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

**Commander's Corner**

PA VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith



It's a new year but we continue with our same mission to help support our veterans, their families, and our communities.

As we cross over the halfway point in this leadership cycle; I want to emphasize communicating to our younger veterans and the importance of our organization to them.

Our younger veterans would not have the GI Bill if it wasn't for the efforts of the VFW. That assistance is obtained with the voice of veterans. That voice resonates when we unite and work together. We must have the next generation on deck and working toward the same goal.

In this issue of the Pennsylvania VFW News you will see many photographs from across the state working for veterans, their families and our communities. I thank everyone for doing the hard work they do.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all. It is an honor to command in the state of Pennsylvania and it has been a wonderful experience traveling and visiting posts to see all the great work they do. Fair winds and following seas to all of you and thank you for continuing your hard work.

**Across Pennsylvania: Nobody Does More for Veterans**



At the 2022 Farm Show, Harrisburg Jan. 13; Left to right: Buddy Poppy Chair Robert Emerick, the Food Network's Robert Irvine, Sr. Vice Commander Henry Mannella and Commander Nathaniel Smith. According to his biography, Irvine began his cooking career upon enlisting in the United Kingdom's Royal Navy. Having completed culinary training, Robert served aboard Her Majesty's Royal Yacht Britannia. He hosted the Army/Navy Cookoff. Navy was declared the winner.



Jr. Vice Commander and Homeless Veterans Chairman David "Spike" Gyger, left with sign, went with volunteers who gave their time to endure rain, wind and cold weather in Lebanon, Pa. "We mimic conditions that the homeless face every day for 32 hours straight," said Gyger. "It was grueling but well worth it to ensure we beat our previous 'Street Collection' amount with more than \$30,000."



VFW Auxiliary Post 6631, Selinsgrove, presented a check to Kidsgrove Playground. Thank you for all you do for our Communities.



VFW Post 418, Vesle, Commander Chas Maritz, right, with football legend and fellow VFW member Rocky Bleier at the Nov. 21 Veterans' Advocacy Day held in McKees Rocks. The event helped spread information and awareness to more than 100 veterans and their family members. (Photo by Michael P. Mauer)



## *From the Department Jr. Vice Commander 2021-2022*

### **Looking Out for Each Other**

David "Spike" Gyger



We all should have a dedicated time to come together with collective strength and discuss suicide. Suicide is a permanent action to a temporary problem/situation.

In the US, suicide is the second leading cause of death among people age 10-34 and the 10th cause of death overall. Seventy-eight percent of all people who die by suicide are male.

Suicide is a difficult topic and some are afraid that by asking someone if they're having thoughts of suicide, it will put the idea in their head, or push them to take their own life. Research shows this is not true. Some are worried that they won't know what to do, or how to help, if the person

tells them, "Yes – I am thinking about suicide." It's only by learning more about what leads someone to suicide, the ways we can help to prevent it, and what resources are available – and not being afraid to ask when we're worried about someone, or for help when we need it ourselves – that we can empower our communities to address this leading cause of death.

If you believe that someone is in danger of hurting themselves, don't be a silent partner. Call them and do the buddy check. Ask them if they are thinking about hurting themselves and assist them in seeking help. You can also reach out to the VA Crisis Hotline, 800-273-8255.

The holiday seasons and the winter months can have an effect on all of us. Work to increase suicide prevention awareness - we need to focus on this every day.



## *From the State Quartermaster*

### **Trustees Report**

John B. Getz Jr.



Comrades,

Here we are a new year has suddenly come upon us, we are still working under the COVID-19 conditions, but we are still surviving, some barely, but we are members of the largest combat veterans organization in the world. We, as VFW members, need to keep the VFW strong and at the top of the list.

Those of you who do not know there is a new incentive program from National to recruit membership. The information has been sent to all Post and District

Commanders.

The National organization will pay the post \$30 for every new or reinstated life member they recruit. If you recruit one that would like to go on the payment plan then the post will receive \$20. If the post recruits a new member for yearly membership, they will receive \$20 and \$10 for a reinstated member. These will be paid monthly.

This should be a reason for all our members to get on the band wagon and recruit to help our post and the membership of the VFW. We need these new members to stay strong. Thank you for all you do for the veterans of the world and most of all thank you for your service.

