

FAREWELL TO IMMEDIATE PSC WELCOME NEW DEPARTMENT STATE COMMANDER



**IMMEDIATE PAST
DEPARTMENT STATE
COMMANDER
2022-2023**

Comrades,

As I write this letter for our department newspaper, I realize that this is one of my last acts as your Department Commander. I am proud to say that this past year, every Post and District contributed to make our department successful. Whether it was helping veterans, holding community service, doing recruiting events, or calling our legislators, everyone made it happen.

Valerie Decorte, President of the department, it was an absolute honor working alongside you. Over the past six years, both the department auxiliary and I have witnessed your unwavering dedication and exceptional leadership which has made our department auxiliary a great success. Congratulations on receiving the Circle of Excellence Award!

The membership team of the department aimed to achieve 100% membership and appreciate your dedication. Working recruiting events, whether it involved working long hours or promoting the VFW without pay, your efforts will yield benefits for years to come.

The hospitality shown to me by every post and district over the past year has made me feel at home. At this year's state convention, some of my comrades asked me about the most memorable event of the year. I replied that if I had to choose one event, it would be the overseas visit to our Pennsylvania National Guard troops in Kuwait, which was made possible by our own Col. Frank McGovern.

I would like to extend my best wishes for a successful incoming year to our new Commander, Dave Gyger, and Department President, Mary Jean Mastridge. As a piece of advice, if people tell you that time flies, believe them, because it truly does.

As we end, I want to express my gratitude to everyone for the success we have achieved as a department. I would like to give a special thanks to our ADJ/quartermaster, John Getz, for his guidance throughout this past year. Additionally, I want to acknowledge Chief of Staff Bob Emerick for his company on our road trips and his impressive ability to avoid speeding tickets.

I would like to express my gratitude to my friend and mentor, Glen Umberger, who is our National Council member. I am also thankful for the mentorship and guidance provided by our past National Commander in Chief "Big John", and all the previous department state commanders. Now, it is my turn to pass on the guidance and mentorship you have shown me.

The most challenging aspect of writing this newsletter is expressing my gratitude towards my family. I am immensely grateful to my wife, Deanne, for her unwavering support and for accompanying me on numerous trips. I also want to extend my appreciation to Marie for her invaluable contribution as my personal writer and editor. Without her, these letters would not have been possible. Finally, I hope Antonio enjoys the coin collection he has collected over the years.

Sincerely yours in comradeship,

Henry R. Mannella

STATE COMMANDER



DAVID W. "SPIKE" GYGER
STATE COMMANDER

Over the past years I’ve learned a great deal about the Posts and Districts in this state. I have learned the challenges that many face. But despite the many challenges, I’m also amazed at all the things so many Posts and Districts accomplish.

Perhaps that is due to our military training where we were taught not to draw attention to ourselves; we were constantly reminded that “it’s not about you.” So now we find it difficult to inform and educate the public in all we do, because we are still uncomfortable with drawing attention to ourselves.

Meanwhile, many VFW eligible veterans in our communities go uniformed on the many things that the local VFW is doing; things which are very relevant and would really matter to them if they knew, especially to potential new members.

Many veterans find that there are certain aspects of the military service that they miss, from common jargon and mutual understanding of teamwork for practical solutions. For many it’s the combination of both and the camaraderie that ensues. It is a bond that’s apparent when we interact with each other, a bond that is apparent to those who did not serve and though they don’t quite understand it, they envy it. It is a bond that veterans can still find in the VFW as part of a team that is achieving things that are really making a difference. So, please go out in your communities and get involved, share what your VFW does for them and promote the organization.

GENERAL ORDERS

Comrades:

I would like to start by thanking you for electing me as your State Commander. Serving as your State Commander is an honor and another opportunity to serve our veterans and our communities.

I am truly humbled to serve as your State Commander for the Expand, Encourage and Educate 2023 – 2024.

To all of the comrades, I promise my support and together we can make a positive difference in the lives of our Veterans and their families.

Comrades, as I begin this great journey as YOUR PA VFW STATE Commander, we rise again to the challenge of this new year. We need to pick up the torch TODAY and shine our light brightly into every corner of the state, far and wide while remembering our veterans, those still among us and those who have moved on.

I will give you all I have and leave nothing on the table. I ask you to do the same.

Always remember, No one does more for Veterans than what we do.

1. The next Council of Administration: Meeting will be held 1pm on October 6, 2023 at The Ramada Conference Center in State College, Pa. That weekend is also the State Commander’s Retreat. See attached flyer to book your room, meals, and ads for the ad book for this event.
2. Changes of Post and District Officers: All District and Post Commanders are reminded that whenever there is change of Officer(s) within the Post or District that they need to FILE NEW ELECTION REPORT in OMS and notify the Department HQ.
3. Chain of Command: All Posts members are reminded that if there are any issues at your Posts, it is asked that you start at that level with the Post Commander, then the District Commanders and finally the State Commander. In most cases/situations, problems can be resolved at the post level.
4. District/Post By-Laws: Districts and Posts Commanders are reminded to look at when you last updated your by-laws. If it has been more than 5 years, you need to get them and update them.
Please use the correct templates as provided on Departments Headquarters webpage or contact the State Adjutant Office who will email you the current template. Once completed, please forward the originals signed (they can be emailed, faxed or regular mail. The preferred method is email) to State Headquarters for review and then forwarding to National for approval.
5. District Meetings Date Changes: District Commanders are reminded to notify the State Adjutant Office ASAP of any changes in District meeting dates so that the respective Department Representative can be notified in plenty of time.

