



# Virginia VETERAN

Official Publication of Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars

Official Publication of the Department of Virginia ★ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Volume 4, Issue 1

April 2015

## Department Commander



**Earle P. (Buddy) Weekley, Jr.**  
Commander

The first week in March, most all Departments descended on Washington, D.C. for our annual Legislative Conference. The conference gives us the opportunity to meet with our representative and discuss Veterans issues. Although the weather was horrible, Virginia was well represented. I would like to thank Doc Crouch for arranging all the appointments with our representatives. The highlight of the conference was the awarding of the Voice of Democracy scholarships. Unfortunately our entry didn't place first. Brady Jernigan placed twenty-third and received a \$2,000 scholarship.

Finally, membership, membership, membership, without it we would not be able to do all the great things we do for veterans and our communities. I want to thank Tommy Hines and Ken Wiseman for their recruiting efforts in the Fourth and Fifth Districts. I talked to Ken and the recruiting drive was a success and they also did a little coaching with the Posts they visited. I would also like to thank Ken Wiseman for the excellent job he has done with our hospital program. I have visited three of our VA hospitals and am looking forward to visiting with the Salem VA in the near future.

"Time doesn't stand still, time marches on." By the time this messages goes to print all Posts should have nominated their officers for the incoming year. Yes, that's correct, nomination in March, election in April, and install in May. I hope your Post considered nominating some of your younger members who are active in your Post. Sometimes that is all it takes to make a struggling Post an active Post again.

The first week in March, most all Departments descended on

The following article was originally published prior to the formation of Post 12145—Ed.

## VFW forming Dinwiddie chapter as recruitment drives continue

Article and photo provided by Hermes Publications – The Dinwiddie Monitor — Reprinted with permission.

They've deployed to foreign lands, protected their country against the enemy and served a grateful nation. Now those military veterans will be able to gather locally with others who have had such challenging experiences as a new chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the process of becoming a reality in Dinwiddie County.

Several of the future charter members are still holding recruitment drives and getting out in the public to meet with those who are interested in joining.

Tom Hines, with the VFW, is excited about the project as he meets with community members to share the non-profit organization's vision.

Already they have had more than 25 applicants who have been reached through word of mouth and at events where Hines and other veterans have provided information about the goals. "Dinwiddie has a lot of veterans and it's a good fit," Hines said of starting a chapter here.

Before the Veterans of Foreign Wars was established, Hines says, those who served and many who were ill or wounded did not have the benefits they are provided today.

The VFW traces its roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service: Many arrived home wounded or sick. There was no medical care or veterans' pension for them, and they were left to care for themselves.

"In their misery, some of these veterans banded together and formed organizations with what would become known as the

*(Dinwiddie: continued on page 3)*



**VFW DEPARTMENT of VIRGINIA**  
 403 LEE JACKSON HIGHWAY  
 STAUNTON, VA 24401  
 PHONE: 1-800-888-3521  
 FAX: 1-866-416-0586

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VFW Post 7589  
 Attn: Virginia Veteran  
 PO Box 10206  
 Manassas, VA 20108

**Articles for the next issue must be received before  
 October 31, 2015.**

Please address all comments to the above address.

We reserve to right to edit all submitted articles for timeliness, clarity and syntax.

## Editor's Comments

*Rick Raskin*

This edition of Virginia Veteran marks the debut of our online publication. The marketing firm that had been funding our printed versions cancelled the contract with the Department of Virginia due to their unmet revenue forecasts.

We will continue to publish biannually online. A PDF version will be available for download on the Department website: [www.vfwva.org](http://www.vfwva.org) and will also be emailed to all department officers, including Post and District commanders. Posts are encouraged to cascade distribution to their members.

We are no longer restricted to the number of pages or photographs we can publish. This is your paper to talk about what your Posts are doing. Please submit your articles so we can publicize the great things you do.

Articles and photos submitted by email should be included as separate attached files.

Thank You!

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(Dinwiddie: continued from page 1)

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. By 1915, membership grew to 5,000; by 1936, membership was almost 200,000, the VFW web site states.

Hines says the VFW is important to preserving the entitlements and keeping veterans administration hospitals funded and safe. The organization is the voice for veterans fighting for compensation for Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and those diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome. They have also been instrumental in getting the GI Bill and other educational benefits as well as developing the national cemetery system.

The VFW provides scholarship funding for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, Voice of Democracy programs and scholarships and much more to youth.

Hines, a Vietnam War veteran who served from 1968 to 1971, visited the area with other veterans including William Haney, Skip Klaas and Don Westerlund. They all have served proudly in dangerous situations and feel it's a good thing for Dinwiddie to



**District 4 welcomes a new Post to their roster. (L-R) Bill Haney--new recruit--School Board Member-nominee for Sr. Vice Commander, Tom Hines--PDC-- State Membership Chairman, Don Westerlund--Fourth District Commander, Dept. of Virginia, Adrian Klaas--new recruit--nominee for new Post Quartermaster.**

get it's own chapter.

There are many benefits, but especially being charter members, Hines notes. He said those charter members will leave a legacy because their names will always be associated with the organization whether its 50 or 100 years down the road as long as that

chapter is in existence their names will be listed as charter members.

"It is a great honor to be a charter member," Hines added.

To be eligible applicants must be a U.S. citizen who has served honorably in an overseas conflict, received a campaign medal for overseas service, served 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days in Korea or received hostile fire or imminent danger pay.

Those who are interested or want more information can contact Hines at 434-774-7729 or e-mail: a69v\_vet@yahoo.com, Westerlund at 434-696-8537 or e-mail dwesterlundva@gmail.com, Tonia Talbott at 434-949-1049 or e-mail ttalbott3@yahoo.com, Brenda Armstrong at 804-592-8481 or e-mail brendaarmstrong4@hotmail.com.

The following newspaper article related to the Dinwiddie Post 12145 Instituting Ceremony is reprinted with permission.

By Amir Vera

**DINWIDDIE** — Today marks a new opportunity for local veterans to meet right here in the county. The Veterans of Foreign Wars organization hosts its first official meeting this afternoon at the Eastside Community Enhancement Center.

Any and all area veterans are invited to take part in the meeting, scheduled from 2 to 5 p.m., where members will hold officer elections as well as plan events for the coming year.

"It's important for us to have a Post there and it's important for Dinwiddie County, because Dinwiddie has a lot of veterans there and we support several community activities," said Don Westerlund, VFW District 4 commander.

The process of this organization began in August 2013, when Kenneth B. Wiseman, III Chair, State Student Veterans CMTE and PDC/Department Membership Chairman Tom

Hines visited the Southside Virginia Community College campus in Alberta, to promote the VFW membership benefits to the campus Student Veteran Association. It was here that Hines met SVA faculty adviser and SVCC counselor Tonia Talbot. As a Dinwiddie resident and five-year Navy veteran, Talbot thought that the county needed a chapter.

"I told him that there would be a lot of support in the community," Talbot said. "I have two children at the high school and one of them was in the JROTC program when it first began during the 2009-2010 school year. One of the projects that the students had to do was recognize veterans in the community. There were a great deal of veterans at the event, and I knew there would be a great base that would like to be involved in the VFW."

Upon hearing this, Hines, and Westerlund immediately got to work on organizing and recruiting for the Dinwiddie Post. In conversations with County Administrator Kevin Massengill, the Eastside Community Enhancement Center was chosen as the initial venue. Hines said 35 members are required to start a Post,

(Dinwiddie Post: Continued on page 4)

(Dinwiddie Post: continued from page 3)

and Dinwiddie already has 51.

“We are truly blessed to have a significant number of veterans and active duty military to call Dinwiddie County home. Throughout their term of office, the Board of Supervisors have stressed the importance of being a strong military community,” Massengill said. “When I was approached with the concept of establishing a VFW Post in Dinwiddie, I saw it as a perfect fit to the values of the board and county. VFW Posts throughout this country have proven to be a valuable asset to their communities by educating youth, providing an array of community services, assisting veterans, supporting troops and their families, and also by creating a true sense of patriotism.”

Once official, Dinwiddie County will be VFW Post 12145, making it the 13th Post in Westerlund’s South-Central Virginia district. Westerlund said that there are currently 33,268 VFW members in the commonwealth. He added that in 2014, the Virginia VFW spent \$754,000 on different community-service events and 177,257 hours were donated to different events by VFW members. Westerlund said that the value of these donated hours equates to \$3,997,148.

“Those numbers count because our folks go to the state capital once a year and talk about things that we need to do to support our vets,” Westerlund said. “Our primary focus is helping our veterans retain the entitlements that they have won on the battlefield.”

Two contests sponsored by the VFW that help area children, include the Voice of Democracy Program for high school students and the Patriot’s Pen competition for middle school students. Both competitions require students to write essays. Winners will then have the opportunity to keep winning tournament-style. Hines and Westerlund said Voice of Democracy district winners have the opportunity to win up to \$300 at the District level, and state winners can receive up to \$2,900. If they win the state competition they have the opportunity to represent the commonwealth in the national competition where they can win up to \$30,000 in scholarship money. The Junior High Patriot’s Pen works in the same way in that winners go through a district, state and national hierarchy and can win up to \$5,000 at the national level.

