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YOUR VFW: NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

2021 Convention Held in Pittsburgh

By Cory P. Angell, PA VFW PAO

The Pennsylvania Veterans of Foreign Wars held its annual convention for the first time after COVID-19 had impacted the department last year, which led to the cancellation of many events.

“It was a tough year with COVID-19 but I continued to be impressed by our dedicated membership,” said Immediate Past State Commander Ronald J. Peters. “We managed to keep our community activity up and were very successful in the face of our difficulties. I am very proud of that.”

Incoming State Commander



Nathaniel Smith was sworn in by the National Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch at the convention.

“It truly was an honor to be sworn in by Commander Roesch and it is a great honor to lead this organization,” said Smith. “I think after the tough road our organization had with COVID-19, people are very optimistic about this coming year.”

Other district leaders and committee members also took their oaths of office with the national commander.

The following have entered the 2021 - 2022 program year as leadership:
Continued on Page 4

New Pennsylvania Department Commander Nathaniel Smith is sworn in by National Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch at the 2021 Convention in June.

West Mifflin VFW Members Earn Top Surgeon Awards at State Convention

By Michael P. Mauer
VFW District 29 PAO

Two Mon Valley veterans were recognized June 17 for supporting hospitalized service members during the 102nd Department of Pennsylvania VFW and Auxiliary convention in Pittsburgh. Bill Roland, VFW PA State Surgeon, earned the National Surgeon Award, while VFW Post 914 West Mifflin Surgeon, Bernie Zurawski, won Department of PA VFW Surgeon of the Year.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the VFW has maintained outreach activities to those who served in the United States military. Roland and Zurawski earned their awards for helping to keep these vital programs going during the most adverse of circumstances.



Mr. Bill Rowland being presented the VFW National Surgeon award by National VFW Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch at the 2021 Convention

Such challenges are nothing new for Roland. While on active duty as a medical officer with the Army, the North Versailles resident helped transport a child from war-torn Kosovo to the United States to receive heart surgery. At the start of the pandemic last year, Roland answered a call put through the VFW for retired military medical personnel to help in the coronavirus response.

As a volunteer, Roland assisted with the implementation of COVID-19 vaccination programs for veterans, and met with Veterans Administration hospital managers to help make certain quality of care continued at a high standard during the pandemic.

“In the VFW, the promise to honor those who’ve died by helping the living is sacred to our core beliefs,” said Roland. “As a

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Pennsylvania VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith takes the helm



Since he graduated from high school in the mid-1970's, Nathaniel Smith has dedicated his life to serving his country. That lifetime of service will continue in the coming year now that Smith has been sworn in as the new state commander of the Pennsylvania VFW.

Nathaniel Smith was born on July 3, 1955 in Scranton, Pennsylvania and graduated from Mid-Valley High School on June 7, 1975.

He immediately enlisted in the United States Navy on June 16, 1975, attended Basic Training at Naval Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, IL., and attended a three-week course of instruction at the Apprentice Training Battalion at Naval Training Center, Great lakes, IL., where he was meritoriously advanced to E-2 / Fireman Apprentice. His assignments include over 12 years of sea duty as a Boiler Technician onboard the following ships: William M. Wood (DD-715), USS Mount Whitney (LCC-20), USS Puget Sound (AD-38), USS Coral Sea (CV-43), USS Lawrence (DDG-4), and USS Kalamazoo (AOR-6).

Shore duty assignments include:
Shore Intermediate



Pennsylvania VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith with his family at the 2021 Convention.

Maintenance Activity, Naval Station, Norfolk, Va., Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, IL., and his last duty station Commander Regional Support Group, Naval Station, Mayport, FL, when he served as a Type Desk Maintenance

Broker, Type Desk Officer, and Maintenance Department Leading Chief Petty Officer where he retired on Nov. 30, 1999 after 24 years as an E-9 / Master Chief Boiler Technician.

He joined the VFW at Post 8488 in Lenox, Pa. shortly after retirement and in 2005 transferred to the Donald S. Reinert VFW Post 7293 in Whitehall, Pa. where he became a Life Member. His eligibility for VFW membership was in 1989 where he received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal in support of Operation Earnest Will (Persian Gulf) and the Southwest Asia Service Medal in support of Desert Shield / Desert Storm.

He retired on May 25, 2019 as a Commissioned Boiler Inspector Director and Chief Boiler Inspector for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of

Occupational and Industrial Safety after 20 years of State Civil Service. He is married to Deborah Sue Harris Smith who is a past four term District 8 VFW Auxiliary President. He is the proud father of four children and 11 grandchildren.



