

CHECKPOINT



WHAT'S INSIDE

Extra! Extra!

- 2** • NMS receives \$20,000 in donations.
- Approved convention resolutions online at www.vfw.org.
- November is Veterans in the Classroom Month.

Service Officer Profiled

- 3** A VFW District service officer in Boston says his work gives his life "direction."

Family Embraces VFW Competitions

- 4** Eight of the 12 children in the Winston family of Milford, Del., have participated in the Voice of Democracy or Patriot's Pen essay contests.

Making the Wait Tolerable

- 5** Members of Post 322 and its Auxiliary in Colorado offer coffee and companionship at the local VA hospital.

WWII Vets Active at Posts

- 5** Recognizing those still serving VFW and their communities at the grassroots level.

'A Feeling of Really Helping'

- 6** Members of a New York Post not only adopt vets, they offer their homes.

'When Catastrophe Strikes'

- 7** In the wake of the April bombing at the Boston Marathon, the Massachusetts VFW raised \$14,000.

Businesses Reward Road Cleanup

Arizona Post Offers Kids a 'Learning and Earning' Experience

IMAGINE A YOUTH PROGRAM that teaches money management, environmental awareness and community involvement—all while raising money for a good cause. This program exists—and it's called BagReadyJobs.

The program, based out of Cornville, Ariz., some 100 miles north of Phoenix, has been around since 2009. It's backed by Adopt-a-Highway and Folksville USA, a non-profit also in Cornville that helps BagReadyJobs pair businesses and youth groups.

"We seek out any young-people organization looking for a fundraising opportunity and we take our idea-suggestion to them," said Post 6739 member and Folksville USA founder Gary Chamberlain. "We are trying to teach them how to be independent, creative, and self-motivating."

Its mission is to give kids, ages 12 and older in the Northern Arizona Valley, an opportunity to learn and clean up their

community, while raising money for their youth group on the side.

Four times a year in February, May, August and November, under adult supervision, kids pick up debris scattered along state highways. After spending a day gathering trash, the next three days are dedicated to learning about environmental concerns and what it means to keep America beautiful.

At the end of the near week-long experience, the teens write a 500-word essay on what they learned.

But before the BagReadyJobs crew take off, participants get a chance to sell their fully-stuffed 33-gallon trash bags to pre-selected businesses or individuals, including VFW Post 6739 in Camp Verde. The kids negotiate a price and typically receive between \$7 and \$10 per bag, which goes toward their organization.

A notable turnout was Boy Scout Troop 7021 of Cottonwood, which raised more than \$2,000 in 2010 for its own benefit.

BagReadyJobs, which is rapidly gaining popularity in Arizona, functions fully off of community donations. So when Chamberlain brought the program to his Post, they were on board to show their support.

"We're an aging Post and aren't able to pick up trash, but believe in the cause of BagReadyJobs," Post Commander Don Harder said. "We do what we can."

Since the program began in 2009, the Post has donated \$110 every year and participates in the bag wagering. One thing that the Post has definitely recognized is the great opportunity the program presents. Members believe it is truly something all Posts should become involved in.

"We take pride in donating to [BagReadyJobs]," Harder said. "It helps the community."

The future of BagReadyJobs is looking bright as more coordination requests from local youth groups pour in.

"If we can keep up this effort and make an impact on young folks," Chamberlain said, "this learning and earning opportunity will greatly benefit our country."

E-mail: kdawson@vfw.org



Northern Arizona Boys and Girls Club spends the day gathering garbage along the side of a state highway through the BagReadyJobs program on Oct. 4, 2013.



(Below) Two members of the Northern Arizona Boys and Girls Club pick up debris on the side of a state highway on Oct. 4, 2013.

PHOTOS COURTESY GARY CHAMBERLAIN



"We take pride in donating to [BagReadyJobs]. It helps the community."

— Don Harder, Post 6739 Commander

EXTRA! EXTRA!

\$20,000 WILL BOLSTER NMS IN 2014

During VFW's 114th National Convention in July in Louisville, Ky., VFW's National Military Services (NMS) received more than \$20,000 in total contributions from 12 VFW Departments and five VFW Posts.

The donating VFW Departments include: Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, West Virginia and Washington. The VFW Posts that donated are: Post 63, 1173 and 3646 of Idaho; Post 4666 of Colorado and Post 7686 of New Mexico.



The donations will help fund *Operation Uplink™*, *Unmet Needs* and the *Military Assistance Program* for the upcoming year.

