


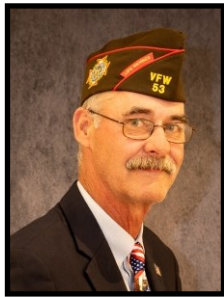
NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

Official Publication
Dept. of New York,
Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States

April, May, June 2024

Volume 42 Issue 4



Daniel Kell
STATE COMMANDER



Greetings Comrades.

Our State Convention has come to a close and I want to thank everyone for their support and confidence in re-electing me as your State Commander for the ensuing year. I am looking forward to serving our great organization and our members in keeping with the tradition our department has created. I am also looking forward to building on the initiatives we have established this year and building to improve them. Congratulations to all the newly Elected Department Line Officers and District Commanders for this year and looking forward to the communication and a successful year.

I want to thank all my Line Officers, District Commanders and Committee Chairman's for their dedication and support they provided me this past year. 2023-2024 was a productive year, bringing Legislation back to Capitol Hill in Albany, with a show of force by the Department of New York Comrades talking with our Legislatures, Assemblymen, Congressman and Senators on our Legislative goals set by National Headquarters as well as Department of New York Legislation goals here in the state of New York.

Again, this year I will be focusing on many different areas within the Department, the top two priorities being Membership and Legislation. Membership will be a challenge again this year, with a little effort we can get to our incoming

State Commander continued on page 2



Robert Mitchell
STATE ADJUTANT



Comrades,

This has been another very successful and enjoyable year for Department of New York Headquarters. The staff at headquarters have continued the tradition of maintaining the high standard of support and quality of assistance that

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Daniel McMahon
STATE QUARTERMASTER



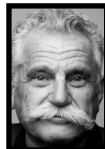
Comrades,

In past article I have written about merging post vs losing charters. It is time for each Post and each member of a post to take a long look as to what direction the post is going. Some points to ponder, Is the post actively doing the programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars? Is every Member of a post recruiting? When recruiting,

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Jody Treadway
Editor



Richard Tibbetts
State Historian



Barbara Bishop
State Photographer



New York State Overseas Veteran

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** ARTICLES:

Articles: Any and all articles involving and/or including Veterans of Foreign Wars, its members, member communities, awards and activities are welcome.

**SUBMISSION & FORMAT:

Please prepare all articles in Microsoft Word (version 2003 or newer) or plain text. Email articles and pictures as attachments with sender's name, address and phone number in the base of the emails. Submissions from other sources must have complete credits such as publication name, address and dates published.

** EDITORIAL POLICY:

Inappropriate, demeaning, unduly critical articles and/or statements will not be published. Article length, inaccuracies, composition and other miscellaneous errors and/or mistakes may be edited.

Although every effort is made to maintain an honorable and accurate publication, the Department of New York and/or its staff, editor and other publication participants are not responsible for the content, views, and/or positions of any articles/submissions.

** ALL ARTICLES AND PICTURES MUST BE E-MAILED TO:

JTreadway@VFWNY.com. They become the sole property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York.

** DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES:

Is established by the State Adjutant.

If you are using regular mail, send the items to:

Jody Treadway
Editor NYSOV
Department of New York VFW
69 Sand Creek Rd.
Albany, NY 12205

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Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt's goal of 102% in the Department by the end of June 2025. I ask and need every Membership Chairman in the District communicate with their Posts and advise our State Membership PSC Michael Burke of any membership drives their Districts are having throughout this issuing year, this will allow the Department to aid the District Membership Chairmans with the required material and assistance they will need to have a successful membership drive. Let's continue to build and strengthen our organization to help get our National Membership back over a million members so our voice on Capital Hill will be stronger to fight for our Veterans rights and benefits they deserve.

Legislation is also a main priority. As everyone knows, we have reinstated going back to Capitol Hill to speak to our Legislators, Assemblyman, Senators and Congressman and will continue to move forward this ensuing year to push our Legislative goals, which is a key to taking care of our veterans who earned they fought for.

Community Service Reports, Inspections, Quarterly reports, and District All-American Dashboard reporting. We need to continue to get with and educate our posts on the importance of reporting this information to the Department of New York and ensure they are entering their program information in the Dashboard for Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen and Teacher of the Year so National will have accurate statistical information on Program activity and the Posts receive credit. Also, District Adjutants completing their entries as well on the All-American Dashboard.

Inspections, I am asking all the District Commanders to assign and train 3 Inspectors in their District to get all the Inspections done by 28 February 2025. Last year the districts did a great job on getting majority of their posts inspected by 31 December 2023. This year with the cutoff date of 28 February 2025, each district should be able to complete and be accepted by the department to the goal of 100% inspected. There are still Posts within the Department to date that currently still have not been Inspected.

As we all know, the National Convention is right around the corner in July. I am looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Yours in Comradeship.

Daniel L. Kell

Department of New York State Commander



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are members mentoring the new member (s). Is the post home too big for the size of the post? One of the national Commander-in-Chief's wrote an article a few years ago and I would share it with you.

I'm The Guy

I'm the guy who asked to join you organization.

I'm the guy who paid his dues to join.

I'm the guy who stood in front of you and promised to be faithful and loyal to the organization.

I'm the guy who tires several times to be a friend, but they all had their own buddies to talk to and sit next to.

I'm the guy who was left out when I volunteered to help with fund raising projects and membership recruitment.

I'm the guy who missed a few meetings because I was sick, but at the next meeting no one asked where I had been; I guess it didn't matter very much to others whether I was there or not.

I'm the guy who decided to stay home & watch TV one meeting night. The following meeting I attended,

But no one asked where I had been.

You might say I'm a good guy, a good family man who holds a responsible job, loves his country and his community.

You know who I am??? The guy who never came back.

It amuses me, how the heads of the organization and members discuss why the organization was losing members.

It amuses me to think that they spend so much time looking for new members when I was there all the time.

All they needed to do was make me feel needed, wanted and welcome.

- Anonymous.

Have a great safe summer!

Daniel McMahon

Quartermaster

dcmahon@vfwny.com

518 414-2605

The Officer (Quartermaster) Bond Application for the 2024-2025 VFW year is now available on the Department's website: <https://vfwny.com/uploads/documents/2024-2025/24-25BondOfficer.pdf>

**James MacArthur****SR. VICE COMMANDER**

Well comrades this will be a very short article for this cycle; last year as the Department Jr. Vice Commander was a great year and I am definitely looking forward to the upcoming year as your Sr. Vice Commander.

This past year I was able to attend many District meetings and a few District Conventions. This coming year I will do my best to get to the Districts that I did not get to this year and also visit more Posts. As you know we have a big state to cover so getting to every Post is impossible, but I will do the best I can. As far as membership we still have twelve days left to get to 100% I'm sure we can get there with a little hard work, I also would like to congratulate the Districts that have made 100%.

As some of you may know and for those of you that don't, we seem to be losing Posts around the State so comrades while Posts are closing it doesn't mean we should be losing members at the Post level if you know of a Post that is closing and is close to your location try and get those members to join your post if not they just end up as a member at large in the Department. Also, if you hear of a Post that is closing reach out to the membership and see if they would consider merging with your Post, we need to do what we can to keep our Posts solvent and helping veterans wherever and whenever we can.

So next up for me is the National Convention in Louisville Kentucky and I am looking forward to a great year ahead for the Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars and remember no one does more for veterans than Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It's to start planning for the Department of New York's OTI Training Session that will be held on Saturday September 21, 2024 at 8:00 AM at the Albany Marriott, 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY. This will be the only OTI session offered by the Department. The mailing for the Department OTI will be sent out during the month of July.

Yours in Comradeship,

James MacArthur

Sr. Vice Commander

Department of New York

Mark your calendar for the Department OTI Training on September 21, 2024

It will be held at the Albany Marriott
189 Wolf Road



State Adjutant continued from page 1

that Posts in the Department are accustomed to.

There have been notable upgrades to the Headquarters facility this year to include the installation of a platform lift elevator that provides easy access to the basement of the building. This internal access to the basement will allow headquarters personnel to utilize the basement of the building for the storage and archival of both Post and Department documentation along with equipment and paraphernalia. The Department has also contracted with a local commercial paving company to repave the Headquarters facility parking lot. Both projects are scheduled to be completed by August 2024.

Department Headquarters has been assisting the Department of the Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) in their efforts to ensure that all Posts in the Department of New York are compliant with the Army's reporting requirements. The Department has also provided assistance in the Army's efforts to locate rifles that were previously provided to Posts that have since gone defunct.

I would like to thank State Commander Daniel Kell for the appointment as State Adjutant. It has been an honor and pleasure serving under his leadership.

Respectively,
Robert J. Mitchell
State Adjutant



John Sanford
JR. VICE COMMANDER



Comrades,

As we start this new VFW year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended the State Convention in Albany and showed your support for me by voting me in as Junior Vice Commander.

Our jobs this year are two-fold – supporting our Commander and making sure our posts are in good shape. In supporting our Commander each post needs to make sure that they are not only doing community service but also reporting their

community service on the Department's website. If you need help with the community service reports, please call the Department and Amanda and Jody will be glad to help walk you through the process. Also please reach out to the schools in your area to spread the word about Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy essay contests. We have very talented students in this State and these two programs highlight their talents. Let's not forget the Commander's Special Project which is Homeless Vets. All monies raised this year will be divided among the Districts to help them with their homeless veterans.

The second job of each Post is to make sure that all quarterly trustee reports are correctly filled out, signed, and sent into the Department and each Post should be filing a 990 each year, as required by the IRS to maintain their tax-exempt status. The new bond year begins August 1, 2024 and the new bond forms are available on the Department's website under Resources, Reports and Forms.

And lastly membership is Department wide goal this year. We need to be actively recruiting new members. If every member in the state recruited just one person, we would double our membership and be the number one State in the VFW.

Yours in Comradeship,
John Sanford
Jr. Vice Commander



Gene Ratigliano
PSC
NATIONAL COUNCIL
MEMBER



Greetings!

Here we are again at the end of the VFW year and again beginning another. I have very little to report since my last article to you. National has been very involved in closing out the year and coordinating with the National Membership Department to get all those well-deserved awards out to the Posts, Districts and Departments who worked so hard to increase our VFW membership to the National Commander Sarmiento's goal of 102%.

I would like to offer my congratulations to all the newly elected officers at the Post, District and Department level. Take your position and responsibilities seriously. Review the requirements of your office and take action accordingly.

National Council Member continued on page 5

National Council Member continued from page 4

Department of NY Officer Training (OTI) is scheduled for September 21, 2024 at the Marriott in Albany. Take the opportunity to attend. Things change every day. Even if you are not currently an officer of the post but may be considering moving up through the chairs, it is a great opportunity to get a head start of the duties and responsibilities of post officer responsibilities.

We are heading to the National Convention in July in Louisville, KY. The National Council of Administration will be meeting and I will do my best to get any important information passed out to you following the convention.

As usual, Administrative Operations at National has been very busy. There are currently 36 Posts under suspension out of 5,628 chartered posts. The office is engaged in 17 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, seven Administrative Removals/Actions and 11 membership eligibility challenges.

If you have an appointment to the National Convention with responsibility to attend a specific Committee meeting, make sure you show up, are on time and dress appropriately. Remember, you are representing the Department of New York. Hope to see many of you at the Convention. Safe travels!

Yours in Comradeship,

Gene Ratigliano

Gene Ratigliano

National Council Member

guidance on the various federal and state programs that affect our comrades. We are hoping to expand the number of service officers in the Department. We are also planning on getting more involved with local veteran service agencies. The veteran community is underrepresented in the state, especially in New York City.

While many government agencies and service organizations are still working remote, we will provide in person service for veterans and families. If not practical due to location, we have successfully implemented procedures for filing claims and representing veterans with their appeals if they can't be done in person.

Membership! Membership! Membership! We have all heard this. From the National Commander-in-Chief on down, this is a priority. We can't provide effective services from the local level through the national legislative level without members. For the chairs of the membership committees, the veteran service officers are an asset. We are amongst the most knowledgeable people in the Department regarding VFW, VA and other federal and state programs and benefits. Please reach out to us to see what support we can provide to your membership drives.

