

# CHECKPOINT



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- Special products at VFW Store for Memorial and Flag Days.
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### Service Officer Profiled

- 3** A Post service officer in Arizona who is 100% disabled uses her own VA experiences to help fellow members.

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Voice of Democracy winners from all of VFW's Departments

- 4** converged in March in Washington, D.C., to vie for the \$30,000 first-place scholarship.

### Young Vets Grab Leadership Reins



At Posts in Oregon, Denver and Brooklyn, young leaders with

- 6** progressive ideas are looking toward the future.

### National Convention in Pittsburgh



Here is a handy map showing VFW Department hotels and

- 7** important locations, as well as a list of sites to visit, in the "City of Champions."

### Flag Murals and a Farm Show

- 8** An artist on a mission visits a VFW Post in Alabama that "called out" to him, while the Department of Pennsylvania assists vets at one of the largest expositions in the nation.

## *Family-Oriented' Events Attract Young Vets*

# Department of Massachusetts Hosts Student Vets at Celtics Game

AS PART OF A DEPARTMENT-WIDE push to attract younger members, the Department of Massachusetts hosted a night out for Boston-area student veterans and their families. The Department purchased tickets to the Boston Celtics basketball game on Feb. 28.

Some 129 people attended the basketball outing with VFW tickets. The attendees represented seven different Massachusetts universities. Members of Posts 801, 1018 and 3236, as well as Massachusetts Districts 7 and 12 were present, representing VFW. The group had the opportunity to meet with Celtics players on the court.

"When we had our units deploying, we had access to bases," said Eric Segundo, Department of Massachusetts membership chairman. "Now deployments are few and far between, so the majority of our post-Vietnam veterans are in school. Reaching out to student veteran groups gives us another opportunity to start a relationship outside of a base."

Segundo, who served in Iraq in 2005 with the 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 3rd Inf. Div., says that by being active alongside other veteran organizations, he has seen success gaining membership after hosting "family-oriented" events.

"It's a way to show them [younger veterans] what VFW is all about—that it's a different image than what they've heard," said Segundo, who has been a VFW member since 2009.

The Department has focused efforts on informing local Reservists about GI Bill benefits and VFW scholarships.

"We can help them further their educations," Segundo said. "We want to raise

awareness through our partnership with the Student Veterans of America. We need to get more in the media to change the image that people have of VFW."

Army Sgt. Robert Foster, who attended the game in February, is the veteran service specialist at Northeastern University (NEU) in Boston and a member of NEU's student veteran organization (SVO). He recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan in 2014, and still serves with the Massachusetts National Guard. He says the university's student veterans have a budding relationship with local VFW Posts.

Prior to the basketball event, Foster said, the SVO had limited engagement with VFW members. But Foster says he expected positive engagement from older veterans.

"I've had the opportunity to work with VFW on several other occasions, so I wasn't surprised by how quickly they embraced our student veterans," Foster said. "VFW has been nothing but helpful, and we look forward to further collaborating on our mission of supporting our veteran population."

While Foster says he is not sure if any of Northeastern's student veterans

joined VFW, he "suspects that some will." He is putting his own application in the mail soon.

"One day, they'll graduate," Foster said. "They won't be part of that student community anymore. So it's important for them to know that VFW is a place they can go to find that camaraderie again."

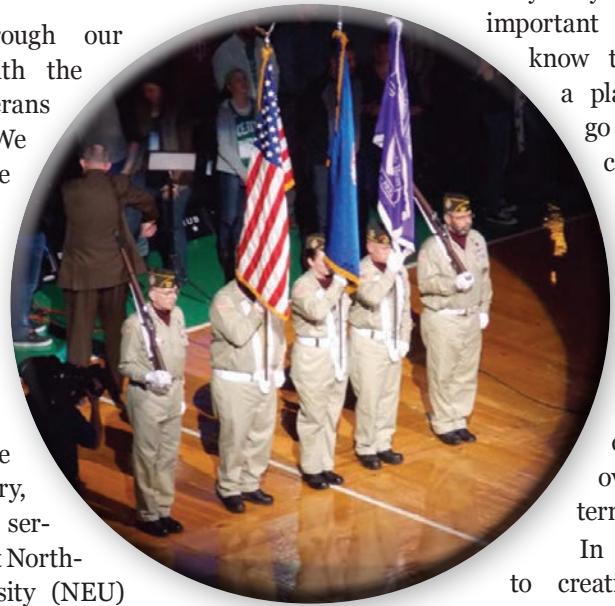
"Our continued engagement with VFW can only benefit both organizations over the long term."

In addition to creating a bond between younger and older veterans, Foster says the engagement is more about working toward a common goal.

"Andy McCarty, our director of veteran and military services, is the staff advisor for the SVO," Foster said. "Since the beginning, he has worked to build a sense of community among veterans and servicemembers here on campus as well as in the greater Boston community. We both see great value in continuing to nurture the relationship between our two organizations. When you boil down our missions, they're pretty much the same: to serve our fellow veterans."

