

# VFW Statement on Fort Hood Shooting

Apr 03, 2014

“Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims and their loved ones and the entire Fort Hood family after yet another senseless and tragic shooting,” said William A. Thien, the national commander of the 1.9 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliaries.

“We may never know why this soldier did what he did, but if for mental health reasons, it’s important in the days ahead that our nation’s military and political leaders don’t use the medical community as their scapegoat. The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs provide some of the nation’s very best mental healthcare, but providing that care first takes someone to voluntarily seek it.

“The VFW also urges leadership to not make hasty decisions. There are no blanket solutions when you deal with people whose individual problems can range from invisible to incapacitating. The best you can do is increase education, outreach and anti-stigma messaging, and to have the care available when and where needed.

“These are challenging times and we are still a nation at war, and a smaller force will not in any way reduce their stress. That’s why I offer the mentorship of VFW members to everyone serving in uniform. We are not trained mental health professionals, but as fellow comrades-in-arms who have been to war and returned, we can relate.”

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