



Pennsylvania VFWnews



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YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

Community Service and Outreach Critical to VFW Post Survival

Ask officers at growing VFW Posts what the key to their success is and you will receive a common response: outreach to veterans and military personnel, and consistent community service.

Posts that engage with veterans, troops and groups in their neighborhoods will survive and even thrive. In contrast, Posts whose leaders and members stay inside their canteens without a multi-faceted community involvement plan will fade away.

This proven formula for growth works at all VFW Posts regardless of membership size, location or whether the Post has a canteen because it creates valuable relationships with current and future eligible members, military families and community leaders.

“VFW Posts that are community minded and service driven are seen as positive forces in their areas,” stated Korean War veteran Thomas Brown, State Commander. “Posts can create beneficial relationships by performing community service and reaching out to those we call our military and veteran brothers and sisters.”

With 90% of units reporting, PA VFW Posts produced a very impressive \$7.24 million and 536,449 hours in community service over the last year.

Each year, the Department holds its Community Activities Record Book competition to encourage Posts to showcase their service and outreach. Nine entries were received for the 2016-17 program year: one was a video entry and the rest featured scrapbooks full of photos, thank you letters, media coverage and other items that captured the impact of their community service and **Service & Outreach ... see page 10**



Post 1754—represented by Commander Tammy McClain, member William Stewart and Auxiliary member Tausa Kauffman—worked with Scouts to present medals to World War II veteran William Carper, shown with wife Alice. The event was covered by a local paper. (Daily News photo)



Middletown Post 1620 has experienced strong growth in part because of consistent outreach to military personnel and participation in community service activities.

PA Department Convention Set for June 14-17, Greentree

Doubletree Hotel Minutes from Pittsburgh

Convention events begin Wednesday evening, June 14, with the Annual Memorial Service and close Saturday evening, June 17, with a reception for incoming State Commander Dwight Fuhrman and Department Auxiliary President Kelley Lepak.

Daily information sessions will be held Thursday and Friday mornings. Department elections will be held Saturday morning during the Business Session. The first 2017-18 Council of Administration meeting will be held immediately after the installment of officers and the Program of Instruction.

The Patriotic Rally will be held Friday evening.

Be sure to check out the many family friendly social and recreational activities available just a few miles from the hotel including Pittsburgh Pirates baseball, the Pittsburgh Zoo, the Pittsburgh Aviary, the Gateway Clipper Riverboat, Kennywood Amusement Park and many more.

PARTICIPATION FORMS WERE SENT TO POST COMMANDERS AND ARE ON WWW.VFWPAHQ.ORG UNDER “EVENTS.”

VFW Troop Support Marches On




Lower Burrell Post 92 attended a Change of Command Ceremony for the 307th MP Company as a continuation of the Post adoption of the unit. Shown are Post Sr. Vice Commander Robert Body, Company Commander CPT Joshua Nordin and Post Commander Lee Johnson.

PA VFW leadership visited the PAARNG 28th ID's HQ to offer its support to Division soldiers. The VFW team reported on the organization's many military support programs. Division Commanding General BG Andrew Schafer and his leadership briefed the VFW about the Division's history and current activities. The VFW thanks CG Schafer, COL Marc Ferraro, MAJ Harry Gobora, CSM John Jones, SFC Kurt Schroder and SPC Alicia Oberholtzer for their hospitality.

Duffy Praises and Challenges PA VFW Members

VFW Chief Attends District 28 Meeting



Accepting an invitation to speak at a District 28 meeting, National Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy saluted the many success stories made possible by the Pennsylvania VFW and challenged Districts, Posts and individual members to bring new members into the VFW. Shown with Chief Duffy are National Legislative Committee member Joe Benacci and Post 7842 Commander Bob Moser. Post 7842 hosted the event.



From the State Commander

Let's Remember Our WWI Comrades

Thomas A. Brown - paatom1@verizon.net or (610) 551-2541



This year, the VFW joined a national effort to recognize the centennial of our nation's entry into World War I. We encourage all VFW members to be thankful for the service of our troops who fought in this war, many whose memberships helped build our VFW into the most important organization for combat veterans.

Below are some thoughts pulled from various sources that help us remember a moving moment during World War I—the Christmas truce of 1914.

Chronicles, at least since Troy, record cessations in fighting to bury the dead, pray to the gods, negotiate peace, assuage war weariness and offer signs of amity to enemies so long opposite in a static war as to encourage mutual respect. None had ever occurred on the scale or duration as when the shooting suddenly stopped on Christmas Eve 1914.

The event appears in retrospect somehow unreal, incredible in its intensity and extent, seemingly impossible to happen without consequences for the outcome of the war. Like a dream, when it was over men wondered at it, then went on with the grim business at hand.

It was one of history's most powerful, yet-forgotten, Christmas stories. It took place in the improbable settings of the mud, cold, rain and senseless killing in the trenches of World War I. It happened in spite of orders to the contrary by superiors; it happened in spite of language barriers.

And it still stands as the only time in history that peace spontaneously arose from the lower ranks in a major conflict, bubbling up to the officers and temporarily turning enemies into friends.

Silent Night, by renowned military historian Stanley Weintraub, magically restores the 1914 Christmas truce to



Allied and German soldiers exchange letters during a World War I Christmas truce in 1914.

history. It had been lost in the tide of horror that filled the battlefields of Europe for months and years afterward. Yet in December 1914, the Great War was still young, and the men who suddenly threw down their arms and came together across the front lines—to sing carols, exchange gifts and letters, eat and drink, and play soccer—naïvely hoped that the war would be short-lived, and that they were fraternizing with future friends.

It began when German soldiers lit candles on small Christmas trees, and British, French, Belgian and German troops serenaded each other on Christmas Eve. Soon they were gathering and burying the dead, in an age-old custom of truces. But as the power of Christmas grew among them, they broke bread, exchanged addresses and letters and expressed deep admiration for one another. When angry superiors ordered them to recommence the shooting, many men aimed harmlessly high overhead.

Sometimes the greatest beauty emerges from deep tragedy. Surely the forgotten Christmas Truce was one of history's most beautiful moments, made beautiful in light of the carnage that followed it. This shows that peace can be more fragile than war, but also that ordinary men, and today women, can bond with one another despite all efforts of politicians and generals to the contrary.

Let's remember this special Christmas miracle and those who fought in World War I. May there be many more peaceful promptings in our world that has faced the pains of battle since "the war to end all wars" ended.

I want to thank everyone for what you have done to make this year one that I will never forget. God Bless you.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The content of this article is largely based on the book "Silent Night," published by Free Press, a division of Simon and Schuster, Inc. Copyright 2001



The Department has recruited more than 2,190 new members so far during the 2016-17 program year due in part to recruiting efforts at special events like the NRA Outdoor Show.