Hines also stressed that the Dinwiddie VFW is not strictly limited to veterans living in Dinwiddie, it’s open to everyone in the region.

“This has been moving along pretty quickly,” Talbot said. “Once you’ve served, you appreciate someone else who has done the same thing.”

### The Progress-Index

Petersburg, VA

• Amir Vera may be reached at [avera@progress-index.com](mailto:avera@progress-index.com) or (804) 722-5155.



Department Commander Buddy Weekley conducts the Instituting Ceremony for the new VFW Dinwiddie Post 12145 on January 31.



Department Commander Buddy Weekley installs the new slate of officers.

## The Young Guns: the new VFW generation

Allen Worrell - aworrell@civitasmedia.com

With approximately 500 World War II veterans dying every day and Vietnam vets now aging in their 60s and 70s, membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been steadily declining nationally over the past two decades. A group of post-Vietnam War era vets hopes to reverse that trend at the Grover King VFW Post 1115 in Hillsville.

After a meeting late in 2014, six members of the Hillsville VFW Post sat down for a brainstorming session on ways to recruit younger members, while also helping the existing Post continue to thrive in helping to serve the public. As a result, the "Young Guns" committee was officially launched on Jan. 16.

"The younger generation like myself, you think of the VFW and you think of World War II, Vietnam and Korea veterans and they are sitting around drinking coffee," said Young Guns President Mike Lara, a two-tour Iraq veteran. "We wanted a committee that gives us something else to do. We will be doing a lot within the community and fundraising, and we just wanted to enhance the recruiting of the VFW because

unfortunately the VFW is getting older. When those gentlemen pass away, we need somebody to step up."

Lara said the reason the Young Guns committee decided to use the post-Vietnam era as a cut-off point is because most everybody that served in the Vietnam War was drafted, while Post-Vietnam veterans chose to serve their country.

"As weird as it sounds, everybody from Vietnam is in their 60s or 70s now. They can't always get out on Saturday to cut somebody's grass or do those types of things. We are in our 30s and 40s and that is what we want to do," Lara said. "This committee is going to be working with the VFW. The more exposure we can get for the VFW the better."



A group of post-Vietnam War era veterans have formed the Young Guns committee at the Grover King VFW Post 1115 in Hillsville. Members are from left: Secretary Gary Adams, Vice President Marty Rivera, President Mike Lara, Treasurer Earl Baskett, Sgt. Doug Barnes. Not pictured: Police Sgt. Phillip Underwood.

Lara stresses that Young Guns is a committee within the VFW. In order to join the Young Guns, you must first be a member of the VFW.

"Our goal is to work within the VFW Post, and come up with events that will strike an interest in younger veterans. We are also a corps of friends as well, the camaraderie of the military. Any kind of issues they have, they can call us and we can listen to them" Lara said. "PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) is a big thing and we understand it. It is always nice to talk to a fellow veteran, someone who is going through the same thing. We also help with VA claims, getting them in the VA system."

Lara said the older members of the Hillsville VFW are ecstatic about the Young Guns committee. They are backing the group 100 percent, he said, and serving as mentors.

"We had to bring this up to a vote in the Post and it was unanimous to let us do it.

They are backing us every chance they can," Lara said. "We all picked a mentor, someone who has been around a while and knows what is going on, so when you come up with ideas they can say, 'This is how you do it.' They are there every step, and they are also teaching us the traditions of the VFW."

VFW Post 1115 Commander Howard Minton stated he has been impressed with the initiative of the Young Guns group. He gave them his blessing to move forward under the VFW leadership to recruit younger members.

"These guys are really working hard and I am proud of it and so is the state commander. We had a district meeting and he said he liked it and other Posts are working on it too because we need to get younger people in," Minton said.

Part of the recruiting pitch the group hopes younger veterans will understand is that the camaraderie they had in the military still exists. That is what the VFW is founded on. Hearing war stories

(Young Guns: continued on page 6)

(Young Guns: continued from page 5)

from some of the older veterans is an incredible experience, he said.

“They tell us how it used to be. It is amazing. We get picked on for being young. We pick on them for being old,” Lara said. “Each branch thinks they are the best branch of the service. We are like a bunch of kids when you get us all together. We get back together for two or three hours once a month and it’s like we are back in uniform.”

Above all, the young group of vets wants to work side-by-side with the VFW.

“We are members of the Post first and foremost. We’re taking advice from our forefathers, the gentlemen who have been around, and we are just putting a young spin on things,” Lara said. “The VFW is dying off and without us younger veterans it will cease to exist, we will have nowhere to call home. We are going to be doing fundraisers, events, not just for the veterans themselves, but for their families as well.”

Joining Lara in the Young Guns committee is Vice President Marty Rivera, Sgt. of the Guard Doug Barnes, Police Sgt. Phillip Underwood, Secretary Gary Adams, and Treasurer Earl Baskett.

The VFW meets the second Friday of each month with a big meal at 5 p.m., followed by a meeting at 6 p.m. VFW Post 1115 has a very active Ladies Auxiliary for veterans’ wives, which Lara encourages younger vets to take advantage of.

“We love family,” he said. “I bring my two kids all the time.”

Minton agreed with that assessment, noting that the VFW often gets mislabeled by outsiders.

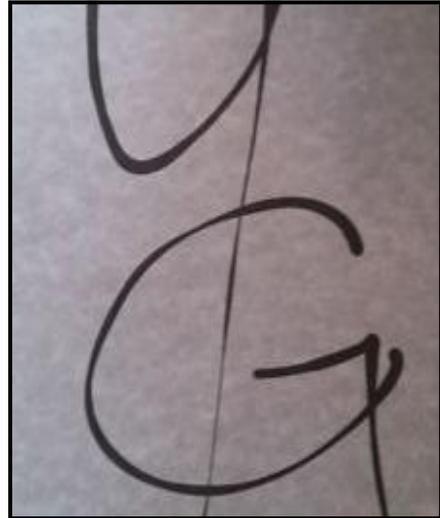
“This Post is family oriented. The VFW is not a bunch of drunks. That is something people have put in their minds to think, but that isn’t so,” Minton said.

For more information about the Young Guns, e-mail Lara at [michale.lara@yahoo.com](mailto:michale.lara@yahoo.com) or [youngguns1115@yahoo.com](mailto:youngguns1115@yahoo.com), on [Twitter@vfwyoungguns](https://twitter.com/vfwyoungguns), on Facebook at [vfw youngguns hills-ville](https://www.facebook.com/vfw.youngguns.hillsville) or call the Hillsville VFW Post at (276) 728-7311.

“This is just something we would like to go nationwide, but we want to build a solid foundation in Hillsville first,” Lara said.

From The Carroll News, January 28, 2015 — Reprinted with permission.

“Our goal is to work within the VFW Post, and come up with events that will strike an interest in younger veterans...”



## Important Dates:

April 18	Department Commander and President’s Homecoming, Harrisonburg, VA
June 11-14	Department Convention, Williamsburg, VA. Room Rate \$87.00, cut-off date 5-20-15. Phone 757-220-2250
July 18-22	National Convention, Pittsburg, PA
October 2-4	National C-I-C Homecoming, Pittsburg, PA
November 19-22	Southern Conference, Savannah, GA

## Two Virginia Teachers are VFW Teachers of the Year

*Only the 2<sup>nd</sup> time a Department has had 2 winners*

For the first time in sixteen years one Department has two National winners in the VFW Teacher of the Year competition. The other Department to have had such honors is The Department of Ohio in 2004.

Elementary teacher Ann Komara was selected as the Elementary Teacher of the Year (Grades K-5) and Craig Blackman was selected as the High School Teacher of the Year (Grades 9-12).

Both will be attending the National Convention in Pittsburgh where they will receive their awards at the Tuesday Business Session.

— Craig Blackman —



Craig Blackman

An award winning history teacher at Indian River High School, Craig asked each of his AP history students to select one of Chesapeake's sons who had been killed during the Vietnam War and to write up their biographies. These were young soldiers and Marines who, for the most part, had been forgotten in their home town and had never received the proper recognition and honors for their sacrifice from their country, their state, or their city.

The students researched official records, interviewed family members and friends who were still living locally, and – for those servicemen who had no one left in the area – searched out relatives who had moved or lived out of state. These interviews affected not just the family members, but made significant impacts on the high school students themselves who had little or no knowledge of the effect that Vietnam had on the American psyche.

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At the Memorial Day Ceremony, each of the 25 fallen servicemen was represented by at least one family member, escorted by the students who had written up his history, as they placed memorial bricks at the Veterans' Memorial in front of City Hall.

Mr. Blackman's dedication to US military members has been evident throughout his career. He has written a book and numerous articles about Americans serving in combat from the Revolutionary War, through the War of 1812, the Civil War, World War

II, and Vietnam.

His enthusiasm and support for all that this great country stands for is transmitted to his students, the future leaders of our nation. He continuously invites Service members – both young and old – and supporters of the military to his classrooms to give presentations and to interact with his students so that they can learn to appreciate what “serving in uniform” truly means.

