

[IAVA CEO Says President's Apology to Veterans for Comments on TBI Would Only Be the First Step](#)

New York, NY (January 27, 2020) – In response to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) calling upon President Trump to apologize to service members for his remarks minimizing the severity of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), IAVA calls such an apology “step one” in the President’s obligation to veterans and service members to remedy these remarks.

“Apologizing for these remarks would only be step one,” said [IAVA CEO Jeremy Butler](#). “Rather than diminishing the severity of the combat injuries our service members received and rather than reducing the necessity of seeking medical care by comparing their relative importance with other injuries that ‘he has seen,’ the Commander in Chief should be ensuring that our military members receive the best medical care possible and that they and their families are afforded the respect and honor that our military members deserve and earned on the battlefield.”

On January 8, Iran launched numerous ballistic missiles at the Ayn al-Asad Air Base in Iraq, in retaliation for the killing of Qassim Suleimani. President Trump reported that the Iranian attack resulted in no casualties, and later stated: “I heard that they had headaches and a couple of other things, but I can report it is not very serious.” On Friday, the Department of Defense announced that 34 service members were being treated for TBI as a result of Iran’s missile strikes.

IAVA has long championed the need for aggressive treatment of TBI for our nation’s veterans. The IAVA-led *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act* (S. 785) specifically calls on the VA to do more research and better track veterans that may have been exposed to TBI and create a center of excellence to study the connection between TBI and PTSD. Passing this important bill is the proactive way for Congress to signal to the President that TBI is important and must be taken seriously.