



# Pennsylvania VFWnews



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

### VFW Salutes Service of World War II and Korean War Veterans

Well known for their toughness and tenacity during battle conditions—in the air, on land, across and under oceans—millions of United States World War II servicemen led Allied troops in driving the Axis forces to their knees in total surrender. Less than a decade later, many of these same hardened veterans, joined by a new generation of spirited warriors, stopped the enemies of freedom in their tracks during the Korean War.

Just as they distinguished themselves as patriots in military uniforms, many of these veterans continued to serve America with dogged dedication and unparalleled patriotism through the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Proudly donning VFW overseas caps—and some in full VFW dress uniforms with Color Guard and Honor Guard units—these young veterans were the catalyst for the organization's greatest expansion era during the mid-20th century. Thousands of them played instrumental roles in developing and growing the programs, services and advocacy that earned the VFW accolades as the most effective veterans organization in the world.

The Department of Pennsylvania salutes and honors all World War II and Korean War veterans for their exemplary battle-zone prowess and their immeasurable impact on the VFW.

World War II B-25 pilot Major Charles V. Reddig, a life member of Ephrata Post 3376, spent much of his war service flying "Pauline" on combat missions against Japanese forces. He recalls one mission when, "I might have flown a little too low." After releasing a torpedo just above the waves, he deftly stayed low on the deck to strafe an enemy destroyer before executing an extreme pull out as the ship rapidly filled his cockpit view. "When we landed, we found a Japanese flag in an engine cowling. Maybe I should have started to climb sooner," mused the 94-year-old veteran.

Stationed mostly on the Pacific island of Makin, Reddig became **WWII and Korean War Vets ... continued on page 4**



Charles V. Reddig  
Post 3376



Jay L. McNeil  
Post 315



John "Jack" Gunn  
Post 2506



Carmen A. DeSanti  
(being honored  
Posthumously)

### Struggling VFW Posts Can Keep Legacies Alive Through Mergers

Running a VFW post can be tough. Membership revenues are declining in many posts. Others fight against rising costs of repairing aging facilities while canteen income is dropping off. Because of situations like these, sometimes hard decisions need to be made by officers about their posts' survivability. And despite the finality of ending a tradition of service, some officers see turning in their charters as the first option against rising overhead.

This could be the worst route. Department leadership urges post officers who are contemplating ending their charters to take a more proactive, positive step: merge with another VFW unit to keep alive the proud histories of their posts.

"We encourage posts facing possible closure—whether due to not having enough leaders to fill the required positions, a lack of members or canteen business being down—to meet with local posts to discuss possible mergers," said State Adjutant John B. Getz, Jr. "Merging with another post creates a new chapter for VFW units that might otherwise be forgotten."

"A merger carries the tradition of the post into the surviving post. We would much rather have struggling posts continue their service and support of the VFW by consolidating their operations with another post," State **Post Mergers ... continued on page 5**

### Thank You, PA Guardians - Your VFW Comrades Support You!



At right, soldiers of the 28th Military Police Co., 165th Military Police BN, 55th Maneuver Enhancement BDE, 28th ID, PAARNG, receive a standing ovation during their departure ceremony in Sept. in Johnstown. The soldiers will soon head overseas. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Andrew Weston)



Above, PA Guardians serving overseas pose with some of the many care package items sent by Carlisle Post 477. The Post Operation Gratitude project collected more than 20 large boxes totaling 1,500 pounds of tasty treats, coffee, Keurig machines, and much more, totaling approximately \$5,000. The Post is collecting donations to hold a large post-deployment dinner party for the soldiers and their spouses.



Approximately 24 soldiers assigned to Charlie Co., 1st ARB, 151st Aviation Reg., 28th Expeditionary CAB, 28th ID, PAARNG, recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. The soldiers operated AH-64 Apache helicopters. They joined with companies in the 1st Attack Reconnaissance BN, 151st Aviation Reg. from South Carolina to form a task force for aviation capabilities. (Photo courtesy of Joint Force HQ/PA National Guard)

### 2019 MWC will Once Again Feature Workshop Sessions

The Department's 2019 Mid-Winter Conference—scheduled for January 25-27 at the Double Tree in Cranberry/Mars—will once again feature a workshop-based format that addresses key subjects important to VFW post success.

On Saturday morning, a National Headquarters membership team leader will conduct an in-depth presentation on how to recruit, retain and reinstate members. This program will help VFW leaders of all experience levels build and sustain their post, in part, by focusing on how to increase the number of younger veterans who join the VFW.

Other workshops will address post administrative and internal affairs issues, veterans benefits updates and general question-and-answer sessions about any post issue.

"Last year, we heard very positive comments on the workshop-dominated format," said State Commander Thomas Hanzes. "We're using that style again because workshops provide information and resources that strengthen post leaders' knowledge and their ability to serve effectively."

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. A Council of Administration meeting is slated for Sunday.

Participation forms will be sent to posts and will be uploaded to the Department's website, [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org).



From the State Commander**Comrades, Together We Can Achieve Mission Success**

Thomas M. Hanzes - thomashanzes@yahoo.com or (724) 815-9164



Comrades:  
Once again, I must start this column by saying how humbled and honored I am to be your State Commander.

I have been on the road since June visiting posts and districts. It has been

an experience of a lifetime. You have so much to be proud of because of your VFW work. There are success stories all over, a few of which I will share with you.

A few years ago, Mt. Pleasant VFW Post 3368, sold their building and a few years later, they bought it back! They came together, worked incredibly hard raising money, found officers and other leaders, and this post is now thriving! Way to go, Post 3368.

Progress does not come without great



**State Commander Thomas Hanzes proudly poses with leaders of northeastern PA VFW posts, who attended one of the Post Officer Training programs.**

dedication and all hands working together. Here are a few more examples: VFW Post 25, Scranton, is building a beautiful memorial near the Scranton High School; and Clearfield Post 1785 is in the process of building a brand new post structure.

Growth requires change, positive change relies on teamwork, and teamwork drives the VFW's service mission. It's not rocket science; we must use this formula if the VFW is to reach new heights.

Let us keep working to help veterans, their families, our troops and our communities. Let us not forget our young veterans and women veterans! They have so much to offer. If we do not involve them, we are wasting opportunities to grow. We must convey our desire to get them involved in a way that inspires them to join, serve and be a part of the legacy of this great organization!

We continue to work hard on the smoking exemption elimination (HB 1309 and SB 519) as another opportunity to open our doors to the community and our members' families.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention membership. We are currently running a little behind from last year. I am confident that in the next few months we will put

forth the effort to erase this deficit.

It is imperative that we work hard on continuous and subscription dues members. New members are coming in, but many existing members are leaving.

One way to accomplish membership growth is to offer an incentive to convert them to life memberships. Also, there are recruiting ideas and free promotional literature at National and Department HQs. Buy a VFW tablecloth, have marketing materials ready and seek out events where you can promote the VFW.

We had tremendous attendance at our leadership training events. It was inspiring to see the excitement and dedication by post members and leadership.

I keep thinking about Chaplain Peter Hook's words regarding "BEING A CARING CULTURE." We must develop and expand this attitude with ALL members, so they know we genuinely care about them and the issues they face daily—specifically those who do not visit the post or canteen!

We must "talk the talk and walk the walk" to show that we care. Erie VFW Post 470 recently claimed the body of Korean war veteran and homicide victim Vincent Force. The post coordinated with the community to provide a very emotional, first-class memorial and funeral service for him. Comrade Force received a hero's send-off, which he certainly deserved.

We must continue attending community fairs and events, making hospital and nursing home visits, helping our members and other veterans in distress, encouraging patriotic programs with our schools, getting involved with local sporting and community events and coordinating events with our youth.

We have to find new and innovative ways to build bridges, and positive relationships, with the community and veterans who are not members. This is a productive way to grow regardless of the size of your post.

I wish you all a meaningful Veterans Day, although every day should be Veterans Day! I also wish you a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

*Thanks for all that you do for the VFW!*



**State Commander Thomas Hanzes speaks to reporters about his push for Posts to become no-smoking facilities during a news event held by the American Heart Association.**

**Community Activity Creates Good Post Publicity**

By participating in community projects, all VFW Posts can enhance their image and form important relationships that show town officials and citizens that the VFW is a positive force.