A graduate of Franklin & Marshall College, Craig holds a Master's Degree in Education with a focus on American History from Pennsylvania State University. In 2008, Craig was selected as Virginia's

Social Studies Teacher of the Year and served as the President of the Virginia Council for Social Studies

— Ann Komara —



Ann Komara

Ann Komara is a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher at Ottobine Elementary School in Rockingham County. Ottobine is a small country school located at the base of a mountain in the Shenandoah Valley with a population of 231 students (54% of whom receive free/reduced cost lunches).

According to the school principal Laura Evy, “During the 2013-2014 school year, Ms. Komara led the students in one of the most patriotic programs I have witnessed in my 30 year career as an educator. She began the year with a mission to educate not only her 5<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom, but the entire school about the roles of sacrifice, service and honor as each pertains to the American experience, past and present.”

Ann states that she is proud to be an American and thought it was important to thank those who have served, and are serving, to protect our freedom. Together with 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher Dawn Flora they embarked on a yearlong study of patriotism and love of country. Her class along with their 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading buddies carried out service projects that showcased these values and together they worked on the following:

- Set a goal to raise \$500 with the mission being to support troops overseas and veterans at home.
- Arranged for a classroom visit by a recently discharged soldier who appeared in full uniform.

*(Teachers: continued on page 8)*

(Teachers: continued from page 7)

- Made red, white and blue windsocks from coffee cans were sold at various school events.
- Fabricated red, white and blue clothespin wreaths and placed them on veterans' graves for Memorial Day.
- A Veterans Day assembly honoring local veterans and members of Myers-Hodges VFW Post 8644 in Bridgewater. Post members educated the students about the American flag. Veterans from WWII up to the present day attended and it was a moving experience for the entire school.
- Care packages were sent to 25 overseas active duty service members.
- The students made and sold Para-cord bracelets to raise money for shipping.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> graders visited Arlington National Cemetery.
- A donation was made to the Wounded Warriors Project.

During the project to assemble care packages the students made

daily announcements on the school intercom asking for donations or addresses of family or friends who were actively deployed. When they had gathered sufficient donations members of the VFW Post's Ladies Auxiliary came in and taught the students how to fill out customs forms and pack boxes. To make the event even more special, Custom Transportation donated a limo for the students to ride to the post office. Each student carried the exact amount of money needed to mail a package and they each interfaced with the postal workers. The Daily News Record was there to take pictures and write an article.

Additional projects also received local news coverage and brought in donations from the local business community.

Ann Komara obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies from Bridgewater College and is presently pursuing her Masters at James Madison University.

The following comrades contributed to this article: Buddy Weekley, Department of Virginia Commander; Chris Birch, Past Department of Virginia Commander, Chris Mulholland, Commander, VFW Post 2894 and Rick Raskin, Editor - [Virginia Veteran](http://VirginiaVeteran.com).

Photo credits: [www.costalvirginiamag.com](http://www.costalvirginiamag.com): (Craig Blackman) Doc Crouch, Post 3150 (Ann Komara).

## Legislative Update

The VFW Commander in Chief and other members of the VFW were on Capitol Hill last month talking about a variety of issues: Sequestration, the Veterans Choice & Accountability Act, Veterans Health Care, VA Benefits Delivery and Veterans Success After Service. As a part of a National VFW effort, the Department visited the offices of all of Virginia's senators and house members in D.C. on 3 and 4 March. Leading that effort was State Commander Buddy Weekley, accompanied by his wife Debbie (LAux-8644 Bridgewater). I would also like to thank the following members who took time off from their jobs to assist in this important effort: Pete MacLeod (VFW-7568 Manassas), Ross Meglathery (VFW-5412 Burke), Shawn Poulin (VFW-3150 Arlington), Grant Vaught (VFW-3150 Arlington), Ken Wiseman (Dept. Surgeon) and Dee Guillory (LAux Natl. Chaplain). Members of congress are always happy to meet with the VFW but if there is a constituent present among us we're even better received.

Copies of our VFW Legislative Priority Goals and the talking papers that support those goals have been sent to ALL Post Commanders to share with Post Members. However, if you would like your own copy via e-mail please do not hesitate to contact me at [cgdcl@juno.com](mailto:cgdcl@juno.com).

Yours in Comradeship,  
C. D. "Doc" Crouch  
National Legislative Committee



**The Department of Virginia Delegation visits Congressman Robert Hurt (R-5-VA) during the VFW's 2015 Legislative Conference in Washington, DC.**

(L-R): C. D. "Doc" Crouch (VFW-3150 Arlington), Grant Vaught (VFW-3150 Arlington), Shawn Poulin (VFW-3150 Arlington), Earle P. "Buddy" Weekley, Jr. (Dept. Cdr. Virginia), Cong. Robert Hurt, Debbie Weekley (LAux-8644 Bridgewater), Dan Boyer (PDC Virginia) and Ken Wiseman (Dept. Surgeon-Student Veterans Association representative)

# John Lyon Post 3150 receives \$7,000 donation from RazorX2

Submitted by Post 3150, Arlington

On November 26, 2014 RazorX2 President H. Julie Pak presented a certificate and check for \$7000 to Post Commander Jim Bertine and Past Commander Michael McCartney.

The total reflects all proceeds from the recent RazorX2-sponsored Rock Out for Vets Benefit Concert for Post 3150. The proceeds included ticket sales, door prize drawings, online donations, etc., plus a donation from RazorX2 — they like to work with round numbers.

The Post, in return, presented certificates of thanks to RazorX2, and to Mandy and Jimmy Levri, Daniel Witmer, Julie Pak, Rebekah Gregg, Michael McCartney and RazorX2 employees for their extensive work on the concert.



About 20 John Lyon members attended the concert on November 17, 2014 at Jammin Java Music Club and Café in Vienna, VA. It featured bands Amsterdam and Traitors & Thieves which also donated their time. The proceeds will go to building maintenance and the Relief Fund.

Rock Out For Vets was a benefit concert by RazorX2 to give back to our Veterans of Foreign Wars. This concert aimed to raise funds, awareness, and to say "Thank You" to the brave men and women who have risked their lives for our freedom.

RazorX2 is a defense contracting firm specializing in IT and Federal contracts in the Northern VA area.



## Manassas veteran Richard Bean's remains returned to American soil after 70 years

Submitted by Post 7589, Manassas

Pfc. Richard Norris Bean's remains after 70 years were discovered in August, 2013, by Kuentai (<http://www.kuentai-usa.com>), a Japanese non-profit organization who searches the Pacific to return soldiers remains; discovered Richard's remains in a shallow grave on Saipan, along with Japanese soldiers. He was killed in action on July 7, 1944. Since the discovery, the U.S. Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (<http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo>) has overseen all aspects of the important processes, including the DNA testing confirmation with Richard J. Bean, his nephew.

Pfc. Bean, born in 1919 in Prince William County, Virginia was 24 years old at the time of his death. Richard was the son of the late Richard N. Bean of Virginia and Rosie (Snyder) Bean of West Virginia. Like millions of American youth of this period, Richard was a product of the Great Depression. As a result, he only had the opportunity to gain a 5th grade elementary education. To help provide for his family's basic food and shelter he became a farm laborer, working long backbreaking hours during the planting and harvest seasons while living on Alleghany Street, in Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Virginia. He was Roman Catholic. He is survived by his 78 year old younger brother and approximately 26 nephews and nieces.

Responding to President Roosevelt's call during the National Emergency of 1941 for mobilization against the growing Nazi threat Richard enlisted in the United States Army on September 4, 1941 in Roanoke, Virginia, approximately three months prior to Pearl Harbor. His unit was one of the first Division's deployed to fight in the Pacific Campaign. Richard participated in combat operations landing in the Marshall Islands, prior to his landing on Saipan.

Pfc. Bean was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division. The 1st and 2nd Battalion of 105 Infantry Regiment lost 658 members during the 3,300 strong, swords wielding Japanese Banzai attack, nearly wiping out both Army battalions. PFC Bean's extreme foxhole frontal perimeter location was directly on the main line of the Japanese suicide attack. Confirmed Japanese deaths were placed at 2,295. Also found in Pfc. Bean's foxhole were remains of multiple fallen Japanese soldiers. Pfc. Bean stood ground in the face of overwhelming enemy superiority.

