

CHECKPOINT



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Walking Off the War

VFW Members Hike Appalachian Trail to Support Veteran Amputees

AFTER COMPLETING THEIR TOURS in the Afghanistan desert, two Marines repacked their bags to explore a very different terrain known as the Appalachian Trail.

The mission for former captains Sean Gobin and Mark Silvers went beyond merely conquering the mountain range, which is known for its dense forests and rocky slopes. While the two were stationed in Afghanistan in 2011 as armor officers, they established Warrior Hike, a non-profit program that gives 100% of its proceeds to veteran amputees in need of adaptive vehicles.

"The biggest threat in Afghanistan is IEDs," Gobin said. "So many of our guys are coming back as single, double, triple and quadruple amputees. That was our war."

To raise money, the two Marines stopped at 37 VFW Posts between Amicalola Falls in northern Georgia, and Mount Katahdin near Millinocket, Maine, to hold fundraisers.

When their hike started on March 14, 2012, Gobin had been home from deployment for two months, but Silvers had just returned from his second tour in Afghanistan 12 days prior to their starting date. Overall, it took the Marines four and a half months to hike the entire trail, while the average hiker takes six.

"We never thought about giving up, despite going through our stages of challenging times," said Gobin, who has completed two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan.

Silvers recalls the generosity of VFW members throughout the hike. At Post 2540 in East Stroudsburg, Pa., members

picked them up in a Willy's Navy Jeep and took them in for the night. Post 7751 in Boiling Springs, Pa., served a steak dinner. It was a week after the hike that Post 3175 in Greenville, N.Y., with the help of American Legion Post 1607, held their most successful fundraiser, raising some \$7,500.

"The biggest threat in Afghanistan is IEDs. So many of our guys are coming back as single, double, triple and quadruple amputees. That was our war."

— Sean Gobin on Warrior Hike

"It was everything from us just talking to three members at the bar to huge events with hundreds of people," Silvers said of their fundraising.

After traveling 2,184 miles, they reached Post 4154 in Millinocket on July 31. The Post, along with American Legion Post 80, threw a special event with more than 200 people in attendance. Silvers and Gobin were presented flags that were flown over the U.S. Capitol Building as well as congratulations from national lawmakers.

"Hiking the entire trail is something I would have never done without the cause to go along with it," Silvers said. "But having the goal, planning the fundraisers and meeting all these people really made the experience worth it."

Hikers Raise \$48,500

From potlucks to parades, the hikers raised some \$48,500 for their cause.

Gobin explains that while VA supplies an \$18,900 grant to disabled veterans for specialized vehicles, there's still a gap between the amount provided and what vehicles actually cost—that's where Gobin's group lends a hand.

Such is the case of Army Spc. Chris Kurtz, who was severely wounded after encountering an IED in Afghanistan in December 2010. He lost both legs and two fingers on his left hand. On Nov. 16, 2012, Kurtz became the first veteran to receive a \$23,000 grant for an adaptive vehicle.

A few weeks later, Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Walker, a 28-year-old bomb technician who lost both arms and his left leg in April 2012 while stationed in Afghanistan, was the second to receive a grant of \$13,000 from the non-profit group last December.

"We wanted something specific, something people could understand tangibly," Silvers said about their program.

Program to Take New Direction

As for the program's future—Gobin and Silvers see it taking a different trail. The program will support veterans who are interested in hiking the Appalachians as a therapeutic way to transition back into civilian life.

"Any funds raised in the future will go towards getting more guys out on the trail," Silvers said. "We want to reach as many veterans as possible."

There is already a number of interested veterans who are ready to start hiking in March 2013.

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Mark Silvers (left) and Sean Gobin reach their final destination of Mount Katahdin, Maine, on July 31, 2012.

PHOTO COURTESY WARRIOR HIKE

EXTRA! EXTRA!

CAPITOL HILL HOSTS VFW

This year's Legislative Conference is March 2-7, at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Va. Housing opened Nov. 1, 2012. You may make reservations online at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/vfw2013> or by calling **1-888-421-1442**. Remember to identify yourself with VFW. For a complete schedule, visit www.vfw.org/News-and-Events/Events/2013-Legislative/Senior-Vice-Commanders-Meeting. Here is an abbreviated tentative agenda of what is to take place at the conference.

Sat., March 2

- Foundation Board Meetings
- Committee on Appeals
- Briefing for new Legislative committee members

Sun., March 3

- Committee meetings
- Legislative meeting
- National Council of Administration
- VOD winners announced

Mon., March 4

- Capitol Hill visits
- Senior Vice Commanders, Adjutants and Quartermasters meeting
- Commander-in-Chief meeting with Department commanders

Tues., March 5

- Capitol Hill visits
- Legislative reception

Wed., March 6 Commander-in-Chief's testimony

For more information regarding conference or hotel information, please contact Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM at **(816) 968-1198**, or by e-mailing vkane@vfw.org.

