



By Cory Angell

250TH BIRTHDAYS HAVE STRONG PENNSYLVANIA CONNECTIONS

Our nation's 250th anniversaries for the Army, Navy and Marine Corps will be celebrated in Pennsylvania in 2025 with the branches having strong Revolutionary ties to the state.

The town of Carlisle played a significant role in the American Revolution as the main source of supplies for the Continental Army and continues to serve as the home for the U.S. Army War College and Army Heritage Center.

The Navy was born in Philadelphia on Oct. 13, 1775, less than six months after the start of the American Revolution. The Marines, who seem the best at celebrating a birthday, were established on Nov. 10, 1775 in Philadelphia at the legendary Tun Tavern.

All of these will bring celebrations for Pennsylvania veterans to attend.

Celebrating the Army's 250th Birthday

On June 14, 2025, the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center will celebrate the Army's 250th Birthday with a formal dinner with guest speaker Lt. Gen. James Dubik, former Commander of the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq during the "Surge" of 2007-08. Dubik is the author of *Just War Reconsidered*.



Lt. Gen. James Dubik, former Commander of the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq and author of *Just War Reconsidered* will speak at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle on the Army's 250th Birthday on June 14, 2025.

"You only turn 250 once," said Julie Germany, President of the Army Heritage Foundation, Carlisle. "This is a celebration held here in Pennsylvania for the Army's 250th. The proceeds from the event are used to support the mission at the Army Heritage Center and we look forward to as many attending as possible to celebrate this milestone in Army history."

Emmy-Award Winning Journalist Marie Waxel will serve as the Master of Ceremonies. More information on the event can be found at www.armyheritage.org.

Germany says the foundation supports the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in its mission to educate the public on contributions made by the Army and its soldiers throughout the history of our nation.

"We have wonderful displays here and programs that foster learning for the public and military leaders," said Germany. "The Veterans of Foreign Wars has played a role in assisting this mission and we value the contributions they have made."

Navy and Marines in Philadelphia

The Navy and Marine Corps will celebrate their 250th Anniversary in Philadelphia and Camden, NJ, Oct. 9-16, 2025.

"There will be tours of different Navy ships and flyovers by Navy and Marine Corps aircraft, including the Blue Angels on Oct. 13th," said Monica Hollman, Vice President of Homecoming 250, the non-profit promoting events for the celebration.

Hoffman said there will be a demonstration by the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon and performances by Navy and Marine bands, including a Victory at Sea Concert followed by fireworks.

"There will be an All Veterans Reunion picnic for Veterans of all services at Independence Mall," said Hoffman. "You can toast the Navy 250th Birthday at the Navy 250th Gala at Independence Hall."

Hoffman said that on Nov. 10 The Marine Corps 250th Birthday Celebration will be held at Independence Hall and you can celebrate the recreation of The Tun, birthplace of the Marine Corps, near its original site and enjoy the 100th Marine Corps Birthday Ball in the same ballroom where Commandant Lejeune held the 1st Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

For more information, visit www.homecoming250.org.

VFWs Support the Army Heritage Center

VFW posts have supported the Army Heritage Foundation's efforts to upgrade the outdoor event pavilion in time for the Army's 250th Birthday. Germany hopes to have a ribbon cutting to celebrate it's completion and recognize those who have made it possible. Those Pennsylvania VFW Posts include:

- VFW Post #148, Harrisburg
- VFW Post #470, Erie
- VFW Post #1600, Bellefonte
- VFW Post #3258, Chalfont
- VFW Post #3368, Mt Pleasant
- VFW Post #4200, Tire Hill
- VFW Post #5020, Osceola Mills
- VFW Post #5754, Mount Union
- VFW Post #5956, Manheim
- VFW Post #6168, Shippensburg
- VFW Post #6520, Jefferson Township
- VFW Post #7011, Lewistown
- VFW Post #7374, York
- VFW Post #7457, Central City
- VFW Post #8023, Annville
- VFW Post #8240, Jeannette
- VFW Post #8896, East Berlin



Left to right, Mr. James Lukeman, President of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, Kristie McNally, Deputy Director of the U.S. Mint, and Gen. Christopher Mahoney, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps show the newly struck silver dollar coin after a mint striking ceremony, Philadelphia, Dec. 4, 2024.

