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Vol. 49, No. 3

SSN 0745 4031

March/April 2018

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

## Camaraderie, Workshops Drive 2018 Mid-Winter Conference

There are always a few special moments during the Department's two statewide conferences when the VFW's mission and members' common bond of serving overseas in harm's way come together in perfect form and are celebrated with great applause. Whether through an award presentation, a speaker's remarks or photo opportunity, these landmark occasions bring into focus everything that the VFW stands for—service, support and camaraderie.

During the Department's recent 2018 Mid-Winter Conference, one of these moments occurred when State Commander Dwight R. Fuhrman, a Vietnam War veteran, asked conference participants to stand if they earned their eligibility during or after the Gulf War in 1990-91. When more than 50 members stood—including 17 women—veterans from earlier service periods used a standing ovation to show them appreciation for their service both in uniform and in the VFW.

True to their pledge to never let happen again the hardship they experienced as combat veterans coming home, Vietnam War veterans took great pleasure in showing their gratitude and respect for younger veterans.

In return, veterans from the Gulf War service era and beyond reached out to their brothers and sisters who served before them—including VFW leaders from the Vietnam War, Korean War and World War II—to rededicate themselves to working hand in hand with them to keep the VFW mission going strong.

If camaraderie is defined as having mutual trust, spirit of good friendship and loyalty among people who share common interests, then the benefits of VFW camaraderie were on full display throughout the conference.

The traditional conference format was changed from having reports from program chairpersons and other speakers to mostly workshops on important VFW operational issues. Topics covered membership recruiting; attracting and involving younger veterans including female veterans and student veterans; post internal affairs and quartermaster issues; post service officer training; and the VFW's top state and national legislative issues.



**PAARNG 1SG Justin S. Wardman, a combat veteran of service in Iraq (two tours) and Jordan, receives a Pennsylvania VFW Eagle Award from State Commander Dwight R. Fuhrman.**

Participants packed into the main meeting room for all sessions, expressing their approval of the format change, which offered only one workshop at a time so interested persons could attend all programs.

One of the best sources for VFW program training and volunteer equipping is the "My VFW" section of the National Headquarters website, [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). Several conference presenters utilized "Training and Support" videos in this section to provide guidelines on post operations and VFW programs.

### Past Chief Spera: Work Hard to Keep Members

To help sustain membership, posts were encouraged to dedicate just as much time and effort to retain current members as they do to recruit new comrades.

"One of the biggest challenges we face is retaining current members; we're losing too many after we recruit them," said Past National Chief Paul Spera. "We've **Mid-Winter Conference ... see page 4**

## VFW's National Activities Put Veterans' Interests Up Front

More than 500 leaders from VFW Departments across the nation recently finished an aggressive boots-on-the-ground deployment to Washington, D.C., to keep VFW legislative issues at the forefront of national lawmakers' minds.

During the VFW's Annual Legislative Conference on March 4-7, Pennsylvania Department officers and legislative advocates stormed the nation's capital to advocate on behalf of America's nearly 25 million veterans and military service members, as well as their families and survivors.

VFW members met with their elected officials in their home offices and on Capitol Hill to enlist their support in bringing the VFW's legislative goals to fruition—including ending budget sequestration, which harms America's national defense and VA healthcare.

Highlighting this year's conference was VFW National Commander Keith Harman's testimony before a special joint hearing of the U.S. House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, as well as the presentation of the VFW Congressional Award to Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) and the *Voice of Democracy* Parade of Department Winners.

The VFW live-streamed conference events at [www.vfw.org/VFWDC2018](http://www.vfw.org/VFWDC2018), which may still be available online for viewing. #VFWDC2018 was used on social media to increase VFW member online participation. Conference attendees used a FREE

**National Activities ... see page 8**

## State Conv. Set for June 13-16 at the Wyndham, Gettysburg

VFW leaders from across the state will gather at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg, June 13-16, for the 2018 State Convention to celebrate VFW successes during the 2017-18 program year under the leadership of State Commander Dwight R. Fuhrman. The event will also feature the installation of Vietnam War veteran Thomas M. Hanzes of Post 7599 as the 2018-19 State Commander.

Events begin Wednesday night with the Annual Memorial Service and end Saturday night with a reception for incoming State Commander Hanzes and Auxiliary President Charlotte Lopes.

Daily information and award sessions are scheduled for Thursday and Friday. The Patriotic Rally will be held Friday evening and Department elections will occur Saturday morning.

The first 2018-19 Council of Administration meeting will be held Saturday afternoon and is open to members.

There will be plenty of time for camaraderie and networking. Convention participation forms will be mailed to post commanders and quartermasters, and will be available soon on the Department's website.



Left to right: State *Voice of Democracy* student winner Justin M. Grosvenor—representing District 14 and VFW Post 5642—proudly poses with his trophy. Grosvenor is congratulated by VFW and Auxiliary leaders (from left) Past National Commander Paul Spera, State Commander Dwight Fuhrman, Department Auxiliary President Kelley Lepak, Auxiliary Scholarships Chairwoman Joan Faddis and State VFW VOD Chairman Glenn Owen. *Patriot's Pen* state winner Carley G. Mykut—representing VFW Post 1754 and District 17 accepts the first-place plaque from Chairman Ben Lipschutz, President Lepak, Chairwoman Faddis and State Commander Fuhrman.



## From the State Commander

### Let's Show Dedication, Civility and Integrity

Dwight R. Fuhrman - dmfuhrman@comcast.net or (717) 255-2541



Thank you for attending the Mid-Winter Conference at the Wyndham in Gettysburg. We had a lot of positive feedback from comrades on the new workshop format of the presentations. I hope that everyone took the information back to their posts to share with your members.

We are working hard to make the State Convention just as good, if not better than, the Mid-Winter Conference.

As I write this column, we are 169 members behind California for first place in total Department membership, which makes us number 2 on the national level. I know that we can adapt and overcome our membership challenges, by each member recruiting just one new member. Let's keep Pennsylvania as the largest Department in the nation.



State Commander Fuhrman and PA Adjutant General Anthony Carrelli attended a flag pole dedication ceremony at the Central PA Food Bank. The leaders applauded the CPFEB's Military Share Program.

There are a lot of veterans in our communities and surrounding areas that need our help. We help our homeless vets by giving them new white socks, hats, gloves, toiletries, getting them to their local VA for help, and giving financial assistance from your Post relief fund. We have to be sure that these vets are not forgotten and that we do all we can to help them out.

#### TAKE CARE OF OUR COMRADES

I find it very disturbing that veterans are committing suicide daily. Please, if you sense that a veteran is having a hard time or is depressed, step in and assist them. Be aware of the five signs of emotional distress and act appropriately: poor self-care, hopelessness, being withdrawn, showing agitation and going through a personality change.

#### RESPECT, HONOR & INTEGRITY

Our Department is really suffering in many ways due to post issues. Don't let petty jealousies ruin or drive your VFW post and canteen meetings. Many of these problems can be resolved at the post or district level. However, Department Headquarters is always available to help if you need it.

By showing each other respect, conducting yourself with honor and committing yourself to being a person of integrity, we can work together to resolve problems. The VFW mission is too important to allow personality issues to impact our operations.

#### POST SUSTAINABILITY

Sometimes, there's not a lot we can do about Posts closing. In some cases, survivability simply comes down to the location of a post. With many older members passing away, some areas now have too many veterans clubs within a small radius for all posts to maintain memberships strong enough to survive.

If you have more than one VFW post in the same geographic region that are struggling, we hope leadership at both posts will consider merging. We've seen it work where two posts each facing closure pull together to create an entity that has a better chance of surviving. If you need examples of successful mergers, please contact State Headquarters.

