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No One Does More for Veterans & Military Families than Your VFW!

The VFW's Impressive Impact - "No One Does More for Veterans"

Testimonials and Reports Capture Benefits of Membership

When speaking with eligible veterans about joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, recruiters can expect to hear a valid question that deserves a honest response: "What will membership do for me?" Prospective members want to know why they should use their money, time and effort to support the organization.

Recruiters should be ready to provide an impactful overview about how veterans' involvement in the world's largest organization of combat- and peacekeeping-zone veterans generates life-enhancing benefits as well as meaningful camaraderie and service opportunities.

As the organization's 120 years of mission work continues, membership today yields important dividends in many areas that are critical for veterans from all service eras.

For the past century, the VFW has maintained an office in Washington, D.C., devoted to ensuring that the nation's leaders provide benefits and services that

take care of the men and women that the government sent to war and to peacekeeping theaters. This office, located just a few blocks from where laws are passed and executive branch decisions are made, also manages the VFW's nationwide network of 2,000 VA-accredited Veterans Service Officers.

During the VFW's 2019-20 program year, Department service officer network staff secured veterans to more than \$60 million in federal benefits.

Thousands of Pennsylvania VFW members have gained financial, healthcare and other benefits by using State Service Officers,

all who provide free claims assistance across the Commonwealth, including rural residents.

Veterans interested in joining an organization that serves hospitalized combat veterans can be proud of the VFW's involvement with VA medical centers. In 2019, more than 2,766 regularly scheduled VFW

Membership ... see page 11 page



WWII Veteran Hurd Returns to France; Jacoby Recalls Oceanic Journey to War

In 1944, VFW Life Member Walter Hurd was just a kid with little more than 18 years of life under his belt and some training jumps under his silk canopy as a member of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. Growing up in a small town in northwestern PA, he had little travel experience and wondered where his hard-earned, highly prized jump wings would carry him.

After experiencing his first Atlantic Ocean crossing, Hurd knew in his gut that he and his comrades were headed for battle action in western



Punxsutawney Post 2076 member Walter Hurd retraces his footsteps in France while participating in the 75th Anniversary Ceremony of D-Day in June.

World War II Vets Look Back ... see page 13



The PA VFW Proudly Supports Military Service Personnel and Their Families



(Clockwise, from top left) King of Prussia Post 7878 presents \$1,000 to PA Guardian Mike Karminski, while Roberta Nelson witnesses the presentation. The funds were raised through the John Nelson Memorial Scholarship golf outing. • Millersville Post 7294 treated families of its adopted unit with a picnic and summer activities to show its appreciation for their service. • At a Ft. Indiantown Gap deployment ceremony for PAARNG 2/104th GASB soldiers, State VFW VMS Chairman (Post 1564 Commander) John Lorusso, Past Post 1564 Commander Donald Mahoney and Past Post 1564 Commander Bing Gensemer present a VFW "Adopt-a-Unit" certificate to B Co. Commander David W. Smith. The VFW trio helped prepare and serve breakfast and lunch to the deploying soldiers and their families using a National VFW MAP grant. • The VFW had a strong presence at the deployment ceremony for members of the PAANG's RED HORSE Squadron on the Guard's training base in Annville. Present were members of posts in District 18: Dave Gyger (PAANG, Retired), Bill Meiser (PAANG veteran), Fred Heckler, Terry James, Donna Coulter and Joe Staudt.



Mid-Winter Conf. is Set for Jan. 31-Feb 2 in Gettysburg

The Department's 2020 Mid-Winter Conference is scheduled for January 31 through February 2 at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg. The event will focus on key issues impacting the VFW organization at all levels, State and National VFW programs, and topics that affect the lives of veterans from all service eras.

Participants will have opportunities to ask questions about any Post operation areas including internal affairs, small games of chance, financial accountability, legislation, membership eligibility, home association matters and how to resolve issues with individual members.

The agenda will also include presentations on becoming an All-State post, veterans benefit updates, and an overview of the programs that help posts of all sizes to develop reputations as a positive force in the community.

Conference sessions begin on Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. and continue through Saturday morning. On Saturday evening, the Department will hold its annual *Voice of Democracy Banquet*, when the top VOD students, the VOD teacher of the year and *Patriot's Pen* winner will be honored.

Participation forms will be sent to posts and will be uploaded to the Department's website, www.vfwpahq.org.

*From the State Commander***Let's Work Our Mission and Tell Our Story**

By Wayne D. Perry, State Commander - wayper@zoominternet.net



To My Comrades: With the first quarter of the 2019-20 program year now behind us, I thank all VFW posts and districts I have visited so far. The high level of hospitality and

warm camaraderie that you have shown to me and Chief of Staff Cecil Dennis is very much appreciated. Your efforts make a difference!

At its roots, the VFW is first and foremost a human service organization. Our mission is focused on taking care of each other through assistance, support and outreach. Our commitment to serving others extends to our military families and into our neighborhoods.

How we implement our service programs and project our organization as a powerful force for good in the community proves that we are not a bar. Ask yourselves, "Is our post reputation having a positive impact or is our post just a place for deals on food and drink?" Better yet, ask others what they think about your post.

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I hope that by now, your post has created and is working a plan to meet your membership and service goals for the year. Progress and success do not happen without preparation and dedication. It was that way when we

were in the military, and that approach also determines whether VFW goals will be accomplished.

I have seen many times how VFW teamwork—members and post leaders uniting behind our mission, and at times several posts working together through their districts—to improve life for veterans, our troops and citizens from all walks of life. In fact, one of the reasons I ran for the office of state commander was to encourage and support the VFW's continued impressive record of making the world a better place.

There is no doubt in my mind that your post can achieve all of its membership and program participation goals. But remember, your post needs the support and participation of *all members*. Individual members—not just post officers—are an important part of this great organization. For our posts, districts and Department to be successful, we need every member to actively support the VFW mission.

Because VFW members do show a concern for other veterans, you can be confident that someone cares about how you are doing and what you may need during tough times.

Because the VFW dedicates money and time to supporting our troops, military families can rest assured that we are ready to support them—before, during and after deployments.

And because the VFW mission includes being responsive to community needs, your neighbors will respect how our programs touch many lives.

If I can do anything for you, please know that I am just a phone call away.

With Veterans Day just around the corner, I wish you a happy celebration of how veterans have improved our nation and the world. If not for veterans, we would not have the most wonderful country to live in. I am so proud to serve with such a great group of veterans and their families.

Let's make the PA Department number one again in membership!

Carrying out the VFW's service mission takes many forms. This photo shows Post 1564 Commander John Lorusso—who also serves as the Department Chairman of the Veterans and Military Services program—and Past Post Commander Donald Mahoney serve breakfast to the soldiers and family members of PAARNG 2-104 GSAB. Not pictured is Past Post Commander Bing Gensemer, who assisted the National Guard cooks.

**Congratulations, Post 211, for 100 Years of VFW Service**

Post 211 holds its 100th Anniversary Ceremony outside its facility in Youngwood. District 27 Commander Carl Trusiak presents a National VFW Diamond Anniversary Certificate to Post Commander Ray Harrold. The Post also received special recognition from State Representative Eric R. Nelson and Youngwood Mayor Kris Long. Special guests and speakers included Gail Francowic, niece of Roy E. Closson; Westmoreland VA representative Matt Zamosky; and the Post's three oldest members Frank Emanuel (95), John E. Sterba (94) and Myron Hay (90). Congratulations, Post 211, for reaching this impressive VFW mission milestone.

Past National/State Cmdr. John Biedrzycki Passes Away

The hearts of Veterans of Foreign Wars and National Auxiliary leaders and members were deeply saddened in August when past National VFW Commander-in-Chief John A. Biedrzycki, Jr., passed away. U.S. Army veteran Biedrzycki served as an All-American Department of Pennsylvania State Commander in 2002-03. "Big John" was 73 years old.

When he was elected as the VFW's top officer in 2015, he became the first Pennsylvania VFW member to hold that office since 1971. He was only the 10th member from the Commonwealth to serve as National VFW chief.

John was elected as the VFW's commander-in-chief at the 116th National Convention in Pittsburgh, 13 years after leading the Pennsylvania Department, which was then the largest VFW state unit in the nation.

Biedrzycki served in the Army from 1967-1970 in Korea as a Pay Distribution Specialist with the 7th Infantry Division. His decorations include the National Defense Service Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Korean Defense Medal.

A VFW Gold Legacy member, Biedrzycki joined the VFW in 1969 at Post 418 in McKees Rocks. He served in elected and appointed positions at the post, county, district and Department levels culminating with his election as Department Commander for 2002-2003, during which he achieved All-American status.

Nationally, he served on many committees, including chairman of the National VFW Programs Committee, chairman of the National Youth, Education and Community Service Committee and vice chairman of the National Legislative Committee.

He was named "PA VFW Young Veteran of the Year" and "National Young Veteran of the Year." He received a Presidential Award from President Jimmy Carter for "Outstanding Community Achievement of Vietnam Era Veterans".

His leadership helped create the *Voice of Democracy* Contest, a program to which he was named as Teacher of the Year. He served as VOD chairman for five years and as a member of the National VOD Committee. His VFW committee service also included national work groups handling military, legislative, finance, internal, national security and foreign affairs. Big John also served as chairman of the VFW's Eastern States Conference.

VFW National and State officials describe Big John's impact on the VFW and its programs as immeasurable due to his countless hours and his maximum effort that positively touched the organization and many thousands of veterans, troops and citizens.

Comrade Biedrzycki was a retired educator. He was employed by the City of Pittsburgh Board of Education as chairman of the Social Studies Department and Facilitator of the Langley Teaching Academy. His teaching accolades include being named as an "All-Star Educator" by the Giant Eagle Foundation and the Vira Heinz Endowment. He was selected as an "Outstanding Educator" by the Teaching Academy of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Comrade Biedrzycki was married for nearly 50 years to his wife Bette Jean, a past Department Auxiliary President and past National Auxiliary Council member.