As far as the game in February, the Celtics beat the Charlotte Hornets 106-98, coming from behind. Foster said it was exciting to be in attendance at such a close game that ended with a win for their home team.

E-mail: [kgibson@vfw.org](mailto:kgibson@vfw.org)



Student veterans and their families cheer on the Boston Celtics on Feb. 28, 2015. The Department of Massachusetts purchased some 129 tickets for young veterans at seven Massachusetts universities to have a night out, which helped strengthen relationships between VFW and student veteran organizations.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ERIC SEGUNDO

# EXTRA! EXTRA!

## RESERVE A SHUTTLE FOR 116TH CONVENTION

If you are attending VFW's 116th National Convention in Pittsburgh July 18-22, you'll want to make transportation reservations now to save yourself time later.

A convention rate has been negotiated with Super Shuttle. Reservations must be made in advance and online to receive a 10% discount.

Visit: <http://groups.supershuttle.com/vfw.html> to make your reservation. The code is VFWUS.

At the airport, Super Shuttle's customer service counter is located on the baggage claim level in the rental car area behind the elevators by Door 4.

None of the downtown hotels offer private shuttles to and from the airport so make your reservation today to guarantee a seat.

## SCOOTERS, WHEELCHAIRS FOR RENT IN PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Wheelchair Exchange will rent wheelchairs, scooters and power lift chairs to those requiring assistance at convention. Contact the company at (412) 241-5121 to reserve yours today.

Scooters are \$40 per day or \$150 for the entire convention. For more information, visit [www.pittsburghwheelchairexchange.com](http://www.pittsburghwheelchairexchange.com).



## VFW STORE HAS MEMORIAL DAY PRODUCTS

VFW Store has everything you need for Memorial Day and Flag Day. Check out our selection of flags, grave markers, memorial wreaths and more at [www.vfwstore.org](http://www.vfwstore.org) or call us at 1-800-821-2606.



## HONOR VFW WITH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

When it comes to your will and estate plans, we agree that your loved ones should come first. After your family has been taken care of, we ask you to evaluate VFW's place in your overall plans. If you're interested in supporting VFW and your fellow veterans with a gift in your will, contact VFW's Planned Giving Office for more information at (816) 968-1119, e-mail [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@vfw.org) or visit [www.vfw.org/plannedgiving](http://www.vfw.org/plannedgiving).

## LEARN ABOUT BURIAL BENEFITS NOW

There is a lot of confusion among veterans concerning VA burial benefits. It is important that all VFW members get the information they need to make important planning decisions now that can help alleviate some of the emotional and financial burdens later. Please visit [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org), click on the "Join" tab, choose "Member Benefits" and visit "End of Life Services" for more information.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:rfreiburghouse@vfw.org).



# Leadership Perspectives

John Hamilton, Adjutant General

## Publicize Your Post at Tractor Supply

For the third consecutive year, VFW is partnering with Tractor Supply Company (TSC) to give our Posts more opportunities to publicize themselves, build relationships and recruit more members in their communities. This year's "Salute Our Troops" event with TSC—one of the nation's leading home improvement and farm implement suppliers—has the potential to be the best one yet.

Last year during Memorial Day weekend, nearly 300 Posts participated. They hosted barbecues, offered games and displayed military memorabilia. These attention-grabbing activities also gave those Posts the chance to distribute Buddy Poppies and recruit eligible veterans.

This year—on May 23—we hope even more Posts will get involved. It is an optimal time—the Saturday before Memorial Day—for Posts to be visible in their communities as it coincides with one of TSC's highest foot-traffic days of the year.

We want Post and Ladies Auxiliary members to embrace this opportunity to connect with their local



communities. Make this an event to remember and engage your neighbors.

In addition to handing out Poppies, bring along a grill and offer free hamburgers and hot dogs. Set up a recruiting booth and also tell the public about the community service you provide at local schools, police and fire departments or veterans facilities. Encourage your visitors to sign "Thank You" notes to active-duty troops, too.

To participate, register your

Post with TSC at [www.tractorsupply.com/VFW](http://www.tractorsupply.com/VFW).

We need to support companies like TSC that believe strongly in VFW's mission. Offering our Posts space to host events like this is even more crucial because changes in solicitation policies for many retailers are making it more difficult to find venues where Posts can distribute Buddy Poppies.

So be ready to participate. Salute our active-duty troops, and promote your Post and VFW in your local communities.

Bob Greene, Quartermaster General

## Life Members Have Options with the Installment Plan

The life membership installment payment plan allows a new member or current annual member to obtain a VFW life membership by paying the fee in installments. The program is another option for obtaining a life membership and does not replace any existing time payment programs offered by Posts.

This plan is available at any time during the year by making an initial payment of \$45. This fee keeps the member in good standing during the payment period and is not applied towards the total amount due. After the initial \$45 payment, the member will have 11 payments for the 12-month plan remaining.