His service awards include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Ameri-

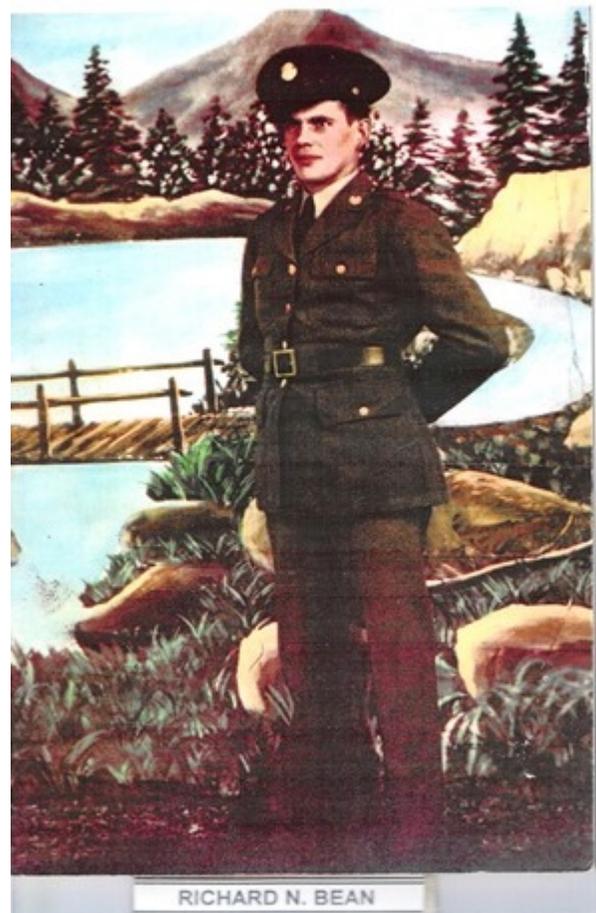
can Campaign Medal, Asia-Pacific Campaign Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, World War II Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He was posthumously promoted to Sergeant.

Commenting on the Veterans organization effort, nephew Richard Bean offered: "The Bean Family is eternally grateful by the outpouring of area veterans support. It has been a most humbling experience to witness how veterans take ownership of their fallen brothers, even after 70 years."

Funeral Services with full military honors were held Oct. 3, 2014 at Pierce Funeral Home in Manassas, Va. A color guard comprised of members of VFW Post 7589 and American Legion Post 10 stood casket watch and served as pallbearers. After the funeral service a procession of motorcycle riders and police led the cortege to Quantico National Cemetery where an interment service was conducted with color guard provided by the US Army.

American Legion Post 10 Commander Lee Purser stated "We wish to thank VFW Post 7589 and all the other area VSA's who ... unselfishly contributed to this collective effort. We are profoundly grateful as a nation that one more of our Country's fallen has been returned home".

**"We are profoundly grateful as a nation that one more of our Country's fallen has been returned home".**



# Battle of the Bulge, a Ceremony Sponsored by VFW Post 824 with: William Lee Chapter of the 101st Airborne

Submitted by Post 824, Grafton

Thursday December 18th, members of VFW Post 824, Grafton met with members of the William Lee Chapter of the 101st Airborne to do a memorial ceremony of the 70th anniversary of the 101st entry into Bastogne, Belgium, and their entry into the Battle of the Bulge.

Significant members of the William Lee Chapter of the 101st participating were:

- Col. Ed Shames, of the 506 PIR (Parachute Infantry Regiment), Easy Company - 'Band of Brothers', of the 101st. Ed is the last officer of Easy Co., and the last of five members left. He jumped on D-Day at Normandy, and was with the 101st all the way to Hitler's Eagles Nest.
- Norbert Thomas, of the 501 PIR, 101st who also jumped at Normandy, and was with the 101st all the way to Hitler's Eagles Nest.

VFW Post 824 members, with the 101st - Col. James Shamblen, an officer with the William Lee Chapter is also the Jr. Vice Commander of VFW Post 824, and took the suggestion that the Battle of the Bulge monument at Cannon Park, Fort Monroe needed to be recognized on the 70th anniversary.

VFW Post 824 member with the 101st - Lt. Col John Przbylski, also with the William Lee Chapter, was a Capt. of the 101st at Hamburger Hill, and led the last Company of men off the battlefield. VFW Post 824 Members: John Anthony 'Tony' Sayago (Commander); Bobby Edwards (Adjutant); James Shamblen,

John Przbylski, Timothy Pentecost, and Michael Murray also attended.

The William Lee Chapter had three Vietnam Veterans of the 101st plus several WWII Veterans in attendance. James Shamblen coordinated the event and had a prepared presentation on the 101st's involvement on the 18th, and being surrounded on the 19th.



Col. Ed Shames, of the 506 PIR and Norbert Thomas, of the 501 PIR



Members of Post 824 and William Lee Chapter – 101st Airborne Association

## LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP:

This prestigious program is available to all Life Members. Three levels of membership each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life Member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

<b>Enrollment Cost:</b>	<b>Annual Payouts:</b>	<b>Post:</b>	<b>Department:</b>	<b>National:</b>
LEVELS: GOLD — \$1200		\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
SILVER — \$800		\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
BRONZE — \$400		\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00

*What will your Legacy be?*

## World War II, Through Patton's Lens

By Mark Hartsell, *The Library of Congress Gazette*—December 12, 2014 — Reprinted with permission.

Imagine, military historian Kevin Hymel writes, if George Washington or Ulysses S. Grant had carried a camera and photographed war as he experienced it. How important would those images be as documents of history?

Gen. George S. Patton, the brilliant but often-troublesome U.S. Army commander of World War II, did just that during his campaigns across North Africa and Europe from 1942 through 1945.

Patton, an amateur photographer who carried an Army-issued Leica camera, took hundreds of photos of the war he lived: ruined towns, dead soldiers, destroyed tanks, civilian refugees, ancient monuments, his palatial headquarters in Sicily (where, he said, all the maids gave him the fascist salute) and, sometimes, soldiers simultaneously taking pictures of Patton as he photographed them.

Those images today reside in the Library of Congress's Manuscript Division. Patton died following a car accident in Germany just months after the war ended, and in 1964 his family donated his papers – and photo albums – to the Library.

Hymel appeared at the Library on Nov. 18 to discuss the photos and his own book about them, "Patton's Photographs: War as He Saw It." The event was sponsored by the European Division.

The general, Hymel said, mailed the photos home to his wife, Beatrice, to build a historical record of his experiences.

"I'm going to send you photographs and letters so that some future historian can make a less-untrue history of me," Patton told her.

Beatrice wrote captions and placed his photos into albums along with images of the general taken by others: Patton wading ashore during the Sicily invasion; meeting with Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower; playing with his pet bull terrier, Willie; posing beside a tank in headgear of his own design – a gold football helmet bearing the stars of his rank.

"His photo albums are just like yours and mine," Hymel said. "They're photographs that we take and photographs that other people take that we like and put into our albums."

The albums also chronicle Patton's time in limbo following two infamous incidents in the Sicily campaign – he slapped soldiers



George S. Patton Papers / Manuscript Division—Library of Congress



**George S. Patton, photographer: Engineers (clockwise from top) pose on a bridge they built over the Sauer River into Germany; Silhouetted infantrymen cross a snowy field during the Battle of the Bulge; GIs get stuck in the mud in France.**

suffering battle fatigue, drawing the wrath of Eisenhower and Congress. Awaiting a new assignment, Patton restlessly toured forts in Malta, pyramids in Egypt and battlefields and cemeteries in Sicily.

"A year ago, I commanded an entire corps," he wrote after visiting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division cemetery. "Today, I command barely my self-respect."

Patton claimed one photo saved his life. The general stopped to photograph artillery in action and, seconds later, a shell landed in the path ahead – just where, Patton said, he would have been if he hadn't stopped to use his camera.

Patton took the near-miss as a sign that God was saving him for greater achievements.

"It's only a few days later," Hymel said, "that he gets the call to come to England and command Third Army for the invasion of France and the eventual invasion of Germany."

## VFW honors men who brought vet home

*Chilhowie men lead company's decision to make the goodwill journey to Texas*

By Linda Burchette, Smyth County News & Messenger, January 3, 2015

"We honor the dead by serving the living." That is what Francis Marion VFW Post 4667, [Marion, VA] is all about, said member Herbert "Turk" Johnson as he presented a check Thursday night from the post to Abingdon Ambulance Service for its service to a veteran.

The check for \$500 is to help the ambulance service with expenses incurred when three paramedics took an ambulance to Texas in November to return a stranded veteran to his home in Bristol, Tenn.

The story was broadcast on KPRC in Houston, Texas, and shared with NBC affiliate WCYB in Bristol.

Keith Martin, a paramedic with Abingdon Ambulance Service and a resident of Chilhowie, said he saw the story on television and thought about it, coming to a decision that he wanted to help but before he could even ask his boss, Kevin Austin, also a Chilhowie resident, the decision had been made.

The veteran was Robert Taylor, who served in the Army during the Korean War. According to Martin, he had gone to Texas (reported to have been in October 2013) to visit the grave of his grandson. But days after arriving in Texas, Taylor walked out of his hotel room and had a massive stroke, Martin said.

"Basically, he had a stroke and his family couldn't afford to send him home," Martin said. "When I saw the story I was getting ready for work, and it stayed with me all day. Before I left I asked my boss if I could see him and before I could say anything he said, 'How would you feel about a trip to Houston?' I said, 'You must have seen the same story.'"

Martin said that Taylor's son and daughter-in-law in Texas had helped rent a house for Taylor and his wife, Linda. They had been stranded in Texas for about a year because the cost of transporting Taylor, who was hooked to, feeding tubes and a ventilator and could not move or speak, had been quoted at over \$10,000 and as much as \$18,000.

