



Pennsylvania VFWnews



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YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

VFW Shines Spotlight on Veterans' Emotional Wellness

At the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., the VFW National Headquarters recently unveiled a campaign to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health—for veterans and non-veterans alike.

VFW National Commander Brian Duffy participated in a panel discussing VFW's Mental Wellness Campaign. Other panelists included Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, founder/president of Give an Hour; Joan Demetriades, One Mind chief strategy officer; and Jim Murray, director of strategic partnerships for PatientsLikeMe.

"All of [our members] at one point were at the pointed end of the spear," Duffy said. "All of them know first-hand what it means—no matter what generation, no matter what we called it back then, whether it was shell shock or PTSD, PTSD, they all know the challenges.

"So we bring an organization that has a lot of resources, not only physical brick and mortar, but the folks themselves, the 1.7 million members who are ideally suited to partner up with the organizations that are up here to lead the fight."



VFW National Photo

The VFW partnered with numerous groups to launch a campaign that provides key resources for veterans struggling with emotional wellness issues.

The organizations will work with VFW and VFW Auxiliary to "raise awareness, foster community engagement, improve research and provide intervention for those affected by invisible injuries and emotional stress," said Ryan Gallucci, deputy director of VFW's national veterans service.

Give an Hour has provided free mental health care to service members and their families for 11 years by "harnessing civilian mental health professionals and asking them to step up and give service, give their time to provide care," according to Van Dahlen. The nonprofit also launched its Campaign to Change Direction nearly two years ago in an effort to "change the greater culture" surrounding mental health.

This year, VFW partnered with Give an Hour for "A Day to Change Direction" on Oct. 8—a day in which VFW Posts hosted training sessions or performed community service. A key component of the overall campaign is to make communities aware of the five signs of emotional suffering: personality change, agitation, withdrawal, poor self-care and hopelessness.

Wellness ... continued on page 2



VFW National Photo

VFW C-in-C Brian Duffy and Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, founder/president of Give an Hour, urge veterans to know the five signs of emotional suffering.

Department's Mid-Winter Conference Set for Jan. 20-22, Greentree

The Department's 2017 Mid-Winter Conference will present reports and resources that help VFW officers effectively lead their Posts. Scheduled for Friday, January 20 through Sunday, January 22 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Greentree (just outside of Pittsburgh), conference sessions will provide VFW leaders with information and support designed to assist them with every phase of Post operation.

Beginning Friday afternoon at 3 p.m., conference highlights will include:

- an update on VFW priority issues;
- speakers who will address important topics of interest to veterans;
- customized workshops for Post officers and chaplains on Saturday;
- a Quartermaster primer that will use

conference-attendee questions to drive discussion;

- a member-recruiting seminar led by the Department's membership team;
- VFW information tables with handouts about programs and activities that serve veterans, troops and local communities;
- and, plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

The tradition of closing the conference with the annual *Voice of Democracy Banquet* Saturday evening will continue, during which the *Patriot's Pen* state winner will also be honored.

Sunday morning, the Department's Council of Administration will hold a meeting at the conference hotel. The meeting is open for all active VFW

Conference ... continued on page 10

VFW Supports HB 1858 to Require H.S. Students to Pass Civics Test



The VFW has a long and proud history of supporting the fundamental pillars of democracy and freedom, in part by conducting local patriotic programs, participating in citizenship education efforts, honoring those who defend freedom and leading classroom presentations.

Recently, State Commander Thomas A. Brown added a new chapter to the Department's volume of activity promoting America's unique history and governing structure by testifying in support of Pennsylvania House Bill 1858—a measure that would require high school seniors to pass a civics exam as part of graduation requirements.

Even though HB 1858 is rather lenient in what it requires students to score in order to graduate—a civics exam grade of 60% or greater would pass the student—the bill is facing strong opposition from organizations representing teachers, principals, school boards and school administrators.

Speaking on September 24th during a joint hearing of the PA House Education and Veterans Affairs Committees at the State Capitol, State Commander Brown minced no

VFW Supports HB 1858... continued on page 5

VFW Support of PA Guard Marches On



The VFW's strong presence at the March for the Fallen in September at Ft. Indiantown Gap helped to honor PAARNG 28th ID soldiers who died during the GWOT. Many Guardians thanked the VFW for its support including (clockwise from top left) VFW Life Member Col. David Wood, Life Member Maj. Frank McGovern and Life Member SSG Joel Kramer. VFW/Auxiliary volunteers included Dist. 18 Cmdr. Scott Fritz, Dist. Adj. Susan Fritz, Past Dist. 18 Cmdrs. Donna Coulter and Terry James, and Post 148 Auxiliary's Carol Powley. (Photos - Spc. Alexis Gonzalez/Cpt. Gregory McElwain)

From the State Commander

Thinking Outside of the Box Helps Us Overcome Challenges

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



Some of our greatest “Veterans” were not human. In fact, for carrying out some very difficult, important duties—tasks that would be extremely tough for our troops—our military thought outside of the box to utilize

assets with four legs and fins as the best solution.

Consider the virtue of stubbornness: mules at war. As stated in the *Defense Media Network*, mules don’t exist in nature. They are an artificial product of human ingenuity. Like so many products, it didn’t take long before they found a place in the grim business of war.

A mule is the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. The genetic mismatch of these species causes sterility, but the hybrid creates a pack animal that combines a horse’s strength and intelligence with a donkey’s sure-footedness and endurance. Plus, a mule’s hide and hooves are tougher than a horse’s and endure heat better.

In Sierra Nevada, our military trains animals. Troops from city and suburban areas are usually apprehensive and unfamiliar with animals other than dogs and cats. Here’s a useful tip that would help troops them in combat:

“Determination, loyalty and teamwork—we could use more of that in the VFW. Determination to always get the job done right. Loyalty to the VFW’s mission, each other and our nation. Teamwork to provide the needed energy and shared goals to succeed.”

mules can often sense an ambush before soldiers can, so if the mule’s ears flare out, be aware of danger.

The U.S. Navy’s combat dolphins are serious military assets. The U.S. has trained bottle-nose dolphins to carry out a range of military tasks, from locating underwater mines to flagging the presence of enemy swimmers for harbor defense. Military researchers soon realized that



Commander Brown congratulates a member of the VFW Baseball Championship team.

the dolphins themselves could become a battlefield asset. It was soon discovered that they had excellent biological sonar, so they did a lot of research on that as well.

We all know about the many lives saved by bomb-sniffing dogs in the Middle East, canines that guided our troops around IEDs and alerted them to the presence of the enemy. These K-9s are so good at protecting our troops that enemy combatants try to eliminate them.

Early in the War on Terror in Afghanistan, some of our forces and advanced troops used horses to keep the pace up as we searched for Taliban and Bin Laden.

There are some great books that document how effective dogs, horses, mules and marine mammals have been to our military. Their determination, loyalty and teamwork with their units are so

valuable. Like a good battle buddy, they have been instrumental to helping many stay out of harm’s way, to detecting threats and moving equipment where needed.

Determination, loyalty and teamwork—we could use more of that in the VFW. Determination to always get the job done right. Loyalty to the VFW’s mission, each other and our nation. Teamwork to provide the needed energy and shared goals to succeed.

The VFW could also benefit by thinking outside of the box more when tackling challenges. There may be smarter, more effective ways of doing things, compared to “the way we’ve always done it.”

We may not be able to use mules, dolphins or K-9s to make our posts better, but we can surely apply determination, loyalty, teamwork and new ideas to accomplish our important mission.



State VFW leadership congratulate recipients of PA VFW Barger Nursing Scholarships, which were handed out during Post Officer Training Institutes.

