



Pennsylvania VFWnews



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YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

Conference Reports Show VFW is Making a Big Difference

Marking the halfway point of the 2016-17 program year, the Department's Mid-Winter Conference in Pittsburgh during late January showcased Pennsylvania VFW programs and services that impact many thousands of veterans, military personnel and citizens in the Commonwealth.

Department officers and committee chairpersons reported how Pennsylvania VFW award programs, scholarships, donations, community projects and special events support State Commander Thomas A. Brown's leadership theme, "You Make a Difference."

"The Pennsylvania VFW has a lot to be proud of, from the state and district levels down to our local posts," Commander Brown stated to 350 conference participants. "Your hard work and dedication to keep the VFW mission going strong is making life better for your fellow veterans, our troops and our neighbors."

Speaking on behalf of the VFW National Headquarters, the Department's National Council Member, Robert Eiler, also commended Pennsylvania VFW leaders and members for showing that "No One Does More for Veterans."

"I am so proud of the outstanding work being done by my comrades in our Department to support the VFW mission," said Eiler, who served as State Commander during 2005-06. "The good work you do is showing that the VFW is an active, effective organization worthy of support by veterans of all ages."

"We need to bring in more members, and they will want to join if we tell them how the VFW is helping them and so many others. We need to make sure that our good work is known by eligible members, military personnel, the media and our communities."



PAARNG SSG Brian J. Reighard, a combat veteran of service in Iraq and Afghanistan, receives a Pennsylvania VFW Eagle Award from State Commander Thomas A. Brown. PAARNG Brigadier General George M. Schwartz, Deputy Adjutant General for Army operations, assisted in the presentation of the award and thanked VFW members for their service.

Serving Veterans of All Ages

During the 2015-16 year the Department's State Service Officers filed 5,736 claims for veterans, had 53,419 veteran contacts and brought \$44,595,471 of federal benefits to Pennsylvania veterans. This service helped veterans from World War II up through modern wars to improve their lives through healthcare services, compensation awards, pensions and other benefits.

Many VFW members volunteer their time to support Veterans Courts across the state. Department programs assist homeless and unemployed veterans, veterans impacted by diabetes and arthritis, veterans still in the **Conference ... see page 4**

VFW Online Tools Help Post Volunteers to Serve Effectively

There are thousands of dedicated VFW members across the state who volunteer as post officers, committee members and event coverage team members. These veterans represent all military service periods and branches, men and women, experienced post leaders and newly appointed officials.

Realizing that many of these volunteers desire greater information about and support for fulfilling their roles, State and National VFW Headquarters created online training tools and resources

to help elected and appointed leaders effectively serve their posts. By utilizing State and National VFW websites—which can be found online at www.vfwpahq.org and www.vfw.org—post volunteers can quickly access user-friendly training, leadership tips, participation forms and helpful guidelines at a time

VFW Websites ... see page 8



State Conv. Set for June 14-17 at the Doubletree in Pittsburgh

VFW leaders from across Pennsylvania will gather at the Doubletree by Hilton in Green Tree on June 14-17 for the 2017 State Convention to celebrate VFW successes during the 2016-17 program year under the leadership of State Commander Thomas A. Brown. The event will also feature the installation of Vietnam War veteran Dwight R. Fuhrman of Post 8896 as the 2017-18 State Commander.

Events begin Wednesday night with the Annual Memorial Service and end Saturday night with a reception for incoming State Commander Fuhrman and Auxiliary President Kelley Lepak. Daily information sessions are scheduled for Thursday and Friday. The Patriotic Rally will be held Friday evening and Department elections will be held Saturday morning.

A Council of Administration meeting will be held Saturday and is open to all active members.

There will be plenty of time for camaraderie and networking. Convention participation forms will be mailed to post commanders and quartermasters, and will be available soon on the Department's website.



Left to right: State Voice of Democracy student winner Haley Butina, representing Post 4559 and District 22, reacts to hearing her name announced as the Department's first-place contestant. She received the VOD trophy from State Commander Thomas Brown and Department Auxiliary President Donna Mills. West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid VOD Teacher of the Year Melissa L. Fulmer was also honored during the conference banquet as the Department's top VOD teacher.



From the State Commander

Treat Each Other with Honor and Respect

Thomas A. Brown, paatom1@verizon.net or (610) 551-2451



I attended the Brentwood Post 1810 “Veteran of the Year” event and was extremely impressed with both their professionalism in organizing and conducting the event, and in the nature of the program to promote veterans who make a difference.

The event was so memorable, inspiring and emotional that I ask every post to step up and have an event like this. It is an outstanding idea that draws all veterans closer together.

Your post “Veteran of the Year” can be a member who others love and admire—one who stands above the crowd in his or her service commitment, conduct, ability to work with all types of persons and their mission focus.

It is especially important to hold volunteer recognition events today when it is hard to even get enough people to fill all the required officer and volunteer positions.

This “Veteran of the Year” can help showcase the attitude and willingness of your members to step in and drive posts of any size to success.



After giving a keynote address, Commander Brown celebrates Veterans Day with other veterans and military personnel at the Defense Logistics Agency in New Cumberland.

So how might you choose this person? Well, look at the impact your post programs have on others. How is your post making life better in your community for youth, students, military personnel, less-fortunate persons, senior citizens and others. Who are the key people in your post who make your outreach and service programs work well? If you cannot pick just one person you can have two “Veterans of the Year.”

The military has its own ways of honoring dedicated leaders and support persons through decorations, medals and other tools. The VFW should also

have a recognition program. In fact, wouldn't it be great if our VFW post leaders and members thought as high of any VFW recognition they receive as they do their military honors?

Watch people evolve and become leaders in your post. Take a look at the VFW leaders who have dedicated many years of their lives to the success of your post and its ability to serve the community. Honoring them will give them a time to reflect on their good work, not to become proud, but to celebrate all the great work that can be done for others through VFW service.

There's another reason why honoring “Veterans of the Year” is important: the fact is, veterans have experienced and overcome challenges not imaginable by those who have not served. When you look at systemic oppression, obstacles and trap doors that are put in front of veterans, the valleys can be deep and the climb up the mountain requires everything you have.

Overcoming these challenges requires the muscle of perseverance, building on each minute and hour, calling on the resiliency that veterans from all service periods have shown us. We must move forward being able to smile in the face of the Devil.

This year a national VFW priority is taking care of each other in part through mental health awareness. Today, it takes strength and yes, heroic effort, to push through what some might call weakness. Fellow veterans, we have experienced unique things. As family, we need to “love one another.” That's all we need to do—spread love by speaking love and kindness to one another.

All it takes is a small compliment, smile or shoulder to lean on, which as veterans we should extend to each other. If not us in the VFW, who will? It's affirming and uplifting. We need to hear and see that from veteran to veteran.

We should affirm, believe in and encourage one another. It has a chain reaction as smiles lead to laughter, which can change a veteran's outlook.

When people hear the strongest person say, “I need help,” it can change the culture of the room. To travel alone is one thing, but when you take the hand of God, the direction is known.

A “Veteran of the Year” program can play a big role in making our VFW more caring, more supportive, more effective and more relevant in the future.

God bless all the “Veterans of the Year” for all you have done and what you are going to do in future years.

VFW Post Donations Benefit People of All Ages

By holding fundraising events and donating small games of chance earnings, VFW posts across the state are making life better for veterans and others needing a helping hand.

