



Pennsylvania VFWnews



Vol. 51, No. 1

SSN 0745 4031

August/September 2019

Scan this QR code to find VFW web resources that will keep you informed and ready to engage.

YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

100th State Convention Served as a Celebration on Many Fronts

In the VFW community, mission success is best measured by how well the organization assists, represents and embraces veterans and military families, as well as the impact of the organization's community service programs.

The Department's 100th State Convention in June—when more than 300 post delegates gathered in Erie—served as a lofty celebration of the many VFW mission objectives that were accomplished during the 2018-19 year, including strengthening the VFW's ranks with a 100% plus membership performance.

To help celebrate "a century of service" since the first VFW statewide encampment in 1919, Department officials paid tribute to individual members, local posts, districts and state leaders whose strong dedication helped maintain the VFW's elite status as a service organization.

Using the motto "No One Does More for Veterans" as a challenge and motivation, the most recent program year helped thousands of veterans, less fortunate
Convention ... continued on page 4



After taking the helm, 2019-20 State Commander Wayne D. Perry urges all VFW members to help grow the organization.

Department of PA Scores Big at VFW National Convention



The spotlight shone often on the Pennsylvania Department during the VFW National Convention in mid-July in Orlando, Florida. In addition to the Department receiving All-American accolades under the leadership of 2018-19 State Commander Thomas M. Hanzes, five Pennsylvania posts and districts received All-American honors, in part for their strong membership growth that helped drive the Department to a 100.07% finish—the first

National Awards ... continued on page 10

CONGRATULATIONS, PA DEPT. 2018-19 VFW ALL-AMERICAN PERFORMERS!

DEPARTMENT:

PENNSYLVANIA - STATE COMMANDER THOMAS HANZES

PA VFW POSTS: (CMDR)

VFW POST 464 - OIL CITY - JASON REED

VFW POST 3376 - EPHRATA - DWAYNE MACKENZIE

VFW POST 5958 - TITUSVILLE - JAMES BROWN

VFW POST 7599 - TRANSFER - CLARK EBERHART

VFW POST 8951 - YORK - RICHARD OLVITT

PA VFW DISTRICTS: (CMDR)

VFW DISTRICT 9 - WILLIAM STELLFOX

VFW DISTRICT 18 - DAVID "SPIKE" GYGER

VFW DISTRICT 21 - RICHARD OLVITT

VFW DISTRICT 28 - DONALD CHRISTY

VFW DISTRICT 29 - WILLIAM ROLAND, JR.



(From left) Past National Chief Robert Wallace salutes the Convention delegates for a successful year; All-State Department Membership Captains Commander Clark Eberhart and Quartermaster Roger Irby of Post 7599 pose with Department leaders; and the State's top recruiter, James Brown (Post 5958/45 members), poses with State leadership.

VFW Eagle Award Presented to PAANG SSGT. Christopher Ryan



During the State Convention, VFW leaders and members honored Pennsylvania Air National Guard Staff Sergeant Christopher M. Ryan (right) as the latest recipient of the State VFW Eagle Award.

The VFW Department of PA presents this award twice a year to recognize Commonwealth Guardians for the significant impact they have had on overseas military campaign success.

Staff Sergeant Ryan, a VFW life member and New York City police officer, serves with the 111th Security Forces Squadron, 111th Attack Wing, Horsham Air Guard Station, PA. He was nominated by the PA Adjutant General's Office for his distinguished service during Operations Freedom Sentinel and Inherent Resolve.

State Commander Thomas Hanzes presents the award to SSGT. Ryan, who was accompanied at the event by his unit commander, LTC James Williams.

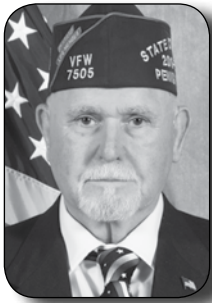
State Safety Award Recipients Honored



The Department handed out its State VFW Public Safety Awards during the Convention. Shown are (from left) State Commander Thomas Hanzes, EMT of the Year Larry Pifer (now retired), a long-time VFW member, sponsored by Post 6231; John Radko Police Officer of the Year Hermitage Chief of Police Paul Eric Jewell, Post 7599; Fire Fighter of the Year Rothsville Volunteer Fire Company Chief Claude Sam Young, Jr. (now retired), of Lititz, Post 3376; and State Safety Chairman Ron Smith. All posts are encouraged to seek award nominees from local safety units.

From the State Commander**It's Full Speed Ahead to Another 100% Plus Year**

Wayne D. Perry - wayper@zoominternet.net



Comrades, I have never been more proud of a group that I am involved with than I am now, my VFW brothers and sisters. Your support of the VFW, its programs and its mission is commendable and inspirational. Your dedication and honor are second to none when it comes to veterans serving veterans, the military and their communities.

When I stood before the convention delegates on June 15 reciting the oath of office as your VFW State Commander, the degree of pride that I felt to take the helm of your organization left me humbled.



State Commander Perry joined by State Sr. Vice Commander Ron Peters (left) and State Jr. Vice Commander Nathaniel Smith.

We have much to celebrate, including having the best membership effort during the 2018-19 year than we've had in quite some time. I am confident that we will once again finish our VFW year with more members than when we started.

We have retained much of the same membership contest program as State Commander Thomas Hanzes ran, with a few small tweaks to help make it possible for even more posts and districts to earn "All-State" honors. You've proven that it can be done.

We've launched a membership plan that has terrific recruiting and retention incentives for individuals, posts and districts. Trust me, when we plan these contests, we gear the contests to be achievable by posts of all sizes. We want all VFW units to feel the pride of success in carrying out our mission.

ALL POSTS can qualify for these contest rewards with some time, effort and—most importantly—with dedication to ensure that the VFW will keep moving forward strong.

VFW dedication and honor brings thousands of stories to life telling how your hard work shows everyone that we deserve the motto, "No One Does More than the VFW." This statement is a real fact that we can proudly proclaim. These life-enhancing VFW impact stories only happen because of individual VFW members, local posts, and district and Department volunteers who still serve their nation through the VFW.

I am so proud to call myself a VFW member. I know many of you are, too. To those who don't value their membership as more than a place to get a cheaper drink or meal, I ask you to get involved in your post even in a small way. Get to know more members, benefit from the camaraderie and experience the potential for how the VFW improves whole communities.

We all know what dedication means when it comes to making the world a better place to live. I urge you to give your time and energy to make our VFW stronger in numbers and service activities.

We all know what it means to conduct ourselves with honor. Without honor, all efforts are misguided and often meaningless. I plead with all members to conduct yourselves with honor by giving your best service to our organization. Treat everyone with respect and dignity.

I recently returned from the National Convention, where our Department's many VFW victories were in the spotlight. I am so proud to be associated with you all. Together, we have impacted many lives for the better, which is what the VFW is all about.

So, anchors away, mates! Let's move full speed ahead on a steady course to continue working our VFW mission to improve life for our veterans, our troops and our communities.

Thank you for your continued service.



Activities like this project, featuring West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid officials presenting scholarships to local high school students, help VFW posts to demonstrate their positive impact on communities.

D-Day Vet Hurd Returns to Normandy 75 Years Later

At the age of 94, World War II veteran Walter Hurd—a life member of Punxsutawney VFW Post 2076—recently traveled to the Normandy coast of France for the second time in his life, only this time he arrived ready to celebrate an important anniversary instead of parachuting into St. Mere Eglise with his comrades from the 82nd Airborne Division. Joined by his lifelong friend and fellow Post 2076 officer Robert Lott—and very grateful to VFW posts for providing the support needed to make the trip possible—Wally enjoyed revisiting France under much different terms to the warm reception he received from the French.



Wally is shown above receiving a French Legion of Honor Award from the president of the La Manche District. He proudly wears the medal as well as his VFW hat and jacket.

OIF Marine Vet Helps Change the VFW's Image

Submitted by Michael P. Mauer

Marine Jessica Marie Adams, a life member of East McKeesport Veterans of Foreign Wars 'Hilltoppers' Post 8430, has been selected as Senior Vice Commander of VFW District 29, Department of Pennsylvania.

She is second in command of the approximately three dozen active VFW posts in Allegheny County.

Adams said her main effort while in office will be to assist new VFW District 29 Commander John Drake, and to help try to change the perception of the 120-year-old VFW from a men's club to a service organization open to all combat veterans.

"I want to change the way the VFW is viewed in the younger and women veterans' eyes," she said. "I also want to help posts in District 29 to work together."

The Iraq War veteran added that teaching youth and former service members about the VFW will achieve this goal.

