

CHECKPOINT



Building Rapport Within the Community

Arizona Post Spearheads a ‘Heartwarming’ Donation to Disabled Iraq War Vet



PHOTO BY STARR BEARCAT, PALO VERDE VALLEY TIMES

AFTER BEING WOUNDED IN IRAQ in 2008, an Army vet from Arizona couldn't take his kids to his favorite fishing holes. But he can do that now with a brand new all-terrain wheelchair donated by members of a local VFW Post and others.

Members of Post 769 in Quartzsite, Ariz., along with members of the community, presented Army veteran Jesus “Jessie” De La Cruz with a brand new Action Trackchair in April. De La Cruz lost his left leg below the knee and suffered other wounds in 2008 near Bayji, Iraq, after his patrol's Humvee was hit by an improvised explosive device. The Post donated \$900 and worked closely with its community to raise the total \$12,000 needed to purchase the chair. They presented De La Cruz with the chair at the Post's dedication ceremony at its new location April 4.

Quartermaster Dennis Dole said it's important to give back to those who've served. “We've all been there, we've all seen what can happen and how it happens,” Dole said. “Getting wounded is indiscriminate. It is not his fault he was away at war protecting our freedoms. Anything we can do to help him is so important.”

Dole said they connected with De La Cruz thanks to the help of Bob Zimmerman, who is a member of the Men's Auxiliary of Post 3787 in San Diego. Zimmerman met De La Cruz at the Naval Medical Center San Diego, where he

receives treatment for his injuries. Members of Post 3787 donated a lift fitted for De La Cruz's vehicle that will allow him to load and unload his new chair.

The project brought the community together and created a great relationship, Dole said. “We've been trying to get involved in the community,” Dole said. “It's working now.” Quartzsite residents and members of the local group Quartzsite Improvement Association, had already raised \$2,000 and had a veteran project in mind when they connected with the Post. Through private donations, they raised more than \$9,000 and allocated donations for parts of the chair. Some community members paid for the motor, while others sponsored the battery and so on, until the chair was completely financed. The strong bond with the community also has helped increase membership, Dole said.

The donation went so well, Dole said the Post plans to start on another project soon. “That was such a heart-filling event, the smile on his face,” Dole said. “He said he can now take his kids fishing to spots that he went to when he was growing up. It's just heartwarming.”

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS DOLE



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS DOLE

Top left: Post 769 Commander Bob Braa shakes hands with Jesse De La Cruz in an April ceremony at the Arizona Post. Post Quartermaster Dennis Dole (background) helped organize the event, at which De La Cruz received an all-terrain wheelchair.

Top right: Jesse De La Cruz, wife, Sunshine, son, Jesse Jr., and daughter, Aurora, take pause with members of the Quartzsite Improvement Association April 4 at a ceremony at VFW Post 769 in Quartzsite, Ariz. Members of Post 769 worked with the association and members of the community to raise the \$12,000 needed for the chair.

Bottom right: Jesse De La Cruz smiles after receiving a brand new Action Trackchair from members of Post 769 and the community in Quartzsite, Ariz. De La Cruz lost his left leg below the knee and suffered other injuries in 2008 in Iraq, after his patrol's Humvee was hit by an explosive device.

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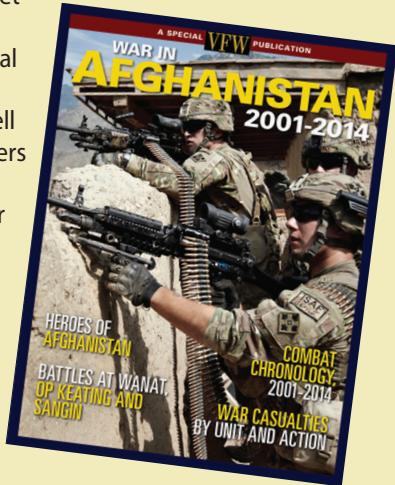


EXTRA! EXTRA!

FREE TRIBUTE TO AFGHANISTAN VETERANS

VFW magazine is offering a special commemorative 68-page booklet free for the asking for actual Afghanistan veterans, as well as VFW members who have a family member who served there.

