



Pennsylvania VFWnews



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November/December 2017

YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

Does Your Post Image Reflect the True Mission of the VFW?

Is your VFW post known as just the building down the street that offers less costly food and beverage? Does your community think of your post as a dark, smoky bar that rarely gets involved with outside projects? Do younger veterans dismiss the idea of joining your post because there's nothing of interest for them and their families?

If any or all of these less-than-desirable images are all too real for your post, then it is time for your leadership and members to recommit your VFW unit to why your charter was granted: to serve veterans, military personnel and your community.

Too many Pennsylvania VFW posts have closed over the past 10 years, in many cases because of a lack of support from area veterans who saw no real commitment to the VFW's mission of service. A lasting trend of fewer new VFW members and the loss of current members has deeply cut into the organization's efforts to replace its aging membership and leadership with younger members.

So, how do VFW posts improve their image, **VFW Mission ... continued on page 5**

***Our Mission:* To foster camaraderie among U.S. veterans of overseas conflicts, serve our veterans, the military and our communities, and advocate for all veterans.**

***Our Vision:* Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.**

This is why the Veterans of Foreign Wars was created, and why we still exist today.

History of Veterans Day in U.S. is a Tribute to the Critical Role of Veterans

Few would argue that of all population segments in America, veterans have played the most monumentally important role in the course of the nation's development as a world power. In fact, without the select few of men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend freedom—less than 10 percent of all citizens and even less who have served in war zones—the United States would be far from the country we know today.

Fittingly, the nation pauses on November 11th each year to recognize those who have served in military uniforms for the sacrifices they have made to keep our nation, and many other countries across the globe, free.

World War I—known at the time as “The Great War”—officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally **Veterans Day ... continued on page 4**

VFW Troop Support Marches On



(From top left) The Department once again supported the PA National Guard's March for the Fallen on the grounds of Ft. Indiantown Gap, Annville. Pictured explaining VFW benefits to other attendees are National Recruiter David Gyger, VFW Post 3502 Commander Scott Fritz and Post 148 Chaplain Donna Coulter—all Past District 18 Commanders.

After attending a deployment ceremony, State Commander Dwight Fuhrman and Chief of Staff (PSC) John Brenner express the VFW's support to PAARNG Col. Marc Ferraro, Deputy Commanding General-Maneuver, PAARNG 28th Infantry Division, and Col. Robert Allison, State Aviation Officer.

State Commander Fuhrman, State Adjutant (PSC) John Getz and Chief of Staff Brenner present a “VFW Adopt-a-Unit Certificate” to 28th ID Col. Ferraro and Col. Jeffrey Heasley, symbolic of the Department of PA FFW's commitment to support deploying members of the Division's Higher Headquarters Battalion.



January 26-27th in Gettysburg 2018 Mid-Winter Conference will Feature Workshop-Driven Format

Participants in the Department's 2018 Mid-Winter Conference—scheduled for January 26-27 at the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel—will notice a significant change in the event agenda: fewer speakers and reports, and more workshops. After the opening session Friday afternoon, the conference schedule will feature staggered workshops to help VFW post leaders excel in critical areas of post operations.

A member of the National Headquarters membership team will conduct an in-depth presentation on how to recruit, retain and reinstate members. This program will help VFW leaders of all experience levels build and sustain their post, in part, by focusing on how to increase the number of younger veterans who join the VFW.

Other workshop topics include women veterans issues, post chaplain responsibilities, managing post internal affairs, younger veteran issues, veteran service officers, quartermaster and adjutant responsibilities, legislative priorities and a VFW program overview.

“We're putting in a big shift in how we run this event, so all areas of post operation will be addressed,” said State Commander Dwight R. Fuhrman. “Everyone coming to the conference volunteers their time in specific ways to keep their post moving forward. These workshops will help them strengthen their knowledge and ability to serve their post.”

On Saturday evening, the Department will hold its annual *Voice of Democracy* Banquet, when the top VOD students, the VOD teacher of the year and the winning *Patriot's Pen* student will also be honored.

Forms for MWC participation appear on page 10 and will be sent to all posts.

*From the State Commander***Mission First and Comrades Always!**

Dwight R. Fuhrman - dmfuhrman@comcast.net or (717) 255-2541



Hello to all of my brothers and sisters in the great Keystone state. Thank you for all of your hospitality during my travels throughout the Commonwealth.

Our leadership team was invited to

Johnstown for the deployment ceremony for Charlie Co. 1-51st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion going to Afghanistan. Many Vietnam Vets know it was just "Get on the bus, Gus" back then, but it made me even prouder to witness the community, family, friends and fellow soldiers see their troops off to war. As Battalion Commander LTC. Michael Girvin told me "We're going to take it to them. God bless our troops."



During a Fox 43 interview, State Commander Fuhrman outlines the many ways younger veterans benefit from VFW programs.

Your Department leadership also met with commanders of the PA Army National 28th Infantry Division to showcase how VFW programs can benefit their soldiers, including the 500 of their Division HHBN who will deploy soon to the Middle East.

We supported the Pennsylvania National Guard's March for the Fallen at Ft. Indiantown Gap. It was inspiring to see our Guardians and others march their tails off to honor our Guardians who paid the ultimate price of freedom.

We carry out VFW troop support activities because we truly stand behind our servicemembers 100%. We know what it feels like to go overseas, and we know how it impacts entire families. We should lead the way supporting our military families. It's the right thing to do, and it will open doors to new members.

As I write this column, we are down 17,057 members from last year and

in 45th place in the nation for membership totals among Departments. This is not good. We have 61,821 members.

Our long tradition of leading the nation in membership is seriously threatened—at press time, our Department was 4,000 members behind California. If each one of you recruit or reinstate just one member—that's one comrade who has never benefited from VFW membership—we will stay in the top position and keep our national organization strong and growing.

Please help with membership. Our future depends on us getting the younger vets engaged and involved in the VFW. They deserve to inherit a healthy VFW just the way we did because of the work done by those who went before us.

Let's have something to celebrate at our Mid-Winter Conference, where we will have fewer reports from the podium, and many workshops starting Friday evening, and all-day Saturday. This is a new approach to our MWC. We hope you participate in these workshops because all post leaders will receive instruction that benefits their posts. See you there!

We've received some feedback about the Department promoting the removal of the exemption private clubs now receive from the state. Most of the comments have been very supportive. We've also received some comments from posts that want to keep smoking in their canteens.

Our main thrust with this effort is to make VFW posts more healthy, more attractive to younger veterans at a time when active membership continues to drop, and more welcoming for entire families. It's important to remember that there are veteran members who stay away from their post because of smoky conditions.

Please remember to take care of your VFW brothers and sisters. Watch for signs of distress. No one should be left alone with the emotional and physical trauma.

Always remember, stand for the flag and kneel for the fallen.



State Commander Fuhrman speaks during an American Heart Association news conference.

With Your Support, VFW Can Provide Disaster Relief

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is accepting donations to help veterans, service members and military families impacted by the recent string of natural disasters.

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Jose, along with the raging wildfires across our western region, have left many in desperate need of assistance. The VFW's Emergency Relief Fund provides our organization the opportunity to react quickly with immediate relief to those in the affected areas.

To donate to the VFW Emergency Relief Fund, donate online or send checks payable to the VFW, earmarked "Emergency Relief" to: Veterans of Foreign Wars, Quartermaster General, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111



You may also show your support by making a \$10 donation to the effort by texting the word "NEEDS" to 27722.

The VFW is also encouraging departments, districts and posts to contribute to the relief efforts (Post Relief Funds can be used to assist).