"I want to educate children on the sacrifices that have been made for freedom we enjoy today, and make sure our local heroes are always remembered," she said. "And I'd like to get information out about resources that help."

Adams enlisted in the United States Marine Corps after graduating high school, and did four years of active duty. She was recalled after her initial discharge during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and served as a motor vehicle operator.

During the ground offensive in Iraq, Adams' unit—the 1st and 2nd Platoon Truck Company of the 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division—was tasked with helping supply fast-moving combat units with ammunition, food, fuel and water. Traveling along streets and highways, the Marines were often attacked by Iraqi and insurgent forces, and had to deal with mines and improvised explosive devices.

"I wanted to join the toughest branch," said Adams of her duty in Iraq. "I wanted to prove to myself that I could be part of the few and the proud, and be part of something bigger than myself."

She completed her military service as a sergeant in 2009. Among the awards and decorations she earned are the Presidential Unit Citation, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War On Terrorism Service Medal and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal.

The camaraderie and fellowship she experienced during her time as a Marine now motivates her to help veterans and their families through the VFW.

"Being part of the VFW is like being part of something big again," the Marine said. "It's good being around people who



New District 29 Senior Vice Commander Jessica Adams, with fiancé VFW Post 8430 Quartermaster Richard R. King.

have been through what you experienced."

According to Adams, many younger veterans aren't aware that the VFW's core mission is to provide support to veterans in need. She said her participation in the VFW helped her adjust more easily to civilian life, as well as get her through difficult times.

"It is all about you helping your brothers and sisters," she said. "And letting your brothers and sisters help you."

"I want to help more posts adopt a welcoming, family atmosphere," said Adams. "A lot of younger and female veterans have families. Making posts more family friendly will help bring in more members, and close some of the age gap we're experiencing as well."

(Michael P. Mauer is the Public Affairs Officer for VFW District 29.)



AT YOUR SERVICE: MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS BENEFITS ASSISTANCE



VA MISSION Act: Urgent Care to Expand Choice

Urgent care is one of the new benefits offered as part of the VA MISSION Act that gives veterans greater choice in their health care. The benefit is offered in addition to the opportunity to receive care from a VA provider, as the VA also offers same-day services. The VA is working to ensure veterans understand how to use the new urgent care benefit as part of its comprehensive benefits.

1. What is urgent care? Urgent care is a type of walk-in health care for situations where you need help but don't have an emergency, such as colds, ear infections, minor injuries, pink eye, skin infections and strep throat.

2. There are two types of urgent care network locations: Retail and Urgent.

- Retail locations such as CVS or Walgreens are places where you can get care for minor ailments like a sore throat or earache.

- Urgent locations provide more comprehensive walk-in care for illnesses or injuries that are not life-threatening, like splinting, casting, lacerations, or wound treatment. Both retail and urgent locations are staffed with healthcare professionals who are licensed and credentialed.

3. Are there urgent care providers near me? The VA launched the urgent care benefit on June 6, 2019, and we are working to expand our network of urgent care providers, adding more

every week. Urgent care providers are vetted and must meet strict standards of care and other requirements before they are added to the VA's network. To find a location, use the VA facility locator at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>. Select the link entitled "Find VA approved urgent care locations and pharmacies near you."

4. Do I get prescription medication with this benefit? You can get up to a 14-day supply of prescription medication through the VA, a VA-contracted pharmacy, or a non-contracted pharmacy. If you choose to fill an urgent care prescription at a non-contracted pharmacy, you will be required to pay for the prescription when you pick it up and then file a claim for reimbursement at your local VA medical facility. Prescription medication for longer than a 14-day supply must be filled by a VA pharmacy.

5. Do I have to make copayments for urgent care? Copayments for urgent care depend on your assigned priority group and the number of times you visit any urgent care provider in a calendar year. Urgent care copayments are not charged when you receive care from an urgent care provider, but are billed separately by VA.

For additional information about the VA MISSION Act, visit <https://missionact.va.gov/>

VA Benefit News & Other Important Health Updates

This information is provided by the PA VFW Veterans Service Officer program. For an appointment or to find the nearest VFW Service Officer, call State Headquarters at (717) 234-7927 and ask to speak with Linda. State HQ thanks the State for Act 66 Service Officer Outreach Grant funds to bring claims assistance closer to veterans in all parts of the state.

The VFW's National Veterans Service training team has prepared the following fact sheet with some items on what Service Officers and veterans should know about **Blue Water Navy claims** in light of the recent passage of PL 116-23.

Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019: What does it change?

With the enactment of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Veterans Act of 2019, we have been receiving many inquiries about how VA plans to adjudicate claims under the new law. Here's what we know so far and what we are waiting on the VA to determine.

In short, DO NOT wait until 2020 to file claims. Clients should be informed that it may take several months for the VA to take further action.

What is the same? Presumptives: the law did not add any new presumptive conditions. Only the 14 conditions listed in 38 CFR 3.309(e) are presumptively service connected.

Veterans still need to show both presumptive service, and a presumptive condition, in order to be awarded compensation on a presumptive basis.

If veterans were exposed to herbicides but have a condition that is not on the presumptive list, they can still become service connected, but must provide a nexus between the condition and service. The Institute of Medicine studies may help, but will not prove a claim for service connection.

If a veteran has a condition on the presumptive list but not presumptive exposure to herbicides, they will have to prove their exposure. This includes perimeter duty on Thai Air Force Bases during the Vietnam War. DoD maintains a list of locations where herbicides were used outside of the U.S., which will be a good starting point for such claims.

Veterans who were previously covered by herbicide presumptives are still covered (served "boots on ground" in Vietnam, in the inland waterways "brown water" of Vietnam, in the Korean DMZ during the Vietnam War on certain dates, and on certain C-123 aircraft after Vietnam).

The VA does not recognize service medals as proof of service in Vietnamese waters.

What is different? Presumptive service locations and times: Public Law 116-23 establishes that veterans who served in a unit that operated in or near the Korean DMZ during the Vietnam War are considered to have been exposed to herbicides if their service on the DMZ was between September 1, 1967-August 31, 1971.

The veterans are eligible for presumptive service connection (and their survivors are eligible for DIC based on cause of death) for the 14 conditions listed in 38 CFR 3.309(e).

Presumptive exposure to herbicides was extended to veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam, within the 12 mile territorial sea of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Public Law 116-23 notes that these locations will be determined from all points no more than 12 nautical miles seaward of a baseline starting on the southwestern demarcation of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia and intersecting the points listed at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/>

house-bill/299/text.

If it is unsure whether a veteran's service qualifies, claims should be filed to allow the VA to make the determination.

Spina bifida benefits expansion: Spina bifida benefits (including compensation, health care, and in some cases, vocational rehabilitation) are now available to biological children of veterans who served in Thailand during the Vietnam War, and were born after the veteran mother's or father's service in Thailand.

Effective dates: If a veteran whose service is now considered presumptively exposed to herbicides based on this new law, and if the veteran or survivor previously filed a claim for benefits after September 25, 1985 as a result of the exposure and was denied because of no incurrence in service/presumptive service, the effective date of compensation should be from the date of the original claim.

This effective date rule is like *Nehmer*, except *Nehmer* covers veterans (and survivors) whose claims were denied because their medical condition was not previously recognized as herbicide related, and was later added to the presumptive list in 38 CFR 3.309(e). The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 acts like *Nehmer* for veterans whose claims were denied due to a lack of an in service event.

If a veteran is already service-connected for an herbicide related condition, nothing changes. Attention should be paid to new or secondary conditions.

Veterans with an herbicide-related condition who have not yet filed for compensation should file a VA Form 21-526EZ now even though claims may not be acted on by the VA until January 2020.

Veterans with an herbicide-related condition for which they were previously denied compensation due to no incurrence in service, but who are now covered under Public Law 116-23, should file a VA Form 20-9995 supplemental claim, noting the change in law as the new and relevant evidence.

If a veteran's case meets criteria for their claim to be expedited, a "flash" should be requested using the established process.

Claims for Navy veterans who had "boots on ground" in Vietnam should clearly state that fact to VA, otherwise their claim may be stayed along with the other Blue Water Navy cases.

If veterans were not already eligible for VA Health Care, if they meet the new criteria under Public Law 116-23 for herbicide exposure, filing a claim should result in Priority Group 6 health care.

Additional information exists relating survivors and dependents claims.

The VA has gathered data from the National Archives and the Department of the Navy on ship logs and is developing a system to verify service in Vietnamese waters, using the definition in Public Law 116-23. If the veteran already has records showing service in the 12 nautical mile area, these records should be submitted with the claim.