Thanks, Big John, for your dedication and contributions to the VFW. Rest in peace, knowing that your comrades continue the mission that you proudly served.



Dept. SOs Connect PA Vets with \$60M in Federal Benefits

The PA Department's statewide network of VA-accredited service officers, claims consultants and support staff led Pennsylvania veterans to a very impressive \$60,979,105 in federal benefits during the 2018-19 fiscal year. As a result, veterans from all service periods, living in all regions of the Commonwealth, experienced a quality of life improvement due to the hard work of network staff, who provide free claims assistance to thousands of veterans and their survivors every year.

During the fiscal year, Pennsylvania VFW network clients received \$47.16 million in disability compensation, \$13.27 million in retroactive claim awards and \$538,000 in disability pension dollars.

State VFW service officers and claims consultants recorded 6,593 actions taken on behalf of Pennsylvania veterans during the 2018-19 fiscal year, including 2,595 initial compensation claims, 725 compensation claims reopened, 83 initial pension claims filed and 392 notices of decision disagreements filed.

VFW staff also helped many veterans access health care services during that year. Network employees assisted veterans and their loved ones through many outreach events to demonstrate the Department's

commitment to traveling to many rural locations where veterans live, meet and recreate. Staff handled more than 54,000 contacts during the 2018-19 year and more than 460,000 contacts over the past seven years.

The Department's expanded outreach, beyond its original network size, is made possible by a significant grant from the Commonwealth's Act 66 Service Officer Outreach Grant program, which is administered through the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The government agency reviews funding applications, in part, by measuring the impact of how grant recipients assisted veterans and their survivors beyond main service locations.

By submitting many case studies, sharing feedback from clients, creating outreach maps and reporting performance statistics, the Pennsylvania VFW has demonstrated year after year that its service officer program is second to none.

The Department expresses its gratitude and appreciation to DMVA staff, other government officials and state legislators for providing the grant program support needed to increase veterans' access to, and receipt of, state and federal benefits.

Do You Need Help With Veterans Benefits?

Full-time, VA-accredited VFW State Service Officers are ready to answer benefit questions at no charge. These phone numbers connect you with your nearest Service Officer, who can inform you about office locations and outreach sites.

Southeast PA/Philadelphia: 215-381-3123 • **Northeastern PA:** 570-821-2535/2536
Harrisburg/Reading/Lititz: 717-234-7927 • **York Area/Gettysburg:** 717-884-1705
Altoona/Johnstown: 814-943-8164 • **Pittsburgh/Southwest PA:** 412-395-6259/6260
Butler: 724-287-4781 ext. 4579 • **Erie/Northwest PA:** 814-835-8494
Northcentral PA/State College: 570-560-1382

Visit the Department's website www.vfwpahq.org, "Claims Help," for more information or call State HQ at (717) 234-7927 and ask for Linda. Remember, veterans do not have to pay for assistance when applying for government benefits.

Thank You, Veterans—This Day is For You!

The Noble and the Brave: A Veteran's Day Tribute

By Joanna Fuchs

**When America had an urgent need,
these brave ones raised a hand;
no hesitation held them back;
they were proud to take a stand.**

**They left their friends and family;
they gave up normal life;
to serve their country and their God, they plowed into the strife.**

**They fought for freedom and for peace on strange and foreign shores;
some lost new friends; some lost their lives in long and brutal wars.**

**Other veterans answered a call to support the ones who fought;
their country had requirements for the essential skills they brought.**

**We salute every one of them, the noble and the brave,
the ones still with us here today, and those who rest in a grave.**

**So here's to our country's heroes; they're a cut above the rest;
let's give the honor that is due to our country's very best.**



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 and ask for Linda or see the office listing on this page. State HQs thanks the State of Pennsylvania for Act 66 grant funds.

NO FEE CLAIMS PROCESSING

Veterans and their survivors should watch out for fraudulent activity when seeking assistance for processing VA claims. Some representatives will charge veterans a fee or percentage for any entitlement received. At no time should veterans pay a fee to anyone for processing their VA claims.

Veterans are advised to utilize the services of an accredited service officer. All accredited service officers have an accreditation number given to them by the Veteran Administration's Office of General Counsel. All VFW State Service Officers are required to attend annual training to maintain their VA accreditation.

VFW's Pre-Discharge Service

In 2001, through a cooperative initiative with the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the VFW Pre-Discharge program was established. This program ensures separating and retiring active-duty military personnel receive assistance in obtaining their VA entitlements and benefits upon discharge.

VFW Pre-Discharge representatives guide military personnel through the veterans claims process and conduct physical examinations prior to their separation from active-duty. They are also ready to answer questions about education and medical benefits, as well as VA home loans.

Our pre-discharge offices are located on or near major military installations across the country. If you are within 180 days of discharge, you can contact a VFW Pre-Discharge representative to get the process underway.

VA Upgrades Disability Ratings for Some Conditions

As of August 11, the VA updated portions of its Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD, or Rating Schedule) that evaluate infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional deficiencies.

The collection of federal regulations used by the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration helps claims processors evaluate the severity of disabilities and assign disability ratings.

The complete list of updates to the rating schedule is available online. Claims pending prior to August 11, will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria; whichever criteria is more favorable to a veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after August 11, will be rated under the new rating schedule.

Updating the rating schedule for conditions related to infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional

deficiencies, enables VA claims processors to make more consistent decisions with greater ease and ensure veterans understand these decisions. The VA remains committed to improving its service to veterans continuously and staying at the forefront of modern medicine as it has for decades.

VA Modifies Smoke-Free Policies at Facilities to Include Workers

As part of the VA's commitment to a smoke-free health care environment for veterans, the VA extended in October its smoke-free policies to include employees at its health care facilities.

This follows the department's June 10 announcement of a new policy restricting smoking by patients, visitors, volunteers, contractors and vendors at its health care facilities. The integration of these two efforts guarantees a fully smoke-free environment for Veterans.

VFW Urges Blue Water Veterans to Contact a Service Officer

With the legislative and judicial battles seemingly over for the Vietnam War's so-called "blue water" Navy veterans, the process for them to receive VA compensation is just beginning.

VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci said that contacting a VFW Service Officer should be a common course of action for all blue water veterans affected by Agent Orange exposure. This would include those who have never filed a claim, as well as those who have filed that were granted compensation and stripped of their benefits.

"This class of veterans was unjustly and arbitrarily excluded from compensation benefits for nearly 20 years," said the VFW's National Veterans Service Deputy Director Michael Figlioli. "We are pleased to see Congress and the VA make them whole. The VFW looks forward to assisting every one of them who seek our help, which is always free of charge and has no VFW membership requirement attached."

In June, President Donald Trump signed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 into law (P.L. 116-23). It restores VA benefits to Vietnam War blue water sailors (those who served aboard ships off the coast of Vietnam) who had their disability eligibility arbitrarily taken away by the VA in 2002. Those veterans also could be eligible for retroactive benefits.

The law, which goes into effect in January 2020, requires the VA to contact veterans who filed a disability claim that originally was denied.

WATCHING YOUR BACK: MEMBERSHIP PROTECTS YOUR INTERESTS

VFW's Presence on Capitol Hill Generates Life-Changing Results for All Veterans

When VFW-eligible veterans and current members contemplate whether to support the VFW, their decisions are based largely on whether they think that membership is a good investment of their time and money. In other words, they want to know what the VFW has done for them to earn their respect, trust and support.

In September, VFW National Legislative Committee members and other leaders from nearly every state convened in Washington, D.C., to meet with their members of Congress to advocate for the VFW's 2019-20 Legislative Priority Goals.

Committee members were focused on the elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset, which is currently in the House version of the National Defense

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020. Committee members also focused their efforts on gaining support for health care for veterans, especially those who served near burn pits, removing the 12-year limit on utilizing the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program, women veteran health care, and transition assistance.

This list above covers a small portion of the many legislative issues that the VFW monitors and testifies for on behalf of combat zone veterans of all ages. To show the important impact of activities undertaken by the VFW's Legislative Office, printed below is a list of legislative victories that were accomplished for veterans largely because your dues support the VFW's strength as the most effective national veterans' advocates.



At the Fall Legislative Conference, Department representatives visited federal lawmakers to request strong support of the VFW's legislative priorities. Pictured from left are Past State Commander (PSC) Larry Wade, PSC Benjamin Mastridge, U.S. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, Post 5958 All-American Commander James Brown and District 8 Jr. Vice Commander David Pearl.



VFW LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

The VFW played an instrumental role in virtually every significant piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th century, as well as bills enacted in the 21st century.