If your post needs assistance of any kind, the Department can send in a team of experienced VFW leaders who can provide ideas, solutions and guidance. We will do our best to help you keep your post open and successful.

In closing, don't forget about our women veterans, and Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Due to their service and sacrifice, we continue to live in the land of the free. We also need them if we want to continue to be a great VFW Department.

Inform these veterans about why the VFW exists and tell them how your post makes life better for veterans, military personnel and the public. Doing so will help them see why being a member of the VFW is an honor.

We need to change the image of the VFW being a local bar. Give your post a face lift and go smoke free to attract younger veterans and their families.

Let's be proud and do whatever we can as we serve our veterans, their families and our communities.

Thank you all for your military and VFW service to our country. God bless you, our troops and the USA.

## VFW Post Donations Benefit People of All Ages

Thousands of lives across Pennsylvania are being improved thanks to donations made by VFW posts large and small. These donations are routed through charities, public safety entities, families experiencing hardship, food banks, military families and many more channels to benefit people from all walks of life.

Pictured are (clockwise from top right): Etners Post 537 donating \$16,000 to the Lebanon VA Medical Center; Trappe Post 7155 giving \$17,188 to a family with a special needs child; Downingtown Post 845 making four donations during the Mid-Winter Conference benefiting VFW Baseball, the VFW's Scout of the Year Contest, the VFW National Home for Children and the State VFW Public Safety Contest; and Oil City Post 464 donating \$5,000 to Helen Sajer, president of the Pennsylvania Wounded Warriors, Inc.

More VFW Post donations are pictured on pages 6-7.



## General Orders



- 1. ELIGIBILITY:** The attention of the Post Commander is directed to Section 101, as amended July 25, 2016. The Investigating Committee should not recommend acceptance of an application unless eligibility has been fully determined. Post investigating committee should approve/disapprove each applicant.
  - 2. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING:** Commanders on all levels will enforce the provisions of Section 105 of the National By-Laws (as amended July 25, 2016, effective August 26, 2016) and Manual of Procedure. A member whose dues are unpaid after their anniversary date ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights of membership in the VFW.
  - 3. DELINQUENT DUES COMMITTEE:** All Post Commanders are directed to appoint a Delinquent Dues Committee for the purpose of contacting and collecting dues from delinquent members. The Committee should start operating NOW by visitation at the residence of delinquent members and to collect their dues. Personal contact will bring results.
  - 4. TRUSTEES REPORT OF AUDIT:** Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218 of the Manual of Procedure - Duty of Trustees: Trustee Report of Audit must be completed by the Trustees in detail, at the close of each quarter, one of which will end March 31, 2018. Commanders are reminded that all funds are to be under the custody and control of the Post Quartermaster. Persons other than the Post Quartermaster, who may handle post funds, such as Club Manager, Bingo Chairman, or Committee Chairman, are responsible to the Quartermaster to maintain accurate records and accounts and should be properly bonded. Post Trustees are to ensure that the financial records of these special funds are also audited in the same manner as other accounts of the Post Quartermaster.
  - 5. NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS:** Section 217 of the National Manual of Procedure states: Post officers shall be nominated in March and elected in April. A member making the nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the opening of nominations. Post officers shall be installed in their respective offices prior to the convening of the Department Convention, but shall not assume their duties until the Department Commander is installed. An officer-elect who may be absent for a good and sufficient reason or cause may be installed, at any regular or special meeting prior to the Department Convention, if not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.
- THE POST MUST SEND IN THEIR ELECTION REPORT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTION IN APRIL TO DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

General Orders ... continued on page 5

## VA Adopts New Approach for Low-Performing Med Centers

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced steps that it is taking as part of an aggressive new approach to produce rapid improvements at VA's low-performing medical facilities nationwide.

VA defines its low-performing facilities as those medical centers that receive the lowest score in its SAIL star rating system, or a one-star rating out of five. VA currently has 15 such one-star facilities (none are located in PA).

The steps VA is taking include:

- Central, national accountable leadership—VA has designated Dr. Peter Almenoff, Director of VA's Office of Reporting, Analytics, Performance, Improvement and Deployment (RAPID) Healthcare Improvement Center, to oversee improvement at each of the centers.

- Comprehensive analysis and identification of improvement targets – VA is employing a new initiative, known as Strategic Action Transformation (STAT), that uses a rigorous and formal approach based on clinical performance indicators to identify vulnerabilities in each low-performing facility and set specific targets for improvement.

- Provision of national resources for improvement—VA's RAPID team of experts will use sophisticated statistical tools to track the progress of improvement against these targets, and, where warranted, will dispatch a team of expert improvement coaches quickly to the medical centers to assist them in meeting the goals.

- Accountability for results—VA's Central Office will review each of

the facilities quarterly, and if the facilities fail to make rapid substantial progress in their improvement plan, VA leadership will take prompt action, including changing the leadership of the medical center.

“President Trump has made it clear that our veterans deserve only the best when it comes to their healthcare, and that's why we are focusing on improving our lowest performing facilities,” said VA Secretary David Shulkin. “We will employ tight timelines to demonstrate improvement, and if low performance persists, we will make swift changes including replacing leaders.”



## VA Revises Regulations on Reimbursement for Emergency Treatment of Veterans

The VA also announced that it has revised its regulations concerning payment or reimbursement for emergency treatment for non-service connected conditions at non-VA facilities.

VA will begin processing claims for reimbursement of reasonable costs that were only partially paid by the veteran's other health insurance, to possibly include hospital charges, professional fees and emergency transportation such as ambulances.

This change comes on the heels of VA taking immediate action to address delayed payments to community providers.

## Do You Need Help With Veterans Benefits?

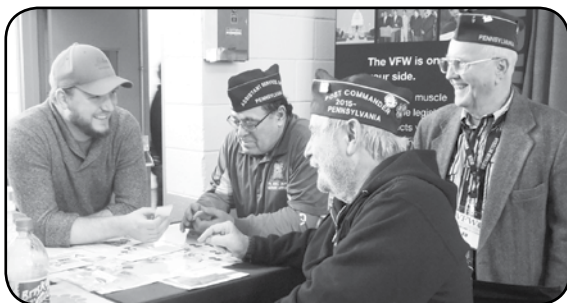
**Full-time, VA-accredited VFW State Service Officers are ready to answer benefit questions. These phone numbers connect you with your nearest Service Officer.**

**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](http://www.vfwpahq.org), "Claims Help" section to read about the State Service Officer program.

Veterans can also contact VFW State HQ at (717) 234-7927 to learn about the VFW Post Service Officer Training Program, which helps members study for and become Post Service Officers.



State Service Officers Luiz Ybarra and Ed Fake, joined by recruiter Paul Kreiner, explain VA benefits.

## Veterans Claims and Benefit Information

*This information is provided by the Department's Veterans Service Officer program. For assistance call State HQs at (717) 234-7927 or see below for an office listing. State HQs thanks the State of Pennsylvania for Act 66 grant funds.*

### Military Burn Pits Cause Disease

A judge under the U.S. Department of Labor's Office for Workers' Compensation Programs has decreed that open-air burn pits—where thousands of chemicals were released into the air after trash and other waste were incinerated at American bases in Iraq and Afghanistan—are connected to lung disease. OIF and OEF veterans who served near burn pits should consider being examined for lung disease.

### Veteran Travel Service

Call (800) 325-9377 to book and get expert advice, travel specials, lowest vacation pricing, customizing your trips based on your unique needs and budget.

### Veterans Online Shopping Benefit

Eligibility for this benefit includes honorably discharged veterans of the United States Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Reserves and National Guard personnel.

