



# Pennsylvania VFWnews



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**YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!**

## Mid-Winter Conference Delivers “Blizzard” of Information

Some VFW members will remember the Mid-Winter Conference as the “VFW Blizzard of 2016” due to the 30-plus inches of snow that, after participants had arrived and sessions started, prevented travel around all of eastern Pennsylvania. Others will recall the three-day Department event as the historical “2016 Snow Battle of Gettysburg” because of the organized union force required to dig vehicles out from the winter invasion that approached from the south.

With many arriving just hours before the blizzard began, more than 300 post representatives received a comprehensive two-day update on VFW programs, instruction on how to effectively run a post, and a review of resources that help veterans and military personnel enjoy life. The conference also featured the presentation of numerous high-profile awards that recognized military personnel, students and teachers.

National Jr. Vice Commander Keith Harman applauded the Department’s success in many VFW programs that serve the military, veterans, youth and citizens. On the political front, he encouraged members to urge their federal lawmakers and the President to end the budget sequestration.

“Sequestration is extremely destructive to America’s defense program. When I speak to our troops and their leadership during my travels I hear the same thing: ‘We’re tired of doing more with less.’ They are working longer hours, their retirement is being impacted and training on equipment is significantly cut. I hate to think that we have a pilot flying in harm’s way over Syria who is not up to speed because of sequestration cuts.

“We have to end this because it has a devastating effect on our military. The VFW has the power to make



State Commander Glenn Umberger presents a PA FFW Eagle Award to Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Ron Shoemaker (center). He was joined on stage by (from left) First Sergeant Guy Miller; National VFW Jr. Vice Commander Keith Harman; and Acting State Adjutant General Anthony J. Carrelli. Many of SSG Shoemaker’s National Guard comrades were on hand to congratulate him.

our officials end sequestration if every member calls, emails or writes to federal lawmakers asking them to be the ones to write the bill that ends this process.”

Showing its ongoing strong support of the military, the Pennsylvania VFW honored Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Ron Shoemaker of Pine Grove with its **Conference ... see page 4**

## Life Story of WWII Veteran Allen Q. Jones Tells of Service to Nation, VFW and Students

“Duty, honor and dedication to service” sounds like a motto for one of the nation’s military branches, but it can also describe an individual’s commitment to making the world a better place to live. This phrase fits World War II veteran and VFW Past State Commander Allen Q. Jones like a fine-tailored suit to describe his life-long approach to accomplishing important missions through service in the United States Army, the teaching field and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



Comrade Jones, now fulfilling the important role as National Commander-in-Chief John A. Biedrzycki’s Chief of Staff, holds a position that only nine other Pennsylvania VFW members have held in the history of the VFW. His presence on the National Council of Administration is a treasured voice as he is one of the last World War II veterans still active on the national level.

As has been noted in several local newspaper articles commending Jones for his service to others, **Allen Jones ... see page 8**

## Families will Enjoy Many Activities! State Conv. Set for June 15-18 at Split Rock Family Resort

Don’t miss the Department’s summer awards, networking, social and training event when the State Convention comes to the family-oriented Split Rock Resort in Lake Harmony (PA), June 15-18. VFW officers of all experience levels will benefit from the informational and idea-sharing sessions that will equip them to better lead their posts to mission success.

Events begin Wednesday night with the Annual Memorial Service and end Saturday night with a reception for incoming State Commander Thomas Brown and Department President Donna Mills. Daily sessions are scheduled for Thursday and Friday, with Department elections on Saturday morning. Friday night’s Patriotic Rally will include family time around the lake with fireworks and patriotic music.

Convention participation forms will be mailed to all post commanders and quartermasters, and will also be available on the Department’s website. **Save the dates!**



Representing East Berlin Post 8896 and District 21 Eden X. Beichler was crowned the State Patriot’s Pen Champion.



State VOD Winner Hanna Houtz, representing New Bloomfield Post 7463 and District 17, is shown with Department and National VOD Chairman Dwight Fuhrman and Auxiliary Scholarships Chairperson Marsha Fuhrman.



VOD Teacher of the Year Kathy Jo Reinsmith, from Shippensburg Post 6168 and District 18, is pictured with State Commander Glenn Umberger and PA Auxiliary President Karen Hoover.



## From the State Commander

### Teamwork is the Key to Success

Glenn R. Umberger, Jr. - glenn.umberger@gmail.com



To our Team Pennsylvania, let me begin this article by saying a big "Thank You" to the Mid-Winter survivors of the Blizzard of 2016. Your ability to adapt and overcome was a true display of our Department's spirit.

Congratulations to our *Voice of Democracy* Chairman Dwight Fuhrman for another successful and memorable program year. Between the live-stream training session with our National Headquarters and the live-stream during the VOD Banquet, Team Pennsylvania once again set another level of success for others to emulate.

As all commanders who have come before me stated, "you won't believe how fast your year will go." Well, they are certainly right. We are past the mid-point in the 2015-16 term. Team Pennsylvania continues to achieve and excel; however, we still have some distance to go before the program year finish line on June 30th.

Throughout this term as your State Commander, I have had the ability to see the multitude of excellent programs and contributions made by our Posts and Membership. Unfortunately, sometimes these efforts get overshadowed by a negative incident. In reviewing these

easier said than done, however, but a lot of the complaints and issues that arise would go away with this shared common

courtesy.

Remember that we all represent the Veterans of Foreign Wars, so let's reflect the best possible image of our great organization.

As we closed out February, Team Pennsylvania still needed just over 6,100 members to renew their membership to reach 100%. This is a large number, but in reviewing the On-line Membership System (OMS), we already know over 10,300 Members whose dues are coming due or have recently expired.

Team, we have an excellent opportunity to stop the decline of our membership and achieve 100% for the first time since 2002-03, which ironically was the year our National Commander-In-Chief John A. Biedrzycki was our State Commander.

As an incentive for the Posts, your Membership Team has come up with two new membership contests. These contests will award Posts with stipends for members to attend either the State or National Convention. See page 9 for details. Visit our website to see all other contests in our Membership Contest Program.

Let's stop the downward trend and stabilize our VFW for future generations of veterans, service members, their families and our communities.

Continue your great work and make sure to submit all proper reports to show your results. With a lot of contest deadlines approaching please fulfill all requirements to receive the proper recognition.

Don't stop now, we're almost there, **Go Team Pennsylvania!**



**Commander Umberger welcomes BG Anthony Carrelli, the acting Adjutant General, to the Mid-Winter Conference.**



**State Commander Glenn Umberger, joined by Chief of Staff James Ritchie and Past National Commander Paul Spera, outlines VFW troop support programs during a tour of Ft. Indiantown Gap, Annville.**

incidents, some common issues can be seen. One common issue that has been noted is common courtesy.