District Meeting Schedule**NOVEMBER 2017**

DIST. #	Place of Meeting	Date	Time
1	Crescenz VAMC – Philadelphia	November 8, 2017	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post #6495 – Levittown	November 19, 2017	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post #845 - Downingtown	November 5, 2017	2:00 P.M.
10	VFW Post #3474 – Dunmore	November 12, 2017	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post #5010 - Freeland	November 19, 2017	2:30 P.M.
12	VFW Post #6982 – Coaldale	November 19, 2017	2:30 P.M.
13	VFW Post #6558 – Womelsdorf	November 12, 2017	2:00 P.M.
14	VFW Post #1568 – Towanda	November 19, 2017	2:00 P.M.
15	VFW Post #6611 – Galetton	November 19, 2017	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #9788 – Horsham	November 15, 2017	7:30 P.M.
17	VFW Post #2088 – Everett	November 5, 2017	2:00 P.M.
18	VFW Post #23 – Lebanon	November 5, 2017	2:00 P.M.
19	VFW Post #1835 – Franklin	November 19, 2017	2:30 P.M.
20	VFW Post #2540 – East Stroudsburg	November 19, 2017	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post #6321 – Smithmill	November 19, 2017	2:30 P.M.
23	VFW Post #7250 – Confluence	November 5, 2017	2:00 P.M.
25	VFW Post #7505 – Mars	November 19, 2017	2:00 P.M.
26	VFW Post #1989 – Indiana	November 12, 2017	2:30 P.M.
27	VFW Post #481 – Delmont	November 19, 2017	2:30 P.M.
29	VFW Post #2754 – Pittsburgh	November 19, 2017	2:00 P.M.

DECEMBER 2017

1	Crescenz VAMC – Philadelphia	December 13, 2017	7:30 P.M.
21	VFW Post #6954 – Littlestown	December 3, 2017	2:00 P.M.
28	VFW Post #169 – Venango	December 10, 2017	2:00 P.M.

JANUARY, 2018

1	Cpl. Michael J. Crescenz – Philadelphia	January 10, 2018	7:30 P.M.
7	VFW Post #7213 – Norwood	January 24, 2018	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post #7293 – Whitehall	January 21, 2018	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post #7294 – Millersville	January 7, 2018	2:00 P.M.
10	VFW Post #7069 – Clarks Summit	January 14, 2018	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post #6615 – White Haven	January 21, 2018	2:30 P.M.
16	VFW Post #1711 – Jenkintown	January 17, 2018	7:30 P.M.
18	VFW Post #7415 – New Cumberland	January 7, 2018	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post #5825 – Pine Grove Mills	January 21, 2018	2:30 P.M.
25	VFW Post #315 – New Castle	January 21, 2018	2:00 P.M.
27	VFW Post #33 – Greensburg	January 7, 2018	2:30 P.M.
29	VFW Post #402 – Coraopolis	January 21, 2018	2:00 P.M.



AT YOUR SERVICE: MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS BENEFITS ASSISTANCE



PA VFW Participates in Roundtable with VA Sec.

Hosted by Mechanicsburg VFW Post 6704, VA Secretary David J. Shulkin held a roundtable discussion in central PA recently with VA leaders, politicians and veterans to discuss how the agency is improving veterans' care and to address areas where care can be improved. Post 6704 Commander Paul Kreiner, State Adjutant John Getz and Post 6704 Trustee Stephen Smalley were among VFW representatives to participate.

Comrades Kreiner, Getz and Smalley also spoke with Lebanon



VAMC Director Robert Callahan to offer their gratitude for the outstanding care veterans receive at the Lebanon VAMC. Secretary Shulkin praised staff at the Lebanon VAMC for effectively running what he described as one of the best facilities in the VA network.

"What we are doing in this administration is going back and fixing the fundamental problems so we don't have these problems continue for decades to come," Shulkin said, quoted in Pennlive. "We are moving in the right direction."



Reader Question: Is SSDI offset by VA disability?

You can receive VA service-connected disability compensation and Social Security disability insurance (SSDI) at the same time, since neither program is needs-based and they are not offset by other income, or each other. However, VA pensions are income-based.

Can a 100% disabled

veteran collect Social Security?

As of March 17, 2014, veterans who have a VA compensation rating of 100% permanent and total (P&T) may receive expedited processing of applications for Social Security disability benefits. Both Social Security and VA pay disability benefits.

VA Benefit News & Other Important Health Updates

This information is provided by the PA VFW Veterans Service Officer program. For an appointment call (717) 234-7927. State HQ thanks the State of PA for Act 66 grant funds.

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

VETERANS' TRUST FUND (VTF)

Veterans Temporary Assistance Purpose - "These guidelines describe the use of the Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF) to provide temporary financial assistance to eligible Veterans and unmarried Surviving Spouses of eligible Veterans when they face adverse financial circumstances and need assistance to provide themselves with the necessities of living. In general, assistance is provided under this section to replace or supplement income lost or reduced because of an unexpected change in circumstances or to offset unexpected increased costs or expenses that affect the ability to pay for the necessities of living."

"Need for Temporary Assistance" - Financial circumstances unexpectedly resulting in insufficient funds to pay for Eligible Veteran:

- Must have been discharged under Honorable conditions OR have a Service Connected disability rated by the VA.

- Must be a resident of Pennsylvania.
- Must show financial need.
- Must show either a loss of income or increase in expenses that renders the applicant temporarily

unable to provide themselves with the necessities of living shelter and necessities of living for the Veteran and family caused by unexpected loss of income, assets or support due to sickness, disability, unemployment, natural or man-made disaster or other cause beyond the control of, and not as a result of, misconduct by the applicant

- An Honorable Discharge - Provide a DD-214 with Character of Service block showing service is General (Under Honorable Conditions) or Honorable. A VA code sheet or rating decision is also acceptable.

Remember, a NGB-22 is not a DD-214. A DD-256 is also not a DD-214. DD-214 reflects active federal service, which is why it's used as the sole factor in determining character and dates of service. Questions, comments, and concerns regarding the Veterans' Temporary Assistance (VTA) program should be addressed to the program manager. Kim Herb, VSS - (717) 861-8909, kherb@pa.gov; David Seaman, VSO - (717) 861-6500, daviseaman@pa.gov

MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND RELIEF PROGRAM

MFRAP's main focus is the Active Duty Soldier who experiences financial difficulty as a result of their military service or "Extenuating Circumstances." MFRAP was designed as an emergency "last resort" program. Grants are issued in amounts up to \$5,000

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS: Members of the nation's Armed Forces or its reserve components, including the PA National Guard, who are:

- Residents of PA at the time of the application.
- Currently serving on Active Duty (other than for training) for a period of 30 or more.

consecutive days.

- A member of the Pennsylvania National Guard serving on State Active Duty for a period of 30 or more consecutive days.
- A member in good standing of any Reserve Component of the Armed Forces, including the PA National Guard, for a period of three years after release from a tour of active duty, authorized under Title 10 or Title 32, (other than active duty for training), or release from a tour of State Active Duty of 30 or more consecutive days duration, when the need for assistance is directly related to the following circumstances:
- A sudden or unexpected loss of real or personal property, assets or support or Exigent Circumstances affecting the Service Member.
- The death or critical illness of a parent, spouse, sibling or child resulting in an immediate need for travel, lodging or subsistence.
- The wounding of the Service Member in the line of duty as a result of combat or attack resulting in an immediate need for travel, lodging or subsistence. No more than two eligible relatives.
- A natural or man-made disaster or other Extenuating Circumstances resulting in deprivation

or food, shelter, or other necessities of life. Emergency need for child care of dependent children.

- Other immediate and necessitous cases determined in the guide-

lines established for the program.

- Exigent Circumstances: "Emergency or Extraordinary situations or conditions resulting in an eligible Service Member being unable to provide the necessities of living for the Member or the Member's dependents due to factors beyond the Member's control. The term includes, but is not limited to, natural or man-made disasters, loss of home or employment, disability or serious illness or injury."