Department Membership Update: 94.78% of the 2015-16 Year-End total

Top five posts ranked by Membership Division			
Div.	Post	Location	%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	101.48%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	97.37%
1	8951	WEST YORK	80.50%
1	1810	BRENTWOOD	70.69%
2	7043	COALPORT	174.61%
2	928	FOLSOM	153.90%
2	2385	GRATZ	101.05%
2	6168	SHIPPENSBURG	100.48%
2	2506	HANOVER	100.00%
3	1620	MIDDLETOWN	115.29%
3	464	OIL CITY	102.57%
3	1785	CLEARFIELD	101.62%
3	3376	EPHRATA	101.17%
3	1754	HUNTINGDON	101.16%
4	7842	LINESVILLE	111.48%
4	6558	WOMELSDORF	104.05%
4	5010	FREELAND	103.21%
4	4793	WAYNESBURG	102.98%
4	7012	NEW FREEDOM	101.55%
5	509	TOBYHANNA	103.33%
5	212	BRADFORD	102.92%
5	148	HARRISBURG	101.29%
5	1338	SHARON	100.64%
5	5859	JERSEY SHORE	100.58%
6	1630	LOCK HAVEN	107.96%
6	803	CLAIRTON	107.20%
6	4907	WELLSBORO	105.64%
6	1132	KANE	103.36%
6	4584	MASONTOWN	103.25%
7	2076	PUNXSUTAWNEY	105.76%
7	34	NEWPORT	105.20%
7	6321	SMITHMILL	103.77%
7	8675	TROY	102.04%
7	7046	STEWARTSTOWN	101.94%
8	3258	CHALFONT	110.12%
8	4200	TIRE HILL	103.65%
8	43	MARTINSBURG	102.63%
8	214	PITTSBURGH	102.35%
8	7130	DELTA	101.33%
9	5201	BELLWOOD	107.69%
9	6982	COALDALE	105.26%
9	8051	PHILADELPHIA	103.50%
9	5069	ANDREAS	101.69%
9	7810	AUSTIN	101.56%
10	274	PITTSBURGH	115.78%
10	7949	EDDYSTONE	114.63%
10	6700	PHILADELPHIA	108.82%
10	6231	SLIPPERY ROCK	104.08%
10	7390	BROOMALL	102.50%

On May 8, Dept. membership stood at 78,934 members or 95.32% of the 2015-16 year-end total. So far this year 2,190 new members and 583 reinstated members have been recruited.

Posts should read the State Membership Program to learn about all membership contests and the criteria for "All-State" and "All-American."

Quartermasters are encouraged to visit www.vfw.org to use the Online Membership System and to ask their District Membership Chairman for their Post delinquent member list.

Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of April 30 Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!



DISTRICT 7 - 100.26% - Cmdr. William Daws
 DISTRICT 22 - 101.22% - Cmdr. Mark Nelson
 DISTRICT 19 - 98.00% - Cmdr. Ronald Peters
 DISTRICT 15 - 97.97% - Cmdr. Jesse Olson
 DISTRICT 26 - 96.58% - Cmdr. Joseph Kopsic
 DISTRICT 18 - 96.39% - Cmdr. Scott Fritz
 DISTRICT 12 - 96.31% - Cmdr. William Begis
 DISTRICT 24 - 95.99% - Cmdr. Martin Puchi
 DISTRICT 13 - 95.75% - Cmdr. James Lindsey
 DISTRICT 1 - 94.48% - Cmdr. Zbigniew Laska

Department Bids Farewell to PSC Eugene Manfrey

State HQs announces with a heavy heart that Past Department Commander Eugene Manfrey, who held the State VFW's highest office during 1982-83, passed away recently at the age of 85.

PSC Manfrey served in Korea with the U.S. Army's 25th ID after a tour with occupation forces in Japan. He attained the rank of master sergeant with the 35th Infantry Regiment. He earned the Occupation of Japan Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Korean Service Medal and, along with his 35th IR comrades, the Presidential Unit Citation.

He joined the VFW in 1952 and quickly rose through the ranks to become judge advocate of Warren Post 631. He was elected Post commander in 1957. He went on to become county council commander and helped organize the Warren County Veterans Affairs Committee, to which he was elected president. In 1965, he was elected State VFW judge advocate.

Comrade Manfrey served in many other VFW roles including district commander during the 1964-65 VFW program year and as a member of the National VFW Safety Committee. Even after moving to Florida, he stayed in touch with his PA VFW friends and returned to the Commonwealth several times to attend state conventions. He presented State HQs with an impressive leather VFW logo piece, which now hangs in the front area of the Department's office. Rest in peace, Comrade Manfrey!





AT YOUR SERVICE: CONNECTING YOU WITH BENEFIT ASSISTANCE



This information is provided by the Department's Veterans Service Officer program. Call State HQs at (717) 234-7927 or visit www.vfwpahq.org for the nearest VFW Service Office. The Department thanks the State for Act 66 Veterans Service Officer Outreach Grant funds.

ASBESTOS ISSUES & VETERANS

Exposure to asbestos can be a serious health risk if asbestos-containing material is disturbed in such a way that the particles and fibers become airborne and are breathed in. Symptoms of asbestos-related diseases, such as shortness of breath, coughing, and chest pain, often do not appear until 20-50 years after the exposure.

If you are concerned about health problems associated with asbestos exposure during your military service, be sure to speak with your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator. VFW State Service Officers can help veterans with confirmed health conditions related to exposure to file for government benefits.

Veterans who served in any of the following occupations may have been exposed to asbestos: mining, milling, shipyard work, insulation work, demolition of old buildings, carpentry and construction, manufacturing and installation of products such as flooring and roofing.

Veterans who served in IRAQ and other areas in that region could have been exposed to asbestos when old buildings were damaged and asbestos was released.

HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS

Breathing asbestos mainly causes problems in the lungs and the membrane that surrounds the lungs, including:

- Asbestosis: Scarring of lung tissue that causes breathing problems, usually in workers exposed to asbestos in workplaces before the Federal government began regulating asbestos use (mid-1970s).
- Pleural plaques: Scarring in the inner surface of the ribcage and area surrounding the lungs that can cause breathing problems, though usually not as serious as asbestosis. People living in areas with high environmental levels of asbestos, as well as workers, can develop pleural plaques.
- Cancer: The two types of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos are lung cancer and mesothelioma, a cancer of the thin lining surrounding the lung (pleural membrane) or abdominal cavity (the peritoneum). Mesothelioma is rare and is usually caused by asbestos.

Learn more about asbestos and its health effects from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

If you are concerned about health problems associated with exposure to asbestos during your military service, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator.

Veterans may file a claim for disability compensation for health problems they believe are related to exposure to asbestos during military service. VA decides these claims on a case-by-case basis.



Department Assistant State Service Officer (SSO) John Chiodi, a Vietnam War veteran, provides veterans benefit information to one of the several hundred PA veterans who were assisted at the Department's State Farm Show booth. VFW SSOs attend events across the state.

HEARING AIDS AND VETERANS

To receive hearing aids and related products through the VA, veterans must register at the health administration/enrollment section of the VA Medical Center of the veterans' choice. The following documents are usually needed at the time of registration: a copy of the veteran's DD-214, driver's license and health insurance (if available).

There are several ways to enroll:

- In person at a VA Medical Center or Clinic.
- Online by filling out the Form 10-10EZ.
- By mailing completed Form 10-10EZ to the Medical Center of your choice (please be sure to sign your application or it cannot be processed for enrollment).

Once registered (or if already registered), a referral to the Audiology and Speech Pathology Clinic may be requested through your assigned VA Primary Care Provider. The audiologist will complete an evaluation and make a clinical determination on the need for hearing aids and/or other hearing assistive devices.

If you are eligible, your hearing aids, repairs, and

future batteries will all be at no charge to you.

Veterans who are authorized to receive VA batteries may request batteries in these ways:

- Through the Mail - Use the blue VA Form 2346, Request for Batteries and Accessories card/envelope received with your initial or latest battery order.
- Over the Phone - Call the Denver Acquisition & Logistics Center (DALC) at 303-273-6200; press 1 for the Automated Battery Reorder System.
- Online with eBenefits - Visit the eBenefits website at: www.ebenefits.va.gov; for security purposes and to protect your personal information, you must first apply for a Premium Account (Level II Credentials) through the eBenefits website; once logged in as a Premium User, ensure you are on the home page by clicking the eBenefits logo in the upper left side. From the main page look for the "Manage Health" category, then "Hearing Aid Batteries."

For help, contact the eBenefits Customer Service at (800) 983-0937, option 2. Please Note: You CANNOT order batteries through the My HealtheVet website.

Once ordered, your batteries should arrive within 7-10 days. Please reorder when your remaining supply of batteries is sufficient for approximately 30 days. Based on the information in your request, each order will have batteries to cover around six months. Veterans can also order other hearing related products like wax guards.

