

MAY 2024

VFW

M A G A Z I N E



VFW TELLS CONGRESS TO **'FIGHT FOR THOSE WHO SERVED'**



**VFW CHIEF BLASTS
'CLAIM SHARKS'
IN SPEECH**

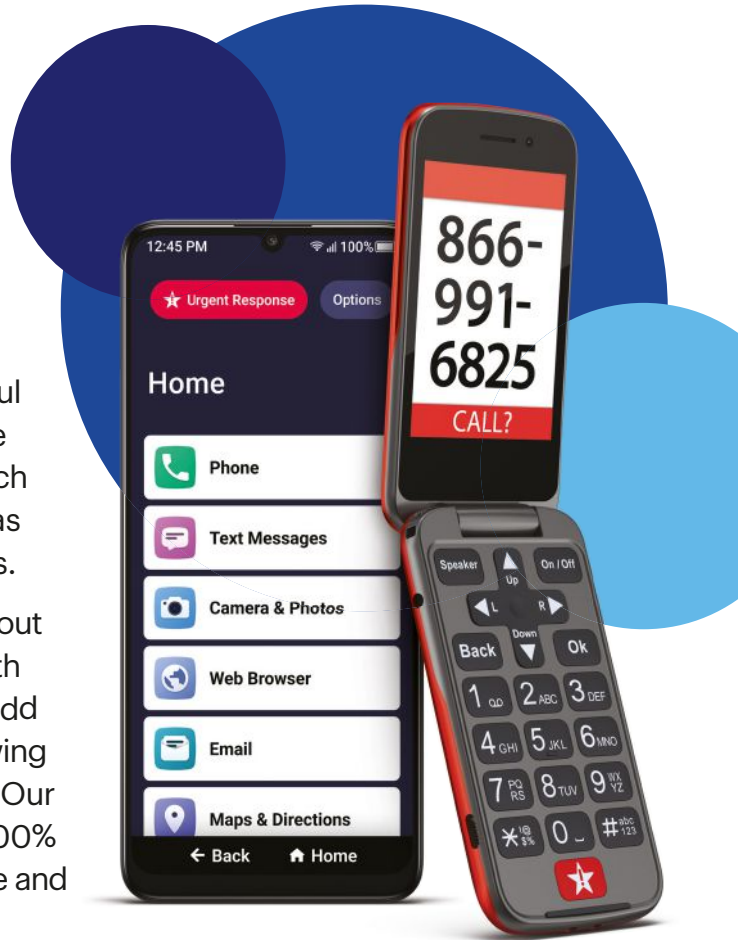
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COVER IMAGE: VFW and VFW Auxiliary members attend a hearing of the Senate and House VA committees on March 6 on Capitol Hill. The centerpiece of the hearing was a speech by VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento in which he outlined VFW priorities that the organization wants Congress and VA to fulfill. *Photo by Bob Knudsen*

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Close to Mount Rushmore, Sturgis and Deadwood, VFW Posts in northwestern South Dakota are the hubs of community activity. There’s also plenty to see and do in this scenic part of America. **By Janie Dyhouse**

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Remembering America’s fallen service members is a national obligation. Here’s a progress update on eight national memorials, including one for Medal of Honor recipients on the National Mall. **By Dave Spiva**

30 MEMORIALS HONOR HOMETOWN HEROES

VFW members throughout the nation are passionate about remembering their fellow veterans who died in uniform. Here’s a sampling of what they completed last year. **By Ismael Rodriguez Jr.**



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COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
Duane Sarmiento

Remember The Fallen on Memorial Day

As veterans, we have a solemn duty that is spotlighted this month. On May 27, the nation observes Memorial Day, the time all citizens should pause, reflect upon and remember those in uniform who gave their lives in defense of the nation.

Many Americans might view the Memorial Day weekend as a time off from work to enjoy with their families. As veterans, it is incumbent upon us to instill in all Americans why this day is celebrated and emphasize that it is a time to show reverence for the human losses in war.

Freedom is not free, and we owe our liberty to those in uniform who gave all they had, their lives. Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance. It is up to those of us who survived war to carry that gauntlet.