Contact: Mrs. Kim Herb, VSS - DMVA, (717) 861-6500 or toll-free at 1-866-292-7201, fax: (717) 861-8589, email: ra-pa-mfrap@pa.gov.

PA WOUNDED WARRIORS, INC.

Provides assistance for housing (security deposits, rent or mortgage payments); basic utilities (ex. gas, oil, electricity, water); car payment, insurance or repair; medical expenses; and education or job training expenses.

You must be a PA resident and a U.S. Armed Forces veteran holding an honorable or general under honorable conditions discharge.

You will need to provide proof of PA residency, a DD 214, a service-connected disability award letter (if you have one), copies of lease and other bills you need assistance with (ensure they have addresses and account numbers on them). If you are asking for help with a car repair, also bring copy of car title, car insurance and car registration.

The social worker and caseworker develops the best course of action and, if needed, will submit a request for assistance to PAWW.

Contact - info@pawoundedwarriors.org.



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VFW - Act of March 1879

Dedicated to the comradeship of those who borne arms in defense of the USA,
to the principle of informed and active patriotism, working to keep us strong and free.

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Adjutant/Quartermaster John B. Getz, Jr.

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'I stand for our flag and anthem. I kneel for our fallen.'**VFW's Chief Takes Stand Against Disrespecting U.S. Flag**

The national commander of America's largest and oldest major combat veterans organization is raising his voice in opposition to those who disrespect the flag.

"There is a time and place for civil debate, and wearing team jerseys and using sporting events to disrespect our country doesn't wash with millions of military veterans who have and continue to wear real uniforms on real battlefields around the globe," said Keith Harman, who leads the VFW.

"My oath to protect the Constitution also protects my right to vehemently disagree with how others may choose to air their grievances," said Harman, who said those who disrespect what most Americans hold dear have forgotten that America is still in a 16-year, multi-front war against groups that sponsor and support terrorism.

The VFW national commander saluted former Army Ranger and now Pittsburgh Steeler offensive tackle Alejandro Villanueva for showing the rest of his team and the league what true mettle is, and NASCAR team owners Richard Petty and Richard Childress for leading from the front. "I stand for our flag and anthem," he said, "and I kneel for our fallen."

***Women Veterans Committee*****Our VFW Women Veterans Retreat is March 23-25**

Roxanne Werner, Chairperson - rox_usn_07@hotmail.com



I encourage women veterans to save the weekend of March 23-25, 2018, for the Department's Women Veterans Retreat.

The event will feature VA healthcare benefits, helpful tips for women transitioning from military to civilian life, and many other areas of interest to all women veterans—all presented in a relaxed environment.

In the past, many VFW posts and auxiliaries have supported this retreat with donations, which allows us to offer this event free of charge or at a low cost. Your support allows us to help women veterans—including those facing financial

hardship—to participate in this event.

Feedback from past retreats shows that this outreach event generates great camaraderie, many friendships and information that helps female veterans enjoy life more.

More details to come, but please reserve these dates.

If you have not visited the VA's webpage just for women veterans, you can access it at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/persona/veteran-women.asp>. I encourage you to contact a PA VFW State Service Officer if you would like to file a claim. They are great advocates for our veterans.

If you want to contact me about the retreat or about anything that will support women veterans, please email rox_usn_07@hotmail.com.

VFW Offers Life-Enhancing Support for Women Veterans

Ensuring women veterans receive veterans' benefits and services that honor their brave military service is one of the VFW's top priorities. The VFW knows that it has never been more important that the VFW ensures women veterans have a VA that is ready and able to care for them.

To gauge how well VA is serving women veterans and to identify areas where it needs to improve, the VFW's women veterans' advisory team commissioned a survey of women veterans to collect direct feedback. After analyzing survey responses and direct feedback from nearly 2,000 women veterans, the VFW identified multiple recommendations to improve VA health care, outreach, training and homeless programs.

The overwhelming majority of women veterans want VA to expand access to women-specific health care, which includes hiring more women VA health care professionals who are able to identify and treat their unique health care needs. The VFW has urged Congress and VA to expand its Designated Women's Health Primary Care Provider model to mental health clinics and other health care specialties.

Women veterans who use VA health

care for family planning services are also concerned that VA requires co-payments for preventative prescription drugs, such as contraceptives. This is counter to industry standards for private health insurance plans, which do not require out-of-pocket costs for preventative care prescriptions. The VFW has urged Congress to align VA's cost share requirements with industry standards.

The VFW also found that older women veterans were less likely to use their earned benefits and services, despite being equally as likely to be eligible or need such benefits and services. The VFW has urged VA to conduct targeted outreach to older women veterans who may not be aware of the veterans' benefits and services VA provides.

Other areas of interest as identified by the survey include better support for homeless women veterans, employment and peer-support programs for all female veterans to help them obtain meaningful employment.

To read all survey findings, visit <https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/women-veterans>.

If you would like to share your experience with VA health care or benefits, call the VFW at (800) 839-1899.

Veterans Day ... continued from page 1

regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: *"To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."*

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings, and a brief suspension of business at 11:00.

The U.S. Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926:

"Whereas the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the U.S. of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed... it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations."

"... Therefore, be it resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the U.S. on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the U.S. to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples."

An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day."

Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II

had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans."

With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.



Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation" (shown signing is pictured here) which stated: "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose."

To the nation's nearly 22 million veterans and the 950,000 Pennsylvania veterans, the Department of Pennsylvania VFW extends its deep gratitude to all who have exchanged civilian attire for military uniforms.

"To my comrades, I salute you all for protecting freedom across the globe," said State Commander Dwight Fuhrman. "You dug in your heels against our enemies and you helped keep the peace in nations recovering from years of war.

"(The VFW) also salutes those veterans who are still in uniform. And, we're ready to support those who have yet to deploy overseas and those there today. Supporting our veterans and our military remain the VFW's top priorities."

VFW NEWS EDITOR'S NOTE: Much of the information for this article was copied from Veterans Administration website, www.va.gov

REUNION - USS DONNER/LSD-20: 20th Reunion scheduled for April 30-May 3, 2018 in Hyannis, MA. For details, call (610) 775-7539 or email dennisheimb@gmail.com. Submitted by Dennis Heimbach, 1375 Pershing Blvd., Unit 709, Reading PA 19607.

VFW Mission ... continued from page 1

which in turn will help attract the attention and support of veterans and the local community?

These 10 steps can be taken by posts of all sizes—whether or not they have a post building—to build a better image that reflects the VFW’s long-standing tradition of serving veterans, military families, neighbors and entire communities:

Step #1 - At your next post meeting, commit to participating in all the VFW’s programs that will keep your post focused on a service path. Assign a committee or volunteer to learn about, carry out and report on program outcomes.

Step #2 - Create a small community involvement team to identify ways for your post to participate in and/or otherwise support area programs. Partner with other community organizations like first responder departments, food pantries, park beautification project leaders and youth activity organizers to show your post support.

By looking at the photos printed in this publication, posts can duplicate efforts that have given other posts good publicity.

Step #3 - Conduct veterans information programs a few times a year and invite the public. These events can focus on veterans benefits by using a VFW state service officer and the VA as presenters. Hold a veterans recognition event to honor area veterans, and invite family members so they can be recognized for their support.

Step #4 - Sponsor events that help the general public like blood drives, holiday parties for area kids, bike safety program, child identification events, food collection and clothing donation programs.

Step #5 - Adopt a military unit using the National VFW adopt-a-unit application and activity report form. Visit the armory to present a unit adoption certificate (provided by National HQ) and ask for a point of contact. Then, host an annual program for military families, ask to set up a VFW table at upcoming unit drills, offer your post as a site for their holiday event, attend unit deployment ceremonies and send care packages during deployments.

