

CHECKPOINT



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'Challenge and Camaraderie'

Michigan Post Honors Fallen Marine with Dart Tournament

THE MT. PLEASANT, MICH., community takes care to honor its service-members. So when local resident Lance Cpl. Justin Ellsworth was killed in Iraq near Al Sadan on Nov. 13, 2004, the community stepped up to remember his sacrifice with golf tournaments and memorial runs. And Post 3033 in Mt. Pleasant continues to honor that sacrifice nearly 10 years later.

This January, Post 3033 hosted its second annual dart tournament honoring Ellsworth and his sacrifice.

"We're here to celebrate with family and friends because that's what Justin would have wanted," said John Ellsworth, Justin's father.

Ellsworth was serving as a combat engineer with 2nd Plt., A Co., 2nd Recon. Bn., 2nd BCT, 1st Marine Div., when his convoy came across an IED. Ellsworth warned the convoy then jumped on the explosion. He was awarded a Bronze Star for his action.

"I am so proud," John told *the Detroit News* in 2005. "It almost gives me the same feeling when he left for Iraq. I was so proud of him, and I was so scared. I do know he didn't die in vain, and he did make a difference."

The Post first honored its hometown hero with a dart tournament last year, raising some \$2,400 and welcoming 130 people to the Post to celebrate Ellsworth's life.

This year, 45 friends and family members participated in the tournament, and many more showed up at the Post to watch the event.

The Post charged \$7 per entrant, and \$5 of that fee went to the winners.

In addition to the dart tournament, the Post raffled sports memorabilia and items donated from a number of local businesses. Also, attendees could purchase T-shirts and dog tags commemorating Ellsworth.

"It's good fun hanging out with everyone, and of course the challenge and camaraderie is exciting, too," Randy Wyrick, also a Marine, told *Central Michigan Life*.

For the family and community, this continued show of support and memory of Ellsworth is touching.

"Justin was an openhearted guy," Marc Brandeberry, Ellsworth's lifelong friend, told *Central Michigan Life*. "If you needed help, he was always there."

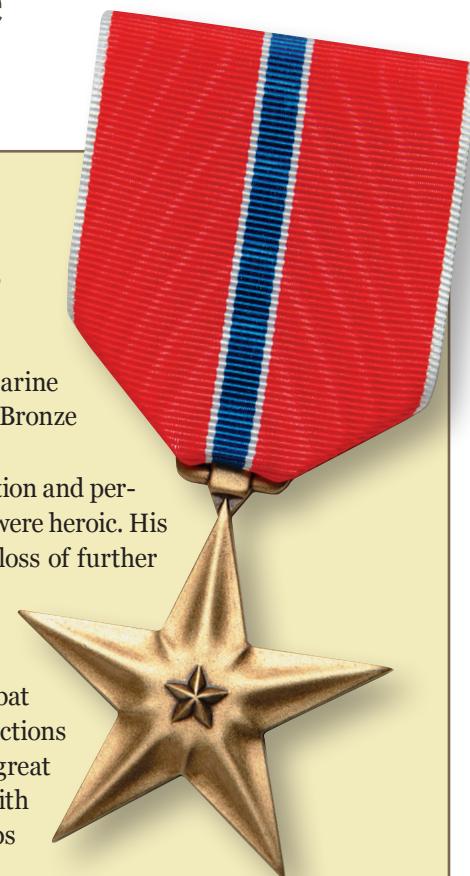
E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org

'Courage and Decisive Actions'

For his actions in Iraq in 2004, Marine Lance Cpl. Justin Ellsworth received a Bronze Star. His citation reads:

"Lance Cpl. Ellsworth's selfless dedication and personal bravery in the face of grave danger were heroic. His sacrifice prevented the serious injury or loss of further life among his fellow Marines. Lance Cpl. Ellsworth's actions and service are deserving of recognition consistent with that of the Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing device. His courageous actions and exceptional dedication reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

"His courage and decisive actions placed him in a position in which he absorbed the majority of the blast and prevented further loss of life or injury to the members of his team and platoon. By his zealous initiative, courageous actions and exceptional dedication to duty, LCpl. Ellsworth gallantly gave his life for his country."



Members of Post 3033 and residents of Mt. Pleasant, Mich., take part in an annual dart tournament honoring Marine Lance Cpl. Justin Ellsworth, who died in Iraq in 2004. The second annual tournament was held at the Post on Jan. 25, 2014.

PHOTO CREDIT: MORGAN TAYLOR/
CENTRAL MICHIGAN LIFE



EXTRA! EXTRA!

RECRUIT WITH VFW PUBLICATIONS

VFW's Publications Department has produced a variety of award-winning special edition magazines. These have proven to be valuable recruiting aids.

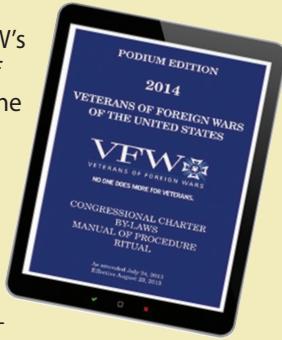
Contact Carla Darnell in the Membership

Department to place your order

today at cdarnell@vfw.org or (816)-756-3390, ext. 208. For a limited time, the magazines are free as long as you pay for the shipping.

