

CHECKPOINT



WHAT'S INSIDE

Extra! Extra!

- 2** Publications contest deadline April 4.
• Free VFW Store catalogs available.
• Register now for VFW's 115th National Convention in St. Louis.

Service Officer Profiled

- 3** A 1991 Persian Gulf War vet in Iowa uses an aggressive outreach program to serve the 900 vets in his county.

Warm Shelter in the Snow

- 4** Post 1241 in Staunton, Ill., worked with its city last January to provide shelter and food for residents when a snowstorm hit.

Regaining Community Relevancy

- 5** By extending a thoughtful gesture toward elderly vets in its community, an Illinois Post re-energizes itself.

Banners Recognize Hometown Troops

- 6** Post 768 in Windsor, Calif., persuades its city council to decorate the town with banners featuring the faces of active-duty residents.

WWII Vets Active at Posts

- 6** This list recognizes those still serving VFW and their communities at the grassroots level.

VFW Scores Victory for Retirees

- 8** VFW's hard work on Capitol Hill paid off in February when it helped secure a repeal of a cap to military retirees' pensions.

VFW Administers Program

New Scholarship Will 'Fill the Gaps' of GI Bill

BEFORE SETH ATCHISON left the Navy, he knew he was going to spend his civilian life in the medical field.

"With [my medical first responder] training, I fell in love with the drills," Atchison said. "I got to know a lot of corpsmen and mentors who pursued pre-med, so that got me interested in med school."

The native Kansan chose the University of Kansas (KU) School of Medicine after completing his undergraduate degree at the University of Kansas. Paying for medical school after he had already utilized his GI Bill benefits, however, proved stressful for Atchison.

"With med school, it's much more expensive, and it's all on loans, so it's a lot of debt," he said. "The Help A Hero scholarship helped out a lot there."

This is the first year that VFW and Sportclips have partnered up to finance the Help A Hero scholarship for veterans like Atchison—those who have used up the GI Bill benefits but wish to further their education without accruing extensive debt. Some 43 veterans received a one-time scholarship for up to \$5,000 for the spring 2014 semester. SportClips and VFW have been working together since 2007.

In January, VFW was presented with a \$500,000 check from Sportclips at the KU Medical Center to finance the scholarship fund. VFW's National Military Services will help administer the program.

"VFW is here to support our veterans

as they transition to civilian life, and we know education is a crucial element to ensuring they succeed," said Bill Thien, VFW commander-in-chief. "The GI Bill is fantastic, but it has its limits, and this scholarship will help fill the gaps for so many veterans."

Atchison served in the Navy from 2005-09 as a medical first responder aboard the destroyer *USS John Paul Jones*. He participated with the U.S. 7th Fleet in 2007-08 as part of the naval exercise *Valiant Shield* in the Pacific Ocean. He deployed aboard the *John Paul Jones* as part of 5th Fleet to the Persian Gulf in 2009, where he earned his VFW eligibility.

"Eventually I knew, even though I was succeeding in my career in the Navy, I had to move on to do what excited and challenged me," he said. "The Navy was one of the most rewarding and defining stages of my life."

Atchison said he heard about the scholarship through KU's veterans office and took advantage of it as he took the next steps to become a doctor. While Atchison is not sure what type of medicine he will eventually practice, he does find joy in the study and plans on graduating in 2017.

"Our scholarship recipients' post-military career aspirations may vary, but the drive to make our country proud and make a contribution—this time, as



Navy veteran Seth Atchison received one of 43 Help A Hero scholarships in January 2014. He is currently attending medical school at the University of Kansas School of Medicine.

PHOTO CREDIT KELLY GIBSON, CHECKPOINT

civilians—is something they all have in common," said Gordon Logan, founder and CEO of SportClips. "It's an honor for SportClips to join VFW in this effort to support our nation's heroes."

The deadline for fall semester scholarship applications is April 30. Potential applicants can download a FAQ or apply online by visiting www.vfw.org/scholarship, or they may e-mail questions to HelpAHero@vfw.org.

E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org
Story continues on page 5



VFW FILE PHOTO

SportClips CEO Gordon Logan (third from left) presents VFW Quartermaster Bob Greene (center) with a \$500,000 check at the KU medical center in January 2014. The donation funds the Help A Hero scholarship, available to veterans who have exhausted their GI Bill benefits but still need financial aid for school.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

PUBLICATIONS CONTEST DEADLINE IS APRIL 4

The deadline for entries in the 2014 VFW National Publications Contest is April 4. One copy of each winning Post, District and Department publication must be mailed by Department adjutants, quartermasters or Department editors. Entries received from anyone else will be immediately disqualified. If you require further information before then, please call (816) 756-3390 ext. 167, or e-mail kgibson@vfw.org.