The member may choose to have the payments automatically charged monthly to a bank or credit card account. In this case, the member will not receive a monthly billing statement. Instead, the payments will be automatically debited or charged to his or her account until all payments have been made.

Upon enrollment in the life membership installment plan, the member will receive a membership card, indicating membership in good standing. A permanent



life membership card will be issued when the life membership fees have been paid in full. Current annual members also may enroll in the life membership installment plan online. Please note that your Post quartermaster can assist in the processing of your application, but only you can submit it to National Headquarters. The Post quartermaster cannot submit it on your behalf.

For more detailed information on how to enroll in the program and the associated life membership fees, please visit the life membership section online at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) or as listed in the Online Quartermaster Manual. You also may contact the Life Membership Department by e-mail at [lifememberprocessing@vfw.org](mailto:lifememberprocessing@vfw.org) or by calling 1-800-963-3180.

# CHECKPOINT

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**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS**

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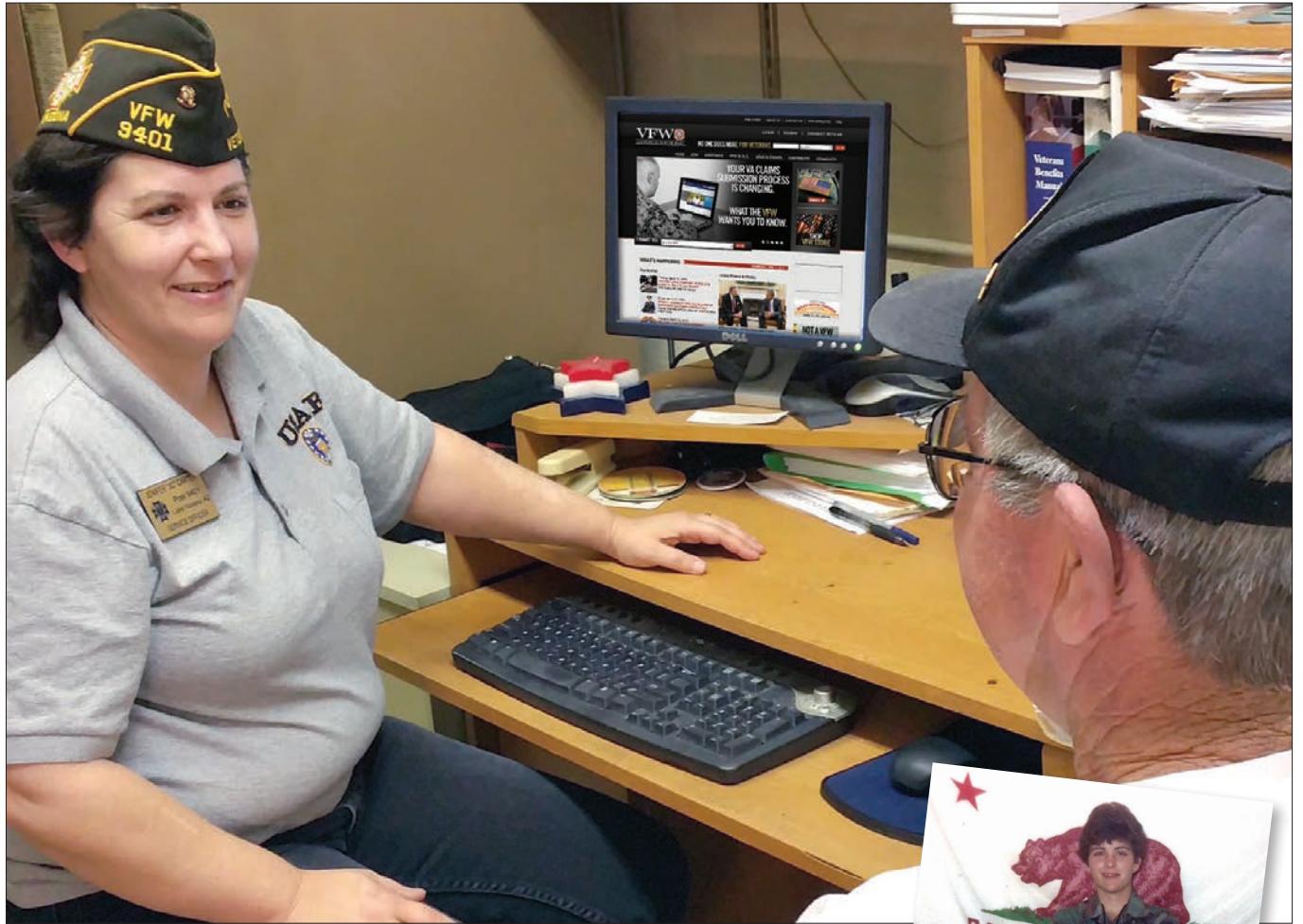
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# Hard Work Gets Claims Paid, Says Arizona Post Service Officer

**ARIZONA SERVICE OFFICER JENIFER CARTER** has what it takes to succeed. Her hard work and dedication helps hundreds of fellow veterans each year.