ACCESS VFW RESOLUTIONS ONLINE

All VFW members can now obtain resolutions and bylaw amendments approved at VFW's national convention at www.vfw.org. By creating an account at VFW's website—www.vfw.org—with a valid member number, members can know exactly where the organization stands on a multitude of issues.

Once on the home page, simply click "Login" to get started. If you don't have an account, click "Create an Account." You will need to supply your name, member number, e-mail address and establish a password. At that point you will be logged on to "My VFW," and you can access approved bylaw amendments and resolutions under the heading "General Member Tools & Resources."

VETS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH IS HAPPENING NOW

For the entire month of November, VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools to talk about their military and home-front experiences to students.

Be sure to take photos of members interacting with the students when possible. If you do, the *Checkpoint* staff would like to see these photos for possible publication. Send any news articles and photos to Janie Blankenship at jblankenship@vfw.org.

VFW STORE BENEFITS VETERANS

Shopping the VFW Store for Veterans Day and the upcoming holidays makes perfect sense. Every purchase helps veterans, troops and their families.

Select from a variety of items, including U.S. flags, patriotic attire, VFW-logoed merchandise and more. To place an order go to www.vfwstore.org or call 1-800-821-2606 to request a free catalog.

TERM LIFE INSURANCE OFFERS SAVINGS

VFW-sponsored insurance makes getting term life insurance easy. Through an agreement with a term life insurance sales agency, you'll receive expert advice and guidance through the quoting and selection process.

They work for you to find the best price and coverage for the life insurance through their network of insurance companies rated "A-" or higher by A.M. Best. Learn more about how you can save money at www.vfwinsurance.com or by calling 1-800-821-2606, option 1.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the last issue of *Checkpoint*, "New Jersey Post Members Offer Wide Ranging War Experience," Gene Murphy was identified as a sailor. He was, in fact, an Army captain during the Vietnam War.

Leadership Perspectives

John Hamilton, Adjutant General

Lou Diamond Phillips Speaks for VFW

VFW now has a veterans advocate with a famous face to promote itself. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips agreed in October to be our national spokesman, and it's a relationship that holds great promise.

Phillips is intimately tied to veterans. He was born in 1962 at Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines. His biological father and stepfather both served in the Navy, and he was named for WWII Marine Gunnery Sgt. Leland "Lou" Diamond.

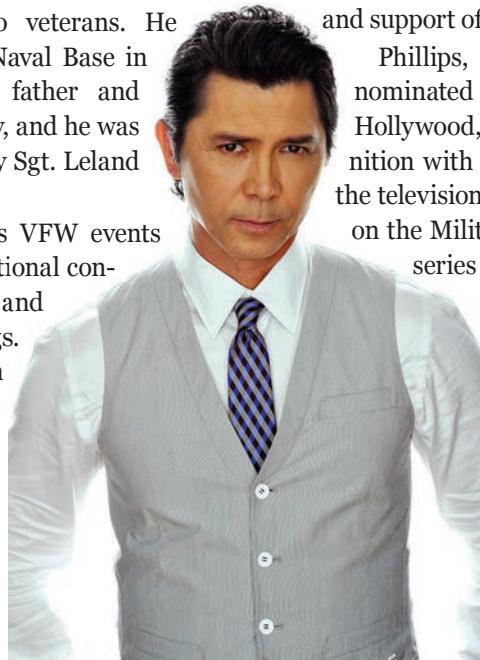
Phillips will appear at various VFW events over the next year, such as our national convention, certain state conventions and perhaps even conference meetings. He has agreed to star in television and radio advertisements, as well as participate in special VFW events. In short, Phillips is willing to do whatever we want as long as his schedule permits.

The reason for our partnership with Phillips is obvious: he cares about veterans and has the

star-power to generate positive publicity for VFW. He is a long-time supporter of veterans, most recently evidenced by his Legacy of Achievement Award, which the USO presented him in March for his commitment to and support of the nation's troops.

Phillips, a Golden Globe and Tony Award nominated actor, also is an established star in Hollywood, which gives VFW instant recognition with the public. He is currently hosting the television program "An Officer and a Movie" on the Military Channel, and stars in the A&E series "Longmire."

But most important, Phillips shares VFW's passion for veterans. He is keenly aware that at certain times throughout its history, the nation has called on these men and women when it desperately needed them. Now, he will help us remind Americans that it's time they took care of this 1% of the population that took care of them in their time of need.



Bob Greene, Quartermaster General

Posts Can Help Protect Members

The statistics on accidents are not encouraging—accidents are the fifth leading cause of death across all age groups. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were more than 120,000 unintentional injury deaths in the U.S. in 2010, with the majority of the accidental deaths occurring while performing routine, everyday activities.