Veterans and survivors will be receiving notification letters from the VA that they may be eligible under the new law.

Do You Need Help With Veterans Benefits?

Full-time, VA-accredited VFW State Service Officers are ready to answer your benefit questions. These phone numbers connect you with your nearest Service Officer. Ask for outreach sites and hours.

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.



(ISSN 0745 4031) OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DEPT. OF PENNSYLVANIA VFW - Act of March 1879

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

Periodicals postage paid @ Harrisburg PA Post Office. Four issues printed annually dated August/September, November/December, March/April and May/June
Dept. of PA Veterans of Foreign Wars, 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17109-5943
(717) 234-7927/Fax: (717) 234-1955 - www.vfwpahq.org - Facebook: "VFW Dept. of PA"

Editors: State Commander Wayne D. Perry & State Adjutant John B. Getz, Jr.
Produced by Department Communications/Public Affairs Director David A. Sandman

\$0.85 cents of membership dues is for a subscription to *Pennsylvania VFW News*.

Postmaster: Send address change to PENNSYLVANIA VFW NEWS
Circulation Dept., (VFW Magazine), 406 WEST 34TH ST.
KANSAS CITY, MO 64111-7503

State Convention ... from 1

persons, youth, senior citizens, service members, student veterans, persons facing life-threatening illnesses and many others to elevate their standing in life. Community service reports and program statistics collected by State Headquarters clearly indicate that the past year was one of the best in the 25 years.

Convention delegates congratulated State Commander Thomas Hanzes for guiding the Department to an outstanding year. Commander Hanzes, displaying the humility that he showed throughout his one-year term, credited members for working hard to make the VFW's growth in members and programs possible.

that may not have qualified for top awards, but which brought in new members and implemented our programs. Every new and reinstated member counts as we rebuild our membership. Every service program that we run shows veterans and the public that the VFW is the most effective combat veterans' organization in the world."

Navy veteran Wayne D. Perry of Post 7505 received unanimous support during his election process as the Department's top officer for 2019-20.

Comrade Perry urged VFW posts to continue expanding their outreach, new member mentoring and support of current members as a platform to repeat last year's 100% membership success.

"If we tell veterans about all the great

"To show younger veterans that the VFW is something they want to be a part of, posts must promote the VFW's core values... Their generation wants to be a part of mission-oriented groups... so knowing about your culture and activities will help them see beyond the 'smoky bar' stigma."

- Ann Rhoades, International Business Executive & Corporate Speaker



Commander and Post 7293 member retired Navy Master Chief veteran Nathaniel Smith, who was unanimously elected as State Jr. Vice Commander of the second-largest VFW Department in the nation.

Convention delegates welcomed Past National Commander Robert Wallace to the Commonwealth. Comrade Wallace recently retired as a national assistant adjutant general and manager of the VFW's advocacy office in Washington.

"I hope you are all connected to our VFW Action Corps, which keeps members current on critical legislative issues and through "calls to action" that make contacting your Congress members easy," stated Wallace. "We have 300,000 members on the system. It's vital that we let Congress know where the VFW stands on issues that impact veterans and our military."

He urged members who do not receive the Action Corps legislative updates to visit www.vfw.org and sign up in the "Advocacy" section.

He referred to the U.S. Marine Corps motto of "never leave a Marine behind" to describe the relevance of the VFW today.

"Pennsylvania combat veterans from all periods, their families, the families of those still listed as MIA and our troops rely on the VFW to not leave them behind," added Wallace, a Marine Vietnam War veteran. "Thank you for making the VFW the best service organization ever created."

Post leaders responded enthusiastically to a marketing presentation titled, "VFW: Built on Values," led by international businesswoman Ann Rhoades, whose successful career has included launching positive corporate cultures with JetBlue, Southwest Airlines and other companies to generate growth and brand loyalty.

Rhoades delivered a presentation to better position the VFW as an organization of value to younger veterans, which will help build membership among the newest generation of combat-zone veterans.

"To show younger veterans that the VFW is something they want to be a part of, posts must promote the VFW's core values like patriotism, serving others, caring for veterans and supporting communities," said Rhoades, suggesting that posts sponsor

Convention ... see next page



"Pennsylvania combat veterans from all periods, their families, the families of those still listed as MIA and our troops rely on the VFW to not leave them behind. Thank you for making the VFW the best service organization ever created in the world."

- Robert Wallace, Past National Chief and Current Assistant Adjutant General

"We were able to accomplish remarkable success in many areas because of the dedication of VFW leaders, posts and districts," said the Vietnam War veteran. "It took a team effort to surpass 100% in membership and to keep our VFW programs running strong as we served veterans, military personnel and communities.

"I also thank those posts and districts

things that the VFW does, they will want to join and support us. Then, we need to make all members feel welcome, respected and important so they will want to stay in the VFW," commented Commander Perry.

State Commander Perry's leadership team includes Post 212 member Army veteran Ronald J. Peters as State Sr. Vice



Many posts received certificates of recognition for their strong support of the VFW's National Military and Veterans Service program, which provides emergency financial assistance to veterans and military families.



Delegates closely follow reports given by program chairpersons.



Post officials watch the nomination of officers.



At right, Past State Commander and National Surgeon Ruth Fairchild honors deceased members in her keynote address during the Memorial Service. Assistant Sgt.-at-Arms Henry Mannella performs the field cross ceremony.



Scout Peter Livingood, sponsored by Post 265, outlines the activities that earned him the Department's first-place Scout award.



Incoming State Commander Wayne Perry and incoming State Sr. Vice Commander Ron Peters present Thomas Hanzes with a gift of appreciation for his highly successful year as State Commander.



Retired Chairman of the PA Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Robert Robbins, a Vietnam War veteran and VFW life member, accepts a PA VFW Eagle Award.

State Commander Perry to be Guest of Honor at Testimonial, Nov. 22-23

"Well Blow me down!" Department Commander Wayne "Popeye" Perry's Testimonial weekend is almost upon us. Join us as we honor our Department Commander on Friday, Nov. 22 and Saturday, Nov. 23 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh Cranberry, 910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA.

Friday night will feature a taste of the Kentucky Derby at our buffet. Ladies, grab your hats and fascinators. Gentlemen, dust off that fedora or bowler hat and couple it with your bold striped or busy plaid slacks, bright pastel shirt, or go classic. Best dressed man and woman will win a prize.

Saturday evening will include a cash bar, followed by a sit-down dinner. Dress will be formal, suit and tie.

Room reservations can be made by contacting the Doubletree Hotel directly. The room rate for the Testimonial Weekend is \$114 plus tax per night. Please reference "VFW Commander's Testimonial" to receive the special rate. Reservation forms will be mailed and also be available on the VFW and Auxiliary websites. Deadline for room reservations is Oct. 30, 2019.

Please show your support for our Commander by placing an ad in the Testimonial Ad Book. The form will be mailed and available on the State VFW and Auxiliary websites. Deadline for ads is October 20, 2019.

PA Department Mourns Passing of Past State Cmdr. John Brenner



John A. Brenner, a VFW Legacy Life member of Post 2493 in Mount Wolf, who served the Department in many leadership capacities including as an "All American" State Commander in 2004-05, passed away in July. He also served as state adjutant for several years.

Comrade Brenner was most recently installed to a State VFW leadership position in June when he was appointed by State Commander Wayne Perry as parliamentarian.

John joined the VFW in 1966, after returning from Vietnam. He served as an Army radio teletype operator from 1965-1967. His last duty assignment was with the HHC of the 1st Battalion, 81st in the 1st Armored Division. He received the Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

Comrade Brenner held many other Department-level positions including Chairman of VFW Teener Baseball, Delinquent Membership Committee, Loyalty Day Committee and Life Membership initiative. He enjoyed sharing his VFW leadership experience with the

organization's officers during training sessions to ensure future VFW growth and program successes.

On the District level—at which he served as a District commander who achieved "All American" status—he served as *Voice of Democracy* chairman, *Patriot's Pen* chairman and the District 21 VFW Walk for Diabetes chairman. He has also served as chairman for the District Buddy Poppy, Legislative and Community Activities committees. He was very proud that during his year as District 21 Membership chairman his District finished the program year over 100% in membership.

John held many of the same positions at the Post level including Commander. He stayed active in many Post initiatives throughout the rest of his life. He supported his Post's change to become a smoke-free establishment.

During his year as State VFW Commander, John also served as president of the Pennsylvania War Veterans Council, a statewide advocacy group. He then served as a multi-term chairman of the State Veterans Commission, a board consisting of veterans, military officers, government officials and employees of the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Comrade Brenner, the VFW salutes you for your service. You can rest in peace knowing that the VFW will continue your legacy of fighting for veterans' interests.



