



VFW VA COMMANDER
KEN WISEMAN

Greetings from State HQs! We are happy to announce that our newspaper will be expanding to have three editions per year. This will allow us to showcase more of the great work we do in Virginia!

Our Department is striving to new levels in many ways and I am proud of all that our Posts and members are doing. We have seen thousands of hours of community service get reported showing

our commitment to all that we value in our own home towns. We have added accredited Service Officers and are helping more veterans than ever. We are also updating our IT abilities by implementing a new website and a more modern network at State HQs. Your State HQs is growing in ways to add more capability that can be used by our Posts, Districts, and (most importantly) our members. As a State Commander, I am proud that we can do this.

Your Posts do awesome work and I hope you will write the article and include the picture that we can use in future editions of the newspaper. I will also encourage you to see what ads we have in this edition and how those companies may be ones you would like to do business with.

Take care and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the State Convention!

VFW Lauded by State Leadership

Reprinted from The Farmville Herald Staff Report

State Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Senior Vice Commander Rick Raskin was at Farmville VFW Post 7059 Saturday to attend the 4th District VFW meeting and present a National level award to one of the 12 area posts. Raskin said, "The VFW Posts in this area are really looking nice. I wish I could say all the Districts were this good." Raskin met with about 50 area veterans to discuss new veteran service officer positions, school youth activities and recruiting noting the district was only 273 members short of achieving 100 percent. Charlotte County Post 8902 was singled out for its record events reporting. The Charlotte County Post reported 1,078 events supporting various VFW objectives of Americanism, community service, safety, youth activities and hospital work. They are leading in the entire state by 200 reports and should they continue could very well earn national level recognition. Raskin also honored Nottoway Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5313 for earning the highest National level recognition available to a post, that of being designated 'All-American.' It is only the second time in history a VFW Post in Virginia's 4th District has earned the award. Raskin made the presentations saying, "The All-American is the most prestigious award a post can earn, and it is a high honor to present this to Nottoway Post 5313. (See Page 14 for more details)



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Nottoway VFW Post 5313 Commander Nathaniel Miller, left sports the coveted red and blue service hat presented to Commanders of Posts earning 'All-American' status, the highest National recognition available to local posts. Miller received the award in Farmville Saturday. There to congratulate him was Farmville VFW Post 7059 member Greg Winston of Prince Edward County (staff.report@farmvilleherald.com)



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Please visit our website at
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The Virginia Veteran is published three times a year by the Department of Virginia, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US and is available in electronic format on the Department website:

www.vfwva.org.

Articles may be submitted by email to:

news@vfwva.org or by USPS to:

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

**Articles for the next issue must be received before
 July 30, 2019**

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

Thank you for your continued interest in the Virginia Veteran!

In conjunction with the direction of the Commander, the VA Veteran will be published three times a year. The schedule for the three publications are posted below along with the cutoff dates for submissions.

Publication	Submissions Cutoff
April 1st	March 18th
August 15th	August 1st
December 1st	November 17th

Please continue to submit your stories of all the great work and comradery around the state, by any means, snail mail, email, courier pigeon, Cavalry or Light Infantry! We will continue to do our best to include as many articles we receive as is practical.

Yours in Comradeship,

Curt Vaughn

Editor

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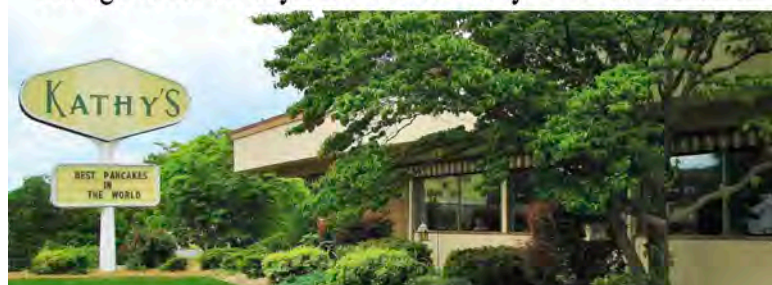
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They fought for us. We fight for them.

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By Debbie Eisele, Special Reporter to *The Fauquier Times*

Dedicated to serving veterans age 65 and older, Hero's Bridge co-founders Molly Brooks and Dave Benhoff collaborated with Warrenton VFW Post 9835 members Bruce Campbell and Jennifer Bowman to help preserve local veterans' experiences and support the Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

Campbell and Bowman recently became aware of this initiative through their connection with Hero's Bridge and their monthly veterans' socials at the Villas at Suffield Meadows. During the May 9 social, one resident, U.S. Air Force retiree Paul Infeld, said, "This is important history," and asked about the Library of Congress program. Hero's Bridge and Warrenton VFW Post 9835 have been documenting history ever since.

Once familiar with the Library of Congress project guidelines, both Campbell and Bowman began recording interview sessions with veterans in June. Now both are ambassadors of the Honor Guard program for Hero's Bridge, a collaborative effort designed to honor aging veterans. The Honor Guard program also assists in replacing lost medals and records, and conducts ceremonies to recognize World War II, Korea and Vietnam veterans for their service.

So far, Campbell and Bowman have identified 15 veterans for this project. Twelve veterans, who reside at the Villas, are World War II veterans, and four are Korean War veterans. Campbell and Bowman have already collected and submitted recordings to the Library of Congress for five of the interviews. These featured veterans will have their information available soon on the Library of Congress website. Copies of the recordings are also provided to the individuals or their families.

"This project is vital for older veterans, it is an opportunity to provide historically important information about what happened to these veterans," said Bowman, a Cold War veteran, who, along with her father, has agreed to participate.



Bruce Campbell, pictured in 1967 when he was a midshipman in flight training, has interviewed several veterans for the project.



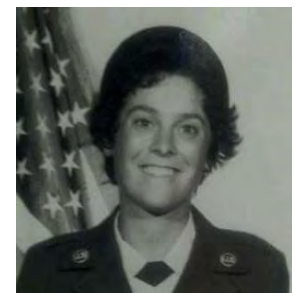
Suffield Villa residents, pictured left to right, Paul Infeld, Jim Pride and Robert Wright discuss the merits of the Library of Congress Veterans' History Project at one of their monthly Hero's Bridge socials.

"My dad served at the Pentagon during the Korean War. He is now 90 years old and realizes the importance of sharing information about that time in our history. Once these veterans pass away, so do their stories."

Campbell said, "This is a wonderful experience for me. I am able to personally connect with the veterans I am interviewing, and it provides a sense of purpose to those sharing their stories." Campbell is a Vietnam veteran and his 99-year-old father, an Air Force veteran of WWII, has agreed to share his stories.

Hero's Bridge and Warrenton VFW Post 9835 hope to grow this initiative, and this collaborative team wishes to engage more older veterans who live at home and in assisted living or nursing facilities to participate. Sharing and recording the vets' experiences honors them and their families, ensuring so many of the important historical events and experiences are available for generations to come.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to assist with this project or knows of an ideal candidate to interview, they may email outreach@herosbridge.org for more information. All volunteers who conduct interviews are required to adhere to the Library of Congress guidelines and have the necessary equipment to meet their submission standards. Both Bowman and Campbell purchased their own equipment, and Hero's Bridge is seeking grants for future purchases to increase the number of volunteers able to conduct the interviews. Anyone interested in donating to Hero's Bridge in support of this program, visit www.herosbridge.org.



Jennifer Bowman is pictured during her Cold War service. A member of Warrenton VFW Post 9835, she supports the efforts to preserve veterans' stories.

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Wreaths Across America

By Fred Hill, Commander, VFW Post 7059

Post 7059 Comrades and Auxiliary members assist with annual Laying of Wreaths at Amelia Veterans Cemetery. A short chapel ceremony preceded the actual laying of thousands of wreaths. Hundreds of volunteers including area VFW and American Legion Posts and Auxiliaries, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, The Chesterfield Police Bagpipe and Drum Corps, Veterans Riders and patriotic citizens.



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Piedmont Area Veterans Council Christmas Happenings

By Fred Hill, Commander, VFW Post 7059

Members of Post 7059 assisted members of Farmville Centra-Health's Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the Piedmont Area Veterans Council wrap and prepare Christmas bags for the "Santa for Seniors" Program.



A few of the over 80 Christmas gift bags were put together for our local seniors and those in need.



Auxiliary elves Linda and Chere in the PACE/PAVC workshop!

Post and Auxiliary members who also serve in various positions with the Piedmont Area Veterans Council had a most enjoyable evening at the PAVC Christmas party at Charlie's. Comrade Medlin was recognized with a well deserved Certificate of Appreciation from Co-founder S. Dunn. The Grinch made a surprise visit and conducted a lively Christmas Trivia contest.




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Local Students and Teachers are Winners of VFW Annual Contests

By Greg Earns, Senior Vice-Commander, District 4

Local winners of three annual VFW contests in the 4th District, which encompasses VFW Posts in Nottoway, Dinwiddie, Buck-ingham, Amelia, Appomattox, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg Counties.

(Victoria)- Student and Teacher winners of 4th District Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) contests were announced this week by Commander Gus Villalobos. The 4th District includes the counties of Nottoway, Prince Edward, Mecklenburg, Bucking-ham, Amelia, Charlotte, Appomattox and Lunenburg. The local winners will compete in state competition.

The judging for the annual Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher of the Year contests was held on Tuesday, Decem-ber 4th at Post 9954 in Victoria. Among the judges was State Delegate Tommy Wright and several retired teachers.

Following are the first, second and third place winners in all categories:

Voice of Democracy: The 'Voice of Democracy' program is a high school scholarship program in which local students be-tween grades 9 and 12 can compete for awards of \$5000 or more to offset their future college costs. Last year more than 40,000 students competed. Local students participate by sub-mitting a written and recorded essay on a patriotic-themed topic to their local posts. This year's topic was 'Why My Vote Mat-ters'. Winners of Virginia's 4th District VFW will be submitted for state competition. State winners will be submitted for Na-tional VFW consideration.

This year's winners in the 4th District include: First Place - Benton P. McFadden from Dinwiddie H.S. - sponsored by Post 12145 (Dinwiddie); Second Place - Justice W. Roberts from Amelia county H.S. - sponsored by Post 8759(Amelia), and Third Place - Bailey J. Minter from Park View H.S. South Hill- sponsored by Post 7059 (Farmville)



Patriot's Pen: The 'Patriot's Pen' essay contest targets students in grades 6 through 8. The first-place winners from each state compete for awards totaling \$55,000 with each first-pace state winner receiving a minimum of \$500 at the national level. Over 132,000 students compete in this 300 to 400-word historical essay starting at the local Post level. This year's theme was 'Why I Honor the American Flag'.

Local District winners include: First Place - Dima H. Hamza from Prince Edward Middle School Farmville - sponsored by Post 7059 (Farmville); Second Place - Rachel Smith from Nottoway Middle School - sponsored by Post 5313 (Nottoway), and Third Place - Caitlynne Vaneisha Horton from Park View Middle School South Hill - sponsored by Post 7166 (South Hill).

Teachers of the Year: The VFW's 'Teacher of the Year' program recognizes exceptional teachers for their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students. National winners may receive up to \$1,000 for professional development expenses, \$1,000 for the school and an all-expense-paid trip to attend the VFW National conference to receive their award.

This year's winners include:

High School: First Place - Betty Spiers from Dinwiddie H.S. - sponsored by Post 12145 (Dinwiddie) and Second Place - Marilyn Wilson from Nottoway H.S. - sponsored by Post 5313 (Nottoway).

Middle School: First Place - Jessi Fleisher from Lunenburg county Middle School - sponsored by Post 9954 (Victoria); Second Place - Beverly Scott from Park View Middle School South Hill - sponsored by Post 7166 (South Hill) and Third Place - Carissa Setters from Dinwiddie Middle School - sponsored by Post 12145 (Dinwiddie).

Elementary School: First Place - Amanda Spencer from Dinwiddie Elementary School - sponsored by Post 12145 (Dinwiddie); Second Place - Charlene Baldwin Zhe from Victoria Elementary School - sponsored by Post 9954 (Victoria) and Third Place - Amber Britt from Kenbridge Elementary School - sponsored by Post 9954 (Victoria).

PHOTO AT LEFT - VFW CONTEST JUDGING: The 4th District Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) held judging for three annual VFW scholarship and award contests on December 4th in Victoria. Among the judges were, from left to right, Sandy Gee of Victoria, a retired school teacher, Anne Hamlett of Victoria, a retired school teacher, Delegate Tommy Wright of Victoria and Department of Virginia Chief of Staff Tommy Hines of South Hill. (Photo by Greg Eanes)



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All American - Nottoway Earns Highest VFW Recognition

By Greg Eanes, Senior Vice-Commander, District 4

Nottoway Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5313 was honored Saturday by State VFW leadership for earning the highest National level recognition available to a post, that of being designated 'All-American'. It is only the second time in history a VFW Post in Virginia's Fourth District has earned the award.

Post 5313 Commander and Blackstone Town Councilman Nathaniel Miller was presented with the coveted Blue and Red 'All-American Post Leadership' service cap, a certificate signed by the VFW National Commander, an All-American Post streamer for the Post Colors and other items.

Department of Virginia Senior Vice Commander Rick Raskin made the presentations saying, "The All-American is the most prestigious award a post can earn, and it is a high honor to present this to Nottoway Post 5313. We hope their example will inspire other Virginia posts to achieve the same high standard of performance."

Fourth District Commander Gus Villalobos told those in attendance that this was the second time in Fourth District VFW recent history that a post has earned 'All-American' status with the previous award going to Dinwiddie.

Nottoway Commander Miller, a Vietnam veteran, said "It took a lot of work and was a team effort. Post 5313 has an outstanding organization with highly motivated officers and members. I'm very proud of the Post and all we've been able to accomplish."

Among the criteria evaluated was Post membership growth, sponsorship of school activities such as the annual student Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen competitions, Buddy Poppy distributions, supporting funds for the National Veterans and Military Support Services program and providing help to local veterans through the Post Service Office.



NATIONAL VFW RECOGNITION – Nottoway VFW Post 5313 Commander Nathaniel Miller and Post 5313 were recognized Saturday with the highest National VFW Honor available to a local unit, that of 'All-American Post'. Miller (center) was presented the 'All-American' Commander's Blue and Red service cap by VFW State Senior Vice Commander Rick Raskin (right) as Fourth District VFW Commander Gus Villalobos (left) and about 50 other district veterans looked on. (Photo by Greg Eanes)



100% MEMBERSHIP – Blackstone VFW Post 7897 was recognized Saturday at the Fourth District VFW meeting for achieving 100% membership before the end of the calendar year. Fourth District Commander Gus Villalobos of Victoria presented a plaque to Blackstone commander Mike 'Doc' McGhee in recognition of the achievement. The members of the Blackstone post took the unusual step of voting to pay all their dues at one time. (Photo by Greg Eanes)

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State Commander Addresses Accomplishments and the Future

By Jeff Dombroff, Commander, Post 9835

On January 23rd, Ken Wiseman, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW) Virginia State Commander and a VA-accredited Veterans Services Officer, provided an informational briefing on VA benefits to a capacity crowd of 55 local veterans and family members at the PATH Foundation. The event was organized by Warrenton's VFW Post 9835.



During the briefing, Ken fielded numerous questions on a wide range of topics about eligibility and benefits. Apart from the main presentation, Ken provided separate one-on-one sessions with many attendees to assist processing their VA benefits claims.

Post Surgeon, Bruce Campbell, CAPT USN (Ret.) welcomed the audience of veterans and family members and, as a prelude, recognized Molly Brooks, the co-founder of Hero's Bridge, a local non-profit organization established three years ago and dedicated to serving elderly veterans age 64 and older. Molly briefly explained how, "We serve, stand by and honor our aging veterans through six distinct programs. These services are available to our heroes wherever they call home, at no expense to them or their families." Molly asked "Do you know an elderly veteran that needs help? Please call us at 540-341-5378". Bruce and Molly affirmed the successful teamwork and close working relationship between Hero's Bridge and Warrenton VFW Post 9835 on behalf of our community.

Ken opened his presentation providing everyone in attendance his business card and citing CFR 38 that states "the Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for the benefits that those who have served and their dependents have rightfully earned . . . this is not a handout; this is a hand up . . . these are the benefits that you have earned because of the service you have given to our country . . . and in equal measure to our veterans and their family members".

Ken clarified that although our government is partially shut down at the current time, the VA remains open for business, "checks are coming on-time and medical appointments are happening."

Ken described how inconsistent interpretations of VA benefits often leads to confusion, frustration and disappointment. This drives the need for claims advocacy by fully trained accredited personnel in accredited Veterans Services Organizations. Nationally, in the case of the VFW, over 2,000 fully accredited Veterans Services Officers provide for this need at no cost to the veteran . . . and they perform this service extremely well . . . and have been doing so for over 100 years. "Just last year, the VFW here in Virginia, helped veterans bring home \$21 million dollars of cash benefits and the VFW as a whole brought home \$8.3 billion." He cited a VA Office of Inspector General study which concluded that using an accredited Veterans Service Organization improved claims results and reduced appeals. Most accredited VSO's entered the field having "walked the walk" with their own claims.

After focusing on VA, Ken discussed the types of state, county and locality benefits that are often available. He encouraged reaching out to local government organizations and the state level to learn what is available, adding "Virginia is a forward pro-veteran state with over 725,000 veterans and the fastest growing population of female veterans."

Introducing Bill Keys, the local VFW District and Post 9835 Service Officer, Ken mentioned eight Post Service Officers who are the local points of contact for ancillary benefits and referrals to Ken. "If you lose my business card, reach out to these guys."

Opening the floor, Ken fielded over 25 minutes of questions covering various topics including the recently enacted caregiver program, assisted living benefits, blue water Navy legislation, the relationship and distinctions between VFW and Virginia Department of Veterans Services, income thresholds and copays, power of attorney issues, surviving spouse benefit, eligibility from reserve service, and others.

In conclusion, drawing from his experience in legislative affairs, Ken encouraged veterans and family members individually and working through veterans services organizations, contact their legislative representatives on subjects of concerns. In particular, he noted "we still have a lot of fight in front of us on World War II Merchant Marine and Vietnam Blue Water Navy."



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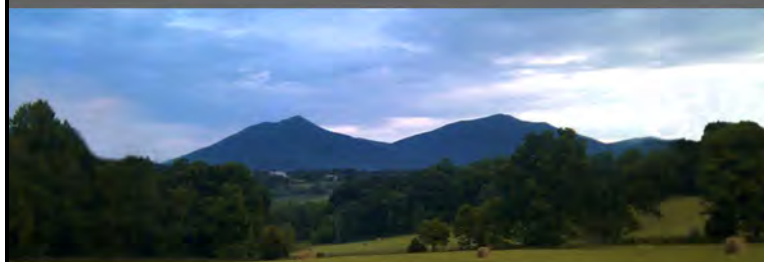
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Post 1827 and Post 7059 Team Up for Farmville Christmas Parade

By Fred Hill, Commander, VFW Post 7059

Post 7059 gives a big thanks to Post 1827 comrade Gary Myers and wife Maggie, Virginia Department Jr. Vice President for towing their entry in Farmville's Annual Christmas Parade. The Myers' Vietnam Tribute pick-up is a true piece of patriotic art honoring our service members.





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Annual State Commander Visit Posts 7059, 8446, 8902 & 9855

By Fred Hill, Commander, VFW Post 7059

Post 7059 hosted State Commander Ken Wiseman and members of Posts 8446 Buckingham, 8902 Charlotte County and 9855 Appomattox for the Annual Commander post visit. Commander Wiseman outlined administrative changes underway for the Department of Virginia and her posts as well as the growing need to utilize technology for communications, advertising and recruiting.



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Patriot's Pen & Teachers' Awards

By Jeff Dombroff, Commander, Post 9835

On December 13, Post 9835 presented awards to the top 3 winners in Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy in front of a full house. The six students photographed below were the top winners out of 158 Patriot's Pen and 8 Voice of Democracy entries received.



L-R: Shannon Kelly - 12th Grade, Highland School (3rd Place VOD); Andrea Riedel, 11th grade, Fauquier HS, (2nd Place VOD); Elanor Lambert, 12th grade, Fresta Valley Christian School; (1st Place VOD, 3rd Place District 8); Jeff Dombroff, Commander, Post 99835; Arden Manson, 6th Grade Wakefield School, (1st Place PP, 1st Place District 8); Heather Wilson, 8th Grade Auburn MS (2nd Place PP, 2nd Place District 8); Jessica Amster, 7th Grade Wakefield School; (3rd Place PP)

Post 9835 is continually engaging youth in their area. Just prior to the publication of the last VA Veteran, members participated in the 6th grade assembly at W. C. Taylor Middle School, to discuss their service and answer questions about what life was like for them. Stan Hunter, a Vietnam Veteran answered questions about replenishing an aircraft carrier while at sea, while other shared their wartime experiences. - Jeff Dombroff, Commander, VFW Post 9835



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He served his country as a United States Marine and was designated "Marine of the Quarter". He has held leadership positions in such organizations as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Waynesboro Senior Center, Camp Virginia, Jaycee, Rotary and the Wayne Theatre Alliance. He also serves on several committees of the WARM Organization, an organization helping homeless men, women, children and veterans in the area.



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District 4 Patriots Pen & Teachers of the Year

Fred Hill, District 4 Youth Activities

Winners of the Patriots Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year were recognized at the District meeting held At Post 8759 in Amelia on February 9th. Awards were presented by F. Hill District Youth Activities Chair and District 4 Quartermaster C. Lewis.



Mr. B. McFadden, 1st Place Voice of Democracy



Mr. J. Roberts, 2nd Place Voice of Democracy



Ms. D. Hamza, Patriot's Pen, 1st Place.



Ms. R. Smith, Patriot's Pen 2nd Place.



Ms. B. Spiers, High School, Teacher of the year.



Ms. SJ Fleisher, Middle School teacher of the Year



Ms. A. Spencer, Middle School Teacher of the Year

Ms. CV Horton 3rd Place winner Patriot's Pen and Ms. B Minter, 3rd Place Voice of Democracy, picture not available.

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VFW Fights for Charitable Gaming

By Ken Wiseman, State Commander

During the 2019 session of the General Assembly, the VFW was on Capitol Hill in Richmond as we often are. However, this year saw the largest portfolio of issues being fought for in years. One new issue is not new, but the Virginia VFW has grown tired of how laws are stagnant, and our members have begun to fight for a better future. The issue in question is charitable gaming.

Charitable gaming includes bingo, Pull Tabs, electronic Pull Tabs, jar tickets, and other approved items. Long studied, known to be effective, and highly regulated, charitable gaming allows the VFW and other organizations to raise money for our charitable work. For example, when the VFW supported the Coast Guard, hurricane relief efforts, and the recent expansion of the Service Officer program into a third location, funds from charitable gaming payed for most or all the work done. This money is a "must" for the Virginia VFW and we "must" continue to push for it.

Don't be blind, however, as this is not something the public in the Commonwealth thinks is totally positive. While there is no doubt that the VFW and other non-profits do great work, there is opposition to modernization and expansion of charitable gaming. Personal beliefs on gaming, those in the casino and horse racing industries, and unregulated (illegal) gaming elements opposed the work being done in the General Assembly this year.



State Commander Ken Wiseman and AMVETS First Vice Commander Frank Johnson meet with House Minority Leader Eileen Filler-Corn to discuss charitable gaming issues.

However, the VFW is not alone in this fight and we will not go quietly. More than a dozen members joined me on multiple trips to the State Capitol to push for bills that would crack down on illegal efforts and expand and modernize charitable gaming. We even had to stop a 13% tax from being placed on Pull Tabs and jar tabs we play in our hospitality rooms and canteens. A bitter battle between

the leadership of the State Senate and State House of Delegates meant our efforts to modernize and expand charitable gaming were defeated after wrongly being lumped into a group of bills related to casinos and horse racing. Powerful lobbying groups planted rumors and lies which all must be overcome.

However, there was plenty of VFW members to help in this fight. Every time the call went out people to come walk the halls and meet with officials, people came. Too many think veterans get everything they want or that what happens in Richmond does not impact them. This could not be more wrong, and many commented to me that they did not realize it was this serious. Along with those companies and other fraternal groups who are aligned with our cause, the VFW will continue its fight to ensure charitable gaming continues to provide the funds we need to support our communities.

We had success in getting stronger laws against illegal factions and in stopping the 13% tax on Pull Tabs and jar tickets, but we still have a lot of work to do. Winning this one will be as important as any other battle we engage in and it will be the VFW who wins eventually.



VFW and American Legion members discuss charitable gaming with Delegate David Toscano.



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VFW 3150 Honors Sole Native American Women's Air Force Service Pilot

By Cathy Graham, Auxiliary Historian, Dept. of Virginia

John Lyon VFW Post 3150 was honored to serve as the location for a reception following the funeral for Ms. Ola M. "Millie" Rexroat, the only Native American who served as a pilot in the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).



Ms. Rexroat (29 Aug., 1917 – 28 June, 2017) was a member of the Oglala Tribe of the Lakota Nation who was originally from Kansas but grew up in South Dakota where she graduated from high school. She later went on to complete her studies for a bachelor's degree in arts from the University of New Mexico in 1939.

When the United States entered World War II, Millie, and her mother and sisters moved to Washington, D.C. and worked at the Army War College. She was not satisfied with just doing paperwork and considered joining the Women's Army Corps (WACs) or the Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services (WAVES). When she received no reply from the Marine Corps, she said "I thought, if I had some background of doing something, maybe I could, you know, do something that really made a difference. And that's how it happened to think about...if I could do something like fly."

She had no prior flying experience and found a local flight school that offered lessons for \$8 an hour. Millie qualified



Friends and family gather at VFW Post 3150 to honor Ola M. "Millie" Rexroat's life and service.

to apply for the WASPs after 35 hours of flight training and went on to Sweetwater, Texas in early 1944 for formal training. She was stationed at Eagle Pass Army Airfield where she was assigned to the highly dangerous job of towing aerial gunnery targets during live fire exercises for male pilots in training and ground anti-aircraft artillery. She noted to others, "You didn't have time to be frightened or scared or anything like that. I was usually more concerned about my landings". There were 38 WASPs who lost their lives in service to the United States before they were disbanded in December, 1944 and one of them, who crashed, is still listing as "Missing".

After World War II she served in the Air Force as an Air Traffic Controller for 10 years. She was married to Arthur McDonald. She was residing at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Nursing Home in Hot Springs, S.D. when she passed away at age 99, she was survived by her only son, Forrest McDonald.

She and the other members of the WASPs were awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for their service in June, 2013.

On 29 March, 2019 members of Millie's family, friends and members of USCG Port Service Unit 303(b) – Desert Storm – joined together for an inurnment service held at Arlington National Cemetery. They came together from across the nation (California, Illinois, South Dakota, New York and New Jersey) as well as locally to honor a special person who served her nation as a part of the "Greatest Generation".

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