While we don't like to think about it, and we do our best to be mindful of our actions, accidents do happen. And they don't come without a cost. VFW wants to help make the financial burden a bit easier.

As a benefit to VFW Posts and their members, VFW sponsors a Post Accidental Death & Dismemberment plan that provides a cash benefit to members of participating Posts in the event of a member's death or dismemberment. This coverage is an additional benefit to the No-Cost Personal Accident

Insurance that all VFW members in good standing receive with their membership.

When Post Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage is purchased by a Post, all members of the Post (in good standing with VFW National Headquarters) are automatically entitled to the benefits.



It's available at a nominal annual rate of \$1.35 per member.

A benefit of \$1,050 is paid to the VFW member's beneficiary in the event of the member's accidental death. Benefits also are paid for loss of sight or limbs. Additionally, all benefit amounts are doubled if the accident or loss of life occurs on the covered VFW Post's premises or while attending a VFW-sponsored event.

VFW Post Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage is an easy way to add value to your Post membership, and it lets your members know you care about their financial well-being should a devastating accident happen to them.

To enroll your Post or to learn more, visit <http://www.vfwinsurance.com/post-accidental-death-insurance.html> or call VFW's Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606, option 1.

CHECKPOINT

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

© November/December 2013



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

Boston Service Officer Says Work Gives His Life 'Direction'

THE UNIFORM IS RETIRED AND THE RIFLE IS SAFELY STORED. But for service officers like Christian Kulikoski in Boston, giving back is far from finished.

During his eight years in the Army, Kulikoski served throughout the Middle East, including Kuwait.

In February 2000, he made his exit with an honorable discharge and spent the next few years working for VA in various positions in Boston; El Paso, Texas; and Las Cruces, N.M. In January 2011, he accepted his position as a VFW District service officer.

"I wanted to make a positive impact on veterans' lives," Kulikoski said. "The idea of being a service officer excited me and gave my life a new direction."



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTIAN KULIKOSKI

Then-Post commander and District service officer Christian Kulikoski hands over a Post donation to Cathy Carangelo-Mclsaac of the North End Against Drugs (NEAD) organization in Boston on Oct. 21, 2010.

"There's so much misinformation out there, and VFW exists to rectify that."

— Christian Kulikoski
District Service Officer

The service officer, with his optimistic outlook, assists approximately 200 veterans a month. Kulikoski shares his Boston office with four other employees, three of whom also are veterans.

His team works with vets of varying age and experience. Most commonly their office deals with claims of post-traumatic stress disorder, hearing loss and diabetes. But a large part of his job is navigating veterans through the labyrinth known as the VA system.

"It's very rewarding that I can explain something to a vet that he or she never knew before," Kulikoski said, a former Post commander at Post 144 in the North End neighborhood of Boston. "There's so much misinformation out there, and VFW exists to rectify that."

Putting in more than 40 hours a week, Kulikoski's hard work has not gone unnoticed.

"I enjoy working with Christian, he's very easy to work with," said Leah LaPoint, the executive assistant in Kulikoski's office. "He cares very much for our clients, and it shows in the work that he does."

For Kulikoski, highlights in his days include helping the homeless and WWII veterans obtain benefits that improve their quality of life.

"One thing to remember is to be patient with the claims process and always remind veterans that you're here to protect their interests," Kulikoski said. "It's very important for service officers to be able to connect."

E-mail: kdawson@vfw.org



VFW Service Officers by the Numbers

VFW accredited service officers provide veterans with unmatched knowledge and experience when it comes to filing a VA claim. Earlier this year, a Vietnam veteran utilized the expertise of a VFW service officer and was awarded \$500,000 in retroactive compensation.

In addition to offering extensive understanding of the latest laws and regulations related to VA benefits, service officers know the correct channels to follow up on a claim's status and how to file a Notice of Disagreement with VA should the claim decision come back unfavorably.

VFW magazine recently collected the following numbers pertaining to service officer success in 2012:

• 276 service officers in the VFW network.

• 25,000 veterans helped.

• \$3.7 billion in recovered VA benefits.

If you need help filing a claim, find a VFW service officer using the information below, or check out the complete listing of accredited service officers in the January 2014 issue of VFW magazine.

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 >>

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

Delaware Family Values VFW's Youth Scholarship Programs

For the past 13 years, the Bradley and Lisa Winston family of Milford, Del., has been intertwined with VFW's Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen competitions.

The family boasts 12 children—six boys and six girls, ages 7 to 27. All of the children are homeschooled by Lisa, who has an education degree.