Everyone occasionally has a bad day, but when dealing with each other, please take a moment and think, "Is this how I would want to be treated?" It is

## VFW's Presence at PA Farm Show & NRA Outdoor Show Promotes Membership and Vet Benefits

By participating in the State Farm Show and NRA Great American Outdoor Show—both of which are the largest indoor East Coast events in the agricultural and sporting fields, respectively—the VFW recruited 75 new members, including many veterans from the newest eligibility categories.

In addition to reaching out to eligible veterans, the VFW booth provided a broad range of benefit information to veterans during the 17 days of combined event activity. State service officers were on duty each day and many veterans expressed their appreciation for the VFW's assistance.

VFW posts and districts are encouraged to participate in local/regional events like gun shows, local/county fairs, town anniversary celebrations, public safety events, veterans information fairs, car shows, scout programs and athletic competitions.



## General Orders #3



- 1. ELIGIBILITY:** The attention of the Post Commander is directed to Section 101, as amended July 20, 2015. The Investigating Committee should not recommend acceptance of an application unless eligibility has been fully determined. Post investigating Committee should approve/disapprove each applicant.
- 2. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING:** Commanders on all levels will enforce the provisions of Section 105 of the National By-Laws (as amended July 20, 2015, effective August 21, 2015) 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 VFW membership.
- 3. 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 residences of delinquent members and collect their dues. Personal contact will bring results.
- 4. 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, 2016. 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.
- 5. 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

**General Orders ... continued on page 5**

## Deadlines Approaching for 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/Resolutions must be sent to State HQs by May 13, 2016. 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](mailto:adjutant@vfwpahq.org) or (717) 234-7927.

## Camp Lejeune Water Contaminates Have Altered Lives

From the 1950s through the 1980s, those living at Camp Lejeune were exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene and other chemicals. The contamination is said to have caused 15 known conditions, including infertility, neurobehavioral problems and several cancers. The worst part is that many military leaders knew about the problem and chose to keep quiet.

Korean War veteran Richard Lien and his wife lived at Camp Lejeune in the '50s, and they have health problems to show for it.

"I had rectal cancer and had my whole rectum removed," said Lien. "Now I have Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is an after-effect of the rectal cancer."

But it wasn't just Lien who was affected. His wife suffers from Parkinson's disease, his daughter passed away from a related nerve disease and his son is currently battling prostate cancer.

Despite his family's decades-long struggle, the VA denied Lien any benefits. That was seven years ago.

Today, Lien has a 100% rating from the VA. He finally got what he deserves thanks to VFW Appeals Consultant Chance Sizemore, who took his case to heart.

### VA Looking Deeper at Issue

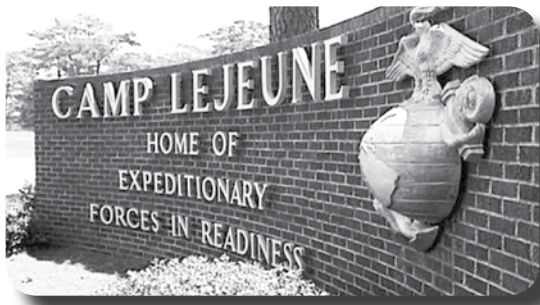
VA announced recently that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Camp Lejeune.

From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions. VA Secretary Bob McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

ATSDR determined that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks. ATSDR also determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of certain health conditions.

Based upon VA's review of current medical science and ATSDR's



findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for kidney cancer, liver cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma, scleroderma, Parkinson's disease and aplastic anemia/myelodysplastic syndromes.

The secretary's proposal would also expand benefits eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time from August 1, 1953, through Dec. 31, 1987. These personnel would be presumed to have been exposed to the contaminated water during their Reserve or National Guard service and, in appropriate circumstances, to have been disabled by such exposure during service, thus allowing them to qualify for VA benefits under the statutory definition of "Veteran."

This would make them eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any of the presumptive conditions, and their surviving dependents would be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

## PA's Desert Storm Bonus Program Extended

The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is once again accepting applications for the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans Benefit Program thanks to an amendment to legislation that extends the application deadline to Aug. 31, 2018.

The bonus pays \$75 per month for qualifying, active-duty service members, up to a \$525 maximum. For personnel whose death was related to illness or injury received in the line of duty in Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm, there is an additional \$5,000 available to the surviving family. Service members who were declared prisoners of war may also be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

The deadline for applying for benefits under the program extension is Aug. 31, 2018. For more information visit [www.persiangulfbonus.pa.gov](http://www.persiangulfbonus.pa.gov).

## 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.*

### PA Veterans Encouraged to Sign Up for Veterans Registry

The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs encourages Pennsylvania veterans to connect with them via their new online Pennsylvania Veterans Registry at [www.register.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.register.dmv.pa.gov) for assistance with obtaining benefits and services.

"There are approximately 940,000 veterans in Pennsylvania and our goal is to connect each and every one of them with the programs and services that they have earned," said Brig. Gen. Jerry Beck Jr., the state's deputy adjutant general for veterans affairs.

The registry is an online application that allows veterans to connect with DMVA to request information related to valuable state benefits, programs and services offered by the agency. The registry features responsive design technology to make it accessible on mobile devices and computers.

A registrant's information will be shared with the veteran's county director for veterans affairs and other relevant Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agencies in order to facilitate local connections that aid in providing service to the veteran.

DMVA is on Facebook, Twitter and the Internet at [www.dmv.pa.gov](http://www.dmv.pa.gov).

### VA Makes Changes to Veterans Choice Program

U.S. Veterans Affairs has made a number of changes to make participation in the Veterans Choice Program easier and more convenient. The move, which streamlines eligibility requirements, follows feedback from veterans along with veterans organizations.

Under the old policy, a veteran was eligible for the program if he or she met the following criteria:

- Enrolled in VA health care by 8/1/14 or eligible to enroll as a combat

veteran for the program;

- Experienced unusual or excessive burden eligibility determined by geographical challenges, environmental factors or a medical condition impacting the veteran's ability to travel; and

- Determined eligible based on the veteran's current residence being more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility.