VA MAKES WAIT TIMES TRANSPARENT

The VA is taking unprecedented steps to increase transparency. VA launched a new Access and Quality Tool that provides veterans with an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand way of accessing patient wait time and quality of care data. This tool not only provides veterans with more information about VA services, it increases accountability and ensures that the VA is held to a higher standard.

"Veterans must have access to information that is clear and understandable to make informed decisions about their health care," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin. "No other health-care system in the country releases this type of information on wait times. This allows veterans to see how the VA is performing."

The tool allows veterans to access the average times patients are waiting to be seen in their local area; how veterans describe their experiences scheduling primary-care and specialty-care appointments at VA facilities; timeliness of appointments for care needed right away; and the quality of health care delivered at VA medical centers compared with local private-sector hospitals. The Access and Quality Tool is the most transparent and easy to understand wait time and quality data website in the health-care industry.

The VA will continue to make improvements to this tool based on the feedback. The Access and Quality Tool can be found at www.accessocare.va.gov.

Please Use Registry

The **PA Veterans Registry** is an online application that allows veterans, family members and people who work with veterans to connect with the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to request information related to valuable state benefits, programs and services.

All registrants' information will be shared with County Directors for Veterans Affairs and Commonwealth agencies to facilitate local connections.



By connecting with DMVA, registrants can receive timely communications like newsletters, press releases and updates.

The registry is one step in the DMVA's strategy to expand communication with veterans and partners who support them. Visit the web page <https://register.dmva.pa.gov/>

Need Help with a Claim? Your VFW State Service Officers are Ready to Assist

Philadelphia Region 215-381-3123; Wilkes-Barre/Scranton/Northeastern PA 570-821-2535/2536; Harrisburg/Lancaster/York/Chambersburg/Hanover Region 717-234-7927; Altoona/Johnstown Region 814-943-8164; Pittsburgh/Southwestern PA 412-395-6259/6260; Butler Region 724-287-4781, ext. 4579; Erie Office/Northwest PA 814-835-8494; Northcentral PA/Lock Haven Region 570-560-1382. You can also call State HQs at 717-234-7927 and ask for Service Officer outreach locations.



WATCHING YOUR BACK: MEMBERSHIP PROTECTS YOUR INTERESTS

VFW's Legislative Priorities Represent the Needs of All Veterans



U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy poses with some of the PA VFW group that participated in the National Legislative Conference. At left, VFW Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy presents the VFW legislative priorities to members of the U.S. House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees.

One of the most important benefits of VFW membership is knowing that State and National HQs staff work hard to represent the interests of veterans and their loved ones in the State and Federal legislative processes. While members move forward with their lives, the VFW speaks at legislative hearings, monitors progress on key bills, meets with lawmakers and their staffs, and makes sure legislators treat veterans with respect and honor.

Here is a list of federal legislative priorities created by National HQ to protect the interests of veterans, our military troops and their families.

BUDGET

Congress must fully fund VA and DOD programs and services. To achieve this, Congress must:

- End budget sequestration and adjust outdated budget caps.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Authorize public/private partnerships for VA's infrastructure needs.

WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

To attract and maintain a quality workforce Congress and VA must:

- Improve hiring authorities to recruit and retain a high quality workforce.
- Provide quality training programs for employees and managers.
- Quickly investigate, discipline and remove employees who underperform or endanger veterans' lives.

HEALTH CARE

Congress and VA must ensure that veterans receive timely access to high quality, comprehensive and veteran-centric care at no added cost to veterans by:

- Conducting demand/capacity analyses in each community.
- Consolidating VA's community care programs into a single, integrated system.
- Modernizing VA's scheduling system.
- Expanding current

caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras.

- Strengthening VA and DOD mental health programs.
- Expanding gender-specific programs and competencies.

- Providing care and benefits to veterans and family members impacted by toxic exposures.
- Improving research for Traumatic Brain Injuries.
- Improving the review process for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.
- Preventing the increase of pharmaceutical co-payments.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Timely and accurate disability ratings are the gateway to compensation and other benefits. To ensure veterans and their dependents have access to these earned benefits Congress and VA must:

- Reform the appeals process.
- Accept private medical evidence when processing disability compensation claims.
- Require treatment of presumptive conditions as a claim for disability compensation.
- Extend presumptive conditions for hearing loss, tinnitus, TBI and toxic exposures.
- Expand nursing home eligibility for all veterans.
- Increase burial allowances, expand marker medallion eligibility, and include spouses' information on all headstones.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

To ensure veterans have an opportunity to obtain meaningful employment after leaving military service, they must have access to:

- High quality and sustainable education benefits.
- Strong employment and training programs.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services throughout their lifetime.
- Small business development opportunities.
- Civilian credentials or academic credit for the professional training they receive during service.
- Government hiring and

contracting opportunities.

- A national veterans treatment court advocate within VA.
- Homeless reintegration programs.

DEFENSE/HOMELAND SECURITY

Congress, DOD and Department of Homeland Security must fully support U.S. troops and their mission to fight the War on Terrorism and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world by:

- Halting the development and/or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Fully funding and deploying a U.S. missile defense system.
- Securing America's borders.

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

Congress and DOD must maintain a quality and comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force. To achieve this they must:

- Preserve the integrity of TRICARE.
- Protect and improve on-base quality of life programs.
- Pass full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation.
- Eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset for surviving military retiree spouses.

POW/MIA

Congress and DOD must make POW/MIA recovery a national priority by:

- Ensuring the POW/MIA Accounting mission is fully funded.
- Expanding partnerships with host nations and private/public organizations to achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. troops missing from all wars.

When you visit your congressional representatives, stress these priorities as the issues that the VFW is fighting for in the 115th Congress. These goals

Priorities ... to page 5

VFW Legislative Victories

While its many legislative victories for veterans started in 1917, the VFW's achievements since just 1980 shows the life-enhancing impact of VFW advocacy:

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

1980 - VFW calls for Agent Orange study, Veterans Rehabilitation & Education Amendments

1981 - POW Benefits Act, Veterans Health Care, Training & Small Business Loan Act

1982 - Veterans Employment and Training Service, Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated

1983 - Emergency Veterans Job-Training Act

1984 - Montgomery GI Bill, Veterans Dioxin & Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act; Agent Orange & Atomic Exposure

1987 - New GI Bill Continuation Act

1988 - The Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act, Department of Veterans Affairs Act, Veterans Judicial Review Act, Veterans Benefits & Improvement Act

1989 - VA becomes a Cabinet Department, Court of Veterans Appeals

1990 - Agent Orange service-connection

1991 - Agent Orange, Persian Gulf War Veterans & Veterans Benefits Improvement Acts

1992 - Veterans Health Care Act

1996 - Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform

1999 - Veterans Health Care and Benefits Act

2003 - Concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 50% disabled or more (P.L. 108-136)

2004 - Full concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 100% disabled (P.L. 108-375)

2005 - Traumatic Injury Insurance supplement

2006 - Protesters banned from military funerals

2007 - VFW calls for VA/military healthcare review after Walter Reed outpatient debacle

2008 - Record VA discretionary budget, GI Bill for the 21st Century signed into law

2009 - Advanced Appropriations for VA

2010 - Family Caregiver Legislation signed: Ensured all VA/DOD health care programs recognized as meeting minimum coverage standards under national health care law

2011 - Vow to Hire Heroes Act and VFW stopped TRICARE premiums from increasing annually, Restoring GI Bill Fairness

2012 - Honoring Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act, Extended USERRA protections to veterans working for TSA

2013 - Reinstated Tuition Assistance Programs; Stolen Valor Act Passed; Stopped Creation of Distinguished Warfare Medal (Drone Medal)

2014 - The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act; In-State Tuition for Post 9/11 GI Bill; Veterans Funding First Act; Advance appropriations for VA Benefits; Advance Appropriations for VA mandatory accounts

2015 - Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act

2016 - Demonstrated the harmful impact of sequestration; 40,000 messages sent to promote major legislative issues for veterans including full-year VA funding and opposing the privatization of the VA system.