While neither parent had heard of VFW's essay competitions at the time, they got a call in 2000 when their eldest daughter, Kirsten, was at the freshman level of her schooling. Bobby Manning with Post 7478 in Greenwood, Del., contacted the family to see if Kirsten would like to enter the VOD contest. According to Lisa, a lot of families did not know that homeschooled children are eligible for the competitions.

"We decided to do so, and that was the beginning of a wonderful friendship that has lasted more than a decade," said Lisa, whose father and grandfather are both veterans. "We are very thankful to VFW and appreciate all they do to encourage youth. They have been a big blessing to our family."

Incidentally, Bradley, a pediatrician, was born in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital because his father was a Navy officer.

The Winston children started participating in 2000 with Kirsten in VOD and younger sister, Annelisa, in Patriot's Pen. Both daughters won at the Post, District and Department levels. Every year since then, at least one of the children has placed in the Post competition if not higher.

Lisa said Kirsten's win provided her daughter with much confidence. The eldest daughter went on to write curriculum at Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Va., where she majored in classical Liberal Arts Education. She also wrote the script and music for a musical put on by her classmates. Now, Kirsten is married and has three children, with a fourth on the way, and lives in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Likewise, Annelisa pursued a career in nursing at Pensacola Christian College in Pensacola, Fla., and now teaches clinical classes to nursing students in Florida. Edith Vincent, a member of the Greenwood VFW, used to share with Annelisa her experiences being a nurse and became an inspiration to Annelisa.

The Winstons credit their local VFW with so much more than the scholarship opportunities. According to Lisa, her children sing at nursing homes, deliver Meals on Wheels, and have participated in Post patriotic programs throughout the years.

"We are very thankful for their investment in our children," Lisa said. "We also are thankful to VFW for the college scholarships that our children have been awarded throughout the years. They have been a wonderful help in paying for our



PHOTOS COURTESY WINSTON FAMILY

The family boasts 12 children—six boys and six girls, ages 7 to 27. All of the children are homeschooled by Lisa, who has an education degree.

Bradley and Lisa Winston of Milford, Del., are flanked by their 12 children, son-in-law and three grandchildren. They credit VFW's Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy programs with helping finance their children's college educations. So far, eight of the children have participated in the programs.

children's college educations. It is not always easy finding scholarships when you homeschool your children."

In addition to Kirsten and Annelisa, David, Benjamin, Jonathan, Joy, Josiah, and Rachel have all participated and have placed at some level in the Voice of Democracy Contest. All but Kirsten also have participated in Patriot's Pen.

Kirsten, Jonathan and Josiah all made it to the national level in VOD. Daughter Grace is participating for the first time this year in Patriot's Pen. The younger children are looking forward to entering the competitions when they are old enough, Lisa said.

"We are honored to be considered part of the 'family' at the Post," Lisa said, "and are thankful for the friendships we have made and the influence these veterans have had on our children's lives."

E-mail: JBlankenship@vfw.org

In Their Own Words



"I am so thankful for VFW, particularly for the veterans and their families of Greenwood Post 7478. They encouraged me in my younger years to speak out for freedom and for my beliefs; and they provided scholarship money, which helped me pay for college and graduate debt free. The Patriot's Pen and VOD programs provided an opportunity for me to learn how to translate my thoughts into words that were organized, clear, concise and powerful. I thank VFW for fostering patriotism in me, and for continuing to invest in developing patriotism in the youth of America—the generation of our future leaders."

Annelisa Winston



"VFW has invested so much in me. They have helped open my eyes to the issues that America faces as well as the rich heritage America possesses. VFW has influenced me the most in a practical way. While I am here at college, I come in contact with many military families, and the research I have done while writing essays for VFW has given me a deep appreciation for the sacrifice they are making. I am so thankful to VFW for their contribution in making others aware of such sacrifices. It has been wonderful being able to participate in VFW, and I count it a privilege to be the recipient of their investment in my life."

Joy Winston



"VFW has helped me to shape my views of America in so many ways. As I've participated in both the VOD and Patriot's Pen Essay contests, I've been challenged to think about what I believe and why. The one thing I think I have gotten the most out of, however, is watching all the members of the Greenwood VFW Post 7478. The people at VFW know what a privilege it is to live free in America, and have passed this appreciation and love on to me; for this I will always be truly grateful."