Stay in touch with the unit’s family support/readiness leaders to offer assistance to families during deployments. Inform families of the availability of VFW grants for emergency financial assistance. Posts can also apply for grants from National HQ to cover the cost of purchasing and serving food and drinks during military appreciation events.

Step #6 - Use small games of chance earnings to support local community

projects; help families experiencing personal disasters; donate equipment to fire, police and ambulance departments; contribute funds to local food and clothing distribution centers; buy uniforms and equipment for youth sports teams and scouting troops; and support other causes that show that the VFW is a source of much-needed financial support.

Step #7 - Get to know your local media contacts and invite the media to your events. Send news releases out at least two weeks prior to event dates. Partner with local media on events hosted at your post, which can lead to promotion and coverage opportunities. If the media does not attend an event, send out photos and caption stories out. The free publicity that your post receives through your media outreach will help build your reputation.

Step #8 - Are your post affairs in order? When a VFW post experiences internal affairs problems, word gets out among members and even into the community. By making sure proper accounting and reporting procedures are followed to track all funds, posts can avoid monetary losses from potential wrongdoing, which creates distrust among members and negative publicity.

Remember, one bad media story can erode the confidence that members and potential new members have in your post.

All post leaders should familiarize themselves with the current VFW By-Laws and Manual of Procedure as well as the new meeting rules of order.

Step #9 - Make changes to your post that will attract younger members and their families. For posts with buildings, update your facility to make them more family-friendly. Add free wi-fi. Clean the exterior of your facility. Renovate the restrooms. End indoor smoking. And, make other cosmetic improvements that modernize and brighten the interior.

Additionally, when you see a younger veteran come into the canteen or any member you don’t recognize, welcome them to your post home. Consider asking them to join you at your table and invite them back.

Step #10 - Most people enjoy being part of a team that generates positive results. Promote a team approach putting this 10-step plan into motion. Ask members to take on mission-oriented roles without over-tasking them. Approach younger members about attending your post meetings, and emphasize that their ideas and involvement on work groups are welcome. Posts relying on a small number of members to fulfill the service mission will burn out existing leaders and suffer

Department Membership Update: 80.54% of the 2016-17 Year-End Total

Top posts ranked by Membership Division			
Div.	Post	Location	%
7	6824	ROME	96.11%
7	415	NEW BETHLEHEM	94.00%
7	8008	NESQUEHONING	92.15%
7	747	POINT MARION	88.04%
7	5935	BELLEVILLE	87.87%
8	7919	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	108.86%
8	7375	HYNDMAN	100.00%
8	6301	JOHNSONBURG	96.29%
8	567	MCDONALD	93.67%
8	129	POTTSVILLE	93.42%
9	6231	SLIPPERY ROCK	98.03%
9	7810	AUSTIN	96.82%
9	6528	SCRANTON	95.23%
9	5205	PHILADELPHIA	93.93%
9	7650	PHILADELPHIA	93.75%
10	1063	PHILADELPHIA	153.84%
10	7390	BROOMALL	126.82%
10	1606	NEWELL	100.00%
10	3425	CHESTER	100.00%
10	3514	UNIONTOWN	96.55%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	101.35%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	85.41%
1	8951	WEST YORK	70.61%
1	7043	COALPORT	26.41%
2	8896	EAST BERLIN	94.60%
2	2385	GRATZ	92.36%
2	264	CORRY	91.71%
2	2006	MEADVILLE	91.02%
2	3428	MUNCY	90.28%
3	7505	MARS	96.46%
3	5265	SPRING GROVE	96.24%
3	2493	MOUNT WOLF	95.03%
3	169	VENANGO	94.94%
3	8803	TIDIOUTE	92.68%
4	1718	HARRISBURG	92.73%
4	5752	MOUNT JOY	92.27%
4	6076	MYERSTOWN	91.82%
4	5956	MANHEIM	91.70%
4	6759	REINHOLDS	91.70%
5	5825	PINE GROVE MILLS	95.97%
5	5642	MONTROSE	93.29%
5	1213	RUTHERFORD HGHT	92.72%
5	6345	MERCER	92.56%
5	7374	YORK	92.30%
6	882	MARYSVILLE	99.23%
6	3575	QUARRYVILLE	98.59%
6	6070	NEWVILLE	94.30%
6	6417	PALMYRA	93.96%
6	3398	WILLOW GROVE	93.04%

On October 23, Dept. membership stood at 63,536 members or 80.54% of the 2016-17 year-end total.

So far this year, 587 new members and 149 reinstated members have been recruited.

Posts should read the State Membership Contest Program book to learn about all membership contests and the criteria for "All-State" and "All-American." This guide can be found at www.vfwpaq.org under the "Tools/Post Info" section or call State HQ.

Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of October 23 Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!

FIRST PLACE



Zbigniew Laska

- DISTRICT 1 - 86.13% - Cmdr. Zbigniew Laska
- DISTRICT 28 - 85.00% - Cmdr. Donald Ramsey
- DISTRICT 13 - 84.84% - Cmdr. James Lindsey
- DISTRICT 9 - 84.36% - Cmdr. John Miller
- DISTRICT 15 - 84.20% - Cmdr. Scott Ostrom
- DISTRICT 18 - 83.91% - Cmdr. Rick Snyder
- DISTRICT 26 - 83.71% - Cmdr. Robert Pegg
- DISTRICT 16 - 83.60% - Cmdr. John Moyer
- DISTRICT 8 - 83.26% - Cmdr. Thomas Goodman
- DISTRICT 14 - 83.16% - Cmdr. John Miner

National HQ Offers Grants to Help Post Projects

VFW posts and auxiliaries can receive grants to assist with the cost of a community service event, thanks to the VFW Foundation. To help posts and auxiliaries serve their communities, the Foundation established the VFW Foundation Post/VFW Auxiliary Community Support Grant.

To help departments, posts and auxiliaries provide vital support to America’s heroes

and their families, the foundation offers its VFW Foundation Regular Grant.

And, under certain circumstances, the National VFW HQ also provides grants to posts that conduct military support programs that involves direct interaction with the troops. For more information on any of these grant programs, visit www.vfw.org and www.vfw.org/foundation.

from a lack of new ideas and energy.

Of course, having a growing membership and more volunteer leaders will increase posts’ ability to expand this plan. To help facilitate membership growth, all posts are encouraged to send several representatives to the Mid-Winter Conference, when National HQ will conduct a workshop to help posts find, sign up and retain new members.

State and National HQs have a

variety of resources to help posts activate this image enhancement plan. Check VFW websites for more information and be sure to always have membership recruiting materials on hand.

Posts that commit to working this plan will improve their image, develop valuable partnerships in the community, attract the attention of veterans interested in continuing their service through the VFW, and become known as the “service organization” down the street.

Focus on Mission Success



Volant Post 7465 is proud to have won the PA VFW Humana Warrior Closet Challenge three years in a row. The Post and Auxiliary work with the community and churches to collect what has grown into three pickup truck loads of clothing for military families. The Post has a streak of receiving first-place plaques from Humana during the State Convention. Shown with Commander Dan Kazmierczak are John Anderson, Pat Grossman, Lilburn Cooper, Stephen Anthony, Judy Dixon, Linda King, Ruth Link and Helen Sevin.



Selinsgrove Post 6631 continues to impact the local community by donating funds to the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life event. Pictured are (from left) Post Commander Douglas Hammett, Quartermaster Harold Aucker, Auxiliary member Tina Burgess, Relay for Life representative Dick Hess, Auxiliary member Diane Shaffer, Auxiliary Treasurer Ginger Griffith and Auxiliary member June Brosious.



West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid Chaplain Gene Staudt, left, and Commander Jake Bradich display a Flag of Honor in preparation for a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony held at Mitchell Paige Memorial Park on September 11. The event featured speaker Jimmy Young, a firefighter with the McKeesport Fire Department who was on site at the 9/11 aftermath, as well as other local first responders.