GENERAL ORDERS CONTINUED

6. Congratulations to all newly elected District Commanders for the term 2023 – 2024

District	Name	Phone	Post	Email
1	Joseph Sokol	267-584-1324	20	dotsokol104@gmail.com
7	Jonnie Walker	610-220-5053	928	fstsgtwalker@comcast.net
8	John Otte	267-644-7942	7293	john.otte@gmail.com
9	Claresa Whitfield	610-322-1410	287	claresa1974@yahoo.com
10	Vincent Gavin	570-862-2955	7963	Vincentdangavin@gmail.com
11	Melissa Dimmitt	931-561-8763	6615	missmissid@yahoo.com
12	Lance Nelson	570-590-6587	7654	pdd1533@verizon.net
13	Ronald Brown	484-772-5387	38	ronaldbrown694@gmail.com
14	Phillip Price	570-506-1347	8488	pprice@nep.net
15	Jesse Olson	706-577-7293	6611	vfw.pa.sva@gmail.com
16	Walt Hartnett	484-362-3957	1074	walt.hartnett4@gmail.com
17	Harold Aucker	570-765-0025	6631	haucker1117@gmail.com
18	Fred Hechler	717-512-3843	9639	persiangulfvet91@gmail.com
19	John Pagliaro	814-661-5282	7252	lpags.vfw7252@gmail.com
20	Gregory Protsko	570-677-9222	8612	g.protsko@outlook.com
21	Christen Smith	717-884-1705	1446	csmithvfw@gmail.com
22	Douglas Warmath	814-414-6953	7689	creasegrinder@gmail.com
23	Alister McGibbon	724-415-8160	8543	alistermcgibbon@hotmail.com
24	Gary MacArthur	724-941-2334	764	gary.macart@gmail.com
25	Stephen Freeman	724-506-3890	249	tiger437@hotmail.com
26	Dave Seymore	814-931-0600	2076	rooftopinsp@aol.com
27	Kenneth King	724-640-5450	7781	colkking@gmail.com
28	Michael Staab	814-450-3718	470	mikey.staab@gmail.com
29	Richard Stefanick	412-400-0819	9197	vfwdistrict29@gmail.com
30	Melody Price	814-644-3760	5754	mjp81364@gmail.com

7. Chairmanship for the Term 2023 - 2024

Chairmans	Name	Phone	Email
Arthritis/Diabetes Chairman	Larry Hawthorne	724-699-2521	larry.hawthorne@att.net
Barger Scholarship Chairman	Dwight Fuhrman	717-578-3151	dmfuhman@comcast.net
Buddy Poppy Chairman	Robert Marshall	717-319-0991	robert192@verizon.net
Bylaws Chairman	Glenn Umberger	610-517-3455	glenn.umberger@gmail.com
Citizen/Education Chairman/Coloring Contest	Glenn Owen	814-812-1970	buck012@frontiernet.net
Communication Contest Chairman-Website-News Letters	Dwayne MacKenzie	717-738-2923	ephratavfw@outlook.com
Honor Guard - Captain	Robert G. Snook	717-582-7776	rsnook7922@gmail.com
Community Service Chairman	Jodi Hartle	814-229-8320	hartlejodi@gmail.com
Credentials Chairman	Barbara Kollar	814-322-8634	barbiekollar@outlook.com
Dept. Legislative Chairman - 3 Years	Charles Jackson	484-707-9757	chuckjackson21@gmail.com
Finance Chairman	Robert Eiler	412-974-4095	golddust2@peoplepc.com
Heath Care Award Chairman	Ruth Fairchild	724-544-4745	raf4ever@aol.com
Homeless Veterans Chairman	William Meiser	717-383-6099	wmeiser@raiderweb.org
Homeless Veterans Co- Chairman	David "Spike" Gyger	717-991-1473	djc57@verizon.net