Etters Post 537 and Auxiliary presented the Lebanon VA Medical Center with \$16,000 raised through a golf event and donations. Shown are Chenlye Lauer, Greg Reigle, Joe Colonna, VA Hospital Voluntary Activities Assistant Chris Levensgood, Holly Sowers, and Jackie Lomman. The donation will be split for hospice care, a Christmas fund, social activities and services for the latest generation of combat veterans.

Trappe Post 7155 held their Ninth Frank H. Martin, III, Car Show and raised \$11,513 for Serena Lotrecchiano, who suffers from Pierre Robin Syndrome. Pictured (front row from left) are Home Assoc. President Glenn Dunlap, Serena's mother Antonia, Serena, Kathy Opperman, Home Assoc. Vice President Jack Clawson, Post Commander Howard Helbert, Post Quartermaster George Henderson; (back row) event committee members Buddy Martin, Dave Maris, Vince Improto, Jeanie Starzell and Josh Martin.

Pittsburgh Post 3945 officials present a \$4,470 donation to the Friends of the Fisher House, which provides housing for family members of veterans receiving overnight treatment at VA facilities in Pittsburgh.



General Orders #3



- ELIGIBILITY:** The attention of the Post Commander is directed to Section 101, has amended July 25, 2016. The Investigating Committee should not recommend acceptance of an application unless eligibility has been fully determined. Post investigating committee should approve/disapprove each applicant.
- MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING:** Commanders on all levels will enforce the provisions of Section 105 of the National By-Laws (as amended July 25, 2016, effective August 26, 2016) and Manual of Procedure. A member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the VFW.
- DELINQUENT DUES COMMITTEE:** All Post Commanders are directed to appoint a Delinquent Dues Committee for the purpose of contacting and collecting dues from delinquent members. The Committee should start operating NOW by visitation at the residence of delinquent members and collect their dues. Personal contact will bring results.
- TRUSTEES REPORT OF AUDIT:** Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure - Duty of Trustees: Trustee Report of Audit must be completed by the Trustees in detail, at the close of each quarter, one of which will end March 31, 2017. Commanders are reminded that all funds are to be under the custody and control of the Post Quartermaster. Persons other than the Post Quartermaster, who may handle post funds, such as Club Manager, Bingo Chairman, or Committee Chairman are responsible to the Quartermaster to maintain accurate records and accounts and should be properly bonded. Post Trustees are to ensure that the financial records of these special funds are also audited in the same manner as other accounts of the Post Quartermaster.
- NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS:** Section 217 of the National Manual of Procedure states: Post officers shall be nominated in March and elected in April. A member making the nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the opening of nominations. Post officers shall be installed in their respective offices prior to the convening of the Department Convention, but shall not assume their duties until the Department Commander is installed. An officer-elect who may be absent for a good and sufficient reason or cause may be installed, at any regular or special meeting prior to the Department Convention, if not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.
THE POST MUST SEND IN THEIR ELECTION REPORT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTION IN APRIL TO DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

General Orders ... continued on page 5

VA Lejeune Presumptive List & Choice Program Updates

WASHINGTON – The VA has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions: adult leukemia; aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes; bladder cancer; kidney cancer; liver cancer; multiple myeloma; non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; and Parkinson's disease.

Environmental health experts in VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program and the National Academies of Science.

Veterans with 30 or more cumulative days of active duty at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period are already eligible for certain benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene, a metal degreaser and perchloroethylene, a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems. Those contaminated wells were shut down in February 1985.

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas. The rule will be effective either

60 days after publication in the Federal Register or after the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.

VA Choice Program

VA appreciates the Office of Inspector General (OIG) review of VA's implementation of the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). The OIG report reviewed the VCP from its inception in November of 2014 through September of 2015. Overall, the Department concurs with the findings in the report. However, VA noted that VCP is no longer the program it was when rolled out and significant improvements have been implemented.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

1 CONVERSATION
can open the door to support.

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

Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

VA notes that it did not wait for the OIG report to publish before taking critical steps towards improving the program, including working with Congress to amend the law four times to increase access and satisfaction with VCP, including growing the provider base, increasing scheduled appointments and implementing process changes.

Veterans Claims and Benefit Information

This information is provided by the Department's Veterans Service Officer program. For assistance call State HQs at (717) 234-7927 or see below for an office listing. State HQs thanks the State of Pennsylvania for Act 66 grant funds.

BENEFICIARY FINANCIAL & ONLINE WILL ASSISTANCE

VA makes financial planning and online will preparation services available at no cost to beneficiaries of: SGLI (Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance), TSGLI (Traumatic Injury Protection), FSGLI (Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance) and VGLI (Veterans' Group Life Insurance).

Servicemembers interested in financial counseling may contact their Command Financial Specialists or Financial Readiness Counselor. Members may also visit www.militaryonesource.mil or call 800-342-9647 for additional information. The financial counseling and online will preparation services offered here are only for SGLI, VGLI and FSGLI beneficiaries and servicemembers who have received TSGLI benefits.

SERVICE FEATURES BENEFICIARY FINANCIAL COUNSELING SERVICE (BFCS)

This service provides beneficiaries with free, professional financial advice from FinancialPoint, an independent company whose professionals are experts in handling financial matters.

Beneficiaries can access this service online 24/7 to request a financial plan. They simply enter their information into FinancialPoint's website, and a financial professional will prepare a customized financial plan based on the details provided.

They can also call or e-mail to get quick answers to simple financial questions. In-person meetings with financial professionals are also available upon request. Beneficiaries have lifetime access to these services.

The will preparation service enables beneficiaries to quickly and easily prepare a will without an attorney. After answering a series of straightforward questions, the beneficiary will receive a legal will, valid in all states, ready to print and sign.

Access These Services Online:

- www.financialpointplus.com
- Register as a first-time user.
- Use "BFCSVA" as the Organization Web ID.
- Have your eight-digit SGLI, TSGLI, FSGLI, or VGLI claim number available.
- Select FinancialPoint to submit information that will be used to create a personalized financial

plan for you.

- Select EstateGuidance® to create and print a will.

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not have your claim number, please call the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance at 800-419-1473. Phone or E-mail Access (BFCS only) SGLI, FSGLI, VGLI beneficiaries: 888-243-7351 TSGLI recipients: 800-428-3416 Email: fcs@FinancialPoint.com Financial professionals are available to help you 24/7.

ELDERLY VETERANS

According to the 2012 U.S. Census brief, veterans age 65 or older numbered in excess of 12.4 million. These veterans served in conflicts around the world including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and even in the Persian Gulf War. As veterans age, the VA will provide benefits and services that address a variety of issues including the changing health risks they face, as well as financial challenges through VA benefits and health services.

Elderly veterans may be eligible for a wide variety of benefits available to all U.S. military veterans. VA benefits include disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and burial assistance.

Two VA programs provide certain elderly veterans with an additional monetary amount if you are eligible for or receiving a VA Pension benefit:

AID AND ATTENDANCE (A&A) is an increased monthly pension paid if you meet one of the conditions below—

- You require help performing daily functions, which may include bathing, eating or dressing.
- You are bedridden.
- You are a patient in a nursing home.
- Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

HOUSEBOUND is an increased monthly pension amount paid if you are substantially confined to your immediate premises because of a permanent disability.