(U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Pedro A. Rodriguez)

STATE COMMANDER



BARBARA "BARB" LONCAR
STATE COMMANDER

Happy New Year!

Dear VFW Members,

I hope you had an enjoyable and memorable holiday season. I know that this time of year can be very trying for some of our members. Please reach out to those around you who are maybe depressed or suicidal. We need to support each other through trying times. Suicide is on the rise, it isn't declining like we would hope. Please do your buddy checks on your family, friends and VFW members. Remember that even those who are in leadership positions need to have someone check on them. We see people we perceive to be strong, but they could be hiding behind that smile or strength.

Know the five signs of suicide:

Do you feel like yourself?

Are you agitated?

Are you withdrawn?

Are you caring about yourself?

Are you feeling helpless?

Healthy habits of emotional well-being:

Take care of yourself.

Check-in with others.

Engage in people around you.

Take time to relax.

Know the five signs of suicide.

The VFW website has Mental Health Resources to help you and others around you if you need assistance. **Please use the "Veterans Crisis Line" Dial 988 then Press 1.** We also have a Chairman for Mental Health (Dave Dibelius) and would be willing to help you or your post. His contact information can be

found on our Department Website, www.vfwpa.org. If you or your Post need any assistance please contact Department Headquarters or one of the many Past State Commanders or the Chairperson's listed on our website. We are here to serve and help you.

You should also work with your District and Posts within your area. We all served in the Military and were taught the Chain of Command, so please use the chain instead of contacting National Headquarters. National Headquarters doesn't handle Social Member issues; they will just refer it back to State Headquarters. Please let us try to help you and always read your VFW Manual for assistance.

I hope to see all of you at our **Mid-Winter Conference on January 24-26th, 2025**. If you haven't attended our Mid-Winter Conference, try to attend. We provide a lot of information and can answer any questions you may have regarding your VFW Post and membership recruiting. Membership is very important to keep our Posts thriving in this competitive world. We constantly have to compete for our veterans' time during their busy schedules. Your Post needs to provide a reason for them to participate and it needs to be a family-friendly post. Your Post community involvement is another way to bring in new members. Open your Posts to the community for special events or create events that encourage them participate.

This is a good time to share your Post's success stories with others and gain insight on how to help your own Post. We need to unify with each other in our Post, District, and Department levels. Reach out to your Auxiliaries for assistance as well. Create a supportive and working Team at your Post!

Together Everyone Achieves More! TEAM!

Barbara Loncar, Dept. of PA Commander

STATE SR. VICE COMMANDER



WILLIAM "BILL" ROLAND
STATE SR. VICE COMMANDER

As I travel around to our VFWs that are having a challenging time, I come to realize that some members have forgotten why the VFW was formed. We need to go back to why VFWs exist. Many members did not know what the VFW mission was or the conversations that we all had. They had no reference to our mission. Take a moment to think of our mission.

VFW's mission statement is:

"To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts and to serve our veterans, the military, and our communities and advocate on behalf of all veterans."

VFW's mission statement is made up of three components:

1. Veteran fellowship
2. Serve veterans
3. Veterans' voice

The first component of the VFW mission statement highlights the preservation and strengthening of comradeship among its members.

The second component of VFW's mission statement specifies the people involved in perpetuating the memory and history of those who served with their lives and thanks them for their patriotism and assisting and helping the surviving spouses and orphans.

On the other hand, **the third component** VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) mission statement presents the advocacy for justice for the veterans, service members and military families on various issues and continues to be the voice of veterans everywhere. This aligns with the VFW's vision statement. This is to preserve the memory of those who went to battle in pursuit of fighting for the rights of the people that they serve through their loyalty and love for their country. Their utmost dedication cannot be forgotten. It is now that their spouses and orphans be given the proper benefits that they truly deserve.