Internal Affairs Co- Chairman - East	Chester Potoski	570-687-5375	cpotoski1954@gmail.com
Internal Affairs Co- Chairman - East	James Frisbie	570-840-0847	hillbillykid_99@yahoo.com
Internal Affairs Co- Chairman - West	Robert Eidler	412-974-4095	golddust@peoplepc.com
Internal Affairs Co- Chairman - East	Roy Shrimp	607-846-8636	schrimpfourwheel@epix.net
Internal Affairs Co- Chairman - West	Thomas Hanzes	724-815-9164	thomashanzes@yohoo.com
Internal Affairs Co- Chairman - West	Wayne Perry	724-816-1247	wayper@zoominternet.net
Internal Affairs Assistant - West	Brian Armstrong	412-901-9610	barms13@gmail.com
Membership / Gold Legacy Chairman	Robert Hinkle	717-542-6948	bhinkle@vfw5265.org
Membership Chairman Co-Chairman N. East	William D. Lamont III	570-241-5875	ta30chev@gmail.com
Membership Chairman Co-Chairman -West	Greg Stump	760-443-6811	gstump.90@gmail.com
National Home Chairman	Ronald Peters	814-366-1698	acavrp@hotmail.com
National Legislative Chairman	James Brown	814-758-6087	jbpit36@gmail.com
National Legislative Co-Chairman	Richard G. Cassey	610-937-1438	commander@trappevfw.org
Patriot Pen Chairman	William D. Lamond III	570-241-5875	ta30chev@gmail.com
POW/MIA Chairman	Dusten E. Zimmerman	814-435-6739	d.zimmerman15@outlook.com
Programs Chairman	Amy MacKenzie	717-575-3982	Quartermaster@ephratavfw.org
Redistricting Chairman	Russell Canevari	570-877-2479	bigguy1248@comcast.net
Safety Awards Chairman	Jim Lewis	724-988-9181	jimandlinda@zoominternet.net
Student Veterans Co-Chairman	Jesse Olson	706-577-7293	wfw.pa.sva@gmail.com
Veterans Service Chairman	Jessica King	412-618-8902	jadamsking2019@gmail.com
Veterans Service Committee	Charles Beatty	814-506-3176	charles.j.beattie62@gmail.com
VFW Motorcycle Riders Chairman	Larry Bills	717-824-1614	lbills70@yahoo.com
VFW Motorcycle Riders Chairman	Brian Armstrong	412-901-9610	barms13@gmail.com
Voice of Democracy Chairman	Thomas Hanzes	724646-3072	thomashanzes@yahoo.com
Women's Veterans Chairman	Amy MacKenzie	717-575-3982	Quartermaster@ephratavfw.org
Youth Activities/Scouting Chairman	Frank McGovern	610-742-4220	frankjmcgovern@msn.com

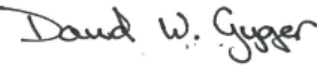
8. Membership
The new VFW years for statistics began on July 1. This is a new VFW year for statistics. Identify those in your Post whose dues expire in July and August and get them paid up. That along with active recruiting, then we should be off to a strong start.
Starting Strong – This challenge is for all Posts with the Post in each membership Division. See the membership contest below:

Contest # 1 – Lead the Pennsylvania Team
The post in each division with the highest new, continuous and reinstated Membership by August 31, 2023 will receive for a Life Membership.

Contest # 2 – Let’s keep pushing on
Any Post who obtains 97% by 31 September 2023 will be entered in a drawing for a Life Membership. If the member is already a Life Member, a Legacy Life Membership will be awarded.

Contest # 3 – Early Bird Special
All Posts with 101% membership reported by December 31, 2023 will receive a bonus of .75 cents per member. Post will receive a bonus of \$ 1.00 per member for each member properly reported over 100% as of December 31, 2023.

Life members will not count until September. This should give us a start with good momentum for the beginning of the membership year.



David W. “Spike” Gyger
Commander

STATE SR. VICE COMMANDER



BARBARA "BARB" LONCAR
STATE SR. VICE COMMANDER

I would like to thank you all for the vote of confidence in electing me your Sr. Vice Commander for the year 2023-2024. I am looking forward to working with Commander "Spike" and his chairpersons. During this year I will be looking for strong leaders - those willing to put in the work on all programs and membership!

If you are interested in working on a program that you can add value to let me know. I am willing to listen to what you have to say and what value you can bring to our programs. I would expect that if appointed to a program that you are in constant contact with the Districts and ensure that they are working with the posts.

Communication is the best way that we can grow and become stronger in all areas. We need "out of the box" thinkers in all areas to improve our programs and get 100% across the board. Every Post and District along with the Department, need to work together. Post Commander's please work with your Auxiliaries (if you have one); also work with other Post Commanders in your district and your District Officers. District Commanders work with all your Post Commanders and Auxiliaries; also, the Chairperson for the programs within the Department.

Working together is the only way that we can achieve great results! Work with other District Commanders to share knowledge and ideas. When you need assistance use your Chain of Command but do not hesitate to reach out to the Department for help; that is why we are here! We all need to work together this year, next year and for all future years to become one "Great team"! Let Us Build a Bridge within our Post, Auxiliary, and Communities! Together Everyone Achieves More! TEAM!

STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER



WILLIAM "BILL" ROLLAND
STATE JR. VICE COMMANDER

I would like to thank the membership for the privilege of becoming the Department Junior Vice Commander. I served twenty-six years in the military. Nine in the U. S. Navy and seventeen in the U. S. Army, retiring March 31, 2011, as the Executive Officer of the 339th Combat Support Hospital. My eligibility for the VFW was Kosovo 2006.