GET A FREE VFW STORE CATALOG

If you would like to take a look at all the VFW Store has to offer, you can receive a FREE catalog. To request a copy, call 1-800-821-2606, send a request by mail to VFW Store, 406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, Mo., 64111 or contact the store through the website at www.vfwstore.org.

REGISTER NOW FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION

It's time to register for the 115th VFW National Convention, July 19-23, in St. Louis.



VFW National Headquarters mailed convention housing and registration forms in February with your Post election mailings. VFW's bylaws state that each Post must register at least one delegate for the convention.

To make housing reservations, call 1-888-850-7720, fax (801) 355-0250; international call (801) 505-5267 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. MST Monday through Friday, mail information to Orchid Event Solutions, 175 S. West Temple, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101, or e-mail help@orchideventsolutions.com. The housing cut-off is June 13, 2014. However, do not wait until the last minute to make your reservations as there is no guarantee rooms will be available by that time.

Additional information is located at www.vfw.org. The website also has general convention information including the registration form, links to other convention-related material and a tentative schedule.

All advance registrations should be mailed to VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th St., Kansas City, Mo., 64111, ATTN: Convention Registration or you may register online by visiting www.vfw.org.

PRESS BUTTON FOR MEDICAL HELP

Personal emergency alert devices can help older adults remain independent and in their own homes. Just knowing that you have a system in place that can alert emergency services, neighbors and family members, can provide peace of mind to seniors living alone, as well as their concerned loved ones.

With a medical alert system, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week with just the press of a button. When help is needed, pressing your medical alert button will connect you with a certified care specialist, who will contact emergency services and your family. A care specialist will stay on the line with you until help arrives.

For additional information about a medical alert system, please contact VFW's Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606, option 1, or visit the Member Benefits website at <http://www.vfw.org/MemberBenefits/>.

ESTATE PLANNING TOOLS AVAILABLE

Check out VFW's Planned Giving website, www.vfw.org/plannedgiving, for helpful estate planning tools including the free Estate Planning Kit. For assistance or more information, contact the Planned Giving Office at (816) 968-1119 or by e-mail at plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Leadership Perspectives

John Hamilton, Adjutant General

VFW and College Vets are a 'Natural Fit'

VFW has a new resource for Posts and Departments that want to connect with a group of young, intelligent veterans.

VFW's Membership Department began distributing a brochure in late February that illustrates our new partnership with the Student Veterans of America (SVA).

This relationship is a natural fit. VFW, as the nation's oldest major veterans organization, offers SVA access to such assets as our network of service officers, VA contacts and veteran-friendly lawmakers. SVA gives VFW access to college-educated veterans eligible for membership in our great organization.

The purpose of the brochure is multifaceted. We want SVA members to learn what VFW can offer them and encourage their participation on our various veteran initiatives in their communities. At the same time, this brochure gives our members some basic knowledge about SVA and its mission so they can approach SVA members and converse intelligently about shared goals.

We hope that recipients of the brochure—such as



our Department SVA liaisons, recruiters and any VFW member who wants to interact with local SVA chapters—will use it to explain VFW's history of veterans advocacy and how our relationship with SVA is a perfect fit. Both organizations are committed to improving education opportunities for veterans and performing quality community service.

The bottom line is the brochure shows how VFW and SVA can work together, and why an SVA member should join VFW. SVA members are college students for only a few short years but remain veterans for life. Once they leave college behind, joining and becoming active in VFW is the next logical step.

As VFW members, they can continue to serve their fellow vets and advocate on their behalf. College-educated and VFW-eligible, SVA members are potential future leaders of our great organization. Use this brochure to start building relationships with them now.

If you're interested in more information about the brochure, contact Corey Cornett, associate director of VFW's Membership Department, at ccornett@vfw.org.

Bob Greene, Quartermaster General

VFW Store Boasts New Website

You asked for an improved website and we listened. The VFW Store is proud to introduce its newly renovated online store. Still located at www.vfwstore.org, the new site has had a face lift and offers an array of enhanced features, including:

- Only one sign-on for VFW members, which means using the same information to sign in for the Online Membership System (OMS) and VFW Store, reducing the number of user names and passwords you need to remember. In addition, your login information will make you eligible for your membership-related discounts such as Legacy or new Life-Member discounts.
- Search capabilities have drastically improved, helping you find the products you are looking for faster.
- Similar or related products are easily viewable so you can compare your options.
- Navigation bar has been simplified so you can find what you want with fewer clicks.
- More products are shown on each page, reducing the amount of time and effort to find the items you need.
- You can now track your packages once they have been shipped from the VFW Store through UPS, USPS or FedEx.
- A frequently asked questions (FAQ) page has been provided to address your most common questions



and concerns.

- The website won't "time you out" anymore. If you leave items in your cart and step away from your computer, the merchandise will still be there when you come back.
- New social media buttons, including Facebook, Twitter and Google+ make it easier to share items with friends, family and comrades.