Former PA VFW Judge Advocate Robert DeSousa, on behalf of U.S. Senator Pat Toomey, presented Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Pins to 200 Schuylkill County veterans.



Etters Post 537 and Auxiliary recognized outstanding *Patriot's Pen* and *Voice of Democracy* essay winners. Post Commander Joe Colonna began the program by welcoming the students, their families, teachers, other school staff and contest judges. Each student was honored with a certificate of achievement from Colonna and a scholarship check from Post Auxiliary member Jackie Lomman.



At Hershey Post 3502, leadership surprised member Edward L. Hill by presenting him with a Bronze Star with Valor, long overdue since his heroic service during the Vietnam War. High school friend, Post member US Army (Ret.) Colonel Tom Fasnacht (in uniform), was assisting his classmate with a VA claim when he discovered the oversight. He made it his personal mission to honor this hero, who also earned the Purple Heart personally presented by General William Westmoreland. Pictured are (from left) Past Commander Micheal Donnelly, Fasnacht, Hill, Commander Scott Fritz and Quartermaster David Gyger. A draftee, Ed Hill volunteered for Vietnam and arrived in-country in August 1967, where he was assigned as an 11B, combat rifleman, to Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. In addition to the Bronze Star Medal, Fasnacht presented Hill with a deluxe version of the CIB, which he had engraved with Ed's name, rank, unit and dates of RVN service. (Hummelstown Sun Photo)

Focus on Mission Success



Erie Post 470 had a strong presence in the city's Labor Day Parade, in which Post and Auxiliary members provided a powerful patriotic presence. At right, Post Adjutant Erica Barrett hands a young girl a flag during the parade.



After attending a PAARNG troop deployment ceremony in Johnstown for soldiers of Charlie Co. 1-51st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, PA VFW representatives gathered by an Apache helicopter for a snapshot. (Photo by PAARNG SGT Zane Craig, Ft. Indiantown Gap Public Affairs Specialist/109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.)



PA VFW's Bill Roland presented Sports Clips Store Manager Rachel Troechil and a staff member with a plaque promoting the partnership between the VFW and Sports Clips company. Sport Clips donations help the VFW to provide scholarships to student veterans.



Lower Allen VFW Post 7530 Commander Scott Henry presents \$5,000 to the Central PA Food Bank. The check represents one of many donations that the Post makes to the community.



Erie Post 470 members participated in "Ruck the Bay" at Presque Isle. Participants carried items for the veterans homeless center Liberty House for either 5 or 15k distances. Shown are (from left) Post Quartermaster Joe Benacci, Trustee George Tanner, Commander Mike Staab, Past Commander AJ Courteau and Lucy.



A U.S. flag from Afghanistan was presented to Lower Burrell Post 92 Commander Lee Johnson in honor of U.S. Army Spc. Nicholas Roberts and Spc. Kenneth Dorsey. Making the presentation were (left) Sgt. Donald Steighner and Platoon Sgt. SFC Richard Jenkins, both members of Post 92, who serve with 307th MP unit in New Kensington.



Galeton Post 6611 Commander Kane Shope and Quartermaster Jesse Olson (not shown) attended a Goodyear Hose Company meeting to discuss future safety and training events. Commander Shope also presented a donation of \$3,000 to the fire company to support its operations.



We Can Overcome the Challenges Facing the VFW

Thomas "Ace" Hanzes, State Sr. Vice Cmdr. - thomashanzes@yahoo.com



Comrades, it is hard to believe that almost half of the VFW's 2017-18 program year is gone.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Officer Training

Institutes and Flying Squadron. I trust everyone left these events with plenty of new knowledge that should be shared with everyone in your post.

The VFW is in a crisis. So many questions to ask and many reasons why. There is our drop in membership,

lack of interest to take on leadership positions, poor business decisions and even image problems, to name a few.

The question is, "What can we do to improve these areas?" Here are some simple steps to take to make our posts the best service organization around:

- First, we must get outside our post and into the community. We must do a better job of promoting the VFW for exactly what it is and what our organization does.
- Second, we have to mentor and welcome our new and younger members. We must encourage them

to take on an officer/leadership role in the post. You can start by making them feel included and valued as part of your post.

- Third, we have to be sensitive to the needs and desires of the younger veterans. Let's do our best to accommodate them and their families as well. Remember, we were in their shoes and someone welcomed and guided us into the VFW.

- Fourth, we have to rely on professional people inside of our posts to help us manage our posts to make good business and financial decisions.

If we achieve these things, our membership will grow and our image will be strengthened as the best veterans' organization.

We already have thousands of veterans who served after 9-11-01 in the VFW, but there are many more thousands who are eligible, but who have not joined. Let's bring them in.

We CAN do this. WE WILL do this! We need your support.

Thank you for helping veterans, veterans' families, our troops and your communities.

No one, and I do mean NO ONE, Does More for Veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars!

If we achieve these things, our membership will grow and our image will be strengthened as the best veterans' organization. WE CAN do this. WE WILL do this! We need your support.



Chaplain's Corner

PA Dept. to host 2018 National Chaplain Event

Rev. Peter Hook, Chaplain - peterhook@verizon.net



For 50 years, the members of VFW Post 1865, and the citizens of Kenosha, WI, honored the VFW National Chaplain and other VFW Chaplains for the service they provide. This was a very special event not duplicated anywhere else in the world.

Unfortunately, a few years ago, the tradition stopped when Post leadership changed. Past National Chaplain Ted Bowers presented the idea of bringing this event to Pennsylvania to his home Post (Richard J. Gross VFW Post 8896) in East Berlin. The East Berlin Post decided to take on the responsibility of honoring the VFW National Chaplain and the work of Chaplains.

The Post held its first event last year, when I served as National Chaplain. This year, the Post will again host the "National Chaplain Event," May 18-20, 2018.

I would love to have many of our Post and District Chaplains and their spouses, join us that weekend. If you need a place to stay, I recommend the Bechtel Victorian Mansion in East Berlin. The staff can be contacted at www.bechtelvictorianmansion.com.

bechtelvictorianmansion.com.

We will check in on Friday evening and have dinner together. On Saturday, Armed Forces Day, a special guided tour of the Gettysburg battlefield will be led by Chaplain John Waga, an expert in Civil War history as well as the role chaplains and faith played in that national conflict.

On Saturday evening, there will be a dinner and program honoring our special guest, Rev. James W. Gray, our National Chaplain.

Chaplains, and anyone else who would like to attend, please mark these days on your calendar now and save that weekend.

I encourage everyone to visit my "Chaplain's Page" on our Department website, www.vfwpahq.org, where you will find many resources that help VFW comrades care for their brothers and sisters. I believe you will find this information of interest, especially for all the dedicated Chaplains in the VFW.

Please plan to attend the Department's 2018 Mid-Winter Conference in January, where I will present a workshop for those serving as chaplains.

If you need to reach me by phone, please call (267) 229-7722 or peterhook@verizon.net.

Blessing as you serve!



Facts and Figures

Quartermasters: OMS is an Online Tool for You

John B. Getz, Jr. - State Adjutant/Quartermaster - adjutant@vfwpahq.org



The National VFW's Online Membership System (OMS)—created and maintained by our National Headquarters—is a very important tool for post quartermasters.

In fact, quartermasters who do not use OMS are wasting time and effort when carrying out some of their responsibilities "the old way."

I strongly recommend that post quartermasters log into the National VFW site to learn and utilize the many tools in this online work area.

If you, as a quartermaster, are not logged into the National website, it is a must to do so. Many of the tasks you do every week can be completed using OMS. This system was created to reduce the steps needed to fulfill your role.