One might say that having a beer with fellow Veterans helps, I agree. But it cannot be the reason we are a VFW!! A new year is here, and my wife and I wish you and yours a safe and healthy new year.

STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER



JIM BROWN
STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER

Sisters and Brothers, I hope you all had safe and enjoyable holidays. We must remember many are no longer with us, and many are deployed around the world. They are unable to celebrate with their families and friends. Keep these individuals and their families in your thoughts.

I have had the opportunity to travel around the Department to visit a few Posts and Districts over the last few months. I also had the opportunity to speak at POW/MIA and Veterans Day ceremonies as well as attend a few other Veterans Day events. I want to thank everyone again for their hospitality. I look forward to my continuing travels throughout the Department.

Membership, the 10 letter word that many dread hearing. Membership is NOT a dirty word, it is the lifeblood of OUR VFW! Membership is what makes OUR voice be heard on Capitol Hill. As of Dec. 1, 2024, Pennsylvania VFW sits at 88.58 percent and with 10 Districts below that percentage, according to National Memstats. One of the most common themes everywhere I visit is: How do we get younger members? I will respond "how many recruiters do we have in the room?", and the response is usually silence. The answer should always be everyone in the room, because we are all recruiters. If you want new Members and younger Members, you must actively pursue those

potential Members. The day of a Veteran showing up at our Posts wanting to be a Member has dwindled. We MUST get out of our buildings, engage, and sell YOUR VFW. We ALL have 365 days every year (366 in leap) to recruit at least one member! Focus on the positives and sell the product you know. Find a person or people to appoint in your Posts and Districts that thrive on communicating with others and allow them to lead your Membership.

It is important to find the proper individuals for an appointment to a committee. Oftentimes, appointments are made to friends or to just fill a spot. This is an injustice at every level. These appointments should be to individuals that will ACTUALLY DO THE JOB! For example, someone who never recruited a new member over the last 10 years is not the best person to be your membership chairman.

Know the difference between the words "Elected" and "Appointed". Simply, the Membership "Elects", and the Commander at their respective level "Appoints" and may revoke said Appointment at any time. Utilize your National By-Laws, they are available online at vfw.org in PDF and books are also available for purchase. Your National By-Laws will assist in clarifying many things, and oftentimes will alleviate the need for Department level involvement. That does NOT mean you should not reach out and ask questions. Officers at every level should be utilized for guidance.

May YOU continue YOUR successes and make YOUR VFW stronger every day!

STATE ADJUTANT/QUARTERMASTER



JOHN B. GETZ, JR
STATE QUARTERMASTER

Comrades, we are getting close to a new election year in just a few months. You all will be nominating Officers for your posts. March is the first month for nominations and it will be here before you know it. You need to prepare for these nominations and the elections the following month. When we

nominate and elect in April, quartermasters must immediately go to the online membership system on the national website (vfw.org) to complete and submit the election report. Don't wait until May or June to complete it. Completing the report in April ensures quartermasters encounter no issues when they assume duties after the state convention. This is an important part of your position as quartermaster. Please do not wait until you get notice from State Headquarters to comply with this procedure. April is the month to file. Thank you for all you do for our veterans. Follow the rules and it will go smoothly.

STATE CHAPLAIN



DAVID BRADY
STATE CHAPLAIN

I retired from the Army as a Chaplain in January 2023 and am honored to have been elected your VFW State Chaplain to continue service by providing spiritual support to service members, veterans, and families. We work as a team at State, District, and Post entrusted to three core values: 1) Nurture the living by providing religious support to strengthen our members; 2) Care for the Sick or Shut-In by providing pastoral care, comfort, and hope through visitation, calls, and cards; and 3) Honor the Fallen by performing memorial ceremonies, services, and funerals that reflect tribute to America's sons and daughters who paid the ultimate price serving the nation in defense of freedom (Paraphrased from Army FM 1-05, 1-16, January 1019).