Under the updated eligibility requirements, a veteran is eligible for the program if he or she is enrolled in the VA health care system and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Told by his or her local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care within 30 days of the date the veteran's physician determines he/she needs to be seen or within 30 days of the date the veteran wishes to be seen if there is no specific date from his or her physician;

- Lives more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA facility with a full-time primary care physician;

- Needs to travel by air, boat or ferry to the closest VA medical facility;

- Faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, a medical condition, the nature or simplicity or frequency of the care needed and whether an attendant is needed. Staff at the veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him or her to determine if the veteran is eligible for any of these reasons; or

- Lives in a State or Territory without a full-service VA medical facility which includes: AK, HI, NH (Note: this excludes New Hampshire veterans who live within 20 miles of the White River Junction VAMC in Vermont) and the U.S. Territories (excluding Puerto Rico).

## 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 numbers give you access your nearest State Service Officer (disabled veterans may request a home visit):

**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**

prestigious Eagle Award. He was nominated by the Pennsylvania Adjutant General's Office for his distinguished overseas service during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Operation Iraqi Freedom and other foreign deployments.

Staff Sgt. Shoemaker, a CH-47F (Chinook) flight instructor who serves with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's Bravo Company of the 628th Aviation Support Battalion at Fort Indiantown Gap, commented, "I thank the VFW for this recognition, God for keeping me alive during my deployments, my chain of command for nominating me for this award and my fellow Guardians who served with me.

"One of the most unnerving things to hear over the (helicopter) radio in a combat zone is the term 'Fallen Angel.'

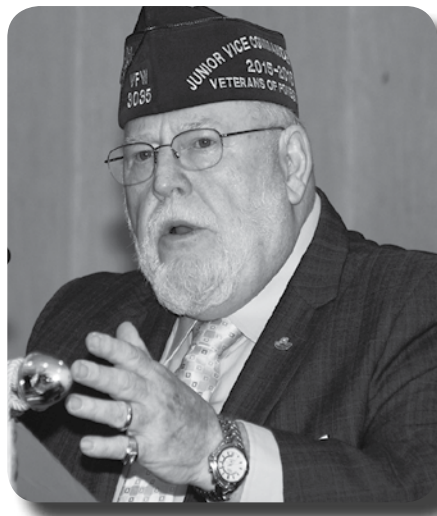
***"Sequestration is extremely destructive to America's defense. (Our military) is tired of doing more with less. Our troops are working longer hours, their retirement is being impacted and training is significantly cut. I hate to think that we have a pilot flying in harm's way over Syria who is not up to speed... The VFW has the power to make our officials end sequestration."***

**- Keith A. Harman  
National Jr. Vice Commander**

role in the VFW... Although those who have joined the VFW contribute greatly, there is still a lot of untapped potential among our newest veterans."

BG Carrelli reported on the Guard's current overseas deployment status and thanked those who have helped keep troop morale high. "We know that these troops are not overseas alone. (The VFW) has been there every step of the way... The VFW has grown into a tremendous advocate for our veterans and our military. This national influence is enabling the VFW to remain a strong voice for those who have served and a valuable partner for those still wearing the uniform."

State Commander Glenn R. Umberger praised those in attendance for working hard to implement VFW service programs and build the membership ranks. "We can reach 100% in Pennsylvania,



When this comes over the radio everyone gets silent. You hear that someone needs your help, then your world stops and everyone calls for grid coordinates. I was proud to be a part of a team that rescued a crew in a downed helicopter. You want to be a part of it because you know that if it was you that needed help, everyone would rush in to help you.

"When veterans come home from war they often get into difficult situations, too, I know that organizations like the VFW are there to support us, both when we are in the military and as civilians."

Acting Pennsylvania Adjutant General Anthony J. Carrelli, a Brigadier General in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, congratulated Eagle Award recipient Shoemaker and thanked the VFW for its consistent support of PA Guard troops. "The Pennsylvania VFW is one of our greatest supporters.

"Over the last 14 years upwards of 35,000 PA Guardians have become eligible for the VFW. Many, including some in this room, have taken an active

but we need a final push. If each post recruited just a few more members and encouraged inactive members to support us again, then Team Pennsylvania will reach 100%.

"We also need to continue excelling at showing veterans, today's military personnel and the public that we are first and foremost about serving others.



**Several hundred PA VFW Post leaders follow information presented during a live-stream training session on membership recruiting and VFW programs. Pennsylvania became the first Department to host a large scale live training feed from National HQs led by its program directors.**

**THE 2015-16 VOICE OF DEMOCRACY FINALISTS**

*Shown below are the District winners and State Program leadership*



Keeping our image positive by effectively serving others is key to demonstrating to eligible veterans why they should want to proudly call themselves VFW members."

The Department—celebrating that more women continue to join the VFW and that they are helping lead Posts and Districts into the future—reported that it will continue holding a Women Veterans Retreat so female veterans can form bonds and utilize key resources.

Chairman reports detailed how Department programs are generating many success stories which show that the VFW is engaged in local communities, with younger veterans and with those serving in the military. For example, the Department's Safety program—which honors a firefighter, police officer and EMS professional each year—develops a strong public appreciation for the outstanding contributions that public safety professionals make every day.

Growth of the Department's Motorcycle Riders Group program continues to bring together riders from different generations for service projects that create lasting camaraderie.

Other reports informed conference delegates that the Department continues its strong support of and outreach to student veterans; homeless veterans; veterans living with PTSD, TBI and MST; unemployed veterans; younger veterans

recovering from disabling wounds; public charities; less fortunate citizens; youth programs; senior citizens; veterans' survivors; military families in need; and families recovering from disasters.

PA Wounded Warriors, Inc. Founder Helen Sajer extended her gratitude for the VFW's continued support. "I'm bursting with pride to thank the VFW and its Auxiliaries—you have shown remarkable support." Announcing that her organization is celebrating its best fundraising year, which pushed its donations beyond \$1 million, she added, "Your support helped us provide \$1.1 million of assistance to the calls we get from wounded warriors, their families and now to veterans of earlier service."

After final reports and activities—including the annual *Voice of Democracy* Banquet, which due to impassable roads required a last-minute live-stream video connection to show student introductions and awards—Commander Umberger thanked all post representatives for attending the event despite the blizzard.

"The same dedication and commitment you showed by participating in this conference is what defines the success of our organization, Team Pennsylvania can accomplish every goal we set if we all give our best effort and keep our mission behind all we do."





## VOD Delivers More Patriotic Students

Dwight R. Fuhrman, VOD Chairman & State Jr. Vice Commander



It was great to see all of our fellow veterans at the Mid-winter Conference in Gettysburg. Please put to use the information you received at the conference. Get your Post and Auxiliary leaders together

certainly made him feel welcome. Both he and our own National Commander John A. Biedrzycki, Jr., are counting on Pennsylvania to do well this year supporting the VFW in all mission activities. Let's all get on board and finish 2016 as well as it started in 2015.