What is the Benefit? Approved veterans can shop the online exchanges, including [www.ShopMyExchange.com](http://www.ShopMyExchange.com). Shopping with the Exchange online gives you access to exclusive military pricing and offers, tax-free shopping and more. This is a life-long benefit that will be extended to all who are honorably discharged from service.

### Military Sexual Trauma Care

VA offers free services to veterans impacted by "Military Sexual Trauma (MST)," which is defined by law as "psychological trauma from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty, active duty for training or inactive duty training.

VA provides all care for mental and physical health conditions related to MST free of charge, and veterans do not need to have reported their experiences of MST at the time or have other documentation to receive this care.

### National VFW YouTube Channel

VFW videos on service officer material can be seen on YouTube including a VFW National Veterans Service Training Introduction and "Hip Pocket Training" sessions focusing on understanding the Decision Ready Claims Process, VA Forms and Veterans Benefits and Entitlements.

### VA Launches "Concierge for Care"

The VA announced the launch of "Concierge for Care," a health-care enrollment initiative that connects with former service members shortly after

they separate from the service.

"Our goal is to give transitioning service members one less thing to worry about," said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin. "We know that more than a third of veterans who haven't yet visited our facilities indicated they are not aware of VA health care benefits, while a quarter reported they do not know how to apply."

As part of "Concierge for Care," VA staff members are contacting recently separated service members to answer questions, process their health-care enrollment applications over the phone and help schedule eligible veterans' first VA medical appointment.

Each week, VA receives a list of separating service members from the Department of Defense. The goal is to make contact with them within a month of discharge.

Certain veterans who served in a theater of combat operation are eligible to enroll and receive cost-free health care for medical conditions related to their military service during the five-year period after discharge.



### March is Women Veterans Month

The VA joins with the nation to observe Women's History Month in March by recognizing and honoring women veterans.

Women veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the veteran population. Of the 22.7 million living veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total veteran population and six percent of all VA care recipients.

### PA VFW to Hold Women Veterans Retreat on March 23-25

The Department of PA VFW will hold its annual Women Veterans Retreat on March 23-25, 2018, at the Park Inn, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. Except for a \$10 registration fee, the event is free of charge thanks to VFW post donations, except as noted on the event sign-up form for special events.

For details, contact Chairperson Roxann Werner at [rox\\_usn\\_07@hotmail.com](mailto:rox_usn_07@hotmail.com) or (717) 654-2453.

**Mid-Winter Conference ... continued from page 1**

always talked about losing members 'out the back door.' We have to close the back door by giving members reasons to stay in the VFW.

"We encourage recruiters to be ready to explain why veterans should join our organization, but educating current members about what we do is just as important to keeping them with us. We have resources to help expand your knowledge about the VFW, and it's up to you to make sure your current members know enough about how we serve them and how we help our military and communities to make them treasure their VFW membership card.



***"We're losing too many (members) after we recruit them. We've always talked about losing members 'out the back door.' We have to close that back door by giving members reasons to stay on as members. We encourage recruiters to explain why veterans should join, but educating members about what we do is just as important to keeping them in our organization. Our future depends on it!"***

**– Paul Spera, Past National Chief  
Veterans of Foreign Wars**

"You can't assume that members are going to stay for life; you have to give them reasons to want to stay involved in the VFW," Spera continued, noting that creating a family-friendly environment is one of the best ways to sustain loyalty among members. "There's plenty of information from your National and State HQs that you can use to accomplish this. Then make sure you tell them about how your post supports the VFW mission, and why their support is critical to our future."

**VFW Honors PA Guardian Wardman**

Army National Guard First Sergeant Justin S. Wardman received a standing ovation when accepting the prestigious Pennsylvania VFW Eagle Award.

First Sergeant Wardman serves as the First Sergeant of Company B, 1-110th Infantry Regiment. He was nominated by the Adjutant General's Office for his distinguished service protecting freedom across the world during two tours of combat

duty in Iraq and a deployment to Jordan to combat radical Islamic forces.

In his first overseas deployment, he served in Iraq in 2004 for 18 months as a squad leader with the Second Infantry Brigade Combat Team Quick Reaction Force. His second tour in Iraq began in 2008 as a platoon leader with the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. His soldiers were tasked with supporting Iraqi troops, but his team often took the lead on missions executed in dangerous areas.

In his latest deployment, Sergeant Wardman served in Jordan during 2016-2017 as part of Operation Inherent Resolve

helping the Jordanians fight against Islamic terrorists. As First Sergeant of Company B/1110th IN, he helped train Jordanians in weapons proficiency and combat tactics, techniques and procedures.

He successfully implemented his civilian law enforcement training, which greatly enhanced force protection while in Jordan. According to his superiors, he performed above and beyond his required duty by utilizing his skills as a civilian K9 police officer and contributing much time to direct, coordinate and qualify a 'Guardian Angel' (K9) platoon.

First Sergeant Wardman also used his infantryman and mortar man expertise to take his company and Jordanian units to a proficiency level never achieved before.

His other active duty service was as a readiness non-commissioned officer for a Homeland Response Force in 2011.

First Sergeant Wardman has earned the: Bronze Star, Global War on Terrorism

Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal (3 Stars), Combat Infantry Badge, China Service Medal (Extended), Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation and many others.

State Commander Fuhrman emphasized the importance of First Sergeant Wardman's service to the fight against terrorism. "Sergeant Wardman's outstanding service has helped protect defenders of freedom while providing the military muscle needed to take on freedom's enemies on the battlefield.

"His dedication to excelling at his duties and training others to safeguard personnel and assets has saved many lives. He is a modern-day patriot, and we're proud to honor him."

**VOD and PP Contests Winners**

A crowd of nearly 500 *Voice of Democracy* Banquet guests rose to their feet to congratulate Department contest winner Justin Grosvenor, representing District 14/Post 5642, who received \$5,000.

Rounding out the top five were: Braydon Brower - District 22/Post 4559; Caroline Sliver - District 17/Post 1754; Leo

***"It is heartwarming for me to be (here) because you dedicate so much effort to supporting veterans. There is a lot of goodness and greatness in the VFW..."***

***"The DMVA is dedicated to serving all the State's veterans. Working with our legislators, we are moving forward on many priority projects including our State Homes, mental health and addiction issues, a GWOT bonus, real estate tax exemption, and others. Your priorities are my priorities."***

**– MG (Ret.) Eric Weller, PA Deputy  
Adjutant General/Veterans Affairs**



Bernabei - District 8/Post 245; and Daniel Crane - District 10/Post 3451.

*Patriot's Pen* state winner Carley G. Mykut—representing Post 1754/District 17—was also honored. Both Grosvenor and Mykut advanced to the VFW's national level competition.

District 19 and Franklin Post 1835 were proud sponsors of the Department's *Voice of Democracy* Teacher of the Year Merrill L. Cowart.

The conference crowd received updates from MG (Ret.) Eric Weller, the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs, and PA Wounded Warriors, Inc. President Helen Sajer, who both thanked the VFW for its impactful backing of programs and services that assist



**Three hundred Department, district and post leaders from across the state participated in the conference.**

the Commonwealth's 900,000 veterans.

Sajer proudly reported that PAWW continues to operate as an all-volunteer organization that delivers 95 cents of every donated dollar toward assistance programs. "I feel very privileged to come before the State VFW because of all the donations that we receive from posts across the Commonwealth. Thank you!"

Department speakers reiterated their hope that the State Legislature will rescind the exemption that it originally granted to non-profit groups when it passed the Clean Indoor Air Act. Many VFW posts have made the transition to non-smoking facilities, with many reporting that canteen business has increased, though some endured slower business for a period of time before word got around that they are now a more family-friendly post.