On Memorial Day, I encourage leaders at all levels of VFW to pay tribute to our fellow veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Your example can set the trend for your community. Pausing for a few moments of silence is available to everyone.

Hosting commemorative ceremonies at your Post is a visible way to demonstrate the importance of the day. Placing flags at gravesites, dedicating memorials and wearing and distributing Buddy Poppies are other ways to remember.

You will read in this issue about VFW Posts around the country that have helped establish memorials to veterans in their communities. These are acts that will live on in history, immortalizing those who died and fulfilling one of VFW's major reasons for existing: remembrance of those who have died in uniform for future generations.

Many of those we are honoring on Memorial Day were so young when they died. Remind your co-workers, your friends and family members about these fine Americans. They were cut down in the prime of their youth so that we could continue to live free. We all owe them so much.

You will notice *VFW* magazine's annual "A Final Salute" section in this issue on page 34. This is a stark reminder of what sacrifice means. It includes the specific names and units of U.S. troops who died overseas during 2023. They served, they died for us and their memories demand recognition and remembrance.

This is part of fulfilling the VFW motto of "No One Does More for Veterans." It has been my honor and pleasure during my tenure to carry this message to our lawmakers in Washington, D.C. Most recently, I spoke in March before a joint hearing of House and Senate VA committee members which outlined VFW's most pressing priorities for veterans. You can read the highlights of that speech on page 11 in this issue.

The nation and its citizens owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women in uniform who sacrificed their lives for the rest of us. Make sure you do your part to remember them as we live free.

SCAN TO JOIN THE VFW



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VFW OBJECTIVES

To ensure national security through maximum military strength.
To speed the rehabilitation of the nation's disabled and needy veterans.
To assist the widows and orphans and the dependents of disabled and needy veterans.
To promote Americanism through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live.

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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest— but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you



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Kosovo Peacekeeping Mission

As a veteran who served in Kosovo, I greatly appreciated the 25th Anniversary article you wrote. Most of the world isn't even aware of what took place. Thank you for bringing attention to it. I was excited to read your article and share it with my daughter. However, when I got to the list of Army divisions, I was disappointed as my company and battalion were not listed — the 630th Military Police Company, 793rd Military Police Battalion out of Germany. We deployed as a part of Task Force Falcon at the end of June 1999 and helped establish what is now Camp Bondsteel.

RYAN CALL

FOWLERVILLE, MICH.

The 34th Infantry Division (Minnesota National Guard) was omitted from the list of units that participated in the Kosovo Force (KFOR). The 34th was the lead of KFOR 5B in Multinational Division-South during the time of the St. Patrick's Day riots in 2004. I served as the Deputy G6 for the KFOR 5B rotation in 2004 during that time. The 34th also

was there when Kosovo declared independence as a country in 2008.

JILL DAVID JENSEN

FOLEY, MINN.

Black History Month

Thanks for highlighting the contributions of Black veterans in the February issue. The veterans who served at Montford Point in Jacksonville, N.C. have important stories to share. I eagerly await an opportunity to hear former combat pilot Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour's inspirational speech. Her successful experience is testimony that military service changes lives.

JAMES E. PATTERSON

WASHINGTON, D.C.

VA Report on Suicide

I am a veteran, and my husband is a retired sergeant major from the Ranger Regiment, with a combined 89 combat months in support of the Global War on Terrorism. We are constantly being notified of yet one more friend or comrade who has lost the fight to suicide. My husband has officially lost more to suicide than combat. My husband and I attended a suicide prevention program, and it saved my husband's life.

The name of the program is Save A Warrior (<https://www.saveawarrior.org>), otherwise referred to as SAW. It is run by Jake Clark, a close friend of ours. It is free to attend, but there is a waiting list. You must be committed to sobriety during the program, and you must be either active-duty, veteran, first responder or the significant other. All you must pay for is getting there.

AMBER CIACCIO

STATESBORO, GA.

"Mail Call" features letters from our readers in nine issues per year. If you have questions, comments or concerns about any subject or article from our most recent issue, letters can be emailed to magazine@vfw.org, with the subject line "Mail Call," or mailed to: VFW magazine, Mail Call, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111. Letters must be no more than 200 words, and VFW magazine reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length and accuracy.