Priorities ... from page 4

reflect the resolutions passed and supported by the men and women of the VFW, its Auxiliary and their families. Remind them that our priorities also help show respect for and support of our troops.



“Providing advocacy for our members—who consist of veterans from World War II up through our latest generation of combat-zone veterans—is one of our most critical activities,” commented State Commander Thomas A. Brown, prior to leading the Pennsylvania VFW contingent to Washington for the VFW Legislative Conference in March.

“The VFW stands guard in Harrisburg and Washington to make sure veterans receive the benefits they need and have earned. Whether it’s making sure that the VA is operating in the best possible manner, providing information and statements to legislative work groups or alerting lawmakers and government officials to developing needs of our veterans, our State and National HQs are on the front lines making sure that the VFW voice is heard loud and clear.”

Post officers and all members are urged to stay abreast with developing legislative issues through VFW blast emails, websites, Facebook pages, other social media and publications.

To find who your congressional representatives are visit www.vfw.org and click on “Advocacy Grassroots Efforts.” You can also sign up for the VFW’s Action Corps Weekly e-newsletter at www.vfw.org/weekly.

Join the VFW Action Corps

District Meeting Schedule

MAY 2017

Dist.	Place	Date	Time
1	Cpl. Michael J. Crescenz – Phila.	May 10, 2017	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post #9264 – Macungie	May 14, 2017	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post #845 – Downingtown	May 21, 2017	1:00 P.M.
10	VFW Post #5207 – Covington Twp.	May 7, 2017	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post #821 – Berwick	May 21, 2017	2:30 P.M.
12	VFW Post #3432 – Pine Grove	May 21, 2017	2:30 P.M.
13	VFW Post #6558 – Womelsdorf	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
14	VFW Post #5642 – Montrose	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
15	VFW Post #844 – Williamsport	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #7155 – Trappe	May 17, 2017	7:30 P.M.
17	VFW Post #882 – Marysville	May 7, 2017	2:00 P.M.
18	VFW Post #7530 – Mechanicsburg	May 7, 2017	2:00 P.M.
19	VFW Post #464 – Oil City	May 21, 2017	2:30 P.M.
20	VFW Post #4714 – Northampton	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
21	VFW Post #6954 – Littlestown	May 21, 2017	1:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post #4559 – Tyrone	May 21, 2017	2:30 P.M.
23	VFW Post #8826 – Salisbury	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
24	VFW Post #8308 – Lawrence	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
25	VFW Post #267 – Bessemer	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.
26	VFW Post #7605 – Twin Rocks	May 21, 2017	2:30 P.M.
27	VFW Post #92 – Lower Burrell	May 7, 2017	2:30 P.M.
28	VFW Post #264 – Corry	May 7, 2017	2:00 P.M.
29	VFW Post #1810 – Pittsburgh	May 21, 2017	2:00 P.M.

SPECIAL NOTE: ALL POSTS MUST BE REPRESENTED AT DISTRICT MEETINGS. POST COMMANDERS WHO CANNOT ATTEND DISTRICT MEETINGS MUST APPOINT A POST REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND AND HAVE THAT PERSON SIGN IN ON THE MEETING ATTENDANCE FORM.

OTI Sessions Prepare Officers for Post Leadership

The Department has scheduled free summer training events to help Post Officers understand and fulfill their duties. These sessions are of great importance to both new and experienced Post officers. Even if you have attended one of these sessions before, you will benefit from the updates and new discussion opportunities.

Each Post is encouraged to send several officers to create teamwork. State HQs will mail details to Post Commanders. Dress is casual with VFW Cap. All sessions begin at 9 a.m. (coffee/donuts at 8 a.m.; lunch at noon).

NORTHEASTERN PA – SATURDAY, AUG. 5TH: POST 5207 JOHN J. MICHAELS MEMORIAL, 257 DALEVILLE HWY., COVINGTON TWP PA 18444

SOUTHEASTERN PA – SUNDAY, AUG. 6TH: POST 6495 JOHN BILLINGTON, 1605 HAINES RD., LEVITTOWN PA 19055

SOUTHCENTRAL PA – FRIDAY, AUG. 11TH: DEPT. DISTRICT 21 GOLF SCRAMBLE AT BRIARWOOD GOLF CLUB, YORK. FRIDAY NIGHT AT RADISSON HOTEL, 1150 CAMP HILL BY-PASS, CAMP HILL - **Department & Auxiliary Leadership Meeting**

SOUTHCENTRAL PA – SATURDAY, AUG. 12TH: THE RADISSON HOTEL, 1150 CAMP HILL BY-PASS CAMP HILL, PA 17011.

Open to Post Officers and Required for Department Leaders

NORTHCENTRAL PA – SUNDAY, AUG. 13TH: POST 8724 DUNCANSVILLE MEMORIAL, 1665 NEWRY LANE, DUNCANSVILLE, PA 16635

SOUTHWESTERN PA – SATURDAY, AUG. 26TH: POST 1810 BRENTWOOD, 3801 CLAIRTON BLVD., PITTSBURGH, PA 15227

NORTHWESTERN PA – SUNDAY, AUG. 27TH: POST 7599 REYNOLDS, 115 EDGEWOOD DRIVE, GREENVILLE, PA 16125

Incoming State Commander Dwight Fuhrman encourages all posts to make plans now to participate in one of these sessions and in all VFW programs.

VFW’s Unmet Needs on Track For Record-Breaking Year



The VFW is proud to announce that its Unmet Needs program has already exceeded \$1 million in financial assistance grants to more than 420 military and veteran families since the VFW’s fiscal year began in September.

This puts Unmet Needs on track for the highest level of assistance provided in a single year since the program’s inception in 2004. To date, more than \$7 million in emergency financial assistance has been awarded to more than 4,300 military families in their most desperate times.

To learn more, visit www.vfw.org/UnmetNeeds.

QMs: Report Election Results & Deceased Members

Post quartermasters are required to file election results using National HQ’s website immediately after the election. Commanders are responsible for ensuring that his or her quartermaster performs this duty even if the same officers are re-elected. National HQ makes it easy for Post quartermasters to accomplish this task electronically. Go to www.vfw.org, enter the Online Membership System (OMS) in the Post QM Tools section, and click “Post Election Report” and file the report. Each officer’s information will automatically populate when the leader’s membership number is entered. A copy of the report will be automatically sent to State HQ. Posts can also register delegates for the National Convention via OMS.

Quartermasters: Report deceased members to State HQ promptly. Timely reporting removes their addresses from VFW lists, which reduces mailing costs and respects surviving family members who no longer want to receive VFW mail.



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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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Produced by Department Communications & Public Affairs Director David A. Sandman

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Focus on Mission Success



Hamburg Post 216 Commander Dennis Carter presented \$3,500 to Hamburg Chief of Police Pedro Rivera to purchase needed police equipment. Shown looking on is the Mayor of Hamburg Peter Kalabisco.



Canonsburg Police Chief Al Coghill points at his department's new vehicle as VFW Post 191 Honor Guard Sergeant Chuck Moyar, Post Commander Alex Nakoneczny, Council President R.T. Bell and Mayor David Rhome enjoy the occasion. The Canonsburg Police Department purchased the new Ford Explorer with a \$36,000 donation from members of Post 191. (Observer Reporter photo)



York City Fire Fighter Matthew B. Hoblitzell accepts a certificate recognizing him as PA VFW Firefighter of the Year, part of the Department's Safety Awards program. Presenting the certificate was Post 8951 Commander David Sloan and Jr. Vice-Commander Richard Olvitt.