As I start this new road in my life, I look forward to working with all of you to make a difference in our Veterans, their familie's lives and our VFW. As I traveled the state campaigning for Jr. Vice, I heard your concerns and areas you felt our organization has shortcomings. As I move forward in the chairs, I will remember your thoughts. I also heard the great things our Posts and Districts do and wish non-members could hear. We can and will do better getting the public the information we know. Commander Gyger has undertaken this project, which I agree is important for the VFW and many of you said this was an area we needed to get better. I look forward to the road ahead.

STATE QUARTERMASTER



JOHN B. GETZ, JR
STATE QUARTERMASTER

As the A/Q of the Department of Pennsylvania, it is a pleasure to try and help as many Veterans as I can since I am here to help all Veterans. The year 2022-2023 went by quickly and the State of Pennsylvania did a great job on membership, but we did not report all the Community Service that we did. We also need to step up and report and show the world what we do.

The Trustees quarterly report is still an issue. We need to do this every quarter to report to the department, but we should have all the trustees go over the bank and credit card accounts every month. This will make it much easier to do the quarterly report. We are allowing too many people take the funds that belong to Veterans and use it as their personal funds. This needs to STOP.

We also need you to look at the property that the post has and make sure it is in the name of the Post and not the Home Association. You need to take back your VFW and not allow a non-member to try and claim your property. If you need help let me know, I am here to help you be a successful Post. Remember everyday is Veterans Day.

STATE JUDGE ADVOCATE



FRANK MCGOVERN
STATE JUDGE ADVOCATE

Officer Duties and Legal Issues
Fiduciary Responsibilities are duties imposed on officers and directors by law. Each elected officer has a personal liability to the Post and the members because you hold the property, records, and money in trust. Officers and Directors have an obligation to act primarily in the interest of the organization rather than personal interests or

the interests of a particular constituency. There are three specific fiduciary duties, Care; Loyalty; Obedience. Common sense rule-In accepting a position of leadership we understand that. 1. We must use good judgment in handling the organization's business. 2. We must act in the interests of the organization as a whole and not in our own self-interests. 3. We must follow the rules if we expect others to follow the rules.

Possible Legal Issues for Posts/Canteens
Lack of proper insurance; Waste of organizational assets; Preparing or promulgating false or misleading reports; Theft; Causing the organization to incur unnecessary tax liability; Failure to disclose prior business interests.

ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA



Ninety-three (93) year old Francis Coleman is the oldest living member of the Stanley Snyder VFW Post 7465 in Volant, Pa. Mr. Coleman served in the US Army and is a Korean War veteran. Pictured left to right are Peter Hook State Chaplain, Thomas Ace Hanzes PSC, David Freed VFW Post 7465 Quartermaster/Adjutant, Francis Coleman, PA VFW State Commander David "Spike" Gyger, Barbara Loncar PA VFW Senior Vice Commander, Jodie Hartle VFW Post 2145 Commander and PA VFW Community Service Program Chair, John Getz PA VFW State Quartermaster/Adjutant and Valerie DeCorte, PA VFW Auxiliary PDP.



PA VFW State Commander David "Spike" Gyger and Quartermaster/Adjutant John Getz have been making site visits to our Service Officers. Across PA the VFW has 30 accredited Service Officers in strategic locations providing assistance to any veteran with VA claims assistance or other needs. They recently visited the Lockhaven offices. Pictured left to right are Nadine Willits, Susan White, Cindy Bardo, David Spike Gyger, David Bower, John Getz.



The Doylestown PA Memorial Day parade is considered the nation's oldest, commencing in 1868. Prime viewing areas are occupied hours before the 10 AM start and due to street closures, access to the parade route is challenging as is nearby parking. In the past, these circumstances have made it difficult for senior veterans residing in area nursing homes to attend the parade.

To enhance the opportunity for the senior veterans to witness the parade, Doylestown VFW Post 175, in concert with the Doylestown Borough Parks and Recreation department, set aside a prime viewing area for senior veterans and their families. The borough brought bleachers and Doylestown American Legion Post 210 setup chairs. Additionally, the borough public works department provided portable restrooms and a shuttle bus/car access route was identified to allow close drop-off/pick-up near the stands.

This first attempt was a resounding success with over two dozen veterans and an equal number of family/friends attending. Plans are to increase awareness for the 2024 Memorial Day Parade for not only facility residents but limited mobility veterans as well.

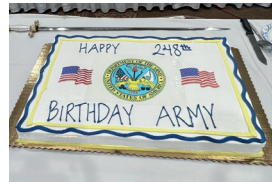


May 11, 2023, Senior Vice Commander David W. "Spike" Gyger and Auxiliary President, Valerie DeCorte, traveled to the Valley Forge Military Academy and College. Senior Vice Gyger presented a ROTC Citation and Medal to Cadet Captain Brooks Burnett.



ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA

HAPPY 248TH BIRTHDAY ARMY



On June 14 we celebrated the 248th Birthday of the Army during our Department Convention. The Program included the Ceremonial cutting of the cake, with the designated "oldest" Veteran present passing the piece of cake to the "youngest" Veteran present. Our oldest Veteran was Walt Gerhart, Korean Veteran and Life Member of the VFW. The youngest was Sgt First Class Duane Prather, who just signed up for the VFW by C-I-C Tim Borland that day and is still on active duty. Serving as Guests of Honor are (PSC) National Council Member Glenn Umberger who is cutting the cake with Dept. of Pa State Commander Henry Mannella.