Learn more about these benefits by using the VA's website www.va.gov or contacting a VFW State Service Officers using the numbers on this page.

Do You Need Help With Veterans Benefits?

Full-time, VA-accredited VFW State Service Officers are ready to answer questions about government benefits, help you file a claim and represent you at a VA appeal hearing. These phone numbers connect you with your nearest State Service Officer. You can ask about outreach locations and home visits.

Philadelphia: 215-381-3123

Northeastern Region: 570-821-2535/2536

Harrisburg/Lancaster/Reading/Lititz Region: 717-234-7927

York/Gettysburg/Chambersburg Region: 717-884-1705

Altoona/Johnstown Region: 814-943-8164

Pittsburgh/Southwest Region: 412-395-6259/6260

Butler Region: 724-287-4781 ext. 4579

Erie /Northwest Region: 814-835-8494

Northcentral/State College Region: 570-560-1382

Conference ... continued from page 1

military through Unmet Needs, Operation Uplink and Adopt-a-Unit programs.

The Department continues visiting VA medical sites in the state to discuss healthcare issues with staff and interview veterans to ensure their needs are met.

The VFW is actively engaged with student veterans by providing support on campus, at local posts and through several partnership programs.

Protecting veterans' rights remains a top priority, as evidenced through conference reports about VFW advocacy at the state and national levels. VFW staff is frequently consulted by lawmakers about key issues facing veterans, which often leads to the VFW giving testimony during legislative hearings in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C.

"I am really grateful for the service of VFW members. On behalf of our state, we owe you a lot. You put your lives on the line to protect a society we dearly love and to protect our families. Our communities and our democracy have survived largely because you supported it with your lives

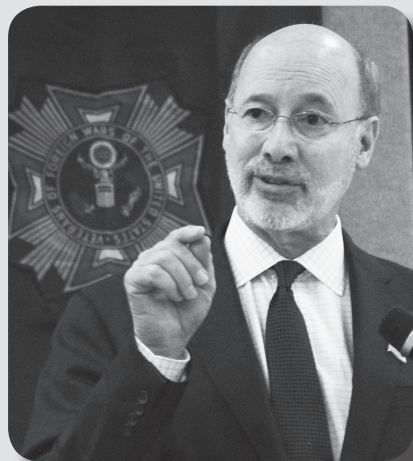
The PA VFW is the best veterans group in the nation. You set the standard because of the people you represent and the things you do for your folks... You have worked hard to make the lives of veterans better."

– Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, speaking to conference attendees

support of the military is unmatched. In addition to supporting troops through care packages, holiday parties, unit adoptions, free overseas calls and emergency financial assistance, the Department honors National Guardians with its VFW Eagle Award for distinguished service.

Pennsylvania Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Brian J. Reighard of Windber received a standing ovation during the Mid-Winter Conference for becoming the latest award recipient.

SSG Reighard was chosen for outstanding service during Operation Iraqi Freedom and his deployment to Afghanistan. He is a Training NCO with the PAARNG 28th Infantry Division's 252nd Engineer Company. He is a lifetime member of Post 4795 in Windber.



"Staff Sergeant Reighard's outstanding service operating in very dangerous environments demonstrates that he fulfilled and exceeded his duties during numerous foreign deployments to combat zones," said Commander Brown. "His willingness to do whatever is necessary to advance the mission is commendable. We're proud to have him in the ranks of the VFW and to recognize his continued military service."

SSG Reighard commented, "I am really thankful for receiving this award

THE 2016-17 VOICE OF DEMOCRACY FINALISTS

Shown below are the District winners and State Program leadership



and appreciate the warm camaraderie I received at the conference. It was very moving. Veterans from all service eras showed their pride in me as a combat veteran, as one of their own."

SSG Reighard's medals and decorations include the Combat Action Badge, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, awarded twice, and the NATO Medal.

During a welcome home event in which Post 4795 participated, Post Commander Robert Foster spoke with Reighard about the VFW and he soon became a member. "I enjoy being active in the VFW because I believe in its mission," noted Reighard.

Serving Students

During its *Voice of Democracy (VOD)* Banquet, the Department honored all district winners including: State winner Tyrone resident Haley Butina, a senior at Tyrone Area H.S., representing District 22/Post 4559; second - Joshua Marzak of Danville, a senior at the Pennsylvania Leadership Cyber School, District 12/Post 298; third - Noah McCloskey of Cresson, a Pennsylvania Cyber School senior, District 26/Post 7377 and its Auxiliary; fourth - Christine Troll of Somerset, a home-schooled sophomore, District 23/Post 554 and its Auxiliary; and fifth - Nicholas Grube of Kane, a senior at Kane Area H.S., District 19 and Post 1132.

Melissa L. Fulmer, a West Mifflin Area H.S. English teacher—representing

Post 914 Intrepid and District 29—received the *VOD* Teacher of the Year Award. "I am honored to be acknowledged for encouraging students to voice their opinions through the *VOD*," said Fulmer. "This program offers students an avenue of communication that challenges them to express their ideas with an academic voice, yet be personal."

A banquet crowd of 450 also congratulated sixth-grader Annika Sullivan of Swarthmore, sponsored by District 7 Post 3460 and its Auxiliary, as the Department's *Patriot's Pen* junior high essay contest winner.

Serving Others

Mid-Winter Conference reports revealed strong success toward enhancing lives of people from all walks of life:

- Ten nursing scholarships are awarded annually; East Berlin Post 8896 alone donated \$10,000 to the Barger Nursing Scholarship fund;
- Awards were presented to police, fire and EMS departments across the state; Downingtown Post 845 donated \$2,000 to the Safety Award fund;
- The Department and posts continue to conduct patriotic celebrations, which promote unity and good citizenship in communities;
- VFW awards and donations to youth sports, scouting, student and community programs develop leadership skills and teamwork;
- Post support of food pantries, services benefiting seniors and emergency assistance programs aid less fortunate persons;
- Pennsylvania support of the VFW National Home for Children provides a safe, caring place for military families to live; and
- Annual VFW community service in Pennsylvania continues to surpass the \$6 million dollar donation and 500,000 hours of volunteer levels.

The information shared during the conference sent a clear message that the VFW is first and foremost a highly effective, life-bettering service organization that raises the quality of life for veterans, our troops and all citizens.

Among other ways that the Department of PA VFW supports veterans is through continued financial and moral support of those returning from war with physical and emotional injuries. PA Wounded Warriors, Inc. Founder Helen Sajer thanked the VFW for donating many thousands of dollars, which helped PAWW surpass the \$1 million mark in fundraising.

Serving the Military

Just as no other organization matches the VFW's work on behalf of veterans, the VFW's impressive outreach to and



VFW members from across the state pay close attention to information being provided during the daily sessions at the Mid-Winter Conference in Pittsburgh.



Patriot's Pen State Winner Annika Sullivan.

PA Dept. Visits VFW National Home for Children



A group of VFW Department of Pennsylvania and Auxiliary members joined with their comrades from Illinois to visit the VFW National Home for Children recently. The group received a tour of the sprawling campus located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, with its 42 beautiful single family homes, museum, guest lodge and community center. The Pennsylvania contingent is shown in front of one of two Pennsylvania Houses sponsored by the Department of Pennsylvania. The Department participated in the parade of checks, making a generous donation to the Home. In addition to this donation, many also pledged to personally help a veteran family by going back into their communities and seeking out a veteran family in need and helping them connect with the program staff at the National Home via the Military and Veteran Family Helpline. For more information visit <http://www.vfwnationalhome.org> or call 800-424-8360.