To place an order, simply e-mail your name, physical mailing address, dates of service in Afghanistan and unit information to: magazine@vfw.org.



YOUTH CONTEST THEMES ANNOUNCED

The 2015-16 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen themes are, respectively: "My Vision for America" and "What Freedom Means to Me."

Voice of Democracy and Patriot's chairmen can access the entry forms by going to www.vfw.org. Then click on "login" to get to "My VFW." Under the "General Members Tools and Resources," click on "VFW Training and Support." From there, go to the "Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities" area. Here you will find all program information.

VFW STORE OFFERS NEW PRODUCTS

Lots of new items are now available at the VFW Store, including a new bullet bottle opener, polo-style shirts and dozens of new ball caps. To check out the new selection go to www.vfwstore.org and click on "Look What's New."



HONOR VETERANS WITH A MEMORIAL GIFT

One way to honor your fellow veterans is by supporting future generations of veterans with a memorial gift to VFW in your will. Learn more about estate planning by requesting our free Personal Estate Planning Kit. Contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at (816) 968-1119, e-mail plannedgiving@vfw.org or visit www.vfw.org/plannedgiving for more information.

SHOP WISELY FOR DENTAL INSURANCE

Dental insurance is one of the most affordable investments you can make in your overall health. Most plans completely cover preventive exams, cleanings and some x-rays and offer discounted rates for additional services.

When shopping for a dental plan, make sure your dentist accepts the insurance you have in mind. With the right plan for your budget, you can stay healthy and avoid costly dental problems in the future.

Please contact the VFW Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606, option 1 for additional information.

Leadership Perspectives

John Hamilton, Adjutant General

Jobs for Young Vets is a VFW Priority

On May 1 this year we announced the establishment of a new section within our Programs Department. The new Student Veteran Outreach, Employment & Transition Services will strive to position VFW as the conduit directly connecting young vets with vet-friendly employers.

The young men and women we are looking to help need it. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2014 male veterans in the 25-34 age bracket logged an unemployment rate of 7.5% compared to the jobless rate of 6.3% for their non-veteran peers.

For women vets, the numbers were even worse. Those in the 25-34 age bracket had a jobless rate of 8.5% compared to 5.9% for non-veteran women. Female vets in the 35-44 age group had an unemployment rate of 9%, compared to the rate of 4.8% for their nonveteran counterparts.

Over the next year, VFW will host at least two virtual career fairs featuring several top veteran-friendly employers. We conducted one in February this year with just such a company.



Cerner, which is based in Kansas City and offers information technology solutions for health care providers at more than 14,000 facilities around the nation, is perhaps the country's leader in this fast-growing field.

We also are working with national companies such as Sprint Corporation, a global provider of wireless and Internet services; Hallmark, the country's leading greeting card supplier; Clarcor, Inc., a Franklin, Tenn.-based manufacturer of filtration devices; Black & Veatch, a global leader in engineering and construction services; and Kansas City Power & Light, which provides electrical utility service for residents across Kansas and Missouri.

As VFW positions itself as the leading veterans service organization in helping veterans find employment, this new section has the potential to expand exponentially. Young vets transitioning into the civilian world must have jobs, and we are determined to help them.

Bob Greene, Quartermaster General

Understanding VFW Post Insurance

There are VFW Posts throughout the country of every shape and size, but the one thing they all have in common is their need for insurance to manage the risks associated with Post operations. Here is an overview of the various types of coverage Posts may need:

- **Property Insurance** to protect against loss or damage to the Post home, its contents and other Post-owned property.
- **General Liability Insurance** for the Post and its members to cover bodily injury or property damage and defense costs related to a liability claim.
- **Liquor Liability Insurance** for any Post that sells alcohol and may end up legally obligated to pay damages as a result.
- **Workers' Compensation Insurance** to cover medical expenses and lost wages in the event of on-the-job injuries to employees and/or volunteers.
- **Business Auto Liability Insurance** for any automobiles the Post owns.

- **Employee Dishonesty Insurance** to cover the theft of money or other property by employees or volunteers.
- **Special Events Coverage** to protect the Post when it hosts or sponsors functions such as a parade, bingo, picnic, reception or fundraiser.
- **Umbrella Liability Insurance** in excess of your Post's primary liability policy to cover larger claims.