As State Chaplain I aim to support our District and Post Chaplains by facilitating or conducting training on morals, morale, and ethical issues that concern our members. I'll do my best to communicate and provide tools for you to meet our roles and responsibilities as chaplains.

My values that bring purpose to my chaplain mission are based on the Bible's Matthew 25:35-36, "for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." Thank you for allowing me to serve our members as State Chaplain.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA



Dept. of PA Jr Vice Commander Jim Brown and the VFW Post 5958 Honor/Color Guard host home schooled students and their families for a Flag History, Flag Etiquette, and Flag Folding presentation.



Vietnam veteran honored

Col. Rick Kiernan, U.S. Army (retired), was recently presented with a Pennsylvania House of Representatives resolution in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Kiernan, the certificate of recognition noted, was honored "for his lifelong contributions to his country; as a member of the United States Army, having served and led soldiers during the Vietnam War; as a communicator, utilizing his skills to assist in the growth of democracies across the globe; and as a natural leader, empowering countless men and women through advising and mentorship." Presenting the certificate to the Warwick resident is state Rep. Kristin Marcell of the 178th District. March 29 was National Vietnam War Veterans Day. On this day in 1973, the last U.S. troops departed Vietnam.



L-R Tony Rankin, past post commander, Kristin Aucker, post chaplain, and Harold W. Aucker, District 17 commander, at Post 6631's recruiting booth at Selinsgrove's annual street fair in late September.

2023-2024 Service Officer Award was presented to Linda Eshenbaugh, Claims Consultant Department of PA VFW by PSC David Gyger and Auxiliary National Council Member and Past Department President Bette Jean Biedrzycki.



STILL SERVING - INSPIRING THE FUTURE

This year, Veterans Day held a special significance for students at Indian Rock Elementary in the York Suburban School District. Most didn't know that Attendance Administrative Assistant Roxann Shearer is a retired Navy and Iraqi Freedom Veteran, the Red Lion VFW Post 1446 Junior Vice Commander, and the PA District 21 Adjutant.

On Veterans Day, Roxann spent time with fifth-grade students and shared her personal experiences as a Cryptologic Technician in the Navy. She painted a vivid picture of the world of Morse code and abbreviated messages used long before texting and emojis were a thing. Using a globe, she traced her extensive travels to nine duty stations, seven of which took her overseas, circling the world at least twice.

This year, Roxann's stories were brought to life with video clips from her 2003 Persian Gulf deployment aboard the USS Cowpens (CG-63). She also provided unique details about Navy life, including the size of the bunks and coffin lockers, safety precautions of a FOD walkdown, an explanation of underway replenishment, and highlights of missile launches from the vertical launch system.

The students, in turn, expressed their gratitude for her continued service to our community through personalized thank-you-cards that can now be found proudly displayed on Roxann's desk. She considers these heartfelt messages as valuable as any military honor she has received.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA



VFW Post 7377, Cresson, received a new fence for the perimeter of their Army equipment display. The project was paid via a Home Depot grant. Posts interested in Post improvement grants can apply through the grants application page on Home Depot's website.



Pictured left to right Andrea Meintel, PA VFWA President, Brenda Bryant, VFWA National President, Barbara Loncar, PA VFW Commander, and PSC David Spike Gyger.

PSC David Spike Gyger's "Special Commander's Project" was to place a PA VFW sponsored monument in three PA cemeteries – Washington's Crossing in the East, Indiantown Gap in Central, and Cemetery of the Alleghenies in the West.

The monument was dedicated Nov. 16, 2024, in memory of the men and women who served their nation and was made possible through donations received from VFW and Auxiliary members.



VFW Post 33 held a Battle of the Bulge remembrance program on Saturday Dec. 14, 2024, at the post in Greensburg.

Battle of the Bulge, WW II, and other war veterans and family members gathered to remember and honor Battle of the Bulge veterans.