World War II nurse honored on National Nurses Day

Pete Bannan Pbannan@21st-Centurymedia.com May 7, 2021

EAST GOSHEN — A local retired nurse was honored as both a compassionate nurse and a member of the “Greatest Generation.” She was honored during National Nurses Day.

Agnes Woods Speer, 97, a World War II Army nurse, was honored by Compassus Hospice, along with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, with a ceremony recognizing her service in the military and over 40 years of service as a nurse. The event was held in conjunction with her residence at The Watermark at Bellingham retirement community.

“Salute a great American patriot and a model of compassion and caregiving. She joined the Nurse Corps in 1944,” said Linda Simon, Veteran Liaison at Compassus. “Her Irish father instilled a strong sense of service and patriotism. Lt. Woods served her country in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II from May 15, 1945 to June 28, 1946. Today, we recognize her for her devotion to our country and compassion and healing of our wounded soldiers.”

Like many of the greatest generation, Speer was humbled by the honors.

“I don’t think I deserve all this. I’m shocked and very appreciative of everything,” Speer said as many of her family members, including sons Ed and John, five grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, gathered around proudly.

“You were a nurse in the Army. It means a lot to our world,” said 7-year-old great-granddaughter Hillary.

“We just did what we had to do. There was a call for nurses and that’s when I went in,” Speer said. “I always wanted to be a nurse for some reason, even when I was a little kid ... school teaching, no, everybody in the family became a school teacher or educator, so I decided to do something different.”

Speer certainly has made a difference in her 40 years as a nurse. She graduated from Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia and went straight into the Nurse Corps program at Fort Pickett in Virginia.



Agnes Speer was presented a certificate, Poppy and a Bible by VFW Chaplain Justin Cohen of Archer-Elper VFW Post 979.

Some of the classes she completed included emergency medical treatment, defense against gas attack and control of respiratory diseases, insect borne diseases and intestinal diseases, as well as military law and safeguarding military information.

During her time in the service, she was stationed at Fort Pickett and McGuire General Hospital, both in Virginia, where she cared for many wounded service members returning from the war overseas. She was discharged in June 1946 as a 2nd Lieutenant and was awarded the World War II Victory Medal.

“She apparently made a lot of friends over the years, because they used to visit us in Lansdowne when we were little kids,” said her son, Ed Speer.

Her husband, Edgar Francis Speer, was an Army veteran and fought in the Battle of the Bulge, where he suffered health issues. After the war, Agnes took care of him while raising two boys and working as a nurse in Delaware County.

The family settled in the Media area.

“She worked at Riddle Memorial Hospital Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. We’d stay home and take care of dad,” said her son. From there (later years), she went to Dunwoody and did private care, which worked out most ideally. “She’s always used her trade and if it hadn’t been for that, Dad wouldn’t have lived at home for the last 20

some years.”

During the ceremony, Speer recalled her time in the Army.

“I enjoyed basic training. To me it was like a vacation – to be away from work, no responsibilities or bedpans. It was climbing poles and running underneath the guns, it was ... camp, summer camp,” said Speer. “No responsibilities! I enjoyed basic training, which was crazy. I know I was young and foolish.”

Speer said the basics of nursing haven’t changed.

“I’ve met a lot of the nurses where I am now and they are very good – conscientious and compassionate. That’s what you need to be. Patience – it takes a lot of patience and if you don’t have patience, don’t bother going into the field.”

“It’s not always easy and the hours sometimes ... right now, they are always working double shifts. I feel bad for them,” Speer said, though she did add it has always been like that. “At that time (during World War II), we worked seven to seven every day and we didn’t mind it.”

Speer said the wounded soldiers coming home were remarkable for how they accepted their injuries without complaints.

“I enjoyed taking care to see how they were getting better,” she said. “But when we lost one of them, it was hard because they had been through so much. The government was good to them. They gave them their homes and set them up and I corresponded with them a lot when I got out of the service. They made good adjustments.”

One practice she did note had changed over the years – giving backrubs.

“I don’t think they give people backrubs anymore,” Speer said. “They (soldiers) always looked forward to the afternoon and evening backrub.”

Speer said she has enjoyed her time in the Army and her career.

“I enjoyed it all very much. I really did. I did what I wanted to do and I was very lucky in life that I had the opportunity to do that, which some people don’t get, what they want in life.”