## **VFW National General Orders No. 6 2021-22 Series**

1. Commanders at all levels should begin organizing their 2022 Memorial Day "Buddy"® Poppy Campaign. Every Post is urged to order and distribute VFW "Buddy" Poppies.

2. Attention is directed to Section 213 of the National Bylaws concerning any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to County Council (if applicable), District, Department and National for fees, dues, poppy money, supply money, failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bonded in accordance with Section 703, failing to ensure that the Post is properly insured in accordance with Section 709, failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit, Post Election Report for the ensuing year, or other obligations, shall be deprived of all representation in County Council and District meetings; County Council, District, Department and National Conventions. Such representation shall be restored promptly upon proper adjustment of such deficiencies.

3. Trustees shall not be eligible to serve as an elected officer, Adjutant or on a committee whose books, records and accounts are audited by the Trustees. Among the duties of the three (3) elected Post Trustees, they shall:

a. At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.

b. Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant and any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee's Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.

c. The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.

d. Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.

4. Proof of Eligibility Requirements for Officers: All Posts, Districts and Departments should be reminded of the provisions of Sections 216, 416, and 516 of the Manual of Procedure that officers, elected and appointed, shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted to the respective Adjutant and properly reviewed.

## 2021 - 2022 Commanders Testimonial



National Council Member Glenn R. Umberger Jr., right, presented a certificate from the VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic to PA VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith, left, in recognition of his service as the Pennsylvania Department Commander during his Oct. 2021 Testimonial.



Mayor of Whitehall Township Michael P. Harakal, Jr., right, presented a Certificate of Commendation to PA VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith, left, during his Oct. 2021 Testimonial.



Bradford VFW Post 212 and its auxiliary hosted their veterans dinner with past state Commanders Ron Peters, left, Ace Hanzes, right, along with District 19 President Amy Peterson.



Pennsylvania VFW leadership gathered in Harrisburg over the holidays season to mark a calendar year of accomplishments.



# Across Pennsylvania



Pennsylvania VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith visited VFW Post 1132, Kane while traveling in District 19. Special thanks to all from the commander.



District 16 Commander James V. Manser III, center left, visited with King of Prussia Post 7878 as their riders made a check presentation to VFW Post 6956, Gladwyne. The donation will assist the post as they rebuild from weather damage.



West York Post 8951 and their Auxiliary hosting the children's Christmas party. Thank you all for your continued service and dedication to your community.

Auxiliary Chaplain Roslyn Rogachesky and Post 33 Chaplain Robert Stricklin lay a wreath during the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor remembrance service December 7, 2021



Cocalico Valley VFW Post 3376 had their Christmas visit with Santa. Special thanks to the VFW and Auxiliary members who made the event happen.



Reynolds VFW Post 7599 and Auxiliary found Santa on the fire truck and brought him to their children's party.



Point Marion VFW Post 747 presented a donation Appalachian Community Center to President Shawn Hellen, Secretary Connie Epley and Trustee Ernie Hellen.



WW II veteran Frank Stellar is a member of Lebanon Post 23 and stopped by the VFW booth at the 2022 Farm Show Jan. 12. From left to right are: Buddy Poppy Chairman Robert R. Emerick, Sr. Vice Commander Henry R. Mannella, Mr. Stellar, Jr. Vice Commander David W. Gyger and State Safety Awards Chair Earl Stump who commands Post 6391 in Port Allegany.



The Veterans Day program at Mifflinburg Intermediate School provided auxiliary members the honor to be able to help children understand who our veterans are and what they do for our country. Many veterans spoke and two district presidents and auxiliary members were in attendance.

Pennsylvania VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith, center right, visited VFW Post 8803 in Tidioute for their Open House Celebrating 75 Years of Service. Congratulations, may there be 75 more years of service to veterans and your community.



## PENNSYLVANIA VFWnews

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## Focus on Mission Success



Presentation of Quilt of Valor to six veterans at VFW Post 6631 in Selinsgrove, October 31. On left, back row, District 17 Commander Harold Aucker and District 17 President Kimberly Grundon with Pennsylvania Congressman Fred Keller on the far right. Recipients; front row left to right Roger Dressler, Kenneth Cray, Wayne Dobson, second row Brett Dressler, Jeffrey Miller, William Filk.