West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid Commander Jake Bradich stands with local winners of the *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* contests at the unit's monthly meeting. Also pictured are scholarship awardees Zkkrah (Ziggy) Patterson, John Gambrell and Samantha Curcio, as well as the Post's VFW *Voice of Democracy* Teacher of the Year, Melissa Fulmer, who won the Department contest.



State Commander Thomas Brown was the guest speaker for a Pearl Harbor Day Program held December 7th at North Union Post 8543. Past State Commander Allen Q. Jones, a member of Post 21, was one of two WW II veterans present. Also pictured are (from left) State Sr. Vice-Commander Thomas Hanzes, Post Commander Carl Stockton, Senator Pat Stefano, Commander Brown and PSC Jones.



Members of Coraopolis Post 402 recently presented 20 Mastercard Gift Cards to the Fisher House (Pittsburgh) for families of veterans staying at the House over Christmas. The Post plans to continue donating funds to programs that benefit veterans and their families. Shown are (from left) Bob Masimini; Sr. Vice-Commander Mike Blair, the Post's oldest active member at 91; House Manager Heather Frantz; and Quartermaster John Radcliff.



The VFW has been involved with the National Rifle Association (NRA) since 1920. Hundreds of VFW Posts provide hunter safety courses and shooting competitions. Annually, the VFW and NRA offer junior and adult small-bore rifle and air rifle individual and team matches conducted by mail called "Postal Matches." Shellsville Post 9639 sponsors youth and teenage shooting competitions. Shown here at the Harrisburg Hunters and Anglers Club, Post Commander Glenn Hoffer presents top awards to Collin Werner, Tatiana Benner and Matthew Boyer. Also pictured is the club's youth shooting program manager, Burt Stockton.



Vietnam veteran Steve Lewis, President/CEO of US Restaurants, Inc., was presented with VFW recognition plaques for the Unmet Needs Program Support. Steve's 32 Burger King restaurants have raised over \$35,000 for the Unmet Needs this past year. Present with Steve (from left) were Administrative Assistant Mary Jean Moroz, Assistant Manager Rebekah Opelski, Team Member Adeeyah Scott, Assistant Manager Jeff Carter, Store Manager Chantille Scott, District Manager Sandra Reed, Marketing Coordinator Liz Dougherty and Assistant Manager Shammi Kausar. Presenting the plaques were Past State Commander Glenn R. Umberger Jr., District 16 Commander Louis J. Varga and District 16 Sr. Vice-Commander John R. Moyer.

Focus on Mission Success



Linesville Post 7842 honored Life Member Charles Rudler, a WWII veteran and former POW, with a screening of the documentary "NEW BOOTS" at the Post Home. Produced by Life Member John Beagle and filmed locally, the film describes Rudler's time in Europe, his capture by German soldiers and his time in a forced labor camp until his liberation. The Post held two screenings, the first being attended by Rudler, his wife of 72 years and two WWII veterans who are life members at the Post.



West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid and the West Mifflin Area High School Air Force JROTC Cadets recently teamed up at Southwestern Veterans Center in Pittsburgh to help local veterans. The Cadets and Post membership provided patients with refreshments and helped with games. Pictured are VFW Post 914 Commander Jake Bradich and West Mifflin JROTC Cadets Staff Sgt. Nate Beck, Tech Sgt. Joe Popa, 2nd Lt. Zach Schmude, Master Sgt. Starr Yoculan and Lt. Col. Jerald Berger.



Duncansville Post 8724 donated funds to the Jaffa Children's Hospital in Erie. Present were (from left) Post Commander Richard Dively, Jaffa Shrine Potentate Jerry Lower and Post Quartermaster Dwayne Anders.



Butler Post 249 Commander Floyd Case presented Jack Protivnak with a VFW Certificate of Recognition for his attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.



State Commander Thomas Brown, State and National VFW Chaplain Peter Hook and Past State Commander Al Thomas pause for a photo during a Cooties event at the Coatesville VA Medical Center. The Cooties sponsored a spaghetti dinner and bingo games for hospitalized veterans.



Etters Post 537 Sr. Vice-Commander Ron Reinecker recognized COL (Retired) Frank Hancock as the Post's nominee for State VFW Citizenship Education Teacher of 2017. Hancock is the senior military instructor of Cedar Cliff H.S.'s JROTC. The values that he teaches inside and outside of the classroom inspire cadets to pursue self-improvement, continue their education, choose better paths in life and be good citizens.



Altoona Post 8685 held a 70th Anniversary and Rededication Ceremony to honor its name sake, Pvt. Bernard Albert Good, who made the ultimate sacrifice on December 20, 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge. Shown is the sister-in-law of Pvt. Good, Mrs. Patricia Good and MSGT Charles Good, US Army (Active) Special Forces (Green Beret).



Valley Forge Post 7878 graciously accepted a donation of \$1,000 from the Upper Merion Township Police Association. Detective Robert Smull is shown handing the donation to Post Commander Donald Collins.

DUE TO THE MANY PHOTOS RECEIVED, SOME PICTURES ARE BEING HELD FOR FUTURE ISSUES. VFW NEWS CANNOT REPRODUCE NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS. POSTS SHOULD ASK THEIR LOCAL PAPERS FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT A PHOTO AND EMAIL THE FILE TO DSANDMAN@VFWPAHQ.ORG ALONG WITH A PERMISSION STATEMENT. PHOTO PRINTS ARE ALSO ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL OR REGULAR MAIL. PRINTS WILL NOT BE RETURNED.



Being Successful is Achievable for All Posts

Dwight R. Fuhrman, State Sr. Vice-Commander - dmfuhrman@comcast.net



Hello, Fellow Veterans! I would like to share good things that my East Berlin Post has done. I know this is bragging, but I am making the point that your Post can do good things, too.

We recently painted our canteen a lighter color, replaced the ceiling tiles and installed new flooring. We applied to Home Depot for a grant to replace the flooring and were approved for the grant. The flooring was replaced by Home Depot and volunteers from our Post.

We had to add new life member boards for the VFW and the Auxiliary.

Our VFW and Auxiliary work as a team to donate back to our community. Here are a few of the examples:

- \$20,000 to four local fire companies
- \$5,000 to the Adams County Law Enforcement Gun Range; and
- a letter of intent to donate \$10,000 to a local church.

We do this while making sure to participate in VFW and Auxiliary programs, which we accomplish in part by adopting three military units that we take care of both at home and when they

are deployed overseas in harm's way.

So, what impact does all this hard work, outreach and support have on our Post? Well, seating is at a premium on the weekends as families come in to the canteen to enjoy a reasonably priced and delicious meal—all knowing that they support an important, positive force in their community.

Many have commented about the remodeling by saying it is like coming in to a “new” Post that is more welcoming and better suited for entire families.

My point is that through teamwork, good leadership of the VFW, Auxiliary and Home Association, all Posts can and do make a difference to our veterans, our troops, our neighbors and our communities. That's what our mission is all about!

I know that there are other Posts throughout Pennsylvania that do even more for their communities and make a bigger difference; that is awesome!

Let's keep our VFW Posts and Auxiliaries top notch and running well. It's the right thing to do. You can maintain a positive attitude knowing that it's for a great cause—the VFW—and you can have a lot of fun doing it, too!

Have a great summer!

VFW Featured During WWI Commemoration Events

“The founding of my organization dates back to 1899 ... the veterans, the service members and the military families of WWI were among the first of millions that the VFW has supported in our storied history,” stated VFW Senior Vice-Commander Keith Harman, at a national World War I Commemoration event in Kansas City titled “In Sacrifice for Liberty and Peace,” which the VFW sponsored.

“And it was our WWI veterans who truly shaped the VFW into one of the most respected veterans' service organizations in the world.”