During the conference, 10 VFW posts signaled that they choose to become non-smoking canteens since the Department passed a resolution during the State Convention in June urging state lawmakers to make all PLCB-licensed facilities smoke free. Around 25 post leaders raised their hands when the audience was asked how many VFW posts provide smoke-free environments.

As evidenced by a contagious camaraderie among all service eras of VFW leaders, the energetic exchanges of ideas and resources, and a shared commitment to improve all areas of VFW operations, participants left the 2018 Mid-Winter Conference excited about how they can direct their posts toward a future of growth, advocacy and service.

**THE 2017-18 VOICE OF DEMOCRACY FINALISTS**

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



**VFW Marches Raise \$35,000 for Diabetes Support**



The Department's long-standing support for diabetes research and patient services continued in 2017 with a 100-mile Erie to Pittsburgh trek and a 40-mile event walk by District 21 Posts. Combined, \$35,000 was added to the \$2.1 million total dating back 40 years to the first western PA March for Diabetes event. The top photo shows participants and supporters of the District 21 march, which raised \$20,000, in part due to a \$5,500 donation from Etters Post 537 and Auxiliary. The bottom picture shows the Erie to Pittsburgh team with Post 2754 Color Guard members. Twenty-five percent of veterans live with disabilities and symptoms of diabetes. Posts are asked to make donations to this fundraiser with checks sent to State HQ earmarked "Diabetes Walk".

**By-Laws Establish Election and Installation Rules**

Post officers, elected and appointed, shall submit proof of eligibility to the post adjutant. Post officers shall not be installed or assume their duties until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed. Such proof shall be open to and reviewed by the commander, adjutant and quartermaster prior to the installation of office. If an elected or appointed officer does not prove eligibility within 60 days of election or appointment, the right of the officer to hold office shall be forfeited and the office vacated. Section 217 of the National By-Laws refers to the Manual of Procedure for details on installing officers immediately after elections. Send the election report to: State Adjutant, Department HQs, 4002 Fenton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17109 and National HQs.

**General Orders ... continued from page 2**

6. COMMUNITY SERVICE RECORD BOOK CONTEST: Close of reporting period for Community Activity Record Book is March 31, 2018. Each Post and Auxiliary should send their combined Record Book of Post Activities to State HQs for Dept. judging. Send your entry to Dept. HQ by April 15, 2018. Books received after this date will not be accepted. Judging will be held at Dept. Headquarters date TBA.

7. LOYALTY DAY: Posts are urged to start planning NOW for Loyalty Day observances in their community. Requests for LD materials should be forwarded to National HQs to the attention of the Americanism Department. The State Loyalty Day Event will be at the State Capitol, May 1, 10:00 a.m.

8. MEMORIAL DAY BUDDY POPPY CAMPAIGN: Commanders on all levels should begin organizing their 2018 Memorial Day Poppy distribution to raise donations for the Post Relief Fund. Every Post is required to order and distribute Poppies. Order Now! There are several Buddy Poppy contests - a listing can be found at [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org). Remember our motto "NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS."

9. ARREARAGE: Any Post in arrears for National, Dept., County Council or District dues, Poppy monies, supply monies or other financial obligations, or failing to have the Quartermaster properly bonded, or failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit or Post Election Report shall be deprived of all representation in County Council meetings, District, Dept. and National Conventions. Representation will be restored upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

10. DEPARTMENT CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS: Dept. Committees will meet at 9:00 p.m., Wed., June 13, 2018 to approve/disapprove resolutions for consideration at the 2018 State Convention. All delegates are encouraged to attend Committee Meetings to become more knowledgeable of pending resolutions.

11. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE FORM 990: Post Commanders should ensure that information returns are filed annually on Form 990. These forms may be obtained by calling Federal Tax Forms & Publications hot-line (800) 829-3676. The forms must be filed on or before the 15th of the fifth month following the close of the respective annual accounting period. If gross receipts are \$50,000 or less, you need to file e-postcard 990N online. The IRS asks ONLY the heading on page one be completed, being sure to check Box B and send it to the Ogden IRS Center, Ogden, Utah 84201.

12. STATE CONVENTION: The Department's State Conv. will be June 13-16, 2018 at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg. See [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org) for details in the "Events" section.

13. NATIONAL CONVENTION: The Veterans of Foreign Wars 119th National Convention will be held in Kansas City, Mo., July 21-25, 2018. Stay tuned to [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

14. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that 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. Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that will be mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing going out this month. Registration forms for the 119th National Convention should be mailed to: Convention Registration, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

15. DIVERSITY: The Dept. of PA, VFW of the U.S., shall not restrict or restrain from holding any elected or appointed office or position within the Dept. of PA any member in good standing thereof based solely upon the individual's age, gender, race, ethnic or sexual preference, physical impairment or disability, or any similar categorization of a prejudicial or discriminatory nature: nor shall any such restriction or restraint by any Post, District, County Council or other organizational division of this Dept. be tolerated. Dept. of PA, VFW, reminds all duly elected Chaplains at all levels within this Dept. to adhere to those references to a supreme being as set forth in the VFW Ritual during all official functions of this organization, not to interject reference to any specific deity or deification during same.

16. CAPS: Only regulation caps can be worn at meetings/conventions or special occasions.

By command of: Dwight R. Fuhrman, State Commander

Attested by: John B. Getz, Jr., State Adjutant/Quartermaster

**District Meeting Schedule**

**MARCH 2018**

Dist.	Place	Date	Time
1	Michael J. Crescenz VA - Phila.	March 14, 2018	7:30 P.M.
7	VFW Post #974 – Darby	March 28, 2018	7:30 P.M.
8	VFW Post #245 – Sellersville	March 18, 2018	1:30 P.M.
9	VFW Post #1463 – Lititz	March 11, 2018	1:30 P.M.
10	VFW Post #7963 – Eynon	March 11, 2018	2:00 P.M.
11	VFW Post #8335 - Avoca	March 18, 2018	2:30 P.M.
14	VFW Post #6223 – Great Bend	March 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
15	VFW Post #6221 – Emporium	March 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #676 – Glenside	March 21, 2018	7:30 P.M.
21	VFW Post #6771 – Dillsburg	March 11, 2018	2:00 P.M.
22	VFW Post #842 – Curwensville	March 18, 2018	2:30 P.M.
23	VFW Post #8543 – No. Union Twp.	March 4, 2018	2:00 P.M.
25	VFW Post #7376 – Saxonburg	March 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.
26	VFW Post #155 – Johnstown	March 11, 2018	2:30 P.M.
27	VFW Post #566 – Vandergrift	March 4, 2018	2:30 P.M.
28	VFW Post #740 – Edinboro	March 11, 2018	2:00 P.M.
29	VFW Post #1810 – Pittsburgh	March 18, 2018	2:00 P.M.

**APRIL 2018**

1	Michael J. Crescenz VA - Phila.	April 11, 2018	7:30 P.M.
7	VFW Post #928 – Folsom	April 25, 2018	7:30 P.M.
14	VFW Post #804 – Bloomsburg	April 15, 2018	2:00 P.M.
16	VFW Post #6956 – Gladwyne	April 18, 2018	7:30 P.M.

**ALL POSTS MUST BE REPRESENTED AT DISTRICT MEETINGS.**

Focus on Mission Success



Fayette Co. Veterans Day Parade was held in Connellsville. Past State Commander Allen Q. Jones, a 93-year-old WWII veteran, has marched in the last 72 Veterans Day Parades. Pictured (from left) are Gerald Browell, a member of VFW Post 21 (program host); Keynote Speaker Captain Jonathan; Post 21 Cmdr. Glen Siple; Past State Auxiliary President Nancy Carol Jones, Post 21 Auxiliary President; PSC Jones; Grand Parade Marshall Ron Shroyer and PA 32nd District Senator Pat Stefano.