Congratulations to these VFW award recipients for their patriotism and good luck in the National competitions:

- *Voice of Democracy* Teacher of the Year Kathy Jo Reinsmith;

- *Patriot's Pen* first place winner from my home Post 8896, East Berlin, District 21 - Eden X. Beichler; and

- *Voice of Democracy* first place winner from Post 7463 District 17 - Hannah Houtz.

We continue to pray for our veterans in need, our troops and their families still serving and our POW/MIAs.

Have a great, safe and healthy 2016! Your efforts are truly needed if we are going to keep the VFW going strong!

and give them an overview of the key issues, VFW program updates and Post operation recommendations that were covered at the conference.

The Department holds these conferences to help both new and experienced Post leaders put new ideas, resources and required operational steps into action. Using what you learned will help your Post do well in membership, our programs and Post requirements.

Thank you to our National Junior Vice Commander in Chief Keith Harman for attending our conference. We

## District Meeting Schedule

### MARCH 2016

Dist.	Place	Date	Time
1	Phila. Crescenz VAMC	March 9	7:30 P.M.
7	VFW Post #974 – Darby	March 23	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post #7293 – Whitehall	March 20	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post #5667 – Elizabethtown	March 13	1:30 P.M.
10	VFW Post #5207 – Covington Twp.	March 20	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post #6615 – White Haven	March 20	2:30 P.M.
14	VFW Post #5642 – Montrose	March 20	2:00 P.M.
15	VFW Post #5859 – Jersey Shore	March 20	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #3612 – Willow Grove	March 16	7:30 P.M.
21	VFW Post #6771 – Dillsburg	March 13	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post #813 – Dubois	March 20	2:30 P.M.
23	VFW Post #8826 – Salisbury	March 13	2:00 P.M.
25	VFW Post #128 – Rochester	March 20	2:00 P.M.
26	VFW Post #7503 – Northern Cambria	March 13	2:30 P.M.
27	VFW Post #734 - Ligonier	March 6	2:30 PM
28	VFW Post #7599 – Transfer	March 13	2:00 P.M.
29	VFW Post #3945 – Pittsburgh	March 20	2:00 PM

### APRIL, 2016

1	Phila. Crescenz VAMC	April 13	7:30 P.M.
7	VFW Post #3460 – Media	April 27	7:30 P.M.
14	VFW Post #6072 – Towanda	April 17	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #1711 – Jenkintown	April 20	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.**

## 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

THE ELECTION IN APRIL TO DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

6. COMMUNITY SERVICE RECORD BOOK CONTEST: Close of reporting period for Community Activity Record Book is March 31, 2016. 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 1, 2016 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, "Hold the flag proudly", deadline for entries was March 1, 2016. The State Loyalty Day Program will be held at the State Capitol, May 2, 10:00 a.m.

8. MEMORIAL DAY BUDDY POPPY CAMPAIGN: Commanders on all levels should begin organizing their 2016 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](http://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 15, 2016 to approve/disapprove resolutions for consideration at the 2016 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 Dept. of PA, VFW 97th State Conv. will be June 15-18, 2016 at the Split Rock Resort, 100 Moseywood Road, Lake Harmony, PA 18624. See [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org)

13. NATIONAL CONVENTION: The Veterans of Foreign Wars 117th National Convention will be held in Charlotte, N.C. July 23-27, 2016.

14. NATIONAL CONVENTION ADVANCE REGISTRATION: Each Post will pay, in advance, a National Conv. registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which entitles the Post to a Conv. information packet and materials, and one identified registered delegate. Each additional delegate at the National Conv. will pay a ten dollar (\$10) fee.

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 Department 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 VFW caps can be worn at meetings/conventions or other special occasions.

By command of: Glenn R. Umberger, Jr., State Commander  
Attest: John B. Getz, Jr., State Adjutant/Quartermaster

## Focus on Mission Success



Gift cards for veterans in need, purchased with \$4,145 in donations from Texas Roadhouse patrons, were recently presented (left to right): Managing Partner Jim Davies, Post 6631 Cmdr. Harold Aucker, Post 1532 Cmdr. Larry Speer and Store Marketer Liz Davies.



Saxton Post 4129 presented the Saxton Borough Council with \$5,000 for help with buying a police cruiser. Pictured are, front row from left: Councilmen Dennis Clawson and Phil Johnson, President Lester Meck, Post Commander Greg Crooks, Mayor Alan Smith and District 17 Commander (Post 4129) David Edwards; back row, Councilman Adam Runk, Police Chief Dave Harker, Post Director Bill Neuder, Vice Commander J.R. Bilger, Director John Jacobs and Councilman John Hoffner. (Photo by Adam Watson/ Broad Top Bulletin)



Greensburg Post 33 Honor Guard participated in a Battle of the Bulge ceremony at the city's National Guard Armory. Three Battle veterans were present: VFW Members Joe Folino, Leroy Schaller and Harry McCrackin.



This Purple Heart Monument was erected and dedicated by the Freeland Post 5010 and American Legion Post 473. Working together, these two proud veterans organizations from a small town raised over \$4,000 towards the memorial through donations and fundraising. This monument stands proudly in the Freeland Public Park War Memorial Area.



Members of West Mifflin Post 914 prepare for a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at West Mifflin Area Senior High School. Pictured from left to right are Vietnam veteran Jim Brickner, World War II veteran Earl Birdy, Desert Storm veteran Mike Mauer, Vietnam veteran Bill Lasobik, Post Quartermaster Gary Ruston and Post Commander Jake Bradich. The veterans laid a wreath in remembrance of the 3,000 Americans who were killed 14 years ago during the terrorist attacks in New York and Pennsylvania.



Erie Post 470 donated pre-paid gas cards to the Erie Veterans Administration Medical Center. District 28 Commander and Post 470 Quartermaster Joe Benacci is pictured making the donation to Navy veteran Heather Moore.



Mechanicsburg Post 6704 and its Auxiliary welcomed veterans from the Lebanon VA Medical Center to its home for a full holiday meal including turkey and all the trimmings. The celebration provided Lebanon VAMC residents with an event full of camaraderie and great food. The post invited Mechanicsburg Mayor Jack Ritter, his Magic Club and DJ Kenny Hetzel to provide the guests with enjoyable entertainment.



As part of his statewide tour to visit districts and posts, State Commander Glenn Umberger (seated far left) was the guest speaker during a recent District 14 meeting in Catawissa. Shown are those who attended the meeting including District Commander Mark Webster (seated next to Commander Umberger). Districts and posts that want to invite a Department leader to speak at an upcoming meeting or event should contact State Headquarters at (717) 234-7927.