VFW Punxsutawney Post 2076 is shown participating in a "National Night Out" event, sponsored by the Punxsutawney

Police Department. Post officials used a corn hole contest, gift cards and flag pins to attract people to its display, which gave them opportunities to tell citizens about VFW programs. Shown are Post 2076 officials Jim Davis, Jim Dunlap, Charley Smith and Bob Lott.

**District Meeting Schedule****NOVEMBER 2018**

DIST.	LOCATION	DATE	TIME
1	VA Office Medical Center - Phila.	Nov. 14, 2018	
8	VFW Post 7293 - Whitehall	Nov. 18, 2018	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post 845 - Downingtown	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
10	VFW Post 7963 - Eynon	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post 8317 - Benton	Nov. 18, 2018	2:30 P.M.
12	VFW Post 6982 - Coaldale	Nov. 18, 2018	2:30 P.M.
13	VFW Post 6558 - Womelsdorf	Nov. 11, 2018	2:00 P.M.
14	VFW Post 1568 - Towanda	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
15	VFW Post 3428 - Muncy	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post 5308 - Telford	Nov. 21, 2018	7:30 P.M.
17	VFW Post 6631 - Selingsgrove	Nov. 4, 2018	2:00 P.M.
18	VFW Post 6076 - Myerstown	Nov. 4, 2018	2:00 P.M.
19	VFW Post 5887 - Ridgeway	Nov. 18, 2018	2:30 P.M.
20	VFW Post 8008 - Nesquehoning	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post 5644 - Snow Shoe	Nov. 18, 2018	2:30 P.M.
23	VFW Post 7295 - Berlin	Nov. 4, 2018	2:00 P.M.
25	VFW Post 315 - New Castle	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
26	VFW Post 6555 - Sagamore	Nov. 4, 2018	2:30 P.M.
27	VFW Post 734 - Ligonier	Nov. 4, 2018	2:30 P.M.
29	VFW Post 1810 - Pittsburgh	Nov. 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.

**DECEMBER 2018**

1	VFW Post 2819 - Phila.	Dec. 12, 2018	
21	VFW Post 6954 - Litlestown	Dec. 2, 2018	2:00 P.M.
28	VFW Post 169 - Venango	Dec. 9, 2018	2:00 P.M.

**JANUARY 2019**

1	VA Office Medical Center - Phila.	Jan. 9, 2019	
7	VFW Post 7213 - Norwood	Jan. 23, 2019	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post 6493 - Warminster	Jan. 20, 2019	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post 1564 - Phoenixville	Jan. 13, 2019	2:00 P.M.
10	VFW Post 6082 - Peckville	Jan. 13, 2019	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post 821 - Berwick	Jan. 20, 2019	2:30 P.M.
16	VFW Post 1711 - Jenkintown	Jan. 16, 2019	7:30 P.M.
18	VFW Post 7415 - New Cumberland	Jan. 6, 2019	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post 8724 - Duncansville	Jan. 20, 2019	2:30 P.M.
25	VFW Post 8805 - Aliquippa	Jan. 13, 2019	2:00 P.M.
27	VFW Post 33 - Greensburg	Jan. 6, 2019	2:30 P.M.
29	VFW Post 914 - West Mifflin	Jan. 20, 2019	2:00 P.M.



# AT YOUR SERVICE: MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

## VSOs to Senate: Pass Blue Water Navy Legislation

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and other service organizations have released a letter to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs urging the Senate to pass H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018 before Congress recesses.

The letter states, "On behalf of the millions of veterans we represent, we urge you to take every action necessary to ensure that a vote is held by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and then the full Senate, on H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018, as soon as possible. This

bi-partisan legislation was passed by the House earlier this year by a 382 to 0 vote. It is now time for the Senate to follow suit by swiftly passing H.R. 299.

"This legislation would reverse an erroneous decision by the VA in 2002 that made thousands of Vietnam War veterans—commonly called "Blue Water Navy veterans"—ineligible for health care and benefits connected to illnesses caused by exposure to Agent Orange. That critical decision was not based on new scientific evidence or changes in law and therefore should be reversed."

## VA & DOD Commit to Aligned Health Records

The VA and DOD Secretaries recently signed a joint statement pledging to align their plans, strategies and structures as they roll out a new electronic health records system that will allow the agencies to share patient data seamlessly.

Signed by Defense Secretary James Mattis and VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, the joint statement reinforces both departments' commitment to ensuring the successful transition from a legacy patient-data system to a modernized one that will continue to support active-duty service members, veterans and their families.

"The joint statement between DOD and VA represents tangible evidence of our commitment to change how we deliver veteran-focused, provider-friendly care," Wilkie said. "The new EHR system will be interoperable with DOD,

while also improving VA's ability to collaborate and share information with community care providers."

VA has signed a contract with Cerner Corp. to replace VA's 40-year-old legacy Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture (Vista) records technology over the next 10 years with the new Cerner system, which is in the pilot phase.

Collaborating with DOD will ensure that VA: understands the challenges encountered as DOD deploys its EHR system called Military Health System GENESIS (MHS GENESIS); adapts an approach by applying lessons learned to anticipate and mitigate known issues; assesses prospective efficiencies to help deploy faster; and delivers an EHR that is fully interoperable.

For more information, visit [www.ehrm.va.gov](http://www.ehrm.va.gov).

## VA Benefit News & Other Important Health Updates

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

### VA Hits Historic Goal by Delivering 81,000 appeals decisions in FY 2018

On Sept. 14, two weeks ahead of schedule, the VA exceeded its goal to deliver 81,000 appeals decisions of disability benefits and services to veterans in fiscal year 2018—28,000 more decisions than the previous year.

In doing so, VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals provided thousands of veterans with critical, life-changing decisions.

The achievements come amid focused Board efforts to prepare for the full implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, which is transforming a complex appeals process into a simple, timely and transparent process.

This process provides Veterans with more choice and control. Veterans who disagree with the a claim decision have three options under the Act: a higher level review at the office of original jurisdiction; a supplemental claim with the original jurisdiction office; and appeal to the VA Board.

Once a veteran appeals to the Board, he or she remains in control of the process by choosing a docket best suited to the appeal: Direct Review Docket, Evidence Docket or Hearing Docket.

To support the various organizations preparing to help veterans navigate the new appeals process, the chairman of the Board and her staff led numerous training sessions and panels held by national, state and local veteran service organizations and legal organizations.

To maintain its momentum, the Board hired 186 new attorneys this fiscal year, and plans to add 30 more to the team. Additionally, the Board is joining the Military Spouse Employment Partnership, and looks forward to participating in a program that helps bring the valuable insights and tremendous talent of military spouses to the VA Board.

For more details, visit [www.bva.va.gov](http://www.bva.va.gov).

### UNDERSTANDING VA EXAMS

Review examinations are requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs to check the severity of your service-connected disability. VA will request a review exam when they need to assess the severity of a disability, or evidence indicates there has been an important and relevant change in the disability or by law are required to conduct a periodic review.

A medical professional will conduct the VA review exam. Their role is to assess your medical condition and they will not be able to answer specific questions about your benefits. Sometimes the VA examiner may be able to complete the exam report by reviewing your medical records without an in-person exam or call. The clinician may ask questions, perform a physical exam, send you for X-rays or lab work, observe your behavior, or review your file with you. Based on

your review of your disability, the VA will prepare a new decision and contact you by mail.

One of three things will happen; your disability remains the same, has worsened and an increase in benefits may be appropriate, or has improved and a reduction in benefits may be appropriate. If you miss your review exam, it may negatively affect your benefits. Please call to reschedule if you cannot attend. If you do not attend your exam, VA is required by law to propose a reduction or termination of your benefits.

### VA LEGAL AID

Pennsylvania has three locations that provide legal aid to veterans. Some are pro bono (no cost)

to assist veterans with civil, family, criminal, financial, domestic (divorce, custody, and child support), expungement, and estate planning (wills).

- Coatesville VAMC – 1400 Blackhorse Hill Road, Coatesville PA - [Diana.Zinnie@va.gov](mailto:Diana.Zinnie@va.gov)

- Erie VAMC – 135 East 38th Street Boulevard, Erie PA 16504 - Jeffrey.Natalie@va.gov

- Lebanon VAMC – 1700 South Lincoln Avenue,

PA - [Sarah.Primak@va.gov](mailto:Sarah.Primak@va.gov)

### VA Implements New Fiduciary Regs to Further Protect Veterans

The VA has updated regulations related to how it governs the oversight of beneficiaries, who, because of injury, disease, or age, are unable to manage their benefits, and the appointment and oversight of fiduciaries for these beneficiaries.