VFW Post 7293 members work together for the Buddy Poppy Drive.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA

VFW Eagle Award Recipient for 2023-2024



In the picture from left to right: Immediate Past State Commander David "Spike" Gyger, Donald Wilmot and his Wilmot's wife Sarah.

Sgt. Donald Wilmot, USMC, was named an Eagle Award recipient for his service in Vietnam.

This was the latest honor to be bestowed on Wilmot, a VFW Post 6520 Thomas A. Snook member, throughout his distinguished military career.

During his service to the nation, Wilmot earned the following honors: National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Air Crew Combat Wings; Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star; 18 air medals, United States Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, President Unit Citation; Rifle Sharpshooter Badge; Pistol Sharpshooter Badge; and two Battlefield Promotions of Corporal to Sergeant.

Wilmot's military service began upon graduation with entry into the United States Marine Corps. He completed 14 weeks of basic training at Parris Island, SC, followed by Advanced Infantry Training at Camp Lejeune, NC.

From there, he attended aviation training at the Naval Air Station in Memphis, Tenn., followed by two years with a transport unit in Minneapolis, Minn., working with a C-119 Flying Box Car.

In Sept. 1965, Wilmot transferred to a squadron that went to Vietnam.

For 13 months, Wilmot fought with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 361 as a crew chief and door gunner on a Marine UH-34 helicopter. Wilmot flew in 434 missions, of which 360 were combat missions. His helicopter crash-landed three times due to enemy fire.

His various Vietnam missions included: combat strikes to assist in lifting troops into enemy positions; medical evacuations to aid and rescue wounded comrades; re-supply to haul food and ammo to field marines; and recon-insert/recon-retraction to drop troops behind enemy positions.

Wilmot rose through the ranks during his military career, advancing from Lance Corporal to Corporal and then Sergeant.

Congratulations to Sgt. Wilmot for receiving this distinguished honor!

100th Birthday Celebration

The Auxiliary enjoyed a two day 100th Birthday celebration weekend with the Dept. of Pa VFW that included a "Night at the Races" on Friday evening. All proceeds were raised for the Sports Complex at the National Home. (Andrea Meintel & Barb Loncar's Special Project)

Everyone had a fun night at the "Races"! The horses included many Line Officers of the VFW and Auxiliary as well as some very competitive Past State Commanders! The derby hat and outfit competition was tense, with the numerous winners showcasing their wild creations.

Many visited the Department Headquarters to enjoy the variety of items displayed from the past 100 years during the weekend.

Saturday evening was our formal banquet where all Past Department Presidents were honored. A PowerPoint/picture presentation of past presidents was enjoyed by everyone, especially the special message from Past Department President Betty Kreszewski (1971-1972).

We will be celebrating our centennial through the 2024-25 Auxiliary year while we also "gallop" towards our next 100!



Showing off their Derby hats are, left to right, PA Auxiliary State President Andrea Meintel; Dept. of PA State Commander Barbara Loncar and National Auxiliary President Brenda Bryant.



Sporting their Friday night derby gear are, left to right, VFW State Commander Barbara Loncar and State Sgt. At Arms David Swanson.



At Saturday evening's formal banquet are, left to right, Auxiliary Officers L to R: Jodie Hollinger, sec/treas; Carolyn Paccio, Conductor; Robin Kohler, Sr. Vice President; Andrea Meintel State President and husband Jim Meintel; Brenda Bryant, National President; Ceil Cook, Jr. Vice; President; Joan Faddis, Guard and Becky Fox, Chaplain.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA



VFW Riders Group District 15: Year 1 in the Rear View

In September 2023, a group of like-minded veteran friends who have a passion for riding motorcycles recognized unmet needs in the LOCAL veteran community. Putting the rubber to the road, the VFW Riders Group – District 15-PA, was formed.

Just a little over a year old, they are a group of resolute volunteers encompassing a wide variety of talents, supported by the VFW organization, and looking to make a solid “boots on the ground” effort to positively impact the quality of life for veterans in Lycoming, Clinton, Tioga, Potter, & Cameron counties.