The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission was created by an Act of Congress in 2013. Members of the 12-member Commission were appointed by the President and the leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the National World War I Museum.

The Commission supports the planning, development and execution of programs, projects and activities to commemorate the centennial of WW I. VFW Posts across the nation have already held a variety of events to remember and honor World War I veterans.

World War I remains America's forgotten war, even though more

Americans gave their lives during that war than during the Korea and Vietnam Wars combined, and even though it profoundly shaped the rest of “the American century.”



Top: VFW Senior Vice-Commander Keith Harman speaks about the organization's support of WWI veterans.

Bottom: Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy pauses to remember veterans buried at the Suresnes American Cemetery and Memorial outside of Paris, France.

General Orders #4

1. Installing officers are directed to see to it that the Post Election Report forms have been completed and submitted to National Headquarters. If a Post Election Report form has not been forwarded to National Headquarters at the time of installation, the installing officer shall complete and forward such report at the time of the installation of Post Officers no later than June 1. Additionally, Section 413 of the National By-Laws requires that a properly completed District Election Report be submitted to National Headquarters prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

Post Election Reports must be submitted following Post election of officers in April and no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters. We encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

2. Post, District, Department Commanders, Adjutants and Quartermasters are reminded of the requirements of sections 216, 416 and 516 of the Manual of Procedure with regard to proof of eligibility for all newly-elected and appointed officers. Elected and appointed officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Failure or refusal to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment shall result in the office being declared vacant.

3. Department Adjutants will send a full roster of newly elected/appointed Officers, including District Commanders, to the Adjutant General immediately after installation at the Department Convention.

4. Attention of Department Quartermasters is directed to Section 518 of the Manual of Procedure, “Duty of Department Quartermaster” paragraph (f) Dues Reserves, which states: “Maintain a dues reserve fund as prescribed in Section 717 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure.”

5. Attention is further directed to Section 518 of the Manual of Procedure, “Duty of the Department Quartermaster” paragraph (k) Budget, which states: “Prepare a tentative balanced budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. The budget once adopted by the Department Council of Administration shall be forwarded to the Adjutant General by November 1.”

6. Attention is called to the provisions of Section 703 of the National By-Laws which require that each officer accountable for funds or property pursuant to any provision of these By-Laws shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, he may be accountable. The bond premium

shall be paid from the funds of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department, District, County Council or Post, as the case may be, to which each officer is accountable. The bonds of such accountable officers, in amount and as to surety, shall be approved by their respective units and held by their respective Commanders. The Commander of each unit shall be responsible for the proper and adequate bonding of all accountable officers in his unit.

7. Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure requires that the Post Commander shall see that the Post Trustees Reports of Audit are properly prepared and submitted each quarter.

8. Attention of incoming Post Officers is directed to Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure which outlines the duties of various Post Officers.

9. Attention is directed to the provision of Section 222 (d) of the National By-Laws, “Each Post will pay, in advance, a national convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee.”

Post Quartermasters are encouraged to register on-line through the Online Membership System (OMS). Posts failing to comply with this provision will be considered delinquent and in arrears.

10. Attention of Department Commanders-elect is directed to Section 516, paragraph (b), of the National By-Laws which provides that the Department Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Chief of Staff, Inspector and Service Officer and such other officers as may be required by Department By-Laws.

The Department Commander shall appoint such other officers, committee chairmen and committees as may be necessary to carry out the responsibilities and functions of the Department and the directives of the Commander-in-Chief.

It is recommended that the appointment of the Public Relations officers be based upon the appointee's credentials as a media representative with special emphasis upon qualifications and continuity rather than political criteria.

It is also recommended that consideration be given in the preparation and adoption of Department budgets and to the importance and necessity for providing adequate financial support for Department Public Relations activities.

BY COMMAND OF Thomas A. Brown, State Commander
ATTEST: John B. Getz, Jr., State Adjutant



Membership Moment

Numbers Aside, Here's the Real Reason Membership is Important to You and Your Comrades

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



VFW leaders hear all the time that members are tired of hearing about the need to recruit members. You already know that if all VFW members recruit one member each, we will easily finish well above 100% in membership. Every member knows an eligible veteran.

I'll assume that you also know that the VFW will be a shell of itself in 10 years if we continue to lose members. Should you care? Will you feel the effect?

Look at membership from another angle: your quality of life. Your quality of life is negatively impacted when your Post members don't renew their memberships. It's the simple truth.

How so? For one thing, lawmakers determine whether your current benefits will continue and if new benefits will be added to address developing issues that veterans from all service periods live with.

Trust me, legislators, governors and presidents know that membership in veterans groups is dropping. The veterans' voice—traditionally one of the most recognized and effective advocacy entities thanks in large part because of the VFW—might not carry the weight it has had over past decades if members leave our posts. Membership strength equals votes. When we lose members, we lose the voting strength to hold lawmakers and government officials accountable.

This is a huge issue that every VFW member should care about. You may not feel it today, but if the trend of seeing

current memberships lapse continues, government benefits and services that enhance your life may be eliminated.



TO RECRUIT NEW VFW MEMBERS?

If not the VFW's voice, then who will speak for you? If membership keeps falling, will our voice matter in 10 years?

And what about the VFW camaraderie that many of you enjoy? I hope the time spent with your VFW comrades has a positive impact on your life. Without local Posts, the activities that bring veterans together will go away.

The VFW's request for your help with recruiting and retaining members is not just to generate dues dollars. It's really all about keeping the VFW strong enough to keep improving your life.

If you don't think VFW programs and services improve lives—starting first with veterans' lives—please read the other articles in this paper. The VFW is making a tremendous difference to many people.

The VFW exists for your benefit. Getting new members and asking those who left your Post to renew helps all of us. Let's keep fighting for each other's welfare just like we did in the military.



Chaplain's Corner

Let's Review Our VFW Cover Etiquette and Ritual Ambiguity

Rev. Peter Hook, State Chaplain - peterhook@verizon.net or (267) 229-7722



Presently, the VFW Ritual is not clear for when covers are to be removed for prayers. I first became aware of this when I attended the Memorial Service at the National

Convention several years ago.

I was struck by the fact that there was no call for covers to be removed prior to prayers. This seemed odd to me, because at the Department Memorial Services, there has always been a call for covers to be removed when a prayer was offered.

While everyone should be aware of proper cover etiquette, chaplains, commanders and sergeants-at-arms usually call for covers to be removed. I hope this column provides some guidance.

Military Cover Etiquette and Tradition

In the military, the hat is never called a hat! It is always referred to as a "cover," and there are specific regulations that explain "proper cover etiquette." As a general rule, military in uniform functioning in a ceremony, and/or under arms, are not to uncover.

Also, during an outside ceremony, military in uniform—not under arms, generally do not uncover, as the cover is considered part of the uniform. For inside ceremonies, and the person in charge of the ceremony calls for covers to be removed, then covers should be removed.

Military and VFW Tradition

Since uniformed military personnel followed the lead of the uniformed military chaplain, or presiding officer,

during prayer, this same custom has been followed by the VFW (follow the lead of the chaplain or presiding officer). This is why the VFW Ritual General Rule 13b (page 3) states, "members will follow the action of the Chaplain or presiding officer for removal of caps during prayers."

VFW Tradition for Opening Ceremonies

During the opening of Post ceremonies, the Post chaplain offers an opening prayer (cf. Ritual page 15). There is no statement as to whether the chaplain and those present uncover or remain covered. Based on the preceding (Military and VFW Tradition), and the mores of American/Western culture, most chaplains call for those present to uncover.

Following the prayer, those present re-cover (whether a command to re-cover is issued or not). This same logic holds true for the prayers offered at a District meeting, Department meeting, Conference meeting and COA meetings.