I am looking forward to the Department of New York's Veteran Service Officer program to continue to excel, expand and reach new, higher levels of support for the veteran community.

Yours in Comradeship

Colin Anderson

Director, Veteran Service



Colin Anderson
DIRECTOR VETERANS SERVICES



Comrades,

First and foremost, I want to thank Tom Todaro for his many years of dedication and commitment to the Department's Service Officer program. I also want to congratulate him on his retirement. He will stay involved with the service officers in an advisory role.

The service officers will remain active in representing our veterans and families with the Department of Veterans Affairs. As we have some of the best service officers in the State of New York, I am confident we will set an example for others to follow. I will be working with the district commanders and district service officers to provide

**DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK
VFW**

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www.vfwny.com

www.facebook.com/VFWNewYork



**Ben Thompson,
PSC
JUDGE ADVOCATE**



Comrades,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Comrades for reelecting me to the high office of State Judge Advocate. I look forward to serving with Commander Kell and the 2024-2025 Administration on all levels.

As the Department Judge Advocate, it is my duty to provide advice to the Department Commander, Department Council of Administration and the Department Convention based on the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and the Department Bylaws. I am also available to provide assistants to any Post or District Commander or any of my Comrades in the Department.

I recommend all officers at every level obtain a copy of the 2025 podium edition of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, when it becomes available through the VFW Store at National Headquarters. The 2025 revised edition will reflect the amendments adopted by the 125th National Convention. I would also recommend that each Post and District maintain a copy of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 12th Edition, for any issue that may come up that is not covered by our Bylaws.

Comrades, it is the responsibility of the Commander along with the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders to enforce strict observance of the laws and usage of this organization including Post, District and Department Bylaws along with the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manuel of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities. Therefore, it is also recommended that copies of the District and Department Bylaws be obtained also.

Commander Kell's theme this year is "Teamwork, Honor and Commitment". If we believe in each part of his theme and work together, the Department of New York will have a successful year.

To the newly elected and returning officers, I wish you the very best for a successful year.

Ben Thompson, PSC
Judge Advocate



I would like to ask our membership to provide me with the names and contact information for anyone they know who is currently deployed to Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, or Djibouti. I will submit their information so we can try and send them a live Christmas Tree with the trimmings this year. We have been 98% successful in the past, reaching all

the service members submitted by the Department. I need the following information as soon as possible and no later than November 25th, so we can contact them prior to the Christmas Tree sendoff.

- NAME
 - UNIT NAME & NUMBER
 - APO ADDRESS
 - EMAIL ADDRESS
- (WE MUST HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS)**



Leslie Crossett



Comrades

This VFW year is coming to an end and the State Convention has come and gone. Congratulations to Commander Kell and President Cooper on a job well done. I would like to thank our state Commander Kell for his many years of dedicated service to our organization and to our Veterans throughout the state. Thank you so much for your leadership. It has been my pleasure to serve with you this past year as your Sr. Vice Commander at the Department of New York VFW.

Congratulations to all the Posts that have achieved All-State. You worked hard to achieve this honor so enjoy it.

For the incoming officers whose terms start in June set your goals and stay ahead of your deadlines, as this will make your year much easier to handle. By this time your new officers for 2024-2025 will have

Leslie Crossett continued on page 10



**PROCTOR-HOPSON POST #1896, Veterans of Foreign Wars
"VFW Military Family Support Center"
IN CONJUNCTION WITH
VFW NY DISTRICT #1
&
AMERICAN CITIZENS FOR SOLDIERS IN SERVICE**

HOLIDAY CHEER

On behalf of our military personnel serving in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Djibouti, we are again sending Christmas Trees, lights, ornaments and Menorahs to our military personnel in harm's way at the above-mentioned locations. This will be our **twenty first** year of running our program to bring a taste of home at Christmas time by sending trees to our deployed troops and we look forward to building on the success of the previous years and making this year a banner year.

To support this program, you may fund a tree with the appropriate lights and decorations for a donation of \$25.00. You may fund as many trees as you would like. Working together, we as supporters of our military personnel can make the Christmas holiday a little more enjoyable for those fighting far away from home.

If you would like to support this program by funding a tree(s), **make your check or money order payable to:**

PROCTOR-HOPSON POST #1896
(*MARK IN MEMO: TREES*)

MAIL TO: BEN THOMPSON
119-26 204TH STREET
ST. ALBANS, NY 11412

Or donate online via ZELLE to phpm1896@verizon.net.

ALL DONATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 29, 2024.

For additional information: (718) 527-6532 or phpm1896@verizon.net

Thank you in advance for your support.



*103rd State Convention
Albany Marriott
June 6-9, 2024*





*Meet our
Award Winners
The 103rd
State Convention*



Leslie Crossett continued from page 6

already been elected and installed at our Post, and Districts. I want to first congratulate each new officer and chairperson. Please learn and understand your duties and responsibilities well, so you, your Post, your District and your Department will be successful throughout 2024-2025.

I would like to thank the team which helped with my campaign to become New York State Department Commander. We had a better showing than most thought with only losing by 16 votes. Past State Commander, National Council Member, Eugene Ratigliano who took charge and steered me in the right direction when it was needed. Mike Hoag, PSC and Gene and I met often to discuss our strategy on how to win this election. Without single handedly picking out individual members, I will mention groups such as Districts and individuals who helped finance my campaign, members who bought the raffle tickets and supplied food for the hospitality rooms. Dan Martin the Lowville Commander who set up and ran our campaign raffles. I would thank the Districts who help support me with their total Delegate strength. I can't forget all the help I received from the office help, Jody and Amanda, thank you very much. I couldn't have done it without you.

I will miss all the friends I have made in the past through the VFW. I'm sorry it didn't turn out better, but we did the best we could. Again, I will say thank you for all you have done to help me with this campaign. I will still be around to help where I can, it's not goodbye but when I see you again.

Leslie F. Crossett



Art Scheuneman
NATIONAL HOME
CHAIRMAN



Comrades,

The National Home will be turning 100 years young in 2025. We are not waiting! We have started the celebration early by introducing the Centennial Garden Brick, What better way to honor a loved one, commemorate a special event, or simply leave

your mark on this historic occasion. Our 8x8 engraved bricks offer a timeless way to do just that. For a limited time only, you can secure your place in history for an unbeatable price of only \$500. Purchases may be made at vfnationalhome.org

We are inviting you to join our Centennial Membership program.

As a token of our appreciation, we are making this special offer **available to current and nonmembers**. When you apply between the dates of April 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025, we are offering the following benefits:

- Exclusive Centennial Membership Pin
- 10% Off Souvenirs and Apparel
- Reduced Guest Lodge Rate
- Exclusive Member-only Apparel

We want to thank you for your kindness and generosity to our veteran families. We are excited to have you join us in our second century of service at vfnationalhome.org.

There are many things happening at the National Home this year. At our Mid-Winter Meeting many topics were discussed and approved. To start with, we approved over \$330,000.00 for new construction of the Pollett House. The old Pollett House was one of the first buildings that was built on the campus. When the construction crew went in to rehab the house they found many issues with it and it was determined that it would be cheaper to demolish it and build a new house in its place. Hopefully, by the time this year's Jr. Vices arrive on campus, construction on the new house will be underway.

We also approved to rebuild all the roads within the campus due to the harsh weather conditions. The work on this project is well underway. We also approved to reroof several roofs on the larger community used buildings on campus. The electrical infrastructure was in need of complete overhaul which included new electric poles and transformers.

As of 4/30/2025 all 41 homes are fully occupied at the present time which is excellent news, and the 42nd home is under construction. The vetting process for admission into the program has been reduced from the range of 60-90 days to just two weeks or less under extreme circumstances.

Many times during the year, the power is lost at the National Home due to the harsh weather conditions and leaving the Home in the dark, sometimes for days on end. This can be a very trying time for those living at the home. Many of the homes have whole home generators to see those residents through those tough times. The two New York Houses do **not** have these whole home generators and are in desperate need to have generators installed. These generators are not cheap by any means, running from \$12,000.00 on up plus installation. Please consider a Post, District or Department Fundraiser to provide a whole home generator for both the New York Houses. Let us avoid putting our house residents at a discomfort or risk by

National Home Chairman continued on page 11

National Home Chairman continued from page 10

working together and providing these much needed generators.

Become a National Home Trustee

For anyone interested in running for National Home Trustee District 2, which includes CT, Europe, New York and VT, guidelines and requirements have changed. FYI, more than one candidate from each Department may run for this position. The time is fast approaching to complete and submit the necessary paperwork. My term expires in October 2025. The deadline for submittal of the on-line packet to apply for the trustee position, must be submitted to the VFW National Home Executive Director between the dates of January 1 and on/or before 11:59pm, Eastern Standard Time of April 30th of the year the applicable term expires for Board of Trustees vacancies. Requirements are:

Be a National Home Life Member for at least 1 year prior to nomination.

Be a member in good standing of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary.

Obtain a written letter of **recommendation** from their respective Department VFW or Auxiliary. Letters may be signed by current Commander or President, Sr. Vice Commander or President, or Jr. Vice Commander or President. The Department may submit multiple qualified candidates and each candidate must have one letter of recommendation.

Submit a biography of qualifications limited to 300 words.

Undergo a criminal background check.

Copies will be forwarded to the National Home Board President, VFW Adjutant General and VFW Auxiliary National Secretary by the Executive Director. Additional information is found at vfnationalhome.org under *Leadership & Board*, under *Requirements to run for Trustee* and under *Apply to become a Trustee*.

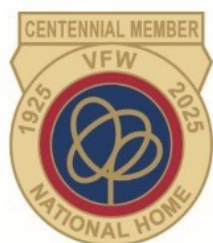
Remember to update your contract information and email address at vfnationalhome.org under *Contact* to receive your ballot and cast your vote for the candidate of your choice.

Thank You,

Art Scheuneman,
National Home Trustee
District 2 2019-2025
VFW NY Department National Home Chairman
WdStock44@Yahoo.Com
585-689-5975



V F W
NATIONAL HOME



Matthew Vanetten

**PATRIOTS PEN
CHAIRMAN**



Comrades,

I want to first start by thanking every Post and District that participated in last year's essay competition. We had 1406 students participate and with over \$26,000.00 award.

There will be some changes this year on how essays are submitted as the department will be utilizing AI software to check the authenticity of our winners. More information will be released in the near future once we are properly trained on this software.

This year's essay competition is titled *My Voice in America's Democracy*

Department Commander Kell has appointed me you Patriot's Pen Chairman again for the ensuing year. With being said I am your point of contact for all issues concerning this competition. We had a terrific year last year with our first-place winner placing in the top 10 in the national competition. I urge all District Commanders and Post Commanders to get with your chairman, review the rules and requirements and come up with a plan on how you can best participate in this competition. These students are our future and for many this will be their first opportunity to voice their opinions on the democratic process of our country.

Thank you, Commander Kell, for the appointment and for any questions or concerns my contact information will be listed on the Department website under the general orders tab.

Respectfully,

Matthew VanEtten
Patriots Pen Chairman
Dept of New York





VFW NATIONAL HOME

CENTENNIAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBER INFORMATION

Title: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss		Name:	
Address:			
City:	State:	ZIP Code:	
Date of birth:	*Email:	*Mobile Phone:	
Membership Type: <input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> NH Membership Upgrade Member number _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (not a member of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary) <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member (must be a member in good standing of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary or a unit of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary. Complete affiliation information below. If no Post or Auxiliary number is provided, an Associate Membership will be issued.)			