(Left and above) New Bloomfield Post 7463 provided a Color Guard unit for the dedication of a new flag pole at the Central PA Food Bank. The Post participates in the Food Bank's Military Share Program.



Broomall Post 6633 sponsored a collection of clothing items, coffee, microwave ovens and DVDs, to be delivered to the VA Medical Center in Coatesville. Shown from the left are Quartermaster George Roebas and Post Commander Manny Leventelis.



Linesville Post 7842 Jr. Vice Commander Norm Haas and Auxiliary member Matthew Haas present a \$500 check to Special Olympics of PA during their recent bowling tournament. Matthew raised \$2,002 for the bowling league through donations.



Lebanon VFW Post 23 presented the Department with a \$2,000 donation for its Homeless Veterans Fund using some of the money it raised during its annual Homeless Veterans Awareness Campaign. Shown from left are Quartermaster Dawna Russell, State Homeless Veterans Chairman Dwayne Anders, Post 23 Jr. Vice Commander and event creator William Meiser, and State Commander Dwight Fuhrman.



West Newton Post 7812 recently honored its *Patriot Pen* winners from Yough Intermediate Middle School. Pictured from left are guest speaker Sgt. Joseph Dunham, sixth-grade teacher Krystal Firmstone, third-place winner Lucy DuCoeur, second-place finisher Madison Hodge, Post Chaplain Terry Miller, Post Commander Mike Weinhofer and first-place winner Liam Buzas at the microphone.



The PA Army National Guard's 28th Infantry Division recognized the PA Department of VFW during a troop send-off ceremony for 500 members of the Division's HHBN serving in the Middle East. State HQ previously presented Division leaders with a "VFW Adopt-a-Unit" certificate signaling that the VFW would provide support to deploying soldiers and their families. The Division's Commanding General, MG Andrew P. Schafer, Jr., is shown thanking the Department, which was represented by Past State Commander John Brenner and Public Affairs Director David Sandman.



Etters Post 537 recently honored the winners of its *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* contests. This photo shows all student winners along with Post Commander Joe Colonna, West Shore School Board president Judy Crocenzi and Post Auxiliary Representative Stuart Andrews. The Post had 70 students compete in its *Patriot's Pen* Program and 50 students participate in the *Voice of Democracy* contest. Post 537 gave special recognition to the families, teachers, and administrators, who all contributed to the excellent caliber of the students' contest entries. The Post also honored Angela Kamps of Cedar Cliff High School as its *Voice of Democracy* Teacher of the Year.

Focus on Mission Success



The VFW is fortunate to have many husband and wife veterans who both dedicate much time to keeping the service organization as the largest combat veterans group in the nation. By working hard on VFW programs and serving as post leaders, these volunteers—including Hershey VFW Post 3502 Commander Scott Fritz and his wife Susan Fritz, a Post Trustee—play important roles in moving the VFW’s mission forward.



Members of the West Mifflin Area H.S. Air Force JROTC program and West Mifflin Post 914 Intrepid joined forces to march in the annual Veterans Day Parade in Pittsburgh. From left are Post 914 Surgeon General Bernie Zurawski, Jr. Vice Commander David Luikart, Sr. Air Force JROTC program instructor Maj. Scott R. Harbula, Cadet John Axtell, Post Commander OIF veteran Jake Bradich, Cadet Brooke Munz and Post Adjutant Ken Curcio.



On Veterans Day, Conshohocken Post 1074 raised \$350 for the Colonial Neighborhood Council and matched it with another \$350. In addition to raising money to help those in need, the post also collected food to support a local food pantry.



New Freedom Post 7012 participated in the “March for the Fallen” at Fort Indiantown Gap, Anville. Shown are the post officers prior to the start of the event. The march is held to honor members of the Pennsylvania National Guard who were killed in action during the War on Terror.



Clarion Post 803 Commander Rich Kindel and Post member Randy Davis present a wreath at the Veterans Day program at North Clarion County School District. VFW Post members held a program at the post before participating in the program at the local high school.



Clarks Summit Post 7069 Sr. Vice Commander John Wettstein was chosen to be a “Reader of Names” by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund at the Wall in Washington D.C. on Veterans Day. This year marked the 35th Anniversary of The WALL.



Clarion Post 2145 Commander Rich Kindel presented the children’s book “What is a Veteran, Anyway” to the Clarion Free Library. Receiving the book is Dan Parker, Library Director. Books were also given to the local elementary school libraries. This hardback book can be found on Amazon by using the title and author name Robert C. Snyder, Ph.D., as search terms.

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



## Success Comes from a Collective Endeavor

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



Another VFW year is winding down as Spring arrives and Summer is just around the corner. My time as your State Senior Vice Commander has flown by at a pace I could not have imagined!

There is still so much work to do in the three months left in the 2017-18 year. Many programs need a final push to complete and meet our goals—specifically, membership, community service, Buddy Poppy, etc.

Every success originates from the seeds of determination! There are literally no limitations on what we can accomplish collectively as an organization. The only thing holding us back is ourselves.

Let's work together to help Commander Fuhrman get over the top to exceed his expectations, which include

surpassing 100% in membership!

Much of the success of the PA Veterans of Foreign Wars depends on each one of us, individually, you and me. Our members are the greatest asset of the VFW. Our commitment to the VFW and our veterans must stay strong and unending! We must not settle for anything less than being the best Department!

"Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way"! We must embrace change to drive our organization forward with continued excellence. And with each of us staying committed to our shared cause, our collective excellence will mean continued VFW excellence.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of veterans and their families, our troops and your communities.

My thanks to all the posts and districts for their courtesies and hospitality shown to Anne and me. We are so blessed and thankful for your friendship and support.

## National Activities ... continued from page 1

mobile event app to receive important notifications, conference reminders and daily agenda information.

*Editor's Note: At press time, there was a chance that the federal government would shut down. If this happens, the VFW will reschedule its conference.*

### VFW: Get Rid of VA Distractors

"The media has reported on the disingenuous actions of a few political appointees in (D.C.), who are trying to undermine the support and confidence of America's veterans in their (VA), as well as in the secretary and deputy secretary who lead it," said Keith Harman, National Commander of the VFW.

"Let there be no mistake that veterans and this Administration can claim successes ranging from increased accountability and transparency to a beefed-up GI Bill, increases in overall funding and patient satisfaction," he said.

"As reported, the acts of these individuals have become a cancer inside this Administration. They sow doubt, they create turmoil, and their ideological agenda clearly puts outside interests ahead of the care and well-being of

millions of wounded, ill and injured veterans. I now call on President Trump to clean house of these distractions. We need a fully functioning VA, not distractions. That's what veterans expect and definitely deserve."

### VFW, Others Submit VA Budget Doc

The nation's top three veterans service organizations have released their latest edition of The Independent Budget to coincide with the Administration's fiscal year 2019 budget recommendation for Veterans Affairs.

For more than 30 years, the DAV, PVA and the VFW have presented budget and policy recommendations to Congress and the Administration. These recommendations are meant to inform lawmakers of the needs of all veterans, and to offer solutions to address the many health care and benefits challenges.

This budget serves as the veterans groups' benchmark for properly funding the VA to ensure the timely delivery of quality care and appropriate benefits, including new benefits if there is a need.

To view the report, visit [www.independentbudget.org](http://www.independentbudget.org).

