

Department Commander



VFW VA Commander
Douglas R. Keller

“Accept challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory.”

George S. Patton

In April, all Posts will be holding their elections. It's always the best solution to elect Comrades who will accept the challenge and will do their very best to conduct the business of the VFW. The worst solution is just to fill in a name just to complete the election report. I hope every Post will elect the very best Comrades to each and every position. The District elections are also very

important. We need to elect Comrades at the District level who will fulfill the responsibilities of the applicable office.

As of the 24th of March, we need 2102 more new, renewed or reinstated members for the Department of Virginia to reach its goal of 100% membership. Posts need to recruit new members, call their annual members who have not renewed and contact those who have dropped out so that we can get them reinstated. This is an obtainable goal. If every Post were to get 2 members per week for the next eight weeks we would make it with 100 members to spare.

April is also the last month for the second half reporting period which ends on the 30th. All Post Community Activities must be submitted to Department Headquarters by then. Don't wait until the last minute! This is the way that we report all the good work that we do in our community. Get it reported before time runs out.

“No Act of kindness, No matter how small, is ever wasted”

Aesop

Yours in Comradeship,

Douglas R. Keller
Department of Virginia
Commander 2015-2016

Salem vets are part of a changing VFW

Posted: Tuesday, November 10, 2015

By Luanne Rife luanne.rife@roanoke.com 981-3209

No need to commission a bugler to play taps over the Veterans of Foreign Wars since the organization is enjoying “a bit of a renaissance,” a state representative said, and veterans in Salem are proving the point.

Organizers in Salem accomplished what they set out to do and signed up enough combat veterans committed to forming a new VFW Post by Veterans Day. It wasn't all that long ago that the former Salem Post folded when longtime members, mostly World War II and Korean War veterans, died off, and younger combat veterans didn't seem interested in an organization whose



Kim Walker (left), who served in the Army for 11 years, moved to Rocky Mount from Michigan five months ago. She spoke with (from left) Mike Rindorf, Nathan Moore, David Perkins and Rick Wheeler, all veterans who are trying to start a new VFW Post.

image had grown as stale as the bar smoke that hung over Post taverns.

Today, the VFW Posts are changing. Only about half own the buildings where they meet. The Posts are more about supporting the community and veterans than they are about socialization.

(Continued on page 5)



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www.vfwva.org

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PO Box 10206

Manassas, VA 20108

**Articles for the next issue must be received before
 October 20, 2016.**

Please address all comments to the above address.

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

From the Editor's desk

This edition features articles from Posts all over the Commonwealth of Virginia. Of particular significance is Virginia has a new Post. As reported in the Roanoke Times, Post 12154 in Salem Virginia was formed before Veterans Day 2015. Our reprint of that article begins on page 1.

The Department of Virginia and Bass Pro Shops of Hampton Roads proudly announces a 50 prize raffle with the winners being determined at the VFW State Convention in Williamsburg on June 18, 2016. All proceeds will be used to support Veterans Programs and Activities. See Page 3.

Of personal interest, Bobbiejo Lazo, our State Service Officer introduces herself on Page 6 and Comrade Joel Chase, Chaplain at Post 7589 in Manassas writes of his experience in a 1970 firefight defending Fire Support Base David in Cambodia, for which he was awarded the Silver Star. See Page 8.

And lastly, let's not forget that Virginia has an excellent chance to have our first Commander in Chief of the VFW in the presence of our own Hal Roesch. There has been very encouraging news where, as of the date of this publication, he has been endorsed by 12 of the 14 states that make up the Southern Conference. Let's all get behind Hal and help him succeed.

Thanks to all of the Posts who submitted articles for this edition. They serve as clear indication of the great work you are doing and the positive image you are helping to project for the Department of Virginia and the VFW.

Yours in Comradeship,

Rick Raskin

Editor

Support



Hal Roesch
2018

Junior-Vice Commander in Chief

Veterans of Foreign Wars
 Of the United States

HB 63 Passes Virginia General Assembly — Signed by Governor *Veteran Service Organizations finally recognized under Virginia Tax Code*



Capitol Building, Richmond Virginia

One of the stated goals of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) in 2016 was to request a change to the Virginia Tax Code. The Commonwealth of Virginia presently does not recognize a VSO under § 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) and it puts them under financial pressure from localities that attempt to tax them at the same rate of any other for-profit business. This puts the mission of service to veterans and their families at risk. Thirty-four other states had already made changes to their tax laws to recognize 501(c)(19) organizations.

When IRC 501(c)(19) was enacted on August 29, 1972, it was evidence of Congress's intent to provide special tax treatment for war veterans' organizations. Prior to 1972, VSOs were either a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4). These permitted veterans' organizations to be exempt from tax, with contributions to them to be tax deductible, and allowed the ability to engage in both lobbying activities and political activities. It is fair to say that veterans' organizations are unique in the tax-exempt sector.

Over the past year, VFW Post 7916 in Occoquan, Virginia, has spearheaded our efforts in the change this law to recognize Veteran Service Organizations and their work in supporting this nation's veterans. Last year the town of Occoquan notified Post 7916 Quartermaster Jim Adams, Col USA (Ret) of the intent to impose a tax on the Post, which had been located in Occoquan for over 55 years. Adams researched the various laws and found the inconsistency that had wide ranging affects. He informed Post 7916 Commander Chuck Wilson, Colonel USAF (Ret), who took the issue and briefed the District 10 Convention, the Virginia Department Convention, and the Potomac Region Veterans Council. Upon hearing the issue presented, Dan Boyer, our Joint Leadership Council Representative (JLC) and former State Commander, convinced the JLC to make it a priority for this year's legislative session.

At the VFW's 2016 Day on the Hill on January 14, teams of

VFW and Auxiliary members canvased both houses of the Legislature. We strongly stressed the importance of this issue and the consequences should it continue to be overlooked in Virginia. Our efforts resulted in the three Bills as described below.

Virginia House Bill 63, sponsored by Delegate Scott Ligamfelter, provides a sales and use tax exemption for entities exempt from federal income taxation under § 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, an exemption for veterans organizations that meet certain requirements. ***This brings the Virginia Code in line with the Federal Code.*** There were also two companion Virginia Bills, HB 21 sponsored by Virginia Delegate Farrell, and SB 533 sponsored by Senator Surovell. Delegate Rich Anderson was also a staunch supporter.



Chuck Wilson

Continuing our efforts, on February 23, 2016, Chuck Wilson addressed the Virginia Senate emphasizing the importance of this change and the positive affects it would have on the VSOs across the Commonwealth. Wilson's address had a positive impact! Also in attendance were Department Senior Vice Commander Tom Gimble, Department Junior Vice Mike Boehme, and Post 7916 Life Member Turk Maggi.

HB 63 passed the Virginia House 96-1—signed by the speaker, passed the Senate 39-0 and was signed by the President of the Senate. On March 25th Governor McAuliffe signed the bill to become effective July 1, 2016.

VA Secretary Visits Post 3150

By J. Gary Wagner

Secretary of the Department of U.S. Veterans Affairs, Robert A. McDonald, and his wife, attended the Veterans Day Weekend pig roast on Sunday, 8 November. The Post responded to a general request from the Secretary's staff for a Veterans Day event that he might attend. Veterans from the VFW Virginia Tenth District and other veterans organizations, as well as a number of John Lyon members, attended the event. A pig was slow-cooked overnight and along with a number of side dishes delighted the full house to kick off Veterans Day Week.



Secretary McDonald (left) chats with Post members Shawn Poulin and Grant Vaught (partially hidden)

Submitted Photo



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

BASS PRO RAFFLE

Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Virginia and Bass Pro Shops of Hampton Roads proudly announce a 50 prize raffle with the winners being determined at the VFW State Convention in Williamsburg on June 18, 2016. The fifty prizes are listed on the back of each ticket. The value of the 50 prizes is approximately \$20,000. As a winning ticket is drawn it will be placed back in the drum to have a chance at the remaining prizes. Tickets are \$5.00 each and we are asking each VFW member to purchase at least one ticket and sell as many as you can. Tickets are available from your Post Commander or State Headquarters. All proceeds will be used to support Veterans Programs and Activities.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. HENRY GOLDEN BOY .22 CAL | 26. LANDMAN FIRE PIT |
| 2. YETI ROADIE | 27. BASS PRO RAIN JACKET |
| 3. SAVAGE 16 .243 CAL | 28. \$ 500.00 BPS GIFT CARD |
| 4. QUANTUM BAITCASTER OUTFIT | 29. BASS PRO CAMP KITCHEN |
| 5. THUNDER HAWK CROSSBOW | 30. \$ 500.00 BPS GIFT CARD |
| 6. OA OCEANMASTER REEL W/B | 31. ORVIS FLY OUTFIT |
| 7. RUGER 10/22 .22 CAL | 32. YETI TRUNDRA 45 |
| 8. FRONTIER REVOLVER .45 CAL LC | 33. MASTERBUILT ELECT. SMOKER |
| 9. COSTA 580P SUNGLASSES | 34. REDHEAD 10 GUN SAFE |
| 10. \$ 500.00 BPS GIFT CARD | 35. BROWNING BPS 12GA |
| 11. MINN KOTA TROLLING MOTOR | 36. TRAEGER PELLET GRILL |
| 12. CHAR-BROIL PROPANE GRILL | 37. PENN BATTLE II & OA BAG |
| 13. TEKNETICS METAL DETECTOR | 38. BROWNING ROD STORAGE |
| 14. BUSHNELL BINOCULARS | 39. YETI 125 |
| 15. \$ 500.00 BPS GIFT CARD | 40. \$500.00 BPS GIFT CARD |
| 16. REMINGTON 870 | 41. BASS PRO BAITCAST |
| 17. RUGER MK111 | 42. BUSHMASTER .223MSR |
| 18. ASCEND C156 CANOE | 43. WINCHESTER SX3 13GA |
| 19. PARKER ENFORCER C'BOW | 44. BROWNING SPINNING CB |
| 20. \$ 500.00 BPS GIFT CARD | 45. YETI 65 |
| 21. BROWNING TWO BURNER | 46. \$ 250.00 BPS GIFT CARD |
| 22. YETI HOPPER 20 | 47. UBIRITE .45CAL PISTOL |
| 23. TIKKA T-3 .308 CAL | 48. PENN SENATOR R&T |
| 24. HENRY BIG BOY .44 MAG | 49. BROWNING MAXUS 12GA 1,349.99 |
| 25. BASS PRO 4 P'SN TENT | 50. \$ 250.00 BPS GIFT CARD |

(Continued from page 1)

Though that component is still there, along with one to welcome veterans' families.

The VFW was formed in 1899. "You don't make it to 2015 without adapting to new ideas," said Ken Wiseman, an officer with VFW Virginia. Those new ideas have returned the organization to its roots of veterans advocating for and helping other veterans.

"The Posts grow out of veterans who served overseas who decide they want to keep serving, and they want to do it under the banner of the VFW," Wiseman added.

While Posts are still folding in rural areas, Wiseman said they are coming back in mid-sized cities and attracting younger veterans who didn't have time for the VFW upon their discharge. One opened last year in Dinwiddie County, south of Richmond. The post-9/11 veterans, as he calls them, "came back, got their education and jobs, started families and really miss that fraternity that appears to be happening in Salem".

David Perkins moved to Virginia five years ago when his wife transferred to the Salem VA Medical Center for work. As a Marine machine gunner, Perkins did two tours in Iraq.

"We kicked off the ground war and were there for 11 months. I was home for about six months and redeployed for another year," he said.

In Salem, he began working for the nonprofit Family Promise, which provides shelter and services to homeless families with children, and he sought out other combat veterans.

About a dozen veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars began meeting informally and taking on small projects like doing yardwork for servicemen and -women or their families, he said.

They wanted to do more and thought that would be possible under the auspices of the VFW.

They reached out to Wiseman.

"He was really excited that we were a younger group and has been helping us along the way," Perkins said.

The goal was to have the requisite 35 members signed up by Veterans Day. Of those 35, 25 must be combat veterans who were never members of a VFW, a rule designed to keep Posts from splintering.

By Monday, 43 veterans had signed on. Perkins plans to submit the paperwork to the state on Friday.

"That does not mean that we will stop taking new members," he said. "It just means that the window of opportunity to become a charter member is slowly starting to close."

Wiseman plans to push through the paperwork in order to swear in the charter members mid-December so that the Post can be introduced during the state's January convention.

Perkins said they've signed on veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Gulf War, Vietnam and Korea. Generational differences don't

matter.

"People who were in combat can relate to others who were in a combat zone whether that was in the desert or jungle. Whoever has experienced combat can talk that language and relate to one another even if there is that age difference," he said.

Bobbie Saul, a three-time commander of Salem's defunct VFW Post 4318 and a veteran of the Korean War, is one of the soon-to-be charter members of the new Post. Saul said the old Post tried several times to attract younger members.

"Nothing ever happened. We were just a bunch of old men, and they had different interests," he said. "I'm really glad to see the young vets doing this."

At its end, the Post "got to be just five, six or seven of us at a meeting. So many of the older ones started dropping off and passing away. We just couldn't make it," Saul said.

The Post donated most of its banked funds to the Salem VA Medical Center and the Virginia Veterans Care Center, before turning over the rest to the state organization.

Wiseman said he's excited about "the kind of energy coming back to Salem. It's not just new veterans, but cross generational. They have a very strong level of support from the community."

In less than a year, they've recruited enough members. To spread the word, they've been setting up an information table at the Salem VA on Wednesday mornings.

Of the estimated 800,000 veterans in Virginia, between 10 percent and 15 percent are eligible for VFW membership. About 33,000 Virginian veterans belong to 138 Posts. Wiseman said membership has trended slightly downward, but there hasn't been a massive drop. Two new Posts in as many years mirror a shift occurring nationwide.



STEPHANIE KLEIN-DAVIS | The Roanoke Times

Vietnam War veteran Elgie Scott, 67, of Lynchburg asks about signing up to the new Salem VFW Post. He chats with (from left) Nathan Moore, who served in the Army, and David Perkins, who was in the Marines, at the Salem VA Medical Center.

Membership is reserved for veterans who served in overseas con-

flicts. To join, veterans need to show proof of combat, which is usually listed on their discharge papers.

Once a Post is formed, the members shape it with few constraints from the VFW. The members pay \$45 annual dues and the Post funds one delegate to the state and national conventions. The Post can opt to participate in the VFW's best-known fundraiser Buddy Poppies, but it maintains autonomy in how it raises money and which projects it undertakes.

Perkins said the Salem group is hoping that as it grows, it can tackle larger projects and fight homelessness of veterans.

"You can prevent them from being homeless if they are late on the rent or behind on their mortgage. If you look at the homeless, it could be me. It could be you," he said. "What we'd like to do is stop it before it happens."

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THE ROANOKE TIMES

roanoke.com

Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Manassas Post 7589 gets massive tab donation from Tractor Supply



Photo by Rick Raskin

Pete Slusher, of Post 7589, looks over some 40,000 tabs recently collected by Tractor Supply Co. of Manassas. The proceeds from the recycling tabs go to the Boston Burn Center which provides cost free medical services to needy families who have suffered burns. To date the Post has collected over 500,000 tabs.

Jacob J. Pearson VFW Post 637 71st Annual Anniversary and Awards Banquet

By Lee Dixon, Post 637

November 13th 2015 was another memorable evening for the comrades, auxiliary members, guests and awardees of the Jacob J. Pearson VFW Post 637 71st Annual Anniversary and Awards Banquet. The ballroom was beautifully decorated in red, white and blue and special thanks are given to VA Department Commander Keller and VA Department QM/Adjutant DeShano for joining us on this special evening. After opening comments by Post Commander Philip J. Arendsen II the colors were posted by the Prince George ROTC Honor Guard followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem performed by a solo trumpet player. This was followed by the POW/MIA Ceremony in which military members from each branch of our military marched into the hall carrying a hat from their respective branch. Once the ceremony was read and the covers were placed on the table, the military members were invited to stay and join the Post to enjoy the dinner and awards presentation.

After members and guests enjoyed a catered dinner of roast beef and ham the community awards were presented. The Post honored our Soldier of the Year, Police Officer of the Year, Sheriff's

Deputy of the Year and Firefighter of the Year. The youth awards included Voice of Democracy winners, Patriot's Pen winners and the Eagle Scout of the Year. All program winners received a cash award and framed certificate. After the awards presentation Commander Arendsen asked all Vietnam War Veterans in attendance to come forward. To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War he presented each of them with a Vietnam War coin and thanked them for their service on behalf of Post 637.



Submitted Photo

A huge crowd gathered for the 71st awards and anniversary banquet.

2015-2016

State Service Office



Bobbiejo Lazo - State Service Officer

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The State of Virginia VFW Department Service Office is currently headquartered in close proximity to the VA Regional Office in Roanoke, Va. The Department Service Office is organized under the authority of the Department By-Laws and provides services under the Department Veteran Service Committee. All Service Officers employed by the VFW of Virginia are members of the VFW. All Service Officers and Clams Consultants are accredited by the VA through the VFW and perform their duties in accordance with the National Policy and Procedure Manual of the VFW National Veterans Service.

The mission of the Department Service Office is to assist all veterans of Virginia, their dependents, and their survivors in the pursuit of all benefits administered by the US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to which they may be entitled. The mission is pursued through the development of supportive relationships with the Virginia Department of Veteran Services (VDVS) offices and the state wide network of volunteer VFW Post and District Service Officers. From these sources claims for benefits are received, prepared and submitted to the VA.

The Department Service Office is under the direction of Department Service Officer, Bobbiejo Lazo, an Iraq veteran. Activities of the Service Office include case management of claims submitted to the VA from all state wide sources to include representation in the VA appeals process to the VA Board of Veterans Appeals. The Office provides training of Post and District Service Officers. The Office also provides guest speakers on the issues of VA benefits to VFW Posts and Districts, local civic groups, military Reserve and National Guard units and college student organizations as requested.

The hours of operation and contact information for the Department Service Office are listed below. Members with questions about existing claims or requesting information about VA benefits are encouraged to contact the Department Service Office during hours of operation or by email.

Bobbiejo Lazo , State Service Officer

US Army, Iraq

Email: serviceofficer@va.vfwwebmail.com

Office Hours: M-F 8am-5-pm

Appointments 08:30 – 4:30pm

* CLOSED ON FEDERAL HOLIDAYS *

The Assault on Firebase David

By Joel Chase — Post 7589, Manassas, VA

In early May 1970, the 1st Air Cavalry Division was inserted deep inside Cambodia to search and destroy caches of NVA food, weapons and munitions in preparation for the withdrawal of all US troops from South Vietnam. Due to the draw-down of personnel and lack of replacements, all elements were less than half their allocated strength.

I was a platoon leader with D Co. 1st of the 5th, and our Battalion Fire Support Base (FSB) David was located ten miles inside the Cambodian border. FSB David consisted of fifteen bunkers circling about four acres of real estate. The bunkers were linked together by a berm about three feet high to offer defilade from enemy fire. There were two glaring deficiencies as to FSB David's position: It was beyond fan fire support from any other firebase and there was a steep ravine about fifty meters from the berm in one sector of the perimeter that offered natural cover to the enemy. Approximately two hundred personnel manned the firebase.

When my Company was pulled out of the jungle and assigned security at FSB David, guess who got the bunkers facing the ravine? We immediately began making improvements to our position by building secondary fighting positions between our four assigned bunkers. The bunkers were like magnets to NVA B-40 rockets, so I instructed my men stay out of them if we were attacked. Claymore mines were brought back and dug into the berm to deter the enemy from turning them around toward us. We installed fifty trip flares in front of each bunker in every direction possible. Our organic mortar tubes were zeroed in on the ravine. I suspected that the enemy planned to attack FSB David and had mapped the location of our defensive positions, so after darkness fell we moved everything around. Each man was assigned a place to be and a field of fire. We were as ready as we could be.

At 0300 hours on 14 June a trip flare went off in front of one of my bunkers and the guard took a shot when he thought he saw something move. I recommended we go to 100% alert on the perimeter. Dense fog limited visibility to about fifty feet, and mortar illumination was of no help. We visually searched the area for nearly thirty minutes with no results. As I stood behind the berm, a burst of AK-47 fire erupted which was intended to give me a new belly button. However, the rounds struck the berm and grazed my scalp. Suddenly the darkness was filled with red and green tracers and men were scurrying to their assigned positions. I got on the radio to the mortar guys and asked them to commence their preplanned fire into the ravine. My CO called and asked me: "What the hell is going on?" My sector was the only one under attack at the time, but soon the entire firebase was under siege by NVA. About five minutes later a Chi-com grenade took me out of the fight, but my guys continued to perform marvelously until dawn and the enemy withdrew. During the three hour battle, gunships circled above FB David but could not fire due to the dense fog.

Due to the extent of my injuries I was unable to witness the damage the Cav had inflicted on the enemy, but I had read the Daily Log, Manning Report and After-Action reports that told the story. There were 28 NVA to bury and numerous blood and drag trails to illustrate the carnage we brought on the enemy. There were 29 wounded Americans needing evacuation when the fog cleared but not one man was killed during the battle. Later that morning the Commanding General of the 5th Cav flew in with a footlocker full of medals to present including ten Silver Stars. He was giddy with praise for the troops who had beaten the NVA's best at their own game saying: "This was the finest defense of a firebase he could imagine".

The After-Action report said the NVA hit us with 250 to 300 of their regular army. Our troops fought a great fight, but a little luck and a single trip flare played a huge role in preventing the firebase from being completely overrun.

Was I prepared to become a platoon leader after graduating from OCS? **HELL NO!** However, I was blessed with great NCOs and an understanding Company Commander who helped me learn how to get from point A to point B while keeping my men from getting killed or accidentally killing one another. After nine months of OJT I kind of knew what I was doing and could smell trouble a mile away. That was the "luck" we experienced at FSB David. After visually searching the area for thirty minutes following the trip flare going off, everyone wanted to call it quits and go back to bed - except me. I knew the NVA was there just waiting to unleash their deadly attack. I was unwilling to ignore the warning signal of the trip flare. I had listened on the radio as other fire bases such as Eagle and Illingworth were being overrun. I had vowed not to let that happen at David and neither did my troopers. I know I'm probably obsessive about this but it was an important event not in just my life, but in the lives of many other American soldiers.

A year later while I was recuperating at Walter Reed there was an awards and decorations ceremony in the Commanding General's office for a number of us wounded. I wasn't aware that the Silver Star was one of my awards and quite frankly at the time, didn't care. Afterward, my party simply departed for lunch in the officer's mess.

Today I have a much higher respect for those who merited medals. However, I feel that my decorations should belong to those I served with. They were the true heroes; I was just a wounded warrior.



FSB David, near O Rang Cambodia

Thanking Those Who Served: VFW Post Aids Homeless Veterans

By MARGE SWAYNE
THE FARMVILLE (VA.) HERALD

Submitted by Post 7059

While the majority of Americans paused to celebrate Thanksgiving on Thursday, homeless veterans and their families, many in the Richmond area, were out in the cold with little to be thankful about. One blessing those homeless families can be thankful for again this year is Farmville VFW Post 7059.

In a month's time the local VFW Post's Homeless Veterans Clothing Drive collected roughly \$30,000 worth of clothing and personal items for distribution at the annual Stand Down held at McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond on November 15.

"This year I concentrated on collecting for homeless families," Hicks stated. "Not only are a lot of veterans homeless - so are their families."

This year marks the fourth time the local VFW Post has collected clothing and personal items for homeless veterans.

The VFW's Homeless Veteran's Drive, which actually began in 2010, had a very down-to-earth beginning. It was a Sock Drive launched by former Post 7059 Commander Tom Hicks. The project was inspired by a routine visit to McGuire by members of the Farmville VFW Post.

"I was standing by the nurses' station and I heard a nurse come up and ask for socks," Hicks explained. Another nurse told her they were out of socks - because of the veterans' wounds they sometimes went through five or six pairs of socks."

Hicks decided this situation was unacceptable. "I came back and talked to the guys at the VFW and then started the sock campaign," Hicks explained. Hicks' collection effort netted 1,800 pairs of socks that year.

In 2012 when Hicks learned of the high rate of homeless veterans near Richmond he brought up the idea of a Homeless Veterans Clothing Drive to Post 7059 members. The project was approved and has become an ongoing effort by the local VFW Post. Items are collected locally for homeless veterans and taken to

the annual Stand Down held at McGuire, usually near the holiday season.

Stand Downs, like the one held in Richmond Nov. 15, are part of the Department of Veterans Affairs effort to provide services to homeless veterans and have been an effective tool in reaching out to homeless veterans across the country. The Stand Down at McGuire offers homeless veterans health care screenings and services, assistance in applying for VA benefits and Social Services, employment counseling and job referrals, and a variety of community-based services in addition to clothing and personal hygiene items. Many of those personal items are donated by organizations such as the VFW.

This year's Farmville's clothing drive focused on warm winter clothing, coats, hats, and shoes for men, women and children. Collection points were set up around town at Merk's, Sears Farm Bureau, Carpet House, Re-Store, and WVHL Kickin' Country Radio Station. Every Saturday from Oct. 7 to Nov. 8, Hicks sat at the VFW Post Hall to accept donations personally.

I had said that items should be new or gently-worn," Hicks said. "Eighty percent of what I collected was brand spanking new - shirts, underwear, coats, and pants -some still had the tags on them. People really surprised me this year."

In some instances, Hicks went shopping for items himself. "One person took me to Walmart and gave me \$100 to buy personal items for ladies," Hicks related. Hicks was undeterred at the prospect of going through the checkout line with a basket full of



Photo by Marge Swayne

Members of Farmville VFW Post 7059 joined the effort to help homeless veterans again this year. Last month the local Post collected an estimated \$30,000 worth of warm winter clothing and personal items for men, women and children and transported them to McGuire VA Hospital for distribution. Pictured (from left) are Tom Hicks, Harry Wyat, Fred Hill, Greg Winston, Earl Swink, Neil Chamberlin, and (kneeling) Jimmy Nash.

feminine hygiene products. The cashier gave me a funny look," Hicks recalled. "I just told her 'I had a whole lot of daughters!'" The VFW's annual Homeless Veterans Drive, Hicks believes, has made the community more aware of the need to assist homeless veterans. "This community supports our veterans," he stated. "And this is an opportunity for them to help."

The plight of homeless veterans in Virginia came to the attention of Governor Terry McAuliffe earlier this year. In June he signed onto a national agreement aimed at ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2015.

"One in every 10 Virginians is a veteran," said Health and Human Resources Secretary Bill Hazel in a June 9 release from Richmond. "They are our neighbors, friends, brothers, sisters, parents and children."

That so many veterans are homeless, an estimated 49,900 nationwide according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, is becoming increasingly unacceptable on both the national and state levels.

"All Virginians should be concerned about veteran homelessness," said Commerce and Trade Secretary Maurice Jones. "These brave men and women deserve the certainty and security of a place they can call home."

Tom Hicks and Farmville VFW Post 7059 are doing what they can to help. On November 13 a group of VFW members gathered at Hicks' home to load a trailer with donated items for the Stand Down in Richmond.

"We filled that trailer and had only two feet left at the end of it," Hicks stated. "I would guess that we had about \$30,000 to \$35,000 worth of clothing from the local area - that's Farmville, Rice, Prospect, Meherrin - all just local."

Hicks was on the road himself during the month-long drive to collect items donors were unable to bring to a collection site. "It kept me running, picking up things," he commented. "I would get home at six at night and get a call - I'd be off and running again."

"The community came through with flying colors," the retired Marine concluded.

The Farmville community, Hicks believes, should be proud.

Thanking homeless veterans for the service they have given combines "thanks" and "giving" in the truest spirit of the season.

2nd District holds Valentines Day recruiting class

"There was a lot of interaction between Mike and I and the attendees. Great time was had by all in attendance."

Tom Hines



Smithfield Post Commander Chris Garrett welcomes members of the Second District to the class.



PDC and State Membership Committee chair Tom Hines in action. Department JVC Mike Boehme was also an instructor for the session.



Submitted Photos

General Lewis B “Chesty” Puller Post 1503 IN REVIEW



Post Honor Guard with the Post Chaplain for life in prayer

The Comrades and Auxiliary members of Post 1503 continue to focus on Veterans helping Veterans with the “Team Chesty” one team approach. Our local motto is to “Recruit”, “Retain” and “Maintain”. We have experienced great success this year, by making the new members feel at home and welcome into the Post and is one of the ways we use to reach our goals. Veterans support, hospital work and providing assistance in and around the community, continues to be the other primary focuses for the “Chesty Puller” Post 1503. September is always a busy time around our Post, with the VFW Birthday, the Air Force Birthday and POW/MIA day. We paid a tribute to those POW/MIAs with a ceremony in the canteen on September 20th.

In November of 2015 we celebrated Veterans Day across the country. The Comrades and Auxiliary members of Post 1503 were on hand at the Quantico National Cemetery, along with hundreds of guests from the local community, to show respect and honor those who paved the way many years ago. That same day, later in the afternoon the Post Commander was the guest speaker at the Prince William County Veterans War Memorial wreath laying ceremony where a small crowd gathered at the memorial to pay solemn tribute.



Post Commander Randy Coker discusses the significance of Veterans and the sacrifices they make for their country.

Our Boy Scout Troop 1919 stays engaged around our Post and the community by conducting community projects, clean up days, mulch delivery, flag collection projects and much more



Members of Chesty Puller VFW Post 1503 join the Boy Scout troop 1919 on the Post cleanup day



Thanksgiving came and went very quickly and it was time for the famous 1503 Christmas tree sales. This year we hit a record of selling 450 trees in twelve days. The volunteer turnout was the biggest one on record as well.

The community and the surrounding neighborhoods had already started gathering in line before we had all of the trees unloaded. Sales did not slow down for twelve days, from sun up to sun down. The volunteers showed their dedication.

Once we were finished selling the Christmas trees we transitioned into the annual Christmas basket program, where we purchase food, assemble and deliver food baskets for the local needy families.



Members of Post 1503 taking delivery of the food basket items and then placing them into neatly separated stacks, staged for the box preparation later that evening. The next morning, they loaded up the trucks and went on their delivery routes.

Post 1503 Food baskets program is one of our signature events that attract more and more Post volunteers each year. This is just another one of the ways we give back to the community.



Of course it would not be the Holiday season without the **annual laying of Christmas wreaths on the graves at Quantico National Cemetery**. This year was another record year, when it was all said and done, the cemetery had over 7,000 wreaths. The only event that comes close, is the National Wreath Laying project at Arlington National Cemetery.



Who's the jolly ole fat man in the red suit? WELL, it's our very own Santa Clause for the **children's Christmas party**. We had a very large group of children this year, over 100 kids came to tell Santa their wishes. Our Auxiliary and Post volunteers are dedicated to this event by helping to prepare food and drinks and activities for the children.

Another very successful program that our Post has participated in for the past two years has been the **Marine Corps Toys for Tots program**. We are now an official drop off location for the toys and we collected over 3000 toys during this year's program.

Throughout this past year our VFW Programs have been very successful and have yielded some very smart and talented individuals. The Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy programs saw some outstand competition and our only regret is that we could not give all of them an award. Virginia has some of the most talented adults.



Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen winners with the Post Senior Vice Commander, Post Surgeon and Auxiliary President.

Our Post took on a new challenge this year by raising money for the local homeless Veterans and their community outreach center. This year was our first year raising money for this event. We raised over \$7,500. This amount was enough to help get another veteran off the street and into his own apartment.



Post Commander, Auxiliary President and other members Of the Post 1503 Auxiliary present a \$7,700.00 check to the Lucille Cahill of the Homeless Veteran-an Outreach center.

We were also proud to present Lucille Cahill the Dale City Civic Association's Catherine Spellman Citizen of the Year Award. Ms. Cahill's lifetime goal is to give back to humanity in thanksgiving for the many blessings in her life. When asked what drives her, she replies, "Love and anger. Unconditional love for all children and their families, and anger that our community, our County, State and Nation can't find the resources to ensure that every citizen, especially our veterans, have a roof over their heads every night and necessary medical and social services."



It is an honor to be able to reach out to so many of our fellow veterans and their families in our community. Our Military Order of the Cootie and it's Auxiliary go one step further and take their show on the road to McGuire's Veterans Hospital in Richmond every two or three weeks. Whether it is singing karaoke, playing bingo or just hanging out and sharing comradeship. These comrades show the meaning of being a true comrade.

VFW strives to remember all veterans

BY GLENNA CRABTREE-BULLINS

SMYTH COUNTY NEWS & MESSENGER

"Thank you for your service and Merry Christmas! We just wanted to let you know that we are thinking about you and we appreciate what you did for your country."

The halls of Francis Marion Manor in Marion, Carrington Place in Rural Retreat, Hands of Grace in Seven Mile Ford and Valley Health Care Center in Chilhowie rang with these words on Dec. 23 as members of Francis Marion VFW Post 4667 visited with veterans in these facilities, passing out fruit baskets and words of good cheer.

The VFW members also visited several homebound veterans as well.

The gifts were received with smiles, thank yous and even tears, but more important than the fruit baskets was the message the visit conveyed – "We value you. We care about you. You are so important to us, and we thank you."

This is the first year of what the local VFW Post plans to make an annual tradition. The idea originated with two VFW members and brothers, J. D. Baldwin, a WWII veteran, and Bill Baldwin, a veteran of Korea.

"We wanted to do something for our veterans who were in the nursing homes or homebound. We honor the dead by serving the living," said J. D. Baldwin.

The 53 veterans honored were not all members of the VFW, but it was important for the local Post to honor all veterans they knew about.

"Some veterans may not have anyone to come to see them. Sometimes they are put in a nursing home and forgotten. We are not going to let this happen to any of our veterans," Post Commander Sam Rosenbaum said.

"We've got a fine crew here. I'm proud of this VFW. It has been here for over 70 years. It was chartered on Nov. 30, 1945, with 74 members on the charter," he added.

Cecil Carter of Marion, who was active in the local Post until he encountered some health problems, told his friends that he wished he could be with them delivering the fruit baskets and good wishes.

"I can't do like I could, but I want to do all I can. I love this organization," Carter said, obviously touched by the gesture with tears coming to his eyes as he asked his comrades about other Post members with health issues.



Glenna Crabtree-Bullins, Smyth County News & Messenger

VFW Commander Sam Rosenbaum thanked Chris Langston for his military service.

Post 4667 is the fourth largest in Virginia and is involved in many community activities, including working with the Salvation Army; sponsoring youth ball teams; giving flags to schools,



Glenna Crabtree-Bullins, Smyth County News & Messenger

Francis Marion VFW Post 4667 Commander Sam Rosenbaum and Ronald Null presented veteran Jimmy Coe with a Christmas fruit basket.

churches, scouts, cemeteries and other non-profit organizations; sponsoring fishing trips for handicapped children; helping finance youth camping trips and providing an honor guard burial detail and firing squad for veterans' funerals. The Post has donated over \$500,000 to non-profit organizations and worthwhile projects. Of course, the Post's primary role is to provide support to veterans.

In 2002, the VFW Memorial Monument was dedicated. Over



Glenna Crabtree-Bullins, Smyth County News & Messenger

Veteran Cecil Carter expressed his gratitude to Sam Rosenbaum of VFW Post 4667 and said he wished he could have been well enough to help deliver the fruit baskets.



Glenna Crabtree-Bullins, Smyth County News & Messenger

Veteran John Thompson visits with Sam Rosenbaum and Ronald Null at his Marion home. Post 4667 members delivered fruit baskets to homebound veterans and those in local nursing homes on Dec. 23.

1,900 names of comrades have been inscribed on the wall.

In 2007, the VFW Post began placing flags and crosses on the Smyth County Courthouse lawn in remembrance of deceased veterans as a part of the Memorial Day ceremonies. Over 800 flags and crosses adorned the courthouse lawn in 2015. Following the parade, a program is held at the local Post home. The Post also sponsors a Memorial Day show at the Lincoln Theatre.

Each August, on the second Sunday, the Spirit of '45 program honors World War II veterans. The annual golf tournament raises money for the Mel Leaman Free Clinic.

The Post provides a service officer for help with veterans' benefits, and the group supports the Salvation Army with a meal for all bell ringers and a donation. Many VFW members serve as bell ringers.

The color guard is active in community activities, and the VFW Auxiliary has actively participated in all Post programs since it was chartered on April 26, 1946.

And now a new tradition has been added to those from the Post's last 70 years – the tradition of bringing fruit and Christmas cheer to local veterans in nursing homes and those who are homebound. It was a day filled with patriotic music, joy, tears and handshakes. It was a day of good will. It was a day that embodied the VFW's moto – "We honor the dead by helping the living."

(This article and accompanying photographers were reprinted with permission from the Smyth County News & Messenger.)

Respect and rewards

Veterans ID cards for those who served

Apply at www.dmvNow.com
or any DMV customer service center

Department of Motor Vehicles



Gordon Widener (93) sings the National Anthem with Dave Thomas at the piano.

During the past 70 years, VFW Post 4667 has become a very important organization to the people of Marion and Smyth County. Our Post, which is one of the largest Posts in Virginia, is also one of the best in Virginia.

Post 4667 is involved in many community activities, such as working with the Salvation Army, sponsoring youth ball teams, giving flags to schools, churches, scouts, cemeteries, and other non-profit organizations, sponsoring fishing trips for handicapped children, helping finance youth camping trips, and providing a burial detail and firing squad for veterans funerals. During the past ten years, the Post has donated a total of over \$500,000 to many non-profit organizations and worthwhile projects.

The past twenty years have been challenging and the Post is still very active in the community. The VFW Memorial monument was established and dedicated in 2002 and now has over 1900 names of comrades on the wall.

In the year 2007, we began placing flags and crosses on the Smyth County Courthouse lawn in remembrance of deceased veterans for our Memorial Day ceremonies. This year we placed over 800 flags and crosses in remembrance of veterans.

Each year on the second Sunday in August we have a Spirit of '45 program honoring our World War II veterans.

We have acquired two additional pieces of property adjacent to the Post and exceeded in donations the amount that we received in the first fifty years.

We are still active in the funerals for deceased veterans and the honor guard is very active in participating in community activities. The VFW Auxiliary has become very active in participating in all the VFW programs since being chartered April 26, 1946



Past Commander "Turk" Johnson, Commander Sam Rosenbaum and Mayor David Helms.

Photos by Rick Raskin

Wreaths Across America 2015



On Dec 12, 2015 the VFW Riders Virginia and members of VFW Post 3219 helped lay Wreaths at Hampton National Cemetery.

The organization Wreaths Across America working with local military and volunteers laid wreaths on the graves at National Cemeteries on Saturday December 10.

The mission of Wreaths across America is to Remember, Honor, Teach, and is carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies on a specified Saturday in December at Arlington, as well as veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states, ceremonies at sea, and 24 national cemeteries on foreign soil.

What began in 1992 with a trailer load of wreaths, decorated by volunteers and laid at the graves of fallen soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery has now become a national organization with over 900 participating locations - all focused on the mission to Remember - Honor - and Teach.



Auxiliary 7589 President Mary Corkhill along with Yvonne Sullivan at Quantico National Cemetery.



A number of John Lyon Post 3150 members participated in Wreaths Across America at Alexandria and Arlington National Cemeteries. Above, a wreath is seen on the decorated grave of Post member Keith "Joe" Weeks at Arlington.



Post 7916 Senior Vice Eric Hill & Post 7916 CDR Chuck Wilson at Quantico



(L-R) Glenn Holman VFW Post 3160, Chris Hansen VFW Post 3219, Bill Goodall VFW Post 4809, Hal Roesch VFW Post 3219, William "Shep" Shepherd VFW Post 3160, Lumanog Noel "Nogger" VFW Post 3160



Members of Post 1503 and hundreds of other friends and neighbors gathered to help place Christmas Wreaths on Quantico



2016 Day on the Hill

January event the best ever according to attendees

Dividing into small teams we met with more legislators than ever before



C. D. "Doc" Crouch (PDC, Post 3150), Del. Richard L. Anderson (R-51), Penny Johnson (President District 9, Herb Johnson (Commander 4667)



Delegate Robert S. Bloxton, Jr. (R-100) (R-2)



Delegate David L. Bulova (D-37)



Delegate L. Mark Dudenhefer (R-2)



Senator L. Chapman "Chap" Petersen (D-34)



Delegate Roxann L. Robinson (R-27)



(L-R) Pete MacLeod (Cdr. VFW-7589), Cathy Graham (PDP Aux-3150), Delegate John J. Bell (D-87) and Linda Sikes (Aux-6364)



(L-R) Cathy Graham, Brian Sikes, Delegate Paul E. Krizek (D-44), Linda Sikes and Pete MacLeod



Delegate Scott W. Taylor (R-85)



Governor Terry McAuliffe greets Department Commander Doug Keller. Also shown are JVC Mike Boehme and Legislative Committee Chair Dan Boyer (R)



In the afternoon Governor Terry McAuliffe addressed the veterans following their morning meetings with legislators.

Winter Council Meeting — Williamsburg, VA — January 15—17

Photos by Doc Crouch



Posting the Colors



Council of Administration



BG John P. Rose, PhD speaks about the Vietnam 50th commemoration.



Commander's Club meeting



Hangin' out — everyone needs some time to decompress.



A sample recruiting station accompanied the Recruiting Workshop.



Mary Corkhill, Mark Guillory and Laine Beckwith



Beth & Hal Roesch



Shema Peppers & Linda Bond



Patriots Pen winner Hannah Minnix with Doug Keller and Auxiliary member Carol Vangi



VOD winner George Tryfiates with CDR Doug Keller and 8th Dist. CDR Ron Link



Service Officer training with Michael Figlioli



Connie Agresti discusses a point at one of the breakout sessions.



Susie & Kim DeShano



John Hamilton, Pat and Doug Keller

National Legislative Visits to D.C.

The VFW National Legislative Committee met on 29 February in Arlington for a workshop. This was followed the next two days and beyond by visits to the offices of all members of the U. S. Senate and the U. S. House of Representatives where discussions were held and handouts provided that outlined our overall legislative Priority Goals as well as Talking Papers that were more specific. Additionally, a special brochure on Women Veterans' health care and benefits issues, and recommendations on A Framework For Veterans Health Care Reform were discussed at length. Your Post Commanders, Adjutants and Quartermasters have been provided with copies of these handouts to share with you. However, if you are unable to get in touch with them do not hesitate to contact:

C. D. "Doc" Crouch at cgdc1@juno.com for copies.



Photos by Doc Crouch

Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki, SVC Tom Gimble, VA VOD winner George Tryfiates, Auxiliary President Georgette Dausey and National Auxiliary President Francisca Guilford.



Jamie Glines, Defense Fellow - Cong. Wittman (R-1st) with SVC Tom Gimble and Post 7589 CDR Pete MacLeod



Doc Crouch and Congressman Robert Hurt (VA-5th)



Dan Boyer & Congressman Morgan Griffith (VA-9th)



Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki



Never a dull moment. Dan Boyer fields a call while coordinating visits.



(L-R) SVC Tom Gimble, Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier and John Smart



Photo by Shawn Miller

Brothers John (from left), George and Glen Percy donated their uncle's papers.

Rare Survivor of Pacific War

Diary Makes It Back from Japanese POW Camp

By Mark Hartsell

The Library of Congress Gazette

Before he boarded the ship carrying prisoners of war across the ocean to a forced-labor camp, George Washington Percy divided his diary and gave the pieces to two comrades staying behind.

If he didn't survive the journey, Percy hoped, his story somehow would.

Percy, a POW held by the Japanese during World War II, never made it home to his family.

His diary eventually did and, more than 70 years later, found its way to Veterans History Project (VHP) at the Library of Congress.

Three of Percy's nephews – George, Glen and John Percy – donated the diary, along with photos and family letters, to VHP in December.

The diary is a most-rare item: Such journals were common among POWs in German stalags but much less so at the brutal Japanese camps, where they were kept at risk of death.

"He's representative of a much larger group that did not leave something behind for us to preserve," VHP archivist Rachel Telford said. "So many prisoners didn't keep diaries that they could get home to their families. We're preserving his place in history, but he's also a stand-in for so many other men who didn't make it home."

War in the Pacific

In June 1941, Percy graduated from Washington University law school, joined the Army and was assigned to the 66th Coastal Artillery on Corregidor, an island bastion protecting Manila Bay in the Philippines.

Following their attack on Pearl Harbor that December, the Japanese invaded the Philippines. American forces surrendered at Bataan in April 1942 and at Corregidor in May.

Second Lt. Percy was taken prisoner and held in a succession of Japanese camps – mostly at Cabanatuan, the largest in the Philippines.

Some 9,000 Americans eventually were held at Cabanatuan. Thousands would end up buried just outside the camp's fence.

While there, Percy documented his experiences on whatever scraps he could find – old maps, hospital forms, labels peeled from food cans.

He recalled the "mental daze of the men" after Pearl Harbor, the fighting on nearby Bataan, Corregidor's fall. He made lists: things he remembered on Bataan, diseases he'd suffered and treatments he'd received, a glossary ("toad-stabber=bayonet"), things to do when he returned home (make wine, build up a stock of food, collect veterans' stories).

He recounted everyday life in camp – the attempted escapes, the beating of prisoners, the thieves' market.

"Two aspects of it were profound to me: the cruelty imposed upon the prisoners and the need to survive, the turning of American prisoners upon each other for food and medicine to survive," nephew George Percy said. "They're all on death's doorstep and if you turn your back on your food, it was gone. If you turn your back on your medicine, it was gone."

"They had to protect themselves amongst each other, to a certain extent, as well as against the Japanese."

And Percy recorded the terrible things he saw.

He noted that a Japanese sentry had been decapitated, evidently by a Filipino. A few days later, the Japanese paraded into camp carrying battle flags and a Filipino's head on a pole – a warning against future attacks on their soldiers.



Photo by Shawn Miller

The diary was written in part on can labels, such as this one for Mico mackerel.

"I have seen pictures of [Japanese] beheadings in China but never expected to see such a barbaric display – especially carrying a human head at the head of a company of troops," Percy wrote.

'Hell Ship' Voyage

In 1944, with Gen. Douglas MacArthur moving to retake the Philippines, the Japanese began to evacuate some POWs aboard "hell ships" – freighters known for their terrible conditions.

On Oct. 20, Percy and nearly 1,800 other Allied prisoners sailed from Manila Bay aboard the Arisan Maru, packed into cargo holds not nearly big enough to hold them.

"From the outset, the journey was a horror story," Manny Lawton wrote in "Some Survived: An Eyewitness Account of the Bataan Death March and the Men Who Lived Through It." "Men were so tightly crowded together that there was scarcely room to lie down. With the hatch covers closed there was no way to get fresh air, and the humid, sweltering 120-degree atmosphere soon became fouled with the stench of unwashed bodies and human waste.

"In their frightening, helpless condition, many men panicked. Some went mad."

The ship was headed to Japan or one of its territories, where POWs worked as forced laborers.

They never made it.

On Oct. 24, an American submarine torpedoed the unmarked Arisan Maru, sinking her. Only nine prisoners survived – Percy wasn't one of them.

On the Homefront

Stateside, Percy's family wasn't sure what had happened to him. His mother wrote him letters, but all came back marked "return to

sender."

The only communications they received during his captivity were a few postcards that mostly allowed Percy to choose among preprinted choices: "My health is – excellent; good; fair; poor."

But Percy, fearing the worst before he boarded the Arisan Maru, took a gamble to ensure his story reached home. Figuring his diary had a better chance of survival if it remained behind, Percy split his papers between two POWs considered too sick to travel.

The gamble worked. After Percy's death, half the diary got back to his family, in care of a soldier from Utah.

"I don't know if he presented it or mailed it," George Percy said. "But he got it to them."

And now it has a permanent place at the Library of Congress.

"We thought it was a story larger than just the Percy family," Percy said. "We thought this was the best vehicle to allow the story to be told about what I feel is not just the Percy story, but the story of that generation and thousands upon thousands of people that experienced the same doggone thing."



Remembering Local Heroes Who Perished After Bataan and Corregidor

by Chris Mulholland, Commander, VFW Post 2894

With our biggest event of the year, the Bataan Death March Memorial Walk, coming up on 23 April in Chesapeake's Dismal Swamp Park, we need to take the time to remember the six local servicemen from South Norfolk and Norfolk County who were captured by the Japanese and died as prisoners of war (POWs).

Chesapeake was established in 1963 with the merger of South Norfolk and Norfolk County. The six servicemen who came from here and served in the Philippines in the winter of 1941-'42 were:

Corporal James Beasley, Coast Artillery Corps, US Army

Private Hilbert B. Caplan, 7th Chemical Company (Aviation), US Army Air Force (USAAF)

Private Harry Day, Jr., C Company, 803rd Engineer Aviation Battalion, US Army Air Force

Private Junius D. Moore, 7th Chemical Company (Aviation), USAAF

Private First Class Charles F. Mott, Jr., 31st "Polar Bears" Infantry Regiment, US Army

Corporal James R. Shy, Quartermaster Corps, US Army

By December 1941, the combined defense forces in the Philippines were organized into the US Army Forces in the Far East (USAFEF), which included 12 divisions of the Philippine Army and the US Army's Philippine Department. The Department had been reinforced between August and November 1941 by 8,500 troops of the US Army Air Force (USAAF) and three Army National Guard units. As of 30 November 1941 the Department's strength was 31,095 troops, including 11,988 Philippine Scouts.

The day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attacked the Philippines by air and sea on 8 December 1941. Landing on Luzon they gradually pushed American forces back onto the Bataan Peninsula by early January 1942. The Americans held out until 9 April 1942 when they were surrendered. Meanwhile, Corregidor Island at the entrance to Manila Bay continued to resist the Japanese until 8 May 1942 when General Wainwright was forced to surrender all Allied Forces in the Philippines.

The defeat was the beginning of three and a half years of harsh treatment for the Allied survivors, including atrocities like the Bataan Death March and the misery of Japanese prison camps, and the "Hell Ships" on which American and Allied men were sent to Japan to be used as labor in mines and factories. Thousands were crowded into the holds of Japanese ships, without water, food, or sufficient ventilation. The Japanese did not mark "POW" on the decks of these vessels, and some were attacked and sunk by Allied aircraft and submarines. Although the campaign was a victory to the Japanese, it was also a military setback as it took longer than anticipated to defeat the Filipinos and Americans. This required forces to be diverted to the Philippines, and slowed the advance on New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

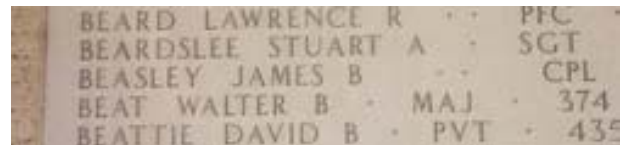
JAMES BEASLEY

James Beasley was born in 1893 and only completed

grammar school before going to work as a "semi-skilled chauffeur" (which is what truck drivers were called back then). On 29 January 1941, he was noted as being single, standing 70 inches tall, and weighing 190 pounds when he enlisted at the late age of 48 into the US Army as a private. He was assigned to the Coast Artillery Corps and trained at Fort Monroe, the Army's school for coastal artillery, before being sent to the Philippines sometime in the summer or fall of 1941.

In July 1941 the Philippine Coast Artillery Command was headquartered at Fort Mills, on Corregidor with three forts (Hughes, Drum, and Frank) at the entrance to Manila Bay, and one (Wint) at the entrance to Subic Bay. 4,967 troops were assigned to the Harbor Defenses and were heavily engaged against the Japanese invasion. However, the coast defense installations were vulnerable to air and high-angle artillery attack and were surrendered on 6 May 1942.

On 25 November 1942, James was declared dead while "a prisoner of war" in the Philippine Islands. His name was included on a stone tablet erected at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial after the war.



CHARLES MOTT

Charles Mott was born in 1923 in Pennsylvania but was living in Virginia when enlisted in the US Army on 15 May 1941. He had a grammar school education and specifically enlisted "for the Philippine Department". He was small, standing only 5'5" tall and weighing just 120 pounds. Upon arrival in the Philippines he was assigned to the 31st Infantry Regiment "The Polar Bear regiment". They had received that name from their service in Siberia between 1918-1920.

After landing in northern and southern Luzon, the Japanese pushed rapidly toward Manila, routing hastily formed Philippine Army units that had little training and few heavy weapons. The 31st Infantry covered the withdrawal of American and Philippine forces to the Bataan Peninsula. Unfortunately, the peninsula had not been provisioned with food and medicine and no help could come in from the outside after much of the Pacific fleet was destroyed at Pearl Harbor. Despite starvation, disease, no supplies, obsolete weapons, and often inoperative ammunition, the peninsula's defenders fought the Japanese to a standstill for 4 months, upsetting Japan's timetable for Asia's conquest. When the announcement was made about the surrender on 9 April 1942, the 31st Infantry buried its colors and the cherished Shanghai Bowl to keep them out of enemy hands.

The Shanghai Bowl was a very important symbol of the lineage of the 31st Infantry Regiment. The large silver punch bowl and its matching cups were made in 1932 by a Shanghai silversmith, fashioned from approximately 1,600 silver US Trade Dollars that were collected from the officers of the unit.



Some of the 31st's survivors escaped to continue resisting, but most underwent brutal torture and humiliation on the Bataan Death March and nearly four years of captivity. Twenty-nine of the regiment's members earned the Distinguished Service Cross and one was recommended for the Medal of Honor, but the entire chain of command died in captivity before the medal recommendation could be formally submitted. Roughly half of the 1600 members of the 31st

Infantry who surrendered at Bataan perished while prisoners of the Japanese.

The Shanghai Bowl was later recovered due to the efforts of CPT Earl Short (who had buried it) after his release from a POW camp. He returned to Corregidor Island under the orders of Major General Marshall in September 1945 to retrieve the bowl from its hidden location. While he was able to pinpoint the area, others had to continue the excavation until it was located in December 1945. The Bowl and Cups were found a yard and a half from where CPT Short had remembered them to be. And so the trophy and symbol of the 31st Regiment was returned to them.

Charles was one of those who was interned by the Japanese and kept in a POW camp in the Philippines. He died on 24 October 1944, four days after US forces had landed on the islands to liberate them. By this time, he had been promoted to Private First Class and he was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star medals. He is buried at the cemetery at Fort William McKinley in Manila.

HILBERT CAPLAN and JUNIUS MOORE

Hilbert Caplan was born in 1921 in Elizabeth City, North Carolina to a Jewish family. After completing grammar school he went to work in the "Packing, filling, labeling, marking, bottling, and related occupations" in South Norfolk. On 3 March 1941, he was 68 inches tall and weighed 144 pounds when he enlisted as a private in the US Army in Richmond. He was given service number 33040762 and eventually assigned to the 7th Chemical Company (Aviation), USAAF.

Interestingly enough, another local, Junius Moore, was also assigned to the 7th Chem Co in the Philippines. Junius had been born in 1917 in North Carolina and was living in Virginia when he enlisted in the Army on 26 May 1941 and given service number 33043023. He was a high school graduate and working as a "shipping and receiving" clerk when he joined the Army. He was listed as being single and standing an even 6 feet tall and weighing 170 pounds.

In December 1941, the Chemical Warfare Service (CWS) (an early name for the Army's Chemical Corps) was a small part of the Army. Between 1920 and 1940 there were never more than 800 soldiers in the CWS but their numbers exploded to more than 6,500 by December 1941. Of these, 301 soldiers (divided into two companies) were on the Philippine Islands when the Japanese attacked.

The 7th Chemical Company (Aviation) had personnel from several small detachments located at Clark, Nichols, and Iba Airfields. Their mission was to support the Philippine Far East Air Force with smoke and chemical warfare material. When the Far East Air Force was eliminated as a formidable fighting force, the 7th was left without a mission so they were then joined to the 31st Infantry Regiment and fought as infantrymen on Bataan. The 7th Chemical Company began the war with 3 officers and 185 Soldiers;

of these, 8 were killed in action prior to capture and only 62 returned home at the end of the war. This was true for all chemical soldiers stationed in the Philippines in 1941 – only one out of every three ever

returned home.

Hilbert's story continues with Harry Day's below while Junius' continues with James Shy's.

HARRY DAY

Harry Day was born in 1921 in Virginia and enlisted in the Army on 2 July 1940. He was noted as being employed as a "sheet metal worker" and also as "single, without dependents". He received service number 13016413 and was initially assigned to the 809th Engineer Company, Aviation (Separate), USAAF in the Philippines.

On 23 October 1941, the 803rd Engineer Battalion arrived and a month later, the 809th was renamed "Company C" of the 803rd.

The 803rd was assigned duties throughout the islands including Luzon and airfields near Manila. The 803rd was the first Aviation Engineer Battalion to engage in combat in WWII. Nine members were recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism when they jumped to small caliber machine guns in exposed positions and directed a continuous stream of fire, disregarding their personal safety and downing several planes.

12 Silver Stars were recommended for gallantry, while continuing to repair damaged Clark Field during incessant air attacks using heavy equipment, which, when in operation, made it impossible to hear air raid warnings. As a result they were given no opportunity to take adequate cover after the attacks actually began. But they stuck to their jobs.

General MacArthur recognized the 803rd's distinct contribution and issued the following commendation for the entire unit: "... In the face of continued bombardment and strafing of flying fields on Luzon, you men continued day and night to carry on important engineer construction and repair operations ... and in addition assumed the task of guarding and defending your stations. It displays a splendid spirit, established an excellent record and set a high standard of devotion to duty ... As a former Engineer Officer, it gives me special pleasure to commend you, for your splendid work."

The majority of the 803rd was on Bataan when it was surrendered on 9 April. Harry was one of 75,000 prisoners (American and Filipino) taken by the Japanese. They were malnourished, ill, and weary from the final battle of the Bataan Peninsula. They were then forced to march nearly 100 miles without food or water in what became known as the Bataan Death March where beatings were commonplace, and those who could not keep up were bayoneted. The exact number who died is not known. The best estimate of the death toll is between seven and ten thousand, 2,330 of whom were Americans. The Bataan Death March lasted 10 days. Those that survived were placed into disease-ridden concentration camps and endured inhumane treatment, starvation, and death from disease, bayonet, beheadings, or shootings. After the death march Harry spent the next several years in Japanese POW Camp 2, Davao Mindanao, Philippines.

In early September 1944, Harry Day and Hilbert Caplan were marched aboard the Japanese tramp cargo steamer SS *Shinyō Maru*, along with 750 other prisoners, most of them survivors of POW Camp #2-Davao, and almost 300 of whom were survivors of the Bataan Death March. Beginning in the early fall, the Japanese had began moving their prisoners of war off the islands via "Hell Ships". The US invasion of the Philippines was imminent and the Japanese did not want to relinquish their POWs.

The *Shinyō* was crewed by both merchant sailors and Imperial

| NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD BUREAU OF WAR RECORDS MASTER CARD SYSTEM | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| NAME CAPLAN Hilbert | | RANK Pvt. | |
| LAST (CAPS) | | FIRST | |
| NEXT OF KIN Mr. Harry B. Caplan | | RELATIONSHIP Father | |
| ADDRESS 714 South Bond | | CITY Elizabeth STATE N. C. | |
| SOURCE OF INFORMATION Prisoners War List May 26, 1943 | | | |
| INQUIRY DATE June 21, 1943 | | FOLLOW-UP DATES 7/19/43, 8/12/43 | |
| WORKER CONSULTED | | FAMILY Father | |
| DATE APPEARED IN HONOR ROLL | | | |

Army soldiers who manned the ship's machine gun and guarded the prisoners in the holds. The Japanese commander is said to have been extremely ruthless. Expecting an attack by the Allies, he told the prisoners that if the ship were fired on, he would order the guards to begin killing them.

On September 7, the *Shinyō* was sailing for Manila with seven other vessels off the Lanboyan Point on Mindanao island when they were spotted by the USS *Paddle* (SS-263), a submarine. A few days previously, American intelligence had reported the *Shinyō* to be carrying Japanese soldiers, and assigned the *Paddle*

Hilbert Caplan's family erected a memorial stone in Gomley Chesed Cemetery in Portsmouth.

Harry and Hilbert were both awarded the Purple Heart.

Both their names are listed on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines.



JAMES SHY

The last of the six was James Shy, born 18 March 1918 in Pike County, Kentucky. James enlisted in the Army on 15 February 1940 with service number 7023384. He was a young widower without any children and had only completed grammar school education. He was assigned to the Quartermaster Corps and sent to the Philippines before December 1941. He was eventually promoted to Corporal before his death.

The Quartermaster Corps is the unsung star within the Army. They provide the soldiers with the "beans, bullets, and band-aids" that are needed to win the fight. James could have been a truck driver, ammunition supply man, cook, bulk fuel operator, telephone wireman, or anything in between.

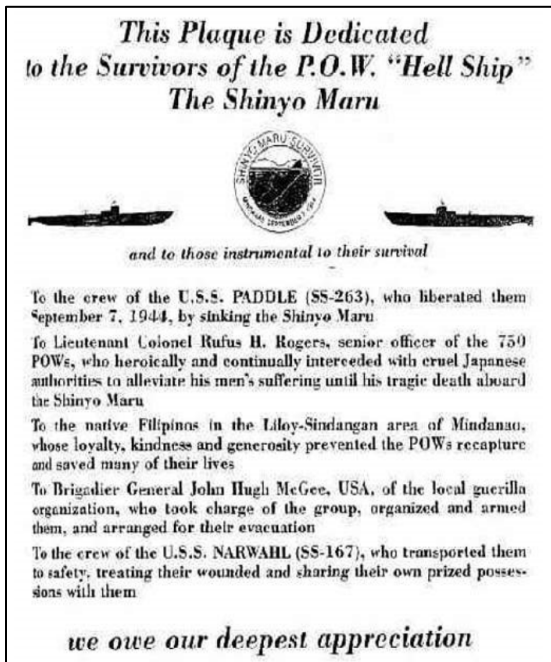
After the surrender of Bataan on 9 April 1942, James was sent to POW Camp #4 (Camp O'Donnell) near Tarlac, Luzon, Philippines where 2,160 other American POWs were held. James's capture was first reported to the International Committee of the Red Cross on May 7, 1942, and the last report was made on October 24, 1944. Based on these two reports, James was imprisoned for at least 901 days (2 years and ~7 months), one of the longest durations of captivity recorded.

On 11 October 1944, Corporal Shy and Private Junius Moore, along with 1800 other prisoners, primarily from Cabanatuan Prison Camp, were loaded on the *Arisan Maru*, a 6886 ton freighter with no markings or flags indicating that it was carrying Allied prisoners. The American Navy had no way of recognizing it as a prison ship.

The *Arisan Maru* was a rather new freighter and the men were led to the dark, putrid holds, where no air circulated. The holds contained three levels of wooden shelves with about three feet between shelves. They could barely stand or move in the space.

The *Arisan Maru* and other ships evacuated Manila Harbor just ahead of American bombers. When the attack was over, the *Arisan Maru* headed back to Manila, loaded some supplies and took off again with a convoy headed north.

The prisoners were not allowed to leave the ship's hold and received few sips of water a day and a little rice while on board. The heat proved unbearable, and about a third of the men suffered from dysentery and malaria. The stench grew steadily in the confined quarters. The Japanese dispensed no medicine. They did however issue life preservers which served to increase the fear of them. Many men lost their spirit and will to



to search for it. A spread of four torpedos was then released in the direction of the *Shinyō*, which was the leading ship in the convoy. Two of the torpedoes struck, both in the hold. Just after the *Shinyō* was hit, the guards opened fire on the prisoners with captured Thompson submachine guns, though several of the men fought their way out of the hold, with their fists and improvised weapons, and abandoned ship.

The ships of the convoy then began launching boats to pick up Japanese survivors and kill all of the remaining prisoners. A machine gun mounted on a grounded cargo ship and a second on the *Shinyō* were also opened up on the Allied personnel. Fifteen or 20 prisoners were recaptured and taken aboard one of the torpedo boats, where they were executed by firing squad as for trying to escape.

Of the 750 Allied prisoners of war, 668 were killed including Harry and Hilbert whose bodies were never found. Eighty-three Americans made it to shore and received aid from Filipino guerrillas. The crew of USS *Paddle* was not informed of the deaths of hundreds of Allied POWs until 1946.





live and had fits. The other men had to hold them down. Those who died were hoisted up though the hatches and tossed overboard. Those who lived sometimes prayed aloud for an American attack.

On October 24, 1944 at about 5:00 pm, the *Arisan* was hit aft amidships with an explosion causing it to split open with the rear section sinking downward into the sea. Naval records indicate that the USS *Shark II* (SS 314) attacked a Japanese freighter in the late afternoon of October 24, 1944. The *Shark* was lost with all 87 hands in that same action and is believed to have torpedoed the *Arisan*.

The Japanese quickly evacuated the ship and were picked up by their destroyer escorts. Before leaving the guards cut the rope ladders into the prisoner holds but these were restored by the prisoners and the survivors later agreed that almost all prisoners were able to get off the ship. Many scavenged whatever food and water they could before leaving the ship. At first, many prisoners swam toward the Japanese destroyers hoping for rescue but they were pushed and beaten away with poles. The men climbed on whatever wreckage they could find to stay afloat for rescue.

There is some question regarding the number of survivors. The documented number is eight or nine depending on whether you include a soldier who succumbed to exposure and poor treatment shortly after being picked up and taken to Formosa. Five men miraculously sailed to China and were taken to Allied forces and returned to the USA in December 1944.

Regardless of the final count, the *Arisan* represents the greatest loss of American life in a single military sinking. Approximately 5000 American men died on hell ships in transit from the Philippines to Japan. The total is over 20,000 men lost when considering all Allied prisoners on Japanese hell ships traveling in the Pacific. If they were not killed by friendly fire in the fog of war by Allied planes and submarines they died in the filthy holds of the freighters carrying them to Japan for forced labor. The ships carried no special markings and the Japanese even switched numbers on the *Arisan* while it lay off Palawan.

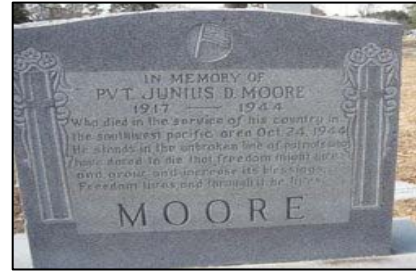
The inscription on the Pacific War Memorial on Corregidor provides the best final benediction for the men of the *Arisan*:

*"Sleep, my sons, your duty done,
for Freedom's light has come;
sleep in the silent depths of the sea,
or in your bed of hallowed sod,
until you hear at dawn the low,
clear reveille of God."*

Neither James or Junius' body was ever recovered and both their names are listed on the Tablets of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines.

Junius' family erected a memorial for him in the Oakdale Cemetery, in Washington, North Carolina. The stone is engraved:

"In Memory of Pvt. Junius Moore, 1917-1944, Who died in the service of his country in the southwest pacific area Oct 24, 1944. He stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase its blessings. Freedom lives and through it, he lives."



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Post 5311 Events in review

Article and Photos Submitted by Post 5311



Veterans attend the Post's annual Pearl Harbor Day dinner on December 6.

On December 6 Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5311 held their annual Pearl Harbor Day dinner honoring Montgomery County World War Two and Korean War veterans. There are currently more than 80 veterans of these two wars living in Montgomery County. Among those veterans attending were William Bryson, Charlie Elgin, Cecil Booth, Pat Rossi, Bud Thomas, Alvin Akers, Scott Weaver, Rodney Downs, and Alonzo Hardy. We thank them for their service to our country and wish them well.



Don Compton, Bob Smith and Daniel Maderic deliver candy for the residents of Heritage Hall to hand out to children on Halloween. Cathy DeHart, ADC Activities Director and Volunteer Coordinator gratefully accepts the donation.



JVC Matthew Woods with students at Bellview School.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5311 Commander Daniel Maderic and Junior Vice Commander Matthew Woods visited Bellview School kindergarten students. The students had filled a care package to support a warrior dog and the veterans talked about the importance the dogs play in combat situations. A dog's role in the military includes mine detection, drug search and force protection. Dogs are used both overseas and in the United States. The veterans also talked about the history and respect due the American flag and how to dispose of worn or tattered flags.



Kara Lyn Garvey with her parents Sean and Carol Garvey receives her award from Commander Daniel Maderic.

Kara Lyn Garvey, a 2015 graduate of Christiansburg High School, receives the Leadership in Government award from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5311 Commander Daniel Maderic. In addition to the certificate, Kara received a \$1000 scholarship. VFW Post 5311 is located on High Street behind the Christiansburg Aquatic Center and gives out several scholarship awards each year including the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy.



Post 5311 Commander Daniel Maderic presents a certificate of appreciation to Wade's Store Manager Garry Willard .

Veteran's of Foreign Wars Post 5311 presented Wade's Supermarket and Kroger, North Franklin, Christiansburg, with certificates of appreciation to their management and store employees for their assistance at Buddy Poppy drives held in the past at their locations. Their assistance and the generous donations from their customers are greatly appreciated by the VFW.

VFW Buddy Poppies are assembled by disabled, needy, and aging veterans in VA Hospitals and domiciliaries across the country. The majority of proceeds derived from each sale conducted by VFW Posts and their Auxiliaries is retained locally to provide for veteran services and welfare. The minimal assessment (cost of Buddy Poppies) to VFW units provides compensation to the veterans who assembled the poppies, provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans' rehabilitation and service programs, and partially supports the VFW National Home for orphans and widows of our nation's veterans.

Buddy Poppy proceeds represent no profit to any VFW unit. All the money contributed by the public for Buddy Poppies is used for aid, assistance, relief and comfort of needy or disabled veterans or members of the Armed Forces and their dependents.



Father Alex Darby with Krista Wilson of the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program.

Father Alex Darby, Chaplain of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5311, presented a check for \$500 to Krista Wilson of the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP). The funds will be used to help residents obtain food, clothing and housing assistance. Help with utilities such as fuel oil and electricity is also provided.



Nelson Betancourt & Rick Raskin recruit at the Nations Gun Show in Chantilly, Virginia on Friday, February 12. Thirteen veterans became VFW members at the show which ran from February 12—14.

Photo by Chuck Wilson

VFW Post 7916 Supports Occoquan Craft Show



Members of Post 7916 welcomes visitors to the annual Occoquan Craft Fair.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7916 opened its doors to the many visitors who came to the Occoquan Craft Fair September 26-27. The Occoquan Arts and Crafts Show is one of the finest on the east coast and a must for anyone who loves the craft show experience. Hosted by the town of Occoquan it has been an annual event for over 25 years.

VFW Member volunteers, along with volunteers from the VFW Auxiliary, Boy Scout Troop 1352, and Sea Scout Ship 7916, extended a warm welcome to the town's many visitors.

The town of Occoquan is located along the Occoquan River and is full of history. Visitors to the show could walk along the river on the boardwalk to visit many of the fine restaurants and stores, all the while experiencing the many exhibits. Information tables were located near shuttle bus stops to help folks find any of the merchants, exhibitors or restaurants that they came to see.

VFW Leads POW/MIA Memorial Ceremonies in Occoquan

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 18. Post Chaplain Rafael Landrau, led the prayers.

The Ceremony opened with a presentation of the Colors, Pledge of Allegiance, and welcoming remarks by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Commander, Charles P. "Chuck" 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 over 83,000 Americans listed as missing and unaccounted-for from our nation's wars going back to the beginning of World War II..."



Hylton High School JROTC Cadets prepare the POW Table of Remembrance.

Nancy Huff, President of the Post 7916 Auxiliary added comments. This was followed by the Junior ROTC Cadets from Cecil D. Hylton High School who performed a POW/MIA tribute and assembled the POW/MIA Table of Remembrance.

The POW/MIA Table of Remembrance was the heart of the ceremony. One-by-one the Air Force JROTC Cadets from Cecil B. Hylton High School slowly marched to the memorial table. The table was assembled step by step, each piece symbolizing POWs/MIAs service, sacrifice, and remembrance.

During the Air Force JROTC cadet performance, memorial balloons were released in respect to each POW/MIA's branch of Service.

Captain James Freeman, USMC, and 1st Lt Robert Altman, USMC, led the 12-person US Marine team that assisted with the ceremony.

The ceremony was concluded with a salute to the United States Flag. Over 65 people observed the event.

Woodbridge Post 7916 Participates in Veterans Day Ceremony at Quantico

A Veterans Day National Ceremony is held each year on November 11th at Quantico National Cemetery. Over 400 soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, along with many families and distinguished guests came to commemorate National Veterans Day.

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 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month," 1918. The ceremony commenced on the "11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month" of this year and included a wreath presentation to honor those who served.

The Quantico Marine Corps Band played service melodies and music resounding with Americanism. Ron Bantom, Chairman of the Potomac Region Veterans Council gave the Call to Order. Col. Chuck Wilson, Vice Chairman of Potomac Region Veterans Council, lead the Pledge of Allegiance and the Avenue of Honor Recognition.



Veterans recognition ceremony at the Little Hall Theater on Marine Corps Base Quantico.

Robert Morris, Lt. Col USAF Ret, of the National Cemetery Administration provided welcoming remarks. The keynote speaker was Danny Pummill, Colonel USA Ret., and Principal Undersecretary for Benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs.

VFW Post 7916 provided one of the "Color Guards" for this special event. Participants included: CDR Chuck Wilson, SVC Eric Hill and Life Members Cobby McDonald and Rafael Landrau.

Quantico National Cemetery has hosted this event since 1983. 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.

Vietnam Veterans Recognition Ceremony Supported by VFW Post 7916

L-R: Eric Hill Post 7916 SVC; Congressman Rob Whitman; Chuck Wilson Post 7916 Commander; Lou Piantadosi Post 7916 Life Member



This year is the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. A Vietnam Veterans recognition ceremony was held August 29, 2015, at the Little Hall Theater on Marine Corps Base Quantico. VFW Post 7916 supported this event.

Hosted by US Congressman Rob Whitman, the event recognized each Vietnam Veteran who attended. Lt. Gen. George R Christmas USMC Ret and Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer, USA Ret., both veterans of Vietnam were the keynote speakers.

A solemn prayer echoed throughout the Little Hall Theater at Marine Corps Base Quantico where more than 100 Vietnam War veterans were in attendance. War photos appeared on a movie screen—images and memories. Old photos showed the veterans, some standing tall in uniform in front of clouds of smoke, some reclining on beaches with their dog tags around their necks. Others hoisted their guns with camouflaged faces.

Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer, USA retired, said the nation's reception of Vietnam veterans following the war was a time in our history that shouldn't have happened. "It was a time when we blamed the Vietnam veterans for a war they didn't cause," Spencer said. "This is a very special ceremony that means so much for those who gave their all."

The ceremony was part of a national commemoration to honor the 7.2 million living Vietnam veterans, plus the families of the 9 million who served in the conflict that lasted from November 1955 until May 1975. The commemoration will continue through Veterans Day 2025.

As background: In accordance with Public Law 110-181 SEC.598, Congress authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and "in conducting the commemorative program, the Secretary shall coordinate, support, and facilitate other programs and activities of the Federal Government, State and local governments, and other persons and organizations in commemoration of the Vietnam War."



Post 7916 Presents Community Awards for 2015

March 1, Occoquan Virginia. Assembling in the Post Hall, Post 7916 presented the 2015 Awards for: Teacher of the Year, Voice of Democracy, and Patriot's Pen. Distinguished visitors included Delegate Richard Anderson of the Virginia House, and Occoquan Supervisor Ruth Anderson. Major Eric Quist, husband of Mayor Elizabeth Quist, represented the Town of Occoquan.

Sponsored by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars, **Patriots' Pen** is the essay competition for Middle School students. The theme: "What Freedom Means to Me."

Since 1947 the **Voice of Democracy** has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' premiere High School essay, and oral presenta-

tion, contest. The theme, "My Vision for America."

The VFW **Teacher of the Year** award contest recognizes exceptional teachers for their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students.

VFW Post 7916 Commander, Chuck Wilson, Col USAF Ret., presented the awards.

The ceremony was very well received with over 40 moms, dads, brothers, sisters, teachers, principals, and members attending. Post 7916 continues to receive many accolades in the conduct of this event.



Education Award winners with Commander Chuck Wilson (L-R) Max Bloom, PP-1; Matthew Lettieri, PP-3; Vivian Zadnik, VoD-1; Madeline Gabriel, VoD-2 and Ayesha Atif, PP-2. Not pictured: John Remer, VoD-3 and Brian Zylich, Scout of the Year.



Post Commander Wilson and Teacher of the Year winner Cynthia Hundley

Department of Virginia 3rd District Sponsors the Virginia War Memorial Artifacts Roadshow

By James "Mike" Dunham, Commander Post 6364



Mike Dunham, Post 6364 Commander and 3rd District Adjutant, beside one of the artifacts, a WWI display mannequin.

Whether it's an old uniform cap or helmet, a box of medals and ribbons, a flag, sword, or a canteen - every piece of military memorabilia has a story to tell.

Anyone who wanted to learn more about a military-related item that's been passed down in his or her family, was discovered in the attic or found at a yard sale, was invited to bring it in for a free expert review at the Virginia War Memorial's Artifacts Roadshow - Winter Edition, on Saturday, January 30, at the Virginia War Memorial's Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center.

Virginia War Memorial Curator Jesse Smith and noted military memorabilia expert Robert House of Virginia Beach were on hand to personally review and offer their insights on the history of military items from any historical era - from the Revolutionary War until today.

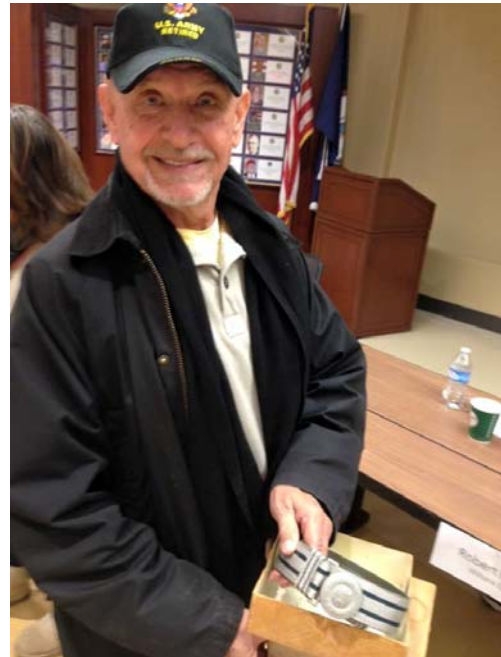
Sponsors of the 2016 Artifacts Roadshow-Winter Edition were the Bank of Virginia and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), 3rd District, Department of Virginia. Media sponsors were WCVE Public Radio and the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Mike Dunham (3rd District Adjutant) said "It was quite interesting to be able to be here and see some of the items family members brought in to be looked at, I was able to meet and talk with a family who had pictures of their father serving in Africa and Europe during WWII. To be able to see actual aerial photography of bombing runs, and then see photos of the pilot and crew was amazing. For many of these families the things their relatives brought back from war are very meaningful to them."

Since the first Artifacts Roadshow was held in January 2012, this program has become one of the Virginia War Memorial's most popular twice-yearly events. While Jesse Smith, Robert House and other experts were pleased to tell the story about each item reviewed and give preservation tips, they did not offer appraisals or monetary evaluations of items.

Memorial Curator Jesse Smith noted "We always look forward to seeing the items that people bring in for us to review. The Artifacts Roadshow gives folks the opportunity to rummage through their closets and attics and learn more about military items that may have belonged to a family member. Robert House and I are always astounded by the variety of items we get to review."

The 3rd District, Department of Virginia also made a donation to the Virginia War Memorial Education Foundation, and provided coffee and donuts to people who brought in things to be reviewed. Remarkd Mike Dunham, "We were able to talk to so many individuals about their military service, and that of their families. It was amazing. We are so happy to be able to participate in this event and look forward to being here again at the next one."



Jack Boles, 3rd District Surgeon, waiting for review of his German Officers Belt and original box by the experts.



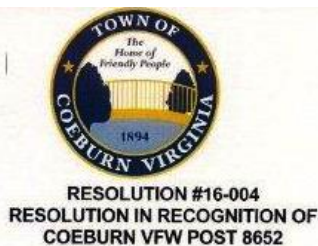
Submitted Photos

Coeburn Town Council recognizes Post 8652 for receiving VFW Community Service Award.



Submitted Photo

Members of Post 8652 attend a ceremony extending congratulations from the Town Council for earning the VFW National Community Service Award for 2015; the only VFW Post in Virginia to do so.



BE IT UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, by the Town Council of the Town of Coeburn, Virginia, on February 8, 2016, as follows:

WHEREAS, VFW Post 8652 in Coeburn, Virginia, has been awarded one of the VFW's most prestigious awards, the National Outstanding Community Service Award for 2015, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Coeburn recognizes that only sixty-one Posts nationwide were selected to receive this award and VFW Post 8652 was the only Virginia Post to be so honored in 2015, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Coeburn wishes to extend congratulations to VFW Post 8652 for earning this National award, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Coeburn acknowledges the outstanding commitment and service of VFW Post 8652 and is proud of the way in which they represented their community, the area, and the Town of Coeburn, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Coeburn wishes continued success for VFW Post 8652 and wishes to thank all involved for their service, their contributions, and for all that they continue to do for our community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Coeburn wishes a copy of this Resolution to be presented to the Coeburn VFW Post 8652.

Jeff Kiser
Jeff Kiser, Mayor
Sharon B. Still
Sharon Still, Vice Mayor
Jess B. Powers
Jess Powers, Council Member

Veronica Buchanan
Veronica Buchanan, Council Member
Devontae Mooney
Devontae Mooney, Council Member

ATTEST:

Christy L. McCoy
Christy L. McCoy, Clerk

VFW Scouters at provide information on VFW programs at University of Scouting

Two new VFW members also recruited



Submitted Photo

February 27, 2016: Tom Troy (left) and Terry Meehan were assisted by Don Northcutt (not pictured), all from VFW Post 5412. Post 5412 loaned us their table covering and VFW table-banner, which combined with some locally-produced posters and table displays made for a professional and attractive appearance.

Our VFW team provided information brochures and explanations to dozens of Scouters, veterans and non-Veterans alike. Many were unaware of the Scout of the Year and Wood Badge scholarships, and even fewer aware of the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy.

We encouraged interested parties to begin planning to enter contests next year and distributed the most recent brochures from National to assist in that planning.

Tom and Don had brought VFW applications as well and about a half-dozen persons expressed interest in joining and took away contact information on their respective local Posts.

They pitched the value of VFW membership and two new members were signed up on the spot.