Focus on Mission Success



Led by State Commander Glenn R. Umberger, Jr., Department leaders met with PAARNG 28th ID Command Staff including Commanding General John Gronski (third from left) to promote VFW programs that support military personnel. MG Gronski briefed the VFW team about Division activities across the world and in the Commonwealth.



While attending the Pennsylvania Veterans Symposium at Ft. Indiantown Gap, Past District 18 Commander Donna Coulter, National Recruiter David Gyger and State Sr. Vice Commander Thomas Brown discussed issues facing military personnel and veterans with National Guard Bureau Chief Frank J. Grass. Grass, a four-star general, serves on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



A Medical Detachment consisting of soldiers from the PAARNG's 1/104th ARB sent this holiday photo to everyone who has supported them during their deployment to the Middle East. Joined by numerous posts, VFW State HQs shipped several care packages and Christmas decorations to this unit and a second detachment in the Middle East.



Wendy's in central-western PA continue to support military families in need through "The Michael J. Beaver Wendy's-PA Veterans of Foreign Wars Military Assistance Grant Program." With donations made by patrons who receive a free Jr. Frosty with any purchase during the campaign period, more than \$150,000 has been presented to the Department for military assistance. The Department thanks participating Wendy's stores and the franchise owners who support the grant program.



Huntingdon Post 1754 attended the Hollidaysburg Veterans Home Christmas Party, which is sponsored by the Department of PA VFW. Attendees included Maj. Gen. James Joseph, BG. (Ret.) Jerry Beck, Home Commandant Debbie Nesbella, Business Manager Sam Dunkle, PA Army and Air National Guard troops, VFW Past State Commander Frank Mills, Past State Inspector Ray Shipp and Post 1754 Auxiliary Chaplain Cathy Shipp.

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 TO DSANDMAN@VFWPAHQ.ORG. PHOTO PRINTS ARE ALSO ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL OR REGULAR MAIL.



A group of Indiana Post 1989 members delivered 107 Christmas gifts to veterans in assisted living homes in the Indiana area. Pictured are, back row: Herb Gleditsch, Jim Wilson, Walt Friday, Harvey Pepper, Harry Pennington and Jack Frank; front row Marty Pisarcik, George Kevstetter, Richard Morris and Don Becker.



## We Learn and Grow by Asking Questions

Thomas A. Brown, State Sr. Vice-Commander - paatom1@verizon.net



People learn in different ways, but one method works well for us all: asking questions helps us gain knowledge and hopefully grow wiser.

As you seek information about the VFW, and hopefully move up the post leadership ladder, remember that asking questions is often the best step to take. Rather than pretending to be an authority on everything please ask questions and absorb the information you receive.

Asking questions helps us to grow. However, make sure that you are asking the right people—those who are authorities or the most knowledgeable especially on the subject of post operations. Don't just

take someone's word when they give you an answer; utilize available resources to confirm the information before you act.

While many books and websites exist—and fellow comrades may offer their thoughts—when it comes to handling post operations remember that all key answers are in the Manual of Procedure.

Like a pencil, everything we do leaves a mark on someone or a situation. We can always correct the mistakes we make, but it's best to avoid those mistakes or at least learn from them.

I hope you will maintain integrity and honor when responding to post issues. As your parents said, it's what's inside you that matters the most.

Sure, we will undergo painful constant "sharpening," but this process helps us become better people. And to be the best "pencil" we must be guided by the hand that holds us.

This parable encourages us as special people with unique God-given talents and abilities. Only we can fulfill the purpose for which we were created. Never allow yourself to get discouraged or think that your life is insignificant or cannot be changed.

And as Mark Twain said, "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt."

### PA Trip to Nat'l Home for Children is Sept. 23-25

Two buses will go to Eaton Rapids—one from Warminster, one from Mercer—to visit the PA VFW sponsored houses at the National Home. Deadline for payment is Aug. 15. Fifty people are needed per bus. For more information call (609) 261-5629.

### Allen Jones ... continued from page 1

his adult life has been one of continuous dedicated, honorable service:

- Nearly two years with the Army including service in the 717th Tank Battalion during that unit's presence in the European Theater; he earned the European service campaign medal with two battle stars.
- VFW member since 1945 (70-year member); has held leadership positions at every level including commander at Uniontown Post 47 and Connellsville Post 21; elected state commander for 1986-87 and served as state judge advocate, state inspector and state parliamentarian; named National aide-de-camp by at least 10 past National commanders; has served on numerous National VFW work groups including as board president for the VFW's National Home for Children of military and veterans' families.
- 30 years as a teacher in the Connellsville Area School District; president of that District's Education Association; state president of the State Department of Classroom Teachers; board member of the State Education Association.

"My most satisfying involvement has been serving as a VFW service officer for more than 50 years helping veterans, their widows and their children receive assistance during times of need," he stated.

"It has also been rewarding to serve in leadership on the post, county, district, State and National levels for 70 years. Having the opportunity to serve as National chief of staff has been a very special opportunity," added Jones, who has participated in more than 950 military funerals.

Jones has attended an astounding 65 National



Allen Q. Jones, National Chief of Staff, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the Post 8543 Band. The certificate, on behalf of Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki, is for participation at the 116th National Convention held in Pittsburgh and its dedication to veterans, their families and community. Post 8543 has one of the oldest VFW Bands still performing in the state.

conventions including the 2015 event in Pittsburgh, where he helped nominate his long-time friend Biedrzycki for National Commander and was installed as a National Council member.

National Chief of Staff Jones believes that the VFW will continue to be the most effective veterans organization if it remains true to the organization's roots. "It began with the determination of WW I Veterans, who marched on Washington D.C., to secure a bonus that was promised to them. It continued with their determination to

## Post Donations Make Big Impacts on Many Lives

Trappe Post 7155 presented Wyatt Daring with \$10,000 raised during the Annual Frank H. Martin, III Car/Truck Show. Wyatt suffers from the skin disease Ichthyosis. Pictured left to right: Josh Martin (kneeling); Glenn Dunlap, Home Assoc. President; Connie Deery; Howard Maris; Kathy Maris; Jeannie Startzel, Auxiliary Pres.; David Maris; Commander Edward McDade; Patricia Wilkie; Terri Daring; Jack Clawson, Home Assoc. Vice Pres.; and Wyatt.



Representatives of Etters Post 537 delivered a very impressive donation of \$16,000 to the Lebanon VA Medical Center recently to support programs and activities that benefit veterans residing at the center. By donating small games of chance proceeds to community programs that benefit veterans and others all posts can help boost their public image while improving lives.