Make sure to check out the new site at www.vfw-store.org, and see all that it has to offer. For assistance in navigating the new website click on the tutorial for step-by-step instructions with easy-to-follow pictures. This tutorial also can be printed for your files.

And don't forget, your purchase from the VFW Store supports veterans, military service members and their families.

CHECKPOINT



INT

Editor

Tim Dyhouse

Assistant Editor

Janie Blankenship

Senior Writer

Kelly Gibson

Staff Writer

Katherine Dawson

Graphic Designer

Sally A. Nemeth

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

Annual subscription rate: \$6



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111
(816) 756-3390 • FAX 816-968-1169
Checkpoint e-mail: tdyhouse@vfw.org

VFW WASHINGTON OFFICE

VFW Memorial Building
200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002
(202) 543-2239 • Fax: 202-543-6719
E-mail: vfw@vfwdc.org

Iowa Service Officer Says ‘Probing Questions’ Lead to VA Claims Victories

JERRY HANSEN SPENT 36 YEARS in the Army National Guard. After retiring in 2006, he realized his service to his country wasn’t finished.

Around the time of his retirement, the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs had an opening for a service officer position in Montgomery County. For Hansen, a member at Post 2265 in Red Oak, it was a way to help veterans in need.

“I viewed it as another opportunity to serve,” Hansen said, “so I went ahead and put in an application.”

In 2010, the service officer position at his Post opened up. “It was a natural transition from being [a VA] county service officer to the VFW service officer,” Hansen said.

But in addition to the new job being an easy transition, it was also a natural fit for Hansen.

“He seeks to increase public awareness in terms of veterans’ benefits and programs through outreach activities—in addition to his work in the office,” said Post Commander Stan Smith. “It’s very comforting knowing that if you ask Jerry a question, he will answer it correctly, or find out the answer promptly.”

Hansen is the only one in his office in Red Oak, about 50 miles southeast of Omaha, Neb., and he keeps himself busy. He works with several veterans groups in the area and, according to Smith, is always seeking out new training.



VFW Service Officer Jerry Hansen sits with a veteran to go over potential VA benefits at Post 2265 in Red Oak, Iowa, on Jan. 31, 2014.



Above: VFW Service Officer Jerry Hansen participating in outreach at the local National Guard Armory.

Right: Jerry Hansen in Saudi Arabia, 1991.

Hansen knows approximately how many veterans are in the county, and says he wants to reach out to all 900 of them.

In 2013, he conducted 774 interviews with veterans and filled out 205 claim forms.

Before Hansen slid into the service officer position, records from 2006 show that 232 interviews were conducted and 98 claim forms were filled out.

“Since Jerry took over the position, we’ve seen a significant improvement in services provided to veterans, widows and families,” Smith said.

Hansen also points out the importance of tracking information and keeping reliable records.

“After spending 36 years in the military, you learn to track stuff,” Hansen

said. “That way you know whether you’re improving or not. It was a goal of mine to improve.”

While drastically improving veteran outreach, Hansen has seen his fair share of results as well.

He talks about a particular case when a Vietnam veteran applied for disability compensation in 1998 and was denied. Hansen started working with him in 2007 and compiled a long list of ailments, including PTSD. In 2010, the vet received a disability check for \$314,000.

“I told him, ‘Don’t you feel a bit bad about this—the system has owed you money since 1998,’ ” Hansen said.

In addition to helping hundreds of veterans, Hansen also has helped their families.

“I had a widow come into my office looking for help with burial benefits in 2011,” Hansen said. “It turns out her husband had been fighting with the VA since 1994. Even though her husband had passed, we were able to help her out.”

That same widow later stopped Hansen in the grocery store to thank him. According to him, she’s now able

to retire because of the benefits she’s receiving.

Hansen’s secret to success is recognizing the importance of interviewing skills.

“One of the most important skills a service officer can have is the ability to interview someone,” he said. “You have to ask probing questions to lead them to the answers you need.”

Before fighting for veterans’ benefits, the service officer earned his VFW eligibility during 1991’s Persian Gulf War. He was deployed to Saudi Arabia from December 1990 to May 1991 as a truck operator. Hansen later switched jobs and became an Army National Guard recruiter, eventually retiring as a Master Sergeant.

As a service officer today, Hansen sees everything from diabetes to PTSD cases walk into his office. No matter the case, he’s not afraid of a challenge.