So if you do not have a user name

and password, stop what you are doing and type in www.vfw.org, click "log in," and head for the OMS page. You will be recognized as the elected post quartermaster. After you create an account, you will receive a PIN in the mail to use when you log in the next time.

Post quartermasters should also use this tool to set up an online direct deposit account. National will now distribute membership funds using direct deposit.

While you are on the National VFW website, take a tour of the other resources there. The Training and Support section has answers to many questions asked by post leadership and members.

Trust me, regardless of your age or computer experience, using the OMS will help you in many ways.

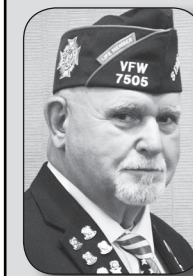
Thank you for all you do. Remember, every day is veteran's day so treat your comrades with respect and honor.

No One Does More for Veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars!



Make Younger Vets Feel Welcome & Respected

Wayne Perry, State Jr. Vice Cmdr. - wayper@zoominternet.net



for our veterans?"

By honestly examining how our time and energy makes veterans' lives better, we can make any needed adjustments to keep our programs on target. So, VFW post officers, at each post meeting I urge you to ask this question and to provide details on how you are carrying out the VFW mission.

Members, ask your post officers this question. If you like what you hear in response—and I certainly hope you do—please volunteer a few hours each month to keep post programs strong.

During my travels as Jr. Vice Commander, I ask this question to all the posts I visit. I frequently get the same issue brought up in relation to

Comrades, as we are well into the second quarter of the VFW program year, now is a good time for posts and districts to ask the important question, "Are we making the VFW a better place

post activities: VFW posts large and small need younger veterans to become involved to provide the energy, talent and dedication needed to continue working our VFW programs.

You first need to get younger veterans to your post meetings. Are you letting them know when the meetings will be? Do you organize your information and practice your duties so your post meetings will run efficiently? Do you spend time with younger members to form friendships and relationships, which lead to shared interests and a common bond?

Do you make younger members feel welcome and appreciated? Do you ask them to become involved and working with them step by step to mentor them? Do you ask for their ideas? Do you invite their friends? Do you give them meaningful opportunities or just stick them with work that no one wants to do?

We are supposed to be veterans helping veterans—regardless of where and when others served. So I am asking all my comrades, please make younger veterans feel welcomed in the VFW.

Why is VFW Membership So Important?

VFW membership recruiters are often asked an important question that deserves an honest answer: "Why should I join the VFW when I don't have time to get involved right now?"

It's critical to provide an overview of the many ways membership improves veterans' lives. In addition, be ready to share these responses from veterans who were asked why VFW members see membership as an investment.

"When you come back, even if you are still in the military, membership is a strong foundation of support." **OIF Veteran**

"My VFW brothers and sisters understand my experiences." **OEF Veteran**

"Being a member helped me settle back into life after war." **OIF Veteran**

"I wanted to find the camaraderie I enjoyed in the Marines." **OEF Veteran**

"My post is always there to help us if I need it." **OIF Veteran**

"I've been able to reach out, touch and honor the lives of other veterans of the past, present and future." **Operation Desert Storm Veteran**

"I learned a lot about veterans' issues." **Operation Southern Watch Veteran**

"We can relate to each other regardless of when we served. Our post is more than for socializing; it is a community for service." **Vietnam Veteran**

"VFW membership guided me to the benefits I earned and has helped me serve others and the community." **Korean War Veteran**

"The VFW doesn't let party lines determine who to support—the VFW backs lawmakers who



stand by veterans." **World War II Veteran**

Regardless of your age—from student vets through retired veterans—and regardless of where you served, we understand what you've been through. Call it our common bond, and we share a mission, too.

We're veterans joining forces to ensure that America treats us well. We give each other support and we continue serving our nation. Even if you never set foot in a local post, you'll benefit from the VFW's past victories and our broad activities today. No organization is more committed to being there for you in the future.

So while veterans earn a living, go to college, raise a family and spend time with their friends, the VFW works diligently to advocate on behalf of its members. We're mission ready and battle tested—focused on winning more victories for veterans.

All post members—not just the officers—should see themselves as VFW recruiters. Cut out this page, keep it in your wallet or purse, and use this article and the list below to show veterans how VFW membership works for them daily.

VFW's Priority Issues Keep Veterans' Interests at the Forefront

So, how does the VFW invoke such strong testimonials as those printed above?

- **VA Health Care:** Ensure veterans have timely access to high quality, comprehensive and veteran-centric health care, and secure sufficient funding for the VA Health Care System.
- **Women Veterans:** Expand women's health care services to all VA medical centers to ensure the growing number of women veterans have access to gender-specific services.
- **Suicide Prevention & Homelessness:** Ensure Congress funds support programs, including education/career training opportunities, substance abuse and mental health services and housing solutions for homeless veterans.
- **VA Benefits & Compensation:** Pass Appeals Modernization Act, and increase staff to ensure timely and accurate claims decisions.
- **Seamless Transition:** Demand the creation of one integrated medical and personnel record for every service member and continue to improve the quality and access to Transition Assistance Programs, both during and after service.
- **Military Quality of Life:** Oppose all proposals that will damage morale, call on Congress to improve the quality of life for service members and support efforts to lower the Reserve Component retirement pay age to 55.
- **Education & Employment:** Fight to sustain G.I. Bill benefits and insist on strengthening USERRA. Continue to improve licensing and credentialing for military skills.

- **Defense & Homeland Security:** Support the troops and their mission in the war on terrorism, and to secure U.S. borders against all enemies.

- **POW/MIA:** Achieve the fullest possible accounting of America's 83,000 MIAs.

- **Legislative Advocacy:** VFW played an instrumental role in virtually every significant piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th century, as well as bills enacted in the 21st century, including these accomplishments:

2011 - VOW to Hire Heroes Act; VFW stopped TRICARE premiums from increasing annually.

2012 - Honoring America's Veterans & Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act; Extended USERRA protections to veterans working for TSA.

2013 - Reinstated Military Tuition Assistance; Stolen Valor Act becomes law; Halted Creation of Distinguished Warfare Medal (Drones).

2014 - Veterans Access, Choice & Accountability Act of 2014; In-State Tuition for Post 9/11 GI Bill eligible veterans; Veterans Funding First Act: Advance appropriations for VA Benefits.

2015 - Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act; Eliminated 1% COLA reduction penalty on future military retirees; Created government match to military Thrift Savings Plan accounts.

2016 - Toxic exposure research; In Vitro Fertilization treatments for wounded vets; Upgrade process for those discharged due to mental health issues; 18-month extension for GI Bill benefits if a college loses their accreditation.

Congratulations BG Beck for DVMA Hall Selection

The Pennsylvania VFW was proud to attend a ceremony that installed two outstanding veterans and former Guardians into the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' Hall of Fame. Brig. Gen. (Ret) Jerry G. Beck, Jr., and Chief Warrant Officer 5 (Ret) Richard A. Schaeffer, Jr. recently became the newest honorees to receive that designation.



Photo by Tom Cherry/PA DMVA

BG Beck, after leading the Army National Guard's 28th Infantry Division as its Commanding General, served as the State's Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs. He spoke to VFW members during Department conferences as both the Division CG and PA DAG/Veterans Affairs. At one event, he humbly accepted the PA VFW Eagle Award for his outstanding leadership in the National Guard and for assisting VFW HQ with supporting his soldiers and their families.

Joining BG Beck and his wife Gina above are (from left) PA VFW Public Affairs Director David Sandman, PSC/Chief of Staff John Brenner, PSC/State Adjutant John Getz and State Commander Dwight Fuhrman.



Membership Moment

Give Veterans Reasons to Join Our VFW

Henry Mannella, Membership Chair - h.mannella72@yahoo.com



As we know, our membership is on a fast decline. This means that the building block for your organization—our membership—continues to weaken. I don't need to tell you what that may mean for the VFW.