2021 Convention from page 1

| | |
|--|--|
| State Sr. Vice Commander: Henry R. Mannella | District 13 Commander: Ronald J. Brown |
| State Jr. Vice Commander: David W. Gyger | District 14 Commander: William H. Harmer |
| State Adjutant: John B. Getz Jr. | District 15 Commander: Dusten E. Zimmerman |
| State Quartermaster: John B. Getz Jr. | District 16 Commander: James V. Manser |
| State Chief of Staff: Benjamin A. Mastridge | District 17 Commander: Harold W. Aucker |
| Immediate Past State Commander: Ronald J. Peters | District 18 Commander: Fredrick W. Hechler |
| State Judge Advocate: Frank J. McGovern | District 19 Commander: John M. Fletcher |
| State Surgeon: William Roland | District 20 Commander: Gregory J. Protsko |
| State Chaplain: Peter R. Hook | District 21 Commander: Joseph F. Colonna |
| State Inspector: Michael G. McLane | District 22 Commander: Daniel M. Kalgren |
| State Parliamentarian: Thomas M. Hanzes | District 23 Commander: Alister McGibbon |
| National Council Member: Glenn R. Umberger | District 24 Commander: Terry L. Hoyle |
| Assistant Adjutant: Amy MacKenzie | District 25 Commander: Jason M. Tindall |
| District 1 Commander: Sean P. Wayland | District 26 Commander: David V. Seymore |
| District 7 Commander: John R. Walker | District 27 Commander: Carl A. Trusiak |
| District 8 Commander: Thomas L. Applebach | District 28 Commander: James E. Brown |
| District 9 Commander: John G. Lorusso | District 29 Commander: Jessica M. King |
| District 10 Commander: William D. Lamond | |
| District 11 Commander: Robert I. Hayes | |
| District 12 Commander: E. Lance Nelson | |

Awards from page 1

former commissioned officer and life member of the VFW, volunteering to help those in need is expected – as well as rewarding.”

For Zurawski, who served as a Marine in Operation Desert Storm, keeping his post’s hospital visitation programs at Southwestern Veterans Center going over the last nine years was at times difficult, but worthwhile.

“It started when I was on active duty,” Zurawski said. “While on leave, I would visit my father-in-law at Southwestern Veterans Center, and we would do bedside bingos and other things to help keep up morale. It was something that I enjoyed doing, and once I retired and became part of the VFW, I became more active helping my fellow veterans.”

Each year, the VFW nationally contributes hundreds of thousands of dollars and volunteer hours towards comforting hospitalized veterans. The hospital visitation program is the oldest established function of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. Caring for warriors is also enshrined in the credo of the Military Order of the Cootie - the VFW’s honor degree. Their service program proudly touts its main directive as “keep ‘em smiling in beds of white.”

“I would say that this is the most important thing that we do as members of the VFW,” said Roland, a retired Army major with 26 years of active and reserve military service. “We help make certain that our comrades are cared for in the best way. Not by just seeing that they receive care in hospitals, but by making sure we can be part of the care wherever and whenever possible.”

Roland, a Kosovo Campaign and Global War On Terrorism veteran, also said that lobbying efforts made by the VFW more than 100 years ago were instrumental in establishing the hospital system run by the Veterans Administration, as well as other medical benefits for former soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

“This is a task that we are committed to doing,” said Roland.

VFW Post 914 West Mifflin Surgeon, Bernie Zurawski, won Department of PA VFW Surgeon of the Year. Immediate Past State Commander Ronald J. Peters made the presentation.



What Hunting Does for Me and What Extra Time Can Mean to Others

By Joe Dafcik, Pennsylvania Veteran

Pennsylvania Senate Bill 607 seeks to allow more days for hunting that could help organizations like Hunts for Healing and Pennsylvania Outdoor Veterans. These are excellent organizations that do a great deal for veterans. It would not only get veterans another therapeutic day in the field but also with helping these organizations have more days available for funding to be allocated towards hunting trips for veterans.

Some of my best childhood memories originated from hunting here in Pennsylvania. From sitting around the fire at camp to watching my dad harvest deer. I loved every minute of it.

When I turned 17 I enlisted in the U.S. Navy. After serving in Norfolk Virginia, I left the Navy and enrolled in a local college majoring in criminal justice. I also chose to enlist in the reserves, Army this time as a Military Police Officer. My college stint was short-lived as my unit received orders for Operation Iraqi Freedom and deployed to Southwest Asia in February of 2003. Serving through the initial invasion we settled between Baghdad and Fallujah running a prison camp and escort missions.