Carter, or JC as she's known, has been the service officer at Post 9401 in Lake Havasu City, Ariz., for about three years. It was a fellow service officer who helped Carter get a 100 % VA disability rating due to a service-connected accident.

"It's really the only thing I can do to repay it," said Carter, a veteran of the Iraq no-fly zone (*Operation Provide Comfort* in 1993) about what motivated her to become a service officer. "I felt it was something I could do well."



"She goes the extra mile for people. She doesn't just help them fill out a form."

— Joan McDermott,  
Commander Post 9401



Service Officer Jenifer Carter helps a veteran in her office at Post 9401 in Lake Havasu City, Ariz. Carter, or JC as she's known around the Post, says studying reference materials has made her successful at her job.

Carter was in the Air Force from 1990 to 1994 and worked as a crew chief with the 693rd Organizational Maintenance Squadron at Castle Air Force Base, Calif.



And she has. When Carter started out, she said she knew she needed to work hard and study to help everyone the best that she could. That's when the Post bought her \$400 in reference materials. "Studying the *Veterans Benefits Manual* is what made me able to be successful with so many types of claims that had always been denied before," Carter said. Between the manual and the *Federal Veterans Law, Rules and Regulations*, Carter said she has the tools she needs to help others.

Carter said she usually doesn't hear about the monetary victories her clients receive from VA – but that doesn't stop those she helps from recognizing her good work. Korean War veteran Bob Van Ort is a member of Post 9401, located some 195 miles west north west of Phoenix, who's worked with Carter. "[She] spends every Wednesday at the Post and untold hours studying VA regulations at home, helping veterans apply for compensation and making appeals," he said.

Van Ort said Carter worked so hard to help him, she even contacted the French unit he was attached to in Korea to get additional information for his claim.

Post Commander Joan McDermott said there was one veteran who was not able to write or use a computer, so Carter typed for him while he dictated. "She goes the extra mile for people," McDermott said. "She doesn't just help them fill out a form." McDermott said Carter helps them understand and "if she doesn't have the answer, she will find it."

For Carter, she's right there alongside the veteran. "When they win, I celebrate with them," Carter said. "When they get a denial, I have that feeling of a kick in the gut."

Carter said she will step down soon for health reasons, and she certainly will miss the victories. "Nine out of 10 of these claimants will break your heart, but the one who makes it, makes it all worth it. That is a wonderful feeling to be able to give them justice."

E-mail: [swilken@vfw.org](mailto:swilken@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](mailto: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](http://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

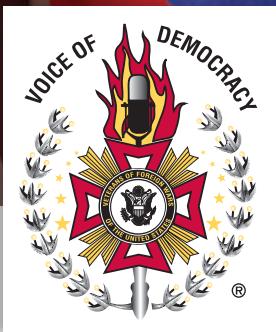
State

GO >>

# 2015 Voice of Democracy



VFW FILE PHOTO



*'My Heart Swelled with Pride'*

## VOD Winner Encourages Others to Honor Veterans

**AT 15, ADAM DENSMORE OF DENVER, IS ONE OF THE YOUNGER VOICE OF DEMOCRACY (VOD) COMPETITORS.** That did not stop him from winning the top prize in this year's contest, a \$30,000 scholarship.

As the VOD representative from the Department of Colorado, Densmore was one of 54 students to receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital Feb. 28-March 4. George Washington's former home at Mount Vernon, Va., as well as the National Mall and the Holocaust Museum in the District, were among the sites visited by the students.

Given the theme "Why Veterans are Important to our Nation's History and Future," Densmore wrote about a chance encounter with a veteran in a grocery store. The man, a stranger, had on a WWII veteran hat and Densmore was compelled to meet him.

"We approached him and introduced ourselves, and as I shook his hand, my heart swelled with pride," he wrote. "I was proud of my country. I was proud of the man whose strong hand was wrapped around mine."

When it came time to write his essay—which had to be pared down to only five minutes—Densmore knew what he wanted to say.

"I wanted to as accurately as possible express the essence of my admiration, appreciation and respect for veterans, perhaps persuading others to be even more mindful of their significance," the homeschool student said.

In his essay, Densmore credits veterans from WWII through Iraq for his ability to freely pray and say and do what he wants. He argued that veterans aren't as appreciated as they once were.

"A failure to celebrate veterans is a failure to raise up the next generation," he wrote.

Sponsored by Post 3631 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Aurora, Colo., Densmore said the scholarship was brought to his attention by his grandpa, Lowell. His other grandpa, Bill, is a Korean War vet.

While Densmore still has a few years before he puts the VOD scholarship to use, he has his eyes on schools like Wheaton College in Illinois or Hillsdale College in Michigan. He is most interested in pastoring, business, marketing and law.

"Those careers are a spread from one another," Densmore said. "But the common trend is my desire to glorify God through all aspects of my life."

For now, he is looking forward to spending time with his fellow VOD participants June 18-21 at the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, where they will participate in the Spirit of America Youth Leadership Conference.