Group members observed that many veterans slip through the cracks either because they may not qualify for certain benefits or because the help they need is not something the Veterans Administration or affiliated agencies provide. Handiwork or repairs around their home, yard work, handicap-supportive adaptations that need completed quickly, or emergency funds to pay a utility bill are common instances where services often fall grossly short. Studies show that stressors such as these contribute to diminished well-being and erode positive mental health. We have a sole mission to ensure “NO VETERAN IS LEFT BEHIND.”

In the year since the group was officially organized, members have embraced the mission full throttle by contributing close to 8,000 hours of service to veterans assisting them with resources and aid they were unable to get elsewhere.

Projects completed include:

- Installed, moved, and reinstalled 6 handicap accessible ramps.
- Stabilized, repaired, and weatherized porch to accommodate access to home.
- Removed a jacuzzi tub to replace it with a walk-in tub.
- Installed handicap shower grab bars.
- Removed weeds/overgrown brush and mowed lawns on 4 properties to alleviate municipal citations.
- Secured and installed a washer/dryer.
- Up-righted veterans grave marker knocked over by weather.
- Donated household items to female veteran transitioning to the area.
- Donated household items for fire victims in Sullivan County.
- Organized a benefit ride for a veteran with cancer.
- Paid rent and utility bills for numerous veterans in need due to serious illnesses.
- Donated to personal items care drive for veterans in a local assisted living facility.
- Paid for minor car repairs.
- Collected, donated, and transported medical supplies for veteran victims in North Carolina devastated by Hurricane Helene.
- Assisted with paying for prescription medication for a traveling veteran in need.
- Connected veterans in need with VFW VSO's to get assistance with paperwork.
- Connected 2 veterans in need with appropriate mental health assistance in response to suicide ideations.
- Participated and networked with area veteran resources to stay current with new opportunities.

In addition to all the above accomplishments, the Riders participated in National Guard Family Deployment events, packed and shipped care packages to deployed service members, supported other motorcycle benefit rides, participated in parades and ceremonies on behalf of the VFW, provided support to Gold Star Families and Blue Star Moms, volunteered at community events, organized and executed fundraising events and volunteered faithfully at Military Share food distributions.

As the VFW Riders Group races into another year of service to our veterans, they look forward to amassing more support from fellow VFW posts and members, community businesses, and veteran networks. The VFW Riders Group District 15 anxiously embraces the road that lies ahead leading to more opportunities to help, serve and connect LOCAL veterans with resources that improve their quality of life.

If your post or auxiliary unit is interested in supporting our mission, please reach out to us via email at vwrgdistrict15@gmail.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA



DWIGHT R. FUHRMAN

Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars Past State Commander Dwight R. Fuhrman, passed away at the age of 74 in Hanover surrounded by his family. He and his wife Marsha E. (Yohe) Fuhrman shared more than 53 years of marriage together. Fuhrman served as state commander 2017-2018.

"Dwight was very important to the Pennsylvania VFW," said Pennsylvania State Commander Barbra Loncar. "After his time as commander he continued to teach, coach and mentor people in our organization, and make it a better one for our fellow veterans."

Born in York, Pa. on May 7, 1950, he graduated from Spring Grove Area High School in 1968 and served in the U.S. Army during Vietnam.

He was a life member of the East Berlin VFW Post #8896 where he served as Post Commander and Quartermaster. He also served as the District 21 Commander, and then Pennsylvania State Commander. Dwight was the Chairman for the Department of Pennsylvania Voice of Democracy program for 14 years.

Dwight worked as a welder at P.H. Glatfelter, Co. in Spring Grove from which he retired after almost 34 years of employment and was a member of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church in York.



ALLEN QUENTIN JONES



World War II veteran and Past State Commander Allen Quentin Jones, 100, formerly of Dunbar, Pa. passed away quietly at his daughter's home in North Carolina, Dec. 5. He was born on April 11, 1924, in Uniontown, Pa.