Wellness ... continued from 1

One Mind, a five-year-old nonprofit, aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

PatientsLikeMe is a web-based organization that is an “online research and resource tool for patients to utilize.” It allows them to learn about their condition, connect with others, track the progression of the condition and share information about their own journey.

DEPARTMENT WEBSITE PROVIDES RESOURCES TO FIND HELP

The Pennsylvania Department’s website—www.vfwpahq.org—has many links to resources that promote emotional wellness and provide support for veterans experiencing emotional stress.

The website currently features:

- A home page visual link to the Veterans Crisis Line;
- Along the right hand side of the homepage, the “Vets Helpline” header links to a page dedicated to supportive services including VA mental health services, a suicide prevention video and links to connect veterans with immediate assistance. This sidebar link is always visible regardless of what page the user is on;
- One of several videos that can be viewed from our home page includes “You are not alone ... Veterans Crisis Line/Chat/Text”;
- Under “Resources” is another link to the Veterans Helpline; and



• Under “Resources” and “Links,” there are many links to helpful web pages including the Mental Wellness Awareness Association, PTSD and TBI info, suicide prevention, addiction recovery services and Helpguide.org

“This collective online approach is critical to ensuring that veterans have multiple access points to resources impacting their emotional wellness,” said State Commander Thomas Brown. “Our Department site, along with resources provided by our National Headquarters, put life-changing—and potentially life-saving—tools within easy reach of veterans of all ages.

“We hope that VFW posts will hold emotional wellness programs at their facilities. There are groups that will conduct them. We also hope that members keep close watch on their comrades to let them know they are there to support them.

“If you see signs that a comrade is acting different or withdrawing, please be there for them,” said Brown. “Let’s take care of each other. Don’t turn away.”

District Meeting Schedule

NOVEMBER 2016

DIST.	LOCATION	DATE	TIME
1	Cpl. Michael J. Crescenz – Phila.	November 9, 2016	7:30 PM
8	VFW Post #6493 – Warminster	November 20, 2016	1:30 PM
9	VFW Post #1564 – Phoenixville	November 13, 2016	2:00 PM
10	VFW Post #6082 – Peckville	November 13, 2016	2:00 PM
11	VFW Post #8335 – Avoca	November 20, 2016	2:30 PM
12	VFW Post #1532 – Sunbury	November 20, 2016	2:30 PM
13	VFW Post #6558 – Womelsdorf	November 13, 2016	2:00 PM
14	VFW Post #1568 – Towanda	November 20, 2016	2:00 PM
15	VFW Post #1630 – Lock Haven	November 20, 2016	2:00 PM
16	VFW Post #1711 – Jenkintown	November 16, 2016	7:30 PM
17	VFW Post #655 – McConnellsburg	November 6, 2016	2:00 PM
18	VFW Post #6704 – Mechanicsburg	November 13, 2016	2:00 PM
19	VFW Post #1835 – Franklin	November 20, 2016	2:30 PM
20	VFW Post #509 – Tobyhanna	November 20, 2016	2:00 PM
22	VFW Post #1785 – Clearfield	November 20, 2016	2:30 PM
23	VFW Post #554 – Somerset	November 6, 2016	2:00 PM
25	VFW Post #315 – New Castle	November 20, 2016	2:00 PM
26	VFW Post #7783 – Saint Benedict	November 13, 2016	2:30 PM
27	VFW Post #734 – Ligonier	November 6, 2016	2:30 PM
29	VFW Post #402 – Coraopolis	November 20, 2016	2:00 PM

DECEMBER 2016

1	Cpl. Michael J. Crescenz – Phila.	December 14, 2016	7:30 PM
21	VFW Post #2506 – Hanover	December 4, 2016	2:00 PM
28	VFW Post #6166 – Hermitage	December 11, 2016	2:00 PM

Visit www.vfwpahq.org for the full list of 2016-17 District Meetings

AT YOUR SERVICE: MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

Help Put a Face with Vietnam Vets' Names

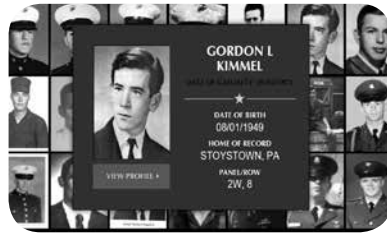
In an effort to preserve the legacy of those who sacrificed all in Vietnam, the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is working with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington to find a photo for each Pennsylvanian whose name is listed on the Wall of Faces.

Through the generosity of those helping to locate their photos, this program will ensure that Vietnam Veterans from Pennsylvania will be remembered and honored by visitors from around the globe for generations to come.

FOUNDERS OF THE WALL



If you have a picture of a loved one or fellow veteran whose name is listed on the DMVA's website— <http://www.vvmf.org/>



www.vvmf.org/—please help VVMF honor these individuals by putting a face with a name.

For information on how to submit a photo, please visit the Virtual Wall of Faces website <http://www.vvmf.org>. You can search through a list of Pennsylvanians whose photos are still needed and also view a PDF map breaking down how many pictures are still needed by county.

All photos collected will be featured in VVMF's Virtual Wall of Faces and in the future Education Center at The Wall.

You may submit your photograph online or by mail. To submit a picture online, you can upload the photograph right onto their profile page.

VFW Advocacy Fulfills Benefits Watchdog Promise

The VFW Action Corps is the VFW's national grassroots advocacy network with 300,000 VFW and Auxiliary members, and patriotic supporters of veterans. Action Corps members stay up-to-date on the issues facing our veterans, our military and their families, standing ready to email, write, call and visit our nation's lawmakers to make their voices heard.

The VFW Action Corps is free and open to all Americans who care about the military and veterans. VFW Action Corps members receive:

- The VFW Action Corps Weekly, an electronic newsletter highlighting VFW advocacy;
- Immediate access to a nationwide database of contacts

via a congressional directory of all elected officials; and

- Regular VFW "Action Alerts" telling them how they can get involved when our nation's veterans, service members and their families need their voices heard on Capitol Hill.

The VFW Action Corps is what gives the VFW its strength in advocating for our nation's heroes. Working hand-in-hand with the VFW's National Legislative Service, members are armed with the tools and information they need to help the VFW support our nation's veterans.

Join our Action Corps today by visiting www.vfw.org and "VFW in D.C." to help us protect veterans.

VA Benefit News & Other Important Health Updates

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

DISABILITY COMPENSATION – Disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to veterans who are at least 10% disabled because of injuries or diseases that occurred or were aggravated during active duty or active duty for training.

VA also pays Disability Compensation for disabilities from injury, heart attack, or stroke that occurred during inactive duty training. The disability must not be a result of your own willful misconduct, or alcohol or drug abuse.

Veterans with a service-connected disability may also qualify for Automobile Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant.

PENSION – VA Pension provides tax-free monthly benefit to war veterans with limited or no income. Additionally, for establishing eligibility based on Title 32 service, a disability must be shown to have been incurred or aggravated during that service.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT – VA provides vocational counseling, job-search assistance and other education and training services to certain veterans with service-connected illnesses or injuries.

HEALTH CARE –

VA health care benefits include all the necessary inpatient hospital care and outpatient services to promote, preserve or restore your health. Medical, dental, pharmacy and prosthetic services. For establishing eligibility based on Title 32 service, a disability must be shown to have been incurred or aggravated during that service.

Returning Service Members (OEF/OIF/OND): If you served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, you are eligible for an extended period of free VA health care benefits, with enrollment allowed up to 5 years from the date of discharge or release.