“Being a VFW service officer is very rewarding, and other folks should consider doing it—it definitely strengthens a Post,” Hansen said. “And there’s nothing more rewarding than helping veterans.” **E-mail:** kdawson@vfw.org

Outreach Activities in 2013

- Montgomery County Fair booth
- Nursing Home visits (9)
- Radio (2)
- National Guard unit briefings (2)
- ESGR functions (4)
- Parades (3)
- Legislative activities (7)
- IACVSO meetings (11)
- Boy Scout presentations (2)
- Retiree Appreciation Day
- Veterans & Memorial Day Programs (5)
- Veterans Appreciation Supper
- Visit to Iowa Veterans Home and Iowa Veterans Cemetery
- Iowa Veterans Commission Meetings
- Iowa Workforce Development

tion and keeping reliable records.

“After spending 36 years in the military, you learn to track stuff,” Hansen

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 >

A graphic design featuring a clipboard with a sheet of paper that has "WANTED Outstanding Service Officers" printed on it. There are two pairs of glasses resting on top of the clipboard. To the right of the clipboard is a white coffee cup filled with dark coffee. Below the clipboard is a black smartphone displaying a home screen with icons. Two yellow pencils are positioned at the bottom left of the graphic.

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

A Post in Wisconsin Celebrates the End of Prohibition

ALCOHOL PROHIBITION in the United States commenced in 1920. But the following 13 years had the opposite effects of what was intended with the new law: higher taxes and an increase in organized crime.

When Prohibition was overturned with the 21st Amendment on Dec. 5, 1933, many considered Repeal Day a time for celebration.

Today, members of Post 1318 in Madison, Wis., consider themselves celebrators and have extended that joy to the surrounding town.

On Dec. 7, 2013, the Post held its first annual Repeal Day 5k run and 1933 Themed Party.

"It was something to do to help broaden the efforts of VFW in its community," said Post Commander Robert Evans. "We wanted something fun that would attract younger members and to show the Post's vitality."

Participants paid \$30 to enter the race. Starting at the Post at 11 a.m., the track wended around the local lakeside neighborhood



"We wanted something fun that would attract younger members and to show the Post's vitality."

— Robert Evans,
Post Commander

Badger Base. Members are hoping to bring the traveling Vietnam Wall memorial, known as the Moving Wall, to Madison.

As of now, *Operation Badger Base* will be a week-long welcome-home event in August 2015 for veterans of every conflict since WWII. The goal is to unite the Post with its local area through educating civilians while honoring veterans.

"We want to increase our exposure in the community," Evans said. "And for us, it's not so much a sense of pride, as it is a sense of community and recognizing the importance of giving back."

The Post is planning their second Repeal Celebration on Dec. 6, 2014.

E-mail: kdawson@vfw.org



Top: Madison community members, from the left, Cody Mills, Peter Nagel and Megan Cruze celebrate Repeal Day at Post 1318 on Dec. 7, 2013.

Bottom: Peter Nagel and Kristen Mathews celebrate Repeal Day at Post 1318 in Madison Wisconsin on Dec. 7, 2013.



PHOTOS COURTESY PETER NAGEL



PHOTO CREDIT: DANIIS DERICS / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Working with the City

Post Acts as Warming Center During Winter Storm

WHEN A SNOWSTORM HIT STAUNTON, ILL., IN JANUARY, some 650 homes—or a quarter of the town—lost power in the middle of the night.

Jay Klein, quartermaster for VFW Post 1241, got a call from a city councilman at 5:30 a.m., asking if Klein could open the Post as a warming center.

Klein's driveway and road were buried in snow and the only way he could have gotten to the Post would have been to walk. So the city sent someone to pick up Klein and drive him to the Post.

By 6 a.m., the Post was open and the coffee was hot. The city brought in doughnuts and rolls for those coming to the makeshift shelter.

Klein said VFW was the first community building in Staunton, some 30 miles northeast of St. Louis, to open to the public because of the extreme cold.

"That's what we are all about," Klein said. "We are here to serve the community."

On Jan. 5, the Post updated its Facebook page noting it was going to be closed on Jan. 6 due to the "dangerous weather." But when the storm knocked out power in the middle of the night, they opted instead to open their doors.

For people who couldn't drive, members, as well as city employees, acted as chauffeurs, shuttling residents from their cold homes to the warmth of the Post or even to a family member's house that had not lost power.

Klein called the ultimate turnout of only 10 a "disappointment," but lauded the city for its cooperation with the Post.

"It was not a great turnout," Klein said. "But we were here if people needed us. We were open, and that is what counts."

This wasn't the first time the Post has served in this capacity, though. Klein said that about four years ago a massive ice storm hit the community knocking out power to most. The Post acted as a warming center since it was one of the few places that retained power.

Klein jokes that the Post has a "good rapport with God," which is why they don't lose power.

While the power was only out for about eight hours in January, Klein said those who chose to stay in their homes must have been "extremely cold," and he hopes that, should this happen again, those people will get to the Post or call for a ride.

"This is a good example of cooperation that can exist between a city and a VFW Post," Klein said. "I would encourage other Posts to take similar steps."