By-Laws Establish Election and Installation Rules

Post officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the post adjutant. Post officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof of eligibility shall be open to and reviewed by the commander, adjutant and quartermaster prior to the installation of office. If an elected or appointed officer does not prove eligibility within 60 days of election or appointment, the right of the officer to hold office shall be forfeited and the office vacated. Section 217 of the National By-Laws refers to the Manual of Procedure for details on installing officers immediately after elections. Send the election report to: State Adjutant, Department HQs, 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17109 and National HQs.

General Orders ... continued from page 2

6. COMMUNITY SERVICE RECORD BOOK CONTEST: Close of reporting period for Community Activity Record Book is March 31, 2017. Each Post and Auxiliary should send their combined Record Book of Post Activities to State HQs for Dept. judging. Send your entry to Dept. HQ by April 15, 2017 books received after this date will not be accepted. Judging will be held at Dept. Headquarters date TBA.

7. LOYALTY DAY: Posts are urged to start planning NOW for Loyalty Day observances in their community. Requests for LD materials should be forwarded to National HQs to the attention of the Americanism Department. Loyalty Day Poster Contest, "I pledge allegiance", deadline for entries was March 1, 2017. The State Loyalty Day Program: State Capitol, May 1, 10:00 a.m.

8. MEMORIAL DAY BUDDY POPPY CAMPAIGN: Commanders on all levels should begin organizing their 2017 Memorial Day Poppy distribution to raise donations for the Post Relief Fund. Every Post is required to order and distribute Poppies. Order Now! There are several Buddy Poppy contests - a listing can be found at www.vfwpahq.org. Remember our motto "NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS."

9. ARREARAGE: Any Post in arrears for National, Dept., County Council or District dues, Poppy monies, supply monies or other financial obligations, or failing to have the Quartermaster properly bonded, or failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit or Post Election Report shall be deprived of all representation in County Council meetings, District, Dept. and National Conventions. Representation will be restored upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

10. DEPARTMENT CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS: Dept. Committees will meet at 9:00 p.m., Wed., June 14, 2017 to approve/disapprove resolutions for consideration at the 2017 State Convention. All delegates are encouraged to attend Committee Meetings to become more knowledgeable of pending resolutions. Committee reports will begin on Thursday, June 16th during General Session.

11. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE FORM 990: Post Commanders should ensure that information returns are filed annually on Form 990. These forms may be obtained by calling Federal Tax Forms & Publications hot-line (800) 829-3676. The forms must be filed on or before the 15th of the fifth month following the close of the respective annual accounting period. If gross receipts are \$50,000 or less you need to file e-postcard 990N online, the IRS asks ONLY the heading on page one be completed, being sure to check Box B and send it to the Ogden IRS Center, Ogden, Utah 84201.

12: STATE CONVENTION: The Department's State Conv. will be June 14-17, 2017 at the Doubletree, 500 Mansfield Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15205. 412-920-8050. See www.vfwpahq.org

13. NATIONAL CONVENTION: The Veterans of Foreign Wars 118th National Convention will be held in New Orleans, LA, July 22-26, 2017.

14. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that 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 National Convention will pay a ten-dollar (\$10) delegate fee. Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that will be mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing going out this month. Registration forms for the 118th National Convention should be mailed to: Convention Registration, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

15. DIVERSITY: The Dept. of PA, VFW of the U.S., shall not restrict or restrain from holding any elected or appointed office or position within the Dept. of PA any member in good standing thereof based solely upon the individual's age, gender, race, ethnic or sexual preference, physical impairment or disability, or any similar categorization of a prejudicial or discriminatory nature: nor shall any such restriction or restraint by any Post, District, County Council or other organizational division of this Dept. be tolerated. Dept. of PA, VFW, reminds all duly elected Chaplains at all levels within this Dept. to adhere to those references to a supreme being as set forth in the VFW Ritual during all official functions of this organization, not to interject reference to any specific deity or deification during same.

16. CAPS: Only regulation caps can be worn at meetings/conventions or special occasions.

By command of: Thomas A. Brown, State Commander

Attested by: John B. Getz, Jr., State Adjutant/Quartermaster

District Meeting Schedule

MARCH 2017

Dist.	Place	Date	Time
7	VFW Post #974 – Darby	March 22	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post #9220 - Bensalem	March 19	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post #7418 – Gap	March 12	1:30 P.M.
10	VFW Post #4712 – Simpson	March 12	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post #283 – Kingston	March 19	2:30 P.M.
14	VFW Post #8488 – Kingsley	March 19	2:00 P.M.
15	VFW Post #6221 – Emporium	March 19	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #676 – Glenside	March 15	7:30 P.M.
21	VFW Post #7045 – Hellam	March 12	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post #1600 – Bellefonte	March 19	2:30 P.M.
23	VFW Post #4584 – Masontown	March 12	2:00 P.M.
25	VFW Post #249 – Butler	March 19	2:00 P.M.
26	VFW Post #155 – Johnstown	March 12	2:30 P.M.
28	VFW Post #7842 – Linesville	March 12	2:00 P.M.
29	VFW Post #3945 – Pittsburgh	March 19	2:00 P.M.

APRIL, 2017

1	Crescenz VA Center – Phila.	April 12	7:30 P.M.
7	VFW Post #7949 – Eddystone	April 26	7:30 P.M.
14	VFW Post #714 – Canton	April 9	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #32 – Lansdale	April 19	7:30 P.M.

SPECIAL NOTE: POSTS MUST BE REPRESENTED AT DISTRICT MEETINGS. POST COMMANDERS WHO CANNOT ATTEND DISTRICT MEETINGS MUST APPOINT A POST REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND.

Focus on Mission Success



Indiana Post 1989 representatives give a plaque to Greta Helsel and Horace Mann Elementary School for 34 years of assemblies honoring local veterans. Shown are Don Becker, Dennis Snyder, Greta Helsel, Greg Marsh and Joe Hancock, members of Post 1989 Indiana.



A dedicated group of officers and volunteers, led by Post Commander Bob Russler, continue to work hard to grow Altoona Post 3 so it can continue proudly saying that it is the third oldest VFW Post in the nation. The Post is searching for a new building after selling its long-time home which was too costly to operate. "We don't have a building, but we have a lot of guts," Commander Russler told the *Altoona Mirror*. (Photo by *Altoona Mirror*)



VFW Middleburg Post 5640 donated \$200 to the Snyder County Sheriff's Office for the purchase and training of a K-9 officer. Pictured are (from left) Chief Deputy and K-9 handler Lucas Bingman, Post Commander Roger Snook and Snyder County Sheriff John Zeckman.



Post 6223 Commander Bill Westover and Post Surgeon Richard Altieri present Sara Altieri with a check to send her to a summer leadership camp.



Kennett Square Post 5467 Commander Michael Pralle presents World War II veteran Cpl. John D Biondi, 93, a shadow box holding his WWII ribbons, which he lost 50 years ago. His children sought to give their father something special for his birthday and arranged for his replacement medals. He is surrounded by his wife of 69 years, Anntoinette, family and friends.