PREPARE NOW FOR PUBLICATIONS CONTEST

By now, all Department adjutants should have received a packet detailing VFW's 2013 National Publications Contest. To find out how your Post can enter at the Department level for consideration in the national contest, contact your Department headquarters.

RESERVE HOUSING FOR CONVENTION

VFW members can start reserving convention housing in mid-February for the 114th VFW national convention to take place July 20-24, 2013, in Louisville, Ky. For more information, contact Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM at **(816) 968-1198** or visit www.vfw.org.

GIVE BACK THROUGH PLANNED GIVING

At VFW, we agree that family comes first. However, you also want to leave a lasting legacy. Good news—you can do both. To find out more, visit www.vfw.org/plannedgiving, call **(816) 968-1119** or e-mail plannedgiving@vfw.org.

\$1.7 MILLION DONATED SINCE 2007

For the sixth consecutive year, the VFW Foundation and Burger King Franchisee Owned Restaurants have partnered to raise funds for VFW's Unmet Needs program.

Since 2007, participating Burger King restaurants have donated a total of some \$1.7 million dollars in support of the program. Unmet Needs offers financial assistance to deserving military families. Funds go toward basic life necessities such as rent, mortgage, utility bills, vehicle repair and medical expenses.

"Burger King Franchisee Owned Restaurants are proud to support America's military families, and we appreciate the compassion of all of our great customers in assisting those who have sacrificed so much for our country," said Mike DeRosa, Burger King franchisee owner and VFW Foundation board member. "We look forward to 2012 as being the most successful year yet."

Some 1,000 locations participated in 2011, raising a total of \$450,000 by asking customers to donate at least \$1 in addition to their purchase totals.

"Burger King Franchisees Owners continue to do wonderful and unselfish work for America's military families," said John Lowe, VFW Foundation director. "VFW's Unmet Needs program helps military families in their greatest time of urgent financial need, and it is through the support of great companies such as Burger King and their patriotic customers that we are able to provide such great assistance."

Leadership Perspectives

Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General

VFW's Voice Will be Heard in Washington

Sometimes it's difficult to get a consensus of opinion in our organization. A good example was the recent presidential election. It's pure common sense that not all of our members were going to vote for the same candidate. But whether we all agreed on the candidate is irrelevant.

What is important is that we all had the chance to act on our opinions. And this process enables the nation to endure. Not because everyone agrees, but because we as a nation believe in America's system of government.

VFW membership reflects the American spirit of independent thought. Our members are not afraid to speak their mind or stand up for what they believe in. This individuality makes us stronger as a group.

But there comes a time when we must stand united and fight. And that time is almost upon us.

On March 6, during the Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., we will stand united behind Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton as he testifies before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees on Capitol Hill. It will be VFW's chance to speak directly to the nation's lawmakers and try to make them understand veterans concerns.

As VFW members, we share common interests. The annual list of VFW's priority goals presents these interests in a concise and coherent fashion. Supporting and promoting them is not only the essence of the Legislative Conference, but the duty of all VFW members who consider themselves veterans advocates.

So take the time to read and understand these goals (listed in the January 2013 issue of VFW magazine).

Even if you don't make the trip this year, remember that as an organization, we have decided that the priority goals represent what's best for the nation's veterans. And it's up to us to provide a solid front.



Bob Greene, Quartermaster General

New Insurance Option for 2013

VFW's Post Insurance Program was created more than 25 years ago to ensure all VFW Posts had access to adequate liquor liability insurance. The Program has been administered by the same provider since inception and continues to exist to provide comprehensive coverage to VFW Posts.

In order to provide choices to Posts, VFW's Post Insurance Program will be introducing a new policy option in 2013. This new product will continue to offer comprehensive coverage, but with added flexibility that will allow Post leaders to choose coverage options that adequately reflect their needs while also allowing them to manage their insurance costs.

Some 2,100 Posts participate in the program today because it provides coverage tailored to meet the unique needs of our organization. A team of insurance experts are specialized and trained to work with only fraternal organizations, making them experts for VFW Posts.

In recent years, the insurance industry has been in a soft or competitive market cycle. During a soft market, more carriers choose to begin writing fraternal business, causing pricing to go down.