Note: In each case, this is the year an act was passed or an institution established.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1917 War Risk Insurance Act Amendments | 1973 Federal court agrees veterans preference applies to state jobs | 2010 Family Caregiver legislation signed into law |
| 1918 Vocational Rehabilitation Act | 1974 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act | Ensured all VA and DOD health care programs met minimum health care coverage standards |
| 1919 Census Act Rider on Veterans Preference Discharge Allowance | 1976 Veterans Education & Employment Assistance Act | 2011 VOW to Hire Heroes Act |
| 1920 Widows and Orphans Pension Act (Spanish-American War) | 1977 Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Act | VFW stopped TRICARE premiums from increasing annually |
| 1921 Veterans Bureau Act | 1978 Veterans preference preserved | 2012 Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act |
| 1923 Veterans Preference Point System | Veterans & Survivors Pension Improvement Act | Extended USERRA protections to veterans working for TSA |
| 1924 House Committee on Veterans' Affairs | Veterans Day returned to Nov. 11 | 2013 Reinstated military Tuition Assistance programs |
| World War Adjusted Compensation Act | 1979 Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program | New Stolen Valor Act signed into law |
| 1925 Senate Subcommittee on Veterans' Affairs | 1980 VFW calls for Agent Orange study | Stopped Creation of Distinguished Warfare Medal (Drone Medal) |
| 1926 Spanish-American War benefits | Veterans Rehabilitation & Education Amendments | 2014 Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act |
| New Johnson Act (WWI benefits) | 1981 Former POW Benefits Act | 2014 In-State Tuition for Post-9/11 GI Bill eligible veterans |
| 1930 Veterans Administration | Veterans Health Care, Training & Small Business Loan Act | Advance appropriations for VA Benefits |
| World War Service Disability Pension Act | 1982 Veterans Employment and Training Service | 2015 Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act |
| 1931 Bacharach Amendment allows borrowing on WWI bonus certificates | Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated | Eliminated 1% COLA reduction penalty on future military retirees |
| 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act: Veterans Employment Service | 1983 Emergency Veterans Job-Training Act | Created government match to military Thrift Savings Plan accounts |
| 1934 Pension for widows of WWI vets | 1984 Montgomery GI Bill | 2016 Toxic Exposure Research Act to evaluate impact on descendants |
| 1936 VFW congressional charter signed by President Roosevelt | Veterans Dioxin & Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act: Agent Orange & Atomic Exposure | Enhanced fertility treatment and adoption services |
| Bonus bonds (\$2.4 billion) to WWI vets redeemable | 1987 New GI Bill Continuation Act | 2017 Forever GI Bill gives veterans a lifetime to use GI Bill benefits |
| 1938 Armistice Day (Nov. 11) legal holiday | 1988 Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act | Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act |
| 1940 National Service Life Insurance | Department of Veterans Affairs Act | VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act |
| Selective Service & Training Act | Veterans Judicial Review Act | Global War on Terrorism Memorial |
| 1943 Benefits to WWII veterans | 1989 VA becomes a Cabinet department | Improved VA hiring and retention authorities |
| Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation Act | Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims | Veterans Choice Program improvements and expansion |
| 1944 GI Bill of Rights | 1990 Agent Orange service-connection | Declassified toxic exposure documents |
| Veterans Preference Act | 1991 Agent Orange Act | Prevented significant copayment increases for TRICARE |
| 1946 Veteran Emergency Housing Act | Persian Gulf War Veterans Assistance Act | 2018 Expanded caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras |
| 1947 Bureau of Veterans Re-employment Rights | 1992 Veterans Health Care Act | Consolidated community care into one improved program |
| 1950 Vocational Rehabilitation Act | 1996 Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act | Established a process to evaluate and improve VA facilities to better serve veterans |
| 1951 Servicemen's Indemnity & Insurance | 1999 Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act | Defeated proposed cuts to Individual Unemployability |
| 1952 Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Korean War GI Bill) | 2003 Concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 50% disabled or more | 2019 Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act |
| 1954 Veterans Compensation Act | 2004 Full concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 100% disabled | |
| November 11 declared as Veterans Day | Traumatic Injury Insurance supplemental created | |
| 1962 Veterans Benefits Act (Cold War GI Bill) | 2005 Protestors banned from military funerals | |
| 1966 Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act (Vietnam War GI Bill) | Stolen Valor Act signed into law | |
| 1970 Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs | 2006 VFW calls for VA/military health care system review after Walter Reed outpatient debacle | |
| 1972 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act | 2008 Record VA discretionary budget approved | |
| | GI Bill for the 21st Century signed into law | |
| | 2009 Advance Appropriations for VA becomes law | |

Posts Ask Lawmakers for License Surtax Exemption

VFW Posts are encouraged to contact their State lawmakers asking for their support of PA House Bill 1048, which if passed, will give national veterans organizations and volunteer fire companies an exemption to the State's Liquor License Surtax.

In 2016, Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 39 that imposed a \$700 surtax on the yearly renewal of liquor licenses in Pennsylvania. Many non-profit service organizations like fire companies and veterans organizations quickly began feeling the financial pinch of the tax.

Some legislators explained that the financial situation was an unintended consequence of the license renewal fee, and they drew up House Bill 1901 to eliminate the tax for these organizations. House Bill 1901 was sent to the State House Liquor Committee for review, but no action was taken. The bill expired at the end of the 2017-2018 session.

To further demonstrate their concern, some legislators then drafted House Bill 1048 and again sent it to the House Liquor Committee for review on April 5, 2019. On September 19, the bill was finally passed out of committee, then sent to the House Appropriations Committee, where it remains at press time. VFW posts and members should urge the full House to pass the bill so it can advance to the Senate.

Veterans organizations have already paid the Surtax several times. These funds could have been used to support mission programs.

Posts can support this effort by requesting a sample letter (email dsandman@vfwpahq.org and use "HB 1048" in the subject line), and adjusting the text for your PA lawmakers. Please act now since the Legislative session will soon close.



Post 3460 officers meets with District 168 Rep. Chris Quinn to ask for his support with moving HB 1048. Shown (from left) are Adjutant Joe Casey, Commander Jake Knapp, Trustee Mike Nozilo, Rep. Quinn, Officer of the Day Ed Modestowicz, Quartermaster Bob Hughes and Jr. Vice Commander Ken Delmar.

VFW General Orders #2

1. For purposes of clarification, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does not operate as a men's organization or a ladies organization, but as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its VFW Auxiliary.
2. Every Post chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will be expected to participate in the following programs during the 2019-20 year: *Voice of Democracy*, *Patriot's Pen*, Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teachers' Awards, Buddy Poppy and Veterans and Military Support Programs. Additionally, it is necessary that all Post and Department Commanders comply with all provisions of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure and Ritual.
3. Post Commanders and District Commanders are directed to forward all resolutions or communications relative to federal legislation or to the policy or procedure of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or any other governmental agency, to their respective Department Headquarters for consideration and referral to the Adjutant General. Department Commanders will not take direct action on any such resolutions or communications without first obtaining full knowledge of existing National Headquarters policies governing such legislation or agencies. Posts, County Councils, Districts and officers and members thereof shall not publicly communicate or promulgate any such resolutions until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief.
4. DEPARTMENT DUES RESERVE: Due to the passage of Bylaw Amendment B-38 at the 119th National Convention, it is no longer necessary for Departments to maintain a dues reserve fund effective Aug. 24, 2018.
5. Attention of commanders at all levels is directed to Section 703 of the National Bylaws, which requires that each accountable officer be bonded with an indemnity company in the sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which he may be accountable.
6. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218(a)(11)(b), Manual of Procedure, Trustees, which states that Post Trustees shall prepare and submit quarterly, through their Post Commander, a Post Trustees' Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector. The first report is due at the close of September. Do not mail these reports to National Headquarters.
7. Attention of Department and Post Commanders is directed to the requirement of timely filing of Internal Revenue Form 990 and 990/T, where applicable. Forms may be secured from your local Post Office or branch office of the Internal Revenue Service.
8. Posts are urged to start planning suitable programs now for the observance of Veterans Day (see Section 223 of the Manual of Procedure).
9. The passage of Manual of Procedure Amendment M-30 has modified Section 1001(25) to read, "The dispensation and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or the use of smoking/vaping products in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings are prohibited."
10. A thorough program of Post inspection is necessary to ensure compliance with National and Department Bylaws and directives. Department and District Inspectors shall make every

Appeals Court Rules VA Must Pay for Veterans' Emergency Care

NBC News Report by Courtney Kube, Mosheh Gains and Adiel Kaplan, with VFW response added.

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs must reimburse veterans for emergency medical care at non-VA facilities, a federal appeals court ruled recently—a decision that could be worth billions of dollars to veterans.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims said the VA has been wrongfully denying reimbursement to veterans who sought emergency medical care at non-VA facilities, and struck down an internal VA regulation that blocked those payments.

"All of this is unacceptable," said the ruling, which ordered the VA secretary to "readjudicate these reimbursement claims."

Plaintiffs' lawyers say that based on past estimates by the VA, the department is now on the hook for between \$1.8 billion-\$6.5 billion in reimbursements to thousands of veterans who have filed or will file claims between 2016 and 2025.

Former Coast Guardsman Amanda Wolfe, one of the plaintiffs in the case, told NBC News. "I'm just overjoyed. I think it means change, it means that veterans don't have to be afraid of receiving care, emergency care. They can have that sense of security that sense of peace knowing they are covered if they require emergency care."

"I served side by side with some of these veterans who were impacted and to think that this is going to make a difference

for them is what is most important to me." The VA told NBC News in a statement that the department, "is aware of this decision and is reviewing it."

In 2015, the court struck down a previous version of the internal VA regulation that refused any coverage for an emergency claim when another form of insurance covered even a small part of the bill. The court said the regulation violated a 2010 federal law.

The recent court ruling found the department had violated the same federal law with its revision of the reimbursement regulation. The panel said the new rule, issued in January 2018, actually created

"The first thing the VA tells people to do when calling is to hang up and dial 911 if it's an emergency. So the VA must reimburse the actual cost of emergency medical care, regardless of whether the veteran has secondary insurance or not."

- William Schmitz, VFW Commander-in-Chief

another obstacle for veterans by forbidding the VA from reimbursing medical expenses for emergency services at non-VA facilities.

VFW Supports the Court Ruling

In a statement released by VFW National Headquarters, Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz noted, "The first thing the

VA tells people to do when calling is to hang up and dial 911 if it's an emergency. So the VA must reimburse the actual cost of emergency medical care, regardless of whether the veteran has secondary insurance or not.

"VA Secretary Robert Wilkie must make these veterans financially whole again, correct its policies and practices regarding non-VA emergency room billing immediately, and fully adopt the IG report's 11 recommendations to improve the accuracy of the non-VA emergency room claims processing."

THE VFW'S 1 STUDENT VETERAN PROGRAM PROVIDES EXPERT ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS SEEKING:

- Guidance in filing for GI Bill benefits.
- Help accessing education benefits.
- Answers to any VA benefit questions.
- Resolution of wrongly denied or delayed benefits.

STUDENT VETERAN

effort to inspect every Post under their cognizance on an annual basis and correct such discrepancies as may be disclosed.