E-mail: jblankenship@vfw.org

Blanket Project Helps Illinois Post Regain Relevancy

AROUND THE HOLIDAYS, THE TINIEST TOKEN can mean the world to those who have little. Last Christmas, members of Post 1336 in Morris, Ill., passed out individually gift-wrapped packages to residents of several local senior facilities.

They saw each of the 92 veteran recipients light up. Inside each gift was a personalized blanket, complete with the veteran's first name and decorated with the seal of his or her branch of service.

"Most couldn't believe that anyone would come over and remember them," Post Commander Charlie Brown said. "Some suffer from dementia, but you could tell from the look in their eyes that they really appreciated it."

The idea to give area veterans personalized blankets came from Brown's wife. She had purchased Brown his own blanket several years ago. Brown said that it was such a thoughtful gift, that he and other members of his Post wanted to do the same for some of the aging veterans staying in assisted living facilities near Morris.

"Some families take care of the veterans, some of them don't," said Brown, who earned his VFW eligibility while in the Navy during the Cuban Missile Crisis. "For a lot of the vets, that may have been the only Christmas present they got."

The Post worked with facility social workers to get the names and services of each veteran for the blankets. At one home, the Post gave blankets to two women veterans who served during WWII.

"You don't see that often," Brown said. "You don't think much of women serving in that era, and there were two in one home."

Bill Thin, a life member at the Post, received a VFW hat instead of a blanket because the Post had already honored him with one earlier in 2013.

At \$50 per blanket, the cost of these timeless mementos was not cheap—but monetary value was nothing compared to the meaning each blanket held for each veteran.

"I don't know who was more moved, them or us," Brown said.

Post 1336 hosts an annual community service project each year, often focused on elderly veterans. In 2012, the Post gave each veteran living in the facilities \$50 to spend as they chose.

The Post sold its Post home in 2010, and they continue to draw from that money

to give back to the community. For now, members meet at a senior community clubhouse for free and focus their efforts on community engagement.

With only 35 members today, the Post was originally chartered in 1925 by WWI veterans, and is slowly gaining Vietnam-era members by being visible to different sectors of the community.

They march in area parades, work a free community Thanksgiving dinner, sponsor the high school fishing team and offer grants to local high-school students planning on joining the military before attending college.

Last Veterans Day, the Post partnered with its local Cub Scout pack to distribute Buddy Poppies, giving the Scouts a chance to talk with veterans and learn



Members of Post 1336 in Morris, Ill., honor veterans residing in nearby assisted living facilities in December 2013. Some 92 veterans received personalized blankets as part of the Post's annual project.

PHOTOS BY JESSICA BOURQUE, PROPERTY OF SHAW MEDIA

about sacrifice.

"We were almost extinct," Brown said. "But we've pumped a little life into this small Post by doing community projects."

Brown says he isn't sure they will do the blanket project again this year, but he hopes to do something just as meaningful.

"It's a tough act to follow," Brown said of the blanket donation. He also says that next time the Post will reach out to the four state-run retirement facilities.

E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org

2014 Help A Hero Spring Scholarship Recipients continued from page 1

Scholarship Eligibility Requirements

Those eligible for the Help A Hero scholarship must:

- Be a citizen of the U.S.
- Be retired, honorably discharged, active-duty or a member of the National Guard or Reserve.
- Have completed basic training and follow-on training.
- Have a military rank of E-5 or below.
- Demonstrate a need for financial assistance.
- Participate in, be accepted to or be currently enrolled in a VA-approved program or school at an accredited post-secondary institution