E-mail: [jblankenship@vfw.org](mailto:jblankenship@vfw.org)

### Youth Essay Themes Announced

The 2015-16 Voice of Democracy theme is:

"My Vision for America."

The Patriot's Pen theme is:

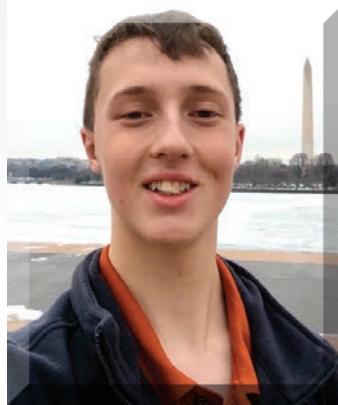
"What Freedom Means to Me."

To download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen, visit: <http://www.vfw.org/VOD/> or <http://www.vfw.org/PatriotsPen/>.

Top: Adam Densmore receives a \$30,000 check from Ladies Auxiliary National President Ann Panteleakos and VFW Commander-in-Chief John Stroud during VFW's Legislative Conference in March in Washington, D.C. Densmore was named first-place winner in the Voice of Democracy essay contest.

Right: The 54 VOD participants visited numerous sites in the District.





PHOTOS COURTESY OF VOD PARTICIPANTS

Mount Vernon, the National Mall, Newseum and the Holocaust Museum were just a few of the stops made by the Voice of Democracy winners during their trip to Washington, D.C., in March.



# Posts in Oregon, Denver and Brooklyn Connect with Young Vets

**IT ONLY OPENED IN AUGUST, BUT POST 12140**, located in Lake Oswego, Ore., is significantly increasing membership. In January, Commander Ken Kraft told VFW magazine his Post had 104 members join from opening to October, with 65% of them being Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. His secret? A professional demeanor and image when soliciting members, as well as maintaining an active presence in the community.

Today, Kraft said, the Post has 135 members, and it's growing. "We're still developing relationships with younger veterans and families as well as providing youth areas and supervision so parents can join meetings," he said.

**AT POST 1 IN DENVER, IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN** veteran membership is about 70% of its 868 members, Commander Michael Mitchel told VFW magazine in February. With highly-attended meetings and a variety of activities geared toward younger veterans, the Post is headed in the right direction.

This spring, those activities not only include yoga but now meditation. "I think it goes to show you that we're not your stodgy old cliché VFW," Mitchel said. "It shows that we're very progressive and very in touch with members."

The Post recently joined Denver's *Third Thursday*, a local art night designed to be a more intimate setting with the artists. Mitchell said the Post hosts an open-house recruiting mixer for student veterans on those dates, which includes art classes. This allows student veterans and civilians alike a chance to visit in an informal setting.

Post 1 increased its membership by 47 since February, bringing the total membership to 915.

**MEANWHILE, LEADERSHIP AT POST 5806 IN BROOKLYN, N.Y.**, notes that younger veterans are looking for community involvement. Emma Lardner, Post senior vice commander and student at nearby Columbia University, said recruiting must focus on that desire for community involvement.

Of the 97 total members in Post 5806, she says 22, or 23%, are Iraq or Afghanistan vets. To increase the younger membership, Lardner said they're working with local active-duty personnel. "We have a good relationship with an engineering guard unit," she said. "Reaching out to student veterans also is a great way to recruit."

Part of that, she said, is showing that service officers can be a valuable tool when navigating benefits such as the GI Bill in higher education.

E-mail: [swilken@vfw.org](mailto:swilken@vfw.org)



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARLA R. KEOWN/VFW POST 1



PHOTO CREDIT: KEN KRAFT



## TELL CHECKPOINT ABOUT YOUR YOUNG POST LEADERS

We want to publicize the success stories being carried out by Posts led by the youngest generation of VFW members. Do you belong to a Post with an Iraq or Afghanistan War veteran serving as commander, quartermaster or another major leadership position? Let us hear about it.

*Checkpoint* wants to print stories about vibrant young leaders with energy, passion and a vision to grow their membership. We want to know how they serve their local veterans and establish their Posts as assets in the community.

And don't skimp on the photos. You'll boost your chances of being featured in *Checkpoint* if you include high-resolution, action-oriented shots of your Post members working projects, helping local citizens or fulfilling VFW's mission of assisting veterans.

Send information via e-mail to [tdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:tdyhouse@vfw.org). Regular mail can be sent to:

**Checkpoint**  
Attn: Young Post Leaders  
406 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARLA R. KEOWN/VFW POST 1

**Above:** Members and civilian volunteers help renovate Post 1 in Denver, Colo. Commander Michael Mitchel says that's just one of the exciting ways young members are involved in the Post.

**Above left:** Marine veteran Jarell Jones teaches a free yoga class for veterans and their friends and family March 31 at VFW Post 1 in Denver. The Post moved into the building located along Denver's art district in July 2014 and hosts a variety of classes like yoga, art and meditation to help bring in a younger crew of veterans.