Six-year-old Evan Ramsey donates \$200 to Post 6221 Commander Dennis McCulla to help veterans injured during their service. Evan asked his grandfather, Ron Armstrong, if they could give proceeds from selling hot dogs during a community event to help wounded veterans. The funds were sent to the PA Wounded Warriors.



Media Post 3460 recently honored WWII veteran and Post Chaplain Edward Hess for his service by presenting him with a VFW Gold Life Legacy Membership. Shown with Hess are State Commander Thomas Brown and Post Commander Frank Newburg.



Helping to deliver food through the Central PA Food Bank's MilitaryShare program are VFW Post 7463 Commander Terry Mullen, a Carson Long Military Academy Cadet, the Carson Long Military Academy Activities Director, Terri Lyn from the Disabled American Veterans, VFW Post Senior Vice Commander Dioin Denault (kneeling), Jennifer Kelemen, and Carson Long Military Academy Cadets. One in five households served by the Feeding America network has at least one person who has served in the military.

Focus on Mission Success



Lansdale Post 32 honored the Army Reserve 978th Composite Supply Company, which the Post adopted to offer support during the unit's deployment to the Middle East. The Post provided a Color Guard for a send-off ceremony. Shown are Quartermaster Bill Waldman with Commander Ivan Eitreim, 1SG Matthew Krug and Commanding Officer CPT Kendra Brown. Congratulations Post 32 for engaging these soldiers through the "VFW Adopt-a-Unit" program.



Shellsville Post 9639 recently honored its members who served during the Korean War. Shown with the honorees are Post Commander Glen Hoffer (far right) and Post Judge Advocate Robert DeSousa (far left), who both presented each veteran with a commemorative medallion and book. Korean War veterans pictured are Karl Bower, Dennis Donmoyer, Horace Flynn, Michael Koropchak, Allen McCormack, Sr. and H. E. Wisaupt.



Proudly standing in the Post home, officers of Hooversville Post 7565 and its Auxiliary gather for a photo after its Veterans Day program.



Coopersburg Post 3405 was honored to participate in the community dedication of a new Veterans Memorial Plaza in Center Valley by presenting the colors at a well-attended ceremony.



Brentwood Post 1810 hosted a breakfast for all *Voice of Democracy* district winners during the 2017 Mid-Winter Conference in Pittsburgh. The Post also hosted the VOD participants for lunch after their visit to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Shown with the VOD participants are Post Commander Al Hipkiss (second from the left) and Sr. Vice Commander Dave Buechel (first on the right). The Department thanks Post 1810 for providing warm hospitality and tasty food that the students enjoyed.

DUE TO THE MANY PHOTOS RECEIVED SOME PICTURES ARE BEING HELD FOR THE NEXT ISSUE. VFW NEWS CANNOT REPRODUCE NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS. PLEASE ASK YOUR LOCAL PAPER FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT A PHOTO AND EMAIL THE FILE ALONG WITH A REPRINT PERMISSION STATEMENT TO DSANDMAN@VFWPAHQ.ORG. PHOTO PRINTS WITH CAPTIONS ARE ALSO ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL OR REGULAR MAIL.



Linesville VFW Post 7842 held its annual Veteran's Day dinner and program featuring Phil Davis, Veterans of the Vietnam War Post 52, as the guest speaker. Past Quartermaster Charlie King and his late wife and Post Life Member Katherine were honored with a plaque to be placed with a stone in the Post Memorial. It reads: "This stone is placed here in honor of Catherine and Charles King for their undying love and devotion to Post 7842 and the ideals of the VFW."



Information Not Shared is a Wasted Resource

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



Hello my fellow veterans, we made it through Mid-Winter Conference without a 30-inch blizzard that I'm sure we all remember last year.

Even without the snow, we had a great conference with information that helps us to better serve veterans, our military and our communities.

I hope everyone who attended the conference enjoyed the *Voice of Democracy* Banquet, the terrific Pittsburgh hospitality and the outstanding camaraderie we shared. If you have not done so, please go over the information you learned at the conference during a post meeting. Your post covered your conference expenses, so make that investment pay off for the VFW.

Here's some important information for post commanders and quartermasters wanting to attain All-State status: you

must complete State Commander Brown's mandatory work sheet on pages 11-12 of this year's membership awards program, available on www.vfwpahq.org or by calling State HQs. All requirements must be completed or you will not qualify.

If you need to check whether your post has completed all requirements, call Joyce Reece at State Headquarters and she will be glad to answer your questions.

Hopefully, by now, you've completed most of the requirements. If not, there's still time. Report your good work to HQs.

Remember, it takes work and dedication to make good things happen. Volunteer a few hours. Be a source of information and ideas. Be a team player, not a naysayer. Treat your comrades with respect and support them in all ways.

Marsha and I hope to see everyone again at our State Convention in Pittsburgh. Until then, happy trails, much VFW love and friendship to you!

VFW Websites ... continued from page 1

convenient for them or in a group setting.

National VFW Website—www.vfw.org

From recruiting training guides to Post Service Officer training videos, the VFW Training and Support section is designed to help you lead the VFW into the future. After logging into the National site, users can access information in these categories:

- **Member & Officer Training, Forms & Templates** - Whether you've just been elected or appointed or want to brush up on protocol, here's where you can access resources designed with your role as a VFW leader in mind.

- **Community Service & Youth Programs** - This section delivers tools and resources designed to aid you in your quest to support your local military, veterans and hometown community.

- **Membership Recruiting & Retention** - Membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and this section has all post recruiting needs covered in one place including videos on recruiting, answers to common questions about completing applications, down-loadable brochures and applications, along with tips to help you grow your membership.

- **Communications & Public Affairs** - Getting the word out about the great programs and assistance the VFW provides can be a challenge. Help your post, district or Department achieve their communication goals by using these helpful resources like PSAs, website and social media how-to guides, news release templates and much more.

- **Post Service Officers** - Helping veterans cut through the VA's red tape is one of the VFW's

greatest strengths. Presented in eight easy to watch segments, this special training series provides post service officers with important information and insights into their role as an advocate for veterans.

- **Veterans & Military Support**-VFW assistance and support programs are there to help serve members and veterans. This section leads post volunteers to posters, brochures and applications for assistance.



Department Website—www.vfwpahq.org

The Pennsylvania VFW's award-winning website provides post officers, committee members and other volunteers with facts about the VFW's history, contact information for all Department and district leaders, an overview of how the VFW serves veterans, military personnel and the public, and a section on how the VFW's initiatives develop patriotism and good citizenship.

The website connects users with VFW communications, late-breaking news, ideas for attracting



Community Service Helps Drive Our Mission

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



Helping veterans and their families is what we are all about. "NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS" – No truer words are spoken.

However, our community activities are vital to the success of our VFW. I cannot overemphasize this enough. The volunteer hours and monetary donations to communities and projects that are reported to me monthly are tremendous!

We need to report all the wonderful and generous things that we do! So many times, things are forgotten and not reported. We are all guilty of this, including myself! Our community service projects are paramount.

Someone asked me, and I quote, "What does the VFW actually do?" Often people think that we ONLY help veterans and, unfortunately, many people think that we stay in our social quarters and drink alcohol and tell war stories! These stigmas need to be eliminated, forever!

They don't realize all the great work that we do because they don't see it for themselves. Honor Guard services, donations to schools and churches, helping senior citizens, hospital/nursing

home visits, scouting and youth projects, donating use of our buildings/halls, VA hospital support and local fire and police department donations are just a few items on the list of the vast amount of volunteer work we accomplish and monetary donations that we make.