BURIAL – VA provides memorial services and allowances to help reimburse burial costs for a veteran and/or his or her dependents. Burial benefits include burial at a national cemetery, an inscribed headstone, marker, or medallion, an allowance to partially reimburse the burial and funeral costs of a veteran, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and an American flag to drape over a veteran's casket.

Eligibility requires that the veteran was serving on active duty, or his/her death was due to an injury or disease that developed during, or was aggravated during, active duty, active duty for training or inactive duty training.

VA CAREGIVER SERVICES – Did you know that VA has a number of support and service options to support you in your role as a Family Caregiver? The programs are available both in and out of your home to help you care for the veteran and for yourself.

Asking for help isn't always easy – especially if you're not exactly sure what kind of support would best serve you. Learn more about how VA's trained professionals can help you find the services and support that are right for you and your veteran.

With VA's Caregiver Support Line – 1-855-260-3274 – assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you're in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what services you may be eligible for, the caring licensed professionals can assist you.

Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible, and providing you with valuable information about resources that can help you stay strong as you care for the veteran you love.

VA has a Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program to connect caregivers to one another, to provide support and to learn from each other.

ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE – ADHC Centers are a safe and active environment with constant supervision designed for veterans to get out of the home and participate in activities.

HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE – HBPC is designed to deliver routine health care services to your home when the veteran you care for has medical issues that make it challenging to travel.

SKILLED HOME CARE – The Skilled Home Care service provides a medical professional who comes to your home to help care for a homebound veteran. To be eligible for this service, a veteran must be homebound and need of receiving medical services at home.

HOMEMAKER AND HOME HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM – Often times, taking care of a veteran leaves no time for you to take care of your own needs. Your local VA medical center can arrange for a home health aide who will come to your home to allow you time to take care of your own needs.

HOME TELEHEALTH – This program gives you ready access to a care coordinator by using technology in your home to enhance and extend care management to you, the Family Caregiver.

RESPIRE CARE – Respite is time for relaxing and renewing your own energy, and respite care can provide you with the time to do that. If a veteran requires a caregiver, you are eligible to receive up to 30 days of respite care per year.

HOME HOSPICE CARE – Home Hospice Care can offer comfort and supportive services for you and the veteran whose terminal health condition can be cared for in your own home. Bereavement care (grief counseling) is also available for you and other immediate family members.

For more information visit www.caregiver.va.gov/support/support_services.asp#sthash.9V or call a VFW State Service Officer.



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VFW - Act of March 1879

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

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Adjutant/Quartermaster John B. Getz, Jr.

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General Orders #2



1. The 53rd Annual Mid-Winter Conference will be held January 20-22, 2017 at the Double Tree by Hilton, 500 Mansfield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, Phone: (412)920-8050.

2. Eastern States Fall Conference: Will be held November 18-20, 2016. This year's ESC will be held at the Radisson Hotel Harrisburg, 1150 Camp Hill By-Pass, Camp Hill, PA 17011.

3. *Voice of Democracy & Patriot's Pen* Youth Essay: Deadline dates apply for both programs (2016 dates unless noted): Nov. 1- student deadline is midnight to the Post; November 15- Post judging completed; Dec. 3- District judging completed; Dec. 7- District winner entry form, (VOD): District winner entry form, CD of essay, typed essay and good photograph. On Dec. 7 the *Patriot's Pen* District summary report and District participation reports need to be sent to Dept. Chairman Robert L. Body, 211 Harding Street, Lower Burrell, PA 15068. Also VOD District summary report and District participation report needs to be mailed to Dept. Chairman Glenn Owen, 8563 RT 467, LeRaysville, PA 18829. Dec. 10-Dept. judging; Jan. 15, 2017- Dept. winner and reports submitted to National HQ. Jan. 21, 2017- *Patriot's Pen* winner announced at Mid-Winter and VOD Banquet.

4. VFW National Awards & Citations Committee: Americanism Award; Armed Forces Award; Citizenship Award; Dwight Davis Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award; Hall of Fame Award; Adjutant General Hamilton asked for recommendations for these awards if you believe you have a worthy candidate. Please forward recommendations and nomination, qualifications and contact info for the nominee or group to VFW National HQs, VFW Programs Coordinator, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

5. *Voice of Democracy*/Legislative Conf.: Washington D.C. Feb. 26- March 2, 2017.

6. District Meetings Attendance: Every Post must be represented at District meeting either by the Post Commander, Sr. Vice Commander, Jr. Vice Commander or their designated delegate must be present. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the Post Commander. IN REFERENCE TO ALL STATE POST COMMANDERS AND QUARTERMASTERS: Post Commander and/or Sr. Vice Commander and/or Jr. Vice Commander and/or Quartermaster must attend 50% of all District Meetings (POST COMMANDER AND POST QUARTERMASTER MUST ATTEND AT LEAST TWO PER YEAR).

7. A thorough program of Post inspection is necessary to ensure compliance with National and Department By-Laws and directives. Department and District Inspectors shall make every effort to inspect every Post under their cognizance on an annual basis and correct such discrepancies as may be disclosed.

8. The distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies will be conducted according to the provisions set forth in sections 711 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure. Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders should arrange now for the distribution of Buddy Poppies in their respective areas. All profits accruing from the distribution of Buddy Poppies shall be used for the relief of disabled and needy veterans and their dependents.

9. Posts are urged to finish planning and conduct suitable programs for the observance of Veterans Day (see section 223 of the Manual of Procedure).

10. Documented participation in Commander's Special Project "Medal of Honor Grove" using photos, videos, newspaper/magazine articles, must be sent to State HQs earmarked "Commander's Special Project/Medal of Honor Grove".

11. Please assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forward to Department Headquarters. Any Post Trustees Report of Audit not filled out correctly will be returned for corrections.

OFFICIAL BY ORDER OF:

Thomas A. Brown - State Commander ATTEST: John B. Getz, Jr. - State Adjutant

Department's Annual Bowling Tournament is Set for April

Save these dates if you love to bowl! The Department's 2017 VFW State Bowling Tournament, which will once again be hosted by Titusville VFW Post 5958, will be held on the following dates:

- April 1st and 2nd (first weekend)
- April 8th and 9th (last weekend for competing)

The tournament will be held at Lin-Van Alleys in Titusville. A mailing with more information will be released to all VFW posts closer to the event dates.



Chaplain's Corner

Let's All Be Trustworthy Comrades

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



Recently, two very similar things happened that stimulated my thinking about what it means to be a trustworthy person.

The first incident involved arrangements being made for the CEO of an organization that operates a ministry for homeless veterans to present the ministry to a group. It was stated upfront that the group was planning to donate to the cause and would like to have a briefing.

Detailed arrangements were made, and a follow-up call was made to confirm the details and to ensure that the person had directions, phone contact information, etc. Well, the meeting date arrived, and the CEO was a no-show. There was no phone call from the person canceling the meeting or stating that they would not be able to keep the appointment. The CEO just decided to do something else, and no apology was ever given for being a no-show.

In the second incident, I contracted with an individual to come to my home on a Saturday morning to do a small landscaping project. We agreed on a date and time, and the young man assured me that he would be glad to do the project on that day. I agreed to pay him well.

The day came and he was a no-show. Again, no phone call. When I saw the young man about a week later, he just said, "Pastor, I am sorry I didn't come to do that work." No reason was given. He just decided not to show up and follow through on what he said he would do!

As Comrades, and particularly as Chaplains, we need to be trustworthy. We need to do what we say we are going to do. We need to be people who keep their word. This is how most people gauge whether or not a person is trustworthy.

Therefore, I encourage you to write down all promises and agreements you make ... and then make sure you honor them! For trustworthy people, their word is their bond. When they say they'll do something, whether "important" or "seemingly insignificant," they make sure they remember it ... and then do it! If an emergency arises, and they can't keep their commitment, they call to alert those who are waiting for them.