- **Surety Bonds**, also known as Tax & Gambling Bonds, to guarantee your required obligations to other parties.

VFW's Post Insurance Program offers all of these types of coverage, and they can put together a customized insurance package for your Post to address the risks that apply to your situation. To receive a quote through the VFW Post Insurance Program or for additional information on your existing coverage, please call 1-800-829-8390.

CHECKPOINT

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Former Corpsman Distributes Medical Supplies at Wisconsin Post

GARY CHRISTIAN'S GOT A family history of military service, not unlike so many veterans. He describes his father's service as a WWII Army commando with distinction, explaining how his father earned seven Bronze Stars for valor and four Silver Stars for his time in North Africa and Italy.

"I grew up around military installations, so it was natural for me to join," Christian said. He and his brother enlisted the same day in 1966, both in the Navy. Christian was a corpsman who trained at Camp Lejeune, where he learned "invaluable skills" in minor surgery.

"At that time, if you were training with the Marines you were headed for Vietnam," Christian said. But it was his brother who got called up first.

"I thought, 'That's not fair!'" Christian said. "So I volunteered." In March 1969, Christian received his orders to go to Vietnam with the 1st Marine Air Wing, serving in the Quang Tri province with a medevac team.

It wasn't until many years later that Christian finally got involved with VFW, and he has his grandson, Croix, to thank. Christian served as Croix's middle school Veterans Day project topic. He shared photos and stories about his military service with students. After the presentation, Dave Green, the commander of Post 10818 in New Richmond, Wis., approached Christian and asked if he had thought about joining VFW.

"At the time, the image I had of VFW in my mind was a bar where everyone told war stories, and that didn't appeal to me," Christian said. "Later I found out the Post didn't even have a bar."

Just three years ago, Christian was appointed the Post's service officer. Though he doesn't directly help veterans file claims, Christian does work hand-in-hand with the county service officer to make sure area veterans are getting their claims filed fully and correctly.

"They are the experts, so I direct anyone who has a question about claims and benefits to them," Christian said. "They work very hard for veterans."

That's not to discount the importance of directing veterans to the best source. Christian knows how important his role is in that process. But in addition, he focuses his efforts on com-

munity assistance, particularly by facilitating a program through the Post that loans medical supplies to veterans and their family members.

The Post is a donation point for a number of medical supplies, such as wheelchairs, electric scooters and hospital beds.

"There was a need out there," Christian said. "You name it, we had it. The community was really grateful that we made these things available to them."

Christian says veterans and their family members borrow these items "on the honor system" and return them when they are finished. He's now expanding the project, hoping to solicit more supply donations from the community to add to those available through the Post.

But that isn't the only way Christian gives back to his veteran peers as Post service officer. Christian's passion project is distributing grants to veterans from the Post's designated hardship fund, which totals some \$8,000 to help struggling veterans with bills and other emergencies.

"It's rewarding vetting vets in financial difficulty, especially the younger guys coming home," Christian said. "Some haven't had time to learn about finances yet, or planned for unexpected situations."

In addition to acting as Post service officer, Christian is an active member of the Post's honor guard.

"They call it an honor guard because we are delivering an honor," Christian said, "but I'm honored to serve on it. It's an honor for me. It's a very humbling experience."

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PHOTO COURTESY OF GARY CHRISTIAN



Post 10818 Service Officer Gary Christian serves the New Richmond, Wis., community by facilitating a medical supply donation program. The Vietnam vet also is an active member of the Post's honor guard.

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 >>

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

Experimental Therapy Improves Vet's Family Life

VFW OF OHIO CHARITIES is working hard to fill the void in the lives of veterans and their families. For former Army Sgt. Jeremy Lanham, that void was treatment.

After two tours in Iraq—2003 with the 447th MP Company and 2005 with the 983rd Engineer Battalion—Lanham suffered from TBI. He had been exposed to numerous explosions, receiving multiple concussions.