Pictured after the Installation of Officers at the State Convention are members of the Department's Council of Administration (left) consisting of Line Officers and District Commanders; and State Sergeants-at-Arms, Membership Recruiters and Program Chairpersons (right).

Convention Coverage ... from 4

events like charity runs and events benefiting public safety units. "Their generation wants to be a part of mission-oriented groups that effect positive change, so knowing about your culture and activities helps them see beyond the 'smoky bar' stigma."

"Let them know that the VFW is built around a caring culture. Show them how you are working to be a positive force."

Promoting the VFW's values and how those values impact lives should start at the post facility. "Set up an area inside your post entrance that uses wall displays to show your mission in motion," she suggested. "Visually show your members and eligible members how your VFW post puts your values into motion to touch lives."

Post leaders were advised to prepare themselves to speak about the VFW's values and the organization's programs to enhance veterans' lives to foster relationships with those still in the military.

The State VFW Eagle Award is a tool that the Department uses to support and generate interest in membership among younger veterans. PA Air National Guard Staff Sergeant Christopher Ryan received the award during the convention and noted

that receiving the accolade was one of the highlights of his life.

"I can't begin to explain how grateful and truly humbled I am to receive this award," said Ryan, who served in the Middle East to support military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. "I felt honored to share such a memorable VFW Convention experience with all the members from all service eras. I am also proud to call myself a VFW life member."

SSGT. Ryan was commended for his military service to the nation, for serving as a New York City police officer and for his support of the VFW as a life member. Many delegates went out of their way to share VFW camaraderie with him.

Like Ryan's observations, delegates agreed that the convention generated high levels of camaraderie and a re-dedication by leaders to the VFW's service projects.

Driven by the many VFW success stories reported, officers returned to their home posts and districts proud of the VFW's continued leadership in the veterans community and ready to repeat the organization's mission victories again during the 2019-20 year.

General Orders No. 1



1. Per Section 213 of the National Bylaws, Posts that have not submitted a properly completed Post Election Report by June 1 are in arrears and shall be deprived of all representation in District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustments of such deficiencies. Posts that have registered delegates for the Department and National Conventions will not receive credentials until the Post has satisfied their arrearage.

2. Attention is directed to the provision of Section 222 (d) of the National Bylaws, "Each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee." Post Quartermasters are encouraged to register their delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS). Posts failing to comply with this provision will be considered delinquent and in arrears.

3. The following officers having been properly elected or appointed in conjunction with the 100th Annual Convention on June 15, 2019, will be recognized and respected in accordance with the positions they occupy:

State Commander Wayne D. Perry, VFW Post 7505 - wayper@zoominternet.net
 State Senior Vice Commander Ronald J. Peters, VFW Post 212 - acavrp@hotmail.com
 State Junior Vice Commander Nathaniel Smith, VFW Post 7293 - btcmet9955@hotmail.com
 State Adjutant John B. Getz, Jr., VFW Post 3376 - adjutant@vfwpahq.org
 State Chief of Staff Cecil K. Dennis, VFW Post 5958 - cecil_dennis@hotmail.com
 Immediate Past State Commander Thomas M. Hanzes, Post 7599 - thomashanzes@yahoo.com
 State Judge Advocate Frank J. McGovern, VFW Post 3460 - frankjmcgovern@msn.com
 State Surgeon Nelson E. Lowes, Sr., VFW Post 6743 - nelsonlowes@yahoo.com
 State Chaplain Peter R. Hook VFW Post 6393 - peterhook@verizon.net
 State Inspector Michael G. McLane, VFW Post 7069 - mgm128@comcast.net
 State Parliamentarian Allen Q. Jones, VFW Post 21 - anjo@zoominternet.net
 National Council Member Robert C. Eiler, VFW Post 7842 - golddust2@peoplepc.com

General Orders No. 1 ————— **see page 10**

Focus on Mission Success



World War II veteran George Mixell, 90, earned the Bronze Star for Valor for singlehandedly getting seven Japanese snipers to surrender in New Guinea. Carlisle Post 477 wanted to express their gratitude for Mixell's bravery. Post Commander Rick Olson is shown presenting the hero with a Bronze Star ball cap, which Olson reports Mixell received the hat "like we gave him a Cadillac." *Thanks for your service, George!*

National Certified Recruiter Dave Gyger (left) and past District 20 Commander Ronnie Byrd speak to a few National Guard soldiers about the benefits of VFW membership. The PA VFW was an exhibitor during a NASCAR Cup Series event at Pocono Raceway. When buying tickets online for Pocono Raceway events, VFW supporters should use the code "PAVFW" to direct a portion of their purchases to the VFW.



Vandergriff Post 566 Commander Carl Trusiak (left) and Auxiliary President Ernie Eck present Joseph Belles, Chase McDermont and Mia Ament each with \$500 to help them compete in the Jr. Gold Bowling National Tournament being held in Michigan. The Post held a bingo event to raise the funds.



Springfield Township Post 7919 presents its First Responders Awards during the Township Memorial Day Parade, which ends in the town's Veterans Park. Pictured is the Post Policemen of the Year award recipient Michael P. Pitkow, flanked by Commissioner Michael Waxman (left) and Post Commander Robin Liberty.



Selinsgrove Post 6631 Commander Doug Hammett and Quartermaster Harold Aucker present a \$1,000 donation to leaders of the Shikellamy High School JROTC. This donation is one of many that the Post makes to support projects in the community.



Leetsdale Post 3372 holds a flag retirement ceremony with the help of Boy Scout Troop 243 and the Sewickley community. The ceremony was held in conjunction with a Memorial Service. Three youth played taps from locations around a war memorial. Participants help place the flags into the fire.

Focus on Mission Success



(Left photo) West Mifflin Post 914 life member and World War II veteran Glenn E. Kempf, seated, is honored during a 75th D-Day Anniversary event on June 6 at Soldiers and Sailors Hall and Museum in Pittsburgh. He is shown with family members Theresa Urasek, Joanne Majernik and John Majernik. (Right photo) Proudly wearing his Legion of Honor medal, World War II veteran Henry Parham, stands with U.S. Rep. Conor Lamb. Parham served with the 320th Anti-Aircraft Barrage Balloon Battalion, the only African American combat unit on Omaha Beach on D-Day.

On the 75th anniversary of the invasion of France on D-Day, Linesville Post 7842 and its Auxiliary placed a wreath at the Post Home Memorial honoring those who served or paid the ultimate sacrifice. Post Commander Ed O'Malley and Auxiliary President Laura Cornell presided.



At left, Allegheny Co. District 9 Council Representative Robert J. Macey, West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid Chaplain Eugene Staudt and State House District 38 Representative William C. Kortz, II, listen as State District 35 Representative Austin A. Davis addresses the audience during the May 25 Remembrance Ceremony at Mitchell Paige Memorial Park. Post 914 participates in many community events. (Photo By Juanita Dillie)

Post 7842 in Linesville, being selected as a pilot site in the new VA Telehealth Program, held a training session which included veterans from both the VFW and American Legion. The VA expects this program to be fully functional by 2020. Pictured are Post Adjutant Ray Anedel and Deborah Lafer Scher, Executive Advisor to VA Secretary Wilkie.

Past National Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy visits West Springfield Post 4965 to install its officers, including Commander Dave Griffiths.



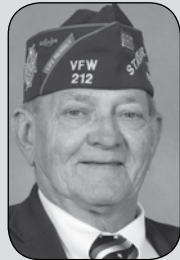
Upper Darby Post 979 conducts its Memorial Day ceremonies, which include a wreath laying ceremony at the graves of Post namesakes Joseph D. Archer and William R. Epler, Jr. The activities included patriotic music provided by the Archer-Epler Musketeers, the Post Drum & Bugle Corps, which started the program by providing music at the Cardington-Stonehurst Fire Station War Memorial before marching over to the Post.

Past State Commander and guest speaker Glenn Umberger (center) poses with local VFW leaders after the Connellsville Memorial Day Program. He is shown with (from left) PSC Allen Q. Jones, Post 21 Commander Glen Siple, Post 21 member Gerald Browell and District 23 Commander Tom McFadden.



Keep Our PA VFW Momentum Marching Forward

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



Comrades, first I would like to thank you for your support and faith in me shown when you elected me to be your Department of Pennsylvania VFW Senior Vice-Commander. I am honored and humbled to represent our Department.

Congratulations on a job well done last year! There are some who said we could not accomplish the many goals we set—including surpassing 100% in membership—but your hard work proved them wrong!