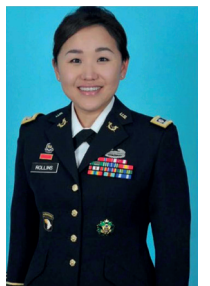
VFW Post 6493—Warminster, PA
Vietnam Resolution Presented to Colonel Rick Kiernan US Army (Retired) by Kristin Marcel, Pennsylvania House of Representatives.



Harrisburg Service Officer
Jonathan Hart helping a 100 yr.
old Veteran with his VA Claim.



CONGRATULATIONS to COL Frank J. McGovern, IV, Staff Judge Advocate for the Pennsylvania National Guard, and LTC(P) Hana Rollins, Deputy Chief, Criminal Law Division, Office of the Judge Advocate General, for being selected as the Judge Advocates Association's 2023 Outstanding Career Judge Advocate Award for the United States Army recipients! COL McGovern was selected as the National Guard recipient, and LTC(P) Rollins was selected as the Active Duty recipient.



These prestigious awards will be presented at the Judge Advocates Association annual awards dinner in May. Congratulations, COL McGovern and LTC(P) Rollins!



On Saturday, June 11, 2023 a Flag Retirement Ceremony and Burn Pit Dedication was held at post 6631 in Selinsgrove, Pa. Zachary Martin was presented with a certificate from the Department of PA VFW for his accomplishments as a scout. He is shown here with Valerie DeCorte, President Dept of PA VFW Auxiliary and David "Spike" Gyger, Senior Vice Commander Dept of PA VFW.

DRAPING OF CHARTER UPON DEATH OF A COMRADE



At the 62nd VFW National Convention held in 1961, Resolution 183 was passed. This resolution mandates that “charters should be draped for 30 days for all deceased comrades.”

On pages 112-113 of the 2023 edition of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual, you will find a “Ceremony for Draping Charter” and on page 113, the statement regarding Resolution 183.

The VFW Memorial Charter Drape shown here, can be purchased from the VFW Store at: <https://www.vfwstore.org/products/31265>. Product code is 02532.

CEREMONY FOR DRAPING CHARTER

(Pages 112-113)

Chaplain Hook’s Observation and Suggestion: I have done the Draping Ceremony as written, which involves three people. It is much easier to do the ceremony if the chaplain takes the commander’s part, after the commander requests the ceremony.

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will obtain drape in preparation for draping charter.

(Officer of Day obtains drape, proceeds to the altar, and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now drape our charter in memory of our beloved Comrade _____ who has passed on.

(Officer of Day proceeds to charter and drapes charter.)

Commander: (While Officer of Day is draping charter) By so doing, we as members of (name of Post) VFW Post # _____ offer solemn tribute to our departed comrade.

(Officer of Day returns to the altar. Salutes Commander, retires to station.)

Commander: Comrades, Salute - Two. (Comrades, parade rest.)

Commander: Comrade Chaplain

Chaplain: (Proceeds to altar. Gives this prayer): Eternal God, let Your grace and mercy rest upon us as we, with grateful affection, remember Comrade _____, who has departed this life. We thank You for his/her days upon earth and the joy that he/she brought. May our remembrance of (name of deceased) live long among us and be to us a source of guidance and strength. Give to those who miss him/her deeply, wells of consolation from which to draw comfort, and enable us to be Your ministers of grace and mercy to them in their time of need. Amen.

(Commander raps gavel once to seat members)

At my Post, when a comrade dies, we hold a short memorial service at the first post meeting following the death. This takes place at the end of the meeting, following the “good of the order” and prior to the “closing ceremonies.”

The Commander says, “Chaplain, lead us in a memorial service for (name of deceased).”

Chaplain renders appropriate salute to Commander, and proceeds to read the obituary and provide some information on the deceased comrade’s military background and his/her service to the VFW and the Post. This is followed by a short prayer.

(Following the prayer is an appropriate place to do the “Draping of the Charter” Ceremony).

Following the Draping of the Charter, the Commander or Chaplain gives the command for the bugler to play Taps. At the conclusion of Taps, the Chaplain says, “Commander, that concludes our memorial service and the draping of the Charter,” followed by the rendering of appropriate salute.

The Commander then proceeds to conduct closing ceremonies.

Blessings as you serve.