Thank you to the districts that are 100% for community service. I won't name them because a district could reach 100% goal between now and press time and I do not want to exclude anyone; some are very close. Posts, please help make ALL districts 100% this year!

Please, let us ALL make an effort to let everyone we come in contact with know just what the VFW is all about. Let's tell our story to anyone who will listen! Invite the local newspaper and radio station to your events.

Get involved in the community. Contact everyone you know who is retiring and may be looking to do some volunteer work to invite them to accompany you on a VFW community service project. Invite them to join the VFW and be a part of what we stand for and who we are!

Invite couples to join in and be VFW volunteers so they can serve together.

The ideas are endless on how to go about getting the word out about the VFW, who we are and what we do.

and signing up members, a link to the Veterans Helpline, answers to frequently asked VFW questions, a list of State Service Officers for benefits assistance, information for veteran-owned businesses and much more to help veterans enjoy life more.

Post leaders and volunteers should frequently refer to the extensive "Post Info" page with content relating to many post operation areas. This page should be your first stop when looking for forms, explanations or direction for fulfilling your responsibilities.

The State and National HQs thank all volunteers for their service to the VFW and those we assist.

Please utilize these websites and call HQs if

you have an idea for making our online communications more helpful. Contact information is listed on our site.

USS Donner LSD-20 Reunion:
Shipmates on the USS Donner - April 24-26, 2017 in Savannah, GA. For info call (610) 775-7539 or send an email to dennisheimb@gmail.com.



Deadlines Approaching for Submitting VFW Convention Resolutions

At VFW State and National Conventions, resolutions are approved to establish goals and policies that govern activities for the following year. Members in good standing may submit resolutions to the Department Convention through their post, county council or district.

All proposed By-Law Amendments and Resolutions must be sent to State HQs by **May 14, 2017**. Make sure to leave adequate time to get your resolution properly submitted.

For more information or guidance on how to submit a proposed By-Law Amendment or Resolution, contact State Adjutant/Quartermaster John Getz at adjutant@vfwpahq.org or (717) 234-7927.



Membership Moment

It's Not What We Say, It's What we Do that Makes Our VFW Better

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



In sports, you can talk a good game, but what matters is how you back up your words on the field. The same goes in the VFW. We can say we're the best combat veterans organization, but what are you doing to show that we really are the most effective?

Giving a few hours a month to support your post activities is all it takes to contribute enough effort to keep our programs and activities strong. The next time you hear that your post is doing outreach or participating in an event, please step forward to help. When veterans see other veterans pulling

together and enjoying each other's company they will be drawn to our camaraderie. Trust me, I've seen this work to recruit new members.

Reading the VFW materials you receive in the mail and checking out our Department and National websites will help train you how to share all the ways that the VFW improves the lives of veterans, our troops and our communities. Equipped with this knowledge, anyone can confidently recruit new members. Please make sure to share your personal story with them about how being involved in the VFW has made your life better.

There are still some important VFW recruiting contests active with incentives benefiting individual recruiters and posts. Be sure to check out the complete Membership Contest Guide on our

Department website, under "Post Info."

How can you recruit new members to qualify for these contest rewards? Not by sitting in the canteen and complaining about no new members coming in. All public events can be recruiting opportunities since veterans work, live and play in all sectors of our community.

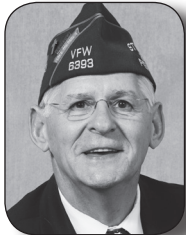
Patriotic events, military drills, local fairs, shopping center displays, gun shows and historic programs all represent sound recruiting opportunities.

We recruited 120 new members recently just by being an exhibitor in two shows that attracted veterans and military personnel. It's not rocket science, folks, but you have to actively engage eligible members. Get out from behind your VFW information table and meet people.

Get out, get active and get members!

Hospice Care Companies and Veterans: A Chaplain's Guide to Making Wise Decisions

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



Hospice care is a great thing. And as hospice care has developed, it has become big business—in 2014 it was a \$17 billion industry. End-of-life care is needed, and those in the business provide a valuable service.

As hospice care companies developed and competition grew, they realized there was a niche market—older veterans—who became easy targets as hospice companies sought business. Using marketing techniques including professional brochures, these companies sought to expand their business. These "for profit" companies specifically started targeting veterans.

I believe the majority of hospice companies provide a good service and are operating in good faith. While targeting and wanting to care for veterans is not necessarily a bad thing, you need to be informed consumers.

Representatives from two hospice companies have contacted me. They would love to have my endorsement and, ultimately, the VFW's endorsement. VFW Chaplains and Commanders across our nation no doubt will also be contacted as hospice companies seek potential clients.

In an effort to get the word out to veterans and their families, a representative from a particular hospice company may contact VFW Commanders and Chaplains and ask to make a presentation at Department, District, and/or Post meetings, or to have literature distributed about their services to veterans.

Here is an email I received: "Hello Peter, Just wanted to touch base with you to let you know I've already met with ___ District ___ Commander, ___ County. I spoke at their District Mtg this month briefly about ___ Hospice and Honor Flight. I'm still trying to touch base with other VFWs, and in the meantime, will be meeting with a Marine Corps League. I think meeting with Chaplains would be very beneficial and would like to discuss this with you. When would be a good time? Thanks."

I have not and will not endorse any hospice company. And, I would caution you about having any hospice company make a presentation at one of your



VFW National Chaplain Peter Hook accepts a framed sketch from Past National Chaplain Ted Bowers during the National Chaplain's Banquet hosted by East Berlin Post 8896.

meetings. From my research and personal conversations, I have made the following observations:

- The hospice companies that are targeting veterans do not provide anything more, with regard to hospice care for veterans, than other hospice companies.
- The sales pitch of hospice companies targeting veterans is designed to leave the consumer with the impression that they are in business to honor and care for veterans. Remember, these are for profit companies that exist to make a profit.
- I am not sure there is any significant savings from using these companies. Just because they "honor veterans" doesn't mean there is a cost benefit.
- Providing information on VA Benefits can and should be done by one of our VFW certified Service Officers. There is no benefit by getting the information through a hospice company.

When families hear that a company services and caters to veterans, they can think that they may get a discount or some special care. This may or may not be true. Shop around and compare services and costs.

Barbara Muntz, a senior advisor with Community Health Accreditation Program, and an experienced home care and hospice nurse, wrote the following

instructions to her children about selecting hospice care for her, when the time comes. I have found this helpful in guiding families in knowing what to look for, questions to ask, and things to consider:

Are you accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting organization? Accreditation is not a guarantee, but hospices that seek accreditation are inspected more thoroughly, and usually more often, than those that do not.

How long have you maintained your accreditation? Hospices that have maintained their standing through multiple cycles of accreditation show that they have sustained the kind of quality needed to provide a high level of care. Many hospices go through one accreditation survey, then do not maintain the requirements. Look for a hospice that has been through at least two three-year cycles of accreditation, or better, three or more cycles.

What has your average daily census been for the last 12 months? You would never have brain surgery at a hospital that only does five brain surgeries a year, right? Of course not – you would go to a hospital that does a ton of brain surgeries and does them well. The same principle applies to hospice. The more patients with my diagnoses that a hospice has seen in the last year, the more likely it is that the team has the expertise to provide better symptom management and care.