## Deadlines Coming for Submitting Conv. Resolutions

At VFW State and National Conventions, resolutions are approved to establish goals and policies that govern activities for the following year. Members in good standing may submit resolutions to the Department Convention through their post, county council or district. All proposed By-Law Amendments and Resolutions must be sent to State HQs by **May 31, 2018**. Make sure to leave adequate time to get your resolution properly submitted.

For more information or guidance on how to submit a proposed By-Law Amendment or Resolution, contact State Adjutant/Quartermaster John Getz at [adjutant@vfwpahq.org](mailto:adjutant@vfwpahq.org) or (717) 234-7927.



## Teach Others What the VFW Does for So Many

Wayne Perry, State Jr. Vice Cmdr. - wayper@zoominternet.net



Comrades, for those of us that have been in the VFW for many years—including some members who have been in the VFW for most of their lives—we have a lot of knowledge to share that will help shape the VFW's future.

We want and need new leaders to step forward to fill in the gaps and to take some of the pressure off existing leaders, but we cannot expect them to do so without proper training and support. We can get them off to a successful start as VFW leaders by sharing our knowledge with them.

A great place to start is to let new leaders and our entire membership know about the VFW's mission and our programs. Without knowing what the VFW is all about, younger veterans will not gain a full appreciation of why our organization is so important to veterans, our military and our communities.

So how do we share what we know? Education and mentorship! It is up to us to educate new committee members, officers and members in general that we are mission oriented and results driven. It's not about beef and beer specials. We need to show them how our programs and services help veterans. Let's explain

how VFW initiatives work—point out the rules and guidelines that exist, lead them to resources, show them past successes and work hand in hand with them until they are experienced volunteers.

Make sure new leaders understand how we help veterans, work in the community and fight for veterans' rights. Doing this will create a lasting motivation and dedication to keep VFW programs moving forward.

Mentorship is so important to the success of the VFW that without it, our efforts to develop the future of our organizations will fall short of creating the committee members and post officers we require to get the job done right.

As noted in the National Commander's training guide, *"To be a leader within the VFW means connecting with those around you; inspiring them with a shared sense of mission; and through education and engagement, mobilizing them in order to accomplish a common goal."*

All too often, people do not realize what we do. So comrades, let's educate our new volunteers and leaders, mentor them and be there to support them. Start by letting new members know what we are about and what we do. Doing this will also help us to retain our members, many who may think we are only a social club.

Thanks for all you do for the VFW!



## Facts and Figures

### The Nomination and Election Process is Near

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



Comrades, we are once again coming to the time of nominating and electing post officers for the upcoming VFW program year. The process should be a smooth one as long as VFW procedures are correctly followed.

In March, your post will nominate officers, then in April you will seek any other nominations and elect your officers.

Post officers are vital to the operation of your unit. And if you have a canteen, they are also vital to the operation of your canteen. So when you nominate and vote on officers, it's critical that you put your trust in people who understand the VFW (service organization) and understand why we were formed (our mission).

First and foremost, the VFW exists to help veterans and families—this is the reason we were formed and we need to get back to the basics.

Your leaders should embrace the VFW as a service organization that focuses on veterans, supports our military and improves life in your community. Nothing comes before these priorities—not social members, not canteen sales, not personalities and not just a few individuals who think that they know it all.

Your chosen leaders should be team players who encourage the participation of all VFW members. Your officers and chairpersons should be open to new ideas. Your command team should seek out and welcome younger members and women veterans, for they are our future.

When you elect trustees, choose members who have integrity and honesty, who will review the books and all accounts before signing post audits.

In April, send in your post election form to National and State HQs as soon as it is done; do not wait until May or June.

Remember that every day is Veterans Day. Keep your post focused on that idea and you will be successful.



**Membership Moment**

**Starting with the Basics: What Does the VFW Do for Veterans?**

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



The Department recently participated in two large recruiting events—the PA State Farm Show and the NRA Great American Outdoor Show—which drew several hundred thousand attendees.

Our recruiters frequently heard a common question that cannot be overemphasized: *“What does the VFW do?”*

All too often, VFW recruiters—and that means all VFW post officers and members—jump too fast into asking eligible members if they want to join. We would be more successful in recruiting new members if we first spoke about the foundation of the VFW: service.

When people ask others if they want to support something, the first thing most people want to know is how is my

investment of time and finances going to help me live better. So be ready to explain some important facts about how the VFW enhances the lives of veterans, our troops and local communities.

You don't have to memorize complex theories, just speak a few elemental truths about the VFW like:

- We are a critical voice for veterans when the nation's laws, benefits and services are voted on in Washington.
- We have programs that benefit veterans of all ages from student veterans (scholarships) all the way through to veterans who need help during their twilight years.
- We provide millions of dollars of support to military families experiencing tough times.
- We recognize junior and high school students and teachers, who participate

in patriotic programs that honor our veterans and our troops.

- We provide veterans with free VA claims assistance that in Pennsylvania alone connects veterans with more than \$30 million in benefits every year.
- Local Posts serve as sponsors of events and programs that build community support for veterans and military personnel.
- VFW posts give veterans opportunities to continue serving their nation while enjoying the camaraderie that they benefited from in the military.
- Membership opens a door for veterans from all service eras to draw strength and direction from a shared bond of serving overseas.

These points directly answer the question of *“What does the VFW do?”*

Not sure how to get a conversation started? Try this when you see someone



**VFW Recruiters John Rybcinski and Bob Hayes help a new member complete an application at the State Farm Show.**

walking up wearing military or veteran apparel: *“Hey, thanks for your service. Can I tell you something you probably don't know about the VFW?”* Then use the VFW success points stated here.

If an eligible member hears these points, and decide it's not time to join, at least they understand more about the VFW and that can pay off down the road.

If you are not meeting new veterans and promoting your post through community events and programs, you won't get opportunities to grow. Be an active post that gives veterans reasons to believe that you have something positive to tell them about the VFW.

**Discerning Good and Evil - The God of the Bible Shows the Way**

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



On every one of our coins appears our nation's motto, *“In God We Trust.”* But, in what God did our founding fathers, and those who led the charge to have this phrase as our National Motto, believe?

When you see the words *“In God We Trust”* or when you recite the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag and say, *“One Nation under God,”* what god are you referring to? Is it the God of the Bible or some other god? The answer is important because there is a difference.

Our country was founded overwhelmingly by men and women who believed in a supreme being as revealed in the sacred Scriptures. They did not just believe in any supreme being. They believed in a specific supreme being—the One revealed in the sacred Scriptures, the Bible. It is the God of the Bible who gave mankind the Ten Commandments, and later Jesus, the exact representation of God in the flesh. It is this God and His moral code that becomes the standard of righteousness by which we evaluate and judge something to be either good or evil, or right or wrong.

Not every god is the same. Just because a person says they believe in god, tells you nothing about the god in whom they believe. When someone says, he/she believes in the God of the Bible, it gives you some understanding about

their god. The same is true for someone who says they believe in the god of the Koran or one of the Hindu gods. While there are some similarities between Allah and the God of the Bible, here are two examples of differences: one says Christians are “infidels” and sanctions the killing of such innocent people, and one condemns such actions. One treats men and women equally, and the other does not.

***“Not every god is the same. Just because a person says they believe in god, tells you nothing about the god in whom they believe. When someone says, he/she believes in the God of the Bible, it gives you some understanding about their god.”***

The character of the God of the Bible and the god of the Koran are not the same, even though the Koran tells Muslims to say to Jews and Christians, *“Our God and your God are One, and unto Him we surrender”* (29.46).