### Posts Urged to Support the Arthritis Donation Campaign

Last year the Department presented its lowest donation ever to the Arthritis Foundation. With the support of all posts we can turn it around to present our highest amount ever. Arthritis is the leading cause of medical discharge from the military. Millions of veterans live with arthritis pain. Two life memberships will be drawn from the donations. For each \$25 donation your post/auxiliary will be entered into the drawing. Donations must be received by May 31st to qualify for the drawing. Send checks to State HQs earmarked "Arthritis Fund."

assure that WWII veterans would be treated fairly when they came home with a GI Bill. We need to continue doing this for all current and future veterans.

"We must maintain a strong legislative committee that visits Capitol Hill to remind Congress of its responsibility to all veterans. We must maintain positive public relations efforts at the local, district, State and National levels so veterans realize how much we do for them, and how much we need them as members to support our endeavors on their behalf."

National Commander Biedrzycki commended his friend for his service-oriented passion. "Allen Q. Jones is clearly an outstanding American citizen. He is a loving husband and father, and a veteran who not only served his nation but returned home to dedicate his life in the service of his fellow man. His career as an educator and involvement in his church, his community and the VFW are sterling examples to us all. I am humbled by his accomplishments and proud to call him my friend."

Comrade Jones attributes much of his success to another long commitment, his 65-year marriage to his wife, Nancy, whose service as Department Auxiliary president was also exemplary. They have fully supported each other, have raised a son and daughter, and remain as two patriotic citizens who are thankful for living their American dream.

"Most people say marriage is 50/50. No, it isn't," says Nancy. "You take 100% and you give back 100%. And, have faith in God; that's the secret."

The Department salutes and thanks Allen and his wife for their dedicated service to their nation, their neighbors and the VFW/Auxiliary family.



## Remembering Those Who Honorably Served



VFW Commander-in-Chief John A. Biedrzycki of Pennsylvania salutes the VFW's National Veterans Day wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Wall in D.C. Joining the Chief is his wife, Bette Jean, and National Auxiliary President Francisca Guilford.



## Membership Moment

### We've Added Some Serious Monetary Incentives for Post Growth

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



This column is about two member recruiting truths: 1) we have to pick up our pace to carry on; and 2) incentives drive action.

This being said, here are two newly added membership contests that all posts can achieve to earn very attractive monetary rewards. Reaching 100% in membership is not required to qualify for these contests; but, you should really be working hard all the time to achieve 100% each year.

**Special Contest 1:** Any post that gets 10 new/reinstated members from

March 1 to March 31, 2016 will receive a \$300 stipend for a post delegate to attend the State Convention this June. It may be used by any member in good standing of that post. The name of the post delegate must be submitted to Department Headquarters no later than April 15, 2016.

**Special Contest 2:** Any post that gets 15 new or reinstated members from April 1 to May 31, 2016 will receive a \$400 stipend for a post delegate to attend the National Convention in July 2016. This may be used by any member in good standing of that post. The name of the post delegate will need to be submitted to Department Headquarters no later than June 8, 2016. (*Deadline for special*

*convention housing rates is June 13 or until block of rooms sells out).*

Trust me, we know how hard it is to keep your post growing. Department recruiters work hard to preserve our strength by recruiting at events all year. You can tap into their expertise and assistance by getting in touch with them.

We all have to show veterans why they should deeply value the VFW support network that runs from the post and district levels up through the Department and National HQs.

The VFW became the effective fighting force we are today because veterans invested time, energy, passion and teamwork to build our ranks. Will you help keep our foundation strong?



## Chaplain's Corner

### Steps to Take to Reduce Stress and Confusion From Funeral Planning for Veterans

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



Decisions surrounding funeral arrangements for a loved one can add stress and confusion on top of sorrow. Changing customs, increased expenses and lack of familiarity with laws and options can make funerals an overwhelming experience.

This article provides information to help our comrades and their families make wise decisions as they plan funerals. Preparing in advance can relieve the stress of making choices at a time of deep sorrow, provide comfort for the family and help avoid unnecessary expenses.

Among the critical decisions and choices are:

- Should I donate my organs?
  - Which funeral home should I use?
  - Should I prepay for my funeral?
  - Do I want cremation or burial?
  - Which cemetery should I use?
  - Which casket options should I select? \*
  - Where should I have the funeral service?
  - Do I want an open casket?
  - How much will this funeral cost?
  - How much is available from my estate for the funeral?
- \* (Neither the VA nor the military offers free caskets unless death occurs on active duty).

Grave sites in VA National Cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance. Families are encouraged to prepare in advance by discussing cemetery options, collecting the veteran's information including discharge papers (DD 214) and contacting the funeral director and cemetery.

The VA suggests that if burial will be in a private cemetery, and a government headstone or marker will be requested for the veteran's grave, that the family apply in advance so that the application can be placed with the veteran's discharge papers for use at the time of need.

The VA furnishes, upon request and at no charge to the applicant, a government headstone or marker for the grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery.

Upon the family's request, the law requires that every eligible veteran receive a military funeral honors

ceremony, which includes the folding and presentation of the U.S. flag and the playing of "Taps." The Department of Defense provides military funeral honors, and the request is made by the family through the funeral director.

A Presidential Memorial Certificate is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. A request form (VA-40-0247) is available on the National Cemetery website [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov), and a military discharge document (DD 214) must be submitted.

Veterans buried in a private cemetery may be eligible to receive a partial reimbursement for burial costs. For non-service related deaths, a burial expense allowance (up to \$300) and a plot allowance (up to \$300) may be given. In order to receive a VA burial allowance you must meet the following conditions:

- Payment for the veteran's burial was made without any reimbursement from a government agency or other source, and the veteran was disabled due to a service-related injury, or

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met: The veteran died because of service-related disability; or the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation; or the veteran died in a VA hospital or nursing home under VA contract.

To determine final reimbursement, an "Application for Burial Benefits" (VA Form 21-530) must be submitted within two years from the date of the permanent burial ([www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)).

The consumer—being in the throes of grief and unfamiliar with the options, laws, and costs—is vulnerable to manipulation and deception. Most funeral homes are reputable, but some are not. The funeral industry has been exposed to include widespread profiteering. The FTC has a Consumer's Guide at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro19.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro19.shtm).

**What is the difference between a Funeral and a Memorial service?** If the body/ashes are present, it is a Funeral service; if not, it is a Memorial service.

**What is the purpose of a Funeral Service?** Every



culture throughout history has marked death with a ritual or ceremony. Primarily, it is an opportunity to remember the life of our loved one and a time of reflection on the value and meaning of life. A service helps to comfort those who are in grief and provides hope and encouragement to those who remain.