Managed by VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the new regulations, which took effect in August, update and reorganize fiduciary rules consistent with current law and VA policies, and clarify the rights of beneficiaries and the roles of VA and fiduciaries in the program.

Among other things, the new regulations clarify beneficiaries' rights, including the right to appeal fiduciary appointments and other fiduciary decisions, the four percent limit on fiduciary fees, and the procedures to remove a fiduciary, for instance, when a beneficiary demonstrates the ability to manage their own funds or when VA determines that the fiduciary misused VA benefits.

This is the first full revision of the Fiduciary Activities regulations since they were first published in 1975.

### FREE FLU SHOTS FOR VETERANS

Veterans are reminded that no-cost flu shots are available for veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. Contact your local VA Medical Center or CBOC for more information.

Free flu shots are also available at Walgreen's Pharmacy locations.

The Center for Disease Control urges persons with health issues, including compromised immune systems, and older Americans to flu vaccinations.



Confidential help for Veterans and their families

**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**



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

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**World War II/Korean War Veterans ... from 1**

friendly with native island headhunters, who considered Japan an enemy, and who were fascinated with modern inventions like cigarette lighters and military equipment.

Earning the Air Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and numerous campaign medals, the Army Air Corps pilot flew 69 combat missions with the 47th Bomber Squadron of the 7th Air Force including one when his crew sank an enemy ship. His squadron flew without fighter cover, which was a decision made higher up based on the B-25 Mitchell's heavy firepower including 50 caliber machine guns in turrets and fixed mounts.

Many enemy air bases and ships felt the fury of low-altitude attacks made by B-25s that were weaponized for strafing, skip bombing and torpedo runs. Using a fine-tuned roller-coaster-like approach, Reddig recalls one time when his squadron returned the favor to the Japanese for frequently bombing their island base at night so his flight squadron could not sleep.

"We popped up over mountains right by their airfield, dove down steep and really hammered a line of their Betty bombers using 50 caliber nose guns and cannon," he recalls with vivid detail. "We really gave it to them that day.

"On different missions, we shot down some Zeros. Sometimes, we returned to base with quite a few bullet holes, and our ground crews playfully let us have it!"

Little did Reddig know that he would witness history when, returning from a bombing mission to Tokyo, his plane flew close to the mushroom cloud over Hiroshima after the Enola Gay dropped the world's first operational atomic bomb.

"My tail gunner told me to look down. I dropped the nose to see what was going on. What I saw made me think I was lost," Reddig recalls. "The city was gone."

He knew by the devastation that this weapon was something extremely different

than any other bomb. The fact that he and his crew lost their hair a few weeks later raised his curiosity about the weapon even higher.

After the war, Reddig left the military in 1950 and settled back into eastern Pennsylvania.

He joined the VFW to find the camaraderie that he enjoyed in Air Corps. He also attended post events to show his continued patriotism and to support his brothers in arms.

His service to the VFW includes donating the proceeds of an interview-style book about his life—*Remembering the Cloud*—to the VFW National Home for Children. So far, the book has generated more than \$4,500 to support families living there. The 88-page book can be purchased on Amazon.com for \$9.95 plus shipping. For an autographed copy, send \$14 (includes shipping) to Connie Kirby, 307 Dorchester Drive, Lititz, PA 17543-8014.)

U.S. Army Air Corps crew member Benjamin J. Jenkins, a life member of Dillsburg Post 6771 who flew in a B-29 bomber, participated in the last major bombing against Japan at the Akita oilfields, after the atomic bombs were dropped.

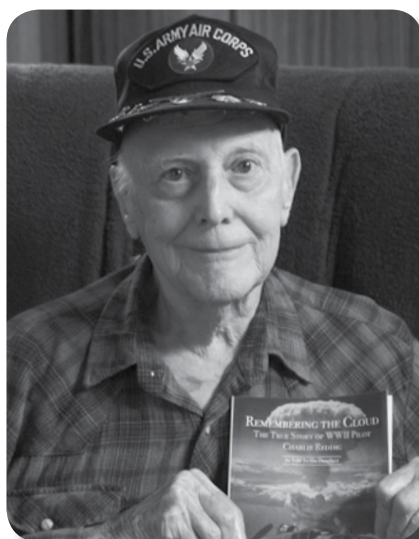
The B-29 was the first pressurized bomber able to fly at 40,000 feet. Jenkins recalls, "the Japanese planes could not reach our altitude. We would look down and see them circling below unable to attack us. So we stripped out most of the machine guns to carry more bombs."

Right after Japan's surrender, Jenkins plane dropped supplies to Allied prisoners of war, including to one POW station holding Marine Corps Corsair ace Pappy Boyington of "Black Sheep" fame.

Like many other proud VFW members, Jenkins speaks to groups about his war experiences to teach younger generations about World War II and to honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

With VFW members Reddig and Jenkins flying overhead, Scout Sniper Carmen A. DeSanti was island hopping with his U.S. Marine Corps buddies taking valuable land from the Japanese empire. DeSanti, who served as the Department's Service Officer Chairman for many years, entered the Marine Corps at the age of 16.

Reaching the rank of Gunnery Sergeant, Orwigsburg Post 2198 member DeSanti recounted his experiences as a scout, which involved being placed by submarines



**Post 3376's Charles Reddig, 94, holds his book, "Remembering the Cloud." More than \$4,500 in proceeds have been sent to the VFW National Home for Children.**

off Japanese held islands, rowing to shore, documenting all Japanese troop and gun placements, and then rowing back out to be picked up by a sub.

He earned the U.S. Navy Cross, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. His unit earned five Battle Stars and the Presidential Citation. He served in the South Pacific from June 1942 to November 1944.

After the war, he used a master's degree in mechanical engineering to enjoy a very successful career in the automotive sector before starting service officer work.

The Department presented a certificate of appreciation to DeSanti's family when he passed away in August at the age of 92.

State VFW membership includes many veterans whose service spanned multiple wars including Marine Technical Sergeant John "Jack" Gunn, a member of Hanover VFW Post 2506. Highly decorated, he was involved in two major invasions during his service in World War II and still feels the chill of the cold Korean winter.

Gunn's service to his nation continued through the VFW, which he joined in 1946. He helped build the State VFW's membership, most notably as State Membership Chairman for ten years.

Gunn, 88, spent countless hours at State HQ making phone calls, meeting with officers, logging thousands of miles on the road and other activities to increase membership. In 1996-

97, when appointed by State Commander Howard Adler, Jr., Gunn earned the well-deserved title "All-American Membership Chairman."

He was proud to help escort National Commanders-in-Chief when they toured Pennsylvania to collect Post memberships. Gunn remembers the Department having as many as 175,000 members.

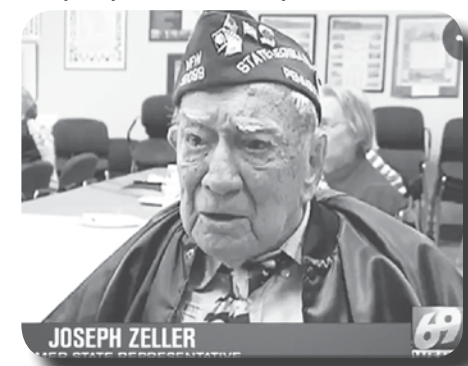
Gunn's other VFW service included being Captain of the State Color Guard; an All-State Post Commander; a member of VFW National committees for Americanism, Citizenship and Community Service; a National Deputy Chief of Staff; and a National Special Aide-de-Camp.

VFW member Joseph R. Zeller—another veteran of both World War II and the Korean War—recently celebrated his 100th birthday. His Allentown Post 12099 comrades held a party for him to show their appreciation of both his military and VFW service, which includes being a past post commander, past State VFW Legislative Committee member and current post judge advocate.

Zeller's military service included almost four years as a chief aviation electrician on the USS Ranger CV-4 Carrier. He then served in the Korean War for another two years.

He also served as a state representative from Lehigh County for ten years, on his local town council and as Mayor of Emmaus.