Name	Residence	School	Name	Residence	School
Adam Abraham	Tallahassee, Fla.	South University—Tampa	John C. Loveridge	Vancouver, Wash.	Washington State University—Vancouver
Andy Angrino	Taylors, S.C.	University of South Carolina, Upstate	America E. Luna	Hampton, Va.	Old Dominion University
Klinton S. Arrington	Enterprise, Ala.	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University	Jeffery Mackowski	Miami, Fla.	Florida International University
Joshua Ashley	Springfield, Ohio	Clark State Community College	Trey D. Maevers	Raytown, Mo.	University of Kansas
Seth Atchison	Kansas City, Kan.	University of Kansas School of Medicine	Irving A. Paiz Marroquin	Woodbridge, Va.	Northern Virginia Community College
Tashina M. Azure	Lawrence, Kan.	University of Kansas School of Law	David M. McNair	Panama City Beach, Fla.	Gulf Coast State College
Paul R. Belk	Indian Trail, N.C.	University of Phoenix	Andrew D. Montgomery	Lafayette, Ind.	Ivy Tech Community College—Lafayette
Alonso Berumen	Lincoln, Calif.	Carrington College—Reno	Brian D. Nibbelink	Pueblo, Colo.	University of Denver
Pouthasone Bouasym	Papillion, Neb.	Bellevue University	Maxwell Q. Nyce	Hastings, Neb.	Hastings College
Michael V. Cuellar	Corpus Christi, Texas	Ashford University	Timothy M. Orange	Anderson, S.C.	University of Phoenix
Samuel J. Dahlberg	Minnetonka, Minn.	Saint Cloud State University	Scott W. Philbrick	Kansas City, Mo.	Central Michigan University
Christopher J. Deery	Fargo, N.D.	University of North Dakota	Robert A Pontious	San Antonio, Texas	University of Phoenix
Alexander J. Demyan	Elyria, Ohio	Kent State University	Konstantine Rudenko	Portsmouth, R.I.	Saint Leo University
Joshua E. Eckman	Washington, D.C.	The George Washington University Law Center	Mary M. Rush	Clarksville, Tenn.	Austin Peay State University
Courtney L. Etsitty	Winslow, Ariz.	Paradise Valley Community College	Rajan L. Scott	Louisville, Ky.	University of Phoenix
Tiffany L. Golden	Quitaque, Texas	University of Phoenix	Kevin P. Smith	Jacksonville, Fla.	University of Phoenix
Paul H. Guillotte	Palestine, Texas	University of Texas at Arlington	Anthony D. Smotherman	Omaha, Neb.	University of Nebraska at Omaha
Gary S. Hammonds	Sahuarita, Ariz.	University of Phoenix	William A. Sterbinsky	Jacksonville, Fla.	Florida Coastal School of Law
Joshua D. Herriott	Swanton, Ohio	Columbus State Community College	Lakeiah S. Watts	Birmingham, Ala.	Lawson State Community College
Meshell T. Horton	Longview, Texas	Kilgore College	Thomas R. Wilkes	Denver, Colo.	Community College of Aurora
Fred E. Jack	Comfort, Texas	San Antonio College	Matthew J. Zifcheck	Columbia Station, Ohio	Baldwin Wallace University
Brenda L. Jennings	Junction City, Kan.	American Military University			

Banners Recognize Hometown Troops in California City

LAST MARCH, A GROUP of veterans and community activists in Windsor, Calif., had a vision to honor active-duty service members who hail from Windsor or those who have immediate family members living there. Vietnam veteran Stan Shusda, a former Navy Seabee, went before the Windsor Town Council to pitch the idea of a banner program, recognizing those currently serving in the military.

By June, Shusda and the others on the newly formed "Windsor Hometown Heroes" committee had the program underway. But by June, the program was underway.

Commander of Post 768, Shusda said the idea had originally been brought to his attention by friends who noticed a similar project in Virginia City, Nev. On Nov. 3, 2013, the committee unveiled 17 banners were unveiled that were hung on light poles in the city's Civic Center area. At 28 inches wide and 54 inches tall, each

banner includes a photo of the honoree in military uniform, accompanied by his or her name and branch of service.

Costing \$200 apiece, banners are hung by city employees, but fully funded by individuals and organizations like VFW. Post 768 alone raised more than \$500 for this project. They hosted pancake breakfasts and set up a booth at a popular flea market in the area.

"We have a very small Post," Shusda said. "But we were all very involved in this, including the November unveiling ceremony, which was literally a red-carpet event."

Red carpet was rolled out and veterans served as escorts for those being honored. A woman who served as a WAVE (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services) who wore her original uniform to lead in a woman into the event, while a 95-year-old Army veteran took his turn bringing in a family, as well.

At the time, there were 24 men and women eligible to have banners, but

seven of those weren't able to supply high-resolution photos in time. Their banners are included in those scheduled to go up on May 18. Once a featured service member is discharged from the military, a retirement ceremony is held and the banner is presented to the individual.

"This is such a patriotic program," said Shusda, who recalls the unjust treatment he and other Vietnam vets received upon coming home after the war. "I want to see it spread like wild fire and have Posts all across the land doing this."

Other California cities—Rhonert Park and Long Beach—also have similar programs honoring those who serve.

Email: jblankenship@vfw.org

In November 2013, Windsor, Calif., city employees hung banners recognizing all active-duty service members from Windsor.

PHOTOS COURTESY STAN SHUSDA



1,908 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 1,908 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: tayhouse@vfw.org



Name	Position	Post/Location
Catello C. Annicchiarco	Judge Advocate	Post 1939, Tarrytown, N.Y.
Kenneth Baumgart	Adjutant	Post 3635, Florence, Wis.
Frank Bednarski	Chaplain	Post 3635, Florence, Wis.
Jack Boursmith	Funeral Detail	Post 4005, Corunna, Mich.
George Bozek	Officer of the Day	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
Arthur Brooks	Commander	Post 4940, Lewisburg, W. Va.
Fran Bruno	Trustee	Post 1012, Medford, Mass.
Joe Bucci	Board Director	Post 1012, Medford, Mass.
Robert T. Conca	Trustee	Post 1939, Tarrytown, N.Y.
Walter Dember	Commander	Post 6251, Cheektowaga, N.Y.
Joe Diamond	Chaplain	Post 9289, St. Marys, Ohio
Edward M. Dunn, Jr.	Quartermaster	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
Herman "H.R." Dybowski	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 8572, Karnes City, Texas
Charles V. Ferris	Surgeon	Post 1939, Tarrytown, N.Y.
Edward Franey, Jr.	Trustee	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
R. Jane Frank	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.