Rev. Peter R. Hook, PA State Chaplain
Eastern Conference Chaplain
Past National Chaplain
Veterans of Foreign Wars

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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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Jonathan Hart
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Mechanicsburg Veterans Center
Thurs: 8:30-4:00
Harrisburg: Monday-Friday-8:30-4:00

Emily LeVault
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Email: Emily.LeVault1@va.gov
Spring Grove: Wed.and Fri. By Appt. Only
Harrisburg: Tues. and Thurs -8:30-4:00
Red Lion: Fri. - By Appt. Only

LEBANON VAMC

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LOYALTY DAY 2023



Under the leadership of the Loyalty Day 2023 chairman, James Manser, the PA VFW and Auxiliary members were present at the Capitol to reaffirm their allegiance to our Nation and to the principles of freedom, justice, equality, and dignity enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

STATE CHAPLAIN



REV. PETER R. HOOK
STATE CHAPLAIN

The “PA Chaplain of the Year Award” recognizes a District or Post Chaplain who demonstrates a commitment to the ministry and duties of a Chaplain, and who exhibits exemplary performance above and beyond normal expectations.

Chaplain of the Year Awarded to Claude “Wally” Walraven

The recipient of the PA Chaplain of the Year Award for 2023 is Claude “Wally” Walraven. Wally is the Chaplain at VFW Post 509 in Tobyhanna, Pa. He is also Chaplain for District 20 which covers Pike, Monroe, Carbon, and Northampton counties.

Wally proudly served his country in the U.S. Army and retired as an E-7. He earned his VFW eligibility while serving in Saudi Arabia and the United States invasion of Panama, codenamed Operation Just Cause.

Wally has performed his duties in an exemplary fashion. He takes care of his post members as well as members of his district. District Commander Gregory Protsko says, “Claude is a caring and honest man who takes his job as chaplain very seriously. He is very easy to talk to and will help you with any problem you might have. He truly does more than just stand up at a meeting and give the prayers. His past post commander Stephen K. Calles Jr, penned these words prior to his passing, “Wally is a special person who makes himself available to everyone. He offers wise counsel and is involved in all aspects of the post.” His present post Commander, Ronnie Byrd stated, “Wally is well-known throughout Monroe County for his ministry and care of people. He is an ordained minister who holds services at the local Methodist Church and is well deserving of this award.”

Claude “Wally” Walraven and his wife, Bonnie, have been married for forty-five years and have two daughters.

It was truly an honor for me to present this award to Claude “Wally” Walraven, a faithful servant and a good model for those of us who are called to serve those who served. The Chaplain of the Year receives a framed certificate and an engraved watch. He also gains possession of a framed painting by Beth Sweigard titled, If My People (Liberty Bell), to be displayed at his Post for the coming year.

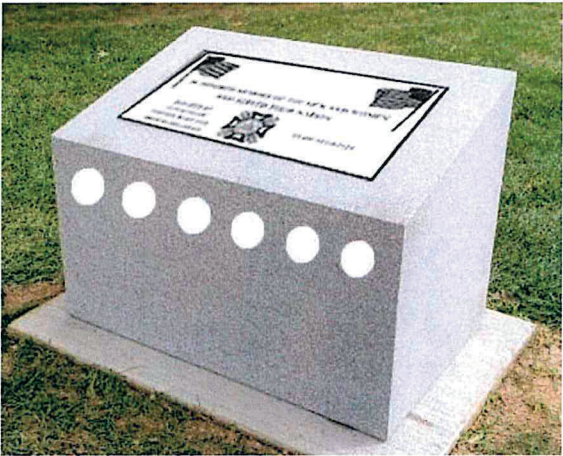
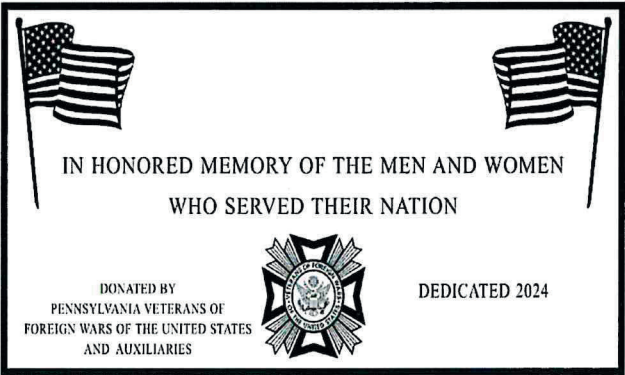
On the Department website <https://vfwpa.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=88797> you will find my Chaplain’s Page which has information concerning the award, the Monthly Chaplain’s Report, and various resources to help chaplains in their ministry to comrades and their families.



COMMANDERS SPECIAL PROJECT

Our special project for the **2023 -2024 Encourage - Expand - Educate VFW** year shall be to place a monument in each of the three National Cemeteries within Pennsylvania. The National Cemetery of the Alleghenies in the west; Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in central; and Washington Crossing National Cemetery in the east. The picture below is what the VFW monument shall look like when it is completed and set. The stone is granite, and the engraved plaque is bronze. Each monument is expected to cost approximately \$10,000 each. Please consider donating to this worthwhile project. Make your check out to PA VFW and in the memo section add Commander's special project. Mail your check to PA VFW HQ, 4002 Fenton Avenue, Harrisburg PA 17109.

The engraved plaque reads:



And the six circles on the front are where the six branches of the Armed Forces emblems shall be placed.