Mahoning Valley VFW Post 2076 in Punxsutawney hosted a craniosynostosis awareness spaghetti dinner on October 17 at the post home on Maple Avenue. Craniosynostosis is a rare birth defect that causes the bones in a baby's skull to close prematurely. Navy veteran, Post 2076 member, Kaycee Elliott learned of her newborn's condition shortly after Milo's birth. She reached out to her close friend Falisha Campbell whose son Braydon had also been born with the condition. After successful operations to correct the birth defect, both mothers began work to bring awareness of this condition to the public.

Proceeds from the dinner, basket raffle, and donations netted more than \$4,000 which will be given to Cranio Care Bears.

From left: Falisha Campbell, Kaycee Elliott holding son Milo, Post 2076 Quartermaster Jim Davis presenting a check, and Post 2076 Commander Jim Pallone.



At the Veterans Day Program at VFW Post 2076 in Punxsutawney: Front center are Eileen and John Quatroche. John was a World War II pilot flying missions out of England over Germany. Front left is Post Commander Jim Pallone who presented John, at age 99, a life membership. Front right, District 26 Commander Dave Seymore. Back left is Tim Cooper who presented John with a certificate from the Punxsutawney American Legion Post 62. Back right is post member Bob Lott who, representing Quilts of Valor Foundation, presented John with the quilt donated by the foundation.



VFW Post 7530, Lower Allen Township, held their Veterans Day celebration. Thank you for inviting state leadership. From Left to right State Adjutant John B. Getz, State Jr. Vice Commander David W. Gyger and State Commander Nathaniel Smith with local veterans in attendance.



Focus on Mission Success



Veterans Day program at VFW Post 33, Greensburg, November 11. Commander Mike Yaggi read the Veterans Day Proclamation from the White House. Here, the VFW Post Honor Guard is at attention for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States. Chaplain Robert Strickland read the closing prayer to end the Veterans day program. Photo by Paul Yeckel Post 33 Life Member



VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith, standing center, visited Catawissa, Pa. as VFW Post 8306 celebrated their 75th Jubilee. Commander Mark Schlieder, back row right of center joined post members and of-ficers who were in attendance. The event included a nice display of the years of history surrounding the post.



Brittany Litwiler and Johnny Bresnan are this year's recipient of the Bob Brandt, Reynolds, VFW Post 7599 Award for cross country. Additional congrats to the boys and girls teams on a fine season. Thank you to the Greenville post for recognizing these fine young athletes.



Auxiliary Secretary Lisa Johnston presents a \$500 check to Eagle Scout Brandon Graham of Troop 1111 West Mifflin for his project painting the VFW Post cannons. They restored a M1897A6 French Chatterault 75MM howitzer cannon from 1919; a US Naval gun Model 22, 3 inch, .50 cal from 1942, and his fellow scouts also refurbished a US 57MM Anti-tank gun from 1942.

# Accross Pennsylvania



At the Mt Holly Springs VFW Post 7343 Veterans Day event are Commander Rick Bower, left, Guest Speaker LTC Castro, center, and Post Chaplain Tom Rhinehart, right.



Lower Allen TWP VFW Post 7530 host Gold Star family members from central Pa. In attendance:

- Mr. and Mrs. Dean and Beverly Faircloth, Parents of United States Marine Corps Corporal Jonathon Faircloth who died in 2011.
- Celeste and Lucille, Sisters of United States Army Private First-Class Samuel Lee McDonald who died in 1965.
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Sandra Seidel, Parents of Army Lt. Robert Seidel III who died in 2006.

Each Gold Star Mother and Sister made a powerful and moving testimonial in honor of their loved ones.

Also in attendance, the Honorable Carla Sands, Former United States Ambassador to Denmark and The Honorable Sheryl DeLozier for the 88th Legislative District of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. David Gyger, Junior Vice Commander of the Pa. VFW and Madam Valerie DeCorte, Senior Vice President of the Auxiliary of the PA. VFW.



Congratulations to Emma Boland, who was selected as the Reynolds VFW Post 7599 Bob Brandt Award winner for outstanding leadership on and off of the volleyball court.