Name	Position	Post/Location
Armando Galella	Trustee	Post 1939, Tarrytown, N.Y.
Wallace Gorski	Chaplain	Post 5530, Toledo, Ohio
Harper F. Griswold	Service Officer	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
John F. Hanlon	Judge Advocate	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
Ray Hildebrandt	Officer of the Day	Post 4005, Corunna, Mich.
Irene Hosking	Chaplain	Post 4005, Corunna, Mich.
Harley Johnson	Quartermaster	Post 6692, Rush City, Minn.
Robert Kennedy	Chaplain	Post 9375, California City, Calif.
Louis Luongo	Trustee	Post 1012, Medford, Mass.
Richard P. Maki	Commander	Post 1939, Tarrytown, N.Y.
Howard M. McNamara	Trustee	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
Edward F. Miller	Adjutant	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
John Misdom	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 1689, Jacksonville, Fla.
Louis Nagy	Trustee	Post 5530, Toledo, Ohio
Larry Olson	Judge Advocate	Post 3635, Florence, Wis.
Raymond L. Perkins	Surgeon	Post 7496, Felicity, Ohio
Clarence Peterson	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 5043, Mullica Twp., N.J.
Mike Petroni	Surgeon	Post 1012, Medford, Mass.
Frank Purpura	Chaplain	Post 1689, Jacksonville, Fla.
Frank P. Scallero	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 1939, Tarrytown, N.Y.
Lorenz Schuster	Trustee	Post 1163, Beaver Dam, Wis.
Paul Sekeras	Surgeon	Post 894, Natrona Heights, Pa.
Thomas Simon	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
Samuel Spencer	Chaplain	Post 9174, San Antonio, Texas
Bill Strauss	Officer of the Day	Post 9777, Salem, Ark.
Leigh Tabor	Commander	Post 9653, Morrisville, Vt.
Robert Tiffany	Trustee	Post 2494, Irving, Texas
Ralph Trease	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 5530, Toledo, Ohio
Charles D. Utter	Chaplain	Post 7496, Felicity, Ohio
Anthony Vallone	Trustee	Post 1012, Medford, Mass.
Herb White	Chaplain	Post 6435, Antioch, Calif.
Robert White	Trustee	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.
Joe Worsley	Chaplain	Post 11402, Lacey, Wash.
Walter F. Yenger, Jr.	Commander	Post 219, Baltimore, Md.



[Sign Up Today](#)

Don't Wait to Register for Convention Housing

RESERVATIONS FOR CONVENTION HOUSING for VFW members opened on Feb. 17 for the 115th VFW National Convention to take place July 19-23, 2014, in St. Louis, Mo. Members can find their housing assignments, as well as a map of the hotel sites, by visiting the convention website at www.vfw.org.

Housing forms are available through your Department headquarters, Post adjutant or online. Be sure to secure your hotel reservations as soon as possible—housing is available on a first come, first served basis.

To make housing reservations: Call 1-888-850-7720 or fax 1-801-355-0250; International 1-801-505-5267, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., MST; or mail to *Orchid Event Solutions, 175 West Temple, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101*, e-mail help@orchideventsolutions.com. The housing cut-off date is June 13.

For more information, contact Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM at (816) 968-1198 or e-mail vkane@vfw.org.



Significant Cost Savings

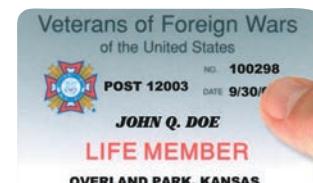
You Served with Honor and Pride. Reward Yourself...

Make a commitment that will last a lifetime.

A VFW Life Membership creates a substantial savings over paying annual dues while helping to support VFW. There's no better way to say you're concerned about veterans issues and the future care of our young fighting forces today than to become a Life Member now.

Here's what you can look forward to:

- Significant cost savings over annual fees
- Lifelong accidental insurance policy
- Lifetime member services, benefits and discounts
- Uninterrupted delivery of VFW magazine
- Eligibility for VFW's Legacy Life program



Start saving now! Becoming a VFW Life Member is easy.

Pay all at once or use the installment plan to spread out the payments. Both are affordable ways to show your commitment to the organization.

Here are examples of how the savings can work for you based on the current rate.

New members can fill out an application online to see their savings.



Eligibility:
Operation
Iraqi Freedom

Age: 31

Cost to pay annually over the course of her membership* \$1,540
Cost to be a VFW Life Member \$410

How much she saves \$1,130

Cost to be a life member in other vet organizations up to **\$1,343**



Eligibility:
Vietnam
War

Age: 63

Cost to continue to pay annually over the course of his membership* \$420
Cost to be a VFW Life Member \$290

How much he saves \$130

Cost to be a life member in other vet organizations up to **\$839**

3 Easy Ways to Become a Life Member

- ✓ Fill out the option on your dues notice
- ✓ Call 1-888-JOINVFW
- ✓ Go to www.vfw.org and renew your membership online.

YOU'VE EARNED IT
www.VFW.org ★ 1-888-JOINVFW

VFW 
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.
www.vfw.org

* Based on remaining a member through age 75



Pennsylvania Post Helps Raise Homeless Vets Awareness

POST 23 COMMANDER BILL MEISER, and members Norman Deaven and Rich Fetter, ask for donations on Veterans Day 2012 to support the *Homeless Veterans Awareness Campaign* in Lebanon, Pa. Since 2011, Post members have camped out in public to raise community awareness about veterans homelessness.

In 2013, Post members raised \$17,211 on the weekend of Nov. 8, which went toward various shelters and veteran assistance groups.

PHOTO COURTESY POST 23

MARCH | APRIL 2014

CHECKPOINT

Posts with the Most

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

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS OR MORE AS OF FEB. 12, 2014

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members	Rank	No.	Location	Members
1	27	Wiesbaden, Germany	2,809	6	392	Virginia Beach, VA	1,699
2	1114	Evansville, IN	2,653	7	2485	Angeles City, Philippines	1,627
3	1503	Dale City, VA	2,397	8	9785	Eagle River, AK	1,619
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ	1,954	9	4372	Odessa, TX	1,609
5	8862	Vicenza, Italy	1,799	10	6506	Rosedale, MD	1,524
11	63	Boise, ID	1,503	19	7234	Ocean View, DE	1,282
12	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany	1,472	20	3944	Overland-St. Ann, MO	1,262
13	4647	North Highlands, CA	1,466	21	10047	North Las Vegas, NV	1,259
14	628	Sioux Falls, SD	1,451	22	972	Terre Haute, IN	1,250
15	76	San Antonio, TX	1,449	23	4809	Norfolk, VA	1,239
16	9342	Ainsbach, Germany	1,443	24	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL	1,214
17	6873	Abilene, TX	1,439	25	8951	West York, PA	1,204
18	1146	St Clair Shores, MI	1,302	26	2503	Omaha, NE	1,181
				27	549	Tucson, AZ	1,174
				28	56	Leavenworth, KS	1,170
				29	2111	Chula Vista, CA	1,162
				30	1326	Bismarck, ND	1,145
				31	1273	Rapid City, SD	1,117
				31	1152	Kokomo, IN	1,117
				31	7686	Alamogordo, NM	1,117
				34	1512	Lemon Grove, CA	1,115
				35	1308	Alton, IL	1,112
				36	969	Tacoma, WA	1,106
				37	1599	Chambersburg, PA	1,079
				38	10216	Songtan-Si, Korea	1,073
				39	10436	Kitzingen, Germany	1,048
				39	7968	Apache Junction, AZ	1,048
				41	7330	Oakville, CT	1,037
				42	1170	Middletown, KY	1,035
				43	788	Cedar Rapids, IA	1,034
				44	4709	Conroe, TX	1,020

www.facebook.com/vfwcheckpointnewsletter

@VFWCheckpoint

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

VFW

VFW Chief Vows to Continue Fight

Congress Repeals COLA Penalty, But Future Retirees in Peril

Congress approved a measure Feb. 12 that repealed an extremely unpopular cap on military retiree pensions. It reversed a provision in a budget deal approved in the waning days of 2013 that placed a cap of 1% on their annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

VFW worked hard to overturn that decision with a two-pronged strategy. First, it helped persuade lawmakers to pass the *FY2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act*, which President Obama signed into law (*P.L. 113-76*) in January. That law reinstated the full COLA for severely wounded vets and survivors of troops killed.

Then VFW helped eliminate a cap on the COLAs of more than 800,000 military retirees under the age of 62. That occurred with the Feb. 12 vote and applies to all military retirees, as well as troops in uniform in 2013 who choose to remain on duty until they are retirement eligible.

But the legislation does not remove the penalty on future retirees who enter the military after Jan. 1, 2014.

"Future military retirees will be required to serve just as long and perhaps sacrifice even more than their predecessors," said VFW Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien.

"It is in that regard that VFW will continue to fight for a full repeal of the COLA penalty, and we hope that this vote will continue that conversation."