Martin said that he talked to his wife, Lorie Martin, administrator of Valley Health Care, and they said they believed the ambulance service could get him home for less than that. So he went to Austin to ask and was pleased and proud when the decision was to go get Taylor and bring him home at no charge.

Martin and fellow paramedics Derek Vance and Sherri Jobe left on a Saturday night, took turns driving, and got Taylor back to

Bristol on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. They transported him in the company's specially painted ambulance to honor veterans.

Martin said the Houston television station contacted WCYB in hopes of gaining interest and assistance: The station there had established a GoFundMe account that Martin said had raised nearly enough to pay for the ambulance ride home by the time the Abingdon Ambulance Service decided to take on the task for free. Martin said

they told the Taylors to use the money raised to help save their home in Bristol, which was in danger of foreclosure and to rehabilitate it for Robert's needs.

When Taylor learned what Abingdon Ambulance Service was doing, "they were overwhelmed," Martin said. "They were so appreciative. They just couldn't believe anybody would do it for free."

When members of VFW Post 4667 heard the story, they wanted to thank Abingdon Ambulance Service with a donation.

"He's a veteran and we support veterans and to me it's the honorable thing to do, and to help the ambulance service for what they did," said Johnson. "It's a heartwarming story. It touches my heart. I think the Post is proud to do it. Regardless of where we live, we are all veterans." It's a brotherhood that never ends, he said.

Martin thanked the Post on behalf of the ambulance service. He told the members that years ago he had been part of the group bagging groceries at the Post for local families in need. He worked for social services in Smyth and Russell counties for 17 years before getting his paramedic license and going to work for the ambulance service just over three years ago. He also serves on the Chilhowie Fire Department.



Linda Burchette—Smyth County News & Messenger

**Herbert "Turk" Johnson, at right with Francis Marion VFW Post 4667, presents a check for \$500 to Keith Martin, paramedic with the Abingdon Ambulance Service and resident of Chilhowie.**

## Barbour honored for military, community service

### *'The Army made a man out of me'*

A Snow Creek veteran was recently honored as a 2014 Veteran of the Year in Martinsville and Henry County.

Billy Barbour, a Korean War veteran, was presented the award at a program at the National Guard Armory in Martinsville on November 9, [2014].

Marc Thomas, who presented the award from the area's Veterans Service Organizations, said Barbour was chosen because of his outstanding record of military service and community work.

Barbour served with the U.S. Army 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 34<sup>th</sup> Regiment as a medic in Korea during the war from 1952 to 1954. He was promoted to sergeant after 16 months of service.

Barbour worked in all areas of the war zone, ending up in Seoul Korea, where his unit was part of Operation "Big Switch", which was the exchanging of prisoners of war, both American and Korean, Thomas said.

After returning to the states in 1954, he was released from active duty and transferred to the Army Reserve. He was discharged from the Reserves in 1960 after six years of service.

Barbour is a charter member of VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Post 10840 in Snow Creek, which was established in 1989. He has held every office the Post has, from junior vice commander to commander. He is now a trustee with the Post.

Barbour has also been a member of the Martinsville-Henry County Honor Guard since 2005 and was and was promoted to training officer (first lieutenant) in 2009. In 2012, he was named a trustee in the Honor Guard and is also a trustee in the VFW Fifth District of Virginia.

In 2007 Barbour was presented the Member of the Year award in the Guard for participating in the Guard's services at more funerals than any other member.

Last year he was selected by his VFW Post 10840 as Franklin County's Veteran of the Year.

"Enlisting in the Army at the age of 19 was the best decision I ever made," he said. "The Army made a man out of me."

Barbour said his "greatest blessings" come from "having a small part in helping with the last rites" of his comrades and helping families who have lost a loved one.

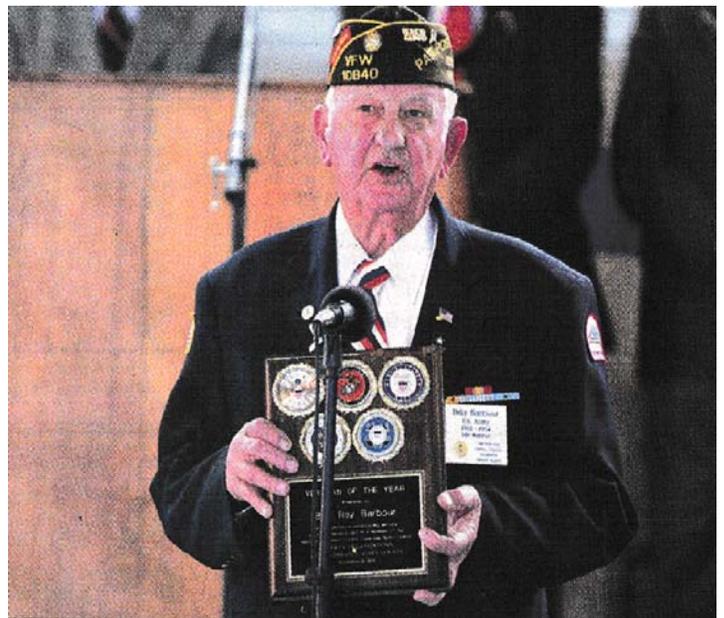
Spending time serving with veterans organizations has not kept Barbour from getting involved in other community services.

Barbour is a member and active in Snow Creek Christian Church; donates time and labor to repair the furnaces at the Snow Creek Rescue Squad; maintains the lights for the American flag at that building and placed American flags on veterans' graves in five cemeteries, as well as private graves in Henry and Franklin counties for the past 13 years; and has delivered food to the needy and elderly on Thanksgiving and Christmas through First Baptist Church in Martinsville for the past 10 years.

He owns Billy's Burner Service and helps needy people with their heating systems when referred by the Red Cross.

Debra Buchanan, Henry County Board of Supervisors member said the award is given "to the person who best represents what service to the community means."

Barbour was sponsored for the honor by his VFW Post Commander Herman Chaney and Martinsville-Henry County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard Commander David Kipfinger.



**Billy Barbour speaks after receiving his award as Veteran of the Year at the 2014 Veterans' Day Program at the National Guard Armory in Martinsville on Nov. 9.**

From *The Franklin News-Post*

December 1, 2014 — Reprinted with permission.



**24th Infantry Division shoulder sleeve insignia**

## --- A Year Long Celebration ---

## Local VFW Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Submitted by Post 10840, Penhook

The Obie D. Minter Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 10840 began celebrating its 25th Anniversary last September. "While our actual charter date was 1 September 1989, we intend to use the entire year as one of celebration, remembrance and public outreach," said current Post Commander Herman Chaney of Boones Mill.

Though they meet in the Snow Creek Volunteer Fire Department the first Tuesday of each month, the Post membership consists of veterans from all of Franklin County and some neighboring Pittsylvania County residents. They welcome any qualified veteran; one whose overseas service has brought combat recognitions, generally, but not strictly, in the form of a campaign or expeditionary medal.

Quartermaster Ronnie Perdue said the Post's current membership includes at least eight of the original 35 members who initiated the Post Charter which includes over 70 names gathered in the charter year. These include William Adkins, Harold Booth, George Bowles, Garland English, Berlin Hanks, Ronnie Jefferson, James Walker and John



**REMEMBERING VETERANS - Members of the Obie D. Minter Post 10840 celebrate 25-years this month of working for veterans, their families and their communities. Pictured are members of the Post following a presentation to Post member Paige English.**

Walker. The Post's current membership includes veterans from every conflict since World War II to include Cold War-era overseas expeditions such as the Dominican Republic and Navy veterans from the Carter-era Iranian Hostage Crisis. Additionally more Vietnam veterans, DESERT SHIELD/STORM and current Global War on Terror veterans are beginning to show interest and join the organization which "honors the dead by helping the living".

During the 25-years the Post has been active in community affairs, conducting annual youth programs in the schools, ensuring the care of veterans, orphans and widows, many who've fallen through the cracks or are unaware of certain programs that better their lot in life. "We do a lot of this very quietly and through word of mouth," says Chaney. "When we hear about a veteran or widow in need, we make inquiries to get the facts and then try to help them through the VA paperwork to get them the assistance they need. We're here to help -- been doing it for 25 years and hope to keep doing it for another 25 years."

Senator Bill Stanley and Delegate Charles Poindexter will introduce in the Virginia General Assembly a commemorative resolution recognizing the 25th Anniversary of the Post and saluting its members for their continued service to the community.

(Submitted Photo)

## Penhook VFW Recognized by State

Submitted by Post 10840

The Obie D. Minter Memorial VFW Post 10840 in Penhook was recognized in General Assembly Resolutions by both the House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate, in recognition of 25-years continuous service to the community. Senator Bill Stanley sponsored the Senate Resolution and Delegate Charles Poindexter sponsored the House Resolution. These were presented at the Post's annual Christmas banquet on Tuesday, 2 December.