In addition to keeping their word, trustworthy people don't lie, steal, or cheat. They are honest—even in little things. As comrades, we should seek to be people who are trustworthy.

Recently, I was made aware that some post leaders take in members they know have not served in a conflict, on the Korean peninsula, or received special

hazardous duty pay, and are not qualified to be members of the VFW; that is a blatant violation of the By-laws and a misrepresentation of the truth.

Also, trustees and commanders must sign the Audit Report statement at the bottom of the form certifying that they have done the following: "*Audited the books and records of the Adjutant and Quartermaster ... in accordance with the National By-Laws and that this report is a true and correct statement thereof to the best of our knowledge and belief. All vouchers and checks have been examined and found to be properly approved and checks properly countersigned.*"

Signing that statement without looking at the books and examining the records is equivalent to lying and filing a false report.

"As Comrades, and particularly as Chaplains, we need to be trustworthy. We need to do what we say we are going to do. We need to be people who keep their word. This is how most people gauge whether or not a person is trustworthy...."

For trustworthy people, their word is their bond. When they say they'll do something, whether "important" or "seemingly insignificant," they make sure they remember it...."

Trustworthy people don't lie, steal, or cheat. They are honest."

Unfortunately, in our great organization posts have had to be put under suspension because of such actions. And, periodically, we hear or read about someone who has stolen money and violated the oath they took when they joined the VFW.

When we joined this great organization, we took an oath in which we stated, "*I will never wrong or defraud this organization .*" We hear those words repeated each time we induct a new member. As one of our ritual prayers states, "*We should live such lives of stainless integrity as shall reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify His great and Holy Name.*"

Check out my Chaplain's Page on the Department's website, www.vfwpahq.org for the Chaplain's Guide, which has many resources for you to serve those who served.

Blessings as you serve.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Post Chaplains are encouraged to report their activities on a regular basis using a new website feature that captures the entered data and stores it for easy review by Chaplain Hook.

To submit your Post Chaplain activity online, please use the link found at the top of the Chaplain's Page on the Department's website—www.vfwpahq.org under the Post/District Info Section.

VFW Supports House Bill 1858 ... continued from page 1

words stating why it's critical that students be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of our nation's history and style of government.

"Our state and nation were founded on some very important principles that have stood the test of time. From the very first days of America's independence, these key principles shaped our country's government to become the most free and representative nation on earth," Commander Brown testified. "These principles remained true and strong during periods of tremendous growth and change in America's population, industry, technology, economy and military service.

"These principles are not mere words on paper. Our Founding Fathers exerted great effort and emotion in defining how America differs from other nations. These statements provide a living, breathing philosophy of freedom that works for citizens with varied backgrounds. These words weave together a framework for freedom that has endured for 240 years since our independence was declared.

"In fact, the uniqueness of our nation's structure has created the longest surviving democracy on the face of this earth. That is why the Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars strongly supports House Bill 1858."

The VFW emphasized that with high school seniors reaching the voting age of 18, they should have a good understanding of how America's government operates and of the important lessons learned from history. "This will help graduates better evaluate how key issues and election candidate's stances may impact their lives," he noted.

The VFW's testimony included excerpts from National *Voice of Democracy* contest winner Grayson Campbell's speech explaining why graduating students should demonstrate their knowledge about the nation's past and their role as responsible, active citizens.

Campbell wrote, "I was born into freedom and I have been afforded rights and opportunities that so many around the world will never experience. What



State Commander Thomas Brown, joined by (back row) State Adjutant John Getz and State Sr. Vice Commander Dwight Fuhrman, promoted better civic education among high school seniors. House Veterans Affairs and Education Committee members asked questions about the bill including Veterans Affairs Majority Chairman Stephen Barrar. (PA House photos)



I wasn't born with was the heart of an American. My patriot's heart journey began many years ago, when I was a middle school student attending a Veteran's Day ceremony.

"At (this event), I watched an old veteran take off his veteran's cap, place his hand over his heart and stand

"If we require immigrants going through the legal process of becoming Americans to pass an exam about civics and citizenship, why would we not also make sure that our graduates have that same knowledge?"

in honor of Old Glory, and seeing tears fill his eyes as the speaker talked about World War II.

"By studying history, my heart for this country transformed as I learned how our country was woven from threads spun from conflicts, and how our nation was built on the backs of those who sacrificed much and carried the colors for all of us.

Campbell's speech continued, "My vision for America is that each citizen of this outstanding nation will have a patriot's heart. For a patriot's heart knows

and appreciates our history, and will never want to forget how we got here or whose shoulders we stand on. A patriot's heart knows what our flag stands for and will not dare sit when "Old Glory" is presented.

"A patriot's heart loves this country, defends its liberty, seeks the greater good, and will never allow our God-given, inalienable rights to be restricted. A patriot's heart realizes the sacrifices that it took to make our nation great, and will never allow those who have defended freedom to be forgotten.

"That is why my vision for America is that each citizen of this great nation will have a patriot's heart, because then, just like in generations past, we will be able to overcome any struggle."

State Commander Brown directed members of the Education and Veterans Affairs Committees to the conclusion of Campbell's speech to further point out that freedom is too precious to assume that young citizens understand the special nature of America's past and its structure as a representative republic.

Campbell's speech closed with, "As President Reagan remarked, 'freedom is never more than one generation from extinction'; we don't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed to them to do the same."

Commander Brown urged lawmakers to pass HB 1858 to ensure that seniors enter their post-high school lives—their voting years—knowing the important aspects of America's history and governing structure.

"Knowledge is the lifeblood of any ideal worth pursuing and protecting. That knowledge—and knowledge of the schemes that freedom's enemies force onto others—is what emboldened and inspired men and women to risk their lives defending America.

"Veterans and today's troops shed their blood and gave their lives to show their loyalty to their nation. Let's inspire young adults to continue these key ideals and to include public service in their futures.

"If we require immigrants going through the legal process of becoming Americans to pass an exam about civics and citizenship, why would we not also make sure that our graduates have that same knowledge?"

VFW posts, members and Auxiliary members are encouraged to contact their State Representative and Senator, and the Governor, asking them to support HB 1858. To request a copy of State Commander Brown's testimony, email dsandman@vfwpahq.org

PA VFW Marchers Raise \$33k for Diabetes Research and Patient Support

The Department's "March for Diabetes" program—which this year again included events in western PA covering 100 miles from Erie to Pittsburgh and in District 21—added more than \$33,000 to its running total of \$2.1 million for diabetes research and support. Pictured (at right, front row) is the western team: State Commander Thomas Brown, State Adjutant John Getz, State Chief of Staff Cecil Dennis, Chairman Bob Mandera, Scott McKenzie, Tony Powell, Dan Casciato and Chris Macellores. Chairman Mandera thanked all posts for their support including Mercer Post 6345 and Meadville Post 2006, which provided tremendous monetary and other contributions. Pictured at the finish is Post 2754's Color Guard.



The District 21 team, some who are shown at left, received \$20,000 in donations during a 43-mile trek. After completing the final leg of their journey, Chambersburg 1599 treated the walkers to a full meal. A partial list of walkers and drivers included State Sr. Vice Commander Dwight and Marsha Fuhrman, Robert and Peggy Brown, Lynn and Judy Keener, PSC Gary Smith, John and Sandy Brenner, Jim and Janet Albin, Delores Wintermyer, District Commander Jeff Loncar, Terry Stokes, Linda Hermansen, Kathy and Carey DeCarlo, Amy Caldwell, Bob and Tina Hinkle.