Beginning in the 1960's, the God of the Bible started to be removed as the standard and basis for determining good and evil. Moral relativism crept in and started to permeate our thinking. “Moral relativism is the view that moral judgments are true or false only relative to some particular standpoint

(for instance, that of an individual, a culture, or a historical period) and that no standpoint is better or uniquely privileged over any other” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Thus, since that time, the God of the Bible was gradually being replaced as the standard to evaluate and determine what is right and wrong in society. An individual's view or what he/she “thinks” or “feels” is right or wrong became the acceptable standard, and no one's view is better than the other's. Thus, every person becomes the judge of what is good and what is evil.

Interestingly, the Biblical book of Judges describes a time when the God of the Bible was pushed aside and, *“Everyone did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Judges 17:6b; 21:25b). History sure does repeat itself!

However, that is not the end of the story. Following the time of the Judges, Israel's God, the God of the Bible, through natural decisions and processes, raised up a leader named Samuel. Samuel's character and policies changed the culture and helped to restore a righteous and moral standard throughout the land. Based on history, there is hope that things can be turned around.

Part of our role as Chaplains is to be like Samuel. As stated in our VFW Charter, the National Chaplain (and by extension) all VFW Chaplains, *“by precept and example point the way toward a high moral plane for the organization.*

*Blessings as you serve.*



**Recruiter David Gyger gives a new member his full attention to answer questions about information requested on the application.**



**Seeing a veteran wearing a military unit hat, Recruiter Cecil Dennis explains the many benefits of VFW membership.**



**Past District 18 Commander Scott Fritz helps a female veteran determine her VFW eligibility.**



## State Removes Transfer Tax for Veterans Units

Frank J. McGovern, State Judge Advocate - frankmcgovern@msn.com



Nationally recognized veterans organizations are now exempt from the Realty Transfer Tax, thanks to a Bill sponsored by State Senators John Rafferty and Mario Scavello.

Prior to this change, veterans organizations desiring to transfer property from the local home association to the post were not excluded from the two (2) percent realty transfer tax despite their tax-exempt status. The tax exemption was introduced as SB 430, which was amended into Act 43 of 2017, the Tax Code Bill.

In 1998, a decision was handed down by the State Supreme Court in the case of *Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board v. Richard E Craft American Legion Home Corporation*, in which the Court held the Home Association of that particular post was a subordinate unit of the post, thus permitting Home Associations to apply for a liquor license as an incorporated unit of a national veterans' organization.

Consequently, it was recommended to all American Legion, Department of PA

Post Commanders, based on the decision in the *Craft* case and the current statute (47 Purdon's Statute §4-461.1 (a)), that Home Associations that do not have a liquor license but wish to obtain one should continue to apply as an incorporated unit of a national veterans' organization.

However, it was also advised that a Home Association who currently has a liquor license transfer all other realty and assets in the Association to the post, to further insulate the post and its assets from liability, while still affording them the chance to have social or associate members contribute to the post's financial success.

The new law exempts veterans organizations from the Realty Transfer Tax during such necessary transactions.

Other tax-exempt entities are excluded from the Realty Transfer Tax, and now organizations that serve veterans will receive the same tax-exempt treatment.

Notwithstanding the change in tax status afforded by this legislation, the home association is still dependent on the national veterans organization post, and the post continues to have the authority to disband the home association at any time.

## Farewell to PSCs Almon Long and Charles Prince

**Past State Commander Almon Long (1988-1989):** Born in Plymouth, PA, Long was a Korean War veteran who served with the U.S. Army's 822nd Engineers Aviation Battalion, 49th Bomber Wing, 5th Air Force, 8th Army in Korea, during 1951-52. He earned the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Medal, the United Nations Service Medal and the Korean War Service Medal with three stars. His unit received a Presidential Unit Citation.

A member of the VFW since 1952, he twice served as Commander of Post 2433 (New Jersey). He was also Commander of Post 283 in Kingston, Pennsylvania. Long was elected Commander of District 11 for 1983-84.

At the Department level, in addition to serving as State Commander, he was on various State VFW Committees including the Membership Committee. Long's leadership as State Commander helped push legislation through the General Assembly to help non-profits raise funds through small games of chance and in getting a fourth State Veterans Home created.

He received several National VFW appointments including to the VFW Legislative Committee. The Eastern States Conference elected him as Sr. Vice Commander.

Sympathy cards can be sent to Cora Long, 65 Warman St, Larksville, PA 18651.

**Past State Commander Charles Prince (2003-04):** A native of Confluence, Prince was a U.S. Navy veteran during World War II, who served on the U.S.S. Missouri, U.S.S. Donaldson, U.S.S. South Dakota and U.S.S. Quincy. Beginning in 1943, his military service included battle action against Japanese naval forces and being present on the Missouri when Japanese leadership signed papers of surrender in Tokyo Bay. He was also a veteran of the Korean War.

Prince earned the Victory Medal, American Campaign Ribbon, Asiatic Pacific Ribbon with seven stars, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with two stars and the Good Conduct Medal.

Prince was a life member of Post 8826. Prior to that, he belonged to Post 7250, for which he served two terms as Post Commander. He achieved All-American District commander status for District 23 in 1996-1997. He was a member of many State and National VFW Committees including groups for national security, veterans employment and student scholarships. In recognition of his outstanding VFW service, he was named as a National-Aide-de-Camp.

Sympathy cards can be sent to Jean Prince, 1211 E. Caroline St. Apt. 122, Travers, FL 32778. Internment service details have not been released.

## Department Membership Update: 91.25% of the 2016-17 Year-End Total

Top five posts ranked by Membership Division			
Div.	Post	Location	%
1	5958	TITUSVILLE	102.46%
1	1599	CHAMBERSBURG	91.99%
1	8951	WEST YORK	71.65%
1	7043	COALPORT	32.08%
2	8896	EAST BERLIN	102.20%
2	2385	GRATZ	100.00%
2	3428	MUNCY	99.79%
2	264	CORRY	97.79%
2	6319	GREENCASTLE	97.05%
3	7505	MARS	114.45%
3	5265	SPRING GROVE	105.26%
3	2493	MOUNT WOLF	100.00%
3	6631	SELINGROVE	98.83%
3	15	GETTYSBURG	97.46%
4	7012	NEW FREEDOM	100.52%
4	6759	REINHOLDS	99.17%
4	6076	MYERSTOWN	98.55%
4	411	BIRDSBORO	98.09%
4	1718	HARRISBURG	97.86%
5	821	BERWICK	102.79%
5	8488	KINGSLEY	101.70%
5	5642	MONTROSE	100.60%
5	4795	WINDBER	100.00%
5	3	ALTOONA	99.44%
6	7073	PARKER	105.12%
6	882	MARYSVILLE	103.84%
6	6417	PALMYRA	103.44%
6	3502	HERSHEY	101.47%
6	7527	BEDFORD	100.00%
7	6824	ROME	109.70%
7	8008	NESQUEHONING	107.84%
7	6555	SAGAMORE	105.61%
7	7343	MT HOLLY SPRINGS	101.85%
7	1074	CONSHOHOCKEN	100.92%
8	7919	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	113.92%
8	7219	FAIRCHANCE	103.75%
8	5644	SNOW SHOE	103.65%
8	8269	HOWARD	102.77%
8	7605	TWIN ROCKS	102.46%
9	7252	BROCKWAY	103.57%
9	7810	AUSTIN	101.58%
9	6231	SLIPPERY ROCK	100.00%
9	9788	HORSHAM	100.00%
9	5205	PHILADELPHIA	98.48%
10	1063	PHILADELPHIA	176.92%
10	7390	BROOMALL	148.78%
10	3514	UNIONTOWN	117.24%
10	7070	OAKDALE	104.34%
10	3498	ROSLYN	102.32%
10	3514	UNIONTOWN	96.55%

On Feb. 28, Dept. membership stood at 71,977 members or 91.25% of the 2016-17 year-end total. So far this year 1,272 new members and 273 reinstated members have been recruited.