Photo by Greg Eanes

Both elected officials praised the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its members for their many years of service on the battlefield and on the homefront with Senator Stanley making note of his own father's Naval career. Delegate Poindexter recalled as a child traveling with his father to Obie D. Minter's store, with whom his father and uncle played music. He also made note of Minter's commitment to God and the Bible testifying to Minter's goodness in the community reflecting the Post was appropriately named.

# 2015 Winter Council of Administration Meeting Williamsburg Virginia





## Post 7916 Participates at National Veterans Day Ceremony

Submitted by Post 7916, Occoquan

A Veterans Day National Ceremony is held each year on November 11th at Quantico National Cemetery. Over 500 Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Marines, along with many families and distinguished guests came to commemorate National Veterans Day, at the Ceremony at Quantico National Cemetery this year. The ceremony is held to honor all of America's veterans past and present. Veterans Day first began with the commemoration of the armistice which ended World War I, on "the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, of the 11<sup>th</sup> day, of the 11<sup>th</sup> month," 1918. The ceremony commenced on the "11<sup>th</sup> hour, of the 11<sup>th</sup> day, of the 11 month" 2014 and included a wreath presentation to honor those who died.

The keynote speaker was Linda Spoonster Schwartz, Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, Department of Veterans Affairs. Schwartz served during the Vietnam War in the United States Air Force (1967-1986) and served on active duty and as a Reservist. She retired in 1986 after sustaining injuries in an aircraft accident while serving as a USAF flight nurse.

Quantico National Cemetery has hosted this event since 1983. Post Life Member Cobby McDonald has carried the colors every year since then. The event is sponsored by the Potomac Region Veterans Council with Post 7916 being a Charter Member. Past Post Commander member Wayne Dearie is one of the PRVC's officers

VFW Post 7916 provided one of the "Color Guards" for this special event. Participants included: Chuck Wilson, Post Commander, Eric Hill, Post Senior Vice Commander, Tom Gilbert Post Adjutant, Cobby McDonald, Post Life Member, Rafael Landrau, Post Life Member and Wayne Dearie, past 2008 Post commander. Other Post 7916 members in attendance were George Schaudel, Post Service Officer, And Ken Killien, Life member.



## VFW Post 7916 Conducts POW/MIA Memorial Ceremonies

Nationwide, the third Friday in September is reserved to honor prisoners of war and those missing in action in our nation's wars going back to World War I. VFW Post 7916 in Occoquan Virginia conducted a memorial ceremony to remember our nation's POW/MIAs on September 19. Senior Vice, Eric Hill, LTC, USA, Ret. led the prayers.

The Ceremony opened up with a presentation of the colors and welcoming remarks by the Post Commander, Charles P. Wilson, Col USAF, Ret.:

"I AM HONORED TO BE HERE TODAY TO HELP RECOGNIZE AND SALUTE THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED AND SACRIFICED TO KEEP AMERICA FREE ... AND TO SALUTE THE FAMILIES OF THE MISSING WHO CONTINUE TO KEEP THE CANDLE OF HOPE ALIVE. TODAY THERE ARE 83,193 AMERICANS LISTED AS MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED-FOR FROM OUR NATION'S WARS GOING BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II..."

Nancy Huff, President of the Post 7916 Ladies Auxiliary then added comments, followed by the Junior ROTC Cadets from Cecil B. Hylton High School to perform the POW/MIA tribute assembling the POW/MIA Table of Remembrance.

The POW/MIA table of remembrance was the heart of the ceremony. The Air Force JROTC Cadets from Cecil B. Hylton High School, one-by-one, slowly marched to the memorial table. The



table was assembled step by step, each piece symbolizing POWs/MIAs service, sacrifice, and remembrance.

Following the Air Force JROTC cadet performance, memorial balloons were released in respect to each POW/MIAs from each of the Services. Post Quartermaster Jesse Barron led the memorial. The ceremony was concluded with the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the United States Flag. In all over 50 people observed the event.

## Hawkins-Reeve VFW Post 7916 hosted the Boy Scouts of Troop 1352 for their Court of Honor.



In the Boy Scouts of America, the Court of Honor is a troop activity where Scouts, former Scouts, and their families come together to get their awards, and have a good time together. This Court of Honor held on October 13, 2014 was a

special one because it not only presented awards, merit badges and advancement in rank for many Scouts; it also recognized two Boy Scouts achieving the rank of Eagle Scout!

Post Commander, Chuck Wilson, Colonel USAF Ret, spoke to the audience, "I want to congratulate each of the Scouts who have achieved the rank of Eagle. I know the challenging road you have taken to get here. I was blessed to spend twenty seven years in the US Air Force piloting high performance jet aircraft and leading some of the world's finest airmen, in the toughest of operations, around the world. Many of the ones, who really stood out and made a difference, were Eagle Scouts. Yes, you are marked in a very special way."

## Sea Scouts Hold Bridge of Honor at VFW Post 7916



On Monday December 1, 2014, Hawkins-Reeve VFW Post 7916 hosted the Sea Scouts Ship 7916 for their Bridge of Honor. The Bridge of Honor is the formal ceremony whereby Sea Scouts, former scouts, and their families

come together to get their awards, and have a good time together.

# VFW Post 7589 & American Legion Post 10 host WWII veterans dinner

by Rick Raskin & Jerry Martin (Post 7589, Manassas)

Sunday, February 22 was a day to remember for some 40 WWII Manassas area veterans. They attended an appreciation dinner sponsored by VFW Post 7589 and American Legion Post 10. Originally scheduled for Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> the dinner was postponed one day because of a snowstorm. Fortunately Sunday proved to be a much nicer day.

The program began at 5 PM with an introduction by the event organizer Rebeccah Christovich (Post 10 and 7589 Auxiliary). Following introductions there were addresses by Post 7589 Commander Ron Link, Post 10 Commander Lee Purser, Virginia House of Delegates Jackson Miller and Rich Anderson and Manassas Mayor Hal Parrish. Past Post 7589 Commander Jerry Martin gave a rousing speech in which he noted some individual acts of heroism and illustrated just why these veterans are known as "The Greatest Generation".

The other speakers reminded the audience it was the WW II generation of veterans that saved the world for Democracy. They also reminded attendees that WW II veterans were not only the fathers, mothers, grandparents, teachers, and coaches of the present generation of Americans but also the role models for the core values that made our nation great. It was stated that the debt owed this group of aging veterans was one that every citizen shared in, and our country has an obligation never to take their legacy of freedom for granted.

A color guard comprised of both VFW and Legion members pre-

sented the colors as the choir from Osbourn High School sang the National Anthem.

Marie Komyathy (Post 10) then introduced the Step Sisters, a group of senior tap dancers from the Manassas Senior Center, who provided a rousing program of period music. The highlight was the conclusion of their program, a rendition of the Andrews Sisters' "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy", which had many of the veterans tapping their feet in time with the music.

LCDR Garry Thornton, Jr., the Regimental Chaplain from Quantico provided an invocation and grace after which dinner was served.

Among the veterans present was a former German POW, a Pearl Harbor survivor, a Women's Army Corps nurse, a wounded veteran from the Anzio invasion, an Air Corps veteran who survived the bomb damage at Hiroshima, and a Navy officer who was present during the Japanese surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay. The event was also attended by students from Osbourn High School who, along with members of both Post 10 and Post 7589 Auxiliaries, assisted veterans and acted as servers during the evening.

After dinner all of the veterans gathered for a group picture and presentation of certificates of appreciation. This was followed by a cake cutting by Jack Cassidy and Evelyn Marshall, the oldest and youngest WWII veterans present.

Everyone had a wonderful time and enjoyed the opportunity to reunite with each other.

Future events honoring veterans of other campaigns are in the planning stages.



Elizabeth Lewis & Merle Hancock



The Step Sisters



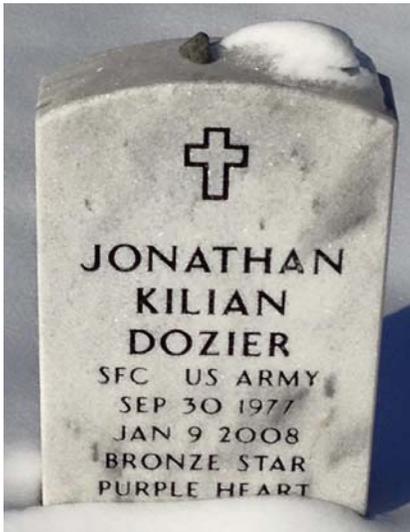
Jack Cassidy & Evelyn Marshall

## The meaning of coins and stones on headstones

by Chris Mulholland, Commander, VFW SSG Dozier Memorial Post 2894, Chesapeake, VA

With Memorial Day coming up shortly, visitors to military gravesites may be presented with the sight of pebbles stones, or coins on top of headstones. Here's the story behind this tradition.

### STONES



There are several explanations as to why visitors leave small stones or pebbles on someone's grave. And it is not strictly a Jewish tradition. For thousands of years, people were buried in tombs or directly in the earth where they had fallen. Stones were then rolled in front of a tomb as a way of sealing it from scavengers and keeping evil spirits from escaping out into the world.