These Posts participated by providing healthy snacks, drinks and donations: 15, 537, 556, 695, 1446, 1599, 2493, 2506, 5265, 6319, 6954, 6771, 7012, 7045, 7046, 7130, 7374, 8951 and 8996. Thanks to all who supported these events!

Focus on Mission Success



Newport Post 34 held a Community Race Car Show featuring several Sprint Car teams. The event attracted many adults, youth and local track drivers who signed autographs. The Post provided food and beverages. Several new members were signed up. Pictured are Rex Geiling, driver Tyler Bear, Sergeant-at-Arms Abe Holley and Commander James Snyder.

The high level of play was impressive during the Department's annual VFW Baseball State Tournament. Shown is the Huntingdon Championship Team in the 14-and-under division. At right, the Championship Trophy is displayed by Huntingdon VFW Post 1754 Sr. Vice Commander Mike Knode, Commander Tammy McClain, Team Manager Bob Foster and Teener League President Greg Lender. The Post, which has been a long-time supporter of VFW Baseball, donated \$2,000 to help cover tournament expenses.



West Mifflin Post 914 Commander Jake Bradich, left, and *Patriot's Pen* and *Voice of Democracy* Chairman, Gary Ruston, far right, give recognition to local winners of the annual *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* contests at the Post's monthly meeting. Pictured also are scholarship awardees Glen Brown, II, Liam Rubright, Ashley Rogalla and Bree DeShields-Metz.



Linesville Post 7842 celebrated the 70th anniversary of its charter in August. Commander Bob Moser holds Certificates of Congratulations from VFW National Chief Brian Duffy and Department of Pennsylvania Commander Tom Brown. The Post held an Open House and signed up seven new members. Pictured are (right): Dares Thompson, Jr. Vice Commander; Tim Watson, Quartermaster; Commander Moser; Mike Peirce, Past Post Commander; Rich Krankota, Director, Crawford County Veterans Services; and Ed O'Malley, Sr. Vice Commander.



To help raise funds for its new home, Post 2076 organized a triathlon event and entered a "senior team" to help promote the fundraiser. Pictured is team of seniors called "Brown's Bombers," in gratitude for State Commander Thomas Brown donating the team's entry fee. Team members included (from left) runner Paul Hicks, age 72; runner Birdie Farrell, 80; biker Joe Cary, 84; biker Gary Harrold age, 72; runner/canoist Naomi Harrold, 72; and Wib Stamler, 84.



Three members of Erie Post 470 received the Republic of Korea Ambassador of Peace Medal for their service during the Korean War. Pictured are (from left) former PA VFW State Judge Advocate Bob DeSousa, on behalf of U.S. Senator Toomey, Jerome Devlin, Bob Southard, Pat Sheldon and State Rep. Ryan Bizzaro.

Focus on Mission Success



Mercer VFW Post 6345 was a corporate sponsor for the Mercer Memorial 500 "Run of the Flags 5K." Fifteen hundred dollars was raised permitting 87 veterans and active duty military personnel to run for free. VFW Post officials Al Chambers and Vern Campbell are pictured next to a wounded warrior who competed in the event.



Yardley Post 6393 received National VFW recognition for reaching its 70th Anniversary. A certificate from then National Commander John Biedrzycki was presented to Commander Tom Hauserman (left) by Rev. Peter Hook, State and Post 6393 Chaplain.



Matt Staab, Adjutant of Erie Post 470, presents a check to John Kowalcyk, founder of Veterans Miracle Center. The money was raised from a pool tournament held at the Post.



For the second year in a row, Volant VFW Post 7465 won the "Humana Challenge" to all VFW posts in Pennsylvania. The event encourages posts to donate items for deployed troops. Post 7465 collected two truckloads of products that will be appreciated by troops overseas. Thanks to all posts that participated, and congratulations Post 7465!



Middletown Post 1620 and Auxiliary continued its strong community activity when members participated in the MS Walk in Hershey and raised \$1,650. Team members shown included Ricky Snyder, Mickey Camden, Angela Childers, Drew Gastley, Alex McGough, Rhonda Mims, Denise Shepersen, Alana Soto, John Stutzman, Eric Swenson, Donnie Thompson and James Tisdell.



Jesse Rinker, Jr. Vice Commander of District 17, covers a VFW information display table at the Huntingdon County Fair. The VFW's presence there, supported by Mt. Union Post 5754 and Huntingdon Post 1754, provided hundreds of veterans with facts about VFW programs, contact information for benefits assistance and other veterans resources.



Abington Memorial Post 7069, Clarks Summit, hosted a seminar introducing a Magisterial Veterans Diversionary Court for a one-year probationary period. Shown from left are: Herman Johnson, Post 7069 trustee; Magisterial District Judge Paul Keeler, who will administer the Veterans Court program; Michael G. McLane, Post 7069 Quartermaster/Adjutant; Steuart J. Bailey, Post 7069 Commander; Donald Jones, Post 7069 Sr. Vice Commander, and Patrick Williams, Post 7069 Chaplain.



Our Mission is All About "Sharing and Caring"

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



Thank you to all who attended the Department Post Officer Training seminars. I really enjoyed the time spent with my fellow veterans as we discussed our

programs and how to properly run a post. Your feedback was important to State Commander Tom Brown's team.

My wife, Marsha, and I had the opportunity to attend the "Sharing and Caring" river cruise with hospitalized veterans and caregivers in Pittsburgh in September. The "Caring and Sharing" committee certainly know how to put a smile on veterans' faces. All veterans sure did enjoy the day!

A huge THANK YOU goes out to all of the dedicated VFW and Auxiliary members who work tirelessly every year to make that event a huge success.

I would like to personally thank Frank and Charlotte Lopes for their tireless efforts to make the river cruise a success. I know that for them it is not a volunteer event—it is a passion.

Charlotte shared the story of a disfigured vet who had lost just about everything, including faith and hope. Charlotte spent time with this vet and gave him the spark to move on with his life. He returned the next year with a whole new outlook on life.



He shared with Charlotte that when he returned home, he prayed to God for strength and hope to start a new life. When Charlotte finished her story, she was in tears. She made a real difference in a veteran's life. So can you!

Please support the "Caring and Sharing" program. It was another event that gives me very fond memories of time spent with our hospitalized veterans. I saw first-hand that "Freedom is not Free," and that the VFW continues to make a world of difference.



Leadership and Commitment are Critical to Success

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



One might think that officer titles sound great, but the title comes with much responsibility to your post, district and yourself.

As it states in our Manual of Procedure, much of the success of the post and district rests with you. Sounds like an easy job, but it takes a special person to be a leader. Commanders get right in the trenches with their comrades.

Recently, at Department and Post Officer Training, I witnessed many leadership skills by many dedicated comrades, so willing to work hard to make their posts and districts better. I was truly inspired by so many whose love for our veterans and the VFW are second to none. I saw it in their eyes and their faces; they want to help veterans more.

What makes some Commanders/Officers better than others? Why do some posts succeed while others fail?

I believe it comes down to three single words: ENERGY, EFFORT AND ENJOYMENT! To be good at anything, one must first believe in it and they must

love all that it entails!

Slogans like "No One Does More for Veterans" and "Every Day is Veterans Day" are just words, unless you believe in them, and love to be a part of all that it entails to make these words come true.

Let's dedicate ourselves to make the Department of Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars one hundred percent (100%) in programs and membership!

Lastly, let's share the knowledge we have with our new officers and younger members. So many times, our leaders take the knowledge they've gained over 30, 40, or 50 years to their final resting place. What a sad scenario. So much can be gained and so many can benefit if we pass our knowledge down.

Please take the time to cast your vote in the upcoming election. It is a right you have truly earned.