THE VFW AUXILIARY

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES



VALERIE DECORTE
FAREWELL PAST DEPARTMENT
PRESIDENT

Being the daughter of a WWII Army veteran, the wife of a Vietnam veteran, and later the mother of an Air Force veteran has been a blessing and becoming a member of the VFW Auxiliary was an honor afforded to me by my husband. It was through his fine recruiting skills that I joined the VFW Auxiliary. To my family, "I do what I do because of what you have done for me."

From the moment I raised my right hand and repeated the member's obligation at my initiation I knew I was going to fall in love with the Auxiliary and my new family. I believe in what the Auxiliary stands for, its mission, and values. The common goals we share are quite clear - we all joined because of a veteran, and it is because of that veteran that we continue to do all we can to serve those who have served our country.

As I come to the end of my journey as this Department's President, let me assure you that I am and will remain deeply proud to have served for the past year. Serving was another honor bestowed upon me and another opportunity to serve the family members of veterans and Armed Forces members. Thank you, Brothers and Sisters, for allowing me this great privilege. A very special thank you to my Post and Auxiliary 2145 in Clarion and District 19. You have always been there for me, and I would not have gotten anywhere without your amazing talents and unwavering support. I had a truly awesome and resourceful Chief of Staff who was a great mentor who made me laugh when all I really wanted to do was cry, and Henry Mannella was an outstanding and wonderful State Commander to work with. I thank all who donated to my special project - benches for the Medal of Honor Grove. Together, we raised over \$43,000.

I thank the Department line officers. I promised you my best and you returned your best ten-fold. During the Respect...Honor...Remember 2022-2023 year we brought training to the members where they lived and took our new training concept to new heights and distances all the while obtaining 105% in membership. I believe together we did make a positive difference in the lives of our members, our veterans, and their families.

A very special thank you to the 2022-2023 program committee chairmen, their outstanding coordinator, and our District Presidents for "going above and beyond." I sincerely believe the contributions you made to our members and Department were appreciated and truly made a difference in the lives of the Veterans and their families that we work so hard for.

I especially thank our Auxiliary members whose legacy of service to Pennsylvania's Veterans and family members has great impact. Our Veterans and their families will have my support for the remainder of my life. Please join me in committing to serving and meeting the needs of our Nation's Veterans, our members of the Armed Forces, and their families.

To the new PA VFW and Auxiliary leaders, I wish you all a successful year.

I have been deeply honored to serve as your Department President during the Respect...Honor...Remember 2022-2023 year. You have given me everlasting memories. Thank you.

God Bless our men and women in uniform, God Bless our Veterans, and God Bless America.



MARY JEAN MASTRIDGE
PRESIDENT
DEPARTMENT OF PA VFW AUXILIARY

Congratulations Immediate Past State Commander, Henry Mannella, for achieving 100% in Membership! We, the VFW Auxiliary, are PA PROUD! As you have previously stated, "We get to have a stronger voice in Washington, DC and in Harrisburg." This translates to better benefits and a better life for our deserving Veterans. Thank you for your service to them and to our Country and thank you for your dedication to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

To our Jr. Past Auxiliary President Valerie DeCorte, congratulations on an outstanding year in membership, visibility and programming! It was truly a year where every member mattered. Best wishes for your future undertakings on behalf of our Veterans.

We will continue working together for our Veterans during this "Let Freedom Ring" year.



ANDREA MEINTEL
MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN 2022-2023

PA VFW AUXILIARY CONTINUES TO GROW

On August 13, 2022 at the Program and Auxiliary Training Conference, I asked the members in attendance what our Membership Goal should be for this year. They shouted, "105%!" Having just come off a stellar membership year of 103.4%, this was a tall order. But those in attendance knew we weren't looking to survive—we were looking to THRIVE. The more our Auxiliaries grow, the more Veterans, military, families, and communities we can help. After all, this is our core mission.

This year's Membership Program focused on **Building, Reenforcing and Reuniting Connections** to ensure that Every Member Matters. We encouraged Auxiliaries to make new members feel welcomed, current members feel needed, and disengaged members feel re-energized.

This year's Membership Program introduced three Connection Challenges: Campus Connections, New Member Welcome Packets, and Tell-Your-Story Recruitment Videos. These challenges were meant to get members to think-outside-the-box. We had outstanding participation in these areas: 8 Campus Connections; 21 New Member Welcome Packets; and 23 Tell-Your-Story Video submissions. There were at least 10 more New Member Welcome Packets received with Year-End Reports and All State Checklists. As we know, the All State Award is given to exemplary Auxiliaries, and this year we had an astounding 72 Auxiliaries achieved **All State Auxiliary** status.

So, did we reach our 105% Growth Goal? Yes, we did! We ended our membership year with 39,907 members at 105.04%. Together, we accomplished our mission and catapulted the Auxiliary into a successful future.

Reminder that our email's have been updated to:
Jodie@vfwauxpa.org and sandy@vfwauxpa.org

SAVE THE DATES AND OTHER INFORMATION:

PA Midwinter Conference - January 18 - 20, 2024 - Cranberry Twp.

