through today's student-veterans.

In addition to signing the memorandum, VFW was out in force at the SVA conference, participating in roundtable discussions on student-veterans’ issues like education policy and

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the transition from combat to college, as well as offering information about the VA disability claims process, VFW advocacy efforts on behalf of all veterans, and ways the student-veterans could continue to serve the veterans' community as a VFW member.

The 2013 SVA national conference was the largest to date for the organization, with more than 600 student veterans traveling from college campuses around the country to participate in the weekend events.

VFW leaders said they were inspired by the caliber of student-veterans they met on the ground in Orlando, and look forward to working with SVA chapters on the local level to help foster leadership and success for a new generation of American veterans.