VFW & VFW AUXILIARY INFORMATION

(Required if a VFW or VFW Auxiliary member)

<input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of VFW Post _____ in the Department of _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of VFW Auxiliary _____ in the Department of VFW Auxiliary _____

RECRUITER (Not required)

Recruiter name: _____ Art Scheuneman	Recruiter Post or Auxiliary number: _____ 4823
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PAYMENT INFORMATION

Apply online at: www.vfwnationalhome.org/membership	One-time membership fee \$100	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed and made payable to VFW National Home <input type="checkbox"/> Charge my <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover <input type="checkbox"/> American Express	
Name on card:	Card number:	
Signature:	Expiration date:	Security code:

CENTENNIAL LIFE MEMBERS



You can become a part of this special program by upgrading your existing membership or becoming a new member. As a Centennial Life Member, you'll receive a special centennial membership pin and membership card that will allow you to display your affiliation with pride. Plus, you'll enjoy discounts on souvenirs and apparel that are not available to regular members.

The Centennial Life Membership program is only available until 12/31/2025, so upgrade your existing membership or become a new member today!

*These fields are required for electronic voting.



Scan to buy your membership online!



Thomas Todaro PSC

**VETERAN SERVICE
ADVISOR**



Comrades,

Here are two important updates from the VA. The first is on mental health co-payments and the second update is the addition of three new cancers presumed service-connected disabilities due to military environmental exposure under the PACT Act.

1. **VA modification to The Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act**

The Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act added a new section that prohibits VA from imposing or collecting a copayment for the first three mental health care outpatient visits of a veteran in a calendar year, if the veteran would otherwise be required to pay a copayment. The determination of the first three mental health visits is expected to be complex due to a variety of issues, including the need to consider whether care is service-connected or otherwise exempt, how to handle veterans with multiple appointments in the same day, and administrative requirements. The following considerations will be accomplished:

- First, the VA will evaluate the clinic where the appointment occurred. If the clinic is a mental health, psychiatry, psychology or substance abuse clinic, the VA will exempt the copayment if it is one of the first three appointments in a year.
- Second, if the visit was not performed in such a clinic as listed above, the VA will review what provider completed the appointment to determine if the visit applies for a copayment exemption. If the provider is a psychiatrist, psychologist, licensed professional mental health counselor, marriage or family therapist, or social worker, and if the medical service provided is an evaluation and management visit, mental health visit, group therapy visit, or psychiatric diagnostic assessment, VA will exempt the copayment if it is one of the first three visits in a year.

- Veterans that are exempt from paying copayments based on Priority Group or service connection should see no difference in their copayment status as copayment is already exempt; and
- If the veteran has multiple appointments in one day, including a visit that qualifies for this exemption, the copayment for the visit that does not qualify for this exemption will still apply.

2. **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Education Service is integrating its payment system so all VBA benefits will be paid to one account.**

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Education Service is integrating its payment system so all VBA benefits will be paid to one account. The purpose of this bank account consolidation effort is to modernize the GI Bill system, reduce fraud and improper payments, and **ensure they pay beneficiaries on time, every time, and without error.** Once fully deployed, the platform will improve claims processing and customer service by providing direct, online, one-stop access to GI Bill benefits and information.

Release 6, the project name for the conversion of the Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) to the Enterprise Management of Payments, Workload, & Reporting (eMPWR) system for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits payment processing, has an implementation date of early July. The eMPWR system requires a GI Bill beneficiary to have only one account for VBA benefits. VBA Education Service has been working through established processes for this major DGIB release, which have resulted in the identification of critical defects and have since been resolved. Additionally, robust testing is being conducted to ensure a timely and effective implementation still within the previously communicated roadmap implementation window, between May and July 2024.

Currently, there remain approximately 9,800 beneficiaries (of the nearly 50,000 originally identified) who have not consolidated their bank accounts. Payments will continue to be made to the account originally associated with their VA education benefit until July 1, 2024. Although the original April 20, 2024, deadline for account updates has passed, these individuals will have until July 1, 2024; to update their records and identify the account they wish all VBA benefits to be paid to.

If impacted beneficiaries take no action, VA will make the change on their behalf; in most cases,

Veteran Service Advisor continued on page 13

Veteran Service Advisor continued from page 13

choosing the non-education benefit payment account for all future payments. **Most importantly, no beneficiary will miss a benefits payment of any type.**

Below is the second update on benefits from the VA:

VA extends presumptions of service-connection for three new cancer types

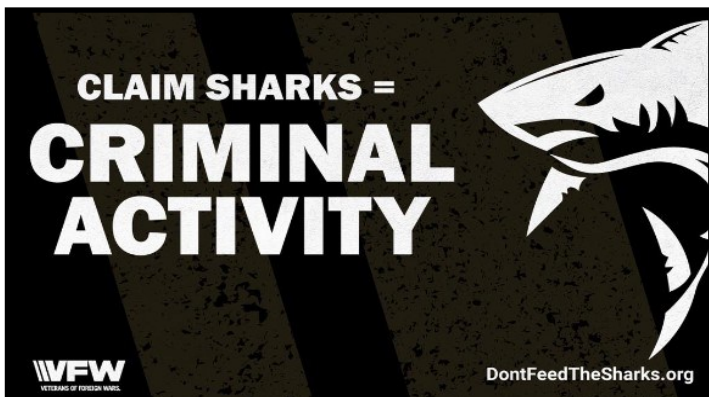
The Department of Veterans Affairs is including three new cancer types in the list of presumed service-connected disabilities due to military environmental exposure under the PACT Act. This announcement marks the continued commitment under the Biden-Harris administration’s Unity Agenda and the Biden Cancer Moonshot to support the nation’s Veterans. Through a sub-regulatory policy letter published to the Federal Register on 17 June 2024 the following three cancer types have been included in the list of presumptive diseases:

- Male breast cancer.
- Urethral cancer.
- Cancer of the paraurethral glands.

This policy establishes presumptions of service-connection for eligible Gulf War and post-9/11 Veterans who deployed to Afghanistan, Somalia, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and the entire Southwest Asia theater of operations, which includes Iraq. Presumptive service connection means VA automatically assumes service connection for the disease and provides benefits to eligible Veterans who have submitted claims with evidence of a diagnosis.

Any veteran who currently has or previously had one of the listed cancers at any time during military service or after separation may be entitled to disability compensation benefits dated back to Aug. 10, 2022, the date the PACT Act was signed into law. VA will review all claims from impacted veterans and survivors who previously filed and were denied for these three conditions on or after Aug. 10, 2022, to determine if benefits can now be granted.

Yours in comradeship.
Thomas Todaro, PSC



Ronald Sorrentino
COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICER CHAIRMAN



Comrades.

This 2023-2024 VFW year will come to an end on June 30, 2024. As of this article the department Community Activity total to date is 52,457, which is down almost 7,000 hours that is almost a 12% decrease from 2022-2023 in volunteer hours. The donation dollar amount in 2023-2024 is \$ 1,325,634. The total for 2023-2024 is \$ 2,993,777 this is an increase of 6.56 % from last year. So far this year 2023-2024 District 3 with a total of \$ 725,073.27 is in first place, followed by District 11 with \$ 521,987.69, then District 10 with \$ 521,475.64. I just want to thank all the comrades for last year, and let’s continue in 2024-2025 with topping last year’s total.

Just to repeat

On reporting of community service, you must remember that the VFW year goes from 1 July – 30 June, to have your reports count it must show that the activity happened within the 1 July – 30 June time frame. When submitting your report make sure the description is more than a one-word explanation, one word is not a description, also make sure the miles, number of members, and dollars spent/ donated are entered.

Ronald Sorrentino

Ronald Sorrentino
Community Activity Chairman





VA ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

HOW TO CHALLENGE A FEE

WHAT A CLAIMANT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHALLENGING A FEE CALLED FOR IN A FEE AGREEMENT WITH AN ATTORNEY OR AGENT

What if I believe that the attorney or claims agent that represented me did not earn the fee called for in our fee agreement? If you believe the fee is too high, or otherwise unreasonable, you can file a motion challenging the reasonableness of the fee. The Office of General Counsel (OGC) of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will review fee agreement for reasonableness if you file a timely motion with our office.¹

How Do I File a Motion With OGC?

I. What Are the Requirements for My Motion? There is no requirement to use any particular format or specific writing style when writing your motion. For example, your motion could simply be a letter from you to OGC. However, OGC will not review your fee agreement unless your motion meets **all** of the following requirements:

- Your motion must be in writing. A telephone call to your VA regional office, or to OGC, does not satisfy this requirement.
- Your motion must include your full name and VA file number.
- Your motion must state and explain the reason(s) why the fee called for in the agreement is unreasonable, i.e., the reason(s) the attorney or claim agent did not earn the fee.
- You must attach to your motion any evidence you want OGC to consider.

II. Do I Have To Inform the Attorney or Claims Agent of My Motion? Yes, you must serve a copy of your motion on the attorney or claims agent involved in this matter by mailing or delivering it to him or her.

III. How Do I File My Motion With OGC and Prove that I Served It On the Attorney or Claims Agent? To begin OGC's review of your fee agreement, you must mail a motion, as well as proof of service (meaning proof that you have sent the motion to the attorney or claims agent involved in this matter), to the following address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel (022D)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

¹ An attorney or claims agent may only charge you for assistance with your claim if: (1) a notice of disagreement was filed with your claim, (2) you signed a VA Form 21-22a authorizing the attorney or claims agent to represent you, and (3) you signed a written agreement to pay the attorney or claims agent. If you believe that these requirements have not been met, but you have received a letter from VA stating that the attorney or claims agent is eligible to be paid, you should file a notice of disagreement (NOD) with the RO. Please note that your NOD must be received within 60 days of the date of that letter.

- Proof of service consists of a statement by the person who sent or delivered the motion. The statement must include the date and manner of service, the name of the person served, and the address of the place of delivery.
- For service by regular mail, proof of service shall include the date a statement that the motion was mailed through the U.S. Postal Service.
- A sample proof of service form that is commonly used by veterans to demonstrate that they have sent their motion to an attorney or claims agent is located [here](#).
- We recommend that you submit proof of service to our office at the same time you file your motion.

III. When Must I File My Motion? You have **120 days** from the date of the final VA action, which in most cases means 120 days from the date of the fee eligibility decision, to file a motion for review of a fee agreement. This means that a motion meeting all of the regulation's requirements, **including proof of service**, must be filed at the address specified above prior to expiration of the 120-day time limit.

IV. What Factors Does the OGC Consider When Making Its Decision? The factors for determining reasonableness include:

1. The extent and type of services the representative performed;
2. The complexity of the case;
3. The level of skill and competence required of the representative in giving the services;
4. The amount of time the representative spent on the case;
5. The results the representative achieved, including the amount of any benefits recovered;
6. The level of review to which the claim was taken and the level of the review at which the representative was retained;
7. Rates charged by other representatives for similar services;
8. Whether, and to what extent, the payment of fees is contingent upon the results achieved; and
9. If the attorney or claims agent was discharged, the reasons why he was discharged.

V. What Happens After I File My Motion?

- The attorney or claims agent involved in this matter may file a response to your motion with OGC not later than 30 days from the date on which you serve him or her with your motion. He or she must serve you with a copy of his response.
- You will then have 15 days from the date the attorney or claim agent serves you with a response to file a reply with OGC; you must also serve the attorney or claims agent with a copy of your reply.
- OGC may extend the time period for the attorney or claims agent's response or your reply for a reasonable period of time if sufficient cause is shown.
- Fifteen days after the date on which the attorney or claims agent responds, or 30 days after you serve the attorney or claims agent, if he or she does not respond, OGC will close the record in the proceedings, and no further evidence or argument will be accepted.
- The General Counsel will issue the final decision on the matter. This decision is appealable to the Board of Veterans Appeals.



William Moore

VOD CHAIRMAN



Comrades,

We look forward to another exciting year for students competing in this year's VOD competition. The contest is open to students in grades 9-12 enrolled in public, private or parochial high schools or home study programs. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students MUST be lawful U.S. permanent residence or have applied for permanent residence (application not being denied) and with the intent to become U.S. citizens.

The 2024-25 THEME: "IS AMERICA TODAY OUR FOREFATHER'S VISION?"

