

VFW Pledges Total Support to National Guard, VA

Sep 17, 2009

WASHINGTON — The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. made a quick trip to the Nation's Capitol this week to meet with the chief of the National Guard Bureau and the secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., elected last month to lead America's largest organization of combat veterans, met with Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley in his Pentagon office Tuesday to discuss Guard rotations, the impact of eight years of war on their families, and how the VFW can help on the home front to support America's 467,000 citizen-soldiers and their families.

"The general applauded our unit adoption program and our other assistance programs," said Tradewell, a Vietnam veteran from Sussex, Wis. "He also encouraged the VFW at every level to get to know their local Guard units, as well as The Adjutant General in every state, in order to help military families wherever they reside."

The VFW national commander said the Guard traces its history back to the militia that was formed to protect the first English settlement in Jamestown in 1607. "Since then it has fought in every war and conflict, and continues to perform humanitarian missions throughout the world today," he said. "These citizen-soldiers are our neighbors and our defenders, and I pledged that the VFW will not let them down."

Tradewell met Monday with VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki to discuss GI Bill implementation, claims processing, information technology, proper staffing, and health care issues that impact all veterans.

"The VFW was instrumental in the creation of the VA in 1930, and we continue to have a vested interest in the proper conduct of their operations," he said. "A successful VA takes care of veterans, and I pledged to the secretary that the VFW would be an active partner in helping them to accomplish their mission."

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