11. U.S. Army ARDEC has issued guidance on the operation and maintenance of the M1 Garand. The manual can be found in the VFW Training & Support section at www.vfw.org or you can visit the M1 Garand Associated Website: www.m1garandtraining.com.

11. The distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies will be conducted according to the provisions set forth in Sections 711 of the National Bylaws 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 in accordance with Section 704 of the National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure.

BY COMMAND OF: PA Department VFW State Commander Wayne D. Perry

ATTEST: PA Department of VFW State Adjutant John B. Getz, Jr.

We'll Be Successful if Our Mission Work Defines the VFW

Ronald J. Peters, State Sr. Vice Cmdr. - acavrp@hotmail.com



Thank you for the warm welcome you have shown me as I travel across this great Department! It is so uplifting to see all the wonderful things that our posts, auxiliaries and districts are doing to support our veterans, their families and their communities!

It is inspiring to see how many of our posts are implementing our programs, which demonstrates that the VFW mission has a powerful, positive effect on many people. Your hard work and the resulting success stories showcase what the VFW stands for: service first to those who have kept America free, those defending our freedom today and those back home who enjoy the blessings of living in our nation.

Your Department urges all posts to build on their service side because that's what we need to do to show others that we are worthy of their support and trust.

We must use our programs to increase our visibility so eligible veterans will want to join our ranks as active members.

We also encourage post leaders and individual members to share "The VFW Story." Everything that you do to support our mission is part of our story. If we stay focused on our core service mission and work at it daily, success will come to our organization. Stay positive and keep working hard to serve others. Share your successes wherever you meet veterans, our troops and community leaders.

This is a great time of year to work on retention of membership. Get a work group together and reach out to current and delinquent members, asking them to stay active. We need every member!

With Veterans Day getting attention, hold events that bring people to your post to celebrate veterans' service. Let all veterans know you care about them. Have an open house to promote your post.

Comrades, success comes from hard work. Let's stay focused on our mission!

Membership Moment

Set a Steady Course for Becoming an All-State Post

Each year, the Department challenges posts of all sizes to attain the prestigious title of "All-State VFW Post." By making a plan to accomplish all required steps, then being committed to working that plan, every post can earn this respected honor regardless of membership size or post location.

State Commander Wayne Perry's 2019-20 Membership Contest Book lists the required steps to receive All-State Post status and includes a mandatory worksheet. See pages 7-8 for all mandatory participation details, deadlines and breakdowns of Post division category requirements.

All-State Mandatory Criteria:

- Membership Properly Reported as attaining percentage goal of 100%.
- Purchase Buddy Poppies (5 per member).
- Voice of Democracy Entry or Donation to Dept. Scholarship Fund.
- Patriot's Pen Entry or Donation to Dept. Scholarship Fund.
- Veterans and Military Support Fundraiser or donation to VMS Fund.
- National Home Donation.
- VAVS Donation.
- Donation to Commander's Special Project - Fisher House, Pittsburgh.
- Post must have submission of one EMT or Firefighter or Police Officer Candidate for Dept. Safety Award.
- All Quarterly Trustee Reports including June, 2019 must be on file.
- Post must have Quartermaster Bonded and on record at Dept. HQ.

- Must Attend All District Meetings (represented by Post Commander and/or Sr. Vice Commander and/or Jr. Vice Commander and/or Quartermaster and/or Adjutant - Post Commander must attend at least one.

- Post Must have a Registered Service Officer (current fee paid).
- Post Must Not be in Arrears (current and prior year).
- Post Inspection is Recorded for 2019-2020.
- All-State Post Requirements Must be completed between July 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020.
- **MANDATORY SUBMISSION OF ALL-STATE POST WORKSHEET TO STATE HQ BY APRIL 30, 2020**

Many posts already completed these steps, so why not gain the positive attention that your unit deserves? There are membership contest incentives that may earn your post financial rewards.

Call State Headquarters if you have questions about the process. It's better to be sure of your All-State Post standing than to be disappointed due to a misunderstanding or falling just short.

VFW posts should be engaged with veterans, military units and their neighborhoods to be relevant as a community organization. In addition to receiving special recognition from the Department at the State Convention, completing all the required steps will ensure that your post is mission driven and worthy of support from prospective members and the local community.

We Need All Hands on Deck to Move the VFW Forward

Nathaniel Smith, State Jr. Vice Commander - btcmet9955@hotmail.com



We are now well into the second quarter of 2019-2020 year. We have faced a setback with the loss of two great leaders: Past State Commander John Brenner and our Past State/National Commander "Big John" Biedrzycki. However, we must move on in their memory.

We had a great turnout at our annual "Flying Squadron" and Officers Training Institutes (OTI). I hope that all participants in these programs have shared the information they learned with post and district chairpersons so we will have another successful year.

I enjoyed meeting many of you at the OTIs. I am inspired by your enthusiasm and great ideas to make this a successful year for Commander Perry.

I have had the honor and privilege of attending district meetings on behalf of Commander Perry. The warm reception that you have given to me is appreciated.

I strongly believe that the VFW Auxiliary is the backbone of this great organization because they do the legwork

for the VFW by supporting veterans and their families. Without their support, I don't think we would be as successful.

Our state membership is 79.96%, which is a good start to reaching 100%. Post commanders, please reach out to district membership chairpersons to hold recruiting drives, information sessions and other events to drive membership.

This is a great time to reach out to Reserve Centers, National Guard units, community colleges and universities to explain the VFW's mission, vision and core values. Please also send care packages to deployed units.

Continue to educate the public about the VFW by providing facts on our programs. Let's also continue honoring younger veterans and their families by inviting them to VFW activities and promoting the VFW as a family group.

After they join, we should mentor, inspire and properly train them to be future leaders in this great organization. Remember, you must train your replacement!

I hope everyone has a nice Veterans Day. Thank you for your service in the Armed Forces, in the VFW and to this great country.

Facts and Figures

Learn and Follow Post and Government Regulations

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



We are getting close to the mid-point of our VFW 2019-20 year. With the holidays approaching, post officers should focus on preparing quarterly audit reports to make sure post trustees are fulfilling their responsibilities of ensuring that checking, savings and investment accounts are accurate.

Quartermasters, you must provide financial information to trustees. Make sure that they receive all financial data and then file the audit report.

I have been getting calls about post quartermasters running the canteen, which cannot happen because this would create a conflict of interest. Post quartermasters

are not allowed to make post or canteen decisions. The role of post quartermasters is to protect the funds of their VFW posts by making sure that expenditures are paid only for the right things, not to make all decisions related to post operations.

I have also been getting complaints from post inspectors about their post only having one EIN number to cover both their post and canteen. If your post has a canteen, you need two EIN numbers because the post is a 501(c)(4) organization and the canteen operates as a 501(c)(7) entity. The 501(c)(7) designation is needed to serve social members in your canteen. Under the 501(c)(4) label, posts are not allowed to serve anyone other than VFW members.

Keep up the good work carrying out the VFW mission. Remember that every day is Veterans Day.

**YOU FOUGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY.
NOW JOIN US IN THE FIGHT
FOR VETERANS.**

We understand the unique bond you share with other veterans of overseas conflicts because we, too, have been there. No matter which conflict called you to service, we invite you to join us as we continue to fight for all that's good FOR VETERANS.



Focus on Mission Success



Ephrata Post 3376 presents a \$600 donation to the Pioneer Fire Company. The Post also supported the Ephrata Community Ambulance Association with a \$500 donation. Pictured (from left) are Post Quartermaster Amy MacKenzie, Commander Dwayne MacKenzie, Adjutant Tim Frey, Fire Company Treasurer Carole Hackman, Sr. Vice Commander Mike Lillis, Fire Company President John Eitnier and Fire Company Financial Secretary Don Whitcraft. (Photo by Melissa Frey)



Gratz Post 2385 and Auxiliary proudly display a 2019 National VFW First-Place Community Record Book Award. Holding the award is Record Book creator Anita Flynn, who is joined by District 18 Commander Dave Gyger (left) and Post Commander Harvey Pennell. Congratulations, Post 2385!



Indiana Post 1989 is very active with community service projects like participating in patriotic events shown above. The Post's service accomplishments account for hundreds of hours of service through hospital activities, church and school volunteering, honor guard duties, VFW programs, Americanism projects, support of Scout units and much more.



Post 1690 and Auxiliary members raise funds by distributing Buddy Poppy flowers, while also recruiting new members. Pictured are (from left) Sr. Vice Commander Russell Hannah, Trustee Aden Nevling, Auxiliary President C.J. Stoudt and Auxiliary Vice President Loraine Hayford.



Post 7530 Commander Jeff Pucket congratulates the first-place winner of the Veteran Category in the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library's Annual "Run for Reading." The event consists of a family 5K Run/Walk, a 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk, and a Children's Five-and-Under Dash. At least ten Post members participated in the event. The overall winner announced that he received his VFW membership card the evening before the race. Proceeds from the "Run for Reading" help sponsor over 3,100 children's programs run by the library.



District 8 Commander Thomas Hauserman presents a PA Department Jack E. Barger student nursing scholarship to Katherine Cleary of Langhorne. She was one of six scholarship winners. The ceremony was held at Post 6495 in Levittown. Pictured are (from left) District Quartermaster Len Sparr, Commander Hauserman, Cleary, District Sr. Vice David Pearl and District Jr. Vice John Otte.

DUE TO THE MANY PHOTOS RECEIVED AT STATE HQ, SOME PICTURES ARE BEING HELD FOR THE NEXT ISSUE. PLEASE NOTE: VFW NEWS CANNOT REPRODUCE NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS. ASK YOUR LOCAL PAPER FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT A PHOTO AND SEND THE FILE OR PRINT (WITH THE PERMISSION STATEMENT) TO DSANDMAN@VFWPAHQ.ORG.



Focus on Mission Success



Thanks for Your Dedication and Service, Comrade Lowes!