Let's focus on how we can best attract members. The building block of getting veterans to buy into and support our mission is information: tell them what's in it for them. We do the same thing when deciding how to invest our time and money.

Make it easy for prospective members to decide to join the VFW by giving them real life examples of how we, and VFW programs, improve their lives. Tell them how membership will serve them.

I bet most of your eligible members think more of the canteen side when thinking about your post. You need to change their perspective. Come to our Mid-Winter Conference workshop about membership.

There are plenty of tools to

use for making eligible members understand that the VFW offers life-changing benefits. Log into the member section of www.vfw.org, then go to "training/support."

Share your experience with eligible members, but not the "cheap beer and food" stuff. Talk about our service officers, how we represent them in the state and national capitals, and how our involvement in communities enhances life for thousands of people every day.

Tell veterans how the VFW is a great service and social avenue for married couples. Explain the opportunities available through the Auxiliary and VFW Post Riders.

Many members have left this organization. Maybe they are sick, down on their luck or withdrawn. A simple call or letter can show that your post cares about them.

The end of the year is approaching fast, so make sure you look over the Membership Contest Program. Some contests end December 31st.

Thanks for all you do to keep the VFW strong. Remember, every VFW member is a recruiter! Every member counts.

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

STAND BY THEM

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

FORMS FOR THE MID-WINTER CONFERENCE JAN. 26-27

The Pennsylvania Department MWC registration fee is \$10 in advance and \$12 at the conference. Please complete the form below and mail with payment to Dept. of PA VFW, "MWC Delegate Fees," 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg PA 17109-5943. Delegate registration forms were sent to post quartermasters and commanders. The deadline for advance registration is Jan. 12, 2018. Make checks payable to "Dept. of PA VFW."

MID-WINTER DELEGATE REGISTRATION

Post No. _____ District No. _____
 Delegate Names/Member #s (please print): _____

 Enclosed: \$ _____ Check #: _____ CHECKS PAYABLE: DEPT. OF PA VFW
 Name/Title of person sending in this form _____

RESERVATIONS FOR VOD BANQUET

Tickets for the *Voice of Democracy* Banquet, scheduled for Saturday night, January 27, are available for \$50 each. A cash bar will open at 6 p.m. with dinner/program at 7 p.m. All seats are reserved with seating 10 per table. Tickets must be paid for when ordered. Group requests should be noted on the order form and include all names in your group. Reservations must be made by January 13. Tickets must be picked up at the VFW registration table by noon, January 27 (tickets are not mailed). Return the form below with payment to: Dept. of PA VFW, "VOD Banquet Reservations," 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg PA 17109-5943.

JANUARY 27 DEPT. of PA VFW VOD EVENING BANQUET

Name: _____ Check #: _____
 Number of tickets requested: _____ X \$50 EA. = \$ _____ Enclosed: _____
 District: _____ Post/Auxiliary: _____
ENTREE CHOICES: (includes salad, starch, vegetable and dessert)
 _____ Roasted Airline Breast of Chicken, Saffron Risotto, Broccoli, Pine Nuts, Pan Juices
 _____ Braised Beef Short Ribs, Creamy Horseradish Mashed Potatoes, Asparagus, Carrots
ENCLOSE A CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO: "DEPT. OF PA VFW" - SEND TO STATE HQ
Please attach a list of persons you want to sit with at tables of 10. There is no guarantee that all requests can be met unless tickets are ordered together.

ROOM RESERVATIONS

Room reservations can be made starting November 20, with a deadline of December 26th, by calling the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel (717) 339-0020 and requesting the "VFW rate" of \$109.00 per night single or double occupancy, plus 11% tax (total \$120.99 per night). One night deposit is required. This a non-smoking facility. The address of the hotel is 95 Presidential Circle, Gettysburg PA 17325.

VOD PROGRAM BOOK

You can help the VFW support young Americans through the *Voice of Democracy* program by purchasing black-and-white ads in a 8 1/2" x 11" ad book. Ads may be solicited outside of the VFW but they must refer specifically to the VOD program. Please send your ad with payment to Ad Book Coordinator Sandy Brenner, P.O. Box 525, Mount Wolf, PA 17347, (717) 891-2093, email - miteymou@aol.com. **Ad deadline is January 5.**

If emailed to Sandy, the ad must be done in Microsoft Word and a copy of the ad must be sent with payment. You are responsible for proofreading all names and information in your submission. Use layout dimensions shown below for ad sizes. If you use a photo, your ad must be camera ready. For hand-written submissions, type or print all information to avoid confusion. If no ad is provided, an ad will be designed at the discretion of printer (no proof will be sent to the ad sponsor). A check or money order payable to the Dept. of PA VFW, earmarked "VOD Ad Book," must accompany your form.

Full Page - \$80 (7 3/4" w x 10 1/4") 1/4 Page - \$30 (3 3/4" w x 5")

1/8 Page - \$25 (1 7/8" x 5") Half Page - \$50 (7 3/4" w x 5") Patron Booster Ad - \$5

All proceeds go toward supporting this non-profit scholarship program event.

PLEASE USE THE FORM AT RIGHT TO SUBMIT YOUR AD

**Younger Veterans Committee****Let's Support the VFW's Future Leadership**

Sandra Showalter, Co-Chairperson - desertstormvet91@gmail.com



This year, State Commander Dwight Fuhrman created a new State Committee to focus on issues and interests for Persian Gulf (Desert Shield/Storm and Operation Southern Watch), Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and current campaign veterans. This committee is Co-Chaired by David Debilus, Erica Barrett, and myself—each who have served during one of those campaigns.

Some of this committee's goals are to bring more eligible members into the VFW and to make veterans from these service periods more aware of everything the VFW has to offer.

Because this is a new committee, we must inform posts and districts about the intent of this work group. The leadership and lessons that our committee provides can be applied at the local level.

The VFW is honoring Desert Shield/Desert Storm veterans during the 27th anniversary of this service era. October marked the 16th year of the start of OEF. This past March was the 14th anniversary of the start of OIF.

As a committee, we will give light to some of the "forgotten" events that impacted—and in some cases, still effect—veterans of these wars.

For example, DS veterans are facing many challenges today. One of these critical issues is a high rate of VA claims for presumptive conditions being denied.

We need to work with our Department Service Officers to help our veterans receive the care and benefits they earned.

Some of the same concerns that Persian Gulf veterans have are also shared by OEF/OIF Veterans including health issues affecting veterans who served in the Middle East.

Another goal is to have "younger" veterans take leadership roles in the VFW. Our WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans can be valuable mentors to younger veterans. It is critical that current and past leadership work closely with DS/OIF/OEF veterans to pass on their knowledge, skills and lessons learned. This mentoring must happen if we are to be an effective service organization in the future.

Our committee will promote networking among the entire VFW membership, leadership, women veterans, Department service officers and student veterans. We will all benefit from getting to know each other better and combining our strengths to improve the VFW. This is vital because we need to show younger veterans that the VFW is the best service organization for them.

Lastly, we will hold a statewide event to address topics impacting DS/OIF/OEF veterans. To support this effort, we will launch a fundraising campaign requesting donations from VFW posts, districts and outside sponsors.

All this activity will help the VFW welcome in, support and benefit from the skills, knowledge and dedication to the VFW that these veterans can provide.

**2018 Mid-Winter Conference
 Voice of Democracy Banquet
 PROGRAM AD BOOK PLACEMENTS**

Print name: _____ Signature: _____

Organization name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Size of Ad: _____ Payment Enclosed: _____

Check #: _____ Date: _____

(check one): Ad is attached on paper in correct size as camera-ready

Ad being sent via email in Microsoft Word in correct size

Please create an ad for me (attach photo if needed)

This form creates a contract between the signer and the Dept. of PA VFW.