As a result, his severe migraines prevented him from living a productive, healthy life. He couldn't sleep for extended periods of time. He also suffered from PTSD. At the VA, he was given up to eight medications at a time, including narcotics.

With a wife and three children, it's not how he wanted to be living.

Lanham heard about hyperbaric oxygen therapy offered at a location in Wauseon, Ohio, called Sara's Garden. HBOT, as it's known, is the administration of 100% oxygen in the presence of pressure. This allows the body to heal from conditions in which low oxygen in the tissues inhibits or complicates the healing process.

However, this treatment was not offered by VA nor was it covered by insurance. VFW of Ohio Charities heard about Lanham's hopes for recovery and agreed to pay \$4,400 for the experimental treat-

ment. For eight weeks, Lanham had two one-hour treatments every day.

"I am sleeping far better than I have in years," Lanham said. "I get four or five hours of concentrated sleep most nights. I feel better than I have in a long time."

Lanham hopes that other veterans will learn about HBOT because at the minimum, he says, it offers hope.

According to VFW of Ohio Charities Director Bill Seagraves, helping Lanham has opened the door for other vets.

"It might be an option for other veterans who are suffering similar symptoms," said Seagraves, adding that he is looking into partnering with Sara's Garden to pay for treatment for many more veterans. (At press time, VFW of Ohio Charities was paying for a Marine with TBI to undergo HBOT.)

Lanham said that thanks to his treatment from Sara's Garden, he is able to be a better dad to his seven-year-old twins—Paxton and Isabella—and three-year-old daughter Lydia Grace.

"I'm not consumed with headaches, pain and discomfort, and it allows me to spend more valuable time with them," he said. "I have totally immersed myself in family life, and it's been the best therapy available."

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Top: Iraq vet Jeremy Lanham outside the hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) chamber which has decreased his severe headaches.

Middle: Lanham's children—twins Paxton and Isabella and three-year-old Lydia Grace—have helped Lanham recover. Inside the HBOT chamber where Lanham received treatment thanks to the generosity of VFW of Ohio Charities.



Right: Lanham in training before his two tours in Iraq.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEREMY LANHAM AND SARA'S GARDEN



PHOTO COURTESY OF DOD INSET, COURTESY OF MICHAEL REAGAN

Ohio VFW Saves Surviving Spouse's Home

SAMANTHA COOK OF MIDDLETOWN, OHIO, ALSO WAS ON THE RECEIVING END OF VFW of Ohio Charities' generosity.

Her husband, Spc. Michael B. Cook, Jr., was killed in Iraq on June 6, 2011, while serving with 1st Bn., 7th Field Artillery Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. Afterward, Cook moved her two children from Ft. Riley, Kan., back to Ohio. For the most part, she was financially sound. But when she encountered an "unanticipated circumstance," she was in jeopardy of losing her home.

Carolyn Coley, wife of Ohio state Sen. Bill Coley, became aware of Cook's hardship and contacted VFW of Ohio Charities.

As a result, the group donated more than \$4,600 to Cook's family so that she could catch up on her mortgage payments.

"Because of VFW, I have been able to get back on track financially," she said. "My mortgage is due on the first of each month, and I have a long-term financial plan in place."

Seagraves said the vets were "honored" to help keep her and her two children in their home.

"This is the type of charity work we do every day," Seagraves said. "We want all veterans and their family members, especially widows and children, to know that we are ready and willing to help during a time of crisis."

In April, a portion of Tylersville Road in both Butler and Warren Counties in Ohio was named Spc. Michael B. Cook, Jr. Memorial Highway. Cook became acquainted with Coley while planning the dedication ceremony.

"I just needed a little help to get through an unanticipated circumstance, and VFW was there for me," Cook said. "I want to thank Mrs. Coley and VFW for working together to make this happen."

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Hailee Cook, daughter of Spc. Michael B. Cook, Jr., reflects at a memorial service in June 2012 at Ft. Riley, Kan., in honor of her dad who was killed in Iraq on June 6, 2011. Cook's wife, Samantha, received much-needed assistance from VFW of Ohio Charities.

Inset: Artist Michael Reagan captured Spc. Cook in this portrait.