The Department salutes and honors Nelson E. Lowes, Sr., for his many years of dedicated service as state surgeon and as state chairman of the National Legislative Committee. As surgeon, Comrade Lowes has visited veterans in VA medical centers and State Veterans Homes to ensure that they receive the best possible care. His service as state surgeon continues through June, 2020. He has also walked many miles inside the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., promoting the VFW's legislative priorities.

"I hope in everyone's eyes, I have served our veterans well. I know in my heart, I tired my very best to do so," said Vietnam veteran Lowes, who has also led the Department's Hospital/VAVS program. "I thank all of the State Commanders who appointed me for putting their trust in me, and everyone who supported our hospital and legislative efforts."



VFW Post and Auxiliary leaders always enjoy presenting student scholarship funds. Here, District 10 *Patriot's Pen* Winner Rory Decker holds her first-place check while flanked by (from left): Auxiliary President JoAnn Powell, District Commander Chester Potoski, Rory's mother Caryn Decker, District Sr. Vice Commander Tom Narcavage and Post 531 Commander Phil Sheehan.



Every year, North East Post 4789 presents four students with \$1,000 scholarships, Commander Thomas Hollarn proudly stands with recipients Adam Malesiewski, Josh Morey, Maura Brereton and Kaleigh Valone. Shown are (from left) Phil Coburn, Maura Brereton, Tom Malesiewski, Adam Malesiewski, Randy Morey, Josh Morey, Diane Hinspeter, Kaleigh Valone and Commander Hollarn. (Photo by Terry Roush)



Eddystone Post 7949 is proud of its 8-ball billiards team, which is pictured with some of its tournament trophies. Pictured are (from left) Dave McGee (USAF), Ed Gillespie (Army) Dominick Cacciatore (Army), Jay Eckleberry (USN Reserves), Ron Dixon, Greg Cagle, Rich McVeigh and Mary Ann McGee. The team hopes to continue its success and may have a chance to advance to the world championships in Las Vegas.



Many VFW units, including Post 4789, support youth activities including Scout troop members. Here, the Post honors new Eagle Scout Lucas A. Walker. The VFW presented Lucas with a framed certificate, a check and an American Flag. Pictured are (from left) Rita Otto, Joe Otto and Eagle Scout Walker. (Photo by Terry Roush)



District 27 Commander Carl Trusiak presents a Pennsylvania Department Jack E. Barger Nursing Scholarship to Caleb Conroy of Latrobe. The Department maintains a fund that distributes numerous scholarships each year in partnership with the Pennsylvania Nurses Association.

Focus on Mission Success



Ephrata Post 3376's Commander Dwayne MacKenzie and Quartermaster Amy MacKenzie proudly pose by their VFW display that was part of a local community event called "Party on the Plaza." The Post leaders passed out Buddy Poppies, applications for the *Patriot's Pen* and *Voice of Democracy* student programs as well as information about other VFW programs.



Linesville Post 7842 presents a \$1,070 check to the Yolanda G. Barco Oncology Institute Benevolence Fund. The donation was raised through a "Souper Bowl," where 19 soups, stews and chilies were offered. The VFW Post matched the total amount of funds raised. Casey's Ice Cream was the corporate sponsor and donated a variety of door prizes. Pictured are (from right) Event Coordinator Ray Anzel, Oncology Director Betsy Brown, Post Commander Ed O'Malley and Casey's owner Shawn Sullivan.



Selinsgrove Post 6631 donates \$1,000 to the Shikellamy High School JROTC unit. Among those pictured are Commander Doug Hammett and Quartermaster Harold Aucker holding the symbolic check.



Clarks Summit Post 7069 served as the Honor Guard for the 100th anniversary celebration of the Waverly Community House. Unit members are (from left): Quartermaster/Adjutant Michael McLane (who also serves as State VFW Inspector), Commander Donald Jones, Surgeon Nick Shyshuk, Chaplain Patrick Williams, Sr. Vice Commander John Wettstein, member John Yevonishon and Post Jr. Vice Commander John Arre.



Greensburg Post 33 holds a POW/MIA Recognition Day service at the Post home. Pictured are Post Commander David Cackowski and Honor Guard member Michael Penzera placing a wreath in honor of POW/MIA personnel. Also pictured is the Post Honor Guard unit standing at attention during the playing of taps. This September ceremony is one of numerous patriotic activities conducted by the Greensburg Post. (Photos by Paul Yeckel - Post 33 POW/MIA chairman)

Focus on Mission Success

District 21's Brenner March for Diabetes Raises \$20,800



Congratulations to District 21 for another very successful fundraiser for Diabetes research and support. A dedicated team of walkers, supporters and donors raised more than \$20,800 during the recent "John A. Brenner Walk for Diabetes," in which participants marched for 33 miles over three days. Every post and auxiliary in District 21 donated to the cause. The highest post donations were from Etters Post, \$5,250; Red Lion Post, \$2,500; Chambersburg Post, \$2,100; and East Berlin Post \$1,500. The Department thanks District 21 for its support of the many veterans who live with Diabetes. District 21 named the annual march for deceased All-American Past State Commander Brenner, who was instrumental in creating the event.



Chalfont Post 3258 Commander George Uhl shows the Post's strong involvement in the community by honoring the *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* winners for 2018-19.



Etters Post 537 combines with members of the PA Army National Guard to provide rifle squad services during a Memorial Day program.



Chalfont Post 3258 Commander George Uhl presents a \$500 check to Liz Stern to support activities of the PA Army National Guard 55th Brigade Support Battalion's Family Readiness Group. The Chalfont Post adopted the 55th BSB unit.



Immediate Past District 21 All-American Commander Richard Olivitt and his wife Linda speak with a veteran during the York Fair. The District participates every year by providing VFW membership information and benefits assistance.



Lancaster Post 1690 holds its annual National POW/MIA Recognition Day tribute, complete with the single table setting honoring veterans who did not return from war. Shown during the ceremony are (from left) Life Member John Baker, Life Member Ronald Baldwin, Post Commander Mark Giblin, Sr. Vice Commander Russell Hannah, Life Member Anthony Tellez and Auxiliary President C.J. Stoudt. All posts are encouraged to create a permanent POW-MIA display inside the canteen. Supplies for this important visual reminder can be purchased through the VFW Store.



Membership ... continued from page 1

volunteers provided more than 351,000 hours of service.

Veterans interested in serving their communities connect with the VFW's many programs that partner with schools, public safety units, youth sports, community improvement projects, organizations that serve the less fortunate, disaster relief agencies, senior citizens groups and other human service entities.

State VFW units donated more than \$3 million in scholarships, youth support, charitable donations, public safety donations, troop support and community projects last year. During those 12 months, VFW members volunteered more than \$10 million worth of volunteer service to support their fellow veterans, military troops and communities.

Nationally, the VFW has distributed almost \$5 million in VFW-Sport Clips Help a Hero scholarships since 2014. Nearly two million troops and family members have enjoyed VFW troop support events since 2005. VFW's Unmet Needs program helps America's military families who have experienced unexpected financial difficulties. Since 2004, the program has given \$10 million to more than 8,800 military and veteran families.

The return on veterans' investment in the VFW is impressive, as told by a diverse group of members who served in all service periods. The following testimonials document the powerful impact that membership has on veterans.

Brian, Operations Iraqi & Enduring Freedom: "The reception I received was full of warm camaraderie. The fact that veterans from all service eras showed their pride in me as a combat veteran—as a brother, who like them, served in harm's way—was very moving."

Chris, Operations Freedom Sentinel & Inherent Resolve: "I am very thankful for all that the VFW does for veterans from all generations. I am humbled and proud to call myself a VFW life member."

Larry, Vietnam War: "I've enjoyed being around other veterans from WWII to the present. We relate to each other regardless of when we served. Our post is a community of people who care for others."

Kristal, Operation Iraqi Freedom: "When you come back from serving overseas, even if you are still in the active military, VFW membership serves as a super strong foundation of support."

Joshua, Operation Iraqi Freedom & Korean Defense: "I'm proud to be among other veterans, including older veterans. At my post, I belong to a family of veterans, and I learn about benefits I'm eligible for."

Charles, Operation Enduring Freedom: "I found a close family of friendly veterans. Being a member makes me proud to be an American. I enjoy talking with veterans who understand my experiences."

Calvin, Operation Iraqi Freedom:

"I wanted to join the ranks of other veterans who served in combat. I can relate to other veterans' experience. Being a member has helped me to settle back into life after war."

Ruth, Operation Desert Storm:

"Membership helped me to continue my feeling of patriotism. I've been able to reach out and touch the lives of other veterans of the past, present and future. I'm proud of my membership."

Joshua, Operation Iraqi Freedom:

"I joined the VFW to serve my fellow veterans and my community, and because of the VFW's reputation of supporting soldiers and their families. My post gives me a support group of veterans."

Dwight, Vietnam War: "I have made new friends and have learned about veterans' issues and other topics. I love the VFW and what we do for veterans, to support the community and educate the public."

Robert, World War II: "Combat veterans earned the right to belong to the VFW and to benefit from its many programs. They are special people who can help carry on the proud VFW traditions. I've enjoyed sharing my experiences with them."

Jeff, Operations Enduring & Iraqi Freedom: "I found the camaraderie that I enjoyed in the Marines at my VFW post."

Rebecca, Operation Iraqi Freedom: "Being a member has broadened my horizons. I love the new circle of friends that my husband and I have made. I know my post is always there to help us."

Dick, Korean War: "VFW membership guided me to the benefits that veterans have earned and provided me with chances to serve others and the community."

Christian, Operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom: "I am part of the VFW because it respects, honors and supports veterans. I have gained a lot of knowledge about veterans' issues, and enjoy the camaraderie."

Jason, Operations Joint Forge (Bosnia) & Enduring Freedom: "The support that membership gave me access to meant a great deal to me when I lost a family member to suicide. I urge all eligible veterans to join the VFW because it allows combat zone veterans to support each other and enjoy the camaraderie that doesn't exist outside of the organization."