For those buried in the ground, rocks and stones were placed on top of the usually shallow grave to keep animals from digging up the body. These stacks of stones were known as *cairns*. Cairns can be found all over the world and vary in size from a few rocks to man-made hills.

Cairns were built not only as funeral monuments but also for ceremonies and defense. Today they are still constructed to mark trails, as seamarks, as sculpture, and as memorials.

Another reason rocks were left on the grave was based on an Eastern European folklore belief that the dead could haunt their burial place, or return to their family and cause trouble. Stones and rocks were used to prevent the deceased from rising up and escaping the body as a spirit, to torment others.

It is also a Jewish custom to place a stone or pebble on a headstone to indicate that you have visited the grave and to indicate respect for the deceased. Adding a stone was also seen as taking part in the Mitzvah of Matzevah or the 'setting of stone.'

Today, leaving a stone of remembrance is viewed more as a way of continuing this tradition of commemoration. The more stones found at a grave, the more the deceased has been visited and remembered by others. An example would be the scene in 'Schindler's List' when the people that Oskar Schindler saved visit his grave and honored him by placing stones upon it.

Symbolically, the stones can indicate many things: that love and remembrance are as strong and as lasting as a rock; that as a stone lasts forever so too does love; and that the deceased is with

God, since the Old Testament refers to God as a rock, as in Psalm 18:2 -- "*The Lord is my rock...*"

Regardless of how the custom came about, it is still an incredible way to remember and respect those who have passed on. Leaving a stone or pebble is a gesture of appreciation for the strong and lasting impression a person has made upon your life. What a wonderful way to leave a lasting tribute of love and honor at the grave site.

### COINS



Coins have a long tradition of being placed on the grave markers of soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Of course, it has different meanings depending on the culture. The ancients would place coins on the eyes of the deceased with a belief that it would cover the fee to cross the river Styx. The tradition of leaving coins with members of the military, especially men or women who have died in combat, dates back to the Roman Empire.

For the United States, the practice became popular during the Vietnam War. With all of the political turmoil in the 60's and 70's surrounding the war, it was a way for friends and comrades to visit a fallen friend and leave a marker to the family that someone had been there to pay respect, without having to contact the family directly, and possibly making a bad situation worse.

Each coin denomination has a different meaning. A friend or a simple acquaintance leaves a penny. Someone who has been through boot camp or other training with the deceased, leaves a nickel. A person who was assigned to an adjoining unit of the deceased may leave a dime. Someone who served in the same unit, or was with the serviceman or woman when he/she died, leaves a quarter.

Some Vietnam veterans leave coins as a "down payment" for a beer or a hand of cards until they are reunited.

This tradition has been held onto by members of the United States military. The money left at graves in national cemeteries and state veterans cemeteries remains in place for a time but is eventually collected and then put toward maintaining the cemetery or paying burial costs for indigent veterans.

And now you know the rest of the story...

#### References:

- 1) Jeff Easterling, "*Tradition of Coins Left on the Gravestone of a Soldier*", (<http://kygl.com/tradition-of-coins-left-on-the-gravestone-of-a-soldier>)
- 2) Joy Neighbors, "*Leaving Stones on Graves*" (<http://agraveinterest.blogspot.com/2012/04/leaving-stones-on-graves.html>)

## Six day membership round-up yields results in many areas

by Ken Wiseman, Department Surgeon

Virginia leadership including State Judge Advocate Mike Boehme, State Surgeon Ken Wiseman and Membership Chair / PDC Tom Hines recently conducted a 6 day tour of the 4th and 5th Districts to engage the local communities, meet with posts and Comrades and recruit new members. The tour, from 10-15 March, was one of many miles and events but one that showed great results considering all events attended.

“By the time March begins the department is two-thirds through the year and we are on the push for warmer weather, Poppies and membership” said State Surgeon Ken Wiseman. “Some days were nicer than others in terms of the weather but the Comrades of the 4th and 5th districts responded to the call and great results were seen which tells me we will finish the year strong” Wiseman added. 20 separate events including recruiting, post meetings, radio and TV interviews and even a breakfast and dinner event were held during the tour.

Starting in the 5th district, District Commander Herman Chaney joined the State Surgeon and Membership Chairman on the road to do the work needed. Tom Hines commented during the visit to Halifax which included recruiting in South Boston that there were numerous Veterans who needed to just be spoken to and they would join. “Sometimes a post existed in the past and sometimes not but there are too many Veterans in Virginia to only have the numbers we have in the VFW.” Hines could not be more right as the team recruited their first member of that day before they even finished with preparing their recruiting table.

After 3 days in the 5th district, the team moved to the 4th district where State Judge Advocate Boehme joined them and District

Commander Don Westerlund had a dynamic schedule ready. “We started a new post this year and we are looking to bring our other posts over 100% by June so this is a great chance to make that goal happen” Westerlund said. Some days there was bitter cold and rain which would turn to 70 degree weather within 12 hours but the trip moved on and saw success.

While these trips happen nearly every year, some people ask why. “Some people wonder how a state officer standing in front

“...this is a chance to get eye-to-eye and toe-to-toe with our posts and Comrades...”

of Food Lion actually accomplishes something but these trips must be seen as more than that” State Surgeon Ken Wiseman said. “We are trying to engage communities that may be nothing more than a Food Lion but they have a VFW post which means they have a Veterans community. Furthermore, this is a chance to get eye-to-eye and toe-to-toe with our posts and Comrades and to show that the state headquarters and senior officers are concerned for the success of our posts and that we want to see firsthand what conditions our posts face.”

“Trust me, those posts who cancelled or opted out will be missing something and we greatly appreciate the hospitality of everyone who did work be it on the phones, at the grocery store or meeting us for dinner. These experiences are not something you gain as the state representative to a district meeting and they shape how a line officer thinks while making us face the questions of many and the consequences of our actions and decisions. Anyone who wants to be state commander someday should make these trips and see exactly what happens in the hills, valleys and crossroads of this state.”

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# Commanders Club Luncheon

**ATTENTION: ALL PAST AND PRESENT COMMANDERS**

You are invited to attend the Annual Commanders Club Luncheon to be held on Friday, June 12, 2015, at the Fort Magruder Hotel in Williamsburg — 11:30 am to 2:00 pm.

See the Department General Orders for a registration form.

Deadline to register: May 30, 2015 — You must pre-register to attend.

## Roanoke man awarded Purple Heart 64 years after injury

By Shayne Dwyer—WBDJ7 TV, Roanoke



A Roanoke man was recently awarded a Purple Heart by the United States for his service in the Korean War more than 60 years ago. The Purple Heart is an award given to U.S. military members injured in combat.

Sergeant Herman Prillip joined an elite group of men and women given this Presidential Award -- less than 2 million exist and it's considered an extremely high honor.

If every picture tells a story and each medal comes with honor, Herman Prillip's Purple Heart sits high above the rest.

"I was shot through the arm into my hip and ended up near my spine," Prillip said.

Prillip was a young Army MP in Korea when he was shot point blank by a friend.

"One of the doctors said you want me to put in for a purple heart and I said no that's OK," Prillip said.

It's a decision Prillip thought about a lot in the years that followed. He looked into it decades later, but the Army told him it lost his records and didn't have much to go on. That's when some friends at the local VFW stepped in.

"It's wonderful to be able to help somebody like Herm correct their record and to make sure that he is recognized in the way he should be recognized," [Buchanan] VFW Post 5895 Commander Frank Ware said.

A 64 year old decision reversed in just 6 short months. The medal itself hasn't yet been given to Prillip, but the certificate makes it official. Sergeant Herman Prillip is a Purple Heart Award recipient for his injuries sustained while serving the United States Army in Korea.

They're injuries he didn't even tell some of his closest friends and family members about. Prillip started sharing details within the past few years to those closest to him.

"He doesn't like to take extra, whatever he considers extra, and he was due this," Prillip's daughter Darlene Goldberg said via Skype from her New Jersey home. "I'm glad he's finally getting it."

In just a few weeks the VFW will present Sgt. Prillip with his physical medal at a formal ceremony open to everyone.

"In all those years, 64 years, I never knew this would happen," Prillip said.

It's a story locked away in time that now sits proudly on display for time to come.

VFW Post 5895 was instrumental in helping Prillip with this process. In addition to helping with these special circumstances, it's always looking to help veteran's in our area. The post can be reached at [cdrpost5895@va.vfwwebmail.com](mailto:cdrpost5895@va.vfwwebmail.com)

Courtesy of WBDJ7 TV Roanoke

[sdwyer@wbj7.com](mailto:sdwyer@wbj7.com)

Submitted by Post 5895

# General Lewis B “Chesty” Puller Post 1503 IN REVIEW

The Dale City VFW Post 1503 continues to go above and beyond with their veterans support and hospital work and recruiting events around the community. Our Boy Scout troop maintains a very aggressive schedule of events. Our award winning Honor Guard is often



Halloween 2014

held our annual Halloween haunted house and party for the children and the adults....those of you that missed it last year...be aware that we challenge you to visit us next year. You will not forget it.