After spending over a year boots-on-ground we rotated back home and demobilized. Life was hard then, there was a big adjustment, all of a sudden being thrown back into normal everyday life without having to dodge mortar and small arms fire was out of the norm. I found myself scanning the highway for any signs of improvised explosive devices. On the highways, I still



Photo of veterans after a successful hunt with Hunts for Healing. Based out of Laceyville, Pennsylvania the organization encourages veterans to visit their website and participate at www.huntsforhealing.org

made sure to change lanes quickly when going under an overpass to avoid the risk of explosives being dropped from above and directly on my vehicle. I am the first to admit, for some reason, my friends were not appreciative of that type of move on our drive to the beach during that year's summer vacation.

That fall hunting took on a whole new meaning for me. Yes, I still loved that time with my father and friends. As I sat in my archery stand on a cool autumn evening feeling the slight warmth of the sun in my face, a feeling of calm came over me. There was something about sitting there with the noise of the world drowned out by the sounds of nature combined with the thrill of the hunt that was therapeutic.

So many veterans gave so much more than me and have it much worse. For many of them, hunting has been a huge help, even

a lifesaver in many cases. Over the years, for veterans, the benefits of hunting have been so clear that groups like Hunts For Healing and Pennsylvania Outdoor Veterans among others have emerged.

Donation-based non-profit organizations are dedicated to helping veterans get afield and experience the many benefits that hunting has to offer. Some veterans are amputees or wheelchair-bound. Some live with traumatic brain injuries or post-traumatic stress disorder.

One thing for certain, no matter what injury or what condition a veteran might be dealing with, these organizations give them something invaluable, a sense of calm and peace along with the sense they are appreciated for their sacrifices. Which in itself can save the life of a struggling veteran.

I recently had an opportunity to chat with the founder of Pennsylvania Outdoor Veterans, Ryan Bowman. While his organization remains neutral on the issue of Sunday hunting, he did say an extra day of hunting would be extremely beneficial for the veterans he serves. Not only to get veterans another therapeutic day in the field but also with helping organizational funding by having more days available for funding to be allocated towards.

Please consider donating to the organizations mentioned above. It could be the greatest gift you ever give for those veterans who find therapy in the hunting woods of Pennsylvania.



Focus on Mission Success

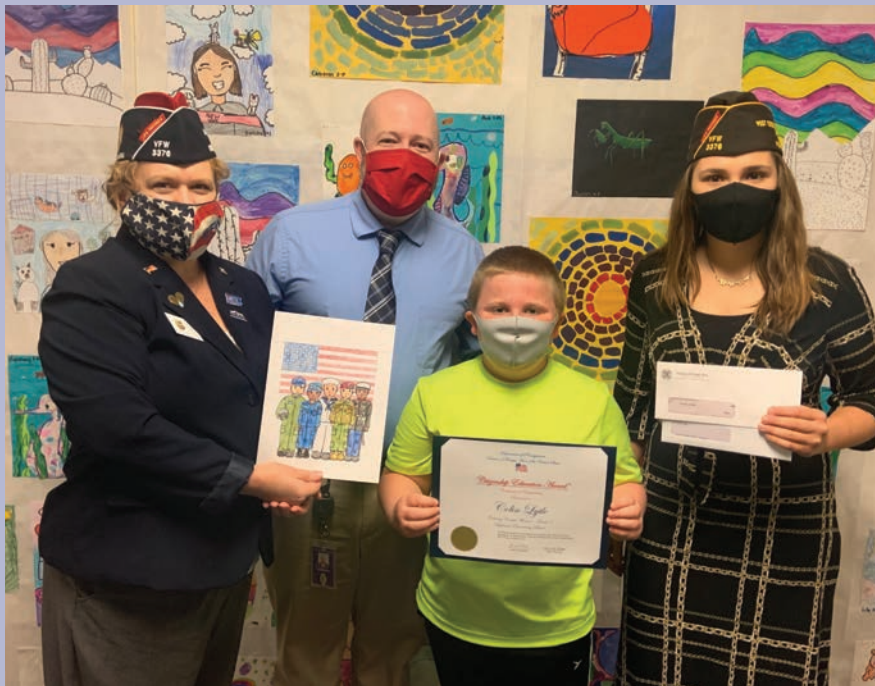


Carlisle had the privilege of honoring Charley Alleman as the VFW Post 477 Firefighter of the Year at Union Fire Company No. 1, where he recently celebrated his 46th year as a Cumberland Valley Fireman.

Over these many years, he has responded to over 10,000 fire calls, 5,000 ambulance calls, delivered three babies, and successfully performed CPR on over 1,000 people.