VFW members are urged to keep this issue for use when recruiting as solid testimony about why the organization is the most effective veterans service group. Paired with the impressive VFW program results noted above, the Department's recovery of millions in government benefit dollars for veterans last year (see page 3) and many legislative victories affecting veterans (page 4), these testimonials speak volumes about the VFW's unmatched service, camaraderie, assistance and representation.

Department Membership Update: 79.96% of the 2018-19 Year-End Total

Top five posts ranked by Membership Division			7 6611	GALETON	89.60%
Div. Post	Location	%	7 6070	NEWVILLE	89.56%
2 5958	TITUSVILLE	89.62%	8 6824	ROME	100.93%
2 1599	CHAMBERSBURG	86.78%	8 415	NEW BETHLEHEM	98.97%
2 8951	WEST YORK	80.78%	8 1586	HASTINGS	93.81%
3 2385	GRATZ	99.46%	8 9765	OAKFORD	92.47%
3 8896	EAST BERLIN	93.01%	8 747	POINT MARION	92.04%
3 2006	MEADVILLE	92.55%	9 7919	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	103.75%
3 7863	DUBOISTOWN	90.54%	9 7375	HYNDMAN	98.57%
3 3428	MUNCY	89.14%	9 3090	PHILADELPHIA	94.44%
4 813	DU BOIS	97.87%	9 709	SHARPSBURG	92.85%
4 2493	MOUNT WOLF	96.00%	9 6755	LIBERTY	92.00%
4 169	VENANGO	94.94%	10 6231	SLIPPERY ROCK	109.25%
4 264	CORRY	89.72%	10 8051	PHILADELPHIA	101.72%
4 7045	HELLAM	89.43%	10 5205	PHILADELPHIA	98.43%
5 4793	WAYNESBURG	97.96%	10 7650	PHILADELPHIA	96.36%
5 8803	TIDIOUTE	96.66%	10 5069	ANDREAS	92.45%
5 6076	MYERSTOWN	92.38%	11 1606	NEWELL	100.00%
5 5752	MOUNT JOY	91.89%	11 9118	LANDISBURG	100.00%
5 6954	LITTLESTOWN	91.44%	11 11277	WAYNE	100.00%
6 5825	PINE GROVE MILLS	97.63%	11 6303	GREENSBORO	97.95%
6 7878	KING OF PRUSSIA	88.07%	11 294	ALBRIGHTSVILLE	97.14%
6 8106	NEW GALILEE	87.43%			
6 5956	MANHEIM	86.47%			
6 1568	TOWANDA	85.86%			
7 7343	MT HOLLY SPRINGS	96.66%			
7 3575	QUARRYVILLE	95.55%			
7 1532	SUNBURY	91.05%			

On Oct. 17, 2019, Dept. membership stood at 55,775 members or 79.96% of the 2018-19 year-end total. So far this year, 509 new members and 96 reinstated members have been recruited. Posts should read the State Membership Program to learn about all membership contests.

Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of 10/15/19 Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!

- First Place: DISTRICT 15 - 85.36% - Commander David S. Flook
- Second Place: DISTRICT 18 - 84.5% - Commander David W. Gyger
- Third Place: DISTRICT 21 - 83.45% - Commander Robert E. Hinkle, Jr.
- Fourth Place: DISTRICT 1 - 82.93% - Commander Zbigniew S. Laksa
- Fifth Place: DISTRICT 28 - 81.84% - Commander Donald E. Christy
- Sixth Place: DISTRICT 9 - 81.37% - Commander William E. Stellfox
- Seventh Place: DISTRICT 13 - 81.28% - Commander Ronald J. Brown
- Eighth Place: DISTRICT 16 - 80.58% - Commander Gordon R. Boe
- Ninth Place: DISTRICT 26 - 80.36% - Commander Joseph R. Kopsic
- Tenth Place: DISTRICT 14 - 79.99% - Commander John D. Miner



Holding the Top Spot:
District 15
Commander David S. Flook



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Two Mon Valley Veterans Use Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey Action to Help Ice Wounds

By Michael P. Mauer

When athletes get hurt while playing sports, trainers are often quick to apply ice. For two Mon Valley veterans, their therapy involves getting on the ice.

Air Force veteran Richard J. Betler and retired Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer David G. Jackel, II, both lace on skates as part of the Pittsburgh Warriors Hockey program. The two members of West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid also agree that hockey helps them decompress from the stress they experienced in the military.

"I really enjoy playing for this team because we are completely focused on brotherhood and healing from whatever physical and mental battles we may be facing," said Jackel, a veteran of the Global War on Terror. "We aspire to be good ambassadors for the game of hockey, and the veterans in and around the city of Pittsburgh."

"Hockey helps me experience some of the same unselfish teamwork I had in the Air Force," said Betler, an Afghanistan campaign veteran. "On the ice, we all have to act quickly together to stay competitive. That type of adrenaline flow really helps me focus on other areas in my life."

A nonprofit organization, the Pittsburgh Warriors team is made up of honorably discharged, disabled veterans that use hockey to help fight the physical and mental scars of military service. The group also encourages members to be productive in their communities, and to build relationships with fellow veterans.

To skate for the team, candidates are required to provide a Veterans Administration disability letter, as well as proper discharge documentation noted on a Form DD-214. The group is affiliated with the Pittsburgh Penguins of the National Hockey League through the Hockey Sticks Together Foundation, and wears the professional team's logo on its sweaters. The Warriors team is the only nonprofit disabled veteran hockey squad authorized for this honor.

"I am extremely proud to wear the jersey and represent our area's veterans when we travel throughout the country," said Jackel, who plays right wing and is an alternate captain. "Hockey truly is for everyone."

"It is a great bridge for veterans," he added. "It brings a warrior mentality into a team environment."

Jackel also said that what he gets from playing hockey is similar to his experiences in uniform.

"It fills a void that a lot of us had when we left the military," the former sailor said.

Teammate Betler, who plays goal, agrees.

"We play solid, aggressive hockey, but are very disciplined and respectful of each other and our opponents," said Betler. "Like the Air Force, it is a team I'm proud to be part of."

The team's competitive experience has included action in the American Hero Hockey Tournament in Toledo, OH. Last year, the Pittsburgh Warriors took a divisional runner-up slot during the USA Hockey Warrior

Festival in Las Vegas, NV.

Future games include playing the Pittsburgh Icemen on November 9, as part of a Veteran's Day 2019 Hockey Weekend program that will benefit Warriors Hockey.

In addition to wearing the Pittsburgh Penguins gold and black logo on their camouflage sweaters, Jackel and Betler also get to prepare at that NHL club's UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex in Cranberry. The Warriors team usually practices three to four times each month.

Ice time, equipment, uniforms, travel and lodging are all funded by donations through Hockey Sticks Together, the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, and various other businesses and individuals. Personal equipment is preferred, but not required.

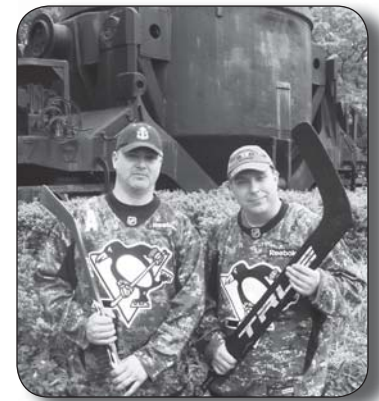
Off the ice, both Mon Valley hockey players are active in veterans' affairs and their communities. Jackel serves as a volunteer firefighter in West Mifflin, while Betler works for the Veterans Administration. As a member of Post 914, Jackel has organized several events, including Memorial Day Services at Mitchell Paige Park, West Mifflin. Betler has participated in fundraisers, including the Disabled American Veterans Colonel Samuel D. Foster Post 76 annual installation and dance.

It was at such an event this past February that Betler won an opportune prize—two tickets to see the Pittsburgh Penguins play at the PPG Paints Arena.

"It was a great game," the Air Force veteran said. "The Pens won, and so did I."

The Philadelphia Flyers team also backs a Warriors Hockey program. Both Warrior teams have a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pittsburghwarriors/> and <https://www.facebook.com/FlyersWarriorHockey/>

(Michael P. Mauer is the Public Affairs Officer for VFW District 29. He served as an Army photojournalist during Operation Desert Storm, and was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal by Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf.)



VFW Post 914 Intrepid members David G. Jackel II, left, and Richard J. Betler, proudly show their hockey team jerseys.

Knowing The Role and Responsibility of a District Chaplain

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



The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a volunteer organization made up primarily of unpaid people who share a common bond. We joined the VFW for various reasons, and in time, some of us get elected to various positions.

In my case, someone found out that I was a "Reverend" and I was then asked to be the Post Chaplain. When I became the Post Chaplain, no one explained my duties or what was expected of me besides offering the meeting prayers.

Since that time, I have written quite a bit about the role and responsibility of a Post Chaplain and how to go about ministering effectively to Post members and their families. I have developed a new edition of the Handbook for Chaplains and a number of other resources, which can be found at www.vfwpahq.org. Just look under "District/Post Tools," and you will see "Chaplain's Guide."

Up to this point, I have written virtually nothing about the role and responsibility of the District Chaplain. And, there is quite a bit of ambiguity when it comes to the role and

responsibility of District Chaplains. Take for example what is said on page 82 of the Manual of Procedure for District Chaplains:

"During the annual District Convention, the District Chaplain shall see that a fitting tribute is paid to our departed comrades. The Chaplain shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority."

Even after being a District Chaplain for a number of years, and functioning at the State and National level, I am not sure what it means to perform such other duties "as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority."

At the present time, we have 24 Districts and 24 District Chaplains. Each of the District Chaplains should realize that in addition to saying the prayers and conducting the annual District Memorial Service, the District Chaplain should serve as a role model, coach, and mentor to the Post Chaplains within the district.

Where to begin:

- The District Chaplain should take the lead and reach out to establish a

collaborative relationship with each of the Post Chaplains within their district. Developing relationships takes time, but begin by calling each Post Chaplain in your district.