VFW GUIDES AVAILABLE AS E-BOOKS

You can now reference VFW's *Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Rituals* and the *Service Officer Guide* on your iPhone, tablet or electronic book reader. Any of these can be purchased online at www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com—search "Veterans of Foreign Wars."



YOUTH CONTEST THEMES ANNOUNCED

The 2014-15 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen themes are, respectively: "Why Veterans are Important to our Nation's History and Future" and "Why I Appreciate America's Veterans."

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen chairmen can access the entry forms for distribution in schools by going to <https://www.vfw.org/Login.aspx>.

Log in, then click on "Chairman Guides" under the "General Members Tools and Resources" heading. Here you will

find all program materials. Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen information is under the "Scholarships" section.



IS YOUR PET INSURED?

Similar to health insurance for humans, pet insurance covers hundreds of conditions that affect animals. There are plans that cover illnesses, hereditary ailments or accidents only. Wellness coverage also can be added to pay for routine pet care that is crucial to your pet's ongoing health.

For additional information, please call the VFW Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606, option 1, or visit www.vfwinsurance.com.



CONSIDER A VFW CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

Make a donation to VFW—a minimum of \$10,000—and receive income for life at a rate that will never change. For a customized, no-obligation illustration, contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at (816) 968-1119 or e-mail plannedgiving@vfw.org.



Leadership Perspectives

John Hamilton, Adjutant General

VFW is Taking Action to Reform VA

VA's health care system is embroiled in a crisis of confidence, and VFW is leading the charge to force fundamental change. We've been warning Congress about long wait times at VA since 2005.

We've outlined the problems of improper resources, oversight and accountability at VA health care facilities in the annual *Independent Budget*. We've also expressed these concerns directly to lawmakers in our annual testimony in March on Capitol Hill.

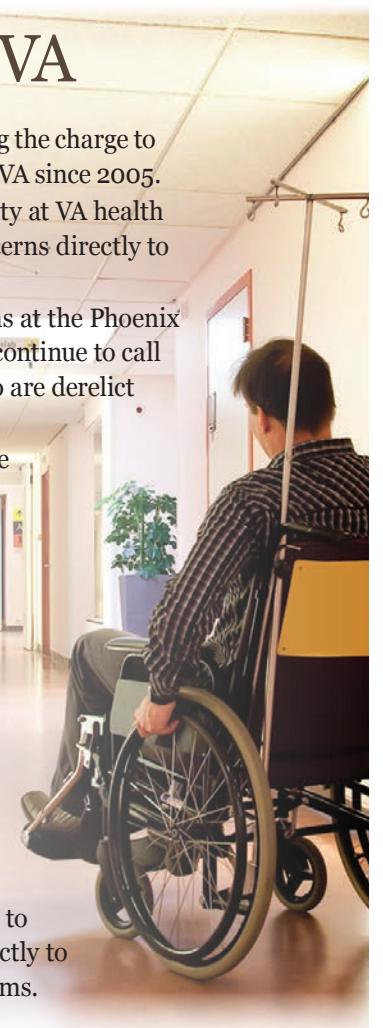
On May 15, VFW also testified before the Senate VA Committee about problems at the Phoenix VA system. Two weeks later, former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki resigned. We will continue to call for the removal—and prosecution, if necessary—of other VA senior leadership who are derelict in their responsibilities.

We have been deploying VFW service officers on unannounced visits to the waiting rooms of VA health care facilities. They are speaking with vets waiting for appointments and gauging their satisfaction regarding care and the length of their waiting times.

On June 9, we kicked off a series of town hall meetings. We hosted one at Post 6506 in Rosedale, Md., and another at the Uptown Theater in Kansas City, Mo. We heard directly from vets about their experiences with VA health care. These meetings will continue until we have collected sufficient anecdotal evidence to present to Congress.

In the meantime, we are ratcheting up the pressure on the nation's lawmakers. They swiftly approved bills in the House (June 11) and Senate (June 12), which at press time were expected to be resolved and quickly enacted by the President.

Once a compromise between the two bills is reached, the real fight will be how to pay for it. We want our Post and Department members to carry this message directly to their lawmakers: VFW demands adequate funding for real solutions to VA's problems.



Bob Greene, Quartermaster General

Notify IRS of Quartermaster Change

In January 2014, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) began requiring entities with an Employer Identification Number to file IRS Form 8822-B to report the latest change of address or responsible party. Form 8822-B must be filed within 60 days of the change.

The purpose of Form 8822-B is to notify the IRS if you changed your business mailing address, your business location or the identity of your responsible party.