Please read carefully the rules on the information sheet.

What I need to enter:

Original 3-5-minute (+/- 5 secs.) audio essay on a FLASH DRIVE – No computer audios, student's own voice, in English

Typed version of the audio essay

Completed application form with proper signatures both the student, school, parent, VFW Post/Aux sections- every year contact must be made for incomplete applications especially the Post section regarding data for the number participating, winner advancement, scholarship \$ awarded. Kindly add a contact phone number to an email so missing information is accounted for.

Head shot picture of each applicant.

NOTE and NEW: Applicant MUST be the sole owner of the essay. Inappropriate use of ChatGPT or other AI tools is NOT allowed.

When screening your essays, please make careful attention to the rules regarding no music, singing, poetry, or sound effects, AND not to identify self in the beginning or in the essay content in any way.

Many students are assisted in finding a sponsoring post. Please reach out to these students trying to find a place to sponsor them. All entries begin at the VFW Post level.

Dates to Remember:

All entries at the Post level must be in the hands of the local VFW Post by OCT. 31, 2024

NEW YORK STATE COMPETITION WILL BE DECEMBER 29, 2024 WITH A SUBMISSION DEADLINE OF MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2024. Judging will take place at VFW Post #7765, 30 Elizabeth Street, Red Hook, NY 12571 at 1PM. Submissions need to be

sent to me at 10 Rokeby Road, Red Hook, NY 12571 so I can log in all applicants in the state competition. It is the responsibility of the Posts to screen the applications for completion and get it to me on time. Late submissions are disqualified.

Please call or email me anytime with questions.

William Moore

Home phone 845-758-8175,

email: WMOORE@hvc.rr.com



Ronald Sorrentino

SERVICE OFFICER JOURNAL AD CHAIRMAN



Comrades,

Once more I want to say **Thank You** to all the Post, Auxiliaries and Members who donated to the Service officer Raffle and Journal this year. We had \$ 7,950.00 in prize money with 73 prizes being drawn. The Journal had 73 Ads five more than last year, how great is that. I just want to repeat and say **Thank You** to all Comrades for their great response to this deserving cause.

We are so grateful to all who have participated in the Service Officer Raffle and Journal. As I said before, without your generous support, we would not be able to raise the additional funds needed to continue the service provided by our Service Officers. The work they do, as you know, is essential in both counseling our Veterans and helping them with their claim so they can receive the benefits they need.

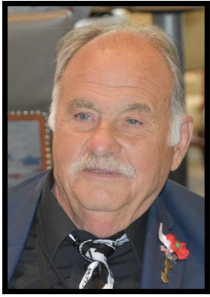
I will be continuing as the Chair of the Service Officer program once again, and I will graciously accept this Chairmanship. With all your help as in the past, I know we can have another great Program next year. We will be sending out the 2024-2025 raffle donation letter soon so keep an eye out for it and as last year please donate. In closing I would like to congratulate all the winners in the raffle last year.

Ronald Sorrentino

Ronald Sorrentino

Veterans Service Officer Journal & Raffle Chairman





Pat Iuliucci

POW/MIA CHAIRMAN



The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Bartholomew C. Loschiavo, 24, of Buffalo, New York, killed during World War II, was accounted for April 2, 2024.



In October 1944, Loschiavo was assigned to Company A, 329th Infantry Regiment, 83rd Infantry Division in the European Theater. On October 1, Loschiavo was killed in action while his unit engaged German troops near Grevenmacher, Luxembourg. A witness during the battle reported Loschiavo was struck by an enemy mortar shell, injuring his legs and abdomen. While trying to reach cover, he rolled off a terrace and disappeared into cluster of grapevines. Following the battle, company medics went back to render aid but could not locate any remains of Pfc. Loschiavo. His body remained unaccounted for during, and after the war.

On February 25, 1946, [American Graves Registration Command \(AGRC\)](#) recovered one set of Unknown remains, designated X-323 Hamm (X-323) from the Grevenmacher village cemetery. Local residents claimed to have discovered and buried the remains in April 1945. AGRC investigators analyzed the remains, but despite their efforts were unable to make a scientific identification at the time and they were interred in the Luxembourg American Cemetery, an [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) site in Hamm, Luxembourg.

In 2020, the family of Loschiavo contacted DPAA to ask analysts to evaluate if X-323 might be his remains. Due to the incomplete documentation of X-323, DPAA historians had to conduct a comprehensive review of combat, including all unresolved casualties in the area where the remains were reportedly found. DPAA scientific staff then compared the biological profile data for all potential candidates to the data on file for the remains, finding that Loschiavo and two other soldiers were the most likely candidates. Following that multi-disciplinary analysis, in 2021

DPAA proposed X-323 for disinterment. That proposal was approved in July 2022, which unfortunately was too late for DPAA to add X-323 to its disinterment schedule that year.

In July 2023, the Department of Defense and ABMC officials exhumed the remains of X-323 for forensic analysis and comparison to unresolved American Soldiers in the area. The remains were transferred to the DPAA Laboratory for analysis.

To identify Loschiavo's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as chest radiograph comparisons. Additionally, scientists from the [Armed Forces Medical Examiner System](#) used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Pfc. Loschiavo's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at Luxembourg American Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg, along with others still missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

Pfc. Loschiavo will be buried in Buffalo, New York, on June 1, 2024.



Neil ,

Thank you and all the VFW leaders that came to our Burger King Opening at Bayside yesterday.

You made it a truly memorable event and we are all grateful that you were able to join us and celebrate Flag day.

We will always be grateful for your service to this great Country of ours .

Sincerely,

Debbie Sena





John Pieprzak

COMMANDER DISTRICT 1



Greetings comrades.

I hope this letter finds all in good health. You must bear with me; I haven't written an article for a newsletter since high school which was farther back than I would care to admit. Hopefully I'll get better as time goes by.

My home is the Pfc. John P. Czachor Post 5806 in Williamsburg Brooklyn, where I have been Commander since 2016. I was Brooklyn County Council Commander for two years and went up the chairs in District One. I am also a PUFL member of the St. Stanislaus Memorial Post 1771, American Legion where I was Commander from 2003 – 2013.

Right now, we are at the point in between 'seasons' as we close out 2023-2024 and start 2024-2025. As the newly installed District One Commander I am getting myself prepared for this new position. I am looking forward to the new adventures to come, and new people to meet. For many the summer months are a time to slow down, recharge and get ready. Just remember there are many opportunities that the summer provides us. The nice weather brings people outside, BBQ's, Fairs, parties, etc. These are perfect chances to recruit. Wear your VFW or branch of service shirts and hats. Keep some applications in your wallet. Keep your eyes open for others that are wearing the same. Watch for INK, tattoos... Many vets might not have military clothing on, but the tattoos get uncovered when tank tops and shorts come out. If you set up a table at an event, bring a cooler with bottles of water for humans and dogs alike. Have a bowl out there for the four-legged friends. It will show people you care, even if they aren't veterans. That's what we are here for. People will remember things like that.

I hope I didn't bore you with the babbling on. Good luck to all, enjoy the summer.

Semper Fi.

Loyally Yours,

John Pieprzak

District 1 Commander



This year marks the beginning of VFW's celebration of its 125th anniversary. Founded on Sept. 29, 1899, VFW has made a legacy in the lives of veterans and their families – it is a legacy that endures.

As the nation's oldest combat veterans organization, VFW has many opportunities this year for its members to recognize this momentous occasion.

All VFW Posts are invited to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their family members to our country during this anniversary year. In accepting this invitation to become a VFW 125th Anniversary Commemorative Community Service Post, such VFW Posts will receive due recognition.

Additionally, Posts are asked to encourage the communities to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

To become a VFW 125th Anniversary Commemorative Community Service Post, visit vfw125.org.



Madison Fletcher

COMMANDER DISTRICT 2 2023-2024



Comrades,

This has been a great year for District 2. We did fall short of All American by only 100 members. I want to thank all the posts that stepped up and hit the recruiting goal set by the national Commander. I want to congratulate the posts that did make All-State. Those posts were Posts-

686 Joseph C. Hassett Memorial Post,

1666- Yonkers City Post

5491- The Greater Mahopac Post

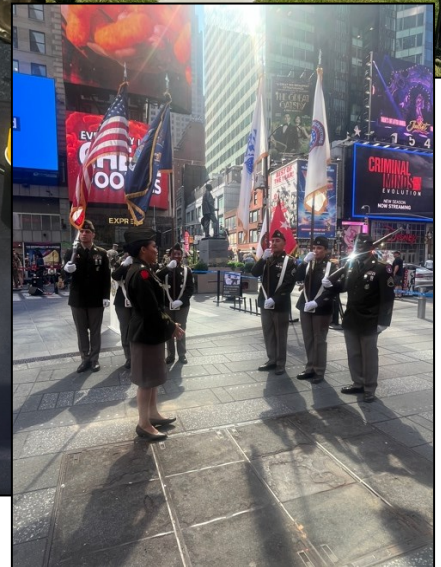
7765- Red Hook Post

Commander District 2 continued on pager 21

Patriotic Events by Jesse Figueroa – District 1 Jr Vice Commander and Post 546 Commander

Greetings Comrades,

I am pleased to announce that yours truly participated in parades representing District 1: Forest Hills and Bay Ridge Memorial Day Parades; Salute to Ships on the Bluff of US Army Garrison Fort Hamilton; 249th Army Birthday and Flag Day ceremony at Father Duffy Square on 47th St-Broadway in Midtown Manhattan.



Commander District 2 continued from page 19

I also want to congratulate Post 686 again for the highest recruiting percentage at 113%. Bravo Zulu on a job well done.

Our District Convention was held at Renegades Stadium where we welcomed the Department Commander Dan Kell to speak to the Posts in attendance. I want to congratulate the incoming chain of command and I am standing by at the ready for any assistance they may need. Looking forward I expect all Posts to show them the same support and effort that was shown for me.

Thank you all for a great year and I look forward to the future.

Yours in Comradeship,

Madison Fletcher

District 2 Commander 2023-2024

Springs), held ours on Saturday May 18th. Our day was spent at Maplewood cemetery, in Saratoga Springs, cleaning headstones for veterans.

Yes, I'm missing in the picture. I transported the tee signs etc. from the Department Commanders golf outing at Brier Creek to Casolwood GC, for the Saturday 5/18 outing. A good time was had by all. On May 11th Walton VFW Post 270 held a "Fill the Jeep" food drive, with all donations going to the Walton Food Bank. Post 270 Commander Mel Woodin spoke about VFW membership, eligibility requirements, benefits and invited everyone who thought he or she might be eligible to stop by the post on their post meeting night.

Over Memorial Day weekend I was privileged to attend three parades, each followed by a brief Memorial service. On Friday May 24th I attended the parade with service held at Post 7291 in Greenwich, Saturday May 25th in Ballston Spa with Post 358 and Monday May 27th at the Glens Falls parade and service with Queensbury Post 6196. All three events were very well attended by Post VFW and Auxiliary Members.



Harold Patchen

**COMMANDER
DISTRICT 3**



Comrades

I want to wish every Post Commander, not only from District 3, a successful year in membership (102%) and programs. 102% is a challenge but it can be done with effort from **every Post member**. Your Commander and Quartermaster can't do it alone, it takes a team effort. While I'm on membership I want to **thank every post** in District 3 that met or exceeded 100% in membership. At this writing we have 25 of 43 that accomplished 100%+ membership.



I want to thank every Post in District 3 that held a VFW Day of Service. My Post, 420 (Saratoga



On Saturday 6/15 I attended the **100th Anniversary** celebration for Oneonta Post 1206. The Mayor of Oneonta presented Post Commander Mike Woytach with a proclamation. PSC Tom Howard presented Post Commander Woytach and Past Post Commander Beth Akulin with their Post's Certificate from

VFW Commander in Chief D. Sarmiento.