- Be genuine and honest. First introduce yourself and then explain that you recently learned that as District Chaplain you want to make yourself available to support and help them, if and when they may need it. Ask them how they are doing and try to find out how they view their role and responsibility as a Post Chaplain.

- Be available to answer questions and provide advice when appropriate.

- Help them become familiar with the resources that are available at vfwpahq.org.

- Respond to e-mails and texts in a timely fashion if questions are asked.

- Encourage them to attend the District meeting, and set a time to meet with them.

In almost every organization, and particularly within the VFW, those in leadership positions are expected to work with those under them to provide support and encouragement, serving as their "coach" or "mentor."

Blessings as you serve.

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1
Confidential help for Veterans and their families

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Europe. He found out shortly before June 6, 1944, that his first combat jump would be behind German lines in Sainte Mere Eglise, France, the first town liberated by the Allies.

Hurd clearly knew both the immensity and the importance of his unit's part of the invasion. While U.S. infantry troops assaulted the beaches in Normandy on D-Day, as part of Operation Overlord, Hurd and his Airborne battle buddies floated down onto enemy soil during Operation Neptune to disrupt German troops reinforcing the beachheads and coastal towns.

"We knew it was big and that our role was to help cut off German reinforcements," he said. "It was dark when our plane came over the coast. We were trying to protect ourselves in the plane because the Germans were shooting up at us and rounds came through some planes.

"On training jumps, we usually left the plane at 1,000 feet, but for this one we jumped at 500. We hit the ground hard and fast. I landed in some brush and stayed out of sight until it started to get light out. Then we could see what we were running into and how to deal with it. I still had all my equipment, but others lost some key items."



Post 2076 members—and long-time friends—Walter Hurd and Robert Lott attended the 75th D-Day Anniversary in France.

As with many other paratrooper groups, his unit was broadly dispersed. Darkness and rain obscured rally points. Priorities became survival, equipment checks and getting organized to launch the mission.

Three months after his D-Day jump, Hurd's unit was transported into the Netherlands as part of Operation Market Garden. This time, he would drop into enemy territory inside a wooden glider. He and other paratroopers were concerned because gliders used in other theaters revealed flight control and landing gear weaknesses.

"Once we landed, the Germans lowered their anti-aircraft guns and opened up. Rounds kicked up dirt around me. We went up a slope, then I was sent back to our weapons cache to get a machine gun. The Germans saw me and fired the AA gun. I got in a ditch and was pinned down. I got hit by some shrapnel, but got the machine gun to one of our positions, while also carrying my M-1 carbine and other equipment."

A resident later showed Hurd and another Airborne soldier a church where she thought Germans were inside. They busted through the doors and saw almost two dozen enemy soldiers. The group surrendered to Hurd and his comrade, but the Americans transferred the prisoners to officers so they could move the machine gun forward.

With the machine gun delivered, Hurd helped load ammunition for a bazooka team. "He took a few shots into a hedgerow. Then both sides started trading rifle and automatic fire. We had the machine gun going, but a German round damaged it so that went out of action."

On both Airborne incursions, Hurd didn't have to look far to witness the dangers and uncertainties of war. He remembers seeing planes full of deceased paratroopers, who did not get a chance to fight because their plane was shot down by German fire.

FAST FORWARD 75 YEARS

This past June, Hurd found himself airborne again headed toward France. More than seven decades after his first landing on French soil, one which harshly transitioned him from a young man to combat veteran, this time his thoughts were on more pleasant topics like the warm reception that French people give to American veterans. He had made numerous visits back to Europe before, but this one was special: the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

They enjoyed the official ceremony at the American Cemetery on June 6, where dignitaries of various nations thanked the veterans. During the ceremony, Hurd received the French Legion of Honor Award, which is the highest honor that the French present to non-citizens.

"When you're in combat, you don't always know what's going on around you or the overall picture. You focus on surviving and defeating the enemy. I wanted to go see the ground where I was, and to retrace my steps.

"One trip back, I stayed with a Frenchman who was in the Free French Service during the war. He showed me where my unit was on the field. Another time, some civilians told us where Germans captured a church and killed all the Americans. He told me he saw that happen, and he took me to the church to see the grave markers."

"The French people are great. They hug us and encourage us. They show us great hospitality and appreciation for what Americans did to liberate them."

On this anniversary trip, he was joined by long-time friend Robert Lott, the Sr. Vice Commander of Post 2076. They have been companions for more than five decades.

"When the 70th anniversary of D-Day came, I told him that I would go with him for the 75th," said Lott, who took many photos of his friend and created a movie to document the trip. "I knew that it would be a thrill to take a man who was over there 75 years ago.

"To me, the essence of the trip was about the people of Normandy and how they love the WWII veterans," he continued. "You can't really understand their showing of love without being there. It's not just those who were there in 1944. The children are taught early who freed them. The children ask the veterans for autographs and pictures."

Hurd was emotionally touched by the VFW and Auxiliary support that he received as the planning for his latest trip unfolded. "I didn't have to pay a cent," he said. "I was—and still am—deeply touched by the fundraising efforts by numerous VFW posts to help cover my travel costs."

William Jacoby's "Around the World By Water"

Like all World War II veterans who served overseas, Coatesville native William Jacoby traveled extensively to reach his assigned service theater and return home. Often excruciatingly slow and dangerous, his travel orders utilized ships, planes, trains and land vehicles.

Inducted in New Cumberland, in March 1943, Jacoby finished training in Utah and Texas, then headed to Tennessee assigned for the 72nd Air Service Squadron. Then he traveled to California to prepare for sea travel.

Most troops were packed onto very primitive, overcrowded ships that bobbed across often stormy seas. Suffering from severe motion sickness, some troops preferred facing the physical challenges of more training and even combat conditions over spending time on ships.

Jacoby's long journey to his assignment in India with the Army Air Force required that he found his sea legs early. He jokes that after reviewing his military travel log, some think he was in the U.S. Navy.

"My war travel included 34 months, most of it by ship, which is why I named my memoirs, 'Around the World by Water.' And I was in the Air Corps!"

His overseas journey began on Aug. 3, 1943 on the

USS Uruguay, which transported him to Australia and India.

The 5,500 U.S. troops on the ship endured very difficult living conditions. Many were desperate for shore leave to escape rough seas, frequent zig-zagging, fear of traveling without Navy escorts, worsening hygiene, sweaty conditions below deck and the constant stench of vomit.

He then changed ships a few times, now part of armed escorted convoys

because enemy submarines were prowling for easy targets like slow ships carrying thousands of troops and supplies.

After some train and airplane travel, Jacoby arrived at his final station in Jorhat, India on October 11, and was given shipping and receiving duties in the Supply Section.

Jacoby recalls several Japanese air raids that pounded the airstrip, once when he was watching a movie at a makeshift outdoor theater. While the film reel was being changed, Japanese bombers sped in and rocked the base leaving deep craters. Fortunately, the movie screen was dark when the attack occurred, so the Japanese pilots randomly dropped their ordinance.

"If that screen had been lit up when the planes came, that might have been the end for us," he said. "You never saw guys scrambling for cover and digging in so fast!"

During another air raid, Jacoby was alone after dark guarding a fighter aircraft parts structure when bombs started falling close by. Not wanting to be injured without anyone around to assist him, he dangerously scooted one-quarter mile across the base to be with other unit members.

"The next morning, when I came back to my post, I saw that a bomb had detonated near the supply area where I was taking cover. There were shrapnel holes in the netting where my cot was, so obviously I was glad that I did not stay there. I kept some shrapnel pieces and the nose cone from the bomb that went off closest to my area."

Jacoby remembers hitching rides to Calcutta to see the Taj Mahal. "Riding on the C-46 was scary because they were having problems with engine fires."

The Japanese surrendered in August of 1945. His own journey home started on November 18, which meant starting the long trek across the world again. This time, though, thoughts of wartime uncertainty were replaced by plans for peacetime happiness.

A few flights after leaving Burma, he boarded the USS Ballou. While homebound, Jacoby recalls memorable events including a bad storm in the Atlantic Ocean that damaged the ship, sailing by Rock of Gibraltar and seeing the Suez Canal.

On New Year's Eve 1945, he arrived on the shores of New York Harbor. He was finally back on home soil.

Jacoby, a past Coatesville Post 287 commander, finished his World War II service as a staff sergeant.

Jacoby was discharged on January 6 at Fort Indiantown Gap. He boarded a train in Harrisburg and stepped off his passenger car in Coatesville, ending his worldwide journey.

Veterans Hurd and Jacoby represent a generation of true warriors and dedicated patriots, who helped defeat oppression and murder carried out by Axis nations. The legacy of their military accomplishments continues to provide freedom for many millions across the world.



Post 287 Past Quartermaster William Jacoby endured extensive travel to reach his World War II duty station.

The VFW Auxiliary ...

Unwavering Support

for Uncommon Heroes



The Department Auxiliary President Says...

Thank You for "Being There" for Veterans

By Sandra Wilder - swpa2004@comcast.net



Fall is here, and soon the snow will be in the air. But don't let that stop you and your Auxiliary from getting out and being active to help our veterans.

Our Auxiliary organization is set up to help our veterans. If it were not for our brave men and women, we would not have the freedoms we have today. So, it is up to us to give back and continue "Working Hard for our Veterans and their Families." We need to be "Serving Our Veterans with Aloha".

As I travel across this great state of Pennsylvania, I see so much beauty in our state and meet the greatest people who make up the VFW and the Auxiliary. My Brothers, Sisters and Comrades, your hospitality has been so wonderful.

The Districts and Post Auxiliaries that my Chief of Staff and I have visited so far have welcomed us in every way. It's truly an honor to be your Department President. And it is truly inspirational to see the high levels of teamwork that allow us to accomplish so much in support of the VFW and its mission.

Veterans Day is a great time to work closely with our posts to conduct activities that remind our citizens how grateful they should be that veterans defended their freedom. This holiday is also a great time to carry out special recruiting events that will bring in new members for the VFW and our Auxiliary.