Proceeds will be used to offset the cost of the VOD program and banquet.

Thank you for your support of this high school scholarship program.

The VFW Auxiliary ...

Unwavering Support

for Uncommon Heroes



The Department President Says...

We're Off to a Great Membership Start!

By Kelley Lepak - kms4013@hotmail.com or (724)203-4494



Wow, what an amazing start to the 2017-2018 year! The months are flying by.

I want to thank all the Districts we have visited so far, and extend a huge thank you for all the hospitality shown to Department Chief of Staff Ceil Cook, my husband Robert Lepak and myself. We greatly appreciate your courtesies and support. It has been so wonderful meeting my Comrades, Sisters and Brothers.

I want to thank all the Auxiliaries for their patience and understanding as the MALTA system was rolled out and

revised. Please do your best working with this membership program and let us know if you have any problems.

Congratulations to each Auxiliary that has reached 100% in membership already, and to those Auxiliaries who reached 100% plus in membership. You've done a great job. Thanks for setting a good example for other Auxiliaries to follow.

To State VFW Commander Dwight Fuhrman, I extend best wishes for a memorable Testimonial weekend, and continued success throughout the year.

As we continue to "CATCH A DREAM" as we keep "LIGHTING THE WAY FOR OUR VETERANS", together "WE WILL" achieve our goals.



All Posts Can Participate in Youth Activity Programs

By Deb Rothermel, Youth Activities Chairperson - deb4steelers@gmail.com



I would like to request that all VFW Posts and Auxiliaries make a commitment to youth. Whether male, female, young, or older, we all have an obligation to teach future generations how to honor, assist, respect and appreciate the many sacrifices veterans have, and still are making for them.

Several essays are established to encourage children to write about National dictated topics, but the "Let's Talk" essay allows them to express their feelings and knowledge learned from interviewing veterans. There were 14 entries last year. I am hoping for more this year.

If you don't have an entry, you can still participate by making a contribution to the awards (checks can be sent to PA VFW Auxiliary for the "Let's Talk" program).

Information about the program is listed on the Department Auxiliary website (www.pavfwaux.org), or if you have any questions, you can contact me or one of my Area Chairpersons (Brenda Johnson, Eastern; Tracy Barcavage, Central; and Amie Clark, Western).

It only takes a minute to make a difference in a child's life. There are many positive things we can do to help protect and nurture our children. Contact your schools to see if they have any extra credits available for students when participating in community activities.

Let them know when youth can assist Posts or Auxiliaries in activities (helping at the Post, placing flags in cemeteries, parades, etc.), and always remember to recognize and thank them for helping.

We need to recruit children (all ages) in our endeavors to "CATCH THE DREAM FOR OUR VETERANS" as we are "LIGHTING THE WAY FOR OUR VETERANS."

Membership Recruiting Tips: FAQs About the Aux.

Auxiliary leaders and members are encouraged to cut out this article and keep it in their wallets or purses to respond to questions.

How do I know if I'm eligible to join?

You must be related to a veteran who has served in overseas combat, earning the campaign medals eligible. That veteran can be a living or deceased spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild. Step- and adopted parents, children, siblings (and half-siblings), grandparents and grandchildren are considered the same as biological parents, children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren and may join the VFW Auxiliary under their VFW-eligible veteran.

How do I prove my veteran can join the VFW Auxiliary?

The most common document is a DD 214, which will list the veteran's dates of service and campaign medals. But you can also use other separation documents, such as documents showing service in Korea, Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay on pay records, and also sometimes other documentation if you don't have one of these.

Does my veteran have to be retired from the military?

No, your veteran is eligible the moment he/she earns the accepted campaign medals for overseas service.

Why aren't in-laws, cousins, uncles/aunts, nephews/nieces, great-grandparents/great-grandchildren of veterans eligible?

The IRS determines the degrees of separation from the veteran that qualify for membership in a veterans' service organization auxiliary. The relationship must be within two degrees of "consanguinity" in order to be eligible. That means two generations back (i.e. parents or grandparents) or forward (i.e. children or grandchildren).

If I am a veteran who is VFW eligible can I join the Auxiliary?

After the change in Auxiliary eligibility opened to men in 2015, the VFW determined that any veteran who is eligible for the VFW cannot join the Auxiliary. Some dual members exist from before the change, and they must maintain their eligibility in order to stay members of both organizations.

Call State HQ at (717) 232-7604 for more information.

Please Hold a "Family Freedom Festival" This Year

By Veronica Grant, Americanism Chairman/Patriotic Instructor - mycatsbossme@comcast.net



As VFW and Auxiliary Members, we can demonstrate our patriotic spirit and promote patriotism when we encourage citizens to fly the American Flag every day.

Teaching youth about patriotism will lead them toward good citizenship. Posts and Auxiliaries can host flag retirement ceremonies to show honor and respect for the U.S. Flag. We can honor Prisoners of War/Missing in Action veterans with a Missing Man Table Ceremony.

Celebrate patriotic holidays and host a "Family Freedom Festival." The goal of this festival is to increase VFW and Auxiliary program participation by expanding community awareness of, and involvement with, our National Programs. This is an event Auxiliaries and Posts of all

sizes can implement in their communities.

When your Post and/or Auxiliary hosts a "Family Freedom Festival," you will create awareness of—and hopefully support for—our legislative initiatives, increase membership, provide youth with scholarship and volunteer opportunities, and promote every National Program in this one event.

The Family Freedom Festival Toolkit is available at: www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources and includes information how to host a successful event. The webpage features these resources: Steps to Participate, Event Ideas, What to Do at the Event, Event Suggestions, Logo

for Event Promotion, Sample Social Media Posts and a Sample Press Release.

We will be "LIGHTING THE WAY FOR OUR VETERANS" and "CATCH THE DREAM FOR OUR VETERANS" when we promote patriotism by hosting a "Family Freedom Festival."



Focus on Mission Success

PERIODICALS



Recently, Mike Harmon of Waynesburg Moose Lodge No. 461 presented Rick Black and the Greene County Salute to Vietnam Veterans Committee with \$3,000 to support activities related to hosting the Traveling Vietnam War Memorial Wall. Pictured are (from left) Dan Keller, Vietnam War veteran and Purple Heart recipient; Gary Milovac of VFW Post 4793, also a Vietnam War veteran; Harmon; Don Martin of Post 4793; and Black. The VFW played a strong role in making the exhibit activities successful. (Herald Standard Photo)



The Traveling Vietnam Wall from Washington, D.C., came to the VA Medical Center in Butler. Butler Post 249 participated in the ceremonies. Pictured are Post Junior Vice Commander Jason Tindall and veteran Will Guitteau presenting a wreath, reading the names of all KIAs and ringing the bell for each one.



Robert Body, District 27 Commander, accepts a \$1,000 donation to assist homeless veterans from Post 8643's Darrell McMahan. The funds were raised during a motorcycle ride.



State VFW POW/MIA Chairman Stephen Calles (left) enjoyed meeting World War II Code Talker Thomas H. Begay during a VFW event. Code talkers were bilingual Navajo speakers recruited by the U.S. Marines during World War II to serve with communications units.



Post 7463 received the "Partner of the Year Award" from the Central PA Food Bank for the Post's Military Share Program. Military Share started at Post 7463 in 2016 and has grown to serve 136 veterans and 100 military family members. Shown (from left) is District 17 Commander Jesse Rinker, Post member Deon Denault, Sr. Vice Commander Robert Snook, Post Commander Terry Mullen and Post Jr. Vice Commander Paul Sulick.



VETERANS DAY

IS THE DAY THAT WE REMEMBER
 THE DEEDS OF THE PEOPLE
 FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION
 THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
 IS ENSHRINED FOREVER

November 11, 2017

"To care for him who shall have borne the battle..."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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