"Eighty years ago our greatest generation changed the world for the better and few are left with us from that time," said Pennsylvania VFW Commander Barbra Loncar. "It saddens us as fellow servicemembers to say goodbye to one of the few we have had the honor to know so well."

A life member of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion, Allen never left the ranks of his fellow veterans. He was Pennsylvania State VFW Commander 1986-87. Throughout his 70 plus years in the VFW he held numerous other positions as well as serving as President of the Board of Trustees of the VFW National Home for Children 1994-95.

A veteran of World War II, he served in the U.S. Army with the 717th Tank Battalion, an independent tank battalion which fought in the Europe in World War II, attached to the 79th Infantry Division.

The Battalion entered the war against Germany during its final stages, with its first shot in combat during the crossing of the Rhine River on March 24, 1945, eighteen days before Jones 21st birthday. Jones' awards included the European Theater Campaign Medal with two Battle Stars and the WW II Victory Medal.

After earning his bachelor's degree in education, Allen began teaching special education, and then later middle school science in the Connellsville Area School District.

Allen was also the Jr. High East basketball coach and led the team to a 16-0 WPIAL Junior Basketball Championship 1969-1970.

"We should all remember Commander Jones for the great man he was, and the example he has set for us all to live by," said Loncar.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA



At VFW Post 5958's Veterans Day Ceremony, Cecil Dennis was Honored for his lifelong dedication to the VFW. Pictured are Cecil Dennis, 4th from the left, PSC Ace Hanzes, first one on the left, Dept of PA Jr Vice Commander Jim Brown, 5th from the left, and the Post 5958 Officers.



VFW Post 402 Commander Mike Blair and Service Officer Bart Stack delivered turkeys headed to North Carolina to feed families suffering from hurricane damage. Turkeys were also donated to the Hanger Bar and Grill by the post to feed the local needy.

A wreath-laying ceremony was held by Susquehanna VFW Post & Auxiliary #2493, Mt. Wolf - District 21 - on Dec. 14. With 200 people in attendance, nearly 500 wreaths were placed on veterans' graves in Union Cemetery in Manchester.



The Post Color Guard presented the Colors for the Ceremonial Wreath presentation before the wreaths were placed throughout the Union Cemetery.



Wesley Elfner, Member of the Junior Unit, captured placing a wreath at Union Cemetery.



Buglers were throughout Union Cemetery playing taps for families and friends.

Pink Out event held at Post 9788.

Final numbers are in and through the schedule of events, pink drinks at the bar, donations for pink ribbons, raffles, 50/50, and shirt sales, a total of \$1,225 was raised!

Unite for Her and Veterans Multi-Service Center will each receive a check from Post 9788 for \$612.50.

For a first-time effort, we're all very pleased with the result!



PA VFW ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICERS & CLAIMS CONSULTANTS

VFW Veteran Services Officers and Claim Consultants are employed by the VFW to assist all veterans – regardless of membership in the VFW. This service is FREE. All of our veterans deserve comprehensive assistance with applying for and understanding their VA disability benefits. Please reach out to any of the Service Officers/Claims Consultants near you. Feel free to refer any veteran in need of assistance to one of us at the VFW.

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THE VFW AUXILIARY



ANDREA MEINTEL
PRESIDENT
DEPARTMENT OF PA VFW AUXILIARY

100 Years of Service

One hundred years ago, our Auxiliary was founded as an organization grounded in service, resilience, and unity—a commitment that has never wavered. From the very beginning, it was our volunteers—our members—who turned our mission into a reality. Through their actions, the Auxiliary became a force for good, meeting the needs of veterans and families across this great state.

Today, we are proud to continue their legacy. Every event we organize, every fundraiser we host, and every project we undertake is powered by the dedication and energy of our incredible members. You are the heart and soul of this organization. Each hour you volunteer, each initiative you lead, and each person you support represents the true success of the VFW Auxiliary. It is you, our members, who make this organization strong, meaningful, and impactful.