On April 22, VFW District 26 Commander Robert Pegg Jr. presented the Diamond Jubilee Award to VFW Post 4963 Commander Robert Slebodnick in recognition of the 75th anniversary of VFW Post 4963 in Ebensburg, PA.



Amy MacKenzie, VFW Post 3376 Quartermaster, Mr. Esbenshade, Highland Elementary School Principal, Colin L., 1st place winner Coloring Contest for Second Grade (local and state),



Past State Commander Ronald J. Peters, local elected officials and VFW leaders joined together to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Post 7362 in New Holland, Pa. Congratulations!



Focus on Mission Success



Immediate Past State Commander Ronald J. Peters and Pennsylvania Jr. Vice Commander David Gyger presented VFW certificates of commendation to Sheila Ferraro and the Red Lion Salvage Yard for their efforts to respect and care for the veterans in the community. People leave all kinds of items in vehicles that end up at the yard in York County, but two recent finds were more unusual than most. Sheila Ferraro thought she had seen it all until an abandoned car ended up at the business about a year ago.

“When they opened up the trunk to take the spare tire and the jack out, that’s when

they saw the urn,” she said. The urn had the remains of a Lancaster man and a tag from the Lancaster County Coroner’s Office.

“I was like, ‘oh, my God, this is creepy.’ And then I’m like, wait — this is a person. I’ve got to find where he belongs,” Ferraro said. She reached out to the coroner’s office. A woman, who was a deputy coroner at the time, went to the salvage yard to retrieve the urn, it was eventually returned to the man’s family.

About a year later, workers discovered a casket flag for veteran Leonard Pietras in another vehicle. Ferraro contacted David

Gyger, who is the Pennsylvania VFW as the State Jr. Vice Commander, picked up the flag.

“It was my first call ever from a salvage yard,” he said. Gyger said it was an honor to retrieve the flag. “I did what we had to. She did what she had to as a caring citizen of our community,” he said. The flag will fly at the Avenue of Flags at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery.

“It gives me chills. I want to go up there and see it flying high,” Ferraro said.



In another twist of found veterans property, Gregory Jacobs of Draper, Utah found this folded flag and certificate (left) in a trash receptacle. Having a strong belief it should find its way home, he sent it to The Pennsylvania VFW Headquarters. It will be returned in memory of Robert W. Young, a deceased VFW member with Post 8805 Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. We thank you for your efforts, Mr. Jacobs.

Ed's Pocket Watch

By Anonymous Soldier

Hi there, I'm Ed's pocket watch. Now we know watches don't talk but I have a story to share. Pull up a chair and let me tell you about Ed.

First, I want you to know that "Ed," well he is my Hero. He bought me many years ago and he took me everywhere he went. We traveled many a mile as he traveled our great country because you see Ed was a truck driver. Ed also served his country, first as a Marine and then later as a soldier in the U.S. Army Pennsylvania National Guard. Some years later he met and married this beautiful Georgia girl named Cheryl.

Cheryl too would become a truck driver and they both loved the open road. Ed would often pull me out of his pocket just to check the time. Cheryl often noticed that and would ask, "what you doing?" Ed would reply, "just checking the time."

Ed had the opportunity to transfer to a unit in Georgia because that was now home for Ed. But Ed loved his unit in Pennsylvania



and Cheryl encouraged him to stay with his unit which he did. Every month Ed would travel to Pa. to drill with his unit. The 131st Transportation Company of the PA Army National Guard in Williamstown Pa.

It came a time and Ed's unit was activated to deploy to Afghanistan. His unit would be responsible for delivering supplies to units in the outer reaches of the country. It was a very dangerous mission. But our Brave men and women are known for being courageous. There were many treacherous missions they had. Then on 18 July 2011 they experienced a tragic explosion that took the lives of three brave soldiers. One of them was my Hero Ed. The other two were Bryan and Ken.

I was returned to Ed's wife Cheryl and for many years her home was my home and it always will be. In Nov. 2020 Cheryl wanted the story of my hero and hers to live on through me. She handed me to another soldier to pass along Ed's story. So, Ed's story will be passed on down to yet another generation. I'm honored to be able to pass on the story of my hero "Ed" Semper Fi my friend!

I Miss You!



Ed from Ed's Watch

This undated photo provided by the Pennsylvania National Guard shows Sgt. Edward Koehler, of Lebanon, PA, during his time with the Marine Corps between 1982-1988. Koehler, 47, and two other soldiers were killed and five others wounded by a roadside bomb that struck their convoy in Afghanistan, military officials said Wednesday, July 20, 2011. (AP Photo/Pennsylvania National Guard)

Do You Need Help With Veterans Benefits?