Posts should read the State Membership Program to learn about all membership contests and the criteria for "All-State" and "All-American."

Quartermasters are encouraged to visit [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) to use the Online Membership System and to ask their District Membership Chairman for their post delinquent member list.

## Top 10 Performing Membership Districts as of Feb. 28

**Congratulations District Commanders for Leading the Way Forward!**

- First Place: DISTRICT 16 - 94.66% - Commander John R. Moyer**
- Second Place: DISTRICT 23 - 94.53% - Commander Thomas McFadden**
- Third Place: DISTRICT 28 - 94.29% - Donald Ramsey**
- Fourth Place: DISTRICT 26 - 94.27% - Commander Robert L. Pegg, Jr.**
- Fifth Place: DISTRICT 1 - 94.23% - Zbigniew Laska**
- Sixth Place: DISTRICT 13 - 94.11% - Commander James Lindsey**
- Seventh Place: DISTRICT 14 - 93.64% - Commander John Miner**
- Eighth Place: DISTRICT 25 - 93.63% - Commander Russell Mason**
- Ninth Place: DISTRICT 8 - 93.59% - Commander Thomas Goodman**
- Tenth Place: DISTRICT 20 - 93.50% - Commander Byron J. Miller, Sr.**



**Holding the Top Spot:  
District 16 (Montgomery County)  
Commander John R. Moyer**



(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  
State HQ - (717) 234-7927 - Fax: (717) 234-1955 - [www.vfwpahq.org](http://www.vfwpahq.org) - Facebook: "VFW Department PA"

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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

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



*The Department President Says...*

## Your Great Work Keeps Our Aux. Strong

By Kelley Lepak - kms4013@hotmail.com or (724)203-4494



A belated "Happy New Year" wish to my brothers and sisters of the VFW Auxiliary. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. Now it's time to get back to work as we continue moving the Auxiliary forward with our 2017-2018 program year.

I want to thank everyone who attended the Department Mid-Winter Conference and for your attendance at the Program and Leadership Workshop. We hope you agree that the information presented was delivered in a way that can be put into use at all levels to better our organization.

I look forward to the final six months of my journey as the Department President. The first six months flew by so quickly. Before you know it, we will be in Gettysburg again for our State Convention.

So let's be vigilant in keeping the momentum we created in the first seven months of the program year going strong through the Spring and Summer.

One of the true blessings of serving as Department Auxiliary President is getting to meet so many comrades as I make my official visits to each district. It is indeed inspiring to spend time with outstanding people who share your passion for helping veterans and their families. Your energy,

ideas and commitment inspire your Department leaders to ensure that all our programs and services are the best each can be.

Your leaders were proud to represent our PA VFW Auxiliary brothers and sisters at the National Mid-Winter Conference in Nashville TN. We attended all meetings and activities, and we can honestly say that our Department Auxiliary continues to play a leadership role at the National level.

I want to offer my heartfelt gratitude to all Post Auxiliaries who have supported my Presidents Special Project, Camp JRA. The Arthritis Foundation's JA camp programs give kids with arthritis and related childhood rheumatic diseases the chance to make lasting memories. Camp programs provide a safe and secure camping experience for children and teens, who gain a greater understanding of their own diagnosis and treatment.

For many young people, attending an Arthritis Foundation Camp with other kids who have JA can change their lives. Thanks to your big hearts and support. Your donations to my project will help many more children to enjoy this camp. To learn more, visit [www.pavfwaux.org](http://www.pavfwaux.org) and click on my Special Project link.

"Lighting the Way for Our Veterans" as we continue to "Catch A Dream" as Team Pennsylvania.



## Your Support of NVS Programs Makes a Difference

Alice Anders, Chairperson - Veterans & Family Support - [amanders8724@aol.com](mailto:amanders8724@aol.com)



Every Auxiliary member knows a veteran, and in some way that veteran has touched your life. I'm sure you have done something to help and support our veterans.

That is our purpose as an Auxiliary by "Lighting the Way for Our Veterans".

We also need to help support the VFW Programs: NVS - National Veterans Service, Buddy Poppies, National Home, Homeless Veterans, or any other service for veterans, so we can help to "Catch the Dream for Our Veterans."

When we donate to NVS, National HQ will use it wherever it is needed most: MAP,

Uplink, Unmet Needs grants or scholarships.

Don't forget our homeless veterans. With cold weather still ahead this Spring, I hope they find shelter and warm blankets. Your donations help keep shelters open.

If you ordered Buddy Poppies, use them - don't let them sit on a shelf, pass them out at your post, or any place you go, even if you don't get a donation.

I hope all kids at the National Home had a very nice Christmas. With a parent possibly being deployed, the holidays may be hard for them. Supporting the Home helps care for our military families.

Please remember our Active Troops. Keep sending boxes and cards, and keep them in your prayers.

## Spotlighting Our Auxiliary Successes



Clockwise from top: The Department's Auxiliary leadership joined the Pennsylvania Department VFW delegation at the latest Eastern States Conference meeting; Department President Kelley Lepak offers her support to National President Dee Guillory during her National Homecoming in Nashville; and President Lepak, Department Auxiliary Chaplain Wendi Hennemann and District 14 President Anne Eastbrook pose for a patriotic photo.



## Always Put Our Mission First and We Will Grow

Cecilia Cook, Chief of Staff - [ceil2754@comcast.net](mailto:ceil2754@comcast.net)



Hello Comrades and Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters! This year has been very exciting in the Department of Pennsylvania. We have seven new Auxiliaries, which is fantastic!

I would like to welcome these new Auxiliaries and ask them all to join us in "Lighting the Way for our Veterans".

The Extension Program includes bolstering membership. By adding new Auxiliaries, the program also includes mentoring and guiding those that need assistance, to ensure that each Auxiliary is following the rituals and by-laws of our National Organization, and being the best Auxiliary that they can be.

If anyone feels that an Auxiliary needs help or if they have questions, feel free to contact me or Department Headquarters and we will be happy to assist you.

A number of issues that Department President Kelley and I were presented with this year related to personality conflicts and attitudes. I have one piece of advice that I can give everyone: attitudes are like flat tires - if you don't change it, you won't go anywhere.

Each member must remember that our organization was founded for the soul purpose of serving our veterans and their families. If we put this statement in front of everything that we do, we will all succeed in our VFW Auxiliary endeavors.

Thank you for your great work!

**FOCUS ON MISSION SUCCESS**



King of Prussia Post 7878 held a Veteran's Day Salute Ride during which 37 riders endured 20-degree temperatures to honor veterans from all service eras.

**PERIODICALS**

**MORE 2018 MID-WINTER CONFERENCE PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM GETTYSBURG**



Left photo: A strong contingent of female VFW members participated in the Mid-Winter Conference including these 17 women veterans; conference workshops featured four of them as presenters. Right photo: Conference participants included an impressive number of veterans who earned their VFW eligibility during military action beginning with Operations Desert Shield/Storm and running through the nation's newest campaign medals.



PA Veterans of Foreign Wars State Color Guard Captain Paul Kreiner renders a salute while George Beck joins other Guard team members in presenting the colors of the United States. Lloyd Drake is shown saluting the nation's flag.



VFW and Auxiliary members participate in the Mid-Winter Conference opening ceremony at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg. Historically, a joint session of both groups is held before the Department Auxiliary begins its own conference activities.



Membership Recruiter Nate Smith, one of the Department's Sergeants-at-Arms, and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Jon Bittner demonstrate how to recruit younger veterans into the VFW. Bittner is a co-chairman of the Department's Student Veterans Committee.