I wish all of you a joyous holiday season. Let's approach the New Year with renewed vigor in all we do for veterans and our communities.

I am so proud to belong to this organization. You make a difference in the lives of veterans, their families and the community. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Mid-Winter Conference.

VFW Salutes Full Funding for Veterans Administration

Congress averted an imminent government shutdown recently by passing a continuing resolution to temporarily fund the federal government for ten weeks in fiscal year 2017. Congress also approved full-year funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which was a significant victory for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"Stop-gap budget measures harm veterans," said VFW National Commander Brian Duffy, "which is why we are glad that Congress agreed and acted on full-year appropriations for the VA. This will allow the VA to properly plan and execute its numerous programs to better serve wounded, ill and injured veterans, as well as their families and survivors."

The VA/military construction budget that the president is expected to sign will provide \$74.4 billion in discretionary spending to the VA next year. The amount is about a 4-percent increase to 2016 funding levels, but almost \$700 million less than what the White House requested earlier this year. The bill also includes \$7.72 billion for military construction, which is about 6 percent less than current funding levels, but nearly \$300 million more than the White House requested.

Included in the new funding package are a number of VFW-supported initiatives and programs, such as authorizing VA to

provide In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and covering the cost of adoptions, eliminating co-payments for medications that counter potential opioid overdoses, expanding VA childcare pilot programs and whistleblower protections, and increasing the transparency of VA Office of Inspector General reports.

Regarding IVF, which the VFW had been strongly supporting for two years, the legislation will provide urgently needed relief to veterans who suffer from service-connected injuries and illnesses that prevent them from conceiving.

"Veterans with service-connected injuries must be made as whole as possible," said the VFW national commander, "and helping them to start families — by receiving the same fertility options that would have been afforded to them had they still been in uniform — is the very least a grateful nation can do."

Although Congress averted a government shutdown and provided full-year funding for veterans programs, federal lawmakers still have to work together after the Nov. 8 elections, to include passing a number of important veterans-related legislation already introduced, and to finally eliminate the budget sequestration, which has been the VFW's top legislative priority ever since Congress created it in 2011.



Facts and Figures

Get Bonded, Grow Your Auxiliary and Be Well

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



The time for Post Quartermaster and Club Bonding is just about complete. For the Quartermaster's Bond, this is a position bond, so even if your quartermaster changes, the position itself is still

bonded.

Under the Club Bond, since the quartermaster is in charge of all funds and the Quartermaster's Bond does not cover gaming, the quartermaster needs to be covered by name under the Club Bond for all liquid assets in the home association.

With the change in the National Auxiliary allowing male members, you have a good opportunity to urge eligible social members to join your auxiliary with the same criteria that was used when it was a ladies auxiliary. This should help revitalize your auxiliary and provide interested men a true chance to participate in a bigger part of your post.

This change was made to recognize that many more females serve in the military these days. Encouraging males

to join your auxiliary honors their female veterans and gives men an auxiliary voice.

Both your National and Department VFW Headquarters are working hard to keep veterans' emotional wellness in the forefront of all we do. Twenty-two veterans take their own lives each day, men and women, from all service eras. And, it is not just veterans who deployed to combat zones who are ending their own lives. Even those who never deployed are at risk.

Comrades, we need to better understand mental health issues—what they are, how they surface and resources that help distressed veterans improve their lives. Sometimes the signs are obvious; in other instances, only a few people see it.

Is a veteran not acting like his or her self? Are they agitated or withdrawn? Are they failing to take care of themselves? Do they have a substance abuse problem?

Our VFW Commander-in-Chief asks all posts to run mental health awareness projects to help eliminate veteran suicide. Please visit www.changedirection.org.

Thanks for all you do for veterans. EVERY DAY IS VETERANS DAY.



Membership Moment

Reaching 100% is Really Quite Realistic

Membership Chair Henry Mannella and Co-Chair Cecil Dennis



We know that there are some VFW posts that don't even try to reach 100% in membership. You know what would happen if our military fell well below reaching their recruiting goals? Their capabilities would be cut even further and the draft might be needed.

Every year that your post and our Department fails to reach 100% at the end of the year results in us being less capable in what we can do for veterans, our troops and local communities.

Here are easy steps to make achieving 100% in membership realistic:

- Take time to read over the Membership Program and familiarize yourself with the individual contests, awards, and deadline dates, then set your goals early. We created these programs to be not only reachable, but also financially rewarding for your post.

- Pick a small team of 4-6 people to make plans for how to achieve the Department Contest goals. If you run a few programs, go to other events in your community and talk to veterans and military units, you will reach 100%.

- Make sure every post meeting includes a membership report. Then go over what your post requirements are to reach

100%, ask for volunteers to help conduct a few events. Pick some community events to setup tables like gun shows, fairs and patriotic programs.

- Make donations to groups that make your community safer and better like police and fire departments, EMS units and local beautification projects. If your community sees your post as a positive asset, people will be drawn to your VFW unit.

- Dig in and renew your delinquent members! Get on the phone.

- Be in the public eye and let folks in your area know that the VFW is not a drinking club, but rather a vital part of the community.

- Host a veteran's open house at your post with VFW Service Officers, VA reps, healthcare providers and other organizations that serve veterans.

National HQs added a "Pot O' Gold" drawing: three winners will be drawn and accompany the Commander-in-Chief on an all-expense paid trip to Ireland (Fall 2017), along with their spouse or guest.

For any new/reinstated member recruited between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, you will receive one chance for every five new/reinstated members recruited, and you will receive ten chances for every increment of 25 new/reinstated members recruited.

Post and District Commanders: You will receive ten chances in recognition of 85%+ post and district retention. The drawing will take place July 1, 2017.

Getting memberships will happen if you put some elbow grease into your efforts.

Annual Ride Revs Up \$8,151 for Homeless Veterans

The Department's 13th Annual Gary Anders Memorial Ride for Homeless Veterans, which begins at Duncansville Post 8724, drew nearly 100 motorcycles and raised \$8,151. Post 8724 donated the highest amount, \$1,500. Donations also came in from District 26 and Posts 1620, 1600, 7377, 7043, Post 43 Auxiliary as well as other veterans organizations and supporters. Donations can still be submitted to State Homeless Veterans Chairman Dwayne Anders (iraqandy@yahoo.com/814 937-1741). The funds will be donated to homeless shelters throughout the state. (Photo at right: Patrick Waksmunski/Altoona Mirror)



Freedom Isn't Free Rally Benefits Wounded Warriors

In July, VFW Post 464 hosted its second "Freedom Isn't Free Rally" in support of the PA Wounded Warriors, Inc. The event raised over \$5,000, which is half the Post's \$10,000 goal to be presented to PAWW Founder Helen Sager at the Mid-Winter Conference.

The Post asked its community for sponsors and received numerous donations including the largest one from Allegheny Toyota, which also purchased t-shirts for the Rally. Burger King, Spanky's Tobacco World, Thornes Market, Oil City Automotive, Clarion VFW, Franklin VFW, Franklin Beer, Titusville VFW, RPM Motorcars and Home Depot also sponsored the rally. The Post thanks all VFW units that supported the fundraiser.