Full-time, VA-accredited VFW State Service Officers are ready to answer questions about government benefits, help you file a claim and represent you at a VA appeal hearing. These phone numbers connect you with your nearest State Service Officer. You can ask about outreach locations and home visits.

Philadelphia: 215-381-3123

Northeastern Region: 570-821-2535/2536

Harrisburg/Lancaster/Reading/Lititz Region: 717-234-7927

York/Gettysburg/Chambersburg Region: 717-884-7927

Altoona/Johnstown Region: 814-943-8164

Pittsburgh/Southwest Region: 412-395-6259/6260

Butler Region: 724-287-4781

Erie /Northwest Region: 814-835-8494

Northcentral/State College Region: 570-748-5929

Pennsylvania Soldier and the Medal of Honor

Once Called a One-Man Army... Now Honored with the Highest Decoration of the US Military

“You’re a one man army,” said a beachhead General to Pfc Alton W. Knappenberger, 20, **Spring Mount, Pennsylvania**, shown here cleaning his fondest possession, an automatic rifle. With it, he neutralized approximately 40 enemy combatants, along with two soldiers (killed in this action) ‘Knapp’ (now single-handedly) fired 600 rounds of ammo - returned for more - then stopped more Germans, including an officer and seven men who ordered him to surrender during the Battle of Cisterna in Italy. Pfc Knappenberger served in the 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. (Source: arlingtoncemetery.net)

Private First Class Knappenberger’s official Medal of Honor Citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, on February 1, 1944, near Cisterna di Littoria, Italy. When a heavy German counterattack was launched against his battalion, Pfc. Knappenberger crawled to an exposed knoll and went into position with his automatic rifle. An enemy machine-gun 85 yards away opened fire, and bullets struck within six inches of him. Rising to a kneeling position, Pfc. Knappenberger opened fire on the hostile crew, knocked out the gun, killed two members of the crew, and wounded the third. While he fired at this hostile position, two Germans crawled to a point within 20 yards of the knoll and threw potato-masher grenades at him, but Pfc. Knappenberger killed them both with one burst from his automatic rifle. Later, a second machine-gun opened fire upon his exposed position from a distance of 100 yards, and this weapon also was silenced by



his well-aimed shots. Shortly thereafter, an enemy 20mm. antiaircraft gun directed fire at him, and again Pfc. Knappenberger returned fire to wound one member of the hostile crew. Under tank and artillery shellfire, with shells bursting within 15 yards of him, he held his precarious position and fired at all enemy infantrymen armed with machine pistols and machine-guns which he could locate. When his ammunition supply became exhausted, he crawled 15 yards forward through steady

machine-gun fire, removed rifle clips from the belt of a casualty, returned to his position and resumed firing to repel an assaulting German platoon armed with automatic weapons. Finally, his ammunition supply being completely exhausted, he rejoined his company. Pfc. Knappenberger’s intrepid action disrupted the enemy attack for over two hours.

Knappenberger was then promoted to Staff Sergeant. His Medal of Honor Ceremony was held on May 26, 1944.

Alton returned to Pennsylvania after the war. He owned a potato farm and later changed careers; working for a blacktop pavement company. Knappenberger was also an avid hunter. Alton passed on June 9, 2008 at the age of 84. Lest We Forget.

Original description and photo sourced by militarytimes.com, US Signal Corps Archive arlingtoncemetery.net and ancestry.com© WWII uncovered ©



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Department Membership Update:

97.68% as of June 30, 2021

| Div | Post | Dist | Percent | Need for 100% | Location |
|-----|------|------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | |
| 2 | 5958 | 28 | 73.70% | -229 | TITUSVILLE |
| | | | | | |
| 3 | 8896 | 21 | 103.15% | 12 | EAST BERLIN |
| 3 | 477 | 18 | 102.29% | 13 | CARLISLE |
| 3 | 7530 | 18 | 101.53% | 7 | MECHANICSBURG |
| 3 | 2385 | 18 | 101.05% | 4 | LYKENS |
| 3 | 6704 | 18 | 100.21% | 1 | MECHANICSBURG |
| | | | | | |
| 4 | 7155 | 16 | 103.86% | 10 | TRAPPE |
| 4 | 2493 | 21 | 102.84% | 8 | MOUNT WOLF |
| 4 | 813 | 22 | 102.47% | 7 | DU BOIS |
| 4 | 4843 | 26 | 101.34% | 4 | FORD CITY |
| 4 | 6168 | 18 | 101.17% | 4 | SHIPPENSBURG |
| | | | | | |
| 5 | 8724 | 22 | 128.15% | 67 | DUNCANSVILLE |
| 5 | 537 | 21 | 104.65% | 10 | ETTERS |
| 5 | 1620 | 18 | 102.84% | 6 | MIDDLETOWN |
| 5 | 1785 | 22 | 102.61% | 5 | CLEARFIELD |
| 5 | 4795 | 23 | 102.57% | 5 | WINDBER |
| | | | | | |
| 6 | 734 | 27 | 126.38% | 43 | LIGONIER |
| 6 | 509 | 20 | 119.23% | 30 | TOBYHANNA |
| 6 | 5642 | 14 | 109.15% | 14 | MONTROSE |
| 6 | 148 | 18 | 106.25% | 11 | HARRISBURG |
| 6 | 1213 | 18 | 103.18% | 5 | RUTHERFORD HEIGHTS |
| | | | | | |
| 7 | 8008 | 20 | 139.83% | 49 | NESQUEHONING |
| 7 | 3258 | 8 | 136.23% | 50 | CHALFONT |
| 7 | 212 | 19 | 128.57% | 38 | BRADFORD |
| 7 | 1074 | 16 | 120.00% | 23 | CONSHOHOCKEN |
| 7 | 4584 | 23 | 114.28% | 16 | MASONTOWN |
| | | | | | |
| 8 | 2076 | 19 | 122.00% | 22 | PUNXSUTAWNEY |
| 8 | 1132 | 19 | 118.34% | 20 | KANE |
| 8 | 6675 | 29 | 110.00% | 10 | PITTSBURGH |
| 8 | 7527 | 17 | 106.12% | 6 | BEDFORD |
| 8 | 8023 | 18 | 104.16% | 4 | ANNVILLE |
| | | | | | |

| Div | Post | Dist | Percent | Needed for 100% | Location |
|-----|------|------|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| 9 | 8427 | 27 | 114.94% | 13 | HERMINIE |
| 9 | 7689 | 22 | 114.28% | 10 | ROARING SPRING |
| 9 | 2341 | 28 | 113.09% | 11 | ALBION |
| 9 | 8051 | 1 | 105.55% | 4 | PHILADELPHIA |
| 9 | 7251 | 10 | 105.26% | 4 | THROOP |
| | | | | | |
| 10 | 7840 | 25 | 116.66% | 10 | HILLIARDS |
| 10 | 314 | 19 | 113.20% | 7 | CLARENDON |
| 10 | 3975 | 12 | 111.66% | 7 | AUBURN |
| 10 | 6303 | 24 | 111.53% | 6 | GREENSBORO |
| 10 | 7810 | 15 | 110.34% | 6 | AUSTIN |
| | | | | | |
| 11 | 9788 | 16 | 160.41% | 29 | HORSHAM |
| 11 | 8353 | 11 | 134.78% | 8 | GLEN LYON |
| 11 | 5635 | 20 | 117.24% | 5 | LACKAWAXEN |
| 11 | 7524 | 26 | 110.25% | 4 | SOUTH FORK |
| 11 | 6673 | 29 | 109.75% | 4 | MUNHALL |

| Place | District | % Membership | Current Membership | Needed for 100% |
|-------|----------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 19 | 97.56% | 2039 | -51 |
| 2 | 16 | 96.00% | 1630 | -68 |
| 3 | 15 | 95.90% | 1939 | -83 |
| 4 | 20 | 95.69% | 1311 | -59 |
| 5 | 27 | 94.37% | 2512 | -150 |
| 6 | 21 | 94.34% | 5512 | -331 |
| 7 | 7 | 94.32% | 996 | -60 |
| 8 | 1 | 94.31% | 961 | -58 |
| 9 | 18 | 94.17% | 5019 | -311 |
| 10 | 13 | 94.08% | 1080 | -68 |
| 11 | 23 | 93.80% | 1769 | -117 |
| 12 | 26 | 93.56% | 2454 | -169 |
| 13 | 14 | 93.29% | 1558 | -112 |
| 14 | 17 | 93.12% | 2300 | -170 |
| 15 | 8 | 93.06% | 2586 | -193 |
| 16 | 12 | 92.84% | 1414 | -109 |
| 17 | 24 | 92.47% | 1449 | -118 |
| 18 | 9 | 92.23% | 3441 | -290 |
| 19 | 11 | 92.14% | 1781 | -152 |
| 20 | 22 | 91.78% | 2690 | -241 |
| 21 | 29 | 90.80% | 3494 | -354 |
| 22 | 25 | 89.69% | 2392 | -275 |
| 23 | 10 | 89.62% | 1631 | -189 |
| 24 | 28 | 89.53% | 4393 | -514 |

The VFW Auxiliary ...

Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes



What is Patriotism?

By Janet Albin, Patriotic Instructor/Americanism Chairman
VFW Auxiliary – Department of PA
janetalbin@comcast.net



Three of my favorite quotes about Patriotism: “Patriotism consists not in only waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.” (James Bryce) “America without her soldiers is like God without His angels.” (Claudia Pemberton) “Patriotism is easy to understand in America. It means looking out for yourself by looking out for your country.” (Calvin Coolidge)

Recently, I witnessed the interaction of a Vietnam veteran and two WWII veterans, as well as the kindness and patience exhibited by an Iraqi veteran listening to the experiences of a WWII veteran. Which branch of service each veteran was a part of really is not important but rather, the camaraderie, respect and understanding that each had for the other is the focus of their interaction. Witnessing these two examples made me proud to be an American and to witness their patriotic unity. I was in awe of all of them. Even though each of them had different experiences, they all did this for love of their country. In plain language, the patriotism they exhibited drove them to answer the call of duty. Each of these individuals acted for the love of their country, this country, more importantly, our country! They showed a willingness to sacrifice to promote the good of our country.

Sometimes, patriotism is not just the obvious flying of our flag, it is also the pride that we feel when we see the camaraderie of various generations of veterans and the way they interact, which demonstrates their patriotic unity. Patriotism is the pride that we feel toward our veterans, the flag, and our nation. All these thoughts fill my heart and bring tears to my eyes. The act of patriotism and feeling patriotic makes our country stronger, uniting us in loyalty, love and devotion. This is what patriotism means to me, what does patriotism mean to you?

Welcome Aboard President Sopher

By Cory Angell Pennsylvania VFW HQ



“I am nervous and excited,” said Pennsylvania VFW Auxiliary President Pam Sopher. “I can’t wait to do what needs to be done for our veterans and our service people.”

Sopher noted the challenges over the past year.

“Although members pushed forward through the difficulties of COVID-19, there were still many challenges that we faced,” said Sopher. “Our focus for this membership year must be on getting each of us back on track.”

Among some of the projects Sopher envisions she has chosen areas to of focus.

“My projects are Homeless Veterans of Washington Boulevard in Pittsburgh and Mr. Sandy’s in York,” said Sopher. “If we can get one homeless veteran off the street then we will have made a difference.”

Sopher had worked with Mr. Sandy’s in the past and was impacted by the work they did years ago. She noted that we should work to help the homeless veteran issue across the state but these two will be her focus.

“I’m excited that we are getting out of the pandemic. We will have a new normal and things won’t be the same but we are able to get back to what we did for veterans,” said Sopher. “I think the pandemic taught us a lot and we can be the best we have ever been in the coming year.”

Sopher also noted that she has worked with Pennsylvania VFW Commander Nathaniel Smith and she looks forward to work as a team.

New Pennsylvania VFW Auxiliary Leadership

President Pam Sopher

Sr. Vice President Valerie DeCorte

Jr. Vice President Mary Jean Mastridge

Secretary-Treasurer Jodie Hollinger

Chaplain Andrea Meintel

Conductress Robin Kohler

Guard Cecelia Cook

National Council Area A Kathy Jo M. Reihsmith

FOCUS ON MISSION SUCCESS



Congratulations to Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Jacklyn Ditzel, from **Pottsville, Pa.**, who was recognized by the Navy League of the United States as USS Constitution's Sailor of the Year in Boston March 25. The USS Constitution, the world's oldest commissioned warship afloat, played a crucial role in the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812, actively defending sea lanes from 1797 to 1855. During normal operations, the active-duty Sailors stationed aboard USS Constitution provide free tours and offer public visitation to more than 600,000 people a year. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alec Kramer/Released)

PERIODICALS



Susquehanna Service Dogs located in Grantville, Pa. received a sizable donation and a long-term commitment to their service dog program. "We think it's a wonderful program and it is right in VFW Post 9639's back yard," said former post commander Tom Gordon. "We look forward to assisting them in their work in the future." SSD breeds, raises, trains, and places assistance dogs to give people the confidence to live more independently since 1993 and has placed more than 350 assistance dogs with children and adults. Photo by Cory Angell

White Rose VFW Post 556 in York, Pa. wanted to recognize Mr. John Stambaugh a WWII Veteran who cuts the Memorial Day cake at their post every year. He is 100 years old. (Photo submitted by Quartermaster William Evans)