Rachel Winston



"Currently enrolled as a sophomore at Pensacola Christian College, the funds and experience I received from both of these programs was invaluable. The college scholarship I received from the VOD speech contest was a tremendous help to me financially, helping to pay my tuition for my first year of college. The influence, support and character I have learned from VFW has had such a great influence in my life. I am forever grateful and truly indebted to our nation's veterans and especially the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

Jonathan Winston

continued on page 8

VFW Volunteers Make VA Waiting Time Tolerable

ANYONE WHO HAS EVER SAT WAITING FOR AN APPOINTMENT at their local VA medical center knows what waiting really means. Sometimes, it means sitting for hours on end. The VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver is certainly no exception.

That's why area VFW Posts do what they can to make the waiting more tolerable. Volunteers staff a coffee booth in the main waiting room of the hospital. Members of Post 322 and its Ladies Auxiliary in nearby Englewood are among those pulling 4-5 hour shifts twice a month.



Post 322 Commander Lyle Carter, left, hands a cup of coffee to Marine veteran Robert Sanders last April as Post volunteers staffed the free coffee booth at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver. PHOTO BY TOM MUNDS, ENGLEWOOD HERALD

"This is about more than our Post," said Lyle Carter, Post 322 Commander. "There are volunteers from other Posts as well because we need to have the booth manned Monday through Friday."

During every shift, the volunteers dole out some 450 to 500 free cups of coffee or hot chocolate.

A Korean War vet who served with the 1st Marine Air Wing, Carter has been volunteering at the coffee booth since 1996. His VA volunteer efforts go well beyond that, though, and he has seen lots of changes in that time, he says.

"Really, the entire VA has changed from when I first started coming here," said Carter, who boasts nine children and 16 grandchildren. "Now the staff even smiles and are helpful. Back then, they didn't even smile. There seems to be a lot of women doctors now, too. We see a lot of women veterans today."

Those are not the only changes, though. At one time, the volunteers had to brew pots of coffee so that it was typically pretty strong. Today, a machine brews the coffee so that each pot is the same strength. The booth is funded entirely by donations from veterans groups.

Carter, whose wife always volunteered with him before her death in March, says he enjoys the experience each week because he meets so many interesting people. Other volunteers include Phil Phillips and Ruby Clark.

The patients and family members in the waiting room appreciate the smiles and conversation as much as the beverage service.

"It is so nice to have the coffee booth here," Iraq War vet Mike Latrell told the *Englewood Herald* in April. "It's usually a fair wait to see my doctor, so the coffee is sort of a pick-me-up. Bless them for being here, and I really appreciate the smiles, a little conversation and, of course, a free cup of coffee."

E-mail: JBlankenship@vfw.org



1,808 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 1,808 such Post leaders since the March/April 2009 issue. We will continue to feature this section in subsequent issues until every WWII Post leader whose name is submitted is recognized.

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

Checkpoint

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



Name	Position	Post/Location
Al Acey	Trustee	Post 2193, Melrose Park, Ill.
Arthur Arnold	Judge Advocate	Post 6899, Trinity, Texas
John Britain	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 6958, Marion, Kan.
Charles Buennagel	Chaplain	Post 5297, Cathlamet, Wash.
Sam Butler	Chaplain	Post 67, Sacramento, Calif.
Henri Buzy	Chaplain	Post 6061, Colonia, N.J.
Doc Callahan	Guard	Post 11234, Gardner, Kan.
Hector Canestrini	Trustee	Post 2193, Melrose Park, Ill.
Leo Cannici	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 2193, Melrose Park, Ill.
Stanley Dudley	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 683, Ellensburg, Wash.
George "Jack" Eckert	Asst. QM	Post 420, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
Robert Ellis	Judge Advocate	Post 11234, Gardner, Kan.
Gene K. Foster	Commander	Post 3974, Eldora, Iowa
Charles Frascotti	Adjutant	Post 1544, Milford, Mass.
Louis C. Giralдин	Judge Advocate	Post 3436, Issaquah, Wash.
Adolfo Gonzales	Trustee	Post 8782, El Paso, Texas