VFW Tradition during Post Meetings

After the Commander declares the Post duly opened, the Ritual on page 17 states, "When the Commander gives the command of "Parade Rest," a member in uniform or wearing VFW cap (this should be changed to cover), shall remain at parade rest; shall not remove their cap during prayer (optional), and shall remain at parade rest until another command is given." NOTE: Since it is the chaplain or presiding officer who determines whether covers are removed, this section of the ritual should be changed. I have submitted a suggested change to National HQ.

American Custom and Tradition

It has been the custom in America

for males to remove head coverings when entering buildings, when prayers are offered, and during the playing of the National Anthem, as a sign of respect. To not to remove a hat at these times would be considered rude and disrespectful.

Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh Culture, and General VFW Protocol

Jewish law requires men to cover their heads as a sign of respect and reverence for God when praying, studying Torah, saying a blessing or entering a synagogue. This practice has its roots in biblical times, when the priests in the Temple were instructed to cover their heads.

Traditionally, Jewish men and boys wear the kippah (or yarmulke) at all times, a symbol of their awareness of, and submission to a "higher" entity. Muslims and Sikhs all remain covered when in a holy assembly. Both have distinctive head gear which is specific to their needs.

Because of the traditional mores of American/Western culture, most VFW chaplains call for the audience to uncover during prayers. Those of the Jewish faith will remove their VFW cover, and keep the traditional Jewish yarmulke on, thus remaining true to their faith practice while following and honoring the traditions of the VFW and American/Western culture.

Outside Funerals and Cover Etiquette

When attending outdoor funerals or graveside services, those in military uniform and VFW members wear their covers at all times. Military personnel are not to take off a cover while at an outside funeral in uniform. Understanding this, some VFW Chaplains call for VFW members to remain covered during prayers

at an outside funeral service.


However, civilians will most likely uncover (and expect the VFW members participating to do the same) since it is considered a sign of respect to do so. There are VFW chaplains who will call for the funeral detail and those present (other than military in uniform and those under arms) to uncover. The general rule is to follow the command of the chaplain or commander who is leading the service.

Funerals Indoors and Cover Etiquette

The Ritual states on page 91: "All military or VFW details shall, in church, have heads bared except while actually functioning. Members of the color detail and firing squad do not remove caps. Uniformed pallbearers remain covered while carrying casket. Uniformed members not in formation, but attending services as individuals, stand at attention with cap held to left breast whenever casket is moved by pallbearers and during salutes and Taps."

Therefore, covers are only worn when one is actually functioning. In that case, those functioning at the funeral would be covered and: "follow the action of the chaplain or presiding officer relative to removal of caps during prayers."

If wearing civilian attire and a civilian hat while attending a funeral, it is appropriate (and a visible sign of respect) to remove the hat when entering a building, and during prayers, to place it over your heart. Understanding this to be so, most chaplains will call for the VFW funeral detail to uncover during the prayers. In other words, "When in Rome do as the Romans would do."


Facts and Figures
Keep Your Quarterly Audit Reports Coming In

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


I am so proud of the great work that you and your Post do everyday to drive the Veterans of Foreign Wars' mission forward. Staying true to our motto "No One Does More for Veterans" requires many volunteer hours of service, and we could not do it without terrific support from the Post level.

The 2016-17 VFW program year has been a challenging year, but we continue to make life better for veterans, those defending freedom and our neighbors.

At the State HQ level, we are receiving better quarterly Post Trustee Audit Forms. However, we still have some improper ones being submitted, including ones that have the line for Post Relief Funds incorrect or left blank. This line must show all donations raised from the Poppy distributions or donations that come for helping needy veterans and their families.

I know that the funds are usually kept in the General Fund, but Poppy money and donations must be broken out and subtracted from the General Fund by reporting it as Post Relief funds and used


Let's Show Everyone How Much the VFW Does

 Thomas M. Hanzes, State Jr. Vice-Commander - thomashanzes@yahoo.com


It is so hard to believe that a year has almost passed since the 2016 State Convention when I was installed as State Jr. Vice-Commander. I want to sincerely thank all the Posts and

Districts who have worked so diligently to complete so many VFW programs.

Most certainly, first and foremost, congratulations to State Commander Tom Brown for a job well done. Thank you for your guidance and leadership.

To my comrades, we still have time to complete our membership and community service reports.

This is my fifth and final year as Department of PA Community Service Chairman. I have met so many dedicated comrades and wonderful VFW Posts. The efforts from all of you makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars what it is – "No One Does More For Veterans."

Thank you to the following districts who have already made their 100%

only for that purpose.

Section 219 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure clearly states the purpose of a Post Relief Fund. Section 704 also covers this issue. Your VFW Post exists, first and foremost, to help veterans, so funds raised for this purpose must be dedicated to assisting those comrades who are facing hard times. You can even use these funds to pay membership dues for members unable to afford dues on their own.

Another common problem area involves the Post Dues Reserve Fund. From July 1 through June 30th, Post Quartermasters must put one half of the dues money received into this Fund. This is clearly defined in Section 717 of the Manual of Procedure.

Please follow the instructions for all areas on the Audit Form. Otherwise, your Post will be considered late in submitting this critical form. When Post trustees sign the form, they attest to the form being accurate, audited and complete. Please take this responsibility seriously.

Remember, if you follow the By-Laws, you cannot go wrong.

Keep up the outstanding work that you do as an individual and through Post teamwork. If State HQ can help you in any way, please call (717) 234-7927.

participation goal: Districts 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 28 and 29. There are many districts that are so close. Let's get the job done to show that from the local Post level up through our Districts and Department that Pennsylvania has the hardest working VFW Posts in the world!

Lastly, a heartfelt and sincere thank you to Commander Brown, Sr. Vice Commander Dwight Fuhrman, State Adjutant/Quartermaster John Getz, Department Public Affairs Director David Sandman, Auxiliary President Donna Mills, and all Posts and Auxiliaries, for all their advice and support in my year as Jr. Vice-Commander. I have learned so much, but have so much to learn yet!

As we move forward into the next year, let's keep strong the pride, commitment and dedication we have in the Veterans of Foreign Wars!

In closing, thank you to each and every one of you for all you do to help veterans, veterans' families and your neighbors in your communities.

Let's work hard to show that "Every Day is Veterans Day."

Service & Outreach ... from page 1

outreach.

Congratulations to Huntingdon Post 1754 for earning first place followed by Folsom Post 928 and Middletown Post 1620 in second and third, respectively.

Entry forms reported total number of volunteer hours and dollars spent on service and outreach projects:

- Middletown Post 1620 (VFW membership 261/Auxiliary 126) - 256 hours of activity, \$57,101 spent;
- Huntingdon Post 1754 (346/257) - 760 hours, \$107,814;
- Chalfont Post 3258 (88) - 1,871 hours, \$13,853;
- Harmony Post 879 (121) - 1,080 hours, \$10,139;



Greensburg Post 33 worked with local law enforcement to conduct a Halloween safety event for area families.

- Mechanicsburg Post 6704 (513/247) - 4,580 hours, \$6,388;
- Bradford Post 212 (174/185) - 1,290 hours, \$48,962;
- Folsom Post 928 (480/140) - 8,345 hours, \$37,028;
- Yardley Post 6393 (317/72) - 53,080 hours, \$38,324; and
- Greensburg Post 33 (494/105) - 7,142 hours, \$27,714.

As photos with this article indicate, community service takes many forms from promoting youth development, public safety, park beautification, student scholarships and patriotism to participating in community fairs, food pantry fundraisers, military unit support and retirement home visits.

Some Posts help place flags on



Mechanicsburg Post 6704 teaches youth about the history of our nation's flag.

graves, collect school supplies for less fortunate youth, visit veterans in nursing homes, adopt families during the holiday season and hold benefit events for local families facing financial hardship.