California Post and City Officials Come Together to Build 'Veterans Center'

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY A CITY COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES something. But that's just what happened when city officials in Manteca, Calif., were presented with the opportunity to help members of Post 6311 find a permanent home.

Post Commander Carlon Perry, a former Manteca mayor, and current Mayor Willie Weatherford worked with city officials to ink a deal that would give the Post its first and only brick and mortar structure since it was chartered in 1946. The Post previously met in a community center and an American Legion hall. The city donated the land as well as \$700,000 to fund the project that, when finished, will include a 3,700 square foot complex for the VFW Post, located in California's Central Valley.

For Perry, a Vietnam veteran, naming it the 'Manteca VFW Veterans Center' is not just about the Post having a home – it's about helping every veteran in the community. He's also looking at it as an opportunity to grow VFW membership, saying many veterans have already reached out since the project was announced.

"What it really means is we can keep growing," Perry said. "More and more veterans are calling and saying 'We want to be a part of this new era.' We felt in order for our Post to survive, to grow, we needed a permanent home."

In addition to Post meetings and events, he sees an opportunity to help all veterans in the community, adding that they'll have a service officer on duty. The Post



Manteca, Calif., Mayor Willie Weatherford and Post 6311 Commander Carlon Perry shake hands on the site of the Post's first brick and mortar home since it was chartered in 1946. The city donated the land and \$700,000 to fund the project, which includes a 3,700 square-foot complex completed this summer. PHOTO COURTESY OF CARLON PERRY

also is working on partnering with VA to offer health services and help to access benefits.

To complete the project, the Post collected \$90,000 through fundraising efforts as well as donations from the community. One anonymous member gave a generous \$10,000, Perry said. Local residents and merchants also contributed. "The community has really kicked into gear to help its veterans," he said. "It feels really good that our community is so patriotic."

Perry said the whole project gives him a wonderful feeling. "I can't give enough credit to Mayor Weatherford and the City of Manteca and its residents," he said. "It's like we've come home."

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Grants Available to Help Fund Improvements

Illinois Post Spruces Itself Up with \$4,700 Grant

POST 4551 LITERALLY HAS A FRESH COAT OF PAINT thanks to a grant from one home improvement store. The Post, located in Antioch, Ill., received a \$4,700 grant from Home Depot to make improvements, and members say they couldn't be happier.

The economic downturn in the last seven years has plagued Post 4551, like it has so many other Posts, said Quartermaster Larry McCarty. That's when the Home Depot Foundation "came to the rescue," he said, and helped fund improvements to transform the Post located in northern Illinois, northwest of Chicago.

The 6,000-square-foot main hall was "drab and dark," said Commander William Oerly. With the grant and a generous donation from Behr Paint, there's a fresh coat of white on the walls. "It sure makes the room look bigger and a lot lighter," he said. In addition, the grant provided funds to install new flooring in their back room, where the carpet was old and worn. They also installed new doors on the canteen and repaired the storage garage door, he said.

But there was another challenge, even with the generous donations, McCarty said. Their older members were unable to physically do the improvements, and their younger members were unable to because of their hectic schedules. "A conundrum for sure," he said. "Here comes Home Depot to the rescue, they provided 19 volunteers to help make the changes," he said.

Now the Post is nice and clean, Oerly said, adding it's a great improvement. He said everyone who's come inside loves the improvements and comments on how much it's changed, and he encourages all Posts to apply for the grant. "What is so great is everybody in VFW can go and apply for this grant from Home Depot," he said. "That's what they all need to do."

They're all very grateful, McCarty said. "With the help of Post members, community volunteers, Home Depot volunteers, and the grace of God, we got it done," he said.

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Top: In addition to the \$4,700 Home Depot granted the Post for improvements, 19 Home Depot volunteers came to help with the renovations. Members of the Post say everyone loves the improvements.

Bottom: Members of Post 4551 in Antioch, Ill., pull up carpet during a Post remodel that included new flooring, fresh paint on the walls and more. The Post received a \$4,700 grant from Home Depot to make the improvements.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LARRY MCCARTY

Home Depot Grants Available

The 2015 Home Depot Foundation Community Impact Grant is now available. Eligible VFW Posts may receive up to \$5,000 to fix up their buildings.