**Isn't viewing the body inappropriate when the real person is already gone?** A dead body is indeed lifeless, for the true person (the individual's spirit) has already departed. Yet, it is often a source of comfort and a part of healthy grieving for loved ones to see the body and say "good-bye."

**Does cremation dishonor God? Will the destruction of the body prevent future resurrection?** There is nothing in the Bible which excludes the practice of cremation. However, there are several religions that prohibit cremation or prefer burial over cremation. The Eastern religions (i.e., Dharmic faiths) such as Hinduism and Buddhism mandate the use of cremation.

**Where should a service be held?** The service can be held at the Funeral Home, grave site or place of worship, especially for those who have a regular place of worship.

*Blessings as you serve.*

*This article is available in brochure form at [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org), District/Post Tools, in the Chaplain's Guide.*


**Facts and Figures**
**The Necessary Paperwork of Running a Post**

 John Getz, State Adjutant/Quartermaster - [adjutant@vfwpahq.org](mailto:adjutant@vfwpahq.org)


With the Mid-Winter Conference behind us it's time to look at the nomination of officers in March and the nomination and election of officers in April. I would like to remind everyone that after you elect your officers please submit your election report right away. Please don't wait until your officers have been installed; *please report right away.*

Based on calls we get at State HQs there is still some misunderstanding about the required Trustee's Report of Audit. If this critical report is not filled out correctly and completely, the report will be sent to your District Commander so corrections/additions can be made. The process is not officially complete until the form is properly completed.

Under "Funds," line #3 general fund is for reporting your post account. Line #4 is for recording your relief fund, which must be created and maintained according to the National By-laws. Line #5 is for listing your dues reserve fund;

check your By-Laws because this equals one-half of all dues you receive all year.

Under "Operations," if you have a building or canteen you must have this information completed. Also on the form, your trustees must reconcile all funds that your post and home have—yes, that is a responsibility that trustees must check.

If you carefully read each information category and take your time—and have your trustees really look at your finances and how they are reported on the form—there's really not much to it.

In our Department's legislative activities we were proud to join VFW leaders from across the nation at the VFW Legislative Conference. Our presence in D.C. and the points that the VFW made to lawmakers showed that we are the best advocate for combat zone veterans.

We also recently attended numerous legislative hearings at the State level to ensure that funding for veterans programs in our state remains steady, and in some areas that funding is increased.

Thank you for all that you did in the military and for what you are doing now to support the military, your community and your VFW.

**Dept. Bids Farewell to Comrades Fisher, Rettig & Sarver**

We salute the lives and service of the following Department leaders who died recently:



Past State All-American Commander Franklin R. Fisher (1990-91) - Comrade Fisher was an U.S. Air Force veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. He served 22 years with tours in Korea, Japan, Spain, Germany, England, France, Africa and Vietnam. He served as Commander of Post 4789 and as District 28 Commander. He also served on National VFW Committees.



Past State Commander Norman F. Rettig (1993-94) - He was a World War II U.S. Navy veteran serving from 1943-46 including in the Pacific Theater in Guam. He served as Commander of Post 249 and as Commander of the Butler County Council and District 25. Norm was also named to numerous National VFW work groups.



George F. Sarver, Jr. - Comrade Sarver was best known as the Pennsylvania Department's and VFW National's Sergeant-at-Arms. A U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War, George was a Past Commander at Post 402. When State and National Commanders gave George the signal to silence the Convention room and begin opening ceremonies he did so with great precision, pride and patriotism.

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**Department Membership Update:  
93.18% of the 2014-15 Year-End Total**

Top five posts ranked by Membership Division

Div.	Post	Location	%	7	4907	WELLSBORO	116.83%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	101.90%	7	914	WEST MIFFLIN	111.92%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	91.73%	7	6824	ROME	105.82%
1	1989	INDIANA	90.30%	7	9575	POTTERS MILLS	103.88%
1	8951	WEST YORK	75.29%	7	8430	EAST MC KEESPORT	102.77%
2	1810	BRENTWOOD	110.12%	8	6648	FREEPORT	105.97%
2	7505	MARS	109.38%	8	499	EVANS CITY	102.29%
2	8896	EAST BERLIN	102.53%	8	7783	SAINT BENEDICT	101.21%
2	1446	RED LION	100.97%	8	7134	PALMERTON	101.19%
2	7293	EGYPT	100.74%	8	3258	CHALFONT	100.00%
3	7043	COALPORT	116.96%	9	5201	BELLWOOD	104.76%
3	8803	TIDIOUTE	101.55%	9	6613	LENNI	101.92%
3	4843	FORD CITY	99.70%	9	6347	MOUNT JEWETT	101.58%
3	9199	SHALER TOWNSH	99.24%	9	7252	BROCKWAY	100.00%
3	2493	MOUNT WOLF	98.62%	9	7918	SLOCUM TOWNSHIP	100.00%
4	5207	DALEVILLE	109.52%	10	6518	EXETER	125.00%
4	4793	WAYNESBURG	107.60%	10	294	ALBRIGHTSVILLE	111.36%
4	1568	TOWANDA	104.09%	10	11282	LEESPORT	108.00%
4	3460	MEDIA	103.72%	10	265	FARMINGTON	105.26%
4	1620	MIDDLETOWN	102.64%	10	7949	EDDYSTONE	105.26%
5	882	MARYSVILLE	109.79%	On March 8, Dept. membership stood at 79,640 members or 93.18% of the 2014-15 year-end total. So far this year 1,524 new members and 551 reinstated members have been recruited.			
5	3945	PITTSBURGH	105.14%	Posts should read the State Membership Program to learn all membership contests and the criteria for "All-State" and "All-American."			
5	148	HARRISBURG	104.69%	Quartermasters are encouraged to visit <a href="http://www.vfw.org">www.vfw.org</a> to use the Online Membership System and to ask their District Membership Chairman for their post delinquent member list.			
5	212	BRADFORD	103.24%				
5	6345	MERCER	102.01%				
6	3575	QUARRYVILLE	105.92%				
6	25	SCRANTON	104.91%				
6	655	MC CONNELLSBURG	101.61%				
6	6341	ROYERSFORD	99.13%				
6	1940	BROUGHTON	99.10%				

**Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of March 8  
Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!**
**FIRST PLACE**


MARK WEBSTER

 DISTRICT 14 - 96.04% - Cmdr. Mark Webster  
 DISTRICT 29 - 95.25% - Cmdr. John Winters  
 DISTRICT 28 - 95.13% - Cmdr. Joseph Benacci  
 DISTRICT 15 - 94.87% - Cmdr. Elmer Everetts  
 DISTRICT 19 - 94.24% - Cmdr. Rickey Hicks  
 DISTRICT 18 - 94.14% - Cmdr. Scott Fritz  
 DISTRICT 9 - 94.05% - Cmdr. James Haller  
 DISTRICT 17 - 94.00% - Cmdr. Ralph March  
 DISTRICT 8 - 93.48% - Cmdr. James McComb  
 DISTRICT 10 - 93.52% - Cmdr. John Tomasovitch

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# The VFW Auxiliary ... Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



The Department President Says...

