

VFW Conveys Condolences for National Guard Members Killed, Wounded in Syria

The following statement is from the VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore

Dec 15, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is heartbroken by the tragic loss of two Iowa Army National Guard soldiers and one U.S. civilian, and by the injuries sustained by three others in the suspected ISIS attack in Palmyra, Syria, on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025.

On behalf of the VFW and our members around the world, I extend our deepest condolences to the Gold Star families of Sgt. William Nathaniel Howard and Sgt. Edgar Brian Torres-Tovar. Words cannot ease the pain of this loss, but please know that a grateful nation stands with you and honors your loved ones' courage and sacrifice.

As an Iowa native, this tragedy is especially personal. Sgt. Howard, age 29, was from Marshalltown, and Sgt. Torres-Tovar, age 25, was from Des Moines. Both were members of 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division. These soldiers were our neighbors, our friends and our family, and their service and devotion to duty reflect the very best of our state and our country.

This holiday season, I urge all Americans to keep in their thoughts and prayers the deployed U.S. service members, particularly the approximately 1,800 Iowa Army National Guard soldiers supporting Operation Inherent Resolve, who continue to stand in harm's way around the world, confronting the very real threat of terrorism and those who seek to undermine our freedoms and our way of life. We will never forget their sacrifice, nor the families who bear its weight every day.

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