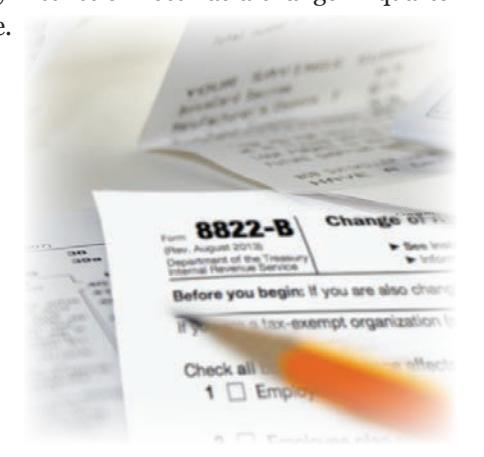
A responsible party is the person who has a level of control over the funds or assets of the organization. For VFW purposes, that would be the quartermaster. So when the Department, District or Post has a change in quartermaster leadership, this form must be filed within the 60-day timeframe.

IRS Form 8822-B and its instructions can be found at the following link: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8822b.pdf>

The form will require the following information from the organization:

- Legal name of the organization
- Old mailing address
- Employer Identification Number
- New mailing address
- New business location, if different from mailing address
- Old name of the responsible party (2013-2014 quartermaster)
- New name of responsible party (2014-2015 quartermaster)

Since Post election reports must be completed and filed with VFW National Headquarters immediately following your annual election, it would be a good time to complete the IRS Form 8822-B and forward it directly to the IRS.



CHECKPOINT

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Checkpoint is an award-winning newsletter published six times a year in January, March, May, July, September and November. Its purpose is to provide VFW Department, District and Post leaders with information to enhance their job performance and furnish them with a more comprehensive understanding of the organization.

Correspondence can be sent to the editor at VFW National Headquarters.

VFW Department, District and Post publications may reproduce sections of *Checkpoint*. All other publications must receive editor's permission. Internet address: www.vfwmagazine.org

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NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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Minnesota Service Officer Fights for ‘Veteran Brothers and Sisters’

FOR TOM FIGLIUZZI OF POST 1223 in Dilworth, Minn., being a veterans service officer (VSO) isn't just a job, it's "a calling." Although he is currently in his 15th year as a VSO, his story begins much earlier.

Figliuzzi was enrolled at the University of Minnesota before he got his start in the military in 1982, leaving school to enlist in the Army. After completing basic training and graduating from the Military Intelligence Academy at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz., he was sent to South Korea as a military intelligence analyst. Other assignments took him to Panama and El Salvador, where he earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

After his tours and deciding that he wanted to make a career of his military service, Figliuzzi contracted with the North Dakota National Guard. He was named *Soldier of the Year* for the state just before retiring in 1999 as a sergeant first class.

Like many recently discharged troops, Figliuzzi decided he wanted to help other veterans. In April 1999, he learned of a county VSO job opening in Fergus Falls, Minn. He applied and received the position.

"I now had chance to use all the skills that I had learned, not only in the military but academic skills from college, and I could fight for my veteran brothers and sisters with everything I have," Figliuzzi said.

Fergus Falls was Figliuzzi's home until 2006, when he took a new VSO position in Clay County, Minn. He has been serving the veterans community there ever since.

With two paid staff members and 18 volunteers, the Clay County Veterans Service Office handles thousands of cases each year. Figliuzzi estimates



Tom Figliuzzi, service officer for Post 1223 in Dilworth, Minn., helps a veteran file a claim in May 2014. Figliuzzi is now in his 15th year as a veterans service officer. PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILLIAMS

there are more than 12,500 files in the office's database. The most common cases he sees are compensation claims, largely for hearing loss and tinnitus.

"I have been able to get hundreds of veterans compensated at the 100% rating," Figliuzzi said. "And in some cases, the retro-award was so staggering to the veteran that they don't believe it's real."

Jennifer Williams, veterans benefits coordinator for Clay County Veterans Service Office, can attest to Figliuzzi's skills when it comes to helping vets.

"In the five years that I have known Tom, I have seen how he goes to bat for

every veteran in a manner that is competent, thorough and dedicated," Williams said. "He strives to support each veteran by searching out every benefit and coordinating every resource."

Figliuzzi's passion has earned him multiple awards over the years for his service and activism, but he cites his ability to gain the trust of vets as the most rewarding aspect of his work. He says VSOs are given autonomy, which allows him and others to "really go to bat for our veterans without fear of reprisal."

This line of work also has rewarded Figliuzzi in his personal life, intro-



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM FIGLIUZZI

Figliuzzi contracted with the North Dakota National Guard after his Army service. He was named *Soldier of the Year* for the state in 1999.

ducing him to his wife, Launette. A fellow Army retiree, Launette Figliuzzi also works as a VSO in nearby Cass County, N.D.

E-mail: hshipman@vfw.org

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 Veterans Service 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 >>

Unmet Needs Makes a Real Difference for Military Families

WHEN HARDSHIPS BEFALL MILITARY FAMILIES or those recently separated from the military, VFW's *Unmet Needs* program is in place to help. Since 2004, 3,600 families have received assistance totaling \$4,943,500.

Unmet Needs grants are available to those still on active duty as well as those who have been discharged within a three-year period.

According to Linda Ferguson, manager of VFW special programs and projects, these one-time grants can pay for a wide range of things.