Punxsutawney Post 2076 member Walter Hurd, who parachuted into Normandy on June 6, 1944, with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, spent many days behind enemy lines in France.



**Post 12099 member Joe Zeller speaks with WFMZ-TV during his 100th birthday celebration. (WFMZ screenshot image)**

He fought the Germans through Holland and to Berlin, including during the Battle of the Bulge.

After 72 years of membership, he still proudly wears his VFW member hat and serves as Post 2076 surgeon.

New Castle Post 315 life member Jay L. McNeil's military career placed him in service during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. His military decorations include the Bronze Star for Valor, the World War II Victory Medal, the Korean War Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

McNeil, 89, was an Army amphibious engineer who continues to serve the VFW as a post guard.

Indiana Post 1989 proudly reports that its roster includes veterans from these wartime eras including James C. Wilson, 87, who served as a company clerk for the Headquarters Company, 7th Division, and is the home association president; former Commander Marlin E. Hartman, 86; Robert Saylor, 95, a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War; and World War II

**WWII and Korean War Vets ... continued on page 9**



**Media Post member World War II veteran Edward Hess, 99, helps Post Quartermaster Bob Hughes and Post Adjutant Ed Modestowicz collect \$900 in Buddy Poppy donations.**



PA Department VFW Membership Update:

83.22% of the 2017-18 Year-End Total

Adjutant Getz continued. "Doing so will hopefully create a stronger surviving post with more members and resources."

The scant volunteers who turned out for struggling Millerstown Post 5049 meetings knew that their post could not stay open with too few officers, fewer members and falling income. Leaders considered handing in the charter but then chose to keep the post's history alive.

Rather than ending its story, the Millerstown Post began a new chapter by merging with Post 34 in Newport—just seven miles away. Post 34 Quartermaster Rex Geiling described the merger process as smooth, with both posts benefiting from the arrangement.

"We appreciated having new members join our post. We gave them life memberships right away, and Post 5049 paid us back when their property sold," Quartermaster Geiling noted.

Also, former members of Post 5049 now have a more modern canteen to enjoy and a larger membership to find camaraderie. There are also more volunteer service opportunities and patriotic activities to continue carrying out the VFW mission.

"We see a few of the transferred members at our meetings and in the canteen. Some participated in our Memorial Day activities. We're also glad to hear any ideas that they have for promoting our post and getting new members," Geiling added.

To honor the legacy of the former Post 5049, Post 34 displays the Millerstown Post charter next to its own charter, along with memorabilia from both buildings.

"We also expanded our public safety donations and student scholarships into the Millerstown area to help keep the VFW's presence there. A historical group is going to display a member plaque from inside Post 5049's building. We don't plan on letting the memory of that post fade into oblivion," Geiling said.

The former Post 5049's Quartermaster, Bruce Hengst of Millerstown, agreed that the merger was a positive experience. He is now serving as a three-year trustee on Post 34's leadership team.

On the other side of Pennsylvania, two Mon Valley VFW posts are now one. Following a unanimous vote on September 4, Post 6681 has merged with Post 5008, formerly in East Pittsburgh. The newly minted post is officially known as VFW John Dayton Rodgers Post 5008.

"This is a great opportunity for the VFW as well as our community," said Marine Beirut veteran William Gribbin, first commander of the consolidated post. "We can all work together to benefit our members and those we pledge to serve."

William Roland, a former commander



New Post 5008 Commander William Gribbin, center, receives the gavel symbolizing his authority from Wayne Perry, State Senior Vice Commander, while William Roland, District 29 commander, watches.

of VFW Post 5008 who as District 29 commander oversees roughly 36 posts in Allegheny County, agrees that this new configuration will be a marked improvement. Being separated only by a 10-minute drive before the merger, both posts competed for combat-decorated veterans within the same communities.

Like most wars of attrition, the conflict was slowly weakening both sides. Now the two posts will work together to serve local veterans and their families.

"We're always looking to foster a spirit of co-operation rather than competition between posts," said Roland, a retired Army major with 26 years of service. "When it comes down to it, all of us are committed to honoring those who have fallen by helping the living."

VFW Post 5008's former building is slated to be sold, said Roland, and the proceeds of the sale will be used to help strengthen the recently amalgamated post. He added that when it comes to the VFW, membership is about much more than a post having a building.

At times, in fact, a building can be a liability. Some distressed posts that cannot keep their canteen balance sheets on the plus side close their buildings and still operate their posts.

"When veterans think about joining the VFW, they shouldn't be thinking about a bar or a social hall," Roland said. "They should be thinking about our hospital visitation programs and sponsorship of local youth sports teams. At its heart, that is what the VFW is all about—serving veterans, our troops and its community."

Shellsville Post 9639 followed that approach by selling its building and using the proceeds to build its reserves to fund service programs.

Rather than struggling with its canteen, Post 9639 now meets in a municipal building and maintains a strong record of participating in VFW service initiatives and community projects. The post, which has earned national VFW honors many times, hopes to return to its standing as an

Top posts ranked by Membership Division

Div.	Post	Location	%
1	8951	WEST YORK	97.92%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	88.48%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	77.69%
2	249	BUTLER	94.35%
2	6704	MECHANICSBURG	94.03%
2	2006	MEAVILLE	93.16%
2	2385	GRATZ	91.77%
2	7294	MILLERSVILLE	91.36%
3	813	DUBOIS	111.02%
3	464	OIL CITY	96.19%
3	2493	MOUNT WOLF	94.13%
3	169	VENANGO	93.65%
3	1835	FRANKLIN	92.40%
4	8803	TIDIOUTE	100.88%
4	4793	WAYNESBURG	100.00%
4	1718	HARRISBURG	95.89%
4	537	ETTERS	95.26%
4	4789	NORTH EAST	93.23%
5	7878	KING OF PRUSSIA	97.60%
5	5542	BRISTOL	95.39%
5	9219	PLEASANTVILLE	94.55%
5	5825	PINE GROVE MILLS	93.71%
5	148	HARRISBURG	91.25%
6	6675	PITTSBURGH	103.10%
6	38	READING	102.14%
6	3575	QUARRYVILLE	101.43%
6	20	PHILADELPHIA	100.87%
6	3398	WILLOW GROVE	95.53%

Top posts ranked by Membership Division

Div.	Post	Location	%
7	7046	STEWARTSTOWN	119.35%
7	8008	NESQUEHONING	104.80%
7	415	NEW BETHLEHEM	101.05%
7	9765	OAKFORD	94.23%
7	1586	HASTINGS	92.59%
8	6301	JOHNSONBURG	105.47%
8	747	POINT MARION	104.65%
8	3090	PHILADELPHIA	101.20%
8	7919	MONTGOMERY CO.	101.17%
8	709	SHARPSBURG	97.67%
9	974	DARBY	105.17%
9	5205	PHILADELPHIA	101.51%
9	7650	PHILADELPHIA	100.00%
9	1424	MARIENVILLE	96.77%
9	5756	SEWICKLEY	96.77%
10	3610	PHILADELPHIA	125.00%
10	4040	PITTSBURGH	120.00%
10	6231	SLIPPERY ROCK	110.00%
10	9118	LANDISBURG	103.33%
10	1606	NEWELL	100.00%

On October 21, Dept. membership stood at 61,349 members or 83.22% of the 2017-18 year-end total including 494 new members and 160 reinstated members. All posts are encouraged to read the Membership Contest Book to learn how posts and individual members can receive monetary and other incentives for reaching contest goals.

Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of October 21

FIRST PLACE



COMMANDER ZBIGNIEW LASKA

- DISTRICT 1 - 91.80% - CMDR. ZBIGNIEW LASKA
- DISTRICT 18 - 87.38% - CMDR. DAVID GYGER
- DISTRICT 21 - 86.80% - CMDR. RICHARD OLVITT
- DISTRICT 9 - 86.09% - CMDR. WILLIAM STELLFOX
- DISTRICT 19 - 85.89% - CMDR. JASON REED
- DISTRICT 15 - 85.41% - CMDR. DANIEL RIEPPEL
- DISTRICT 16 - 85.18% - CMDR. JONATHAN BITTNER
- DISTRICT 20 - 84.42% - CMDR. RICHARD ELLIS
- DISTRICT 26 - 84.35% - CMDR. WILLIAM BROWN
- DISTRICT 25 - 84.09% - CMDR. JAMES HODGE

"All American Post."