Name	Position	Post/Location
Joe Greska	Surgeon	Post 1544, Milford, Mass.
Howell Hedrick	Judge Advocate	Post 6158, Fair Oaks, Calif.
Larry Hughes	Commander	Post 1544, Milford, Mass.
Clement P. Kachelmyer	Trustee	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
Ernest L. Lamson	Quartermaster	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
James E. Lee	Trustee	Post 3893, Nacogdoches, Texas
Robert Madrid	Officer of the Day	Post 8782, El Paso, Texas
Augustine Martinez	Surgeon	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
Jerry McClanahan	Trustee	Post 8748, South Bend, Ind.
Donald Micco	Honor Guard	Post 6846, Geneva, Ohio Allan
Michaels	Commander	Post 6003, Oxford, Wis.
Melvin A. Michiels	Asst. Chaplain	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
Sam Mock	Trustee	Post 6904, Fortville, Ind.
Jim Muscaritillo	Quartermaster	Post 1544, Milford, Mass.
Charles Noskoviak	Trustee	Post 2110, Mount Carmel, Pa.
Melvin R. Ogg	Trustee	Post 12118, Copperopolis, Calif.
Maurice Panagian	Trustee	Post 1544, Milford, Mass.
Montford C. Patton	Trustee	Post 7477, Hopedale, Ohio
Norman O. Peery	Surgeon	Post 3436, Issaquah, Wash.
Ted Rocca	Judge Advocate	Post 6061, Colonia, N.J.
Bill Rutherford	Trustee	Post 10574, Colonial Beach, Va.
Lou Salvino	Trustee	Post 2193, Melrose Park, Ill.
Alfred Schleifer	Hospital Escort	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
Robert Shippee	Trustee	Post 11234, Gardner, Kan.
Wight Sims	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 2981, Oakley, Kan.
Fred J. Smith, Jr.	Commander	Post 707, Mandan, N.D.
Matthew C. Sprangers	Historian	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
Walter Straus	Trustee	Post 303, Winslow, N.J.
Elmer C. Svendsen	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 5, St. Paul, Minn.
Otto Thorstenson	Trustee	Post 4117, Waukon, Iowa
Emerson Warner	Judge Advocate	Post 3288, Brookville, Ohio
Robert Wasson	Officer of the Day	Post 11234, Gardner, Kan.
Al Wenzel	Surgeon	Post 6377, Sussex, Wis.
Adam Zajackowski	Trustee	Post 8342, Ringle, Wis.

New York Post Embraces Spirit of Helping Veterans

“Our members take so much pride in the Post. They call the Post ‘home.’ That’s what I want our veterans to feel when they come to a Post like ours—to be able to say, ‘This is my home.’”

—Patrick Cammilleri, Post 8495 Commander.



Veterans living in an elderly care facility in Fairport, N.Y., receive certificates of recognition for their military service on Veterans Day 2012. Members of Post 8495 visited the home as part of the Post’s *Adopt-a-Vet* program, in which Post members provide support to veterans in the community. PHOTO COURTESY PATRICK CAMMILLERI

THE MEMBERS OF POST 8495 IN FAIRPORT, N.Y., are dedicated to their community.

“We’re a very active Post—very involved,” Post Commander Patrick Cammilleri said. “We try and get people to see that we are a very community-oriented Post.”

But within that community, Cammilleri, who served with the Army in Berlin from 1962-66, says, there is a specific group that the Post reaches out to: veterans in distress. The Post is located just nine miles from Rochester, N.Y., and assists the state’s veterans court, which works with non-violent criminal offenders who are veterans for rehabilitation rather than incarceration. And in the spirit of veterans courts, Post 8495 developed a program called *Adopt-a-Vet*.

“It’s a unique process and every case is unique,” Cammilleri said. “It comes in different colors and different sizes.”

Members agree to partner with a local veteran, and assistance can range from tasks such as accompanying the veteran to an event, assisting with airline flights, or—in extreme cases—taking the veteran into the member’s home.

Randy and Maureen Clark have fully embraced this notion by literally adopting a WWII veteran. The 92-year-old man lives with the family—he even vacations with them. And they ensure he gets to his appointments and takes his medication.

“It’s about being happy, being part of a family,” Cammilleri said. “They treat him like one of their family. And this has added to the longevity of his life.”

But the Post does smaller things for veterans and their families in the community. Members regularly visit the local VA hospital. They throw pizza parties and picnics for veterans. And they organize a Christmas party every year—all paid for through Post fundraising such as Buddy Poppy donations and golf tournaments.

Cammilleri says that Post leaders make a point to go out in the community and encourage participation in Post events, regardless of whether the veterans attending are members.

Three years ago, Post officers visited all six of the assisted living facilities in the community and invited the residents to attend the activities planned to honor area veterans. As a result, the number of attendees at Post ceremonial events more than quadrupled.

“Some even wanted to join the Post, but that’s what you do,” Cammilleri said. “You have to reach out to the community. They need to be recognized and feel that self worth.”

And that, Cammilleri stresses, is all part of the *Adopt-a-Vet* program as well. By hosting parties and visiting the VA hospital, Cammilleri says it shows that the Post cares about veterans.