How wonderful does it feel to be able to report that we finished the 2018-19 year with more members than we started the year? It will feel even better next July if we can boast that we accomplished this challenging, but critical, membership objective again.

As we look to the year ahead, let's develop a plan to not only maintain our membership momentum, but to increase the rate at which we rebuild our Department's growth. Having another outstanding retention and recruiting effort will be the key to reaching our top priority of strengthening the VFW.

Let's get ahead of the pace that we

need to beat our 100.7% membership total last year, right from the start. Please put your membership plan into action immediately to support Commander Perry and our entire Department. Plan your work, then work your plan—hard!

On many of my visits to recruiting events, posts and districts, one of the common issues that I am frequently confronted with is acceptance of all members in their VFW unit. I can guarantee you that veterans who don't feel welcomed at their post, and who are not asked to be a part of the team, will leave and possibly never return.

How can we create a lasting legacy of success in our organization if we have people feeling that their presence is not wanted? Let's examine ourselves and our posts, then create an atmosphere of inclusiveness. Let's reach out to new members, then find ways to get them engaged to mentor and embrace them.

Comrades, I am excited and passionate about the VFW's future. I look forward to meeting with as many of you as possible. Let's believe in who we are and what the VFW does best: serve, assist, encourage and represent.

Let's get out and talk to fellow comrades about our how our great VFW improves many lives every day. Tell our proud story loud and often.



Facts and Figures

Run a Tight Ship and Set a Course to Success

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



Comrades, here we are at the start of a new year, so we need to make sure that we follow the new Bylaws and Manual of Procedure right from the beginning. Please, frequently refer to this important guide throughout the year to walk you through the proper ways of handling post matters.

Our Department once again had an impressive contingent at the National Convention in Orlando last month. Among the information we learned are changes to the Bylaws. Each year, the printed version is made available sometime during September, so when copies are available, make sure to get a copy to stay current with our rules.

We still need to emphasize that the job of post trustees is very important to the health of post finances. Too often, problems arise with post funds because the trustees and officers were not watching the books close enough. Trustees should invest the time needed to review all

accounts and to ask questions when they see something that does not look right.

District officials, make sure that you go over the books of the quartermaster, adjutant and canteen manager. Quartermasters, please help the trustees understand the procedure of the audit report because they are the ones who have to sign off on the accuracy of the report.

The VFW has a very effective system of rules, regulations, and checks and balances, so running a tight ship requires following our established guidelines.

We just came off an exceptional membership and program year. Congratulations, members and officers, for helping to tell the VFW's impressive story of how we help them live better. The more we get our mission story out there, the more receptive veterans will be to joining and then staying on board.

Let's keep this momentum going. You made our success happen last year, and only you can make it happen again. Be VFW Strong once again!

Thank you for all you do for our veterans, and remember, that every day is Veterans Day.

Membership Moment

Camaraderie and Caring Keys to Recruiting and Retention

There were several instrumental factors that drove the Department's membership growth success during the 2018-19 year, when for the first time in the past 17 years, the Pennsylvania VFW's strength grew over the previous year's member total.

While outreach expansion and greater dedication to membership undoubtedly fueled some of the growth, more intangible areas—such as growing camaraderie with and concern for other veterans—also enabled many posts to keep current members, resign previous members and attract new members.

In service organizations, relationship building is vital to creating and maintaining connections that strengthen membership.

CAMARADERIE:

When their military service ends, many veterans search for the camaraderie they enjoyed in the Armed Forces. They also look for a team-oriented way to fulfill a mission that positively impacts others. In order to show these veterans why the VFW is a perfect fit for them, post leaders and members must be ready to demonstrate why the VFW proudly claims, *"No One Does More for Veterans."*

Camaraderie begins the first time you meet veterans and is further nurtured when he or she comes to their first post meeting. Go the extra mile to welcome a veteran, introduce that person to others, allow them to share their military story and ask the veteran what they hope to find in the VFW.

Assign an experienced VFW leader to care for and mentor them. Invite them to attend VFW activities and encourage them to bring their families. This growing involvement will help them develop friendships and respect for the VFW.

Once they understand VFW programs, invite them to serve on a work group or in one of the lesser demanding leadership roles. Posts should avoid putting too much responsibility on new members.

CONCERN FOR OTHER VETERANS:

VFW posts should ensure that all members—regardless of their age and

number of years in the VFW—are treated with compassion and one-on-one support. If your post wants to be a "VFW family," then the membership must take care of each other, again, just as a battle buddy "has the back" of his or her buddy.

Sharing a genuine concern for members develops a stronger VFW post that is ready to assist members when they encounter difficult times. If a member has not been heard from for a while, post members should call or visit the member. Offer to help with yard work and stop by to deliver a few meals. If they experience financial strain, use your post relief fund to pay their dues. In general, just "be there."

When veterans know that you care about them, and they enjoy spending time with post members, they will experience what many members already know: the VFW is a family of veterans who take care of each other, who support military families

and who serve their nation through the organization.

Using these steps will help new members become part of a meaningful team that is dedicated to serving others. The pride and satisfaction they feel will create a desire to continue supporting the VFW as a place of warm camaraderie and rewarding work.

The VFW's story is all about creating a caring community of veterans who take pride in their military service and who still make a difference by working together through the VFW. Each post should have plenty of examples to share with eligible members about how it generates VFW mission successes. Sharing these stories at post meetings and recruiting events will show current and eligible members that they will benefit from their VFW experience.

When planning and executing your post membership program, remember that the VFW is all about relationships among people who share a common bond, who enjoy each other's company and who build the future chapter of the VFW.



2019-20 Membership Contest Early Bird Contests

All posts recently received a copy of the 2019-20 Membership Contest manual. On pages 7-8, there is a checklist to help posts track their progress in attaining "All State Honors." Using this feature will help posts to satisfy all the required "All-State" steps.

There are numerous post and individual member recruiting contests with deadlines beginning on September 30, and then on the last day of October, November and December. Contests run throughout the 2019-20 program year, however, the prizes or drawing opportunities are weighted heavier in the contests with the earliest deadlines.

The Membership Contest Program can be viewed on the Department's website, www.vfwpahq.org, in the Post/District Info section under "Post Info." The National VFW Membership Program book is posted next to the Department Contest link.

2018-19 Dept. of PA VFW Award Winners

MEMBERSHIP CONTESTS

CAPTAINS ALL-STATE TEAM:

Commander Clark Eberhart - Reynolds Post 7599, Transfer Post Quartermaster Roger Irby - Reynolds Post 7599

COMMANDER'S PLAQUE (HIGHEST INCREASE AMONG POSTS): Post 8951- Commander Richard Olvitt, Quartermaster Lloyd Greenwood

ROBERT MUSSER MEMORIAL PLAQUE (GREATEST POST PERCENTAGE INCREASE BY APRIL 30): 126.16% - Post 1620 - Commander Henk Hymans, Quartermaster Ricky Snyder

VAN ZANDT AWARD (MOST NEW/REINSTATED POST MEMBERS AS % OF MEMBERSHIP): 23 members (20.54%) - Post 914 - Commander Jake Bradich, Quartermaster Gary Ruston

JOE SALVO AWARD (INDIVIDUAL MEMBER SIGNING UP THE MOST NEW/REINSTATED MEMBERS OVER 25): 45 members - James Brown, VFW Post 5958

CHOSNYK AWARD (District with Greatest Percentage Increase as of April 30): District 1 - Commander Zbigniew Laska and Quartermaster Joseph Sokol

All-State Posts:

Post/Commander/Quartermaster

32 - Ivan D. Eitrem/James J. Hannon
148 - Patrick B. Shupp/Joseph A. Staudt
464 - Jason W. Reed/Patrick P. Winger
477 - Richard J. Olson/Wayne E. Wright
566 - Carl A. Trusiak, Jr./Gregg H. Bothell
879 - Hugh G. MacPherson/Rex B. Brown
914 - Jake Bradich/Gary P. Ruston
1446 - Roxann L. Werner/Terry L. Stokes
1564 - Donald F. Mahoney, Jr./Jerry E. Buchanan
1597 - Micheal J. Heil/Thomas H. Goodman
1620 - Henk L. Hymans/Ricky L. Snyder
1690 - Mark A. Giblin/Ronald J. Miller
2076 - James A. Pallone/James R. Davis
2385 - Harvey L. Pennell/Glen A. Welker
2493 - Mark B. Windsor/Kristina N. Staub
3258 - Elwood H. Hippel/Lawrence L. Duchnowski
3376 - Dwayne MacKenzie/Amy E. MacKenzie
5207 - William D. Lamond, III/Robert Meckes
5265 - Charles A. Becker/Douglas E. Senft
5286 - James E. Grossman/Melvin E. Boggs
5958 - James E. Brown/Elizabeth M. Miller
6231 - Damian S. Hambley/Larry A. Pifer
6495 - David A. Pearl/James J. Ritchie
6704 - Michael J. Gagnon/David B. Madden
7069 - Donald A. Jones/Michael G. McLane
7155 - Howard J. Helbert, Jr./George. M Henderson
7343 - Frederick K. Bower/Barry R. Bender
7505 - Herbert O. Carpenter, II/Robert M. Carrara
7599 - Clark W. Eberhart, Jr./Roger D. Irby
8724 - Richard E. Dively/Dale D. Hoffman
8951 - Richard C. Olvitt/Lloyd W. Greenwood
11322 - Paul H. Gerhart, Jr./John F. Sandle