## Believe In It, and It Will Happen!

Karen Hoover - [khoover@pbi.org](mailto:khoover@pbi.org) or (717) 503-0996



*"We Believe in America's Veterans!"*

This statement is very evident in the remarkable year we are having in Pennsylvania. Not only are we 100% in

membership, but we are also leading the National organization in male members. Now what do we do with all these new volunteers?

First of all, make them feel welcome and listen to their opinions and ideas. Everyone joins this organization for a reason. You need to ask how they would like to contribute—what are their skills, what is their area of expertise and what is their availability. Be a mentor so the VFW legacy lives on in our communities.

Everyone can make a contribution in support of veterans, active-duty military, their families and your communities. Together, we can do so much for the needy.

Spring is right around the corner. So get out in the community and promote who we are and what we do. Remember our elderly members, those who are hospitalized, families at the National Home and the many volunteers involved with our youth programs. Donate American flags to replace those worn from the winter weather,

make Buddy Poppy decorations to brighten up the VFW Post, and volunteer to put flags on the cemetery for Memorial Day. Use all resources available to encourage members to get active and lend a helping hand. You can find many activities to make your Auxiliary 100% in participation for the year-end reports. Be creative, think outside the box and publicize what you do.

I have met some amazing Sisters and Brothers in my travels. I love listening to your stories, reading your meeting minutes and hearing what you do in our programs. I am always amazed at your successful fundraisers and your passion for our veterans and our active military. It is very encouraging to see the efforts, time and love put forth into our mission—veterans parties, bingo parties, volunteer recognitions, flag dedications, Homeless veteran assistance, *Voice of Democracy* winners, *Patriot's Pen* winners, etc. I hope you continue supporting "Our Veterans – Now and Forever".

I look forward to the remaining District visits and meeting more members at the district, post and auxiliary level. We are all Sisters and Brothers in our mission for our veterans and I appreciate your hospitality and support.

God Bless All and I wish you success in all your endeavors. Remember, all things are possible if you believe!



## Now is the Perfect Time to Create a Post Auxiliary

By Deborah Rothermel, Chief of Staff/Extension Ambassador



The Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary is a proud organization created to assist and support our veterans in many capacities.

Bachelor posts—those without an Auxiliary—that are interested in establishing an Auxiliary should contact either me or Department HQs to discuss the steps and requirements to create an Auxiliary. You'll be surprised at how an Auxiliary can pump new energy, support and enthusiasm into your post.

My Auxiliary membership allows me to honor my father's service by supporting

our veterans and families in many ways by participating in homeless veterans programs, military awareness and suicide prevention; aiding active-duty military and their families; boosting VA hospital volunteerism; supporting legislative bills that help veterans; and teaching youth—who are the future of our country—about our veterans and how they have served in the past, present and the future.

The list of service goes on, but the bottom line is that Auxiliary members show "Our Veterans Now and Forever" that we truly "Believe in America's Veterans," and we will continue to honor and support you whenever possible.

## Spotlighting Our Auxiliary Successes



Morningside Post 3945 delivered holiday presents to 54 hospitalized veterans at H.J. Heinz Division of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. The VFW volunteers—which included members of the Post 214 Auxiliary—visited hospitalized veterans to spread good wishes and holiday cheer. The hospitalized veterans were given a gift bag loaded with clothes, toiletries and games.



District 14 Auxiliary turned out in strong numbers to welcome Department Auxiliary President Karen Hoover to the area during a meeting in Catawissa. President Hoover thanks District 14 and all districts for giving her a warm welcome and steady support during the 2015-16 year.

## Department President Testimonial: April 22-24

**BEST WESTERN PREMIER HOTEL  
& CONFERENCE CENTER  
HARRISBURG, PA**

**FRIDAY NIGHT – "BEACH PARTY"  
6:00 PM – 11:30 PM**

**SATURDAY NIGHT – TESTIMONIAL DINNER  
CASH BAR 6:00 PM  
DINNER 7:00 PM**

**All Reservation Dates & Details are Available on  
the Department's Website - [www.pavfwaux.org](http://www.pavfwaux.org)**

**FOCUS ON MISSION SUCCESS**



Congratulations to all officers and members at Bridesburg-Lawton Philadelphia Post 2 for reaching the 100th Anniversary mark on 11-11-2015. State Commander Glenn Umberger handed a special 100th Anniversary Certificate from National Commander John Biedrzycki to Sr. Vice Commander Art Schneider, who is joined by Post 2's other line officers.

**PERIODICALS**



Lower Allen Post 7530 presented the Lower Allen Fire Department and the Lower Allen Police Department with checks for \$5,000 on Veterans' Day to ensure community safety. Presenting the check is Past Commander and current Board President Don Prescott.



In conjunction with the 111th Air Wing, Chalfont Post 3258 participated in a Veterans Day event at Mary Mother of the Redeemer (MMR) School as part of the school's Character Education Program. Post members were introduced in the 6, 7 and 8th grade assembly and were honored for both their branch of service and years of service. Commander Woody Hippel spoke to the students about the significance of Veterans Day. Adjutant Larry Polgar handed out *Patriot's Pen* awards. Post members broke down into small groups to discuss military service and citizenship issues.



District 14 Past Commanders Glenn Owen, Roy Shrimp and Joe Noltie served as judges for the Guthrie Robert Packer Hospital (Sayre) Auxiliary and Guthrie Veterans Committee Buddy Poppy competition. The event was held as part of special Veterans Day activities honoring veterans who worked at the facility and families whose loved ones include military personnel and veterans.



In conjunction with their Veterans Day program, Mercer Elementary School classes collected items needed by veteran related non-profit organizations. This year the Fisher House in Pittsburgh received the items. Mercer Post 6345 either ships or delivers the donated items as part of its continuing efforts to work with schools, promote veterans' needs and support other veteran service programs.



West Mifflin Post 914 Commander Jake Bradich presents the post's VFW *Voice of Democracy* Teacher of the Year award to Melissa L. Fulmer during a recognition ceremony at the Thompson Run Athletic Association.