Department Membership Update: 79.18% of the 2015-16 Year-End Total

Top five posts ranked by Membership Division			
Div.	Post	Location	%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	88.02%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	83.20%
1	8951	WEST YORK	74.35%
1	1810	BRENTWOOD	57.66%
2	2006	MEADVILLE	95.71%
2	2385	GRATZ	93.93%
2	7863	DUBOISTOWN	91.82%
2	6319	GREENCASTLE	89.66%
2	106	WEST CHESTER	88.97%
3	1620	MIDDLETOWN	100.78%
3	8803	TIDIOUTE	95.40%
3	2493	MOUNT WOLF	93.15%
3	1835	FRANKLIN	90.25%
3	169	VENANGO	90.03%
4	38	READING	91.93%
4	5752	MOUNT JOY	91.70%
4	6558	WOMELSDORF	90.99%
4	7878	KING OF PRUSSIA	90.20%
4	7842	LINESVILLE	89.95%
5	3575	QUARRYVILLE	98.61%
5	9219	PLEASANTVILLE	92.10%
5	5642	MONTROSE	90.41%
5	6345	MERCER	89.74%
5	8206	TURBOTVILLE	88.96%
6	1586	HASTINGS	93.60%
6	779	PATTON	92.98%
6	6070	NEWVILLE	92.91%
6	3398	WILLOW GROVE	91.33%
6	4907	WELLSBORO	91.12%
7	415	NEW BETHLEHEM	96.03%
7	747	POINT MARION	92.39%
7	129	POTTSVILLE	91.11%
7	567	MC DONALD	91.11%
7	7295	BERLIN	87.85%
8	6301	JOHNSONBURG	96.55%
8	7919	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	96.51%
8	7375	HYNDMAN	95.18%
8	7130	DELTA	94.66%
8	974	DARBY	90.66%
9	5069	ANDREAS	94.91%
9	560	KUTZTOWN	93.75%
9	7810	AUSTIN	93.75%
9	5201	BELLWOOD	92.30%
9	7650	PHILADELPHIA	92.30%
10	274	PITTSBURGH	105.26%
10	7390	BROOMALL	102.50%
10	514	MC KEESPORT	100.00%
10	1606	NEWELL	100.00%
10	3425	CHESTER	100.00%

On October 12th, Dept. membership stood at 69,941 members or 79.18% of the 2015-16 year-end total. So far this year 568 new members and 133 reinstated members have been recruited.

Posts should read the State Membership Program to learn 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 October 12
Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!

FIRST PLACE



SCOTT M. FRITZ

- DISTRICT 18 - 84.73% - Cmdr. Scott M. Fritz
- DISTRICT 1 - 84.72% - Cmdr. Zbigniew Laska
- DISTRICT 15 - 83.95% - Cmdr. Jesse Olson
- DISTRICT 13 - 83.19% - Cmdr. James Lindsay
- DISTRICT 9 - 83.07% - Cmdr. Theresa Reeser
- DISTRICT 26 - 82.56% - Cmdr. Joseph Kopsic
- DISTRICT 21 - 82.46% - Cmdr. Jeffrey Loncar
- DISTRICT 7 - 82.12% - Cmdr. John R. Kennard
- DISTRICT 19 - 81.90% - Cmdr. Ronald Peters
- DISTRICT 12 - 80.84% - Cmdr. William Begis

Don't Miss These Key VFW Program Deadlines

Smart/Maher Citizenship Education Teacher Award

- *February 15, Teacher Nominations to the Post
- February 28, Completion of Post judging
- March 15, Completion of District judging
- March 30, Completion of Department judging
- April 1, District participation reports due to Department Chairmen
- *April 5, Department winners due to National
- *April 15, Department reports due to National

Community Service

- *December 1, Department 6-month Community Service Report (Department to National)
- *April 30, Post Special Project & Fred C. Hall Award Submission (Department to National)
- *April 30, National Outstanding Community Service Post Submission(s) (Department to National)
- *May 31, Department Year-End Community Service Report (Department to National)

Public Servant National Award (Law Enforcement, Firefighter, Emergency Services)

- January 1, Nominations due (from Post to Department)
- February 1 (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), Nominations due from Department to National

National Certificate of Recognition

- *April 1 (to guarantee receipt for Department Convention presentation), List due to National from Department

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen

- *November 1, Student entries to the Post
- November 15, Completion of Post judging
- December 15, Completion of District judging
- January 10, Completion of Department judging
- January 15, District participation reports due to Department Chairmen
- *January 15, Department winners due to National
- *January 31, Department reports due to National

Scout of the Year

- *March 1, Scout entries to the Post
- April 1, Post entries to Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs
- *May 1, Department entry to National from Department Scouting Chairman or Department HQs

***Required deadline (by VFW National Headquarters.) All other deadlines are suggested, and can be internally set at the discretion of the VFW Department leadership. Post Chairmen, be sure to communicate with your District Chairmen to find out their official deadlines, and District Chairmen need to communicate with their Department Chairmen to find out their deadlines.**

Mid-Winter Conference ... continued from page 1

members to attend.

Participation forms for the conference will be mailed to posts. The forms on this page may also be used. These forms will be posted on the "Events" page of the Department's website in mid-November.

Participants who have questions or topics that they would like to be

addressed during the conference can submit their request to State Adjutant John Getz (adjutant@vfwpahq.org).

Attendees are encouraged to bring new and unopened packages of white athletic socks, gloves, hats, sweatpants/sweatshirts, underwear, t-shirts, personal care items (toiletries), blankets and gym bags for homeless veterans.

VOD PROGRAM AD BOOK PLACEMENTS

Print name: _____ Signature: _____

Organization name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Size of Ad: _____ Payment Enclosed: _____

Check #: _____ Date: _____

- (check one): Ad is attached on paper in correct size as camera-ready
 Ad being sent via email in Microsoft Word in correct size
 Please create an ad for me (attach photo if needed)

This form creates a contract between the signer and the Dept. of PA VFW. Proceeds will be used to offset the cost of the VOD program and banquet.

FORMS FOR THE MID-WINTER CONFERENCE JAN. 20-22

The Pennsylvania Department MWC registration fee is \$10 in advance and \$12 at the conference. Please complete the form below and mail with payment to Dept. of PA VFW, "MWC Delegate Fees," 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg PA 17109-5943. Delegate registration forms were sent to post quartermasters and commanders. The deadline for advance registration is January 6, 2017. Make checks payable to "Dept. of PA VFW."

MID-WINTER DELEGATE REGISTRATION

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

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

RESERVATIONS FOR VOD BANQUET

Tickets for the Annual *Voice of Democracy* Banquet, scheduled for Saturday night, January 21st, are available for \$50 each. A cash bar will open at 6 p.m. with dinner/program at 7 p.m. All seats are reserved with seating 10 per table. Tickets must be paid for when ordered. Group requests should be noted on the order form and include all names in your group. Reservations must be made by January 6th. Tickets must be picked up at the VFW registration table by noon, January 21st (tickets are not mailed). Return the form below with payment to: Dept. of PA VFW, "VOD Banquet Reservations," 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg PA 17109-5943.

ANNUAL DEPT. OF PA VFW VOD BANQUET TICKETS

Name: _____ Check #: _____

Number of tickets requested: _____ X \$50 EA. = \$ _____ Enclosed: _____

District: _____ Post/Auxiliary: _____

ENTREE CHOICES: (includes salad, starch, vegetable and dessert)

Herb Marinated Bone in Chicken Breast, potatoes, green beans

Sliced Top Sirloin of Beef with Mushroom Demi Glaze, potatoes, broccoli

ENCLOSE A CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO: "DEPT. OF PA VFW"

Please attach a list of persons you want to sit with. There is no guarantee that all requests can be met unless tickets are ordered together.

ROOM RESERVATIONS

Room reservations can be made starting November 14th, with a deadline of December 29th, by calling the Doubletree by Hilton in Greentree (412) 922-8400 and requesting the "VFW rate" of \$119 per night single or double occupancy, plus tax (total \$135.66 per night). One night deposit is required with the form that can be found on the Department website under "Events." This a non-smoking facility.