All-State Districts:

District/Commander/Quartermaster
1 - Zbigniew Laska/Joseph Sokol
8 - Thomas Goodman/Leonard Spaar
10 - Chester Potoski/William Long
16 - Jonathan Bitner/Emmett Mayo
18 - David Gyger/Wrayburn Reinsmith
19 - Jason Reed/Robert Lott
20 - Richard Ellis/David Jolly (Deceased)
21 - Richard Olvitt/Lloyd Greenwood
23 - Thomas McFadden/Allen Jones
25 - James Hodge/Edward Hodge



In the Department's Buddy Poppy program, District 8 Commander and Post 6393 member Thomas Hauserman (center) accepts a Poppy Award for his Post from Chairman Thomas Ono and then-State Commander Thomas Hanzes.

DEPARTMENT SCOUT AWARDS

First place: Troop 687 Scout Peter E. Livingood of Dunbar, sponsored by VFW Post 265, Berwick; Second place: Troop 22 Scout Colin J. Hill of Berwick, VFW Post 821, Farmington; and Third place: Verity E. Green of New Castle, VFW Post 315, New Castle

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

PA VFW Citizenship Education Teachers of the Year: grades 6-8, Mary Ellen Phillips, sponsored by Post 1810; grades 9-12, Kevin A. Wagner, sponsored by Post 477.

BUDDY POPPY CONTESTS

Poppy Purchases: Group 1 - Post 8951/10,000 purchased; Group 2 - Post 6393/15,000; Group 3 - Post 11322, 10,000;

Display Contests: Category 1 - first place: Post 8951, second place: Post 4843 and third place: Post 509; **Category 2** - first place: Post 6704, second place: Post 470 and third place: Post 5265; **Category 3** - first place: Post 128, second place: Post 4843 and third place: Post 7343.

COMMUNICATIONS CONTESTS

Post Newsletters Post 3258 earned the first-place award, Editor William Malone; second place Post 6495, Editor David Pearl; third place Post 477, Editor Rick Olson
Post Websites first place Post 1446, Webmaster Michael McCarey; second place Post 3258, Webmaster William Malone; third place tie to Post 3376, Webmaster Amy MacKenzie, and Post 7155, Webmaster David Morgan; fourth place Post 6704, Webmaster Michael Gagnon.
District Websites District 18 earned first place, Webmaster David Gyger.

National Communications Contest The Department earned the first-place "Grand Award" for feature story writing, Writer David Sandman; *PA VFW News* earned the VFW Bronze Award for Department publications

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

CONTEST 1 for reporting activity: Div. 1 - Post 1989; Div. 2 - Post 2006; Div. 3 - Post 8724; Division 4 - first place Post 8306, second place Post 1074 and third place Post 7362. **CONTEST 2 for first 10 PA VFW Districts with 100% participation:** Districts 8, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 28 and 29. Also, Auxiliary Category for Achieving 100% Participation in Community Service: Districts 7, 21 and 22. **CONTEST 3 Record Books:** First place Post 2385/Auxiliary, second place Post 879 and third place Post 5958

HEALTH CARE AWARDS

Outstanding VA Health Care Employee - tie, Karen O'Neal, sponsored by Post 5958, and Jennifer Stevey, Post 477. **VA Volunteer of the Year** - Christine Webster, Post 6345.

SCHOLARSHIP CONTESTS:

Voice of Democracy: State Champion Christina Troll, representing VFW Post 554 and District 23, who also earned the National first-place award.

Voice of Democracy Teacher of the Year: Marchia Bartlet, sponsored by Post 6757.

Patriot's Pen: State winner Rory Decker, sponsored by Post 531.

VFW Elects New Commander, Celebrates Growth

William J. "Doc" Schmitz was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on July 24, 2019, at the VFW National Convention. Doc served in the United States Navy from 1966-1970. He served in Vietnam as a corpsman attached to United States Marine Corps infantry and artillery. In recognition of his service, he received the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

During the National Convention, delegates celebrated the fact that the 120-year-old VFW added almost 25,000 members during the 2018-19 year, to snap a 27-year decline in membership. America's oldest war veterans' group began its new membership year earlier this month with almost 1.165 million members as more younger veterans join their comrades who served before them.



"Please keep doing the wonderful things that you do in the VFW," stated Schmitz. "Regardless of what inspires you, if you can get a grip on what motivates you and focus your energy on those things, you, members of the largest combat veterans group, can accomplish a great deal. Please 'Dare to Care' by making things you care about matter in the VFW. We are brothers and sisters in the blood. We're here, as the strongest veterans organization on the face of this earth, and we're going to keep the legacy of our VFW organization moving forward and growing."



Chaplain's Corner

Castelluccio Named Chaplain of the Year

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



The Chaplain of the Year Award recognizes a State VFW district or post chaplain who demonstrates a very strong commitment to the ministry and duties of a VFW chaplain, and who exhibits exemplary performance above and beyond normal expectations.

The recipient of the PA Chaplain of the Year Award for 2019 is Mr. Charlie Castelluccio. Charlie is the longtime Chaplain at Bruce Shorts Post 5958 in Titusville. He has also served as District 28 Chaplain for 13 years.

In addition to his duties as VFW Chaplain, Charlie has been the VFW representative to the Erie VA Medical Center for seven years. According to Don Christy, District 28 commander, Charlie is on a first-name basis with the director and the staff. This was quite evident at our State Convention when Erie VAMC CEO/Director John A. Gennaro recognized Charlie for the work he does with veterans.

He also regularly ministers to veterans at the Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home located in Erie.

Each Monday, for the past 12 years, Charlie has been going to the Crawford County Correctional Facility located in Saegertown to visit, counsel and minister to inmates. He is also the editor of a weekly newspaper column called *The Veterans Corner*,

which appears in five newspapers in six counties.

As Post 5958 Chaplain, Charlie is the primary agent for developing a post that truly cares for veterans and their families. He is the point of contact for bereavement ceremonies. He serves with the Post Honor Guard.

Charlie enlisted in the Navy in June 1969. He volunteered for Vietnam, and he is a Vietnam Brown Water Navy Veteran (1970-1971).

Charlie and his wife, Ilene, have been married for 42 years. They have three children, seven grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.



Comrade Castelluccio (center) accepts the Chaplain Award during the Convention.

It was truly an honor for me to present this award to Charlie Castelluccio, a tireless servant and a good model for those of us who are called to serve those who served.

He received a framed certificate, an engraved watch and possession of a framed picture to be displayed at his Post for the year.

On the Department website <http://www.vfwpahq.org>, you will find my Chaplain's Page which has information concerning the award, the Monthly Chaplain's Report and various resources to help you in your ministry to comrades.

General Orders ... from page 5

DISTRICT COMMANDERS: These members have been properly elected for the ensuing year and are officially recognized as Commander of the District and members of the Council of Administration:

District 1 - Zbigniew S. Laska, VFW Post 8051 - zbisko1149@aol.com
 District 7 - Alfred Robinson, Jr., VFW Post 974 - robinsonprinting@yahoo.com
 District 8 - Thomas Hauserman, VFW Post 6393 - thauserman@aol.com
 District 9 - William E. Stellfox, VFW Post 845 - wstelfox@hotmail.com
 District 10 - Chester J. Potoski, VFW Post 7251 - vfwdistrict10cos@gmail.com
 District 11 - Melissa T. Dimmitt, VFW Post 6615 - missmissid@yahoo.com
 District 12 - Kim D. Shollenberger, VFW Post 3432 - rythmnrace@comcast.net
 District 13 - Ronald J. Brown, VFW Post 38 - ronaldbrown694@gmail.com
 District 14 - John D. Miner, VFW Post 5642 - jminer043@yahoo.com
 District 15 - David S. Flook, VFW Post 6755 - waterstreetrepair@gmail.com
 District 16 - Gordon R. Boe, VFW Post 32 - g.boe@comcast.net
 District 17 - Robert G. Snook, VFW Post 7463 - rsnook7922@gmail.com
 District 18 - David W. Gyger, VFW Post 9639 - djc57@verizon.net
 District 19 - David Swanson, VFW Post 1132 - dasr.swanson@verizon.net
 District 20 - Richard K. Ellis, VFW Post 8008 - dist20.post.pa18.19@gmail.com
 District 21 - Robert E. Hinkle, Jr., VFW Post 5265 - bhinkle@vfw5265.org
 District 22 - Leonard E. Hahn, VFW Post 1600 - leh10@psu.edu
 District 23 - James W. Hay, VFW Post 21 - jwhaypagolfer@gmail.com
 District 24 - Martin A. Puchi, VFW Post 553 - vfwpost553@verizon.net
 District 25 - James D. Hodge, VFW Post 1821 - jdhodge1017@gmail.com
 District 26 - Joseph R. Kopsic, VFW Post 7605 - pigme59@yahoo.com
 District 27 - Carl A. Trusiak, Jr., VFW Post 566 - carl.trusiak@gmail.com
 District 28 - Donald E. Christy, VFW Post 7599 - dchristy2015@outlook.com
 District 29 - John D. Drake, VFW Post 6664 - babymoose.drake3@gmail.com

THE FOLLOWING DEPT. APPOINTMENTS ARE ANNOUNCED:**Program Chairpersons:**

Arthritis/Diabetes Chairman Larry Hawthorne, VFW Post 1338 (28) - larry.hawthorne@att.net
 Audit Committee Chairman Robert C. Eiler, VFW Post 7842 (28) - golddust2@peoplepc.com
 Barger Scholarship Chairman Dwight R. Fuhrman, Post 8896 (21) - dmfuhrman@comcast.net
 Buddy Poppy Chairman Robert R. Emerick, Post 7632 (29) - robert.emerick5566@yahoo.com
 By-Laws Chairman Glenn R. Umberger, Jr., VFW Post 7155 (16) - glenn.umberger@gmail.com
 Citizenship/Education Chairman Daniel L. Rieppel, Post 6757 (15) - dlewis4706@yahoo.com
 Community Service Chairman Rex Brown, VFW Post 879 (25) - rexbrown@zoominternet.net
 Credentials Chairman Barbara Kollar, VFW Post 1586 (26) - barbiekollar@outlook.com
 Employment Opportunities Chair Alfred Robinson, Jr., Post 974 (7) - robinsonprinting@yahoo.com
 Finance Chairman Robert C. Eiler, VFW Post 7842 (28) - golddust2@peoplepc.com
 Health Care Award Chairwoman Ruth A. Fairchild, VFW Post 315 (25) - raf4ever@aol.com
 Homeless Veterans Chairman Dwayne A. Anders, VFW Post 3 (22) - iraqandy@yahoo.com
 Hospital/VAWS Chairman Nelson E. Lowes, Sr., Post 6743 (27) - nelsonlowes@yahoo.com
 Internal Affairs Co-Chairman Carl Curtis, VFW Post 128 (25) - cmr26thdist@yahoo.com
 Internal Affairs Co-Chairman James Frisbie, VFW Post 7251 (10) - hillbillykid_99@yahoo.com
 Internal Affairs Co-Chairman Robert C. Eiler, VFW Post 7842 (28) - golddust2@peoplepc.com
 Internal Affairs Co-Chairman Roy E. Schrimp, Post 1568 (14) - schrimpfourwheel@epix.net
 Internal Affairs Co-Chairman Thomas M. Hanzes, Post 7599 (28) - thomashanzes@yahoo.com
 Loyalty Day Chairman James V. Manser, VFW Post 7155 (21) - james.manser@comcast.net
 National Home Chairman Thomas A. Brown, VFW Post 3460 (7) - paatom1@verizon.net
 Nat'l Legislative Chairman Benjamin A. Mastridge, VFW Post 6495 (8) - bensarmy@hotmail.com
 Nat'l Legislative Co-Chairman Larry M. Wade, VFW Post 7377 (26) - venus@penn.com
 Patriot's Pen Chairman Benjamin A. Lipschutz, VFW Post 882 (17) - blipschutz@gmail.com
 POW/MIA Chairman Stephen K. Calles, Jr., VFW Post 509 (20) - stephen.calles@yahoo.com
 Redistricting Chairman Russell R. Canevari, VFW Post 5544 (10) - bigguy1248@comcast.net
 Safety Awards Chairman Ronald Smith, VFW Post 7045 (21) - cnc.apps.ron@gmail.com
 Student Veterans Chairman Jesse W. Olson, VFW Post 6611 (15) - olsonjw26@mansfield.edu
 Student Veterans Co-Chairman Jonathon Bittner, VFW Post 7155 (16) - jonbittner@comcast.net
 Substance Abuse Chairman - Benjamin A. Mastridge, Post 6495 (8) - bensarmy@hotmail.com
 Veterans and Military Support Chairman John Lorusso, VFW 1564 (9) - hnglorusso@gmail.com
 Veterans Court Advocate Terry Stokes, VFW Post 1446 (21) - shineypenn@aol.com
 Veterans Service Chairwoman Christine S. Smith, VFW Post 1446 (21) - csmith@vfwpahq.org
 Veterans Service Co-Chairman Elizabeth Salvador, Post 914 (29) - elizabeth.salvador@va.gov
 VFW Motorcycle Riders Chairman David Dibellus, Post 6493 (8) - pavfwrider@comcast.net
 Voice of Democracy Chairman Glenn Owen, VFW Post 6824 (14) - buck012@frontiernet.net
 Women Veterans Chairwoman Amy E. MacKenzie, Post 3376 (9) - quartermaster@ephratvfw.org
 Youth Activities/Scouting Chairman James B. Miller, Post 12019 (23) - pavfwscouter@yahoo.com

State Sergeants:

Sgt. Robert I. Hayes, Post 6615 - ida-ira@outlook.com; Asst. State Sgt.-at-Arms: James J. Ritchie, Post 6495 - rustlers175@gmail.com; Barbara K. Loncar, Post 6954 - barbara.loncar87@gmail.com; Henry R. Mannella, Post 1810 - h.mannella72@yahoo.com; Cecil K. Dennis, Post 5958 - cecil_dennis@hotmail.com; Ruth A. Fairchild, Post 315 - raf4ever@aol.com

Membership Team:

Chairman Henry R. Mannella, Post 1810 - h.mannella72@yahoo.com; Co-Chairmen Cecil K. Dennis, Post 5958 - cecil_dennis@hotmail.com and John J. Rybcinski, Post 3474 - rybcinski123@comcast.net; David Gyger, Post 9639 - djc57@verizon.net; Life Membership/Gold Legacy Chairman Gary R. Smith, Post 1446 - vfw6241@comcast.net

Color Guard Captain: Paul L. Kreiner, VFW Post 6704 - cmdr1117@aol.com

BY: Wayne D. Perry, State Commander

ATTEST: John B. Getz, Jr., State Adjutant/Quartermaster

**Spread the Word: "No One Does More for Vets"**

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



Greetings my Brothers and Sisters in the VFW:

Thank you, comrades, for electing me as your Department Jr. Vice Commander. I offer my congratulations

to all comrades who were elected to leadership positions in this organization.

I am excited to join the other dedicated leaders in our Department as we continue to build off the foundation that Past State Commander Hanzes and his leadership team built last year. However, I know that it can't be done without the help of all comrades, who worked very hard last year to get our membership above 100%.

Commander Perry's motto this year is "Dedication and Honor." The dedication that all of you have demonstrated by honoring our veterans and letting them know about the VFW's mission, vision and core values.

I believe that we can continue to strengthen membership by collaboration

with military organizations, employers, and the community by providing facts about the VFW. Dedication to educate the public about the programs that the VFW sponsors and to promote involvement at every level. Veterans need to know that "Nobody Does More for Veterans than the VFW." Be ready tell them our story.

We need to expand how the VFW honors veterans and their families in our communities by inviting them to our post activities, promoting the VFW as a family-oriented organization and ensuring that they are getting the help that they need through the VA.

More posts need to promote the Adopt-a-Unit program and ensure that care packages are being sent to deployed units. Then, welcome our troops home from deployments. We also need to continue to encourage younger veterans to get involved at the post, district, and Department levels, which will also help increase membership.

I am confident that, if we continue working together as a team, the VFW will continue to prosper and once again have a successful year.

National Awards ... continued from Page 1

time that its membership finished ahead of the previous year.

The Department was recognized for receiving the first-place National Voice of Democracy Contest title and the top prize in the National VFW Citizenship Educator of the Year (high school category).

State VFW leaders also celebrated the Department earning a National VFW first-place "Grand Award" for feature writing in a Department publication and a third-place National VFW award for overall excellence in Department publications, in the category for 1-4 issues printed a year.

The Department kept its streak of receiving a Gold Award for its support of the VFW National and Military Services program, which provides emergency help to our troops and veterans.

All Departments joined National Headquarters in celebrating the addition of almost 25,000 members to the VFW ranks during the 2018-19 program year, snapping a 27-year decline.

America's largest and oldest war veterans' organization began its 2019-20 membership year with almost 1.165 million members.

Then National VFW Commander-in-Chief B.J. Lawrence attributed the growth to the organization being more visible on the national scene as well as in more than 6,000 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, and 11 foreign countries.

"The VFW is making a difference in the lives of countless others every day," said Lawrence. "More people are learning about the VFW's service work, which last year helped 526,000 veterans and transitioning service members to recoup \$8.3 billion in

"The VFW is making a difference in the lives of countless others every day. More people are learning about the VFW's service work, which last year helped 526,000 veterans and transitioning service members to recoup more than \$8.3 billion in VA compensation.

"They are learning about VFW's legislative advocacy, which benefits all 22 million veterans and service members, and which produced the U.S. Forever G.I. Bill for our newest (veterans), the Blue Water Navy Act, and will soon eliminate the 'Widow's Tax' penalizing some surviving family members."

disability compensation from the (VA).

"They are learning about the VFW's legislative advocacy, which directly benefits all 22 million veterans and service members, and which produced the Forever G.I. Bill for our newest generation of warriors, the Blue Water Navy Act for Vietnam veterans, and will soon eliminate the 'Widow's Tax' that is penalizing some 65,000 surviving family members of all generations.

"And they are learning about the VFW programs, which range from volunteerism, student veteran scholarships to financial grants and military unit sponsorships," he said. "The VFW is all about service to others."

The VFW Auxiliary ...

Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



The Department President Says...

We'll Keep Working Hard for Our Veterans

By Sandra Wilder, Department Auxiliary President - swpa2004@comcast.net



To all my comrades, brothers and sisters: thank you for the support you gave me over the years as I have gone up through the chair positions of the Department Auxiliary. It is

an honor to serve as your Department President.

A sincere congratulations to VFW State Commander Wayne "Popeye" Perry and his line officers. On behalf of the Department Auxiliary, we wish you a successful year with "Dedication and Honor" serving as your platform for an outstanding term.

I look forward to traveling this great state of Pennsylvania and running into our State Commander along the way. I am also very excited about meeting many of our Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters. We are going to have a great year driven by the dedication and effort of our VFW and Auxiliary units.

We are a TEAM! We can accomplish a lot when we all work together. We will

be "Working Hard for our Veterans and Their Families" and "Serving Our Veterans with Aloha."

The future of our organization relies on continued membership, mentoring and the promotion of all programs. We can do it! "NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS" than the VFW and its Auxiliary.

Let's get this 2019-2020 year off to a great start by attending our Auxiliary Program & Leadership Conference, August 23-24, in Harrisburg. Our National President Peggy Haake will be coming to the conference on Saturday. If you have never met a National President before, this will be a good time to do so. We are looking to give her a HUGE Pennsylvania welcome, so please come join us.



"Invite, Invest, Include and Adopt" will Drive Success

By Kelley M. Lepak, Membership Chairwoman - kms4013@hotmail.com



The Department of Pennsylvania VFW Auxiliary 2019-2020 year is under way. Please remember that the growth and future of the VFW Auxiliary is in our hands.

We must continue recruiting new members, retaining current members and approaching former members to invite them back into our ranks.

Please remember these four words because carrying out these principles will drive our membership success: invite, invest, include and adopt.

If we invite potential members to events, they can see what the Auxiliary stands for and how we carry out our

priority programs.

We must invest in the future of our organization and we must remember to include all members in all activities.

Adopting a member is when a member may be experiencing hardship, and a thoughtful way to assist that member is to pay his or her dues.

Take a minute to imagine how the growth of the VFW Auxiliary can be accelerated if we continue to work together using these four principles as the foundation of our efforts.

Let's continue to work hard in all areas to continue our impressive string of 100% membership years.

By "Serving Our Veterans with Aloha" we can and will be "Pennsylvania Wonderful Warrior's for Veterans".

President



Sandra Wilder
Aux. 267
swpa2004@comcast.net

Senior Vice



Wendi Hennemann
Aux. 8488
wendihennemann@yahoo.com

Junior Vice



Pamela Sopher
Aux. 5958
pssopher@gmail.com

Sec-Treas.



Jodie Hollinger
Aux. 5956
jodie@pavfwaux.org

Chaplain



Valerie DeCorte
Aux. 2145
valriedecorte50@gmail.com

Conductress



Mary Jean Cuddyre Mastridge
Aux. 7505
gramamj75@gmail.com

Guard



Andrea Meintel
Aux. 6954
andreavfwaux@gmail.com

Chief of Staff



Veronica Grant
Aux. 3577
mycatsbossme@comcast.net

Nat'l Council



Donna Mills
Aux. 1754
fd1mills@comcast.net

Parliamentarian



Theresa Groce
Aux. 974
(610) 352-4650

Historian



Louise Gerhart
Aux. 5956
lgerhart@ptd.net

Patriotic Inst.



Leonie Graham
Aux. 249
oma39@zoominternet.net

Promote Our Student Scholarships and Contests

By Joan Faddis, Scholarships Chairwoman - jbfaddis@gmail.com



The Continuing Education Scholarship is awarded to Auxiliary members, their spouse, son or daughter with financial need. The deadline for entries is 2/15/2020.

The Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition and Patriot's Pen Essay Competition: For the first time, both competitions will use the same theme - "WHAT MAKES AMERICA GREAT." Patriot's Pen entrants are 6-8th graders writing essays of 400-500 words, while VOD competitors are 9-12th graders writing and then recording their essays onto CD's or

flash drives. Full details and the entry forms are available on the National VFW website. Entry deadlines for both competitions is October 31, 2019.

The Young American Creative Patriotic Art Competition is a contest for 9th-12 grade students, providing them with the opportunity to express their idea of patriotism through art. Students submit their work, with a brief description of the patriotism being express in the artwork. Deadline for entry is March 31, 2020.

Please participate in these programs to increase patriotism among students.

More details and the applications for each are available on the National VFW and/or Auxiliary websites. Please contact me with any questions.

Focus on Mission Success

PERIODICALS



With the help of elementary school students, Eddystone Post 7949 placed flags in a local cemetery before Memorial Day. Shown with students and school officials are Post representatives Bruce Beswick, Mike Ostriski and Dom Cacciatore. Commander Bill Daws was present, but is not shown.



Troy Post 8675, along with 68th Legislative District Representative Clint Owlett, Bradford County Director of Veterans Affairs and Bradford County Commissioners, honor the last remaining WWII POW in Bradford County, Gerald Spencer, during a ceremony at Twin Oaks Personal Care Home in Granville Summit.



Conshohocken Post 1074 sponsored a car in a local soap box derby competition, which garnered the Post positive community exposure. Supporting the soap box race event is just one of the ways that Post 1074 is reaching into the community to show veterans and the public that the Post is more than just a social organization.



District 29 officials represent the VFW at a Wounded Warriors Veterans Expo in Washington (PA). Pictured are (from left) Service Officer Charles Beattie, Poppy Chairman Robert Emerick, State Membership Chairman Henry Mannella, State Senior Vice Commander Ron Peters and West Virginia Quartermaster/Adjutant Kevin Light.



Then State Commander Thomas Hanzes (left) and District 18 Commander Dave Gyger present World War II veteran Robert Brocklehurst with a certificate of appreciation for his military service. Brocklehurst is a Legacy Life member.



Regan Ward of Girl Scout Troop 2268 recently completed her Girl Scout Silver Award project about flag etiquette. She is pictured with Post 6393 Commander Russ Davidson, who delivered the flags for proper retirement.



Canonsburg Post 191 gives out two \$1,000 scholarships each year in memory of Private James Perry, one to a student at Cannon McMillan High School and one to a student at Chartiers-Houston High School. Pictured are (from left) Post 191 Service Officer Eric Bookmiller, Brant Purcell, Gina Olson and Post Senior Vice Commander Bill Evens.