Perhaps the biggest problem facing VFW posts nationwide is a shrinking pool of veterans. Also, finding new members to fill depleting ranks is often made more difficult due to the VFW's narrow eligibility criteria.

In Allegheny County (District 29), U.S. Census Bureau data shows the number of veterans dropping from about 82,550 to 63,500 over the next five years. And not all of these veterans have the required service records that make them VFW eligible.

"Many posts were founded shortly after World War II," explained Roland, a

Kosovo Campaign and GWOT veteran. "Many more men and women served abroad then and returned to establish VFW posts. Barring another big war, we won't see this size of mobilization again."

What hasn't changed over the last few decades, said Roland, are good reasons to join the VFW. Since 2006, nearly two million military families have received VFW Military Assistance Program grants. Additionally, VFW service officers have helped nearly 300,000 disabled veterans recover approximately \$7 billion in benefits since 2015.

By merging with other VFW units or operating without canteens, struggling posts can provide meaningful ways for members to perpetuate the VFW's heritage of serving others.

*This story was co-authored by Operation Desert Storm veteran Michael P. Mauer and Department Public Affairs Director David A. Sandman. Post 914 Life Member Mauer served as an Army photojournalist during Desert Storm. He was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal by Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf for his actions during the war.*



Bruce Hengst of Millerstown, Jim Snyder of Newport and Rex Geiling of Newport display old charters for Posts 34 and 5049 along with Post 34's new charter.



# Focus on Mission Success



Post 6631 of Selinsgrove presents \$500 to the State Police to support Camp Cadet, which provides youth with camping excursions to help teach them valuable life skills. In the photo are (from left) Post Quartermaster Harold Aucker, Trooper Rick Blair and Post Trustee Tony Rankin.



The Reinholds VFW Post 6759 raised \$12,000 to donate to Keystone Military Families for Stockings for Soldiers. Pictured here are (front row, left to right) Auxiliary Secretary Donna Rutt, Auxiliary member and project coordinator Danielle Shumate, Auxiliary President Britta Killian, Past Commander Scott Fisher, (back row) Assistant Joe Ply and Past Commander Larry Rutt. (Photo by Aubree Fahringer)



Carlisle Post 477 Post Commander Rick Olson welcomes State Commander Thomas Hanzes to one of its luncheons for area World War II and Korean War veterans. The Post, which invites all veterans from these eras to enjoy a free meal and good camaraderie, contacts local retirement centers to bring their veterans to the event.



Selinsgrove Post 6631 presents a 2002 Chrysler Sebring to a needy Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran. Pictured are (from left) Vice Commander Robert Rachau, Commander Doug Hammet, Iraqi Veteran John Black, Service Officer Harold Aucker and Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist Randal Hollenbach from PA CareerLink. The vehicle was donated to the VFW by Mary and Lou Barlett.



On September 11, the officers of Conshohocken Post 1074 visited a local 9/11 memorial. Post Chaplain Dwight Young coordinated a program and Quartermaster Tom Smith played the National Anthem and Taps. The officer detail provided a Color Guard and Rifle Detail. The Post then attended "Suicide Prevention: A Panel Discussion" at the Fellowship Community Center. Veterans were instructed how to help all who suffer from depression and suicidal thoughts. Shown are (from left) Jay Kunaszuk; Walter Hartnett, Senior Vice Commander; George Burchard, Commander; and Ed Strassle. (Photo by Eric Lee).



Erie VFW Post 470 Commander George Tanner and Past District 28 Commander Pete Glaz present Lakeside Auto's Andy Gabler with a check to the Pay It Forward Campaign. The campaign provides donations to persons experiencing hardships.



# Focus on Mission Success



Oil City Post 464, shown here represented by Commander Jason Reed wearing his All-State VFW Post hat, donates funds to a local fire department to prepare Medical Stat kits. The kits will be given to local schools so teaching facilities are better medically equipped to handle mass casualty events. The post received many messages of gratitude from first responders and schools.



Mechanicsburg Post 6704 Commander Michael Gagnon presents \$3,000 to the Hampden Township Veterans Recognition Committee to continue development of the Captain Leon Lock Veterans Memorial. Project Chairman Gary Coburn and Treasurer Robert Weed accept the donation.



Millersville Post 7264 holds a troop appreciation picnic for its adopted military unit, the Army Reserve's 1185th Deployment & Distribution Support Battalion. The unit, based in Lancaster, has a mission of providing trained, well-equipped units and individuals for active duty in time of war and national emergency.



Several Posts in District 21 assist a new outdoor store in York with dedicating and raising a very large U.S. flag. The flag proudly flies above the nearby landscape and serves as a patriotic tribute to the many servicemen and women who have fought for freedom.



State Commander Thomas Hanzas participates in the VFW Homeless Veterans Ride. District 18 Commander Dave Gyger escorts Commander Hanzas on the ride which stopped at many posts.



Nesquehoning Post 8008 participates in the ribbon cutting at a new playground at Panther Valley Elementary School. The cost of this project was in excess of \$40,000. Post 8008 donated \$1,000 while the Post 8008 Auxiliary also donated to this project. Pictured are (from left) District 20 Commander Rick Ellis, Superintendent Dennis Kergick, Principal Robert Palazzo, Post Commander Matthew DeHart and Post Auxiliary President Christa Kattner.



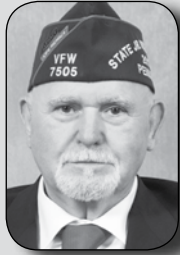
The VFW continues to expand its outreach efforts to recruit new members and help veterans with benefits. Shown are (from left), Recruiter Cecil Dennis, State Jr. Vice Commander Ron Peters, State Sr. Vice Commander Wayne Perry and Membership Chairman Henry Mannella at the Latrobe Air Show.





## Our Organization has a Great Story to Tell

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



We had great post leadership and Department training sessions in August. Thanks to the hundreds of post officers and committee members who attended the events held at six locations. Thanks to the posts that hosted our events.

I encourage everyone who attended these events to share what they learned during their post meetings so others can grow in their knowledge about the VFW. Also, share the essential communication tips that National VFW Public Affairs Director Joe Davis covered. Here are a few key takeaways from Comrade Davis' one-hour presentation:

- Recruiting becomes easier when you know the "VFW's Story"—who we are, what we do and why we do it. Learn about the VFW's mission so you can speak about our history.
- Understand that many organizations are trying to get younger veterans to join. Knowing how to explain the VFW's unique position as the world's largest group of combat zone veterans will make our organization stand out from all the other veteran-related

groups.

- Learning about the VFW's programs and services makes it easier to talk with eligible members about joining. Don't just say that the VFW is the most effective advocate for combat veterans. Be ready to explain why this is true. For example, inform veterans that our State Service Officers connect Pennsylvania veterans with around \$30 million in benefits annually.
- Visit your local media outlets and meet with editors. Newspapers, radio stations and TV stations are more likely to cover your event when they have an existing respect for how your VFW makes the community better.

*(To see all of Comrade Davis' program slides, visit the [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org) website, enter "Post Info," then open the "Tell the VFW Story" file.)*

Comrades, we have a chain of command just like we did in the service. There is a proper way to handle all issues that come up. Please follow your post and district chain of command. Doing so allows your officers to do their jobs and to stop problems fast.

Let's respect each other as veterans, support our VFW leaders, offer your time and energy to our projects, and do your very best to promote the VFW.



## Facts and Figures

### Let's Boast about Our VFW Accomplishments

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



Comrades, are you proud to be a VFW member? Do you tell others about the many ways that VFW posts and programs improve lives each day?

We should think and talk positively about who we are as

VFW members and about what our posts do to deserve the label as the greatest veterans organization on this planet.

We need to promote "The VFW Story" as having one vision and one voice. Our vision—as the VFW's mission has always been—is to serve and support veterans, military families and communities. When veterans issues are being debated, our voice should be the loudest one. We should brag about our 117-year history of walking the talk.

For example, we recoup \$7.7 billion in benefits for veterans nationwide, annually. When lawmakers work on veterans' quality of life programs, our VFW Legislative Services staff presents critical information, testifies and follows

up on how well decision makers keep their promises to us.

We provide \$52 million annually for community service projects across the nation and contribute nine million hours of volunteer support each year.

Through our military support program—including the VFW Unmet Needs grant program—we've given out \$10 million to more than 8,900 military families since 2004. VFW posts have held picnics, parties and other events to honor and support 2.2 million military personnel since 2015.

Working with Sports Clips, we've given \$5 million in "Help a Hero" student veteran scholarships since 2014. Our VFW junior and senior high school contests generate \$3 million annually to help students plan for higher education.

America's VFW posts provided \$850,000 in disaster relief just last year.

We should share this great news with potential members and our existing members. The VFW is not a bar!

To gain members, we must sell the VFW for who we are and what we do for others. Thanks for doing your part.

## Membership Moment

### RECRUITING TIPS FROM VFW "ALL AMERICANS"

1. Ask every person, "Are you a veteran?" and "Did you serve overseas?" to establish a common bond and confirm eligibility.

2. Have every member complete a list of eligible family members and friends. Often, they have never been asked to join.

3. Always visit a prospective member in person. Calling and writing are great campaign tools, but nothing works better than a handshake and eye-to-eye contact.

4. Always carry an application and a membership brochure. Insist that everyone on your team carry them too. It is hard to recover a lost opportunity.

5. Set up recruiting booths at malls, department stores, fairs, special public events and other high traffic areas. Use videos available through National Headquarters. Plan your display carefully. Be prepared to follow up.

6. Do not overlook lapsed members. Their circumstances may have changed and they may be ready to return.

7. Use the "Shotgun Mailer" as part of your membership campaign.

8. Visit other veteran, fraternal and civic

organizations. Let your concern and willingness to help be known by all.

9. Include membership in all programs, for example, while distributing Buddy Poppies. Always ask, "Are you an overseas veteran?"

10. Membership is more than a reflection of recruiting ability. It also reflects your leadership ability, the quality of your programs and the health of the organization.

#### PA VFW Membership Contest Spotlight:

- Contest 3 - Continuous members who pay their 2019 dues by Nov. 30th will be entered into a drawing for one of three Life Memberships, and the December drawing.

- Contest 4 - Continuous members who pay their 2019 dues by Dec. 31st have a chance at winning one of two Life Memberships.

- Contest 9 - Posts that properly report 100% in membership by Dec. 31st (with 15 new/reinstated members) will receive \$500 and \$100 VFW Store certificates.

Please see the complete Membership Program for all individual, post and district contests, and to learn how to earn "All State Post" status. The program is available online at [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org), under "Post Info."



## Engage, Invite and Be Supportive

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



During my travels to posts as your Jr. Vice-Commander, I have experienced warm hospitality and strong support. I really appreciate your kindness and how much effort you put into the VFW.

Success as an organization takes a great deal of hard work and, on many occasions, with just a handful of people. I commend you all for what you do to work our mission.

To stabilize our membership, we must make a concerted effort to focus on new members, reinstating people who have left and changing over continuous members to life members. Growth and retention are vital to ensuring that we can keep being the best veterans organization!

I have seen that if we create a friendly atmosphere inside our VFW posts—one that is inclusive, inviting, caring and supportive—eligible members will join. New members will be more open to getting involved if they like the way they are treated. We hang around with the people we like, right?

We should also treat our leaders and

existing members with respect and honor. Being nice and supporting others will help us boost and maintain our numbers. More people will be willing to volunteer for project teams and leadership positions if they feel appreciated and welcome.

One of the first things you need to learn about recruiting is how to prospect. Prospecting is identifying places where veterans congregate and engaging with potential members. My barber introduced me to a veteran while I was getting my hair cut. When I engaged him, I learned he was a Vietnam veteran. The veteran met me at our post that afternoon. He is now a life member of the VFW.

Create ways of getting out of our club rooms and help put the VFW mission into motion so people can see how we make a difference in so many lives. We have something to "sell" that is intangible. Our "product"

is how we help veterans, our troops and local citizens. Please help us show who we are and what we do by promoting the VFW mission and our impact.

Let's get out into our communities and befriend veterans, our troops and their families. Remember, someone helped you to join the VFW and feel comfortable among our veteran brothers and sisters. Please return the favor.

***I have seen that if we create a friendly atmosphere inside our Posts, eligible members will join. New members will be more open to getting involved.***





## Women Veterans Committee

### VFW Women Veterans Retreat is March 29-31

Amy MacKenzie, Chairperson - [quartermaster@ephratavfw.org](mailto:quartermaster@ephratavfw.org)



Dear Comrades: I encourage women veterans to save the weekend of March 29-31, 2019, for the Department's Women Veterans Retreat in Ephrata.

Why do we need a Women Veterans Retreat? Women Veterans are often an invisible population. Their transition from the military to civilian life is often quite different than male veterans. Many women often do not identify as veterans, and many do not seek services when support is first needed. When they do, they need support immediately.

This retreat will, among other topics, help women veterans learn about VA health and mental health benefits and how to advocate for themselves; provide helpful tips for women transitioning from military to civilian life, and address many other areas of interest to all women veterans—all presented in a relaxed

environment.

Many VFW posts and auxiliaries have supported this retreat with donations, which allows us to offer this event free of charge or at a low cost. Your support enables us to help women veterans, including those facing financial hardship, to enjoy this event.

Feedback from past retreats shows that this outreach event generates great camaraderie, many friendships and information that helps female veterans enjoy life more. More details to come, but please reserve these dates.

If you have not visited the VA's webpage just for women veterans, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/persona/veteran-women.asp>. I encourage you to contact a PA VFW State Service Officer if you would like to file a claim. They are great advocates for our veterans.

If you want to contact me about the retreat or about anything that will support women veterans, please email me at [quartermaster@ephratavfw.org](mailto:quartermaster@ephratavfw.org).



## Chaplain's Corner

### Hospital Visits & Safeguarding Confidentiality

Rev. Peter Hook, Chaplain - [peterhook@verizon.net](mailto:peterhook@verizon.net)



Most people value their personal privacy. And most people also prefer to have their personal business kept private. Financial affairs, relationship issues and health matters are regarded as subjects to keep private, unless they choose to share that information with someone they trust. So even then, there is an expectation that the information will be held in strictest confidence.

However, when a person enters a hospital, no matter who it is, knowledge of that seems to spread rapidly with little or no regard for the wishes of the patient. Within minutes, details of the person's condition can spread throughout an organization, the nation and even around the world. We should realize that not every hospitalized person wants that information known. Also, unless given permission, we should not disseminate indiscriminately.

It is important for us to realize that not everyone wants information about their hospitalization known or shared with others. A patient, if he/she so desires, has the right to be in the hospital anonymously. And every hospital has policies in place to protect the privacy rights of patients.

If such a request is being made by a person being admitted to a hospital, the hospital must honor and respect the patient's rights and wishes. In such cases, the patient's presence or room number may not be divulged by hospital staff.

All of us should keep in mind that the patient should be the one who determines what information is shared, how it is shared, and with whom.

Keep these things in mind when someone you know becomes hospitalized:

1. Ask before visiting. While many people appreciate visits, not everyone does. Call ahead to find out if your friend can have visitors, feels well enough to see you, or wants to have you visit them.

the VFW to improve life for veterans, military personnel and citizens.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: There are hundreds more veterans from these wars that deserve recognition for their service in the military and the VFW. State HQ encourages all posts to find ways to pay tribute to them.*

*The Department of Pennsylvania VFW also honors and salutes its living past state commanders who served overseas during and/or after World War II and the Korean War including: 1982-83 State Commander Thomas J. Dougherty, KW, Post 3474; 1986-87, Allen Q. Jones, WWII, Post 21 (Jones is also a past national chief of staff*

2. Don't stay too long. Patients typically get little rest when hospitalized. They are awoken by staff throughout the day and night for vital sign checks, medications and other procedures. Remember, it's the fact that you took the time to visit, and not the length of time you stay, that gives your patient the boost.

3. Leave the room if a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider arrives to examine or talk to the patient. Unless you are a parent, spouse, or someone else who is an official advocate for the patient, that conversation is not your business. You can return once the provider leaves.

4. Safeguard confidential information. ANY health-related information regarding a patient, whether given to you directly by the patient or a staff member or information gleaned indirectly through what you may observe or overhear, must be held in strict confidentiality. The only use you may make of that information is in determining how to best minister to the patient.