A good time was had by all, my compliments to the "Grill Master". If anyone happens to be in the Oneonta area and has a few minutes, they'd love to have you stop by and see their museum on the second floor. I saw it in November 2023 when I was on our District 3 tour with Commander Kell. You'll find it well worth your time.

In Comradeship,

Harold Patchen

District 3 Commander



Matthew Vanetten

**COMMANDER
DISTRICT 4**



Greetings,

As we move into the new VFW year. I would like to pause and thank all of our posts for the work they do for our veterans and the community as a whole. The District officers worked hard on membership this year, ultimately falling short of meeting the CIC goal of 102%. We did have 6 posts met or exceeded 100% and two post that "met the challenge" Lewis County Memorial Post 6912 and Douglas E Voss Yorkville Memorial Post 6001. I am happy to say we closed the year out with some very satisfying statistics for our District which are 100% inspected, 100% community Service and 100% trustee's reports submitted.

I would like to highlight some of the fantastic events that took place throughout our district this past year.



Lewis County Post 6912 in partnership with the Outdoor Channel and Spectrum hosted a community dinner. Joined by local elected and appointed officials we were provide a fantastic meal.

Camden VFW Post 6530 hosted for the first time a Vietnam Veterans Day. Joined by District leadership we were able to set up a membership table and speak to many veterans from across the state.

It was brought to our attention that an active-duty airman stationed in Rome, NY recently lost his house to a fire. Having a wife and three children, our district and the posts with in were able to raise fund and presented Cpt John Miller with a check to help his

family.

July 25th District 4 will be having our organizational meeting at Rome Post 2246 at 1800 hours (6:00 PM).

In Comradeship,

Matthew Vanetten

District 4 Commander



Susan Rogers

**COMMANDER
DISTRICT 5**



Comrades:

It's been a year of adventure and learning as a district commander. Our focus in the district always is for our membership to grow but also to **sustain and retain** what we already have. Our emphasis has been on community engagement and the preservation of those who served. Our members and posts have been very busy and nonstop. Our members work very hard to plan the events their posts sponsor and work closely with the district to make sure it's a success. Communication has been the key, and it has paid off with an increase in membership and comradeship and conflict resolution.

A HUGE shout out to **the following** posts for their efforts for the **community engagement** holding veteran related events for Clearpath, VA, fundraiser events for people in need, Civil Air Patrol and ROTC, family movie nights, pancake breakfasts, Fish fries, golf tournaments, Boy and girl scouts' events, patriot rides, finally last but not least Memorial day remembrance events and military funerals for those who served.

Edick-Hamlick Post 369 Mexico, Richard Hoyt Post 478 Binghamton, Crystal City Post 524 Corning; Fulton Post 569 Fulton; Rex Field Post 901 Elmira; Liverpool -Clay Post 951 Clay; Glenn Warner Post 1371Owego, Major Ray Humphrey Post 1449 Endicott; Webster-Hill Conklin Post 1470 Bath; Lafayette Memorial Post 1955, Lafayette; Auburn Post 1975 Auburn; Corporal J Mooney Post 2250 Hornell; Alfred & Henry Michalovic Post 2332 Johnson City; Christy Rock Post 2782 Norwich; Stanley B Pennock Post 2893 Solvay; Mattydale Post 3146 Mattydale; Afton Memorial Post 3529 Afton; Phoenix Memoria Post 5540 Pheonix; Quattrini- Dehm Post 5885 Oswego; Gordon Hoover-Wantuck Post 6083 Elmira; Finger Lakes Post 961 Ithaca; Clifford E. Galbraith

District 5 Commander continued on page 23

District 5 Commander continued from page 22

Memorial Post 7127 Moravia; Pulaski Memorial Post 7289 Pulaski; Edwards- Weavers Post 7290 North Syracuse; Trach-Auringer Post 7325 Constantia; Town of Manlius Post 7872 Manlius; Waverly Memorial 8104 Waverly; Herbert D. Roszburg 8664 Camillus; VanEtten-Spencer Post 8139 VanEtten; Cable Trail Post 8534 Laconia; Hastings-Parish Memorial Post 8823 Hastings; Simon Parise Post 9596 East Syracuse.

It has already started to be an exciting new 2024-2025 VFW year for our district and its only July 1st!

Stay Tuned More to come!

Yours in Comradeship

Susan M Rogers

Tiffany Post 53 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars offered them to the public at Brigiotta’s Farmland Produce & Garden Center, Monies raised helps disabled and disadvantaged veterans who assemble the iconic red flowers in addition to supporting veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs as well as the VFW National Home .



From left Jim McNally Past State Commander Dept of New York, Ken Furlow Post 53 Junior Vice-Commander and Buddy Poppy Chair, Mayor Ecklund, and Bill Johnston Post Commander.

Past State Commander Tom Todaro helped out with Post 53’s Poppies drive.



Marcello Rotunda
COMMANDER
DISTRICT 6



Comrades,

District 6 has been busy these past months with outreach activities. We partnered with District 7 at Daemen University for five hours with 28 Veterans Organizations . The VA and VSO Personnel were processing VA Claims in real time.



May 20th marked the 100th anniversary that the designation of “Buddy Poppy” was certified for its sole use by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This iconic symbol of remembrance and support for our fallen, disabled, and needy veterans is traditionally offered in the days just before Memorial Day. The members of the John W.

Ed Johnson, Senator George Borrello and PSC Tom Todaro On Tuesday June 25, 2024 Commander Kell, representing the Department of New York VFW along

Commander District 6 continued on page 24

District 6 Commander continued from page 23

with District 6 Commander Marcello Rotunda and District 7 Jr. Vice Commander Abe Zino attended the Military Student Recognition Ceremony at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park. The ceremony recognized over 100 high school students who are enlisting in the United States Military.



Yours In Comradeship,
Marcello J. Rotunda
6th District Commander

passed. His wife had called and wasn't able to get any help with a family memorial service she wanted to have for her husband. I helped her organize and I presented her with certificates from The District 10 V.F.W, V.F.W. Post 5942, and The Elks National Veterans Service Commission. The Navy sent a bugler for taps and an officer for the flag presentation. The Amvets Post 88 provided the rifle volley and a bagpiper played God Bless America.



Michael Baldwin was a Vietnam Veteran who served on the USS Vesuvius with honor, during the Vietnam War he lost his battle with cancer in September 2023. Approximately 80 family members and friends attended.



Jack Stein
COMMANDER
DISTRICT 10



Comrades,
District 10 has been working to support our veterans in need.



District 10 Commander Jack Stein Presided over a Memorial Service for a Vietnam Veteran who had



District 10 Commander Jack Stein visited Stony Brook Veterans Home and Donated various crafting kits, Slip-free socks, wheelchair gloves, and assorted items for the female residents. pictured, showing off his new leather gloves is Mark Sheridan, a Vietnam veteran, and special forces ranger. Michelle Cheslak, Director of Therapeutic Recreation. Jack is also The Elks New York State Veterans Commission Chairman.

On June 20, 2024 Pat Iuliucci set up at VFW table at the South Nassau Communities Hospital in Oceanside NY.

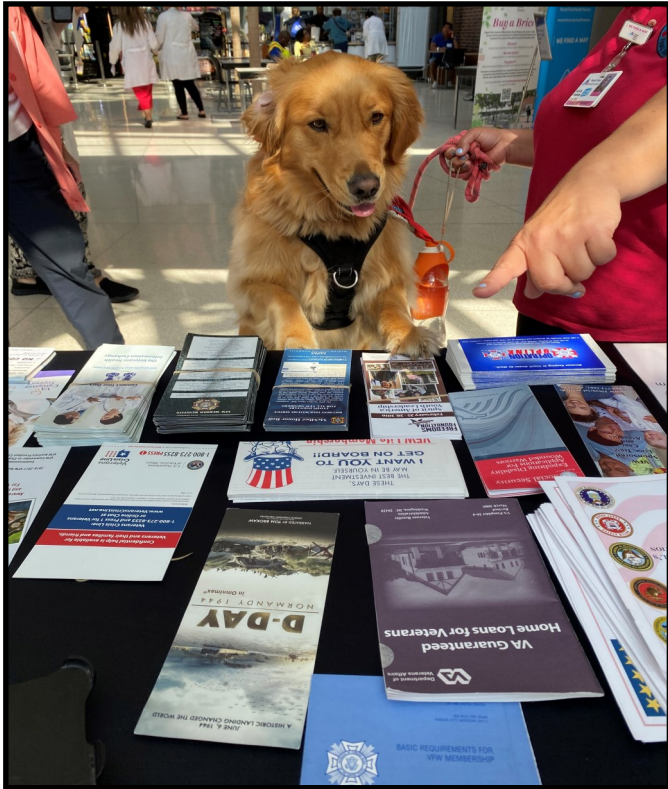
District 10 Commander continued on page 26

District 7's Convention was held on Sunday May 5, 2024 at Eastern Orleans Memorial Post 202 in Holly, New York.. Members of the U S Navy provided the color guard for the day. Karl Bennett was elected to his second term as District 7 Commander.



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The VFW was invited to participate as part of the Hospital's health fair. Including an interested Service dog who wanted to join the VFW.



Yours in Comradeship,
Jack Stein
District 10 Commander



Jeffery Molitor
Commander
District 11
2022-2024



Comrades,

New opportunities for New Commanders. This will be my last Overseas Article for the Department. Working with and watching a brand-New District grow has been an honor and privilege. It's now time to turn over the baton to the next generation of leadership. All-American Commander Bill Hughes has been elected and installed as the New Commander of District 11. We all wish Comrade Hughes the best of luck in his upcoming year.

Domination.... It's what District 11 does. We set the standard for all other Districts to emulate. One of the top 3 in Patriots Pen, The number 2 and 3 Scouts for the Scouting Program, 2 out of 3 Teachers of the Year, and the Number 1 Top slot in Voice of Democracy. The first to 100% membership for the Department of New York. Yes, District 11 Posts crushed it again this year.

Our District distributes Poppies and holds recruitment tables throughout our Communities during Memorial Day. We continue to support the SAR (Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day); New York ANNUALLY recognizes September 22nd as "Veterans Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day."

Posts are marching in the Memorial Day Parades and putting flags on the graves of our Veterans.

Our VFW Riders continue to support the monthly No One in Attendance Ceremonies at Calverton and Long Island National Cemeteries.

Cooties Pup Tent 65 installed their New Officers and are looking not to do much this year. We all hope they have a Lousy year. (wink, wink)

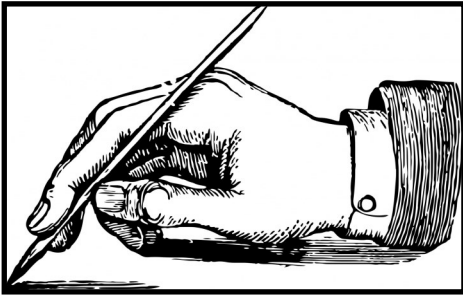
The VFW Day of Service starts in May, and we can't wait to see what the Posts do for their projects.

I thank all District 11 Posts for allowing me to be their Commander over the Past two Years. I hope you continue your support of the District, Department, and National in the upcoming year. Lastly, Thank you, Commander Kell, for this opportunity to lead. Saying that I am proud to be the District 11 Commander is an understatement.

Yours in Comradeship,

Jeffery T. Molitor

All-American District 11 Commander 2022-2024



The Connection of July 4th and Major American
Military Fighting Campaigns from 1898-1950

By

Richard V. Acritelli

"In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved."

– President
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Some two hundred and forty-eight years ago, the establishment of American liberty was created by our Founding Fathers. After eight long years of war, the nation was finally free of British control to eventually establish one of the greatest political systems ever created. During American history our military has been deployed abroad on July 4th, to ensure that the values of liberty did not perish from the threats of aggressor countries. As America is prepared to celebrate our two hundred and forty eighth year of independence, we should always recall the military sacrifices of our service members on this date.

At the turn of the 1800's, the United States tried to develop into an immense economic power that was openly competing with the British. While America was one of the last modern nations to establish a colonial empire, quickly our nation established overseas territories for coaling stations, new areas to gain cheap raw materials, and markets for American products. Former New York City Police Commissioner and Assistant Secretary of Navy Theodore Roosevelt was "hawkish" towards the necessity of the United States to become a military power.

America closely monitored the Spanish held possessions of Cuba and Puerto Rico. National and government leaders feared European presence in the Caribbean Sea and Latin America that was perceived as a direct threat against the Monroe Doctrine. It was understood that the United States was not able to fight the English and the Germans, but the Spanish was an aging European power, with a small military force, and navy. President William McKinley was a moderate leader that served as a major during the Civil War that at first was neither a "hawk" or "dove." As a pro-business and manufacturing leader, McKinley realized that American growth was tied to an overseas empire, and this motivated his

government to annex Hawaii and the Samoan Islands.

Through the massive "yellow journalism" campaign of newspaper publishers like William Randolph Hearst, there were the constant military cries of the United States to remove the Spanish from Cuba. After the destruction of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor, the moderate McKinley started to accept war as being a necessary measure. Across America, newspapers printed stories on a daily basis blaming the Spanish for the loss of this mighty ship and its American naval sailors. This situation worsened by the "DeLome Letter" that portrayed McKinley as a weak figure to act against the Spanish over Cuba. These words ignited a firestorm within the papers, the government, and it pushed more Americans to accept the need for war against the Spanish to free Cuba and to take their territories in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Americans were incensed as they read the words of the Spanish Ambassador to the United States Señor Don Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, "Without a military end of the matter nothing will be accomplished in Cuba, and without a military and political settlement there will always be the danger of encouragement being give to the insurgents...It once more shows what McKinley is, weak and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd besides being a would-be politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party."

On April 24th, 1898, McKinley declared war against the Spanish and became the first leader since James K. Polk's Declaration of War against Mexico in 1846. McKinley informed the government and the American people, "for the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and Government in the island of Cuba, and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect." Right away, he called for volunteers, and started the process of preparing this nation for war. Americans trained with weapons left over from the Civil and Indian Wars, wore cotton uniforms, and dealt with establishment of segregation for African-American soldiers. At this point, "separate, but equal" fully legalized segregation through Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court ruling. As black soldiers enlisted, trained and expected to be sent to Cuba, they endured appalling racial conditions in the South.

This conflict was known as the "100 Day War" and a "Splendid Little War," as America was not prepared for this conflict, but the Spanish government had greater military deficiencies. In May, 1898, Commodore George Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila, Philippines, as he set the sky "black" with naval armaments. Two months later, the United States Army and Navy was at the cusp of a mighty victory against an aging European

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power. General Leonard Wood and Colonel Roosevelt led the 1st Cavalry "Rough Riders" in Cuba, where this unruly and versatile group of military fighters helped achieve victory over the Spanish.

On the eve of Independence Day, the American navy destroyed the Spanish fleet that desperately tried to flee into the Atlantic Ocean. The Spanish were unable to oppose the American Naval blockade that was placed around Cuba, as it prevented their fleet from reaching open waters for safety. These enemy ships were almost trapped behind mines that were placed in the waters around Cuba to prevent the United States from easily entering Cuban ports/harbors. Four Spanish cruisers and two destroyers were unable to escape, as they practically ran into the American Navy. Led by the *USS Brooklyn*, five of these ships were destroyed by Rear Admiral William T. Sampson and Commodore Winfield S. Schley naval squadrons. Those naval sailors and officers who survived this American attack were taken prisoner and sent to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, until final peace was concluded several months later.

At the same moment, the American army siege of Santiago began, and this presented the beginning of the end of this war. Almost two weeks later, Santiago was taken by General William Shafter's forces through the contributions of Roosevelt and Rough Riders charge up the highest point of San Juan Hill to earn an important victory over the Spanish. Risking his own life with a few soldiers to aid him, Roosevelt quickly moved up this terrain against fierce enemy fire. Roosevelt quickly engaged the Spanish with his pistol, as these actions allowed enough time for the rest of the soldiers to reach this position to overwhelm the enemy.

Witness accounts supported the devoted leadership and fierce fighting of Roosevelt through earlier attempts to help him receive the Medal of Honor. But Roosevelt was critical of the War Department's handling of leaving American soldiers who were more susceptible to yellow fever and malaria, than Spanish bullets. Even as President of the United States, the lengthy investigation was never fully concluded if he should have been given the Medal of Honor at this time. He died in 1919 and his older family had to wait one hundred years for him to receive this historic national medal.

As Americans prepared to celebrate its one hundred and twenty second Independence on July 4th, 1898, the Spanish would surrender Santiago on July, 16th. At this point, the United States developed an overseas empire, demonstrated the power of the navy, and strengthened the Monroe Doctrine. Once Roosevelt became President, he continued to connect foreign and military affairs to the interests of the United States. This extremely young President utilized his experience from the Spanish-American War to free Panama of Columbian control and for spearheading to build a canal that would economically, militarily, and strategically connect the

Atlantic and Pacific Oceans under the security of the United States.

On April 6th, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson broke the American foreign policy of neutrality through his Declaration of War against Germany and the Central Powers. As the United States watched the horrors of the fighting for the three years, the government immediately began the draft. The nation went from a small peacetime force of 127,500 officers and soldiers, towards an army of 4,000,000. Wilson wanted to make the "world safe for democracy" and was determined to put the United States on a wartime footing. One of his most important steps that he took to ensure this national goal was making General John J. Pershing the commander of all American Expeditionary Forces.

Departing from New York City, Pershing and his staff for eight days moved through German U-Boat infested waters. During his trip to England, Pershing had the daunting challenge of leading a war effort that was never carried out by any previous military leader and President. The American Expeditionary Force lacked experience on the Western Front, was not yet respected by the British, French or Germans, and it waited for the arrival of ship loads of drafted soldiers and military equipment to train before they were deployed to the lines.

There were many firsts for Pershing and the American officers landing in England, as this was the only time that our military was ever welcomed by a foreign country to aid their war effort. This native of Missouri was greeted by King George V at Buckingham Palace and the appreciation of the British public that the fortunes of war had positively changed for them. Pershing addressed the British people, "Speaking for myself personally, the officers and my staff, and the members of my command, we are very glad indeed to be the standard bearers of our country in this great war for civilization. To land on British soil and to receive the welcome accorded us seems very significant and is deeply appreciated. We expect in the course of time to be playing our part, and we hope it will be a very large part, on the Western Front."

On July 4th, 1917, Pershing traveled to Paris, France, and like in England, he was met by huge crowds that were excited to gain the participation of the United States in this war. Pershing and his staff visited the Marquis de Lafayette gravestone, and it was stated, "Lafayette, we are here." By recalling the French and Americans bond from the Revolutionary War, on this day of independence and at the height of World War I, Pershing had one of the most difficult jobs that was ever assigned to an American commanding general.

Pershing had an immense amount of experience, as he was a younger officer who fought in the Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, and was promoted in 1906 by President Theodore

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Roosevelt over eight hundred senior officers to become a brigadier general. He graduated thirtieth at West Point in 1886 and Pershing was the first white officer to command an all-African American regiment, as "Black Jack Pershing" presented all that was American. After Pancho Villa attacked Columbus, New Mexico, he led a difficult movement of American forces into Mexico. Before opposing Villa on the American - Mexican Border, Pershing understood adversity, as in 1915, his wife and three daughters were killed in a fire at his home at the Presidio in San Francisco, California. His son Warren was the only member of the family to have survived. A Progressive and domestic President, Wilson and his Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, counted on the leadership of Pershing to establish the foundation of American success on the Western Front.

As the United States was in the process of building an army to control a part of the Western Front, our forces up until the fall of 1918, played a limited role. Pershing refused to allow the British and French to take and command American soldiers. Although they were placed under the authority of the British and French on a limited basis to gain combat experience to help train the Americans as they arrived in France, this was only on a limited basis. At Belleau Wood from June 1st-21st, this battlefield that was only thirty-nine miles from Paris, the Germans saw the American soldiers as being green. Instead, many of these marines staved off six German assaults, and the enemy was forced to pull back from this position. One German official observed the American soldiers and stated, "It is not a question of the possession or nonpossession of this or that village or woods, insignificant in itself; it is a question whether the Anglo-American claim that the American Army is equal or even the superior of the German Army is to be made good." Under fire, Pershing and his forces were baptized through the unrelenting horrors of this war that expected quick American military gains.

The United States earned respect from our Allies and the Germans, who realized that American soldiers would accept losses and move against a defiant enemy. Pershing was in the process of molding this army into a fighting force into a determining factor to help win this war. Observing the drive of the American Marine Corps at Belleau Wood, this fighting experience was identified by the German leadership as, "The moral effect of our own gunfire cannot seriously impede the advance of the American infantry." This intense battle produced a tremendous amount of pride by Pershing that he presented a Medal of Honor to one of his soldiers. The marines lost 5,200 casualties, more than half their strength, as they were weakened, but they continued to defy the Germans. As our troops had a steep learning curve, Wilson allowed Pershing the ability the American war effort, the way he saw fit. And this was in the face of British and French opposition that demanded American soldiers to be turned over to their commands. Pershing never fully

allowed these requests, even as his allied peers were calling for his removal, as they claimed that he was about to lose the war by not turning over these soldiers in large numbers.

There were points that the American Expeditionary Force under the leadership of Pershing received more respect from the Germans. It was ascertained by Senior General Erich Ludendorff, that the increase of the discontent in his army to keep fighting, only increased once the American army became more visible on the battle lines, and it worsened once they gained additional experience. Ludendorff feared the morale of his army, as they expected "looming defeat" from the "sheer number of Americans arriving at the front." The Germans destroyed the Russians and forced them to make peace, fought two fronts, and threatened the stability of the British and French. But they were a tired army that feared the progress and growth of the American army that was motivated to fight and destroy their presence on the Western Front.

A year after arriving in France, Pershing started to mass his soldiers west of the Marne Salient, within the large forest of the Oureq Valley. The American 1st and 4th Divisions along with the 1st corps were tasked to secure these lines from Chateau-Thierry to Belleau Wood. For the first time since the Civil War this nation had a corps in the field to fight an enemy. Another rare occurrence was the ability of the United States to command some French soldiers during this battle. Within the rear areas of the front lines, the American military command organized a tremendous number of guns, resources, logistics, and soldiers who were all eager to hit the Germans. It was the goal of the American and French forces to strongly hit Ludendorff's armies that were situated in the Reim's area that was near the eastern side of the enemy salient. Against many experienced soldiers and in an elevated position, if the American soldiers were going to gain their objectives, they had to take losses against the better positioned German forces.

After the difficult task of placing American soldiers in the lines and sitting through a terrible rainstorm, time was present to push forward. It was a chaotic scene of the men being pushed into the lines, having not eaten in twenty-four hours, soaking wet, covered in mud, and anxious soldiers that were unable to smoke cigarettes that were ruined from these wet conditions. An attack that saw 2,000 guns opened fire, with 500 tanks, and seven army corps moved forward against the German positions. The enemy returned fire and the losses for the Americans, French, and Moroccan soldiers began to increase their efforts against the enemy.

From the start of America's involvement on this front, it was the goal of Pershing to push his soldiers out of the deadly accepted trench warfare of the Europeans, to take some casualties, but to fight the Germans and exploit breaches in their own

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lines. Mobility and tenacity were the beliefs of Pershing that was going to finally gain an overall victory against the Germans. Over two kilometers, this territory climbed two hundred feet above the Ourcq River, was situated near the village of Sergy that contained three hundred citizens and was heavily guarded by German soldiers. Americans had to move quickly through this unfriendly terrain that was near the enemy, but they left behind all blankets and unnecessary equipment, and the lucky soldiers carried reserve rations that were quickly eaten. It was a risky operation that called for bravery in the face of fire, as the Americans were briefly pushed back at parts, but the "DoughBoys" understood that the expectations that were placed on them to keep moving forward. Two decades later, this was an important training ground for the future leaders of General's Douglas MacArthur, George Marshall, and George Patton towards their ability to fight WWII.

The German military destroyed French tanks, fired artillery shells, and committed their reserves against the ferocity of this attack. It was a deadly day, where Americans were pushed back in times of disorganization, but they continued to hit the enemy, and place pressure on their lines. At this moment the German High Command met close to this battle site and reports were presented to them that quickly forced them to cancel this conference. By the end of this battle, the German fear that Americans were a determining factor on this front was realized, as their own lines were now being pushed back some five miles towards Vierzy ravine. Led by elements of the Big Red One, over the course of a couple of days, Americans were not supplied food and water, but they continued to move forward under fire. They demonstrated to both the French and Germans that their plans could successfully be carried out under adverse military conditions. Pershing was informed of the fighting at his headquarters at Chaumont and quickly stopped studying maps and staff work to visit the battlefield.

Some twenty-two years after the "War to End all Wars," America went from an isolationist nation at the end of the Great Depression and the start of World War II in Europe on September 1st, 1939, into accepting "armed neutrality." Many Americans viewed World War I as a mistake and tried to prevent the government from intervening against these fascist powers of Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese conquests in Asia. After December 7th, 1941, and the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed America and the world, that our people would not tolerate this "date of infamy." The United States navy and army was hit hard, but not completely paralyzed from these attacks. Roosevelt was determined that in 1942 that America would wage war within the European and Pacific Theater of Operations.

By July 4th, 1942, America was engulfed in its first year of the war, as naval planners prepared for the landing and support operations to invade Guadalcanal. Young adults from across this nation

had little idea of the location of the Solomon Islands, but they trained for this assault that would take them towards the doorstep of Australia. Not since the Spanish-American War in 1898, did this country carry out naval landings to dislodge the presence of an enemy. While Roosevelt's forces were in-experienced in waging war, this was an important first step in operations that would be carried out by MacArthur's "island hopping" campaign that would eventually reach the Japanese home islands in 1945.

Months before the Operation Torch landings that struck the beaches of North Africa during November of 1942, the American navy prepared to steam towards the Solomon Islands. This would be the first taste of battle for the military against this distant Japanese outpost that showed the true extent of their territorial empire. At this moment, the war was fought on different fronts within the Pacific Theater of Operations. The Battle of Coral Sea on May 4th-8th, demonstrated the power of the American navy from allowing the Japanese to deploy forces to New Guinea to continually influence its strength in the Western Pacific. On June 3rd, for three days, the Battle of Midway was fought through American naval and air power that accomplished the goal of preventing further Japanese naval expansion against the United States. Under Admiral Chester Nimitz, the American command gained vital Japanese intelligence, as three American carrier groups created a dangerous trap against their enemy carriers.

Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku fought a battle that was too ambitious, as Japanese forces were stretched from the main fighting at Midway and towards the Alaskan Aleutian Islands. The Japanese wanted to take advantage of the Pearl Harbor losses, but the valuable carriers that were not hit, were now used to devastate the Japanese. Grumman planes that were built on Long Island were ordered through continuous flights to hit the Japanese navy and to target their aircraft who were both out in the open. From the air, American pilots destroyed some of the finest Japanese aircraft and pilots to prove to them that our military would sustain losses in the Pacific but would violently oppose any further enemy expansion. For now, the Japanese were still strong, but they were given a military lesson at this moment some eighty two years ago that their previous gains were to be short lived.

American torpedo bombers and fighters that took off from the USS Hornet and Enterprise ferociously swarmed at the Japanese carriers. While there were heavy American flight losses, once the Japanese had to rearm and refuel, their carriers of the *Akagi*, *Kaga*, and *Soryu* were set on fire from the air. As the Japanese still utilized the fury of its lone carrier the *Hiryu*, it was later assaulted, and forced out of this battle by American aerial bombing. The Japanese received

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the naval and air sting of the war from the Americans, as they lost 3,000 military personnel that included 2,000 valuable pilots, almost 300 aircraft, one heavy cruiser, and the four aircraft carriers. It also showed the conquered nations that they lost sheer credibility over their belief of superiority in now losing battles and territory to the Americans.

As Americans planned to hit the beaches of Guadalcanal, the Eighth Army Air Force conducted its first bombing mission that was flown from bases in England. Unlike the aerial operations that saw massive flights of American bombers out of England and other parts of Europe, this first mission saw our crews fly British "Boston" light bombers. This mission assaulted German airfields in the Netherlands at the loss of two American aircrews. While American bombing was primitive at this time, this operation was an important first step in learning how to handle the strength of the German Luftwaffe, hit targets, and possibly return safely back to England. It laid an important precedent to the German military, government, and people, that the United States was in this air war until there was victory in Europe.

To prevent the Japanese expansion of building additional air bases that could hit the supply and naval routes to Australia and New Zealand, the American naval command ventured into totally uncharted waters. Like the first moments of Pershing's direction to fight on the Western Front, the American military was fighting against a defiant enemy, who was already battle hardened, and not willing to give up an inch to the Americans without presenting casualties to them. But the Japanese were only concerned about their expansion, as they were totally surprised by the "Operation Watchtower," the Americans landing of 11,000 marines on five of the Solomon Islands. By complete surprise, it took the Japanese twenty-four hours to fully realize that they were presently being attacked by the United States at Guadalcanal. The Japanese were briefly pushed back into the jungles of these islands, but they were reinforced, and for a brief time, the American navy was hit by the Japanese, and were forced to head for the open waters, as the land forces fought on their own with a limited number of resources.

This battle that was waged on land at sea took several months to gain a victory against the Japanese who faced immense losses. Orders were issued from the Emperor of Japan to pull back as many of his soldiers and resources as possible in the face of this American victory. Through this brutal battle, the Japanese lost 25,000 men, compared to noticeably smaller American casualties of 1,600, and both sides at sea had twenty-four warships that were knocked out of commission. The United States quickly proved that it could fight within unknown jungle warfare against a defiant enemy that was able to supremely blend into the landscape. But it also demonstrated that Japanese soldiers "Code of Bushido" were willing to fight to the death for territories that were thousands of miles away from Japan. Noted historian William Manchester

fought in this campaign as a marine against this enemy and he recalled, "At the time it was impolite to pay the slightest tribute to the enemy and its determination, their refusal to say die, was uncommonly attributed to 'fanaticism.' In retrospect, it is indistinguishable from heroism. To call it anything less cheapens the victory, for American valor was necessary to defeat it." As the main planner of World War II in Washington D.C., Marshall followed the "Germany First" strategy, but the military and political leadership fully understood that the Japanese were far from defeated.

At this time in 1943, the war found the United States making tremendous strides against the Germans and Japanese. It also showed the British that American forces were able to gain decisive victories, as Tunisia fell in May, and the enemy lost 250,000 soldiers that were forced to surrender. At this point on Independence Day, the American military under the combat operations of General George S. Patton made plans to land in Sicily to strike at Hitler's "soft underbelly." Through increased bases in North Africa and at Malta, attacking Sicily would gain both air and naval support, and loss of this island would later motivate the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III to briefly depose Mussolini of his rule in Rome. From England, the bombing campaign was fully underway, as American air crews conducted massive daytime operations. While this was strategic bombing, the losses for Americans were horrific over the skies of Europe. American air planners supported the British bombing missions over the port of Hamburg, and they hit the historic and cultural structures of Rome.

On July 10th, 1943, the massive "Operation Husky" was directed by General Dwight D. Eisenhower under the direction of Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery and Patton's Seventh Army landed in Sicily. These landings had the support of 3,000 ships, 150,000 soldiers, and 4,000 aircraft that targeted this island and the Italian mainland. For the first time, the German military would be completely fought by army forces on European soil. Unlike the Soviets that absorbed the brunt of the German army on the Eastern Front, this was an important step towards establishing the roots of the invasion of Normandy that was conducted eleven months later. Armed with intelligence that was collected from the Italian mafia in Sicily, both Americans and British stormed the beach and began the pursuit of conquering this enemy.

General George S. Patton not only demonstrated a defiant resolve against the Germans, but like Pershing, he always wanted to protect the prestige of the American soldiers, as was accomplished in Sicily. A tough, uncompromising, and controversial figure, Patton refused to fight to solely support the pompous

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clout of Montgomery who spoke negatively of the American fighting ability. Patton's armor and infantry quickly pushed to the western part of Sicily to take Palermo and drove along the northern coastline to accept heavy casualties to defeat and force the Germans out of Messina. American forces that were originally planned to be in support of Montgomery, beat the British to this port city that faced the Italian mainland.

As Patton directed both land and amphibious operations, the British press attacked the American military as facing weaker enemy resistance. These writers stated that the real strength wrested with Montgomery's forces and inaccurately identified that Americans had "nothing to do except walk through Sicily, eating melons and drinking wine." Patton proved that Americans were not this derogatory claim by the British that our men were not the equivalent of "Italian soldiers." After Sicily was taken, the strength of the United States proved that we would equal and later surpass the fighting skill of the British forces. While Eisenhower and Marshall were later furious over the stupidity of the "Slapping Incident," the fighting worth of Patton kept him from being sent home in shame for the importance of the post-Normandy operations in France.

In the Pacific, there were American successes under MacArthur, through the harsh campaigns in Papua, Guadalcanal, and New Guinea within the Southern Pacific. American commanders planned the next stages of the war through the Central Pacific to bring the war closer to Japanese territory. And Americans at home realized that the war effort was in full swing, as resources were rationed, "Rosie the Riveter" created weapons, vehicles, planes, harvested crops, and handled domestic and military security at home. The "Arsenal of Democracy" demonstrated to the British the true strength of America becoming the leading Allied power and showed to the Germans and Japanese their previous advances were short lived. Across the east and west coasts of the United States, resources were quickly created and shipped out towards the various theaters of war. Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's view that the "Sleeping Giant" of the United States would "Awaken" after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, became a dangerous reality, as Germany and Japan were unable to match this productivity.

On July 4th, 1944, the Allies, were one month after the Normandy landings that established a foothold into France against the German Wehrmacht. While the Allies pushed eastward, the gains were hard fought through the hedgerow's areas of this part of France that saw the German resistance dig in to create heavy casualties and delays against American forces. General Omar Bradley faced immense pressure that his American military was bogged down before the addition of Patton's armor through the future use of "Operation Cobra" and the breakout of the Third Army. Whereas Montgomery was outspoken against the United States and suggested that he should be running the entire

ground war, he was slow and cautious to take Caen. As Americans at home in 1944 took a moment to recall Independence Day, Eisenhower was concerned about the massive amount of 24,698 casualties for the British and Canadians, as the Americans suffered the same losses within the dangerous hedgerow fighting. There were still six weeks of bloody fighting in this area and the eventual break-out of American armor that struck westward to Cherbourg to the liberation of Paris on August 25th, 1944.

At home, Roosevelt prepared for the Democratic National Convention for his pursuit to win a fourth presidential term. A young lieutenant in Jackie Robinson was training to be sent overseas with his armor unit, but he refused to sit in a segregated area on a military bus. Robinson faced a court martial and won his case against the military, which essentially strengthened his views over the needs of American racial equality. Towards the middle of this month, "Operation Valkyrie" demonstrated the willingness of the German officers to attempt an assassinate of Hitler at his "Wolf's Lair" on the Eastern Front. This failed attempt proved that Hitler's rule would only end through another ten more months of warfare that led to the conquest and surrender of Germany.

During the early summer months of 1943, 535 ships that contained 127,000 soldiers and marines, conquered the Marshall Islands. After this victorious movement, MacArthur continued to push forward towards the Mariana Islands that became a crucial defense to protect the Japanese war effort, as MacArthur moved eastward through the Central Pacific region of this war. On June 15th, the United States opened up the Battle of Saipan, to take this vital island as a base of B-29's to attack the Japanese home islands. There was the constant connection to keep moving eastward for additional bases that were closer to assault the Japanese from land and sea.

For a month, hostile fighting between both sides saw the largest "Banzai" assault of the war by 4,000 Japanese soldiers. As the marines continued to engage the Japanese, they slowly took over this territory that amounted to massive casualties that earned American names of "Death Valley" and "Purple Heart Ridge." Although the Japanese were pushed back and defeated, they proved that gains against them would be extremely costly. On July 9th, American forces raised the flag on this island at the cost of 3,000 deaths and over 13,000 casualties. The Japanese endured over 27,000 losses, as thousands of civilians on this island believed their own government's propaganda of being tortured and killed by American forces. Many of these residents killed themselves by leaping off the cliffs of this island, rather than surrendering and living under the occupation of the Americans. By this point in 1945, the war was a deadly affair, but it was entering its final phase of victory against the Germans and Japanese.

By July 4th, 1945, independence was enjoyed

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by the people in Central and Western Europe who were liberated by Allied forces. As American soldiers stopped to recall the efforts of our Founding Fathers to help build a new nation, these Europeans who were subjected to the rule of Hitler, had a new independence date. Many of them have two points of freedom, the historic one through the development of their nation and government, and secondly when Americans triumphantly defeated the ruthlessness of Hitler's regime. President Harry S. Truman prepared to meet Joseph Stalin to address free elections, military rule in Europe, and the end of the war in the Pacific. At this juncture, American scientists in Los Alamos, New Mexico, raced towards the final completions of the atomic bomb, as it was successfully tested as Truman met Stalin at the Potsdam Conference that began on July 17th.

Most of the war in the Pacific and Asia was fought by the direction and support of the American military and the casualties quickly increased through land, air, and naval operations that approached Japan. For eighty-two days, the Battle of Okinawa raged within the deadly terrain of the mountains and mud of this island that cemented the heroic legacy of the United States Marine Corps. As the smoke cleared after this battle, America sustained 49,000 casualties with 12,520 Americans killed. The losses did not discriminate as Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner (the grandson of General Simon Bolivar Buckner, a good friend of General Ulysses S. Grant, who surrendered the Confederate army and stronghold at Fort Donelson in 1862) was killed at the end of this battle. Buckner served forty-one years in the military and was lost as he visited a forward operation post. As this highly contested fighting found its way closer to Japan, it was a very dangerous business, as regardless of your rank or job in the field, it was possible to be killed by the enemy military.

At Okinawa, 110,000 Japanese were killed with a massive number of civilians that ranged from 40,000 to 150,000 lost from the close quarter's fighting. Alarming for the American government and military was the ability of the Japanese to mobilize two million more soldiers who were expected to fight to the death to guard against a home invasion of the home islands. Older civilians received training in using military and civilian weapons to engage and slow down this proposed American assault. With victory in sight, this was a perilous time for the United States, as war planners accepted that its military had to keep taking heavy losses to gain a total victory against Japan. Army leaders like Marshall feared that Japan would become a larger version of Iwo Jima and Okinawa against an enemy that would skillfully turn their nation into a killing field against American troops. At Iwo Jima, the Japanese soldiers expected to fight to the death, as they were instructed, "We would all like to die quickly and easily, but that would not inflict heavy casualties. We must fight from cover as long as we possibly can."

Once the Trinity Test was concluded on July

16th, 1944 by Lieutenant General Leslie Groves and Chief Scientist Robert Oppenheimer, it was reported to Truman and Marshall at the Potsdam Conference by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson of the successful nuclear bomb test that amounted to 15,000 to 20,000 tons of TNT. Conflicting military reports were presented to Truman on the amount of time, soldiers, and resources that were needed to carry out an invasion of Japan. General Curtis LeMay expected that it would be possible to gain a surrender through the constant obliteration of Japanese aerial targets that were still supporting their war effort. Colonel Paul Tibbits and the crew of the *Enola Gay* were secretly trained over a long period of time to carry out the first bombing over Hiroshima. A top-secret mission that awaited their orders from Truman to carry out this task against the Japanese, it was believed that Tibbit's crew was completely prepared to conduct this operation.

Marshall had a different assessment of the fighting in Japan and compared it towards the warfare on the ground that was conducted by Eisenhower's armies in Western Europe. It was completely necessary, even with air superiority, for the army to conduct operations in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Austria and Czechoslovakia, from D-Day to the end of the war. Bombing would continue to hurt the enemy, but Marshall stated that the "Airplane alone was not sufficient to put the Japanese out of the war. It was unable alone to put the Germans out." The two alternatives were to conduct amphibious landings after extensive air bombing or to drop the atomic bomb with the understanding that this weapon would secure a surrender from the Emperor of Japan. Several weeks after Trinity, the decision was made to utilize this horrible weapon to bring about the end of the war, save American lives, and to demonstrate to the difficult presence of Stalin and the Soviet Union the sheer power of the United States.

By 1950, the United States and the Soviet Union were fully engaged in the Cold War. Americans were concerned over the social, economic, political, and military competition of communism within the major areas of the world. Once allies, these strong nations were now adversaries through global competition to oppose each other. Americans watched the division of Germany, the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, China falling to communism, and the Soviet Union developing an atomic bomb. It was a fearful time in American history that watched the government under President Harry S. Truman utilize direct involvement foreign policy to guard against the growth of the "Red Scare" at home and abroad.

The battlefield was in numerous spots around the world, as the United States and the Soviet Union openly opposed each other. Never fighting a war directly against each other, it was always through second and third parties that willingly fought against each other. At this moment some seventy-four

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years ago, the Cold War erupted through the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Through the support of China and the Soviet Union, there was a dangerous turn within the competition of free and communist nations to oppose each other, as 75,000 North Korean soldiers crossed the 38th Parallel to overtake the pro-democratic southern government.

After several long years of war that saw an entire generation of Americans fight in Europe and the Pacific during World War II, five years later, this nation under Truman faced a new threat. While America wanted to "contain" communism, this was the first overt time the American military would have to be called up to prevent the growth of this major threat. It was fully believed that the Soviet Union respected weakness the least and there could be no "domino theory" that could be allowed in Asia or any other area of the world that would see additional nations fall to communism because the United States refused to act. Truman had to act to ensure that the Soviet Union and the Chinese realized the severity of this attack and that it would be tolerated. The President also had to present to our allies and those nations rebuilding from World War II who were still vulnerable to a communist take-over, the United States would not tolerate this overt aggression.

A World War I Veteran and a long-time politician, who entered his fifth year of the presidency, this was another precedent that was established by Truman in how to handle the start of the Cold War. Truman was a controversial figure in office, as there was no experience for him to follow in how to handle this new war that was global and one that the United States could not turn a blind eye towards communist aggression. Looking back at recent history, Truman later wrote in his memoirs, "In my generation, this was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances, Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered each time that the democracies failed to act, it had just encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese acted ten, fifteen, twenty, years earlier. If felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to Fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our shores."

Whereas Truman was in a difficult spot, as he did not want a Third World War, and the worries over the expansion of nuclear weapons, he wanted to preserve the sovereignty of South Korea, in a manner that kept the fighting localized to this peninsula. The Cold War was in a new phase of concern that saw that the United States was not prepared for this fighting, and it had to quickly aid the efforts of South Korea that was now dangerously back into a corner at the Pusan Perimeter in the southeastern corner of this nation. At once MacArthur was called upon to mobilize the skeleton force of American military personnel that was mostly support staff that remained in Japan since the end of World War II. An older figure who was now going to fight his third war,

MacArthur understood the risks that were involved in not defending South Korea, and time was of the essence, as it was about to fall at the Pusan Perimeter. On June 30th, 1950, MacArthur reported back to Truman his assessment of the Korean crisis and wrote, "The only assurance for holding the present line and the ability to regain later lost ground...was through the introduction of United States combat forces into the Korean battle area."

The first American troops was not an overwhelming force to have arrived from Japan, but a start of the mobilization of troops from this region and the United States to quickly be deployed to South Korea. Only two hundred and fifty-six soldiers that amounted to two and half companies landed in South Korea and began to assist their army that was quickly falling back from Seoul and pushed southward. American losses were felt by "Task Force Smith" as the two companies of soldiers that lost the Battle of Osan, as they were defensibly unable to hold their positions. The soldiers lacked modern weapons and ammunition, and their ranks were severely depleted since the end of World War II. It was a dangerous time as the North Koreans held the momentum to almost completely take this entire peninsula and unify this nation under communism. Just after Independence Day, it was estimated that South Korean and American forces were outnumbered 3-1 in the field, between both armies they had 35,000 men to oppose 90,000 of the enemy. This was a dangerous time for faltering resistance as the North Korean advantage in soldiers clearly took a toll on the morale and ability of the fight of the anti-communist forces that were forced to retreat at every turn. Newspapers reported of the numerical waves of North Korean soldiers that overwhelmed weakened defensive measures and the Washington Post stated, "For every ten we killed another ten came charging over the hill to replace them." This was the same problem that struck the United States several months later when the Chinese entered the war, as they crossed the Yalu River in November of 1950.

The major cutbacks to the military after World War II with transitioning millions of Americans out of uniform had serious consequences for the earliest American fighting in Korea. There was a noticeable fighting deterioration from the major strength of American soldiers, weapons, training, and planning that was present in the Pacific and Asia during World War II. Today as there are many concerns with supporting the fighting operations of the Ukrainians against the Russians and the Taiwanese against the Chinese, South Korea should serve as a dangerous warning over the importance of preparation to fight at a moment's notice. If the North Koreans were stronger, it would have been possible that the United States would have been too late to prevent a total collapse of this nation to the communists. There must be a middle ground towards being economically feasible and ensuring that American interests are still guarded around the world. Within this time, Truman was almost on the brink of a military and political disaster that could have impacted other areas of the

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world during the start of the Cold War.

It would not be until September 8th that MacArthur would be given enough men and materials, and the government would approve his plans to invade South Korea through the Inchon landings. General Walton H. Walker the commander of the 8th Army supremely handled the defense of the Pusan Perimeter that was 140 miles long. They held out against North Korean attacks that were mostly sporadic, bought time for MacArthur's invasion, and restored some of the fighting prestige of the United States. There was an important need to ensure that this was a United Nations military operation that presented enough time for other nations to send troops to aid this war against a united fight to stop the sheer force of communist aggression.

For almost the first fifty years of the Twentieth Century, the United States fought numerous wars and battles on the birthdate of this nation. "Freedom is not Free," as is a popular and true statement towards the abilities of the American military and government to protect the interest, ideals, and liberty that our people have enjoyed since General George Washington's victory over the British Empire in 1783. Thank you to all our past, present, and future veterans who continue to make this nation proud of their efforts to serve and protect the United States and to provide the same type of sacrifices that has been seen through these historic battles and events.



The Fischer-Hewins VFW Post 6249 is home to the Rocky Point Suffolk County World War II and Military History Museum.



The Pearl Harbor Uniform of a Long Island veteran who survived attack among displays

The museum features the Veterans Wall of Honor that has over 500 names of military veterans from the Revolutionary War to the present day. Any veteran from an active, guard, reservist, from any conflict and

About the Author

Richard V. Acritelli is a member of VFW Post 6249 Rocky Point. He served 9 years in the Army Reserves and Air National Guard. He has been a Social Studies teacher at Rocky Point High School and adjunct Assistant Professor at Suffolk Community College. He holds a Bachelor degree in History, and Masters degrees in Arts of Liberal Studies and Military History He has been the driving force behind the Rocky Point VFW 6249 PTSD 5K Run and the curator for the VFW Post 6249 Suffolk County World War I and Military History Museum which opened on December 7, 2023. Richard created the Veterans Wall of Honor at his school which has over 130 plaques that has a picture, name armed service and graduation year. This year Richard V. Acritelli was named the grade 9-12 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year for the Department of New York VFW.

times of peace, serving at home and abroad can be placed on this wall.



For more information on the museum or to add a veteran's name to the Wall of Honor contact Richard Acritelli at richvack@yahoo.com and/or 631-839-2996.





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