I hope to see many of you on November 22-24, 2019 at State Commander Wayne Perry's Testimonial in Mars, PA. Occasions like this allow us to celebrate the special relationship that we have with the VFW and its leadership.

I want everyone to remember why we are in this organization: to benefit our veterans. Always keep in mind how much they gave up to protect and preserve our freedom.

Also, we must reach out to serve today's service personnel, who are now becoming our newest generation of combat veterans, as well as their families. These young Americans and their loved ones are experiencing what we in the Auxiliary know all too well—that military service requires sacrifices that others may never experience. Let's be there for them!

Thank a veteran every day.

Please Support the Poppy and National Home Programs

By Rebecca Fox, Chairwoman for Buddy Poppy/National Home - (724) 699-4688



The Buddy Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW for more than 95 Years. We need to continue educating our VFW, Auxiliaries and community about the Buddy Poppy program and how it benefits veterans.

There is a great deal of resourceful information available online at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Poppy displays are a great way to educate the community about our organization and gives you the opportunity to team up with your Post.

Need to order more Poppies? Visit our website www.pavfwaux.org and click on the forms tab.

National Home's commitment is to honor our veterans and active duty military by providing help and hope for their children and families. Contributions

are vital since the campus and its program receive no government funding. Please support the National Home through gifts of 10 cents per member to the Health and Happiness Fund. Donations can be made via the MALTA www.vfwauxiliary.org.

Both the Poppy and National Home programs are very beneficial for our veterans. The Poppy program also provides financial assistance in maintaining State and National Veterans rehabilitation and service programs, and partially supports the VFW National Home for Children.

National home also offers military families not living on the Campus assistance through the Military & Veterans Hotline, 800-313-4200.

Pennsylvania sponsors National Home Cottage #3. All Donations should be sent through Department, not National, with checks earmarked for "Cottage #3."

Thank you!

Spotlighting Our Auxiliary Activity



(Clockwise from top) The Department Auxiliary welcomes National Auxiliary President Peggy Hoke to Pennsylvania. Pictured are District 20 Auxiliary President Guyette Calles, President Hoke, Department Commander Wayne Perry and Department President Sandy Wilder. • Post 5965 Auxiliary participates in a variety of community events including the local Memorial Day Parade. Pictured at right are Auxiliary President Tracy Armentrout, 8-year-old Hannah Herr, who sang the National Anthem, and Post Patriotic Instructor Terry Rohrer. • Department President Sandy Wilder and National President Peggy Hoke lay a wreath at Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery.

Supporting Our Veterans, Our Troops and Their Families

By Janet Albin, Veterans and Family Support Chairwoman - janetalbin@comcast.net



Recently, many of us were asked "What's Your Why?" The common thread among all the responses was a veteran or active duty military member. That is the reason why the VFW Auxiliary is here. We, the family members of veterans and active duty military, support our own veterans as well as each other.

The next few months may be difficult for many veterans and their families. Some because of hardships they face here at home, and others because they are trying to manage to get through the holidays while their loved one is in harm's way. We must remember to be supportive and share information about available resources for veterans, active duty and their families.

VFW programs can assist veterans, active duty military and their families.

These include VFW National Veterans Service and the VFW Veterans and Military Support Program. As Auxiliary members, we support these programs with our fundraising efforts and referrals to those who need benefits.

Remember to support the families of veterans, including military families with loved ones who are overseas. These families must move on without their loved ones, while worrying about their safety and while maintaining a "normal" home front—not an easy task.

These family members may need benefits assistance, financial help or just someone to speak with. VFW Unmet Needs financial grants can be used. Grants are also available to posts and auxiliaries to support activities.

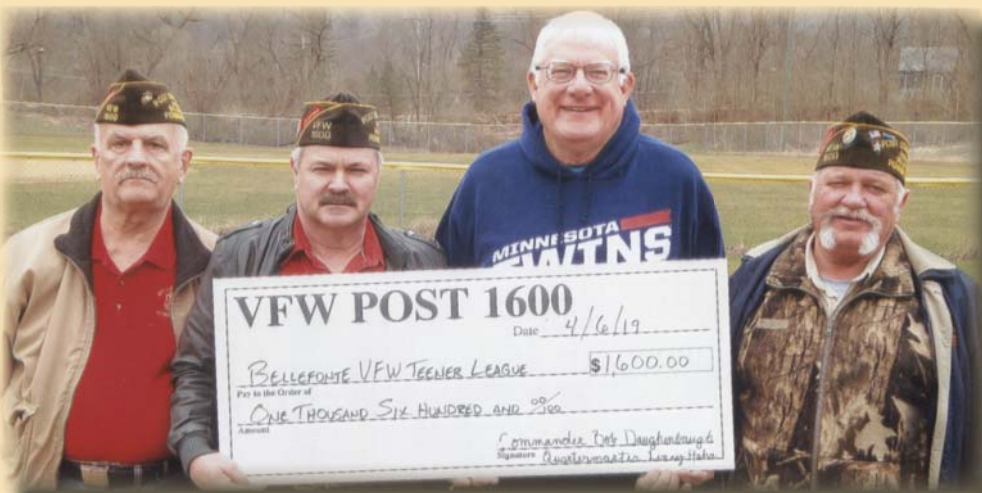
Remember, that the "Why" they do it, is part of the common thread we all share. We are "Working Hard for our Veterans and their Families" by "Serving our Veterans with Aloha".



Focus on Mission Success



Mahoning Valley Post 2076 members gather after conducting a flag and flag pole dedication service at the Cobblestone Hotel in Punxsutawney, an event that also recognized the 205th anniversary of the writing of "The Star Spangled Banner" on Sept. 14, 1814. Pictured are (from left, front row) Commander Jim Pallone, Jr. Vice Commander Duane Miller and Quartermaster/Adjutant Jim Davis; (back) Trustee Geary Smith, Sr. Vice Commander Bob Lott, member John Becker, Trustee Sam Cleveland and member Chuck Pifer.



Bellefonte Post 1600 Past Commander Bill Watson, Quartermaster Lenny Hahn and Adjutant Andy Hillegass present a \$1,600 check to Bellefonte VFW Teener League President Denny Mason.



Jessup Post 5544 presents a donation to local resident Debbie to help her overcome the financial strain caused by her stage 4 colon cancer. Post 5544 held a benefit event to show their full support and best wishes for Deb's full recovery. Pictured are leaders from the Department, District 10 and Post.



VFW Post 7919 Supports Student Veterans

Written by James M. Haitsch, Commander, Post 7919 – Springfield Township, Montgomery County. Commander Haitsch is shown receiving a course completion certificate from Jared Lyon, Founder, SVA National President and CEO.

In August, the Student Veterans of America, in partnership with the VFW, held an educational summit in Seattle, Washington, focusing on education, team building, mentorship, leadership and networking for veterans currently enrolled in colleges and universities.

The summit established an inclusive environment that fostered a sense of comradeship and advocated for student veterans' issues, including government benefits and student housing.

The information covered included interesting facts about student veterans:

- Student veterans are three times more likely to finish a degree if that veteran has a student veteran friend supporting him or her.
- Most student veterans attend school within a 70-mile radius of their home.
- On average, student veterans are more driven and achieve higher grade point averages compared to other students.
- Veterans are one of the most valuable subsets of the student body.
- Student veterans are among the highest educated group in the student body.

Working with the SVA, the VFW needs to be engaged in recruiting student veterans because they represent the current generation of veterans. All posts should take steps to include student veterans in activities.

The SVA and VFW partnership has the energy of purpose and pride that comes from serving our country. That's why Springfield Township Post 7919 established a networking partnership with the SVA Chapter at Bucks County Community College. Post 7919 has been able to provide important informational tips about effectively transitioning military skills into marketable civilian skills. By supporting our college veterans in their academic success and career goals, we have been able to expand the students' networking circle. This will be very important when students near graduation and job searches.

Post 7919 looks forward to working closely with the SVA Chapter at BCCC to help our fellow student veterans, and all veterans, to achieve success.



Munhall Post 6673 Quartermaster Dan Pavasko donates \$1,000 to the H.J. Heinz VAMC in Aspinwall to support the care facility's general fund, which helps provide activities for veterans residing there. Accepting the check is David Difuccia, the VAMC's Program Leader for Voluntary Services.

Focus on Mission Success

PERIODICALS



Coalport Post 7043 presents a donation to the Freedom Riders organization to support its Poker Run motorcycle event. Pictured are (from left, top row) Post Chaplain Pat Johnson, Auxiliary President Donna Peters, Freedom Riders President Lynn Gardini and Post Adjutant Bill Hewitt, joined in the bottom row by Freedom Riders members.



After the passing of Tobyhanna Post 509 Commander David Jolly, VFW representatives made a special presentation of Commander Jolly's All-State Post Commander hat to his wife. Shown from left are District 20 President Guyette Calles, State POW/MIA Chairman Steven Calles, current Post Commander Robert Kerney, Past Post Auxiliary President Bonnie Wallraven, Marrane Jolly with the All-State hat, Past District 20 Commander Ronnie Byrd, National Recruiter/District 18 Commander David Gyger and Post Auxiliary President Donna Kammel.



King of Prussia Post 7878 Commander Andrew Thompson leads members through a Memorial Day Service at the Valley Forge Memorial Gardens.



Posts of all sizes participate in patriotic services throughout the year. Pictured here, West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid partners with local first responders, government officials and other groups to conduct a Patriot's Day ceremony on September 11, in remembrance of the many innocent lives lost during the terrorist attacks in 2001, in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.



York Post 556 presents a special award to World War II veteran Harry Cadwell. Joining U.S. Navy veteran Cadwell are (from left) State Senator Kristen Phillips Hill, Quartermaster Bill Evans, Trustee Mike Jones and Judge Advocate Joe Sinkovitz. State Headquarters salutes Harry for his outstanding service!