Upon leaving the hospital, all of that information must remain confidential and should not be shared with others. You should never assume that you may share any information with fellow comrades, church or synagogue members to keep them updated or for prayer support, unless you have the direct, specific permission of the patient.

The use and release of patient health information is governed by HIPAA (Health Information Portability and Accountability Act, 2003) legislation and regulations. Chaplains are often the link between the patient and the post. Please keep HIPAA regulations in mind and continue to maintain our comrade's privacy and confidentiality.

Please get your VFW post or auxiliary member's permission before sharing information about their hospitalization. Ask the person what he/she wants you to share with other post members.

*Blessings as you serve.*

*who has attended 68 state conventions and 60 national conventions); 1992-93, William C. Allen, Occupation/Germany, Post 7213; 1997-98, Peter Krenitsky, Occupation/Germany, Post 6082; 1998-99, Albert S. Thomas, Jr., Occupation after KW, Post 974; and 2016-17, Thomas A. Brown, KW, Post 928.*

## General Orders No. 2



1. Members are reminded that under the subscription dues model, an annual members dues expire on the last day of the month of which they paid the previous year. Annual members are encouraged to renew their dues prior to their anniversary month to avoid a lapse in continuous membership. Officers and committee members, whose membership is not in good standing for failure to pay current dues, by the end of their anniversary month, shall forfeit eligibility to hold any office the remainder of the administrative year.

In addition, every effort should be made to renew the membership of continuous members and sign up new and recover former members at all times during the year.

2. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to the Commander-in-Chief's decision in response to questions raised concerning alcoholic beverages and smoking/vaping in the Post meeting room during the Post meeting as set forth below:

It is held to be objectionable and contrary to accepted rules of order and proper decorum implicit in the ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to permit alcoholic beverages or the use of smoking/vaping products in the Post meeting room during Post meetings. Accordingly, the presence, dispensation, and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or the use of smoking/vaping products in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings are unacceptable and prohibited. It is the intent of the Commander-in-Chief's decision, regarding this response, to include Post, County Council, District and Department meetings, whereas it is held to be objectionable. Please refer to Section 1001 (25) of the National Manual of Procedure.

3. Certificates of charter evidencing consolidation have been issued to the following Posts: Posts 1977 and 3902 consolidated as Post No. 1977, Decorah, Iowa; and Posts 5008 and 6681 consolidated as Post No. 5008, Wilkins Township, Pennsylvania.

By: Thomas M. Hanzes, State Commander/ATTEST: John B. Getz, Jr., State Adjutant

## WWII and Korean War Vets ... continued from page 4

veteran James F. Watters, 92.

A few years ago, Mohnton Post 9045 honored World War II Navy veteran Earl Eshelman, a founding member of the post, for dedicating many hours to helping it to succeed in carrying out the VFW's mission. His post service includes being commander during the 1970s and more than three decades as quartermaster. Eshelman, 95, is also a past District 13 quartermaster.

Korean War veteran Francis Romeo continues to help leadership and members at Dubois Post 813 find spiritual guidance through decades of service as chaplain.

After World War II and the Korean War ended, thousands of VFW members also earned their eligibility through service with occupation forces. After fulfilling their duty of monitoring former war zone areas, many of these veterans continued their service to America through the VFW.

The VFW could not have become the world's most elite association of combat zone veterans without this tremendous wave of selfless duty. With the same vigor that these veterans fought for global freedom, they channeled their patriotism and passion for doing what is right through

**REUNION - USS Donner, LSD-20: Annual Reunion set for April 29-May 2, 2019, Cincinnati, OH. Contact Dennis Heimbach, (610) 775-7539 or [Dennisheimb@gmail.com](mailto:Dennisheimb@gmail.com).**



## VFW Chief Lawrence Vows to "Make It Happen"

VFW's newest commander-in-chief is a man who wants to get things done, sooner rather than later. His experiences as an artilleryman in Korea and undercover police officer in New Mexico, as well as his rapid rise through VFW's ranks,



underscore his leadership philosophy.

"I believe in more action, less talk," Lawrence said. "And this all comes back to recruiting. We know what the plan is, now we have to execute it. That's why I chose 'Make it Happen' as my slogan."

VFW Commander-in-Chief B.J. Lawrence pauses for a photo in May at the Centennial Plaza at VFW's National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo.

To attract veterans of the post-9/11 generation, Lawrence said VFW members must do a better job of spreading the message about the organization's mission.

"We've come a long way on reaching those vets," he said. "What we need to do better is simply tell our story about the wonderful things we do for veterans and our communities. Young vets are interested in working on projects where they believe they are making a difference."

Lawrence said being a veteran who came of age in the 1980s puts him in a unique position. He's been influenced by examples set by older vets and wants to pass on that knowledge to younger vets, a group with which he has great rapport. He said it gives him "the needed sense of balance" to be successful as Chief.

"I believe I can work with all generations," the 52-year-old said. "Being involved with VFW for almost 20 years now, I understand the needs of our older veterans. I also can relate to our younger veterans and what they want. I want to hear their points of view and their visions for the future of the organization."

As VFW transitions to younger leadership, Lawrence wants to make sure that all veterans feel welcome.

"Our membership is not only getting younger but more diverse every day," he noted. "When young vets join a VFW post, they might feel like they want to shape it to fit their goals. That's wonderful. We want them engaged, but we don't want anyone excluded."

"I tell post commanders to make all members feel involved. The military and VFW are made up of veterans from all walks of life. It's imperative that we make everyone feel comfortable in a post."

While working for the Tularosa Police Department in 2000, Lawrence joined VFW Post 7686 in Alamogordo, N.M. It was an experience that made him

an immediate fan of the organization.

"I was helping out with a Toys for Tots drive at a community event one day," he recalled, "and a VFW post member invited me to a meeting. When I showed up, I

was pleasantly surprised to learn that I was eligible for VFW membership. The members also were having a drawing for a life membership, and I was selected."

Because of that, Lawrence said he felt as if he "owed something" to the post. "Once I joined, there was no looking back," he said. "I got involved with activities and post committees."

### GUIDING THE VFW

As VFW's top leader, Chief Lawrence said he plans to focus on the organization's priority goals during his tenure. He will emphasize issues such as timely access to VA health care, the distribution of private care to supplement VA's services, confirmation of a new VA secretary, ending sequestration and the full accounting of U.S. troops still listed as missing from World War II forward.

The Chief added that as an organization, VFW must always be mindful of what's going on in the world and how to respond.

"We must be ready to adapt to new realities and uncertainties," Lawrence said. "Our mission never changes but the logistics of accomplishing that mission can change. We must always be prepared to do what's best for veterans."

And as all VFW commanders know, the best method of accomplishing their goals is with the help of a robust membership. "Our voice is important on Capitol Hill," Lawrence said. "The bigger our membership, the louder the voice. We always must be in a favorable position to advocate for our military and veterans."

To increase membership and be in tune with today's veterans, the Chief said VFW should reflect the demographics of the U.S. military in the 21st century. The key to that, he said, is for post members to heartily welcome their brothers- and sisters-in-arms and their families.

*This article features excerpts from a feature story in the September 2018 issue of VFW magazine, and was written by Tim Dyhouse, editor-in-chief, VFW magazine. Photo by Susan McSpadden.*

*Post commanders, quartermasters and individual members can read the State and National Membership Contests on [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org) under "Post Info" or call State HQ (717.234.7927) for copies.*

## Department's Diabetes Program Support Marches On

The 2018-2019 Department of Pennsylvania VFW Diabetes Program is dedicated in memory of Bill Mankey, who passed away from complications of diabetes. Mankey—who held many positions at all VFW levels including as a State Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms—once

District 21 Diabetes Walk continues to grow stronger. This year, the District 21 team raised \$20,031.87 during its 30-mile plus walking tour visiting all 18 posts in the district.

The Department encourages posts, auxiliaries and districts to donate to the Diabetes Research and Support Program.

Remember, every veteran knows someone with Diabetes. In fact, 25% of veterans have Diabetes. Together, the Pennsylvania VFW and Auxiliary have raised over \$2.5 million for Diabetes Research.

The Department thanks VFW posts, auxiliaries and districts, for all donations throughout the years.

Please continue supporting the Diabetes Program by sending donations to State Headquarters, earmarked "Diabetes Program" to State Headquarters.