As we honor our past, we also look forward with great anticipation. The challenges our veterans face may change over time, but our commitment to them remains unwavering. We have a shared responsibility to carry forward the principles that have guided us for the last century—to continue serving, advocating, and standing with our veterans and their families.

The future of our Auxiliary depends on each of us to keep growing, evolving, and engaging new members who share our vision. Together, we must continue our work, using the strength of our collective spirit to make an even greater impact in the years ahead.

We are called to build upon this legacy, to ensure that future generations of veterans will be met with the same unwavering support, compassion, and gratitude that have defined us for the past 100 years. Together, we are unstoppable. Let's continue to serve with pride and passion as we look forward to the next 100 years.



PAM SOPHER
SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRMAN

What an exciting year promoting Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen through our schools, Scouting, Home Schooling and personal contacts! How exciting it is for our youth to have these amazing experiences of showing their pride and love for our Country. Our youth today are our future leaders of tomorrow. May we continue to find new ways to spread the word and involve more youth each year. This year, we offered the QR code to reach more students and their families. What can we consider doing for the coming year? As we anxiously await the results of this year's contests, let's begin planning for the 2025-2026 year. Those themes should be available by March; however, we can begin promoting right now! We must spread the word that just by taking the time to write on the topic can bring students great scholarship money for future education.

We ask for your assistance in promoting the Auxiliary Continuing Education Scholarships. Eligibility for this \$1,250 scholarship includes:

- Being a VFW Auxiliary member for at least one full year.
- The spouse, son and/or daughter of a VFW Auxiliary member.
- Applicant must be 21 years of age or older.
- Submission deadline is February 15, 2025.

Our Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest deadlines are March 31, 2025. These are opportunities for students in grades 9 – 12 to earn scholarships beginning at the Post level, right up to the National level. First Place National winner receives \$15,000.00.

For more details on both of these programs, reach out to any VFW Auxiliary member. Working together as a team on all our programs can ensure more winners in Pennsylvania.

I look forward to seeing you at the Mid-Winter Conference in Gettysburg!

Happy New Year to all. Stay safe and warm.



CEMETERY PLOTS AVAILABLE

Cemetery plots have been generously donated throughout Pennsylvania to the PA VFW. These plots are available to our veterans or spouse at no expense. Plots will need to be opened, and that fee must be paid. If you are in need, below is the list of participating cemeteries, their location and number of available plots.

- Bradford County Memorial Gardens,
Towanda – 5 plots
- Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Johnstown – 194 plots
- Mount Rose Cemetery, York – 2 plots
- Jefferson Memorial Cemetery and Funeral Home,
Pittsburgh – 3 plots
- Edgewood Memorial Park, Glen Mills – 7 plots
- Rosedale Memorial Park, Bensalem – 212 plots
- Conestoga Memorial Park, Lancaster – 3 plots
- Philadelphia Memorial Park, Frazer – 10 plots
- Sunset Memorial Park, Huntingdon Valley – 4 plots
- Mechanicsburg Cemetery Association,
Mechanicsburg – 2 plots
- Valley Forge Memorial Gardens - Valley Forge – 13 plots
- Castle View Memorial Gardens, New Castle – 15 plots
- Susquehanna Memorial Gardens, York – 4 plots
- Laurel Hill Memorial Gardens, Columbia – 2 plots
- Cedar Hill Memorial Park, Allentown – 2 plots



PERIODICALS



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SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 20

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (DEPT. HQ CLOSED)

JANUARY 24-25

**MID-WINTER CONFERENCE: EISENHOWER HOTEL,
GETTYSBURG, PA**

FEBRUARY 17

PRESIDENT'S DAY (DEPT. HQ CLOSED)

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 4

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY CELEBRATION: WASHINGTON, DC.

MARCH 1-5

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, DC. (TENATIVE)

MARCH 14-16

WOMEN'S VETERANS CONFERENCE, STATE COLLEGE, PA

Please take some time and checkout our website for all up-to-date information and lots of support materials, including the 2023-2024 Program Book
www.vfwauxpa.org