**Lower left:** Members of Post 12140 in Lake Oswego, Ore., use a brand-new smoker at events to raise money and attract new members. The Post was established in October and now has 135 members.

# 'City of Champions' Welcomes VFW in 2015

Named one of the "Top 15 Places to Go in 2015" by Conde Nast Traveler, Pittsburgh is located at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers.

Founded in 1758, the "Steel City" is steeped in history and culture. Here is a sampling of activities to consider while visiting during VFW's National Convention in July.

## Fort Pitt Museum and Block House

Point State Park, 601 Commonwealth Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 281-9284  
Open daily from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Free and open to the public, the Fort Pitt Block House celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2014. It is the only surviving structure left of Ft. Pitt, a British fortification during the French and Indian War. Located in Point State Park, the Block House is surrounded by the Edith Ammon Memorial Garden. Also nearby, visitors can tour the Fort Pitt Museum, which offers a timeline of the history of Fort Pitt.

## Senator John Heinz History Center

1212 Smallman St., Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 454-6000  
Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

An affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute, this collection of museums is devoted to cataloging the history of western Pennsylvania. Visitors can enjoy exhibits on western Pennsylvania culture

and sports history. If you are interested in touring other historic attractions, visit <http://www.fortpittblockhouse.com/other-attractions/>

## Heinz Field

100 Art Rooney Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 697-7150 or e-mail [tours@steelers.nfl.com](mailto:tours@steelers.nfl.com)

For a behind-the-scenes look at the home of the Pittsburgh Steelers, visitors can take a tour Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10 a.m. and noon. Tickets for adults are \$8 and tickets for seniors 55+ are \$7. Walk-up tickets are available cash-only, or you can buy advance tickets through [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

## Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum

4141 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
(412) 621-4253  
Open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Also located near the University of Pittsburgh campus is the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum.

Exhibits include all conflicts, and honor all who have served through individual stories. The museum takes approximately one hour to see, and admission is free for veterans, \$10 for adults or \$5 for seniors 55+.

## PNC Park

115 Federal Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 325-4700 or  
e-mail [pncparktours@pirates.com](mailto:pncparktours@pirates.com)

PNC Park, located just along the shore of the Allegheny River, is home to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Unfortunately, the Buccs will be on the road playing the Milwaukee Brewers and the Kansas City Royals while VFW's convention is in town. However, baseball fans can take a 90-minute tour of the ballpark. Adults are admitted for \$9, and seniors for \$7.

## William Pitt Union

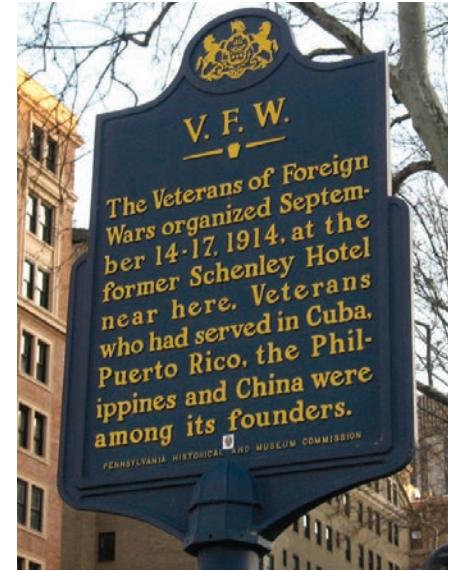
University of Pittsburgh, 3959 Fifth Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

VFW has very strong ties to the Pittsburgh area. In September 1914, VFW held its first convention at the Schenley Hotel. The hotel's location is now the William Pitt Union at the University of Pittsburgh, approximately a 10-minute drive from the convention center. Last September, the university hosted a centennial celebration honoring VFW's founding. Additionally, VFW's first headquarters was located at the present-day corner of Forbes Avenue and Grant Street.

## Flight 93 National Memorial

6424 Lincoln Highway, Stoystown, PA  
(814) 893-6322  
[flight93memorial@nationalparks.org](mailto:flight93memorial@nationalparks.org)

If you have a bit of extra time and a car, the Flight 93 National Memorial is a 1 1/2 hour drive—60 miles—from Pittsburgh. The temporary memorial serves to preserve, protect and tell the story of Flight 93. Passengers of the flight rushed the cockpit to overthrow hijackers on Sept. 11, 2001, possibly foiling another attack on Washington, D.C. As a result, the plane crash-landed in a field outside of Shanksville, Pa. Today, the crash site itself is restricted to family members of Flight



93 passengers and crew. The visitor's center is scheduled to open in September. There are no modern facilities around it, so be sure to bring your own drinking water and dress for a hike.

For more information, visit [www.vfw.org/news-and-events/events/116th-vfw-national-convention](http://www.vfw.org/news-and-events/events/116th-vfw-national-convention).