VFW Post 3414, Latrobe, reached out to the HJ Heinz VAMC Oakland, Southwestern PA Veterans Center and the Veterans Homeless Shelter of Western PA; every patient of the VAMC and SWPA Veterans Center received a blanket and a card for Christmas. They were also able to provide a great deal more thanks to local community efforts.





Veterans of Foreign Wars Vesle Post 418 Commander Chas Maritz, left, receives a certificate commemorating his Post's 100th Anniversary from VFW District 29 Commander Jessica M. King. The McKees Rocks post celebrated its first century May 24, 2020. Pandemic protocol delayed official recognition of the event until Nov. 21, 2021. (Photo by Michael P. Mauer)



Pennsylvania Deputy Adjutant General, Veterans Affairs, Brig. Gen. (PA) Maureen Weigl, center is with Safety Awards Chairman Earl Stump, left, and Membership Chairman John Otte, Right, at the Pennsylvania National Guard Association Conference. Weigl signed up to become a Life Member of the VFW, welcome aboard!



Pennsylvania VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith, center, right, had the honor of presenting the Diamond Jubilee Award to the commander of Harner Allen VFW Post 8306 for their 75th Anniversary. Congratulations and we hope for many more years of service to veterans and the community.



VFW Post 554 Commander Terry Menear, flanked by officers Mark Custer and Eric Grus. Menear is presenting another donation to the Somerset Borough Police Department Motor Unit.

Veteran groups, including the VFW, Vietnam War Veterans and the American Legion have been faithfully donating to the operation of the Motor Unit since its inception in 2007. The donations pay for motor officer certification training, It also helps in the acquisition of motorcycles and maintenance, including the complete refurbishment of the motors in 2019.

“These men and women, these veterans, with their history of service and sacrifice to our nation, continue to serve our community,” said Menear. “For that, on behalf of SPD and the Somerset community, we express our gratitude and pride in them.”

**Department Membership Update:****89.98% as of Dec. 31, 2021**

Div	Post	Dist	Percent	Need for 100%	Location
3	5958	28	101.40%	9	TITUSVILLE
3	8896	21	101.02%	4	EAST BERLIN
3	1810	29	100.47%	2	BRENTWOOD
3	3428	15	99.15%	-4	MUNCY
3	7293	8	98.36%	-6	EGYPT
4	813	22	104.13%	12	DU BOIS
4	7155	16	101.11%	3	TRAPPE
4	15	21	97.10%	-8	GETTYSBURG
4	740	28	96.09%	-13	EDINBORO-MC KEAN
4	7505	25	95.26%	-16	MARS
5	7842	28	105.95%	14	LINESVILLE
5	148	18	104.81%	9	HARRISBURG
5	7599	28	101.68%	4	TRANSFER
5	6076	18	100.49%	1	MYERSTOWN
5	537	21	99.55%	-1	ETTERS
6	5825	22	101.68%	3	PINE GROVE MILLS
6	676	16	101.08%	2	GLENSIDE
6	5956	9	100.61%	1	MANHEIM
6	212	19	100.00%	0	BRADFORD
6	7463	17	98.02%	-3	NEW BLOOMFIELD
7	1074	16	113.76%	19	CONSHOHOCKEN
7	5954	16	105.26%	7	RED HILL
7	6824	14	104.00%	5	ROME
7	1338	28	102.67%	3	SHARON
7	7343	18	101.60%	2	MT HOLLY SPRINGS
8	5424	28	106.06%	6	JAMESTOWN
8	7919	1	103.06%	3	MONTGOMERY COUNTY
8	8023	18	103.00%	3	ANNVILLE
8	6757	15	102.08%	2	MANSFIELD
8	3398	16	101.03%	1	WILLOW GROVE
9	9788	16	111.68%	9	HORSHAM
9	6391	19	102.43%	2	PORT ALLEGANY
9	11322	8	100.00%	0	QUAKERTOWN