National VFW Auxiliary MidWinter Conference - February 12 -17, 2024 - Royal Caribbean's Mariner of the Sea

President Mary Jean Mastridge Testimonial - April 5 - 6, 2024 - Eisenhower Hotel & Conference Center, Gettysburg

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

2022-2023 ALL STATE DISTRICTS

District	Name	
7	John R. Walker	21 Christine Smith
10	William Lamond	23 Alister McGibbon
14	William H. Harmer	24 David E. Logan
16	James V. Manser	26 David V. Seymore
17	Harold Aucker	27 Kenneth E. King
18	Fredrick Hechler	29 Jessica M. King
20	Gregory J. Protsko	

2022-2023 ALL STATE POSTS

Post	Dist	Post	COMMANDER	QUARTERMASTER
3460	7	3460	Francis Newburg	Robert Hughes
175	8	175	Steven Fischer	Louis Rizzo
7293	8	7293	Nathaniel Smith	Christopher Grim
3376	9	3376	Dwayne MacKenzie	Amy MacKenzie
32	16	32	Keith Murray	Jason Slemmer
5954	16	5954	Thomas Sally	Judith Bieberfeld
7155	16	7155	Rich Cassey	George Henderson
7463	17	7463	Robert Snook	Terry Tibbs
477	18	477	Richard Olson	Derek Peters
1620	18	1620	Steven Sellers	Ricky Snyder
1718	18	1718	Roger Decker	Robert Marshall
6076	18	6076	Thomas Sattazahn	Antonio Moore
6704	18	6704	Richard Denison	David Madden
7343	18	7343	Frederick Bower	Joseph Cyr
7530	18	7530	Scott Henry	Brian Spagnoletti
8023	18	8023	Daniel Lineaweaver	Timothy Sholly
1132	19	1132	David Swanson	Gerald Bigley
2145	19	2145	Jodi Hartle	Melody Torion
15	21	15	Gary Ryan	Kathryn Hewitt
537	21	537	Gregory Reigle	Richard Flickinger
1446	21	1446	Kathryn Tate	Terry Stokes
2493	21	2493	Roger Miller	Todd Richwine
8896	21	8896	Matthew Fauth	Dwight Fuhrman
4315	26	4315	Cathy Bateman	Baran Fontanella
566	27	566	William Ruane	William Gomez
734	27	734	Amanda Mattioli	Michael Hootman
470	28	470	Robert Depew	Christopher Crawford
5958	28	5958	Cody Rodgers	James Brown
914	29	914	Jake Bradich	Gary Ruston
1810	29	1810	John Wallace	Henry Mannella

SAVE THE DATE

Flying Squadron Officer Training
(Invite Only)

August 12th - August 14th, 2023

State Commander's Retreat October
6-8, 2023-State College

Mid-Winter Conference
January 18-21, 2024 Cranberry, Pa.

Women Veterans Conference/Expo
March 15-16

Department State Convention
June 12-16, 2024

PERIODICALS



VFW COMMANDER'S RETREAT
OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
RAMADA CONFERENCE CENTER 1450 SOUTH ATHERTON STREET
STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801



Friday night begins with a cash bar from 5:00PM – 6:00PM followed by a buffet dinner in the Grand Ballroom. Friday's menu will include a tossed salad, pasta salad, fresh fruit, followed by Chicken Cordon Bleu with Sauce Supreme, Sliced Roasted Beef with Smoked Mushroom Sauce, and Potato Encrusted Cod, Herb Roasted Potatoes, Honey Glazed Carrots, Fresh Vegetable Medley and will end with an assortment of the Chef's Desserts. Refreshments will be provided.

Entertainment will be provided, and the dress is Casual.

Saturday evening will start off with a cash bar from 5:00PM – 6:00PM followed by a buffet dinner in the Grand Ballroom. Saturday's menu will include Caesar salad, Potato Salad, Fresh Fruit Salad, Grilled Salmon Fillet with Smoked Salmon Butter, Traditional Meat Lasagna, Cider Brined Roasted Pork Loin, Rice Pilaf, Potatoes Au Gratin, Steamed Broccoli and will end with an assortment of the Chef's Desserts. Refreshments will be provided.

Saturday's entertainment will be from Comic House and the dress is **Casual**.

Tickets will be available to be picked up at the registration desk in the Hotel Conference Center on Friday from 1:00 - 4:00pm and on Saturday from 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Guests may make room reservations by contacting the hotel direct at 814-238-3001, use the Group Name VFW SPIKE'S RETREAT and the Group Code is VFW2023. The **deadline** for room reservations is **SEPTEMBER 15, 2023**. Room Rate: **\$94.00** plus applicable taxes per night

_____ Number of **Friday** dinner TICKETS @ \$45.00 per person


_____ Number of **Saturday** dinner TICKETS @ \$45.00 per person

Check Amount Enclosed _____ Check # _____

Name _____ Post/Auxiliary # _____

Make checks payable to: **Gyger Steering Committee**
Please mail reservations to
FRED HECHLER, 6218 ELMER AVENUE, HARRISBURG PA 17112

DINNER RESERVATIONS DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 15, 2023. Seating is limited to 200



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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