## Transportation:

Need to get around town? Pittsburgh is home to VETaxi. The service offers cars driven by veterans, as well as scooter and wheelchair accessible vehicles. You can download the VETaxi app on your phone, or call (412) 481-8387.

Prefer walking? For the technologically inclined, you can download a free walking tour of Pittsburgh by visiting <http://www.mu.edu/about-mu/WalkingTourofPittsburgh>.

## 1. DOUBLETREE

Missouri  
Nebraska  
South Dakota  
Wisconsin  
Tennessee  
Texas

## 2. MARRIOTT CITY CENTER

Illinois  
Indiana  
Michigan  
Ohio  
Minnesota

## 3. OMNI

**WILLIAM PENN**  
Connecticut  
Alaska  
Iowa  
South Carolina  
Arkansas  
Georgia  
Louisiana  
North Carolina  
Oklahoma  
Virginia  
West Virginia

## 4. WYNDHAM GRAND

Nevada  
Pennsylvania  
Kentucky  
Kansas  
Florida  
Arizona  
California  
Colorado  
Hawaii  
Idaho  
Montana

## 5. WESTIN

New Mexico  
North Dakota  
Oregon  
Pacific Areas  
Utah  
Washington  
Wyoming  
Delaware

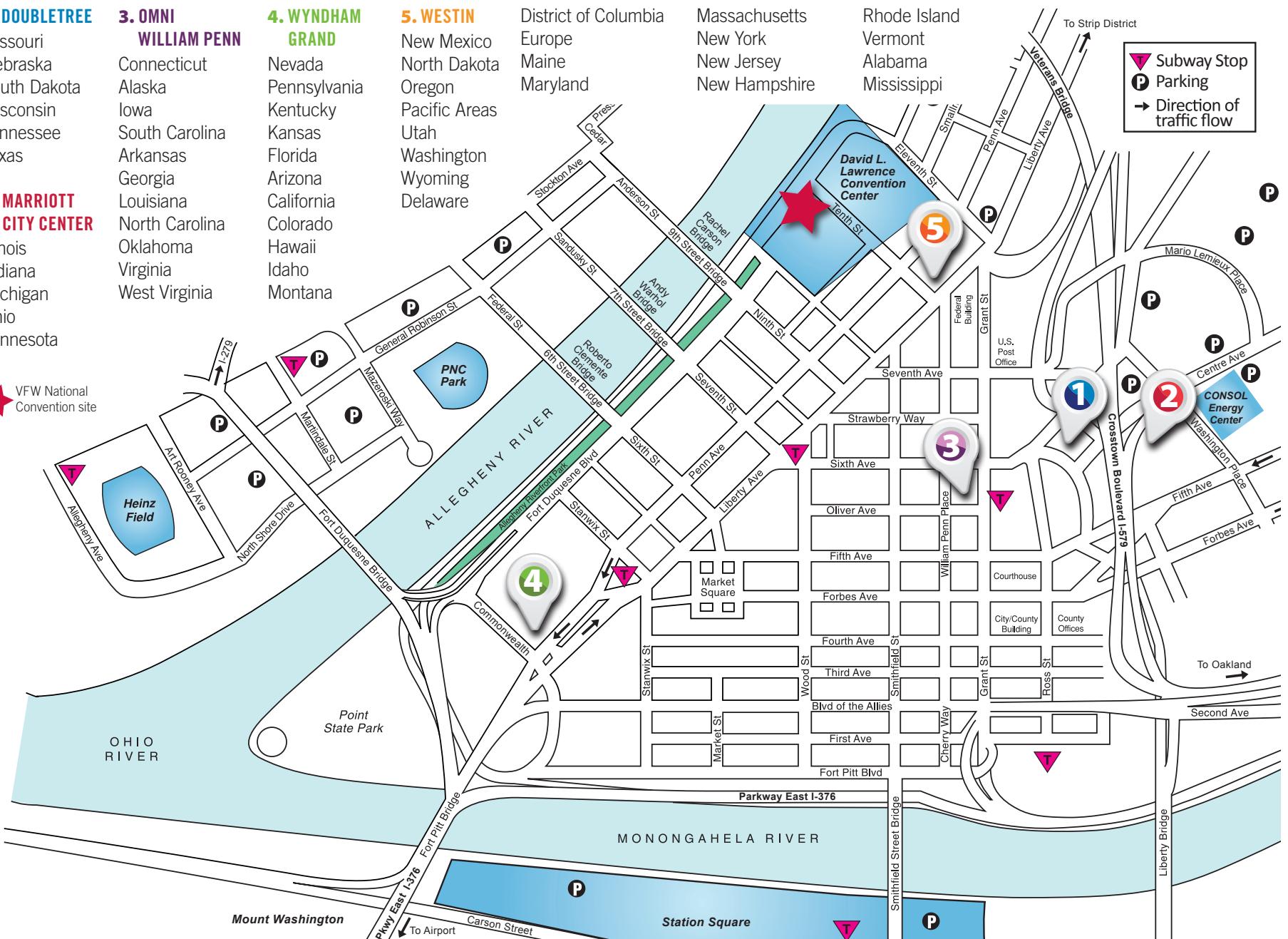
District of Columbia  
Europe  
Maine  
Maryland

Massachusetts  
New York  
New Jersey  
New Hampshire

Rhode Island  
Vermont  
Alabama  
Mississippi



VFW National Convention site



# Flag Mural Graces Alabama Post

VFW Post 49 in Mobile, Ala., sports a new U.S. flag mural on its roof in March courtesy of Scott LoBaido, a New York-based artist who vows to paint such a mural on buildings in all 50 states. Cheryl Rose, former Post 49 commander, said LoBaido chose her Post because of its location and shape of its roof.