“It’s everything we can do to make veterans feel a part of something,” he said. “They are not alone.”

By providing welcoming events and encouraging all eras of veterans to get involved at the Post level, Cammilleri says his Post becomes a social hub and is able to sustain itself and its membership.

“Our members take so much pride in the Post,” Cammilleri said. “They call the Post ‘home.’ That’s what I want our veterans to feel when they come to a Post like ours—to be able to say, ‘This is my home.’”

Regardless of the involvement each member has when participating in *Adopt-a-Vet*, emotional bonds between the veterans still form. One member worked with a WWII veteran, making sure he participated in an “honor flight” to visit the national WWII memorial in Washington, D.C. When the WWII veteran passed away, the member was sure to attend the funeral.

“There is a feeling of really helping someone in real life,” Cammilleri said. “It’s not just words, and that’s one of the things this program does.”

Cammilleri himself has adopted a veteran in his community. For the past four years, Cammilleri has been helping a Korean War veteran get out of debt. By working with the veteran regularly, Cammilleri has helped the man become more self-sufficient and able to start saving money.

Now, once a month, Cammilleri makes his work with the veteran more like a fun outing. They go out to breakfast before they start talking finances and run errands. For Cammilleri, as well as for his adopted veteran, this has become a lifestyle.

“I can’t let go of him; there’s no one else to look after him,” Cammilleri said. “You get attached to the person.”

And it’s possible for other Posts to emulate a similar program. Cammilleri says the hardest part is just getting started.

“Once you start, you have to stay with it,” the Post commander said. “For a lot of the folks, they don’t have the manpower, but they must ask who will lead. Get them excited about what you are doing, and they will get involved.”

E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org



Top Post Donations:
Post 905 – Gardner, Mass.
Post 115 – Attleboro, Mass.
Post 144 – North End Boston
Post 1018 – Boston Police

VFW FILE PHOTO

'When Catastrophe Strikes, We Want to Help'

Massachusetts VFW Donates \$14,000 to Boston Bombing Victims

ON THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 15, 2013, tragedy struck at the 117th annual Boston Marathon. Bombs placed inside two pressure cookers located near the finish line exploded, killing three and injuring some 264.

As the nation banded together to support the “Cradle of Liberty,” so too did VFW.

“When catastrophe strikes, we want to help,” said George D. Murray, national council member and current member at Post 1018 in Boston. “Look at what VFW does for people and other organizations. When so many people were hurt, I decided VFW should help.”

A lifelong resident of Boston, Murray felt connected to the tragedy and took to Facebook to solicit donations on behalf of the Department of Massachusetts:

“I have a lot of friends on Facebook, so I would share it and keep sharing it. Then they would share it.”

As word spread, donations came from Posts, as well as individuals outside the organization. One donation included a football signed by Tom Brady, the quarterback for the New England Patriots. The football was part of a raffle and raised some \$4,070.

The Department raised a total of \$13,980 and presented a check to the One Fund Boston at the Department awards banquet in June.

“Someone needed to step up to the plate and get this thing going,” said Murray, an Army veteran who served in Vietnam from 1964-65. “We wanted to give to a good cause, and make that gift through VFW.”

The One Fund Boston was established by the city of Boston to assist victims with needs after the bombing. The group has raised some \$60 million to help victims pay medical bills and rehabilitation costs, as well as any other financial hardships families and victims experienced as a result of the attack.

E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org

Military Families Targeted

Illinois Post Assists Victims of ‘Grandparent Scam’



CHUCK AND NANCY PADILLA OF RANTOUL, ILL., got a call in August 2012, from their grandson Brian. He frantically asked the couple for money. He had been to a wedding in Mexico, gotten drunk and crashed a car. He needed help but didn’t want to alarm anyone, so if they could refrain from calling his wife in Paris, then that would really help him.

Of course Chuck and Nancy immediately wired Brian the money. But the person on the other end was not Brian, rather a scam artist.

The scam is commonly called the “grandparent scam,” a telephone-based scam that targets the elderly and has been around since 2008, according to the FBI. Criminals use social media sites to find personal information to seem more believable while impersonating the victim’s grandchild. The FBI reports also that the scam is common in military families under the rouse that the child is on military leave and got into trouble in a foreign country.

All told, the scammers got \$109,000 from the Padilla family. It didn’t end until Nancy decided to call Brian’s wife in Paris and Brian answered the phone.