Unfortunately, the carriers write business at premiums below the loss levels required to stay healthy. This, combined with natural disasters and nearly non-existent investment income, resulted in poor underwriting experience industry wide. As a result of the most recent soft market, insurance industry experts predict that insurance rates will increase in 2013 across all carriers and all lines of business.

Please contact the Member Benefits Department at **1-800-821-2606, option 1**, to arrange a consultation to discuss which product, coverage and premium best fits your needs.

With your support, VFW's Post Insurance Program will continue to provide competitive solutions to Posts across the country.



CHECKPOINT

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VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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West Virginia Service Officer Says Vets 'Don't Want Charity'

LARRY PENNINGTON is a no-nonsense sort of guy. He gets right to the point—particularly when he is trying to help other veterans.

"If someone mentions being in the service, he'll ask if they're service connected," said James Pritt, quartermaster for Post 6418 in St. Albans, W.Va. "He's really hot on it. I've never seen anything like it."

Pennington is the service officer for the Post and has been for three years. However, he has served in similar capacities for other groups for 10 years.

"I just think he does a terrific job and everyone in our Post thinks so too," Pritt said.

Becoming a service officer was an easy decision for Pennington. He saw a need, and he worked to fulfill that need.

"I wanted to help veterans," said Pennington, who is also the Post's adjutant. "There were a lot of veterans who would

come to the Post meetings and have questions. And the service officers couldn't answer those questions."

So Pennington was sure to attend as many seminars as he could, and he garnered much of his knowledge from other service officers. He also is the service officer for his American Legion post and his DAV chapter.

"The best thing for a veteran is to join veterans organizations and get involved," Pennington said.

Pennington estimates that he has helped between 500 and 1,000 veterans since joining VFW in 2002.

"He does a whole lot, but he has helped a lot



"There are a lot of veterans out there who don't want charity. If you're hurt and you got hurt in the military, it's not charity."

— Larry Pennington,
Post 6418 service officer

Korean War vet file a claim.

"There are a lot of veterans out there who don't want charity," Pennington said. "If you're hurt and you got hurt in the military, it's not charity."

While attending a recent annual Military Appreciation Day dinner at a local Golden Corral restaurant, Pennington sat and met with area veterans to explain the claims filing process.

"He stands willing to help any and all veterans," Harvey Myers, Post commander, wrote in his nomination letter. "He makes it well known that any vet is welcome to come to his home or he will meet them anywhere to discuss a claim."

As far as claims victories, Pennington says he doesn't keep tabs on ratings the veterans receive.

"Whatever back-pay they get, that's their business," Pennington said. "If they want to share that information with me, that's fine but I've never kept account."

Most often, Pennington deals with PTSD and Agent Orange-related claims.

"The most important thing is that veterans don't know the benefits they've earned, and I get to explain that to them," Pennington said.

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of veterans since he came on board with us," Pritt said.

Pennington gained his VFW eligibility in An Khe, Vietnam, where he served in the Army as an artillery surveyor for 23 months between 1969-1971. He left the Army for 23 months and rejoined in 1973. Pennington retired in August 1990 as a Sgt. 1st Class.

Each Wednesday, Pennington opens up the Post for two hours to help any veteran seeking claims assistance. And he has no qualms traveling to help a veteran in need. In the spring of 2012, Pennington traveled more than 45 miles to help a

WANTED
Outstanding Service Officers

We would like to read about the hard work your Post and Department service officers are doing. If you would like to see them receive some much-deserved recognition, send us a brief note explaining why.

Please send information to:
Checkpoint
Attn: Outstanding Service Officers
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
or call (816) 968-1171
or e-mail tdyhouse@vfw.org

NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE

Do you need help filing a claim?

VFW's National Veteran's Services has a VFW Department service officer locator on its website. To find a service officer near you, just follow these easy steps:

1. Visit www.vfw.org/nvs.
2. Select "ASSISTANCE" from the menu.
3. Select "NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE" from the pull-down menu.
4. Locate the "FIND A SERVICE OFFICER" box on the right-hand side of the screen.
5. Select your state and hit "GO".

FIND A SERVICE OFFICER

State

GO >>

Montford Point Marines Add Another Award for Service

THE MONTFORD POINT MARINES FOUGHT THE JAPANESE for Saipan, served valiantly in Iwo Jima and had their share of casualties on Okinawa. Back home they were known as the few, the proud, the first black Marines.

The group was honored for the first time on June 28, 2012. Some 300 Montford Point Marines were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their service during WWII. Individual Marines, including Stanley E. Costley, a member of Post 7923 in East Orange, N.J., received replica bronze medals and were honored guests at a parade held in the Marine Corps Barracks in Washington, D.C.

“In all my wildest imagination I never thought I’d be in the [Marine] Barracks,” said Costley, who was drafted in 1944 when African-Americans were prohibited from the facility. “I wish my mother and father were alive to see it.”

African-Americans became eligible to serve in the Marine Corps in 1942. For boot camp, recruits traveled to Parris Island, S.C., or San Diego, Calif. Black Marines got their name from Montford Point, N.C., where they trained. In total, the campus saw some 20,000 enlistees pass through.

“I learned from Stanley that serving is an honorable endeavor,” said Ron Stokes, Post 7923 quartermaster and nephew to Costley. “You should always be proud of what you do.”

In addition to congressional acknowledgements, the Marines received VFW’s Gold Medal of Merit in July 2012 at the 113th National Convention held in Reno, Nev.

“The Montford Point Marines paved the way for future generations of African-Americans to proudly call themselves United States Marines,” said VFW past- Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer, who presented the award.

“I’ve never been so honored,” Costley said about the past year’s acknowledgements. “I never thought I’d see the day.”

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Post 7923 members in East Orange, N.J., (from left, back row) Harold Ellis, Simon Mitchell, Lucious Riley, Ronald Riddick, Edgard Pollard, Otto Carr, (from left, front row) William Nielson, Stanley Costley, Robert King and Raymond Spence congratulate Costley on receiving the Congressional Gold Medal.

PHOTO CREDIT: RON STOKES

“I learned from Stanley that serving is an honorable endeavor. You should always be proud of what you do.”

— Ron Stokes, Post 7923 quartermaster and nephew to Stanley Costley.



Social Media Connects

Young VFW Leaders Recruit More of Their Kind



POST 1 IN DENVER, COLO., has recognized the need for drastic change. No longer wanting to portray VFW as an old timer’s club, they’re closing their canteen and broadcasting through social media to young veterans.

“We’re no longer going to be a bar with a smoky room,” Post public affairs officer Brenda Smull said. “We want to focus on the younger generation and what they want.”

Between the variety of programs offered and Post meetings, Post leaders realize that the newest wave of warriors needs easy access to information. That’s why they update their Facebook page several times a week and maintain a LinkedIn group with an active discussion board.

“We’re planning on adding multimedia to our website too,” adds Smull, a 1991 Persian Gulf War veteran. “It’s anything we can do to attract younger vets.”

The public affairs officer said they are hopeful that recent veterans will step into prominent Post roles in the next year.

While Post 1 has projected optimistic leadership numbers for the future, Post

982 in Sag Harbor, N.Y. already has the youngest commander in New York’s District 1.

Roger King, a Marine Corp veteran of the Iraq War, is taking the reins at his Post and has big goals for recruiting new members.

“It’s all about presentation of your Post,” said King, who did two tours in Iraq, first in 2006 and later in 2007-2008.

King said that there is still some transitioning happening within his Post, but the officers plan on utilizing social networks such as Facebook to keep members updated.

“Social media is a better way of reaching out and lets young people know this isn’t your grandfather’s club,” King said.

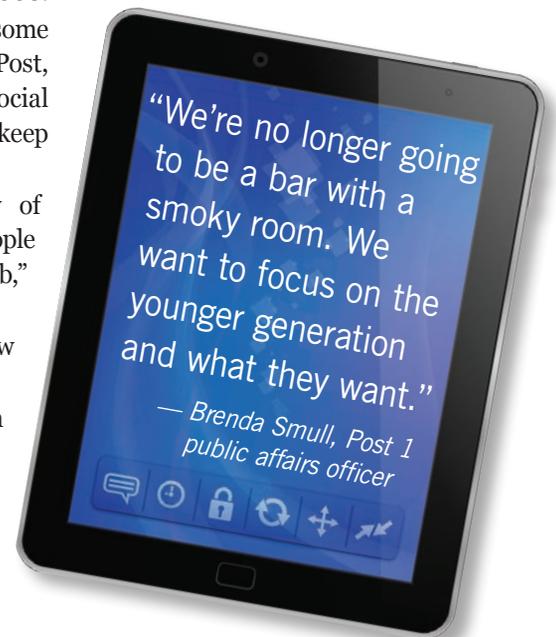
But his Post isn’t the only one in New York that’s using online networking.

Department Commander Jim Durkin, who served during the Iranian hostage crisis in the late 1970s, says Posts have opened up to Twitter, Facebook and Skype for members who cannot physically be present at meetings.

Other Post commanders, such as Brian DeMeritt of Post 524 in Crystal City, N.Y., believe media is a way to keep soldiers connected overseas.

“We worked on a website,” DeMeritt told the *Elmira Star-Gazette*. “We have a Facebook site. It’s an area VFW needs to focus on.”

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— Brenda Smull, Post 1 public affairs officer

Kimbra Rose Moore Memorial Fund



PHOTO CREDIT: KAKE

'A Great Tragedy'

Kansas Post Raises Funds for Funeral Costs

IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF SEPT. 4, 2012, AN 8-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS SHOT and killed while she slept in her bed. The shooting was an accident — a stray bullet from a violent act directed at someone else — but the aftermath devastated the Wichita, Kan., community.

Cheris Moore, mother of the slain girl, Kimbra, could not afford the unexpected costs of the girl's funeral. Adding to her torment, Cheris was laid off from her job at a local shopping mall. Suddenly, she was left unemployed, caring for her other two children and crippled with grief.

"I don't know what to do," Cheris told KAKE, a Wichita news station. "What do you do after someone takes your child? She was everything in the world that was good in me."

That is when Post 3115 in Wichita, Kan., stepped in. Marcia Shepler, Kimbra's former elementary school principal, approached members of the Post's motorcycle riding group about assisting the family. Shepler, who is not a member of the Post but rides with the motorcycle group affiliated with the Post, remembered Kimbra well and knew VFW would be willing to help.

"[Kimbra] was absolute smiles all the time," Shepler told KSN, a Wichita-based NBC affiliate. "She was a well-behaved child, happy all the time, just one of those little ladies that lights up a room."

The riding group quickly organized a donation drive. In only three and a half hours of asking for donations outside of Freddy's Frozen Custard on Oct. 6, 2012 the Post raised \$8,500 — enough to cover funeral expenses and help offset living costs while Cheris searched for a new job.

"We're just trying to make sure mom can focus on the things she needs to focus on — healing from the loss, taking care of her other two children — without having to bear the burden of the sad task of trying to pay for this funeral," Shepler told the *Wichita Eagle*.

An additional \$500 was donated to a memorial fund set up at a local Emprise bank.

"We as a veterans organization volunteered to help this family, and the community helped support our mission," said Marla Harris, former commander of Post 3115 and a member of the riding club. "It shows we can succeed in what we do if we work as a team."

Two people have been arrested in connection with the shooting. A 24-year-old man, previously convicted of methamphetamine possession, has been charged with first-degree murder. He allegedly was firing a gun at a stolen vehicle.

Cheris and her other two children — a 6-year-old son and a 4-year old daughter — had planned on moving. They would have been gone only four days after the shooting occurred.

"It's a great tragedy what happened so we wanted to step up as a Post and help out with the community," said Aaron Rausch, a member of the motorcycle group.

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"We as a veterans organization volunteered to help this family, and the community helped support our mission. It shows we can succeed in what we do if we work as a team."

—Marla Harris, former commander of Post 3115

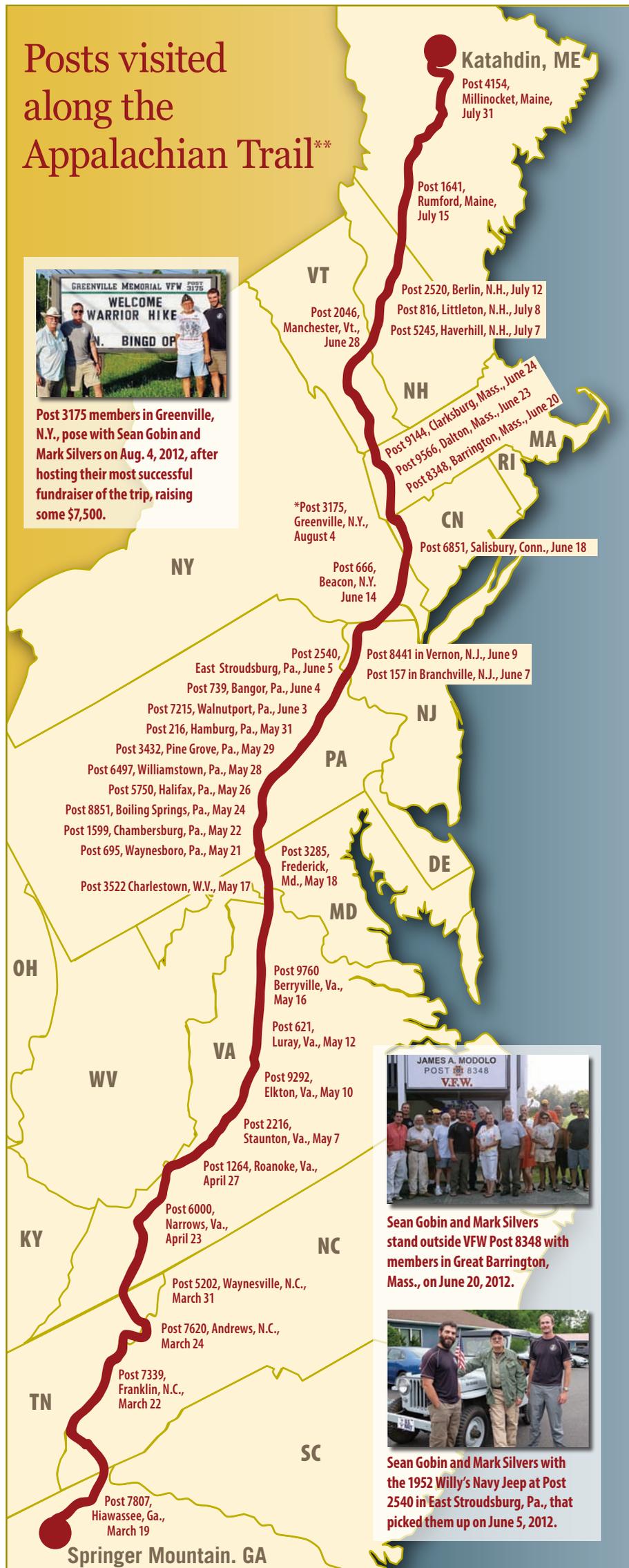


Members of Post 3115 in Wichita, Kan., host a fundraiser for Kimbra Moore, an 8-year-old girl who was fatally shot while sleeping in her home. The Post raised some \$9,000 total.

PHOTO CREDIT: MARLA HARRIS

VFW Members Hike Appalachian Trail for Veteran Amputees, *continued from page 1*

“Hiking the Appalachian Trail was a great transitional activity,” Gobin said. “Just to be with yourself, the national parks, the trail and all the small town support. It was the most therapeutic thing anyone can do.” E-mail: kdawson@vfw.org



**Posts are listed in the order visited and do not represent accurate locations on the map.

A Visible Reminder

Virginia Post Spearheads Monument to County's Veterans

IN MARCH 2012, MEMBERS OF POST 9954 IN VICTORIA, VA., were approached by Cornelius “Bud” Arvin, a Korean war vet and fellow Post member. Arvin wanted to erect a monument in the town of some 2,000 people and dedicate it to all Lunenburg County veterans. He pledged to donate up to 50% of the cost and was hopeful Post members would help raise the remainder of the funds.

According to Post member and monument committee chairman Donald Westerlund, local newspapers gave ample coverage to the plans, which increased interest and fund-raising opportunities. Through donations made by veterans and veterans families, the Post raised \$7,000 for the monument.

“More than 100 contributions were made to offset the costs of this project,” Westerlund said. “After the monument was set, some 300 engraved bricks were purchased by people in the community.”

The 4-inch-by-8-inch bricks include up to three lines of text and cost \$25. Westerlund said people are still purchasing bricks.

Officially dedicated on Nov. 11, 2012, with a crowd of 300 present, the monument is 10 feet tall and five feet wide, weighing 13,500 pounds. Following the dedication, the Post, which boasts 180 members, hosted a luncheon.

Westerlund said that a committee of Post members came up with the design based on some things Arvin had requested. Those included the phrases “God Bless America” and “Freedom is not Free.” A bugle and three verses of “Taps” are engraved on the back side of the stone.

For the town of Victoria, which is located about an hour and a half southwest of the state capital in Richmond, the monument is now an attraction as it is located on the main street of town. Specifically, it is located at the junction of Jefferson Avenue and Nottoway Boulevard.

Westerlund said the property was donated to the town by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

“The town of Victoria had a veterans monument in one of the local cemeteries, but it was in an area rarely visited by the general public,” Westerlund said. “The new one stands as a clearly visible, ongoing reminder to our community of the cost of our freedom.”

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The 10-foot-by-5-foot monument in Victoria, Va., is dedicated to all Lunenburg County veterans. It is the result of fund-raising efforts of members of Post 9954, also in Victoria.

Missouri Post Hosts Employment Event for Veterans

FINDING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT is tough work, especially if you are recently separated from the military. This is why Post 2591 in Sedalia, Mo., hosted a job fair last October.

In cooperation with Terry Beas, the veterans employment representative with the Sedalia Career Center, some 14 central Missouri businesses set up booths in the Post hall to meet with veterans. There was room for up to 20 businesses.

Post Adjutant Gary Gill, who is one of the driving forces behind the job fair, said that while the event was geared for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, it was open to any veteran and spouses of veterans.

"This was our second job fair, and it was really very successful," said Gill, a Vietnam veteran. "We had such good support from our Post members."

Gill was not disappointed that 20 veterans and spouses turned out for the event, but hopes to attract more busi-

"The need for jobs is there, and anything we can do to help fill that need, we will."

— Gary Gill, Post 2591 adjutant

nesses for the third job fair within the next few months.

"We would like to outgrow our space and move to a larger venue," he said. "The need for jobs is there, and anything we can do to help fill that need, we will."

Gill said he is surprised that more Posts don't host similar events because it is "easy" to do. Both town newspapers provided ample coverage leading up to the event as did the local radio stations. Beas works to attract the businesses by sending out promotional material.

Some of those employers attending the October fair include: Sedalia Police Department, Missouri Department of Corrections, Tyson Foods, Bankers Life, Route 66 CDL and Apprenticeship, Inc.

Gill said that in addition to the employment aspect, the Post service officer was there to assist with any questions and helped "four or five" vets with paperwork. The Ladies Auxiliary provided a free chili dinner for all those attending.

For Gill, a former school teacher, the job fair is important. He says he remembers coming home from Vietnam and receiving unfriendly treatment, with the exception of a few people. He knew at that time, he says, that if another war broke out in his lifetime, he would be there to welcome home troops and guide them in any way he could.

"Even doing this, I feel like we aren't doing enough," he said.

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Why do Veterans Make Good Employees?

After interviewing business leaders at 69 companies, the Center for a New American Security unveiled a report in 2012 listing numerous reasons employers should do more than just consider hiring veterans. Here is a look at what the report says.

- **Leadership and teamwork skills.** Veterans typically have led colleagues, accepted direction from others and operated as part of a small team.
- **Character.** Veterans are perceived as being trustworthy, dependable, drug-free and having a strong work ethic.
- **Structure and discipline.** Companies, especially those that emphasize safety, appreciate veterans experience in following established procedures.
- **Expertise.** Companies value veterans occupational skills, job-specific experiences and understanding of the military community.
- **Dynamic environment.** Veterans are accustomed to performing and making decisions in dynamic and rapidly changing circumstances.
- **Proven success.** Some organizations hire veterans largely because other veterans have already been successful in their organization.
- **Resiliency.** Veterans are accustomed to working in difficult environments, and to traveling and relocating.
- **Loyalty.** Veterans are committed to the organizations they work for, which can translate into longer tenure.



The Sedalia Police Department was just one of 14 Missouri businesses attending a veterans job fair sponsored by Post 2591 in Sedalia, Mo. Some 20 veterans and spouses turned out for the event last October. PHOTO CREDIT: RANDY KIRBY, SEDALIA NEWS JOURNAL



Posts with the Most VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS OR MORE AS OF DEC. 7, 2012

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members
1	27	Wiesbaden, Germany	2,608
2	1114	Evansville, IN	2,422
3	1503	Dale City, VA	2,191
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ	1,820
5	392	Virginia Beach, VA	1,605
6	2485	Angeles City, Philippines	1,567
7	9785	Eagle River, AK	1,509
8	6506	Rosedale, MD	1,485
9	628	Sioux Falls, SD	1,465
10	4372	Odessa, TX	1,454

Rank	No.	Location	Members
11	4647	North Highlands, CA	1,404
12	8862	Vicenza, Italy	1,379
13	63	Boise, ID	1,300
14	1146	St Clair Shores, MI	1,294
15	7234	Ocean View, DE	1,284
16	7686	Alamogordo, NM	1,275
17	972	Terre Haute, IN	1,238
18	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany	1,225
19	6873	Abilene, TX	1,219
20	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL	1,217
21	2503	Omaha, NE	1,177
22	2111	Chula Vista, CA	1,150
23	1326	Bismarck, ND	1,133
24	4809	Norfolk, VA	1,129
25	10047	North Las Vegas, NV	1,120
25	1273	Rapid City, SD	1,120
27	549	Tucson, AZ	1,114
27	1512	Lemon Grove, CA	1,114
29	969	Tacoma, WA	1,090
30	1599	Chambersburg, PA	1,086
31	10436	Kitzingen, Germany	1,068
32	3892	Harker Heights, TX	1,060
33	788	Cedar Rapids, IA	1,053
34	9223	Arlington, CA	1,038
35	8951	West York, PA	1,009
35	1296	Bloomington, MN	1,009
37	10420	Murrells Inlet, SC	1,003

1,558 Recognized to Date

World War II Veterans Leading VFW Posts from Coast to Coast

THE CHECKPOINT STAFF EXTENDS A HEARTY “THANK YOU” to all our World War II Post leaders, members and veterans. And we want to recognize those who still devote time and energy to VFW causes.

Listed below are 50 WWII veterans who serve VFW Posts in official capacities. Checkpoint has recognized a total of 1,558 such Post leaders since the March/April 2009 issue. We will continue to feature this section in subsequent issues until every WWII Post leader whose name is submitted is recognized.

If you would like to recognize a WWII veteran who currently serves your Post, please send us his or her name, official Post position and your Post’s location. Send information to:

Checkpoint, Attn: WWII Leaders
406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111
E-mail: tdyhouse@vfw.org



Name	Position	Post/Location	Name	Position	Post/Location
George Andersen	Chaplain	Post 3770, Mountain Grove, Mo.	Ira Hunter	Judge Advocate	Post 4043, Liberty, Mo.
John J. Armstrong	Commander	Post 8542, Welch, Okla.	Earl Kantner	Editor	Post 10523, Canal Winchester, Ohio
Edward Bellendier	Trustee	Post 1622, Lomita, Calif.	Don Kershner	Commander	Post 10523, Canal Winchester, Ohio
Joseph Brammer	Buddy Poppy Chrmn.	Post 876, River Edge, N.J.	Alan E. Kramer	Funeral Team	Post 3733, Fowler, Mich.
Allan Brennecke	Adjutant	Post 8112, St. Louis, Mo.	Frank Lago	Trustee	Post 1622, Lomita, Calif.
Lee Broeker	Honor Guard	Post 2366, Huntingburg, Ind.	Ralph Lerch	Quartermaster	Post 38, Reading, Pa.
Herbert Brucker	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 8696, Palm Coast, Fla.	Ramsey P. Locke	Commander	Post 5066, Collierville, Tenn.
Riley Callahan	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 8112, St. Louis, Mo.	Ray Merrell	Trustee	Post 4043, Liberty, Mo.
Clarence Cherry	Chaplain	Post 8112, St. Louis, Mo.	William Miller	Trustee	Post 8112, St. Louis, Mo.
Milo J. Chlan	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 5340, Montgomery, Minn.	Mike Pohorilla	Judge Advocate	Post 10523, Canal Winchester, Ohio
James B. Clark	Commander	Post 2182, Farmington, N.M.	Cecil Potter	Trustee	Post 4556, Pocahontas, Ark.
Delphin D. Davis	Commander	Post 9679, Waterford, Calif.	Stuart Preston	Quartermaster	Post 10150, Boynton Beach, Fla.
Francis T. Diveny	Commander	Post 711, Bloomfield, N.J.	Leo Reller	Adjutant	Post 2366, Huntingburg, Ind.
James M. Douglas	Trustee	Post 711, Bloomfield, N.J.	Paul Rice	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 72, San Rafael, Calif.
Frank Eadie	Chaplain	Post 5262, Canton, Ga.	Cliff Schleusner	Judge Advocate	Post 6774, Billings, Mont.
Ed Floyd	Commander	Post 2044, Earlysville, Va.	Ray Shaver	Service Officer	Post 4556, Pocahontas, Ark.
Billy Gardner	Honor Guard	Post 5660, Fairhope, Ala.	Paul K. Shearer	Surgeon	Post 9663, Dubuque, Iowa
Ernest Gillian	Trustee	Post 1622, Lomita, Calif.	Charles Stouder	Trustee	Post 10007, Pleasant Plains, Ark.
Julius Goodman	Chaplain	Post 8696, Palm Coast, Fla.	Herbert Turner	Judge Advocate	Post 4556, Pocahontas, Ark.
Otto R. Groel, Jr.	Surgeon	Post 711, Bloomfield, N.J.	Hugo Valadez	Chaplain	Post 72, San Rafael, Calif.
Elmer Hammes	Trustee	Post 8112, St. Louis, Mo.	Donald E. Walters	Commander	Post 10126, Lady Lake, Fla.
Melvin Harden	Judge Advocate	Post 8542, Welch, Okla.	Frank Westervelt	Commander	Post 10150, Boynton Beach, Fla.
Clarence Hoffman	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 5606, Kansas City, Mo.	Charles White	Service Officer	Post 5060, Madrid, Iowa
Dick Hummel	Surgeon	Post 10523, Canal Winchester, Ohio	Russell Winebaugh	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 4556, Pocahontas, Ark.
Martin J. Hunsinger	Commander	Post 2142, Pine Hill, N.J.	A.J. “Buck” Zahratka	Service Officer	Post 5340, Montgomery, Minn.