9	7783	26	96.55%	-3	SAINT BENEDICT
9	7251	10	96.25%	-3	THROOP
10	9220	8	105.97%	4	EDDINGTON
10	6404	28	103.22%	2	SHARPSVILLE
10	6347	19	101.78%	1	MOUNT JEWETT
10	1424	19	101.66%	1	MARIENVILLE
10	5205	1	100.00%	0	PHILADELPHIA
11	8353	11	112.90%	4	GLEN LYON
11	9764	29	112.50%	1	CHESWICK
11	6072	14	102.50%	1	ASYLUM
11	6518	11	102.04%	1	EXETER
11	1063	1	100.00%	0	PHILADELPHIA
11	7524	26	110.25%	4	SOUTH FORK
11	6673	29	109.75%	4	MUNHALL

**District Standings**

Place	District	% Membership	Current Membership 2022	Members Needed for 100%
1	16	97.36%	1735	-47
2	28	95.35%	4349	-212
3	14	93.19%	1492	-109
4	1	92.23%	914	-77
5	12	92.12%	1297	-111
6	21	91.88%	5207	-460
7	15	91.74%	1866	-168
8	26	91.12%	2423	-236
9	19	91.08%	1879	-184
10	9	91.00%	3256	-322
11	13	90.66%	1009	-104
12	29	90.50%	3307	-347
13	7	90.29%	911	-98
14	17	89.81%	917	-104
15	25	89.48%	2236	-263
16	18	89.42%	4774	-565
17	8	89.33%	2419	-289
18	30	89.19%	1229	-149
19	27	88.81%	2334	-294
20	11	88.14%	1657	-223
21	10	86.42%	1496	-235
22	22	85.62%	2519	-423
23	23	85.07%	1596	-280
24	20	84.39%	1162	-215
25	24	84.03%	1258	-239

# The VFW Auxiliary ...

## Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



### Thank You for all your hard work

By Pam Sopher, Department President  
VFW Auxiliary – Department of PA



To all PA Comrades,

It is hard to believe that six months have flown by serving our Veterans and communities. I have had the honor and pleasure of sharing some of my District visits with Commander Smith. We both are so pleased to see our Posts and Auxiliaries working side by side to complete the mission of serving.

What an amazing time visiting each District and meeting so many of our grassroots Brothers, Sisters and Comrades. I am so deeply humbled when I am invited to address your members and have the opportunity to personally thank you for the sacrifices you have made for all of us. I love being able to sit down with my Comrades, Brothers and Sisters and talk about what they have done and what they are planning to provide for those who are less fortunate.

Although we have only been able to make limited hospital visits due to COVID, they have been full of love and gratification.

Thank you for your continued service to our Veterans, Communities and our Country. The true soldier fights not because they hate what is in front of them, but because they love what is behind them.

God Bless and remember **“Our Veterans, Forever and Always.”**



Sandie Walker (far left) is standing next to Pennsylvania VFW President Pamela Sopher. One of Sopher's Veterans projects is Mr. Sandy's Homeless Veteran's Center in York. The center was the vision of Vietnam veteran Mr. Sandy Walker. He spent most of his life serving other veterans. When Mr. Walker died in 2015, his daughter Sandie worked with others in the city to open the Center.



PA VFW Auxiliary President Pam Sopher helped Kathy Altoff, District 21 President, place a wreath at the Veterans Memorial Gold Star Healing and Peace Garden in York, PA. December 5 in honor of the families of the fallen.



**FOCUS ON MISSION SUCCESS**



Post 7343 Mt Holly Springs, a. celebrated their 75th Anniversary, back Row, Judd Sweitzer, Bob Wade, Gregg Newton, Dustin Berger, State Jr. Vice Commander Dave Gyger, front, Joe Cyr-Karla Bear, Randy Chonister, Mitch Brough, Darlene Bower, kneeling, Post Commander Rick Bower and District 18 Commander Fred Hechler.

**PERIODICALS**



McKees Rocks veterans held a Veterans' Advocacy Day event Sunday, Nov. 21. Pictured from left to right are American Legion Post 618 Commander Joe Bopp, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 418, Vesle, members John Ferguson, Rich Dercic, Ed Beliunas, Ed Carter III, Larry Joint and Bill Dawkin. In front is Huckelberry the service dog.



Thank you to Senator Pat Toomey and VFW Post 9639 Judge Advocate Bob DeSousa for taking the time to arrange for recognition of the Cold War Veterans of Post 9639, Shellsville. We thank you all for your service to our country.