Chuck Padilla, a member of Post 6750, and his wife, Nancy, were victims of a telephone scam that cost them \$109,000 in 2012. Members of Padilla’s Post and community raised some \$5,582 to help recoup the couple’s losses. PHOTO COURTESY RANTOUL PRESS

To recoup the loss, several groups leapt into action, including VFW Post 6750 in Rantoul, Ill., which raised \$5,582 at a fundraising auction and pork dinner in March 2013.

Chuck, who served in the Marines from 1947-1949 as a translator, then with the Air Force from 1949-1952, is a life member of Post 6750. When the local paper picked up the story, canteen manager Brenda Wise—among others at the Post—began organizing a way to help the Padilla family make up for the losses.

“He does a lot around town,” said Post Commander Steve Carpenter. “They’re a really great family, and we’re happy to help. But we would have done it for anyone.”

Local businesses and community members donated all of the time and resources necessary to facilitate the fundraiser last March. Carpenter estimated that some 150 members of surrounding communities attended to show their support.

“We raised a good amount of money for them,” said Les Kuelbs, the Post surgeon. “It wasn’t complete, but it helped. That’s what we do for our veterans. Everyone thinks we just come out and drink, but we send boxes to GIs overseas, we have flag ceremonies, we help families in distress. Everything we do is to help. That’s what it’s all about.”

And again, this summer, the Padilla’s were targeted for a similar phone scam. This time, Chuck and Nancy were wise to the signs and did not fall victim to the ploy.

E-mail: kgibson@vfw.org



In Their Own Words, *continued*

"I was honored to win the VOD contest, and getting to go to DC was phenomenal. Being able to meet the winners from every state while also learning about our country's history was truly amazing! I am so thankful for VFW for what they have taught me about sacrificing to make our country great."

Josiah Winston



"I so appreciate the investment that VFW has made in my life! Being involved with our local Post—whether being invited to help with their barbecues, bringing cheer to nursing homes, or speaking at patriotic events—allowed me to get to know the veterans in my community and to learn from their examples. The scholarships and prizes VFW awarded were a significant help to me when I attended college, and I am very grateful for their investment in my life and education. The members of our Post have become good friends. They have demonstrated over and over again what sacrifice and kindness mean—it is not just serving overseas or putting your life on the line in one great crescendo of a moment (though they have all done that!); it is the quiet serving every day, wherever you are, with whatever talents and means you have, for as long as you live, that makes a world of difference."

Kirsten (Winston) Dalton



NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2013

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 OCT. 15, 2013

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members
1	27	Wiesbaden, Germany.....	2,619
2	1114	Evansville, IN.....	2,255
3	1503	Dale City, VA.....	2,139
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ.....	1,771
5	2485	Angeles City, Philippines.....	1,575
6	9785	Eagle River, AK.....	1,534
7	8862	Vicenza, Italy.....	1,527
8	392	Virginia Beach, VA.....	1,481
9	6506	Rosedale, MD.....	1,393
10	4372	Odessa, TX.....	1,365

Rank	No.	Location	Members
11	4647	North Highlands, CA.....	1,330
12	9342	Ansbach, Germany.....	1,270
13	628	Sioux Falls, SD.....	1,253
14	63	Boise, ID.....	1,221
15	1146	St Clair Shores, MI.....	1,219
16	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany.....	1,192
17	7234	Ocean View, DE.....	1,161
18	972	Terre Haute, IN.....	1,151
19	6873	Abilene, TX.....	1,112
20	10047	North Las Vegas, NV.....	1,090
21	2111	Chula Vista, CA.....	1,081
22	1512	Lemon Grove, CA.....	1,060
23	2503	Omaha, NE.....	1,058
24	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL.....	1,057
25	4809	Norfolk, VA.....	1,054
26	549	Tucson, AZ.....	1,053
27	1273	Rapid City, SD.....	1,043
28	10436	Kitzingen, Germany.....	1,041
29	1326	Bismarck, ND.....	1,028
30	56	Leavenworth, KS.....	1,010
31	1599	Chambersburg, PA.....	1,009
32	7686	Alamogordo, NM.....	1,008

www.facebook.com/vfwcheckpointnewsletter

@VFWCheckpoint

PHOTOS COURTESY WISCONSIN VFW NEWS



VFW Members Volunteer in Classroom



Donning colonial period clothing, Jim and Alice Byrnes, members of Post 2113 and its Auxiliary in De Pere, Wis., spoke with students in November 2012 at Dickinson Elementary School in De Pere. To recognize Veterans in the Classroom Month in November, the duo presented a program on the history of the U.S. flag, also explaining the meaning of what the stars and stripes symbolize. The couple also discussed what life was like during the American Revolution.

E-mail: JBlankenship@vfw.org