To begin the process, go to the following Internet link: <http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-grant>.

To help with the application process, the VFW Foundation has prepared a step-by-step, how-to-apply guide. To receive it, send an e-mail to: foundation@vfw.org. In the subject line, type in: "Home Depot Guide Request."

If your Post receives funding, it will come in the form of Home Depot gift cards that can be used to buy materials at your local Home Depot store. You will need to recruit Post members or other community volunteers to do the work. The project must be completed within six months. You also will be required to fill out a final project report.

If you have questions or concerns, contact Richard Freiburghouse, VFW Foundation manager, at (816) 968-1124 or rfreiburghouse@vfw.org.

A Few Comments From the Judges

"Fewer fonts would improve the consistency for a cleaner feel."

"Use full pages to avoid multiple jumps."

"Love the original content with local news. Consider moving that to the cover."

"Make sure you're not enlarging photos too far—that's why some are blurry."

"Nice 'Special Interest Items' column. That grabbed my attention."

"Remember who your audience is."

"Avoid using clip art on every page."

"I like that you have a 'What's Inside' column and number your newsletter pages."

"Try using columns to make reading text easier."

"Great use of color photos, but be sure to use full captions."

"Watch for spelling!"

"Put something fun on the cover for your readers—consider local VFW news."

VFW Honors 16 Publications

Department of Pennsylvania Earns Multiple Awards in 2015 VFW National Publications Contest

THANKS TO ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2015 VFW NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS CONTEST. This year, VFW's publications staff significantly restructured the contest, adding "Best Magazine" and "Best Feature Article" categories. Categories for Best Post and District publications were combined, and submissions were organized based on frequency of publication, rather than circulation. Covering the 2014 calendar year, the contest garnered 38 entries.

Entries came in from 20 Posts/Districts and 11 Departments. There was one submission for the "Best Magazine" category, and six submissions for "Best Feature Article." Of the 38 entries, 16 placed.

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 2016, 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

2015 VFW National Publications Contest Winners

Magazine

1st *Texas VFW News*, Roy Grona, Editor



Best Feature Article

1st "PA Commander Delivers VFW Support to PA Troops in Iraq/Kuwait" by David Sandman, Department of Pennsylvania

2nd "Four New Vans for Nebraska Veteran's Home" by Department of Nebraska

3rd "Honoring Veterans Who Didn't Come Home" by Jim Daly, *The Daily World*, Department of Washington



Department Publications Large Frequency

(published four or more times per year)

1st *Wisconsin VFW News*
Marla J. Morgan, Editor

2nd *Illinois VFW News*
Barbara Wilson, Editor

3rd *Pennsylvania VFW News*
David A. Sandman, Editor



District/Post Publications Large Frequency

(published four or more times per year)

1st *VFW Post 7319 Newsletter*
(Post 7319, South Dakota)
Jerry Seiner, Editor

2nd *Cannon News*
(Post 7589, Virginia)
Rick Raskin, Editor

3rd *Post 9639 Newsletter*
(Post 9639, Pennsylvania)
Michael Stephens, Editor



Small Frequency

(published 1-3 times per year)

1st *VFW Arizona News*
Ski Kuczynski, Editor

2nd *Virginia Veteran*
Rick Raskin, Editor

3rd *Idaho Veterans and Auxiliary News*
Susan Thompson, Editor



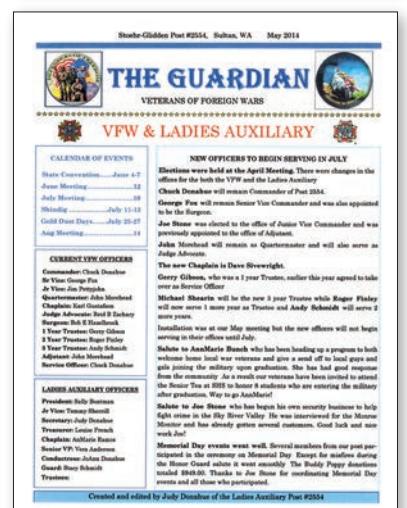
Small Frequency

(published 1-3 times per year)

1st *The Guardian*
(Post 2554, Washington)
Judy Donahue, Editor

2nd *VFW Post 216 Newsletter*
(Post 216, Pennsylvania)
Heather Berger, Editor

3rd *Fort Sisseton VFW 3342*
(Post 3342, South Dakota)
Tammy Chase, Editor



VFW's Military Services Gets a New Name

EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, VFW'S NATIONAL MILITARY SERVICES is now known as Veterans & Military Support (VMS). According to Kevin Jones, director of VFW programs, it's a change in name only. "We felt this name more accurately depicts what we do," Jones said. "It's especially important when we are dealing with people outside of the organization."

Here is a brief look at each of the areas under Veterans & Military Support:

Unmet Needs provides grants up to \$5,000 to active-duty or recently discharged service members (in the past six years) and their immediate families to assist with basic life needs. In 2014-15, *Unmet Needs* awarded 100 families with some \$230,000 in grants.

Operation Uplink sponsors Free Call Days for deployed troops and also distributes virtual PINs (personal identification numbers) for hospitalized vets or those in nursing homes. As the number of overseas troops has been greatly reduced, the program saw a drop in Free Call Day minutes. From July 2014-April 2015, there were 588,540 minutes used, compared to 2,788,324 in 2013-14. Since the Free Call Days began in 2006, more than 90 million minutes of talk time have been awarded.

Military Assistance Program (MAP) offers grants to Posts and Departments sponsoring troop support events. In 2014-15, VFW hosted nearly 100,000 service members and their families at more than 150 morale-boosting events.

Help A Hero Scholarship is funded through Sport Clips and administered by VFW. It has awarded more than 292 scholarships totaling \$1,150,000 since its inception in January 2014. Vets can apply for a scholarship each semester, even if they have previously been awarded one.

According to Linda Ferguson, manager of VFW special programs and projects, VMS will continue Free Call Days as long as there are overseas troops.

"Even though the number of deployed is small, there is still a need for Free Call Days," she said. "Every deployed service man or woman deserves that opportunity to call their loved ones back home."

For more information about any of these four areas and what you can do to help promote them at your Post, contact Ferguson at lferguson@vfw.org.

E-mail: jblankenship@vfw.org

2,175 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 on the right are 25 WWII veterans who serve VFW Posts in official capacities. *Checkpoint* has recognized a total of 2,175 such Post leaders since the January/February 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
Kenneth G. Abbott	Chaplain	Post 1027, Hudson, Mass.
Nicholas Angelicola	Surgeon	Post 9460, Stratford, Conn.
John Balch	Judge Advocate	Post 6471, Manchester, Vt.
Anthony Bolcavage	Surgeon	Post 7963, Eynon, Pa.
Grant Briggs	Chaplain	Post 12106, Branford, Conn.
Paul Cassel	Surgeon	Post 882, Marysville, Pa.
Bill Clarke	Quartermaster	Post 12022, Marion, Ky.
Antoinette Coleman	Trustee	Post 12106, Branford, Conn.
Sam DePadova	Quartermaster	Post 281, Fair Lawn, N.J.
Chuck Evans	Trustee	Post 5689, Burney, Calif.
Nicholas Felice	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 281, Fair Lawn, N.J.
Chet Gardeski	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 1465, Wauwatosa, Wis.
Don Gromko	Quartermaster	Post 5335, Boynton Beach, Fla.
Clinton Hohnstein	Trustee	Post 890, Cozad, Neb.
Meredith Keiser	Trustee	Post 8206, Turbotville, Pa.
Larry Kloess	Judge Advocate	Post 96, Montgomery, Ala.
Joseph Murry	Honor Guard	Post 5852, Lutcher, La.
Tony Nunez	Adjutant	Post 1709, Flagstaff, Ariz.
Ernest O. Paolucci	Commander	Post 605, Paris, France
Richard M. Powell	Advocate	Post 4535, Fairfield, Ill.
James A. Smith	Chaplain	Post 3770, Mountain Grove, Mo.
Richard Vasquez	Quartermaster	Post 605, Paris, France
Harry Warren	Chaplain	Post 9399, Apache Junction, Ariz.
Everett J. Weaver	Trustee	Post 4535, Fairfield, Ill.
Luke Williams	Surgeon	Post 4129, Saxton, Pa.

Promoting VFW's Priority Goals

A group of VFW members from Minnesota meet with Rep. Rick Nolan (D-Minn.) in Nolan's office in March during VFW's Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Minnesota's Department Legislative Chairman Tom McLaughlin (left of Nolan) says the VFW members discussed the adverse effects of sequestration and reducing wait times for VA patients with the congressman.

Leading the delegation was Department Commander Gary Anderson (standing), along with Department Junior Vice Commander Joe Mauricio (with white beard), Department Surgeon Jim Tuorila (in foreground) and National Council of Administration member Don Nix.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GOPHER OVERSEA'R



JULY | AUGUST 2015

CHECKPOINT

VFW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS • PUBLICATIONS
406 WEST 34TH STREET, KANSAS CITY, MO 64111

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Posts with the Most

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS
OR MORE AS OF JUNE 9, 2015

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members
1	27	Wiesbaden, Germany.....	2,793
2	1503	Dale City, VA	2,656
3	1114	Evansville, IN.....	2,261
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ.....	2,076
5	392	Virginia Beach, VA.....	1,882
6	8862	Vicenza, Italy.....	1,802
7	9785	Eagle River, AK.....	1,768
8	2485	Angeles City, Philippines.....	1,671
9	76	San Antonio, TX.....	1,648
10	4372	Odessa, TX	1,643

Rank	No.	Location	Members
11	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany.....	1,642
12	63	Boise, ID	1,563
13	6873	Abilene, TX	1,522
14	4647	North Highlands, CA.....	1,463
15	3944	Overland-St. Ann, MO.....	1,448
16	9342	Ansbach, Germany.....	1,444
17	6506	Rosedale, MD.....	1,435
18	10047	North Las Vegas, NV.....	1,406
19	628	Sioux Falls, SD.....	1,362
20	7234	Ocean View, DE.....	1,355
21	7968	Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,319
22	4709	Conroe, TX.....	1,309
23	1146	St Clair Shores, MI.....	1,306
24	4809	Norfolk, VA.....	1,288
25	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL.....	1,276
26	1152	Kokomo, IN.....	1,270
27	972	Terre Haute, IN.....	1,261
28	549	Tucson, AZ	1,234
29	2391	Saint Augustine, FL.....	1,233
30	8951	West York, PA	1,219
31	2503	Omaha, NE.....	1,197
32	1326	Bismarck, ND.....	1,182
33	2111	Chula Vista, CA.....	1,179
34	2866	Saint Charles, MO.....	1,165
35	7686	Alamogordo, NM.....	1,145
36	10216	Songtan-Si, Korea.....	1,139
37	2995	Redmond, WA	1,137
38	10810	Stuttgart, Germany.....	1,129
39	1273	Rapid City, SD	1,126
40	969	Tacoma, WA	1,115
41	56	Leavenworth, KS.....	1,090
42	1512	Lemon Grove, CA.....	1,074
43	1170	Middletown, KY.....	1,073
44	7564	West Fargo, ND.....	1,067
45	9399	Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,056
46	8696	Palm Coast, FL.....	1,052
47	8541	San Antonio, TX.....	1,045
48	10436	Kitzingen, Germany	1,038
49	1599	Chambersburg, PA	1,035
50	10420	Murrells Inlet, SC.....	1,033
51	3282	Port Orange, FL.....	1,032
52	788	Cedar Rapids, IA	1,019
53	401	Albuquerque, NM.....	1,016
54	10281	Radcliff, KY	1,015
55	7392	Oak Harbor, WA	1,004

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This is an Advertisement

HEROES WITH HEARING LOSS

"It probably took two years to actually identify that I had a hearing loss. I was having multiple surgeries and my pain level was so high... I wasn't worried if people could hear me or if I could hear them..."

MSG Bobby Ehrig, USA, Ret.
Iraq Veteran

To hear the rest of Bobby's story, please join us at the 2015 National Convention at one of our featured panel discussions July 21st at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm.

HeroesWithHearingLoss.org/Vets

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