How do you manage care after hours? The hospice should explain that they have a nurse on call and hospice team members can come to assist 24/7. Ask them for their after-hours call number. Then call it in the evening (Saturday nights are always good for this!) to see how long it takes to get a return call.

What is your model for providing continuous care? Sometimes things get rough, and the patient may need round-the-clock care for a few days to manage symptoms or give the family a break. Every hospice must provide this care, if needed. Ask if they have a "prn" pool or their own private duty staff when needed. Ask them to give you their average time to staff a continuous care case.

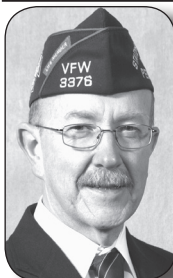
Hopefully, this guidance will help families in choosing hospice care. Feel free to contact me.



Facts and Figures

Manual Outlines How to Nominate, Elect Leaders

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



Time during this 2016-17 VFW year is flying by. Once again we are approaching election time as stated in Section 217 of the Manual of Procedure.

All nominations must be completed in March and elections held in April. Section 217 describes the choices of how to elect whether you use a poll system or open or written ballot. The eligibility for office is covered in Section 215 of the Bylaws and Section 216 covers elected and appointed officers.

If you follow these three sections when conducting nominations and elections you can't go wrong. You also need to remember that Section 218 describes the duties of each office so all leaders should know their responsibilities.

When your post elections are over in April, please don't wait until May, when most officers are installed, to send in your election report. Submit your report as soon as your election process is completed to ensure that your report is

received on time.

I thank all post officers, appointed leaders and volunteers for the outstanding support you are providing to your VFW posts. Service organizations like your post can't exist without a team of dedicated individuals who step up to fulfill the required operational duties.

Thank you also for all that you are



doing through the VFW to help veterans in this Commonwealth. And of course, thank you for your service in uniform to our country.

Please don't hesitate to contact our State HQs by calling (717) 234-7927 if you have questions, concerns or ideas about our VFW programs and post operations.

Department Membership Update: 92.64% of the 2015-16 Year-End Total

Top five posts ranked by Membership Division			7	2076	PUNXSUTAWNEY	104.80%	
Div.	Post	Location	%	7	34	NEWPORT	104.16%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	101.23%	7	6321	SMITHMILL	100.94%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	96.53%	7	384	NEW ALBANY	100.00%
1	8951	WEST YORK	79.89%	7	8675	TROY	100.00%
1	1810	BRENTWOOD	66.00%				
2	928	FOLSOM	138.81%	8	3258	CHALFONT	103.79%
2	7043	COALPORT	137.52%	8	4200	TIRE HILL	102.43%
2	2385	GRATZ	100.00%	8	7130	DELTA	101.33%
2	2006	MEADVILLE	99.46%	8	7503	SPANGLER	100.00%
2	2506	HANOVER	99.44%	8	5205	PHILADELPHIA	98.63%
3	1620	MIDDLETOWN	112.94%	9	5201	BELLWOOD	104.61%
3	464	OIL CITY	101.92%	9	8051	PHILADELPHIA	103.50%
3	1754	HUNTINGDON	100.58%	9	5069	ANDREAS	100.00%
3	8803	TIDIOUTE	97.70%	9	7810	AUSTIN	98.43%
3	2493	MOUNT WOLF	97.26%	9	6982	COALDALE	98.24%
4	7842	LINESVILLE	106.69%	10	274	PITTSBURGH	115.78%
4	6558	WOMELSDORF	102.25%	10	7949	EDDYSTONE	109.75%
4	4793	WAYNESBURG	101.99%	10	6700	PHILADELPHIA	108.82%
4	804	BLOOMSBURG	98.43%	10	6231	SLIPPERY ROCK	104.08%
4	5010	FREELAND	98.16%	10	7390	BROOMALL	102.50%
				10	2092	ELDRED	106.00%
5	212	BRADFORD	102.33%				
5	509	TOBYHANNA	101.66%				
5	5859	JERSEY SHORE	99.41%				
5	3575	QUARRYVILLE	99.30%				
5	5642	MONTROSE	98.20%				
6	4907	WELLSBORO	104.83%				
6	803	CLAIRTON	103.20%				
6	1630	LOCK HAVEN	102.65%				
6	7073	PARKER	100.88%				
6	1597	CROYDON	100.81%				

On March 13, Dept. membership stood at 77,154 members or 92.64% of the 2015-16 year-end total. So far this year 1,734 new members and 481 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.

Farewell to PSC Deibler, Asst. Sgt. Mankey & Lucas

The Department salutes the lives and service of the following Pennsylvania VFW members who passed away recently:



Past State Commander (1994-95) Neale H. Deibler of Warminster, a life member of VFW Post 6493, passed away on December 2, 2016. He was 83. Neale was Commander of VFW Post 6493, Warminster in 1981-82 and again in 1982-83 when he was All-State Post Commander. He was Commander of the District 8 in 1987-88 and a member of the VFW National Council of Administration in 2001-2003. He served on numerous Department Committees and was chairman of the *Voice of Democracy* and Buddy Poppy Committees. Neale also served on VFW National Buddy Poppy, VOD and Finance Committees. He earned the Korean Service Medal serving in U.S. Navy Aviation as a crewman with FAW PAC VF 62 and FAW VAP 62. He was a life member of the VFW National Home for Children, the Scotland School for Veterans Children and the Military Order of the Cootie.

Neale also served on VFW National Buddy Poppy, VOD and Finance Committees. He earned the Korean Service Medal serving in U.S. Navy Aviation as a crewman with FAW PAC VF 62 and FAW VAP 62. He was a life member of the VFW National Home for Children, the Scotland School for Veterans Children and the Military Order of the Cootie.



VFW State Asst. Sgt.-at-Arms William Mankey passed away in late January. Bill was dedicated to the VFW including many years of service as a State Assistant Sergeant. His efforts and leadership helped many local and regional VFW activities to succeed, and his sense of humor always served as a welcomed break for those he worked with. He earned his VFW eligibility through service in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. His many VFW activities included serving as Chief of Staff under State Commander Frank Mills.



World War II Veteran Daniel J. Lucas of Peckville, an Army veteran who landed on Omaha Beach in Normandy, passed away on January 19 at the age of 102. A charter member of Post 6082 who was born in 1914, Dan served with the Army's 5th Cavalry/113th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. His medals included the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four Bronze Stars during service in France, Germany and Central Europe. He served on Post 6082's Honor Guard.

Rest in peace, comrades.

Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of March 7 Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!

- First Place: DISTRICT 7 - 105.13% - Cmdr. William Daws
- Second Place: DISTRICT 15 - 95.91% - Cmdr. Jesse Olson
- Third Place: DISTRICT 19 - 95.61% - Cmdr. Ronald Peters
- Fourth Place: DISTRICT 18 - 94.47% - Cmdr. Scott Fritz
- Fifth Place: DISTRICT 26 - 94.32% - Cmdr. Joseph Kopsic
- Sixth Place: DISTRICT 13 - 94.28% - Cmdr. James Lindsey
- Seventh Place: DISTRICT 12 - 94.02% - Cmdr. William Begis
- Eighth Place: DISTRICT 1 - 93.97% - Cmdr. Zbigniew Laska
- Ninth Place: DISTRICT 9 - 93.73% - Cmdr. John Miller
- Tenth Place: DISTRICT 28 - 93.58% - Cmdr. Ronald Craker



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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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Editors: State Commander Thomas A. Brown and State Adjutant/Quartermaster John B. Getz, Jr.
Produced by Department Communications & Public Affairs Director David A. Sandman

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The VFW Auxiliary ...

Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



The Department President Says...

Yes, Membership is a Critical Issue

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



With Spring around the corner, I would like to focus on a topic that is very important to the VFW Auxiliary and is the most important program that the VFW Auxiliary supports.

What could this program possibly be? Why it is none other than the VFW Auxiliary Department **Membership Program!**

First and foremost—if you or a member of your family is a VFW Auxiliary member without a 2017 membership card—**PLEASE PAY YOUR 2017 MEMBERSHIP DUES NOW!** Double check your roster and ask those who have fallen delinquent to rejoin the Auxiliary and pay their dues today.

Achieving membership goals of 100% PLUS are extremely important to the VFW Auxiliary. Every member is a valuable part of our service team without whom we cannot continue to keep “**SERVING AMERICA’S HEROES**” as well and successfully as we do each year.

Auxiliary Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers should make plans now to pay their 2018 dues right after July 1, 2017. You are the leaders of your Auxiliaries who have been elected and trusted to run your Auxiliary to the best of your ability. Your early payment of dues sets a good example for other Auxiliary members to follow.

Conducting membership drives is a

wonderful Auxiliary project and such drives can be held any time of the year. Have one at a yard sale of a friend or member of the Auxiliary, have one during the Christmas shopping spree and have one over Memorial Day and/or Veteran’s Day, and distribute Buddy Poppies as well.

Please remember to mail dues notices to each of your Auxiliary members, especially those who do not have email addresses. Email dues notices to those who have email addresses. Send your notices as soon after July 1, 2017 as possible and encourage early payment. If necessary, send out notices a second time during the month of November.

Attend a Recruiter Training Seminar held at many Department events by our National Certified Recruiter Trainer, Janet Hauth. Janet is also willing to come to your District to train others. This seminar provides instruction and advice when talking with individuals about joining the VFW Auxiliary. Your participation will give you positive, enthusiastic and encouraging ways to answer any questions you may get.

It is the veteran you are turning your back on when you don’t work on membership at every opportunity. They are discouraged when an Auxiliary doesn’t maintain and grow its membership for the current year.

With “**UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES**” I believe that the VFW Auxiliary Department of Pennsylvania will have obtained 100% PLUS Membership as of June 30, 2017!



Show Your Legislative Support for Veterans

Andrea Meintel, Legislative Chairman – ajmeintel@yahoo.com



The Legislative Program fuels the work we do for veterans, active military personnel and their families. Using the following resources, familiarize yourself with the VFW Priority

Goals, sign up for the weekly Action Corps e-newsletter, and communicate your opinions to your legislators.

CHECKPOINT: The *Checkpoint* newsletter is published by the VFW to highlight post work in the community, regarding veterans issues, their families and active military. Subscribe on-line at www.vfw.org/News-and-Events/Checkpoint/.

VFW ACTION CORPS: The VFW Action Corps is a free weekly news email which highlights new legislation, updates on existing bills and discusses the VFW’s stance on legislative matters. Sign up at www.vfw.org/VFW-in-DC/Action-Corps/. Utilize this same website to receive contact information on your local legislators.

Sign up to be a Veterans’ Advocate: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/mlm/signup.htm>

Visit, Write or Call: Let your politicians know who you are and what you stand for.

Through the Legislative program, we express our commitment to show “Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes,” by “Serving America’s Heroes.”

Spotlighting Our Auxiliary Successes



Mt. Wolf Post 2493 and Auxiliary held a “VFW Day to Change Direction” event to collect donations of all types for the Mr. Sandy’s Veterans Center—a.k.a. the Veteran’s Helping Hand, Inc. The center provides rest, hygiene support, counseling, meals and resources for veterans who need assistance and guidance. Volunteers provided information about the “Give an Hour” and “A Day to Change Direction” programs. More than \$5,200 in donations and cash were delivered to the center.

Past Department President Brenda Johnson, District 8 Auxiliary President Debbie Smith, Department President Donna Mills and her Chief of Staff Bonnie Eichelberger visit the Garden of Reflections in Lower Makefield, Bucks County. This site is a 9/11 Memorial created to remember and honor the 2,973 killed on September 11, 2001. It is situated in Memorial Park amid the natural beauty of Historical Bucks County farmland.



Volunteering Can Make a World of Difference

Linda Dilling, Hospital Chairman – vfwauxldilling@gmail.com



The VFW Auxiliary saves U.S. Veterans Affairs more than \$60 million a year in expenses by providing volunteers and resources to VA facilities. Show your “Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes” by volunteering at your local VA and non-VA medical facilities.

A few Hospital Program Goals are:
Military Suicide Awareness: Suicide in the Military is a huge issue. If you are concerned about a veteran in emotional distress call the Veterans Crisis Line, 800-273-8255. Visit this web site to learn about mental health, <http://www.knowthefivesigns.org/>.

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Volunteer Service in Medical Facilities: Anyone can volunteer their time, skill, talent and interest at any facility that offers medical, extended care or assisted services. Speak with a staff member in Voluntary Service or Recreation Therapy.
Veterans Voices Writing Project: This is a healing therapeutic program for our veterans, shown to help manage Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and reduce the risk of suicide. Writing from the soul...for the soul. For more information on this project visit www.veteransvoice.org.

One of the greatest gifts we can give is our time. Please consider volunteering and “Serving America’s Heroes.”

FOCUS ON MISSION SUCCESS



Lower Burrell Post 92 held its annual "Salute to World War II Veterans" event during which a toast was made to all veterans, veterans lying under white crosses and the last man standing. Pictured are (front row, from left) Arthur Dupstadt and Bob McClosky; middle row Robert Stennett, Mike Mrenko, John Arduino and Ralph Ritter; and back row Marlin Preus, John Green, Michael Honkus, Mike Sopko, William Tingle and John Lange. Thanks for your service!

PERIODICALS



The Media Post 3460 Honor Guard proudly stands by a POW/MIA chair that the Post dedicated at the Penncrest High School sports facility.



Trappe Post 7155 recently held a ceremony to honor its *Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy* winners. Shown are VOD winners Esther Edwin (first place), Rachael Jones (second) and Wedmarlie Salomon (third). Shown with them are Post PP/VOD Chairman/Sr. Vice Commander George Heller and Commander Howard Helbert.



Amy and Dwayne MacKenzie, joined by the U.S. Ambassador to Germany, John B. Emerson, are shown standing on the rooftop terrace of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin with the Brandenburg Gate and the German Reichstag Building behind them. Both are past post commanders and current officers in Cocalico Valley Post 3376. They were excited to return to Berlin where they met when stationed there in the Air Force.



King of Prussia Post 7878 donated a Christmas tree to the Upper Merion Police Department so they could make the holiday season brighter for a local family in need. Shown are Detective Robert Smull, Detective Les Glauner and Post Commander Donald Collins.



Lititz Post 1463 and Auxiliary, assisted by State Service Officer Audrey Bergstresser, secured well-deserved medals for veteran Eugene Tabbutt, who served on occupation duty in Japan with the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division beginning in 1946.