**Chambersburg Post 1599 Commander Edgar Miller presents a \$3,500 donation to March team members**

walked the 100-mile Erie to Pittsburgh Diabetes March.

Mankey was a member of West View VFW Post 2754, whose Color Guard escorted the walkers across the finish line for many years.

The Erie to Pittsburgh Diabetes March has been discontinued, but the



**District 21 March for Diabetes team members log some of the many thousands of steps required to finish the course.**

## National HQ Offers Grants to Help Post Projects

VFW posts and auxiliaries can receive grants to assist with the cost of a community service event through the VFW Foundation. To help posts and auxiliaries serve their communities, the Foundation established the VFW Foundation Post/VFW Auxiliary Community Support Grant. To help departments, posts and auxiliaries provide vital support to America's heroes

and their families, the foundation offers its VFW Foundation Regular Grant.

And, under certain circumstances, the National VFW HQ also provides grants to posts that conduct military support programs that involve direct interaction with the troops. For more information on any of these grant programs, visit [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) and [www.vfw.org/foundation](http://www.vfw.org/foundation).

## VFW Urges Congress to Hold GI Bill Oversight Hearings

WASHINGTON – The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is calling on both the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs to hold oversight hearings on the recent delayed payments of Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits.

VFW is also urging the Senate to pass the SIT-REP Act of 2018, which would ensure that student veterans cannot be disenrolled from their educational programs due to processing errors by VA.

In a letter sent to the House and Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs chairmen and ranking members, Carlos Fuentes,

VFW's director of National Legislative Service, said that in the months preceding the deadline to enact the Forever GI Bill by Aug. 1, "VA officials repeatedly vowed that students and schools would receive payments on time and, while the amounts may not be correct, veterans would not be harmed."

Fuentes also noted that the SIT-REP Act of 2018 was passed unanimously in the House in May, "but lack of Senate action has prevented this important bill from becoming law in time to prevent current issues from negatively affecting veterans."



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Calling the confidential Veterans  
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# The VFW Auxiliary ...

## Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



*The Department President Says...*

### **Our Membership Drives Everything We Do**

By Charlotte Lopes - [swoggerlopes51@gmail.com](mailto:swoggerlopes51@gmail.com) or (724) 454-2820



Sisters and brothers, we are off to a slow start in membership. Please commit yourselves to bring in new members and retain current ones. Remember to include younger veterans and

their families.

Remember that the life of your post and its auxiliary is membership. We must bring in new members to replenish our aging members and who will step up and take the torch to lead the way forward for this organization. We must move forward to reach our 100%.

There are many eligible people out there. We need to get them to join to help support our veterans and their families. Let them know who we are and what we are about. We have a great story to tell!

When you do sign up new members, please welcome them and invite them to participate in our projects.

Also, please remember our brave men and women overseas today—and those who are serving domestically—and their families. Some tend to forget that our military helps out during times of disasters such as the areas devastated by hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Reach out and help these people by sending in a donation to the Disaster Relief Fund, VFW National Headquarters - Quartermaster, 406 W.

### **Support our Poppy and National Home Programs**

By Sarah Smith, Buddy Poppy & National Home Chairman - [sasmith519@comcast.net](mailto:sasmith519@comcast.net)



During the Fall and upcoming holiday season, local communities hold a lot of events that the VFW can get involved with—from parades and fairs, bingos and dinners, there are many chances

to share Buddy Poppies with others.

Use these events to educate children on patriotism and give them something they can keep. Is your post planning a Family Freedom Festival? Make there is

34th Street, 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111. Earmark your checks for "Disaster Relief." REMEMBER, you can tap into your Post Relief Fund to make donations to the National HQ.

During my year, I have had many opportunities to spend time with State Commander Thomas (Ace) Hanzes. He is working hard to serve veterans, our military and those in need.

We enjoyed greeting many veterans at the annual Sharing and Caring riverboat ride on the rivers surrounding Pittsburgh. What an amazing program that gives hospitalized or immobile veterans a great adventure. As Commander Hanzes mentioned, this event could be the only time that some of these veterans get away for fun.

Our Auxiliary was created to serve. To continue to serve our veterans and their families well, we must keep harmony in our meetings to build how we carry out our mission.

We are a team with a shared goal; no one should be expected to carry the load alone. Please do your share to make our Auxiliary grow.

Never underestimate the strength of the elite group of men and women in the VFW. I "Believe We Can Do It," as we continue to work hard to strive for "Getting Justice for Our Veterans."

Have you made a difference to someone today? Please do so because offering a helping hand and being kind makes life better for everyone.

a Buddy Poppy table!

Did you know that anyone can become a Life Member of the National Home? Associate Memberships are for individuals who are not VFW and/or Auxiliary Members. Presently, Life Memberships for the National Home are \$35. Starting on January 1, membership fees increase to \$50 (including a pin). To join, visit [vfnationalhome.org/](http://vfnationalhome.org/) membership for more information.

As we "Believe... We Can Do It!" We must always continue "Getting Justice for Our Veterans" and their families.

### **VFW & Auxiliary Supports "Sharing and Caring"**



For many years, the Department Auxiliary has joined State VFW leaders in support of the "Sharing and Caring" riverboat ride for veterans in Pittsburgh. At left are Department Auxiliary President Charlotte Swogger-Lopes and State Commander Thomas Hanzes with a memorial wreath that was lowered into the water flowing by Point State Park.



Department Auxiliary leaders take a break for a photo during activities at the Celebrating America's Freedom Event in Gettysburg.

### **November is Military Family Appreciation Month**

By Valerie DeCorte, Chair of Veterans and Family Support - [valeriedecorte50@gmail.com](mailto:valeriedecorte50@gmail.com)



"During National Veterans and Military Families Month, we honor the significant contributions made by service members, their families, and their loved ones. We set aside this month surrounding Veterans Day to hold observances around the country to honor and thank those whose service and sacrifice represent the very best of America." - Excerpt from the 2017 Presidential Proclamation.

This is an annual proclamation which marks the beginning of a month-long celebration of the military family. It is a time set aside to recognize the military family's selfless service.

Military families know what it means to serve. Every day, they support their service member, knowing that to serve is an honor.

The backbone of our military is our military families. Time after time, deployment after deployment, they keep all on an even keel while fueling the home fires. So when their time as an actively serving family comes to an end, they support their veteran.

At all levels of our organization, I hope we are planning and hosting events during November to demonstrate the Auxiliary's support of the military family and to recognize their commitment to our military and our nation.

Be creative—think outside of the box and try something NEW. Please contact me if you need ideas or resources.



Focus on Mission Success



Conshohocken Post 1074 officers, joined by Past State Commander (Desert Shield/Storm) Glenn Umberger, gather to discuss ways to expand the post's community activity. Shown are (from left) George Burchard, Commander (OEF); Tom Smith, Quartermaster (Korea); Commander Umberger; Walt Hartnett, Senior Vice President (OEF); Mayor Yaniv Aronson and First Lady, Sarah McGlinchey.



New Bloomfield Post 7463 Honor Guard members help put the finishing touches on the Traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Ickesburg, Perry County. District 17 Commander Robert Snook was the keynote speaker during the opening ceremony.



Linesville VFW Post 7842 Auxiliary celebrates its 70th anniversary with a banquet at the post. Charter Member Carol Huffman receives citations of service from State Senator Michele Brooks and Representative Parke Wentling. Shown are Senator Brooks, Huffman, Auxiliary President Donna Hyde, Post Commander Bob Moser and Representative Wentling. (Photo courtesy of Ray Andel)



Hershey Post 3052 recognizes Nye Elementary second-graders Lauren Udenhoven, Kennedi Flors and Colin Shaffer for their outstanding coloring contest work. Shown are (from left) District 18 Commander David Gyger, Principal Bryan MacLeod, Past Post Commander Scott Fritz and Post Trustee Susan Fritz.



Kennywood Park spokesman Nick Paradise, All-American VFW Post 914 Post Trustee Jim Brickner, Commander Jake Bradich, Officer of the Day Dennis Axelson, Surgeon Bernie Zurawski and Kennywood employee Laura Kerestes display a Buddy Poppy to remember fallen servicemen.

PERIODICALS

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

WWI  
100  
YEARS

VETERANS DAY  
NOVEMBER 11, 2018

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