Many Posts work closely with scouting programs, youth sports teams, JROTC units, the Salvation Army and outdoor camps for veterans. Other popular service projects include supporting the placement and repair of veterans memorial monuments, providing Color Guards for public events, making donations to police and fire departments, hosting hospitalized veterans for parties and donating funds to myriad local service organizations.

As record books show, VFW Posts that let local media know about their activities often receive news coverage.

"Posts do so many things to make life better for Pennsylvanians," Commander Brown stated. "All Posts, even the smallest ones and those with tight finances, can perform this type of service. It's what the VFW is all about."



Post 879 participated in Cranberry's Community Days.

Make Memorial Day A Solemn Tribute

For those who gave their lives for freedom, and those who passed on after serving their nation, let Memorial Day be about giving thanks for their sacrifices and reflecting on how they made this world a better place to live. The PA VFW salutes them all and we support their families.



The VFW Auxiliary ... Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



The Department President Says...

We Have Much to Celebrate and Be Thankful For

Donna K. Mills, fd1mills@comcast.net or (814) 658-2130



WOW! It is so very hard for me to believe that I am writing to you for the last time as VFW Auxiliary Department of PA President!

We have been very busy on many fronts: membership, doing great things for our veterans and their families, promoting patriotism, youth activities and scholarships, caring for our hospitalized veterans and those in Veterans Homes, and pushing legislation so our veterans receive their earned benefits. Whew, time has flown by in the blink of an eye.

I thank each of you for a job well done this year as the State VFW Auxiliary, providing “UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES” in our goal to continue “SERVING AMERICA’S HEROES.”

Every goal that has been accomplished this year is because of your hard work, dedication, enthusiasm and devotion to the VFW and VFW Auxiliary and its mission. Surely, “NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS” than the VFW and Auxiliary.

We need to continue recruiting, retaining and rejoining members every day.

I am proud to announce that the Department Membership is 102.16% as of March 25. I have all hopes that this percentage will increase prior to June 30, and I am very proud of YOU for reaching the coveted 100% PLUS goal two years in a row!

The future of our organization relies heavily on continued membership growth, mentoring of new members and promotion of all our programs.

We need to be kind, respectful and grateful for everyone on our team for what they do. There isn’t a President at any level who can accomplish the goals of the VFW Auxiliary alone and neither can you.

Please keep open minds to the opinions and ideas of every Auxiliary member and realize they are important, valuable and deserve to be heard. That **ONE NEW IDEA** may be a great new project, fundraiser or veterans service. Be open to suggestions. You can attract more bees with honey than you can with vinegar, and we must welcome as many worker bees as we can get!

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as your Department President with PA VFW State Commander Thomas A. Brown. I will see all of you at the Department Convention, where we will celebrate our accomplishments, make plans for the next Auxiliary year and have fun with friends.



Bringing Veterans and Youth Together Creates Memories

Deb Rothermel, Youth Activities Chairman - deb4steelers@gmail.com



I would like to thank all Posts and Auxiliaries for the generous donations made towards the new youth program “Let’s Talk.” The program involved interviews with veterans that were conducted by children, which allowed the youth to share their experience about what they learned or how they felt during or after the interviews.

If you missed the opportunity to donate, don’t worry, there is no deadline. Just send your check to Department Headquarters VFW Auxiliary (earmark Let’s Talk program).

Don’t hesitate to recruit the assistance

of our youth to help with work around the Post, placing flags on cemeteries, parade activities, etc. A lot of schools have programs that encourage students to get involved within their communities. Call your schools and get on their lists.

We all like to be recognized and thanked for things we do. Please give the same respect to our children when they help your Post or Auxiliary. They will long remember being presented with a certificate or other form of recognition.

Our youth are the future of this country. They are our nation’s future freedom defenders. This is your opportunity to mentor and educate them in the many ways of “Serving America’s Heroes” through “Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes.”

Spotlighting Our Auxiliary Successes

Many hands make light work as demonstrated by these very dedicated PA Department Auxiliary members shown here preparing food for the annual Christmas party at Huntingdon Post 1754. The event is held for children of Post and Auxiliary members as well as youth from the greater Huntingdon community.



Joined by VFW National Auxiliary President Colette Bishop during her visit to PA, Department Auxiliary leaders pause during a tour of the Lebanon VA Medical Center for a photo with the Medical Center’s Chief of Voluntary Services Jeremy Fees (far left) and Acting Director Margaret Wilson. (Photo by Douglas Etter, Lebanon VAMC’s Chief Communications Officer and PA VFW life member)



Let’s All Strive to Reintroduce Patriotism

Pat Donovan, Patriotic Instructor/Americanism - panndonovan@comcast.net



It is not difficult to display patriotism through our personal conduct or by letting those we are around know just how much we love and respect the United States of America, our American Flag, our Veterans who have served, those presently serving at home and abroad, and their families by word and deed.

This is a difficult time in our country. Therefore, it is more urgent than ever that we step up and display our American Flag. As Auxiliary members and fellow Americans, we must mentor our youth that they understand what the flag means and the cost it represents to ensure our continuing freedom.

We need to start at home—then be visible at events we attend by simply requesting that hats be removed and that

we stand quietly during the Pledge of Allegiance and/or our National Anthem.

We as Americans cannot allow our patriotism to deteriorate or disappear. If we all work together, we can be the voice to unite our American pride.

I believe it is time to have the Pledge of Allegiance back in all our schools. We cannot remain the silent majority for what we believe in. We can begin by projecting kindness, tolerance and respect to others who may not share our view.

There are many items available through the VFW Store (www.vfwstore.org) that can help you show your patriotism and instill patriotism in others including youth.

Showing our love of country as Americans can be visible by “Serving America’s Heroes and by our “Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes” as they serve us without question or hesitation.

FOCUS ON MISSION SUCCESS



The Pennsylvania VFW Riders proudly rode in the Philadelphia Veterans Day Parade. Shown on their rides are (from left) Bob Clegg, Art Schneider, and Chris Capitano. In addition to the riders, the VFW State HQ participated in the parade as did several Posts and Districts.

PERIODICALS



George Tanner, Erie Post 470 Post Service Officer, works a kiosk to help promote National Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy's campaign to change direction in veterans' emotional wellness, "Know the Five Signs."



District 22, under the direction of its Women Veterans Chairperson Sandy Showalter, sponsored a free luncheon and program for female veterans from any service period. The event, held at Duncansville Post 8724, included numerous speakers and plenty of time for the participants to enjoy camaraderie.



Hamburg Post 216 provided \$24,964 of financial support to groups during 2016: Berks Historical Society, VFW National Home, Our Town Foundation, Hamburg Fish and Game, Hamburg Police Department, HAHS Scholarships, Hamburg's Memorial Day Parade, Hamburg Area Music Assoc., Boy and Girl Scout Troops, Union Fire Co., Hawks Baseball Program, St. John's Cemetery Association, Hamburg Jaycee's, the Borough Trick or Treat Night program, Berks Co. Veteran's Hall of Fame, Hamburg Emergency Services, PA Wounded Warriors, Veteran's Making a Difference, Keystone Soldiers Food Bank, donating gift cards to local veterans and holding a Christmas party for veterans.



Media Post 3460 Auxiliary held an awards dinner for five *Patriot's Pen* student winners, their families and teachers. Pictured is first-place State VFW winner Annika Sullivan with District 7 Auxiliary President Kathy Ebling and State Commander Tom Brown. Not pictured Patricia Iannarelli, Patriotic Instructor.



Clarks Summit Post 7069 recognized Post member Herman Johnson, center, on his appointment as Mayor of Clarks Summit Borough during a Post meeting. Also pictured are (left) Commander Donald Jones and Quartermaster/Adjutant Michael G. McLane, the Department's State Inspector.