Happy 239<sup>th</sup> Birthday Marines. SEMPER-PI



Guest of Honor, 16th SgtMaj of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Carlton Kent

In November of 2014 “Team Chesty” celebrated the United States Marine Corps 239<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Along with the Marine Corps Birthday always comes Buddy Poppies and Veterans Day. These times always prove to be a very busy time around Post

1503, as we have a very robust and productive Buddy Poppy team that continues to increase the donation amount every year.

On Veterans Day we took a few moments of our time and closed the canteen to reflect on our Veterans, past and present. It’s not often that we take a few moments and just recognize our own



Kids line up to play “LIMBO”. How low can you go?

members for the sacrifices that they and their families made, and continue to make.

Thanksgiving and Christmas around the Chesty Puller Post is a time that we are very proud of, because of the work that goes into the community support for food baskets and Christmas tree sales to our community. We do save some time to throw that occasional party during the Holidays...Our Ladies Auxiliary hosted the annual Children’s



Santa almost lost his beard.

Christmas party and made sure that Santa Claus himself this had reserved parking on the roof this year .....I think Santa is actually losing some weight.

We rang in the NEW YEAR with a bang at our New Year’s Eve party and got back to business in 2015 with the Dale City Civic Association Awards banquet. We had the honor of hosting the Awards ceremony for the Police, Fire, EMT, Teacher of the Year and Citizen of the Year. We were surrounded by some of Dale City’s finest. Chesty Puller Post 1503 brought home the distinguished award for the National EMT of the Year, Captain Brian Furgeson, and Dale City Citizen of the Year, Ms. Angela McConnell.



(Post 1503: Continued on page 25)

(Post 1503: Continued from page 24)



Post Commander Randall Coker presents a \$5000 check to the American Wartime Museum representative., Allan Cors.

We pride ourselves on how much we donate back to our community and how much time we put into "giving back". In February 2015, we presented a second donation to the American Wartime Museum in the amount of 5,000 dollars.

In March the Chesty Puller Post 1503 had the distinct honor to host some of the VFW's Past National Commander's in Chief and Madam Presidents during their official visit to Washington DC area for the VFW Legislative meetings. After a guided tour of the Marine Corps museum, they were escorted to the Post, where they were provided lunch, a tour of our post home and some good ole fashion down home comradery. They did not want to leave.....I think it was because of the good food and hos-



At the National Museum of the Marine Corps



VFW Past Commanders-in-Chief visit Chesty Puller VFW Post 1503.

pitality that they received.

As we come to the end of another great year, the Boy Scout troop always conducts their Boy Scout of the Year awards ceremony and it is always good to see and hear what great things our troop continues to do for the community and for our own post. Thanks to our troop 1919 for being such a strong and supportive troop.

As each of us read this Virginia Veteran newsletter we should all remember the sacrifices that our fellow Veterans who each paved the way for us to all enjoy the freedoms that we enjoy. The Vet-



erans of Foreign Wars is just another way for us all to say "Thank You" to all of them.



Arch Archambault, Post 1503's number "one" recruiter

**VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE**  
[www.vfwpost1503.com](http://www.vfwpost1503.com)

93<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION  
 DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA  
 VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES  
 FORT MAGRUDER HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

Eugene Chavis  
 Convention Chairman

Kathy Goodall  
 Convention Vice Chairman

*Tentative Subject to Change*

**Thursday,  
 June 11, 2015**

9:30 AM	1:00 PM	REGISTRATION, MOC	CLARA BARTON
11:00 AM	NOON	COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATON MEETING	EARLY'S
NOON	4:00 PM	REGISTRATION, VFW	CLARA BARTON
2:30 PM	4:00 PM	JOINT MEMORIAL SERVICES	RICHMOND HALL
6:00 PM	10:30 PM	JOINT PRESENTATION OF AWARDS	RICHMOND HALL

**Friday,  
 June 12, 2015**

8:00 AM	5:00 PM	REGISTRATION, VFW	CLARA BARTON
9:00 AM	11:00 AM	JOINT OPENING SESSION	HILLS & MCCLELLANS
9:30 AM	1:00 PM	REGISTRATION, MOC	
11:30 AM	2:00 PM	COMMANDERS CLUB LUNCHEON	EMORYS
2:30 PM	5:00 PM	BUSINESS SESSION (NOMINATION OF STATE OFFICERS)	PETERSBURG HALL
5:30 PM	8:00 PM	COOTIE GRAND SCRATCH	EMORYS
9:00 PM	1:00 AM	COOTIE DANCE – DJ	RICHMOND HALL

**Saturday,  
 June 13, 2015**

7:30 AM	8:30 AM	PAST STATE COMMANDERS/PRESIDENTS BREAKFAST	STUARTS
9:00 AM	1:00 PM	REGISTRATION, VFW	CLARA BARTON
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	BUSINESS SESSION	PETERSBURG HALL
1:00 PM	3:00 PM	BUSINESS SESSION (ELECTION & INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS)	PETERSBURG HALL
3:00 PM	4:00 PM	VFW RIDERS MEETING	TBD
3:00 PM	4:00 PM	MENS AUX MEETING	TBD
6:00 PM	10:00 PM	RECEPTION/ DANCE – DJ	PETERSBURG HALL

**Sunday,  
 June 14, 2015**

9:00 AM	9:30 AM	JOINT DEVOTIONAL SERVICE	EMORYS
9:30 AM	12:00 PM	NEW DISTRICT COMMANDERS SCHOOL	PETERSBURG HALL
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	COUNCIL MEETING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CLOSE OF CONVENTION	PETERSBURG HALL



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Department of Veterans Services*

*Veterans Education, Training and Employment*

*Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)*

Annie Walker

Telephone: (804) 225-2083

Director

Fax: (804) 786-0809

*Annie.walker@dvs.virginia.gov*

March 17, 2015

RE: Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) Dear

JLC member.

The Department of Veterans Services (DVS) determines eligibility for benefits under the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), which provides state education benefits to the spouses and children of military service members who were killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became at least 90 percent disabled as a result of military service in an armed conflict.

Part of the eligibility review process involves a review of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) records, which DVS may not be able to readily access, especially if another veterans service organization (VSO) holds the power of attorney (POA).

DVS has instituted a new process to help applicants, and their veteran spouse or parent, gather and submit the documents necessary for DVS to make a VMSDEP eligibility determination. The attached form gives DVS permission to obtain information from another VSO in order to make a VMSEP eligibility determination.

We ask that you share this letter and the new form with your VSO commander and the head of your VSO's service officer program, so that they may share this information with your VSO's service officers.

If we may provide additional information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Montwrace Cunningham, DVS VMSDEP Coordinator, at 804-225-2083 or [Montrwrace.Cunningham@dvs.virginia.gov](mailto:Montrwrace.Cunningham@dvs.virginia.gov).

Sincerely,

Annie Walker, MBA

Director, Veterans Education, Training and Employment



## VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

### AUTHORIZATION TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION TO VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES (VADVS) IN ORDER TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS THROUGHOUT THE VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS PROGRAM (VMSDEP)

Please complete and upload this form at the time of your online application submission or fax to:  
**Virginia Department of Veterans Services**  
**Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)**  
**Fax: 804-786-0809**

**PURPOSE:** This form authorizes VADVS to access your Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) records from your Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative, agent or attorney in order to determine your dependents' eligibility for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). Your permission, as endorsed by your signature below, is Required for VDVS to process your dependent's application.

**NOTE:** VDVS will not pay any fees charged by a custodian to provide records requested.

<b>Applicant's Name</b>	Last Name	First Name/MI	
<b>Veteran's Name</b>	Last Name	DOB	First Name/MI
<b>SSN</b>		DOB	
<b>Veteran's Home Phone</b>	(    )    -		
<b>Veteran's Cell Phone</b>	(    )    -		

Please list your VSO representative, agent or attorney. Telephone #  
(    )    -

**I give permission for VDVS to obtain information from the following VSO representative, agent or attorney for VMSDEP processing:**

**SIGNER'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** I HEREBY AUTHORIZE the listed VSO representative, agent or attorney to release any information that may have been obtained in connection with a physical, psychological or psychiatric examination or treatment, with the understanding that VDVS will use this information in determining my dependent's eligibility for VMSDEP. I understand that once my VSO representative, agent or attorney sends this information to VDVS under this authorization, the information will no longer be protected by the HIPAA Privacy Rule, but will be protected by the Federal Privacy Act, 5 USC 552a, and the VDVS may disclose this information as authorized by law. I understand that the VSO representative, agent or attorney being asked to provide the VDVS with records under this authorization may refuse as the listed source is not obligated to release such information; upon which I will be responsible for providing all information, as identified by VDVS, to fully evaluate my dependent's request for VMSDEP eligibility determination. I also understand that I may revoke this authorization in writing; and to revoke, I must send a written statement to DVS and also send a copy directly to the listed VSO representative, agent or attorney that I no longer wish to disclose information about me. I understand that VDVS may use information disclosed prior to revocation to act on my dependent's request for determination of eligibility for benefits under the VMSDEP.

**Veteran's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VDVS USE ONLY:**

Document:	Date Received:	Staff:	Application Number: