

Commander's Message



**State Commander
Douglas Hoffman
US Navy, Post 3160**

As we gather during this season of peace and reflection, let us remember the true meaning of service. Our sacrifices were never for profit or politics, they were for the people we love and the freedoms we cherish. Today, as veterans, we carry forward a different mission that is to build communities rooted in compassion, integrity, and unity.

This year, many of our brothers and sisters face challenges, whether it's navigating benefits, finding meaningful work, or simply feeling connected. Let us pledge to stand together, to ensure no veteran or family spends this season in need or isolation. Our strength is not in arms but in advocacy, not in conflict but in care.

We also remind our nation that the cost of war does not end when the guns fall silent. It lives

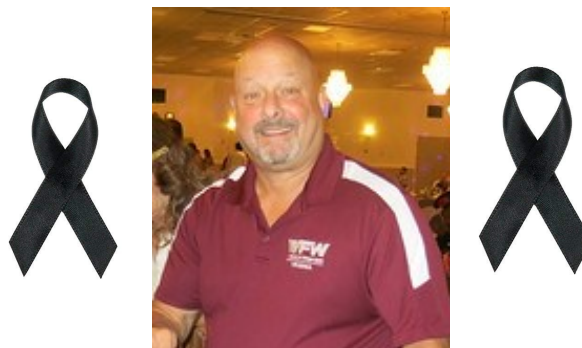
in the hearts and homes of those who served. As we celebrate, let us demand policies that honor service with dignity along with health care, mental health support, and fair benefits for every veteran.

May this holiday bring peace to your homes, hope for the year ahead, and the knowledge that your service matters, always.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Stay strong, stay united, and never forget that our greatest victories are those of peace.

Douglas Hoffman
State Commander
Dept. of Virginia

Gone but not forgotten



In memory

Immediate Past State Commander
Mitchell "Mitch" Rubenstein



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www.vfwva.org

From the Editor's desk

I am excited to continue as your Newspaper editor for another great year. Please keep the Department of Virginia VFW informed of all your accomplishments by submitting your articles and pictures to me, for the Virginia Veterans Newspaper.



Randy Coker

Department Judge Advocate

Department News Paper Chairman

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

*Note: **Deadline for the next newspaper is:***

March 9, 2026

Honoring the dead by helping the living



Unwavering support for uncommon heroes

Past State Commander Mitchell L. Rubenstein



Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Mitchell L. Rubenstein, 65, of Edinburg, VA passed away Tuesday November 4, 2025, at his home.

CSM Rubenstein was born December 24, 1959, in New York, son of Rachelle Lustig Rubenstein and the late Sidney Rubenstein.

Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Mitchell L. Rubenstein entered the

United States Army in December 1980. After completing Basic Training, and Military Police School at Fort McClellan, Alabama, he then completed Basic Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon completion of Airborne school, he went to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for 10 weeks for Patrol Dog Handlers School. He served as an Airborne MP Dog handler with the 188th Military Police Company (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, NC. Ten months later he was back at Lackland Air Force Base for Explosive Detection Dog Handler School. Sergeant Rubenstein was deployed and served with his unit during the invasion and rescue "Operation Urgent Fury" in Grenada from 29 October 1983 thru 05 December 1983 as an Explosive Detection Dog handler. SGT Rubenstein closed out his active duty career with the 118th MP Co. (Airborne), Fort Bragg, NC as a Sergeant E/5, and had to leave his K-9 "Beau" behind, whom he handled since 1982.

Upon re-enlisting in the Army Reserve in June 1984, SGT Rubenstein was assigned to the 812th MP Co. Orangeburg, NY as an Assistant Squad Leader. He later became a Squad Leader after being promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant. SSG Rubenstein left the MP Corp to pursue a 11B Infantry MOS as a Drill Sergeant. After completing the Drill Sergeant Academy he then completed Basic Infantry School at Fort Devens, MA. SSG Rubenstein was then promoted to Sergeant First Class and served with the 78th Training Division, at Lodi, NJ as a Senior Drill Sergeant and received the 78th Division's "Iron Mike Award" for Outstanding Drill Sergeant of the year 1989.

SFC Rubenstein returned to the MP Corp in September 1990, with the 306th MP Battalion as the Security/Intelligence NCO then became the acting First Sergeant, then promoted to First Sergeant of the 306th MP Battalion. 1SG Rubenstein was later assigned to the 800th MP Bridge as the First Sergeant. While attending and completing the Sergeants Major Academy in the Class of 95, 1SG Rubenstein was assigned to the 340th MP Co as the Operations NCO, as a Master Sergeant for one week before being promoted to the rank of Command Sergeant Major and taking over the reins of the 354th Transportation Battalion

as the Battalion CSM. CSM Rubenstein returned to the MP Corps after completing his four year tenure with the 354th Trans Bn. CSM Rubenstein returned to the 306 MP Battalion and retired from the military March 2002.

CSM Rubenstein was a graduate of Nassau Community College, New York City Police Academy, FBI Sniper/Observer School, Nassau/Suffolk County Defensive Tactics Instructors School, New York State BMP State Certified Instructor, Nassau County Motor Officer School, Nassau County Radar/Lidar Course, Drill Sergeant School, Infantry School, Airborne School, Patrol Dog handler, and Explosive Detection Dog handlers Schools, Advanced NCO Courses, and Sergeants Major Academy Graduate class of '95.

CSM Rubenstein's Awards/Decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with (1) Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Award with (4) Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Award with (1) Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Grenada), Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Achievement Medal, National Defense Medal, NCOES-4, Army Service Medal, Army Reserve Overseas Training Ribbon, Novice Airborne Wings, Drill Sergeant Badge, Excellence in Competition Badge (EIC Bronze) for Pistol 1995, and Rifle 1996, and the 78th Division Outstanding Drill Sergeant of the Year "Iron Mike Award."

CSM Rubenstein had been volunteering as a Coach for this son's youth league football team, Instructor to the State of Virginia's Hunter Safety Program and Treestand Safety Team, Honor Guard member for both the VFW and American Legion, and served as the Virginia Commander and in various roles for VFW Post 2447. CSM Rubenstein had been the President of the following organizations: the Blue Knights Chapter VA16, and the 118th MP Company Airborne Association's President and originator of the Association.

CSM Rubenstein resided in Edinburg, VA with his wife, Suzanne who is also a Retired CSM, and their two children, daughter, Casey and son, Sidney. CSM Rubenstein was a Retired Police Officer formerly of the Hempstead Police Department with over 21 years of faithful service and last assignment was with the Traffic Division as a Motorcycle Officer, The Department Defensive Tactics Instructor and Training Officer for the Departments Ceremonial unit.

Also surviving are his siblings, Scott, Sherry, Merry, and Seth, and his brothers in law, Bobby Stumpf and Danny Stumpf.

Western Prince William County Post 12218 food drive for Veterans

In October, the Western Prince William County VFW Post 12218 coordinated a community Food Drive to support the Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center food pantry. Through the generosity of members and local supporters, the Post collected and donated 1,300 pounds of non-perishable food items. Additionally, \$500 was donated allowing financial support for future purchases. This donation will directly benefit Veterans who rely on the Martinsburg VA for assistance during times of food insecurity.

VFW Post 12218 in Haymarket, Va. received a call from Steve Hood, a member of VFW Post 1177 in Leesburg, Virginia, and member of the Military Order of the Cootie, asking for help: The food pantry at the Martinsburg Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia, was running short on food.

The clinic, which hands out bags of food to veterans in need, required donations of specific food items to be stored in each individual bag.

Post 12218 Senior Vice Commander Mike Jeffery began to spread the word to members of the Post, followed by advertising around his neighborhood and social media outreach, asking if anyone had any extra food to spare.

After creating an Amazon link to a specific list of foods that the clinic requested Jeffery saw a huge influx of food to the Post. "Mike made sure we stuck with the specific items the clinic was asking for when asking for donations," Post Quartermaster Tarah Jeffery said. The Post also received monetary donations, which went towards shopping trips to Aldi and Dollar Tree to help maximize the food collection. "Mike was very careful with the money and knew how to stretch the dollars," Jeffery said. "We filled up our living and dining room full of food mostly from Amazon and Aldi." Post member Bill Keys also raised another \$500 to help provide a "cushion" for the medical center, in case of possible food insecurity in the future. "As a relatively new Post in the community, it's crucial for us to connect with local residents and demonstrate our commitment to providing the most effective support possible," added Jeffery.



Pictured in photo above are; Senior Vice Commander of Post 12218 Mike Jeffery, Quartermaster of Post 12218, Tara Jeffery, Post member Greg Eischeid, and several Martinsburg VA staff members.

Post 3103 Still Serving! Veterans Day 2025

Submitted by Sheri Moore

November is typically a VERY busy month for most of our VFW Posts throughout the world. Post 3103 in Fredericksburg was no exception. We began the month by supporting the local Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office Veterans Day Celebration on 1 November. This was more of a resource fair and showing veterans appreciation but also showcasing the local veteran organizations in the area.

Veterans day weekend was a flurry of activity which began with flag placement for veterans buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Fredericksburg. This is a private cemetery with many veterans there. This is an event that we invite the community to support and we use it as a way to educate children and the public on the meaning of 'veteran' and service. It's always a great community outreach event. We picked up the flags the weekend after Veterans Day.



Group of community and Post/Auxiliary members who supported flag placement at Oak Hill Cemetery.



Comrades Nate Singleton and Joe Marshall supporting November Poppy Drives.

We conducted Poppy Drives at four different locations this year. These are also great recruiting and community outreach events. It's always nice to meet local veterans and their families and be able to help them out with questions they may have regarding our Post or the VFW overall. One of the locations we supported was the Vet Fest 2025 event at Strangeways Brewing.

This was primarily Military Motorcycle Clubs (MMCs), but was an event open to the public as well.

We had several of our Post members visit/speak in many of the local schools. Most of this was because a child/grandchild invited them, but James Madison HS invited us to hand out poppies and talk to their students about veterans and service during their three lunch sessions at the school. This was the second year they have invited us to do this. This was also a big month for the Military Kids Club events within the Stafford County Schools with our own Comrade Isabel Wyman leading that charge. Comrades Ben Seal & John Launius attended/spoke to the veterans group at a local retirement community.



Comrade Ben Seal and John Launius with Veterans Group lead and new Post member, James Griner, 93 y/o Marine.



We partnered with a local church to host a Veterans Appreciation dinner in the Post which was free to the veterans and their families. We hosted two Football game events at the Post during November, which were well attended. We met with our adopted MAP unit, the Marine Corps Air Facility Quantico, for lunch and a planning meeting in preparation for the big MCAF Family Holiday Party in December. We also celebrated the 250th Birthday of the US Marine Corps and held our annual Thanksgiving dinner for the Post and Auxiliary.

It was a busy, rewarding, successful November and we are marching full speed ahead into our December events.



Multiple Post and Auxiliary members with their families enjoying Thanksgiving Dinner at the Post.

Dale City Post 1503 conducts Air Force Birthday and POW/MIA ceremonies



Department Commander & Department Auxiliary President
Homecoming — 70s Dance Theme

Doug Hoffman & Kelli Levitt

UNITY BRINGS VICTORY





Chesty Puller Post 1503 hosted their 250th Marine Corps Birthday Ceremony on November 15th.



Hopewell Post 637 Conducted their 81st Anniversary banquet along with Scholarship and local heroes recognition.



Left to right—State Jr. Vice Commander, Charles Bush, State Judge Advocate, Randy Coker, State Auxiliary Chaplain, Cara Buckley, State Commander, Douglas Hoffman, District 3 Commander, Paul Smith, State Chief of Staff Joanne Smith.

National Eagle Scout Scholarship winner and VFW Scout of the year 2024, Sophie Schell sends thanks to Virginia VFW.

As I come up on the last month of my first semester at Wellesley College, I'd like to take a moment to thank two organizations that have helped make this journey possible. I am deeply grateful to the National Eagle Scout Association and its donors for selecting and awarding me the Lawrence S. and Mabel Cooke Eagle Scout Scholarship. I am also honored to have been chosen as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of Virginia 2024 Scout of the Year and am sincerely thankful for the scholarships I received from them.

My first semester at Wellesley has been an exciting and fulfilling blur—especially meaningful as Wellesley celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. I've begun my coursework toward majors in Political Science and French, and one of the highlights has been my Mathematics of Democracy course, where I've been able to explore how political theory intersects with data and decision-making. Outside the classroom, I've grown tremendously as a coxswain on the Wellesley Crew team, and this fall, I had the privilege of racing at the Head of the Charles. I'm looking forward to continuing training this winter as we work toward our spring racing season and the road to NCAA Championships. I also joined the Wellesley Guild of Carillonneurs, where I'm learning to play the carillon, definitely one of the most unique and rewarding experiences I've had so far.

I'm especially excited to share that over winter break, I'll be studying abroad in Paris at the French Institute of Language and Culture. I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity to deepen my understanding of the French language while being fully immersed in its cultural and historical context.



On Sunday, November 9 District 2 Commander Troy Wagers, Past Auxiliary President Fred Jennings and VFW Riders laid a wreath at the Vietnam Travelling Wall at the Virginia Convention Center.



‘We’re going to make sure no one is forgotten’: Black veterans honored at Rose Hill Cemetery

By Cher Muzyk Staff Writer, Prince William Times



Local vets involved in an effort to commemorate Black veterans buried at Rose Hill Cemetery, a historically Black cemetery in Manassas, include, from left: Rick Raskin, who served in the U.S. Army; Lorrie Allen Smith, who served in the Army; Jerry Martin, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps; Megan Cate, who served in the U.S. Air Force; and Wayne Moore, who served in the U.S. Army and Navy.

Photo by Doug Stroud

For more than a decade, Wayne Moore drove to work on Route 28 every day unaware he was driving right past Rose Hill Cemetery, a historic Black cemetery tucked away in an industrial part of Manassas.

But the worst part, he says now, was that the cemetery had fallen into disrepair, and the veterans laid to rest there were all but forgotten.

Moore, 77, of Bristow, is the commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7589 in Manassas. He said he was shocked when he learned about the cemetery and that it contains the graves of so many Black veterans — both marked and unmarked.

“I thought: ‘Wait a second, every year, for over 13 years, I go to the Manassas Cemetery on Memorial Day and place flags there, and you mean to tell me ... we neglected this cemetery, and there’s veterans in it?’” Moore said. “That’s not going to happen anymore.”

Since then, he and other Manassas-area veterans have made it their mission to make sure Rose Hill Cemetery is properly maintained and included when Scouts place flags on veteran graves on Memorial Day, said Moore, who served four years in the U.S. Army and 30 years in the Navy.

But the veterans wanted to do more. So, to ensure the service and sacrifice of veterans interred at Rose Hill Cemetery is permanently

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)



The gates of Rose Hill Cemetery, which is located at 10208 Foster Drive in Manassas. It's tucked into an industrial area off Va. 28.

eteries were open to all fallen service members, but Black people had to be buried in designated sections separate from white people. That policy continued until 1948, when President Harry Truman issued an executive order mandating the integration of the Armed Services, including federal cemeteries.

Similarly, when Rose Hill Cemetery was established in 1887, local laws required that cemeteries be separated by race. Thus, Rose Hill was run by and exclusively served the Black community. It received no public support until about a century later, in 1980, when the City of Manassas took ownership of it.

Samuel Pickett (1854-1885) was likely one of the first people buried in what would become Rose Hill Cemetery, according to the Manassas Museum.

George Butler (1853-1889) who is believed to have been a Buffalo Soldier, is also buried there. Martin said a flag placed at Butler's gravesite indicates he served in the U.S. Army's 9th Cavalry Regiment. Buffalo Soldiers were African American soldiers given the nickname by Native Americans to reflect their bravery and toughness.

The cemetery's most recent burial occurred just a few weeks ago, according to Tim Fitzwater, buildings and grounds manager for the city of Manassas. He said family members continue to be buried there, but plots have long been sold out.

While the cemetery has been kept up by the City of Manassas in the last few years, it was "shoddy-looking" in the past, said Joanne Gaskins, who said several of her relatives are buried at Rose Hill Cemetery, including her grandparents, James and Ella Gaskins, and at least two veterans.

The cemetery used to be rural but is now bordered by industrial parks. Gaskins said she was happy to hear about the commemorative bench and said it's even more important now, at a time when two nearby historic Black cemeteries along Wellington Road in Bristow were damaged by adjacent data center development.

Identifying and honoring as many veterans as possible at the Rose Hill Cemetery is an ongoing project, said Stanley Moore, 59, of Manassas. He is the commander of American Legion Post 10 and served eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps.

"They're our brothers and that's never going to change," he said.

"We're going to make sure that no one's forgotten and their sacrifice will always be remembered."

Reach Cher Muzyk at cmuzyk@fauguier.com

honored, members of VFW Post 7589 and American Legion Post 10 dedicated a new commemorative marble bench there on Friday, Nov. 7.

The \$4,000 bench, paid for with contributions from members of both veterans' groups, is inscribed: "In memory of the unknown resting here who served in the United States Armed Forces and are known but to God."

Because of surrounding development, Rose Hill Cemetery is not easy to find. But it includes many gravestones marked with years of military service, leading the veterans to believe dozens of veterans were laid to rest there, said Jerry Martin, of Nokesville, who served in the Marine Corps for 30 years and is now VFW Post 7589's historian.

"This is the first time veterans have done anything like this in the city of Manassas since 1889, when the Confederate veterans placed a monument in the cemetery across from the judicial center," Martin said. "But this is for the U.S. American veterans."

Separate but not equal in life and death. After the Civil War, federal cemeteries were open to all fallen service members, but Black people had to be buried in designated sections separate from white people.



The gravestone belonging to George Butler (1853-1889) who is believed to have been a Buffalo Soldier. A flag placed on his gravesite says he served in the U.S. Army's 9th Cavalry Regiment. Buffalo Soldiers were African American soldiers given the nickname by Native Americans to reflect their bravery and toughness.

[Doug Stroud](#)

Honoring the fallen at the Normandy American Cemetery

PSC Rick Raskin does honors at the cemetery



JANET RASKIN

Rick Raskin and another veteran salute during the wreath laying ceremony.



JANET RASKIN

Rick Raskin sprinkles Virginia soil on the grave of Post 7589 member Jerry Martin's relative Paul M. Kennedy.

The Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France is located in Colleville-sur-Mer, on the site of the temporary American St. Laurent Cemetery, established by the U.S. First Army on June 8, 1944 as the first American cemetery on European soil in World War II.

The cemetery contains the graves of 9,389 of our military dead, most of whom lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations.

The memorial consists of a semicircular colonnade with a loggia at each end containing large maps and narratives of the military operations; at the center is the bronze statue, "Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves."; beyond is the burial area with a circular chapel and, at the far end, granite statues representing the United States and France.

On October 7, Rick Raskin and another veteran were honored to present a wreath at the memorial during a solemn ceremony. Following the ceremony Rick was privileged to sprinkle some Virginia soil on the grave of Post 7589 Comrade Jerry Martin's relative, Paul M. Kennedy.

Just visiting the cemetery and Omaha Beach was a moving experience, one that will not soon be forgotten.

Northern Virginia Veterans Parade — November 1st



Ellie Smith, Janet Raskin, Rosa Maggio and Mary Corkhill handled the breakfast at the Post for the parade workers.



The Parade opening: (l-r) Wayne Moore, Mark Wolfe, Matt Smith and Jerry Martin



Manassas Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger with Parade MC Mike Riley



Post 7589 Scouts accompanied by Alex Bliem



The Freedom Museum's 3/4 used in the 1970 American black comedy war film M*A*S*H.



American Legion Post 10 Scouts



Legion Riders from Post 10



Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 617



The Joint Services Color Guard



Members of WOVN including Post 7589 member Megan Cate, 2nd from right



Lunch at Post 10 following the parade with Post 7589 members Jerry Martin and Bobby Knight on the right

Virginia Veterans Foundation and Churchill Downs Inc. Announce Contribution To Aid Radford, VA VFW Post Recovery After Break-in



DAVID JONES/VVF

RADFORD, Va. (November 7, 2025)—

Today, the Virginia Veterans Foundation and Churchill Downs Incorporated announced a charitable contribution of \$2,500 to VFW Post 776 (Radford-Montgomery) to help the Post recover from a recent break-in and act of vandalism that significantly damaged its facility.

On September 2nd, a break-in occurred at VFW Post 776 (Radford-Montgomery), causing thousands of dollars in damage. Windows, doors, and equipment were severely damaged, including a safe that stores the Post's Honor Guard rifles. An historic World War I rifle was also removed from its display case and various items were taken.

Funds for the Post's recovery come from the *Colonial Downs VFW Post Home Improvement Grant* program, which was created with a \$25,000 charitable contribution made by Churchill Downs Incorporated as part of its Salute to Service during the 2025 Festival of Racing at Colonial Downs Racetrack. The grant from Churchill Downs and the Virginia Veterans Foundation will cover most of the cost to help the Post and recover from the break-in.

"Churchill Downs is proud to support VFW Post 776 in its time of need," said **Aaron Palmer, Director of Virginia Government Relations for Churchill Downs Incorporated**, owner and operator of Colonial Downs Racetrack and Rosie's Gaming Emporiums. "We were honored to provide the financial support that created the Post Home Improvement Grant and are gratified to see it being put to such good use."

"For more than 80 years, VFW Post 776 has been a place where our community's veterans have found support, camaraderie, and fellowship," said **VFW Post 776 Commander Nathan VanHoy**. "The September break-in shook us, but it did not break us. Our Post is coming back even stronger because the support of

our friends at Colonial Downs, the Virginia Veterans Foundation, and the entire New River Valley community."

"Congratulations to Commander VanHoy and the veterans of Post 776 on the Post reopening and recovery after the September break in," said **VFW Virginia State Commander Doug Hoffman**. "On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Virginia, I want to thank the good people at Colonial Downs in New Kent, and the entire Churchill Downs organization, for supporting the veterans in Radford and all Virginia veterans."

"VFW Post 776 has been an important part of the Radford community since 1944," said **Senator Travis Hackworth**. "The September break in was devastating to the entire Radford community, especially to our veterans. I am grateful to the Virginia Veterans Foundation, and to Colonial Downs, for providing the emergency financial support that helped Radford's VFW Post recover."

"I was shocked and dismayed when I heard of the break-in at VFW Post 776 in Radford," said **Delegate Jason Ballad**. "The people affected by this crime are Veterans who put their lives on the line for this Nation, and I was very pleased when I heard that the criminal responsible was apprehended. I commend the resilience of Post 776 members and Post Commander Nathan VanHoy on quickly reopening after the September 2nd break-in, and I offer my deepest thanks to Colonial Downs and the Virginia Veterans Foundation for providing funds to ensure that this local resource for Veterans was able to re-open."

Churchill Downs Incorporated is the owner and operator of Colonial Downs Racetrack and Rosie's Gaming Emporiums in Vinton and around the state, contributes to local organizations and causes through special programs like the *Colonial Downs VFW Post Home Improvement Grant* and its "[Rosie's Gives Back](#)" program, which has made more than \$5.4 million in direct donations and in-kind contributions, and donated thousands of hours of volunteer service. The program supports a range of nonprofits and causes around Virginia including groups providing services in education, workforce development, healthcare, and support for veterans and law enforcement. The goal of the Rosie's Gives Back program is to meaningfully improve the quality of life in the communities where team members live and work. The company also partners with statewide programs for the broadest impact possible.

The Virginia Veterans Foundation is the official 501(c)3 charitable foundation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of Virginia. Its mission is to support the programs and operations of the Department and to support veterans, active-duty military, and their families. The VFW is one of the largest, *and most charitable*, veterans service organizations in Virginia. Virginia has 122 VFW posts and 36,000 members, including auxiliaries, in every region of the Commonwealth.



Presenting VFW Post 2582 a check from the Virginia Veterans Foundation and Colonial Downs Post Home Improvement Grant.



Presenting VFW Post 12217 a check from the Virginia Veterans Foundation and Colonial Downs Post Home Improvement Grant.



The **Gold Standard** of Service
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VIRGINIA VETERANS
NETWORK



For more information about
the Virginia Veterans Network,
visit **dvs.virginia.gov**.

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