“He contacted us after studying Google maps,” said Rose, who served with the Army Security Agency in Berlin from 1973-75. “He liked that our building sits on a busy street with a lot of exposure, and we wanted the Post to stand out.”

LoBaido worked for three days to finish the mural, after which the Post hosted a dedication and presented him with a certificate of appreciation on March 8. LoBaido, who is sponsored by Home Depot, told a local television station that the Post “called out to me” when he first saw it.

LoBaido will tour the country through the summer painting flag murals free-of-charge. His full itinerary can be viewed at [scottlobaido.com](http://scottlobaido.com).



PHOTO BY CINDY JOHNSON

MAY | JUNE 2015

## CHECKPOINT

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**  
VFW

### Posts with the Most

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS  
OR MORE AS OF APRIL 15, 2015

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members
1	27	Wiesbaden, Germany.....	2,745
2	1503	Dale City, VA .....	2,631
3	1114	Evansville, IN.....	2,232
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ.....	2,050
5	392	Virginia Beach, VA.....	1,803
6	8862	Vicenza, Italy.....	1,778
7	9785	Eagle River, AK.....	1,760
8	2485	Angeles City, Philippines.....	1,656
9	4372	Odessa, TX .....	1,635
10	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany.....	1,583

Rank	No.	Location	Members
11	63	Boise, ID .....	1,532
12	6873	Abilene, TX.....	1,508
13	76	San Antonio, TX.....	1,506
14	4647	North Highlands, CA.....	1,445
15	9342	Ansbach, Germany.....	1,432
16	6506	Rosedale, MD.....	1,426
17	3944	Overland-St. Ann, MO.....	1,410
18	10047	North Las Vegas, NV.....	1,367
19	628	Sioux Falls, SD.....	1,357
20	7234	Ocean View, DE.....	1,340
21	1146	St Clair Shores, MI.....	1,291
22	7968	Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,275
23	4709	Conroe, TX.....	1,264
23	1152	Kokomo, IN.....	1,264
25	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL.....	1,256
26	972	Terre Haute, IN.....	1,253
27	4809	Norfolk, VA.....	1,239
28	8951	West York, PA.....	1,216
29	549	Tucson, AZ.....	1,211
30	2503	Omaha, NE.....	1,185
31	2111	Chula Vista, CA.....	1,166
32	2866	Saint Charles, MO.....	1,161
33	2391	Saint Augustine, FL.....	1,156
34	1326	Bismarck, ND.....	1,126
34	7686	Alamogordo, NM.....	1,126
36	1273	Rapid City, SD.....	1,122
37	969	Tacoma, WA.....	1,097
38	10216	Songtan-Si, Korea.....	1,087
39	2995	Redmond, WA.....	1,079
40	56	Leavenworth, KS.....	1,070
41	1512	Lemon Grove, CA.....	1,062
42	1170	Middletown, KY.....	1,045
43	8541	San Antonio, TX.....	1,042
44	10436	Kitzingen, Germany.....	1,037
45	1599	Chambersburg, PA.....	1,033
46	7564	West Fargo, ND.....	1,022
47	10420	Murrells Inlet, SC.....	1,021
48	9399	Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,017
49	788	Cedar Rapids, IA.....	1,014
50	3282	Port Orange, FL.....	1,009
50	8696	Palm Coast, FL.....	1,009
52	401	Albuquerque, NM.....	1,002

[www.facebook.com/vfwcheckpointnewsletter](http://www.facebook.com/vfwcheckpointnewsletter) @VFWCheckpoint

# Assisting Vets in Pennsylvania

John Foster, Jr., VFW Department of Pennsylvania service officer, discusses VA benefits and health-care options with a young veteran and his wife at the Pennsylvania State Farm Show in Harrisburg in January this year. According to David Sandman, VFW's communications director for Pennsylvania, the Department recruited some 50 new members and collected about \$2,000 in donations.

“Getting membership leads is nice, but it’s vital that VFW is engaged in the veteran community so we can help identify those who need assistance and direct them to services that can enhance their lives,” Sandman said.

This is the fifth year the Department’s leadership—including the Ladies Auxiliary—has attended the Farm Show, which Sandman says is the largest indoor agricultural exposition in the nation, attracting several hundred thousand visitors during the eight-day event.



PHOTO BY DAVID SANDMAN