"It might be used to put diapers on a baby, food in the mouth of a child or keeping a family's lights on," Ferguson said. "We carefully evaluate each application. If we aren't able to provide a monetary grant to a family, we do our best to put them in touch with someone who can better suit their needs."

In its eighth year, *Unmet Needs* grants can be used for basic life needs such as housing and vehicle repair expenses, insurance payments, utilities to include primary phone, food and incidentals. More than half of the nearly \$5 million distributed has gone directly toward basic housing needs.

Payment is made directly to the creditor or gift cards are given to the service member/family.

Ferguson noted that since the majority of U.S. troops will be home from Afghanistan by the end of the year, the general population might not find it necessary to continue supporting *Unmet Needs*.

"These men and women are coming home and need our continued support," Ferguson said. "Some might face financial foes. And that is why *Unmet Needs* is in place to help."

\$2.5 Million Over Seven Years

Unmet Needs is largely funded through the generosity of veteran-friendly companies making a big financial impact on this program.

One example is Burger King. For the past seven years, franchise owners coordinate with November's Military Families Month. Customers at participating Burger King restaurants are given the option to donate a \$1 to *Unmet Needs*, when paying for their meals.

The VFW Foundation provides publicity materials to the franchisees for use during the contribution period.

In 2013, the number of restaurants participating increased, as did the donations. A total of 44 franchise owners representing 891 restaurants in 23 states donated nearly \$500,000.

Contributing to that total was South Dakota franchise owner Tom Walsh, Sr., and his son, Tom, Jr. On Veterans Day 2013, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Walshes matched donations dollar for dollar up to \$10,000 to increase the donations from their franchise.

During the month-long campaign, the South Dakota Burger Kings brought in \$18,589.

This year, for the first time ever, Burger King also is soliciting donations during the month of July. In total, Burger King has collected more than \$2.5 million in seven years.

"Burger King customers have made it possible for *Unmet Needs* to continue being successful," Ferguson said. "They recognize the importance of what we are doing and have stepped forward to help. Every \$1 donation makes a difference."

E-mail: jblankenship@vfw.org



Burger King has collected more than \$2.5 million for *Unmet Needs* in seven years.

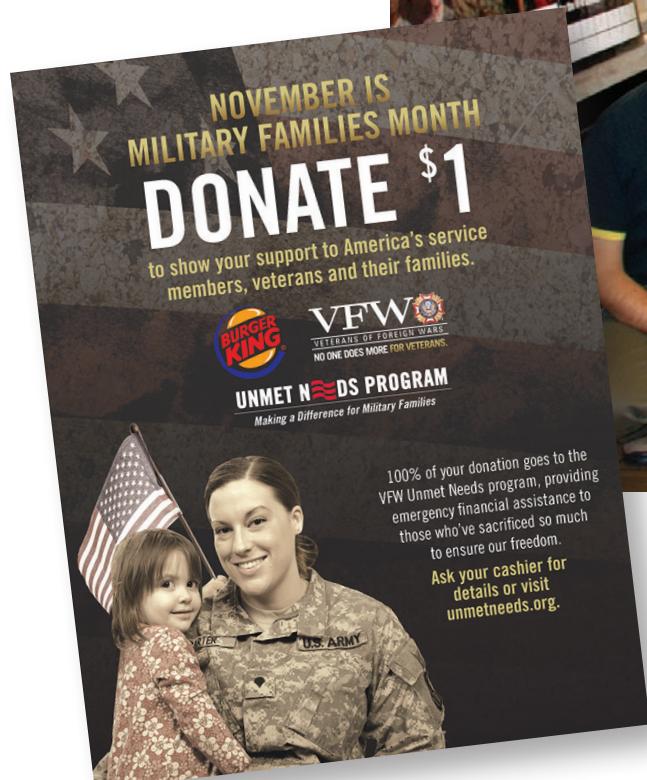


\$4.9 million:

The value of emergency grants awarded to military families since 2004 to help cover basic needs in times of crisis. Nearly half of the funds paid for housing costs.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA FOX.



Members of Post 791 in Yankton, S.D., pose with the Yankton Burger King staff and local radio personalities Cynthia Miller and Dave Lee in November following an *Unmet Needs* fundraiser. For seven years, participating Burger King restaurants have asked customers to donate \$1 for VFW's *Unmet Needs* program. South Dakota Burger Kings brought in \$18,589 in 2013, contributing to the nearly \$500,000 overall national donation.

Illinois and Washington Earn Multiple Awards in 2014 VFW National Publications Contest

THANKS TO ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS of the 2014 VFW National Publications Contest. Covering the 2013 calendar year, the contest garnered 61 entries—16 fewer than last year. Entries came in from 36 Posts (down four from last year), seven Districts (down eight from last year) and 18 Departments (down four from last year). Of the 61 entries, 25 placed.

Category sizing remained the same for this year's contest after being recalibrated in 2013.

Two non-VFW-affiliated journalism professionals served as judges for the competition. This is designed to guarantee impartiality and objectivity in the judging. To reiterate, VFW staffers play no part in judging the entries.

The Checkpoint staff congratulates all entrants for their hard work and service to their respective members. The pool of entries this year proved to be one of the best yet.