VOD PROGRAM BOOK

You can help the VFW support young Americans through the *Voice of Democracy* program by purchasing black-and-white ads in a 8 1/2" x 11" ad book. Ads may be solicited outside of the VFW but they must refer specifically to the VOD program. Please send your ad with payment to Ad Book Coordinator Louise Gerhart, 160 S. Charlotte Street, Manheim PA 17545, (717) 665-2812. Ad deadline is December 9th.

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

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

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

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

PLEASE USE THE FORM AT LEFT TO SUBMIT YOUR AD

The VFW Auxiliary ...

Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



The Department President Says...

Let's Continue Caring About and Supporting Others

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



As pumpkins are carved, turkeys are dressed, packages are wrapped and elves begin their chores, I remind you about all the wonderful work that we can and are doing for veterans, military

troops, their families and our communities.

Aug. 14-17th, the VFW Dept. of PA VFW Auxiliary hosted our National President Colette Bishop for her visit to our state. Thank you to Beatrice Laughman and Sharon McCullough, Visit Chairman and Co-Chairman, for a job well-done.

Aug. 19th-21st, our Department Auxiliary held its annual Program and Leadership Workshop.

Nov. 1, 2016 is the deadline for students to submit their *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* entries for judging. I look forward to greeting the winners from each District, and the *Patriot's Pen* winner, at Mid-Winter Conference in Pittsburgh. Our Scholarships Chairman, Marsha Fuhrman, has more to share with you on this page concerning these and many other scholarships the VFW Auxiliary promotes.

Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy and VFW Auxiliary National President Colette Bishop are sharing a special project this year

titled "Mental Health Awareness." The VFW and VFW Auxiliary have partnered with **Give an Hour, PatientsLikeMe** and **One Mind** to provide training to "Know the Five Signs" of emotional suffering and to better serve those coping with invisible injuries.

One goal is to redirect the mindset concerning mental health in America through **Give an Hour's Change Direction** campaign. Together, we hosted a "Day to Change Direction" on Oct. 8. Please spread the word about mental health awareness.

You can obtain posters from the above websites explaining the five signs of mental suffering and post these in your community. Donations can be sent to my special project, Mental Health Awareness, to Department Secretary/Treasurer Jodie Hollinger.

Mental Health Awareness projects can be reported as Veterans and Family Support, and Hospital projects for year-end reports, and sent to Veterans and Family Support Chairman, Veronica Grant, who on this page writes about how you support veterans and their families.

Have a very grateful Thanksgiving and a safe and joyful Merry Christmas as with "UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES" the VFW Auxiliary - Department of Pennsylvania continues "SERVING AMERICA'S HEROES."



Department of Pennsylvania Auxiliary leadership arranged a tour of the Lebanon VA Medical Center for National President Colette Bishop, who was visiting from her home Department of Iowa. Pictured with the Auxiliary contingent is USMC Veteran Jeremy Fees, Chief of Voluntary Services at Lebanon VA Medical Center.

Joined by Department President Donna Mills, VFW National Auxiliary President Colette Bishop placed a Memorial Wreath by the PA Guard's 28th Infantry Division Wall at Fort Indiantown Gap, Anville, to honor soldiers who lost their lives fighting for freedom. The 28th ID is the Army's oldest continuously operating division.



President Donna Mills and some of her leadership take a break during the Department Auxiliary's Annual Program and Leadership Workshop to smile for the camera. This event creates a foundation of knowledge and commitment to drive Auxiliary success across the Commonwealth.

Being Active and Engaged Changes Many Lives

By Veronica Grant, Veterans & Family Support Chair - mycatsbossme@comcast.net

VFW Auxiliary's Programs Can Help Others Move Forward

By Marsha Fuhrman, Scholarships Chair - dmfuhrman@comcast.net



The Auxiliary Scholarship year is now in high gear as the judging of the *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* at all levels is starting. Be sure to recognize EVERYONE who was involved in the programs in any way. Recognition is the key to continued promotion by teachers and students as well.

Mark your calendar for the Mid-Winter Conference when the *VOD* Banquet will be held Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Doubletree Hotel Pittsburgh-Greentree. The Department *VOD* first-place winner will be announced and we will also honor the Department *Patriot's Pen* first-place winner.

Do you know a teacher who works with students on the *VOD* program? If so, nominate him or her as the *VOD* Teacher of the Year and submit your nominee to your District chairman.

As the year progresses, be sure to promote the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest & the Continuing Education Scholarship. All rules and entry forms for these programs can be printed from the National VFW Auxiliary website--www.vfwauxiliary.org/Scholarships.

Let's make this a banner year in participation. Our teamwork "Serving America's Heroes" will demonstrate that we have "Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes" as we promote our scholarships.

God Bless America, our veterans and those who are serving.



The Veterans & Family Support Program provides support and assistance to the veteran, active-duty military and their families. The VFW Auxiliary members will be "Serving America's Heroes"

by educating and making these resources available to the veteran, military and their families.

The program goals are: VFW National Veterans Service, VFW Veterans and Military Support Programs, Buddy Poppy and VFW National Home for Children. As Auxiliary members some of our goals this year are to:

- Sponsor fundraising activities for the National Veterans Service and VFW Veterans and Military Support

Programs;

- Participate in or sponsor events or projects for homeless veterans;
- Promote Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship;
- Share the Military & Veteran Family Helpline at the VFW National Home;
- Promote or use Buddy Poppies;
- Hold Buddy Poppy drives;
- Promote and/or make donations to the VFW National Home; and
- Promote and/or donate to Unmet Needs.

Veterans and Family Support promotes the whole family, not just the veteran. We will provide "Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes" when we share and promote the Veterans and Family Support Program with the members in our communities so they will be able to help veterans, military and their families.

Focus on Mission Success

PERIODICALS



Frank Cosharek, 98, proudly wears his Knight in the Order of Legion of Honor for his World War II service presented by the French government at North Huntingdon Post 781. The French government started to award the French Legion of Honor, its highest decoration, to veterans of the Allied forces who liberated Europe. Cosharek landed on Omaha Beach in June 1944 in the wake of the D-Day invasion. Post 781 provided a lunch and Honor Guard. (Photo by Steph Chambers/Tribune-Review)



Hershey Post 3502 donated \$1,200 to PA Wounded Warriors, Inc. Pictured are (from left, front row) Trustee Tom Fosnacht, Commander Derek Knaub, PAWW Founder Helen Sajer, Chaplin Dwight Kuhn, Jr.; Sr. Vice Commander Dave Gyger; (Back row) Quartermaster Jack Alwine, Adjutant Mat Mannion, Sr. Vice John Scott and member Dave Thompson.



Kane Post 1132 members and guests participated in a bus trip to the Eldred PA World War II Museum. The Post rented a bus and paid admission for 21 attendees. During World War II, Eldred had a bomb factory which was mainly staffed by women. The group also enjoyed visiting three VFW posts during their trip.



District 21 leaders and posts operated a VFW information booth at the York Fair. Pictured are: (from left) Carol Schrum; Linda Olivitt; Bill, Amy and Cassie Caldwell; and Rick Olivitt.



Normalville Post 12099 recently reached out to form a supportive relationship with the PA Guard's 213th Regional Support Group (1st Defenders) by attending the unit's family picnic. Pictured are Ann Schnur, wife of Post 12099's Post Commander, Post Service Officer Terry Rehrig, Post Commander Mike Schnur and 213th RSG Cpt. Howard Romans.



Shippensburg Mayor Bruce Hockersmith receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Post 6168 Commander Tim Wright, Canteen President Mike Breaux and Quartermaster Kelly Reinsmith. Police Chief Fred Scott also received a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service in public safety.