Battlefield Post 9808 Riders

By Ray Bassetti, Post 9808 Riders



Tuesday May 19th at 0800, VFW Post 9808 Riders, Ken McKnight, Phil Hudson, Buck Buchanan and Ray Bassetti met at the Post on their bikes. Auxiliary members Rachel Cashin, Bella Cashin, and Glenda Bassetti and guest Krag Cash loaded up in the Post van and we all made the trip deep into Powhatan County to visit the Lonesome Dove Equestrian Center. This might have been the first time our VFW van has been given a motorcycle escort. We made a very impressive convoy booking down 295. We arrived at 0930 and were given a tour of the Center, prior to the vets arriving. We also were given some training on how to safely handle the vets in

case someone fell off their horse. At 10:00 a.m. 14 disabled veterans arrived for a morning of horse riding. Mr. Clint Arrington and his wife are the operators of the Center. Their sole purpose is to give disabled veterans therapeutic benefits from riding such as mental stimulation, improved muscle tone, improved mobility, self-confidence, and enjoyment at no charge. The entire operation is done by volunteers like us, and paid for with donations. All of the vets that rode seemed to enjoy themselves, The others just seemed to enjoy being on a field trip outdoors and enjoying the day. I didn't realize that walking beside a horse could be so tiring, but it had to be done for their safety. A delicious lunch was provided by a local Ruritan Club and soon we were on the road back home. Everyone enjoyed the trip. In a small way I feel like we all made a difference in the lives of some less fortunate vets who have paid a terrible price for what we enjoy in this country.



On December 19th, 2015 the VFW 9808 Riders met at the Post to travel to Lonesome Dove Equestrian Center to present a second check for \$200. The weather was a little cold and unpredictable for motorcycle riding, so we all traveled in the Post van. As always Mr. Arrington was happy to see us, showing us some of the improvements which had been made since our last volunteer/serving lunch trip in the summer.

The VFW 9808 Riders also visited Sitter Barfoot on January 30th to host Bingo and hand out toiletries to those participating in the games.



Wow, Wednesday June 24th what a day. The weather was nice, after the day before when it was 102 degrees; it was somewhere in the 80's and low humidity. Seven riders, Buck Buchanan, Ron Scoville, Ken McKnight, Dave Harlow, Jim White, Krag Cash, and Ray Bassetti, along with two Auxiliary members, Ginger Guthrie, and Donna Bissey fired up their bikes and the Post van for another trip to the Lonesome Dove Equestrian Center, in Powhatan County. Just for the record Ginger and Donna did not ride motorcycles. We were loaded down with food this trip; BBQ and all the fixins' including watermelon and desert. Our Auxiliary volunteered to furnish the desserts for this trip and boy did

they come through with brownies and more brownies, cupcakes and more cupcakes.

This time the disabled veterans were very young. Most were overcoming some difficult issues and this day was a day to enjoy doing something we take for granted, riding a horse. Their wives were very grateful for all the volunteers like us that make this possible.

We all left the Lonesome Dove feeling we had helped make a special day for our fellow less fortunate veterans.



Post 9808 Riders at the Lonesome Dove Equestrian Center

VOTE ERIC MALLET

STATE SURGEON 2016-2017!!



My experience in the VFW, private sector and military gives me the skills which make me the right candidate to help our department continue its path forward. As the Department of Virginia goes into the future, there is much to be proud of and our mission continues. Those days ahead will include challenges which we have dealt with before like membership and programs as well as new challenges which come from a changing society where our organization will need to secure its continued role. I appreciate your support as we ***“Continue the Fight for Veterans!”***

Experienced VFW Leader: Life Member 27 years

- State Inspector 2015-2016, Home Coming Chairperson 2015-2016
- District 2 Commander 2013-2014, District Inspector 2014-2016
- Post 4809 Commander 2010-2011, Post Quartermaster 2014-2016
- Military Order of the Cootie 4th Supreme ADJ/Treasurer 2015-2016
- Military Order of the Cootie Grand of Va. Sr. Vice Commander 2015-2016
- MOC Seam Squirrel 2011-2012, MOC Life Member

Relevant Military and Civilian Experience:

- Retired Navy Chief Petty Officer (22years) responsible for training and project management.
- Training supervisor for a large shipyard in Norfolk.
- Awarded the Southwest Asia Service Medal (x2) and Navy Expeditionary Medal.

“Training Posts is one of the most IMPORTANT parts of this organization”

“Continue the Fight for Veterans!”

Tom Snook 2016 Candidate for Virginia VFW State Surgeon



Who is Comrade Tom Snook ?

- Active Member of VFW Post 8644 and Proven VFW Leader
- Retired Army Airborne Ranger and Nurse
- VFW Member 24 years
- District 11 Commander 3 Years
- State Committee Member: Legislation, Membership
- Certified State Recruiter and District Recruiting Coordinator
- Numerous Post and District Leadership Positions

Career Highlights:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 2014 – Present | Chairman, Department Homecoming Committee; Member of State Membership and Legislative Committees; President of Virginia VFW Commanders Club; State Recruiting Coordinator |
| 2013- 2014 | National Aide-de-Camp; Member of National Resolutions Committee; All State Post Commander |
| 2011-2014 | District 11 Commander |
| 1988-2003 | Captain, Virginia State Guard |
| 1969-1989 | Active Duty, U. S. Army Noncommissioned Officer, Airborne Ranger |

Comrade Tom Snook grew up in Hagerstown, Maryland and enlisted in the Army in 1969 after high school. Tom earned his VFW eligibility in Viet Nam while serving with the Company N Ranger, 173rd Airborne, and was highly decorated during that tour of rigorous combat duty.

Comrade Snook spent 20 years on active duty and was awarded the following medals and badges: Air Medal, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Viet Nam Service Medal with 2 bronze star devices, Viet Nam Campaign Medal, Viet Nam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Jump Master, Belgium Parachute Badge, Master Fitness Trainer, and several Army Commendation Medals. Tom also spent 5 years with the Virginia State Guard after earning his Bachelor's Degree in Nursing.

What of our future, where are we going? As surgeon I will be watching the VA very closely. When they misuse the benefits that we worked so hard for and Congress put in place I will be at my Congressman's office asking why. When the VA measured the distance for our choice card by a straight line the 40 miles was a lot shorter than what we were driving. We got that changed by going to our Congressmen and asking them to change that. Now we see the DOD wants us to pay more out of pocket for our Tricare. Many of us live on a fixed income and this would place a burden on many of our comrades. I talked to my Congressman about this and I will follow up with him again this month to see what has been done.

What would my long term goal be for the Department? In 2020, Hal Roesch is on track to become the National Commander. If elected Surgeon, I would be the Department Commander. I want us to be an All American Department that year. The one thing that stops us more than any other is membership. We can meet our membership goal and be an All American Department with just a little work. We can do it, we have done it in the past and we can do it again.

"The day the soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day that you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of LEADERSHIP"

Gen Colin Powell

So I am asking for your vote in June at the state convention in Williamsburg.

Help Us Support Our Wounded Warriors!!!!

7th Annual VFW Battlefield Post 9808 CAR SHOW



**May 7, 2016
10 a.m.—3 p.m.
FREE TO SPECTATORS!**

7168 Flag Lane, Mechanicsville, VA 23111
Corner of Cold Harbor Road & Bell Creek Road
(Rain Date 5/14/16)

SHOW PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE HUNTER HOLMES MCGUIRE VA HOSPITAL & THE FISHER HOUSE

- Trophies Awarded by official judging plus awards based on Commander's Choice and People's Choice
- 1st & 2nd Place trophies for EACH of the following 7 classes (Modified and Stock Classes Combined):

- 1-New Generation—all makes (1995—present)
- 2-Pre-1994 Fords
- 3-Pre-1994 GMs
- 4-Pre-1994 Imports
- 5-Pre-1994 MOPAR
- 6-Pre-1994 Trucks
- 7-Rat Rod

Car Entry Registration \$10 (Early and day of the show)
Registration Cut-off time @ Noon on 5/7

Door Prizes & Drawings: McGruff Crime Prevention Dog & Hanover K-9, IDENT-A-KID ID Cards, DJ Music, EMS Vehicles & Fire Engine Safety Display, Free Blood Glucose & Blood Pressure with Pharmacist on Duty and many vendors

FOOD AND DRINK FOR PURCHASE INSIDE VFW POST 9808. LUNCH SERVED AT 11:30 A.M.

REGISTRATION FORM: Make checks payable to: VFW Post 9808

Check ONLY ONE BOX :

☐ Car Show Entrant \$10 ☐ Vendor (non-food) \$20—10x10 space

☐ Vendor (non-food) \$40—20x20 space Vendor Business Name: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Vehicle Year: _____ Make: _____ Model: _____ Class No. _____

Email: _____ VENDOR product/service: _____

Liability Release: I/We hereby release VFW Post 9808, the County of Hanover, or any/all organizers, sponsors, event s and volunteers for the VFW Post 9808 Car Show from any/all liability associated with the Show and that I/We have the minimum necessary insurance required by the State of VA-DMV.

Signature: _____ Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Application must be signed to enter this show.

Register @ VFW Post 9808 or mail Registration Form to the address above.

For more information contact: Vic Weaver (VFW Facility Mgr) at 804-746-9808 (Visit or call during office hours 8 am—12 noon M thru F), Eddie Hinton at 804-314-5107 or e-mail the Post at vfwpost9808@comcast.net

WIN \$500 1ST Prize !

Meet Ms Veteran America Finalist!

(Open to Military & General Public)

"VETERANS GOLF CLASSIC" (10Th Anniversary)



Honorary Chairman General James "Chaos" Mattis, USMC (R)

Guest Col "Barney" Barnum, USMC (R) Medal of Honor Recipient www.Cmoh.org

Special Host Ms Veteran America Finalist Rachel Engler, LCDR US Navy

Supports Final Salute, VFW Relief Fund, Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation

When: May 23, 2016, Tee Time 0900 HRS / Registration 0800 HRS

Play: Best Ball/Captains Choice

Where: Medal of Honor Golf Course USMC Base Quantico, VA Course details

<https://www.quantico.usmc-mccs.org/index.cfm/recreation/golf-course>

Awards: BBQ Buffet Lunch Mulligans Outdoor Pavilion FREE Balls, Towels, Raffle

Sponsorships:

Star: \$15,000 - All Fees 4 Players, Brochure, 24 plugs WMAL Cumulus Radio

Silver: \$10,000 - All Fees 2 Players, Brochure, 12 plugs WMAL Cumulus Radio

Foursome: \$280 - All Fees, Cart, Buffet Lunch

Single: \$75 - All Fees, Cart, Buffet Lunch

Patriot Sponsor: - \$100 Display Brochure Only

Captain _____ Player _____ Player _____ Player _____

Checks To: Burke VFW Post 5412 Relief Fund 5712 Walnut Wood Trl Burke, VA 22015 or PayPal at:

Official Site www.VeteransGolfClassic.com Questions: (703) 209 5925

Co-Chairs: Chas Sleeper US Army CSleeper@cox.net, David Meyers David.Meyers@Mris.com 703 209 5925

*Non-Profit IRS Code Sect 501c (19) Call for Tax ID *Not An Official Event Nor Endorsed or Sponsored by USMC Base Quantico MCCS or Medal of Honor GC.*

2016 National Memorial Day Parade

Washington DC

500+ Desert Storm Veterans
marching in honor of
The 25th Anniversary of Operation Desert Storm

Criteria

Must have served (in theater) during Desert Shield or Desert Storm

Dates

May 29 [mandatory meeting in Washington DC @ 8pm]
May 30 [parade @ 2pm]

Parade Uniform

Pants: 2 options

Desert Camo [chocolate chip] or light brown civilian khakis (long pants)

Hat: (optional)

If a hat is worn, it needs to be the Desert Camo boonie.

Shirt: A special shirt is being designed for the parade participants.

Parade Route

The Parade Route is 1 mile long. We have limited spaces for Veterans to ride in a vehicle during the parade. These spaces are reserved for those who are physically unable to march in the parade.

Hotel Accommodations

Our Group hotel rates start at \$129.00 per night.

When you are confirmed for the parade you will be given a link to the hotel.

Register to March in the Parade

To inquire about marching in the parade contact
Jill Etter Desertstorm25th@gmail.com
Availability is limited

A project of
The National Desert Storm War Memorial Association
www.ndswm.org