If you have suggestions for how we can improve the national publications contest for 2015, we would like to hear from you. Write to:

VFW Publications Contest
406 W. 34th Street, Ste. 523
Kansas City, MO 64111
E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org

A Few Comments From the Judges

- “Very clean design. Great pictures with captions. Maybe visually break up articles.”
- “Love all the Post news!”
- “Great use of color with photo pages.”
- “Great color photos! Expand on captions when possible.”
- “Be careful not to over-enlarge small photo files.”
- “Consider fewer fonts and colors for a more professional look that is easier on the eyes.”
- “Looks good, but watch for inconsistent fonts and spacing.”
- “Needs to be spell-checked.”
- “Love the format! Consider more legible body font and some photos.”
- “I like the newsletter masthead – very appealing.”
- “Some font is too small! Remember your audience!”
- “Great newsletter layout. Also, I love the paper stock.”



Department Publications

LARGE (21,500 or more members)

- 1st *Texas VFW News*
Roy Grona, Editor
- 2nd *Wisconsin VFW News*
Marla J. Morgan, Editor
- 3rd *Illinois VFW News*
Barbara Wilson, Editor

MEDIUM (10,000-21,499 members)

- 1st *The Oregon VFW News*
Sue Piper, Editor
- 2nd *Nebraska VFW News*
John Liebsack, Editor
- 3rd *Colorado Veteran*
Bruce Dolan, Editor

SMALL (9,999 or fewer members)

- 1st *Utah VFW*
Dennis Howland, Editor
- 2nd *Idaho Veterans and Auxiliary News*
Susan Thompson, Editor
- 3rd *Montana Veteran*
Timothy C. Peters, Editor



District Publications

LARGE (2,600 or more members)

- 1st *Noise from the 19th* (District 19, Illinois)
George Cramer & Linda Sturk, Editors
- 2nd *The Broadside* (District 4, Texas)
Jim Haycraft, Editor
- 3rd *Dispatch* (District 1, California)
Russell Eseltine, Editor

MEDIUM (1,000-2,599 members)

- 1st *“No One Does More For Veterans”* (District 1, Washington)
James M. Traner, Editor
- 2nd *3rd District Flash* (District 3, Illinois)
Michael DeRoss, Editor
- 3rd *District 16 News* (District 16, Oregon)
William Felt, Editor

SMALL (999 or fewer members)

- 1st *News Around the Sound* (District 2, Washington)
Lois Mezek, Editor *
- *No other winners in this category.



Post Publications

LARGE (190 or more members)

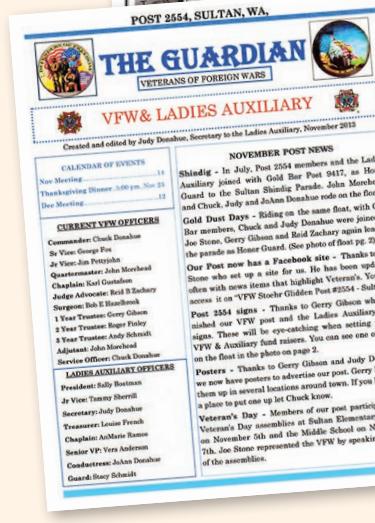
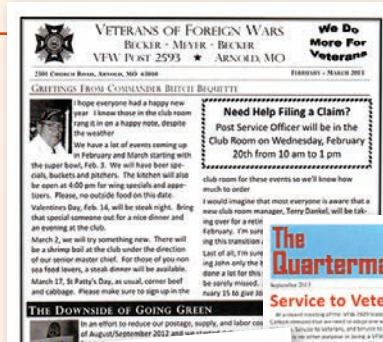
- 1st *VFW 2593 Newsletter* (Post 2593, Missouri)
Pam Ecker, Editor
- 2nd *Miller-Long VFW Post 3606 Newsletter* (Post 3606, Nebraska)
Jim Rall, Editor
- 3rd *Post 9639 Newsletter* (Post 9639, Pennsylvania)
Michael Stephens, Editor

MEDIUM (80-189 members)

- 1st *The Quartermaster's Page* (Post 7829, Colorado)
Bernard Minetti, Editor
- 2nd *VFW Post 7308* (Post 7308, Wisconsin)
Randolph Strickland, Editor
- 3rd *The Connection* (Post 12075, Texas)
Jim Haycraft, Editor

SMALL (79 or fewer members)

- 1st *The Guardian* (Post 2554, Washington)
Judy Donahue, Editor
- 2nd *Wake Forest Post 8466 Newsletter* (Post 8466, North Carolina)
Dennis Mecum, Editor
- 3rd *Veteran Views* (Post 1578, Illinois)
Bob Reichert, Editor



Community Event Brings New Members to Ohio Post

WHEN TIM ZVONCHECK BECAME commander of Post 3345 in Strongsville, Ohio, he had two goals in mind—membership and community awareness. He made great strides in both of those efforts with last September's Community Day.

"I felt that both of these would go hand-in-hand because creating more community awareness would lead to more membership," Zvoncheck said.



Post 3345 Sr. Vice Commander Tad Brown mans the membership table at the Post's Community Day event.

In just four weeks, Zvoncheck and his Post members planned a four-hour event Sept. 28 for Strongsville citizens, complete with food, games, live music and face-painting for the kids. After some coordinating with Strongsville Mayor Thomas Perciak, the city even sent a fire truck and SWAT vehicle for attendees to explore. The festivities closed with a three-volley salute and a

bugler blowing Taps.

The biggest draw of the event? Everything was free.

"I wanted no money exchanged at this event," Zvoncheck told the *Strongsville Post* on Sept. 30. "The goal is awareness."

And bringing the citizens out brought veterans out. Zvoncheck said more than 500 Strongsville residents attended Community Day, several of whom had DD-214s in hand and were interested in learning more about or joining VFW. About 20 new members were signed up that day.

But Post 3345's work didn't end there. Community Day enlightened Strongsville

citizens about what the Post does for them and veterans and also kicked off a six-week membership drive.

To entice Post members to recruit, Zvoncheck worked with a local Walmart store to purchase a discounted 50-inch flat-screen TV to raffle off to one lucky member. Rather than selling raffle tickets, though, entries were given for each new member of VFW or the Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries a current member signed up.

By the end of the drive, VFW counted 25 new members, with an additional 25-plus joining the auxiliaries.

Zvoncheck said Community Day and the membership drive "came

together far better than I hoped and expected." The Post also experienced some residual interest, with a higher-than-average number of vets looking into VFW in the following months.

After experiencing such success with the first-time events, Post 3345 plans to make Community Day and the member drive annual events to help continue to grow its membership.

E-mail: hshipman@vfw.org



Post 3345 Sr. Vice Commander Tad Brown, left, and Post Commander Tim Zvoncheck pose with a sign promoting Community Day.

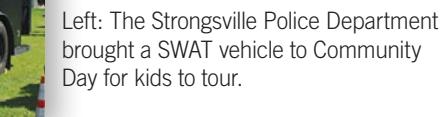


Community Day was held Sept. 28 on the grounds of Post 3345 in Strongsville, Ohio.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOMSQUAREDPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



Above: Ladies Auxiliary members served free food to Community Day attendees.



Left: The Strongsville Police Department brought a SWAT vehicle to Community Day for kids to tour.

2,003 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 45 WWII veterans who serve VFW Posts in official capacities. Checkpoint has recognized a total of 2,003 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
Harold B. Barber	Board of Directors	Post 7234, Ocean View, Del.
Melvin Bockelman	Surgeon	Post 5649, Concordia, Mo.
Kenneth Camell	Quartermaster	Post 807, Boulder, Colo.
Ben Campbell	Surgeon	Post 1518, Gaylord, Mich.
Ernie Cantley	Color Guard	Post 9871, North Ridgeville, Ohio
Ludwig Coiro	Trustee	Post 7827, Wethersfield, Conn.
Ira T. Cole	Officer of the Day	Post 2200, Chehalis, Wash.
Gilbert Coutlee	Trustee	Post 2670, Geneva, N.Y.
Edwin V. De Witt	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 2725, Frankenmuth, Mich.
Dominic Deludos	Commander	Post 6694, Dundalk, Md.
Harold P. Eckert	Chaplain	Post 2725, Frankenmuth, Mich.
Julio Fenoglio	Guard	Post 8141, Calumet City, Ill.
Carl Fetter	Judge Advocate	Post 3954, Batavia, Ohio

Name	Position	Post/Location
Charley Furrer	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 2034, Waco, Texas
Harold "Dean" Geddes	Trustee	Post 4760, Sequim, Wash.
Fenner Goldsborough	Chaplain	Post 1518, Gaylord, Mich.
Chol Gremillion	Trustee	Post 807, Boulder, Colo.
Frank Hart	Color Guard	Post 9871, North Ridgeville, Ohio
Robert Hileman	Officer of the Day	Post 6393, Yardley, Pa.
Joseph Kulmacz	Trustee	Post 7827, Wethersfield, Conn.
Robert Lewis	Trustee	Post 7070, Oakdale, Pa.
Alistair MacKellar	Trustee	Post 768, Windsor, Calif.
Donald McGlooin	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 2670, Geneva, N.Y.
Kenneth Middlemiss	Trustee	Post 7070, Oakdale, Pa.
Harry Morse	Chaplain	Post 768, Windsor, Calif.
Bert Peepers	Color Guard	Post 9871, North Ridgeville, Ohio
Fred Piper	Surgeon	Post 4760, Sequim, Wash.
Roland Poyns	Chaplain	Post 2200, Chehalis, Wash.
Dean L. Quigley	Trustee	Post 5760, Mercer Island, Wash.
Clarence Ralston	Officer of the Day	Post 1518, Gaylord, Mich.
William E. Randall	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 8158, Dryden, N.Y.
Willis J. Ross	Quartermaster	Post 6324, La Harpe, Kan.
Ben Roujansky	Quartermaster	Post 1615, Blauvelt, N.Y.
Harry Rowe	Surgeon	Post 2670, Geneva, N.Y.
John Rusack	Chaplain	Post 770, Catskill, N.Y.
Donald P. Schumacher	Service Officer	Post 5760, Mercer Island, Wash.
Carl "Fuzzy" Sims	Service Officer	Post 3954, Batavia, Ohio
Duane Slingsby	Commander	Post 8746, Green, Kan.
John "Jack" Thurman	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 807, Boulder, Colo.
Elvin Van Sickle	Trustee	Post 4139, Lapeer, Mich.
George Vance	Trustee	Post 8564, Waco, Texas
Vernie Vonallmen	Officer of the Day	Post 473, Cabool, Mo.
George Weidman	Judge Advocate	Post 6780, Dansville, N.Y.
Jay Wildfong	Surgeon	Post 9948, Sturtevant, Wis.
Nubs Willger	Adjutant	Post 9948, Sturtevant, Wis.

Florida Facility Provides Home and Recreation for VFW Members

THIRTY YEARS AGO, VFW'S DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA HAD AN IDEA that would give veterans a golden opportunity to retire to the Sunshine State. And from the Department's efforts, VFW Veterans Village was born.

Established in 1991, VFW Veterans Village at Fort McCoy, Fla., formerly known as the Florida VFW Retirement Home, is an independent living facility reserved for VFW and Auxiliary members. Residents have the freedom to come and go as they please and take in the campus' amenities with the added benefits of a 24-hour kitchen staff, housekeeping, and social and leisure activities.

This one-of-a-kind VFW community didn't happen overnight. The idea was initially proposed 30 years ago at VFW's 1984 national convention in Chicago, but delegates voted down the Department of Florida's resolution. The next year, though, delegates voted to approve the home.

The Department purchased 42 acres of land at Fort McCoy and raised \$1.4 million for construction costs before breaking ground for the home in 1989. Over the course of 23 years, the Department of Florida has continually updated its property.

The home originally had 35 rooms, but the first addition in 2006 added another 18. Also in 2006, an outdoor covered pavilion was added on the property.

When Alcides Lugo, current director of Veterans Village and a retired Army lieutenant colonel, took up his post in 2008, he wanted to do even more to make the home as functional as possible for vets.

"My main goal was to reshape the home, bring it to the modern era," Lugo said. "It needed a facelift."

That led to the latest renovation in 2011, when an 18-unit wing was added, along with a new laundry room and a multipurpose room. Lugo oversaw construction of a gazebo and a dock on the property around this time with the help of the Fraternal Order of Police and Lowe's.

The now 50,000-square-foot building contains 71 furnished rooms, with a choice of single or double occupancy. Couples can rent a room for \$1,615 per month; individuals can have their own room for \$1,415; or shared rooms are available for \$850 to \$900.



Veterans Village residents eat lunch in the home's dining room. The space was updated in 2010 as one of Director Alcides Lugo's first renovations after joining the facility.

Lugo says residents' rental costs cover administration fees, so every donation is used to run the facility. Veterans Village "operates without any federal, state or local funding" but rather solely on the support of the Department of Florida's membership, he says.

Veterans Village currently has 52 residents. Most are veterans of WWII and the Korean War, but some come from the Vietnam and even Afghanistan eras. The facility is more a community for veterans than a retirement home, so there is no age requirement. The youngest resident is 43, and the oldest, Herb Sutter, turned 99 this year.

With such a wide age range among its residents, Veterans Village offers a large variety of activities. Those living at the home can play bingo, stop by the weekly ice cream social, do arts and crafts or take part in regular exercise classes. There also is an annual picnic and golf tournament for residents and their families, as well as those who contribute to or support the home.

"The exercise classes are just wonderful for anybody who's living here," said Sutter, a WWII-era Navy vet who served in the Philippines from 1944-46 and moved into Veterans Village in 2011.

In addition to the fitness classes, which the residents take turns leading, Sutter said he also enjoys playing dominoes and volunteering for tasks around the home to keep himself active.

Lugo hopes to continue providing not just a home but an outstanding experience for residents, and he credits VFW and Ladies Auxiliary with helping Veterans Village become what it is today.

"I've been very fortunate with VFW National Headquarters and Ladies Auxiliary," Lugo said. "If no one else takes care of us, we have to take care of ourselves."

E-mail: hshipman@vfw.org

For more information on VFW Veterans Village, visit www.vfwveteransvillage.org, write VFW Veterans Village, 13005 N.E. 135th St., Fort McCoy, FL 32134, call (352) 236-0823 or e-mail lugoal@flvfw.org.

Growing VFW Veterans Village

1984: Department of Florida proposes retirement home at national convention; resolution is voted down

1985: VFW approves Florida's plan for retirement home

1989: Ground is broken at Fort McCoy, Fla., for Florida VFW Retirement Home on 42-acre site

1991: Home opens in October with three wings, 35 rooms

2006: Fourth wing with 18 new units unveiled in March; covered outdoor pavilion added

2008: Current Director Alcides Lugo joins Veterans Village

2011: Fifth wing with 18 units, as well as a laundry room and multipurpose room, opens in March; dock and gazebo constructed

2013: Name officially changes to VFW Veterans Village

2014: Ribbon-cutting ceremony held in March for RV park on property

VETERANS VILLAGE AMENITIES

- Individually controlled heat and air
- Telephone service (with free long distance)
- Cable TV
- Walk-in closets
- In-house laundry facilities
- 24-hour-a-day kitchen staff
- Screened patio and indoor atriums
- Book and video libraries
- Barber shop
- Fitness/recreation room
- Social and leisure activities



A pier on the Veterans Village property was constructed in 2011 with the help of the Fraternal Order of Police and Lowe's.



From left, Dennis Brennan, John Becker, Selina Fink, A.J. Mohr and Maxine Becker meet for an ice cream social, a weekly activity at Veterans Village.



From left, residents Herb Sutter, David Morse and Robert Wesemann play dominoes in May at Veterans Village.



Dining options are available to residents of Veterans Village 24 hours a day. Terry Norsworthy, a former Army cook, has worked in the facility's kitchen for nearly three years.

PHOTOS BY DARIN BACK



PHOTO BY DAVID SANDMAN, VFW DEPT. OF PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC AFFAIRS/COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

500 Recruited at Pennsylvania Farm Show

TWO POTENTIAL RECRUITS SPEAK WITH VFW Pennsylvania members John Kane, left, of Post 882 in Marysville, Robert Hayes of Post 3448 in Mount Pocono and William Mayer of Post 8896 in East Berlin about the benefits of VFW membership in January at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg. According to VFW Department of Pennsylvania Public Affairs/Communications Director David Sandman, VFW members collected some \$1,500 in Buddy Poppy donations and about 60 membership applications.

“We started participating in this event four years ago because it is an outstanding opportunity to project a positive VFW image to tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians of all ages,” Sandman said.

“Over the four-year period, we’ve signed up more than 500 members at this event, including many husband-wife couples at the same time. This event is all about putting the VFW name in front of a huge crowd and explaining how we can help them enjoy life and why it is important that they support our ability to do so.”

JULY | AUGUST 2014

CHECKPOINT

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Posts with the Most

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS
OR MORE AS OF JUNE 13, 2014

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members
1	27	Wiesbaden, Germany.....	2,863
2	1114	Evansville, IN.....	2,730
3	1503	Dale City, VA.....	2,611
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ.....	2,057
5	8862	Vicenza, Italy.....	1,824
6	392	Virginia Beach, VA.....	1,817
7	76	San Antonio, TX.....	1,805
8	9785	Eagle River, AK.....	1,675
9	2485	Angeles City, Philippines.....	1,658
10	63	Boise, ID.....	1,628

Rank	No.	Location	Members
11	4372	Odessa, TX.....	1,625
12	6506	Rosedale, MD.....	1,584
13	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany.....	1,545
14	4647	North Highlands, CA.....	1,536
15	628	Sioux Falls, SD.....	1,518
16	6873	Abilene, TX.....	1,484
17	9342	Ansbach, Germany.....	1,465
18	10047	North Las Vegas, NV.....	1,373
19	1146	St Clair Shores, MI.....	1,338
20	7234	Ocean View, DE.....	1,330
21	3944	Overland-St. Ann, MO.....	1,312
22	4809	Norfolk, VA.....	1,302
23	972	Terre Haute, IN.....	1,278
24	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL.....	1,264
25	2503	Omaha, NE.....	1,235
26	549	Tucson, AZ.....	1,216
27	8951	West York, PA.....	1,215
28	56	Leavenworth, KS.....	1,203
29	1152	Kokomo, IN.....	1,195
29	2111	Chula Vista, CA.....	1,195
29	7968	Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,195
32	1273	Rapid City, SD.....	1,192
33	10216	Songtan-Si, Korea.....	1,191
34	1326	Bismarck, ND.....	1,175
35	7686	Alamogordo, NM.....	1,161
36	1308	Alton, IL.....	1,155
37	2866	Saint Charles, MO.....	1,145
38	969	Tacoma, WA.....	1,144
39	1512	Lemon Grove, CA.....	1,133
40	4709	Conroe, TX.....	1,131
41	1599	Chambersburg, PA.....	1,104
42	7330	Oakville, CT.....	1,101
43	1170	Middletown, KY.....	1,088
44	788	Cedar Rapids, IA.....	1,065
45	10436	Kitzingen, Germany.....	1,052
46	2995	Redmond, WA.....	1,030
47	10420	Murrells Inlet, SC.....	1,027
48	7564	West Fargo, ND.....	1,012
48	5263	Fort Sill, OK.....	1,012
50	3282	Port Orange, FL.....	1,008
50	379	Yakima, WA.....	1,008

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“The explosion left Mark with a traumatic brain injury followed by years of rehabilitation and therapy. While the brutal nature of the more obvious injuries left him slumped unconscious and dying in Iraq, it was the forewarning trickle of blood coming from his ears that signaled one of the biggest challenges Mark would ever face...”

To hear the rest of Mark’s story, please join us at the 2014 National Convention in the Main Exhibit Hall or check the Schedule of Events for the dates and times of our featured panel discussions.

HeroesWithHearingLoss.org/Vets

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