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PHOTO BY COAST GUARD PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS EDWARD WARGO



Coast Guard Aviation Survival Technician 2nd Class Spencer Manson, right, shakes hands with Coast Guard Rear Adm. Andrew Sugimoto after Manson received the Distinguished Flying Cross on Dec. 12, 2023, at Sector/Air Station Humboldt Bay in McKinleyville, Calif. Manson helped save six people from a sinking vessel off the coast of California in 2021.

Coast Guardsman Receives Distinguished Flying Cross

A Coast Guard rescue swimmer received the Distinguished Flying Cross in December for his “courage, judgment and devotion to duty” during a rescue mission in 2021. Aviation Survival Technician 2nd Class Spencer Manson received the military’s highest award for outstanding achievement during flight at a ceremony at the Coast Guard’s Sector/Air Station Humboldt Bay in McKinleyville, Calif.

Manson was the rescue swimmer assigned to the Coast Guard helicopter MH-65 Dolphin CG6565 when a distress signal was received at Humboldt Bay at 3:45 p.m. on June 19, 2021. Manson’s crew, along with another assigned to a C-27J Spartan aircraft from Coast Guard Station Sacramento, headed to the scene of a disabled 79-foot ship some 80 miles off the California-Oregon coast.

With 60-mph winds and 20-foot seas thrashing the disabled vessel, Manson’s crew lowered him into the water behind the stricken boat. Manson then grabbed a line behind it and pulled himself through the churning sea to the vessel. His award citation noted he was “pitched up and down and slammed onto the sea’s surface several times.”

Once aboard, Manson helped a crewmember with a broken arm and head injuries jump into the sea and swim to an awaiting basket to be hoisted into the Dolphin helicopter. Manson returned to the scene and helped rescue three more people before being relieved by another rescue swimmer from Coast Guard Sector North Bend.

“This case was a great example of a successful, multi-unit effort,” said Lt. Ryan O’Neill, a Dolphin aircraft commander. “The careful coordination between the two helicopters with support from the C-27 allowed us to save all six sailors.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF VFW POST 8530

From left, William Walton, Harvey Reiner, Jerry Kauble, Daniel Woods and Michael Silverthorn enjoy last year’s Decorated Veterans Pheasant Hunt sponsored by VFW Post 8530 in Gettysburg, S.D. Purple Heart veterans are encouraged to apply to the all-expenses-paid trip by July 16 for this year’s hunt, which will take place from Nov. 6-12.

Purple Heart Vets Wanted for Pheasant Hunt

VFW Post 8530 is hosting its annual pheasant hunt from Nov. 6-12. Selected veterans will arrive on Nov. 6 and leave on Nov. 12.

Travel, lodging, meals, ammunition, shotguns (you can also bring your own shotgun), retrieving dogs and bird-cleaning services are included.

Participants must provide a copy of their DD-214 stating Purple Heart and honorable discharge designations. Participants need to be able to lift and use a shotgun. Those with mobility issues can be accommodated.

Please submit your DD-214 and contact information by **July 16, 2024.**

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Navy Veteran and Mesothelioma Survivor Defies the Odds

WRITTEN BY TRAVIS RODGERS

Navy veteran Bob is a mesothelioma survivor who doctors say defies the odds. The 78-year-old was given 10 months to live in 2019. It's been five years since then, and cancer hasn't stopped him from living every day to the fullest.

"Every doctor we've seen – we've seen research scientists, we did everything – and they all said it's impossible medically for this man to still be alive, so it's just not his time to go," said his wife of 55 years.

Bob entered the Navy at age 20 in 1965. His first assignment out of boot camp was to scrape paint off the landing ship USS Hermitage. Bob was unaware the paint contained toxic asbestos.

Veterans are at a higher risk for mesothelioma because of the extensive use of asbestos in the military. Navy veterans have the greatest risk of exposure from vessels, boilers, pipes and even their barracks. Asbestos, a carcinogen, can lead to serious diseases, including asbestosis, COPD and mesothelioma. Symptoms may not appear until 20-60 years after exposure.

The life expectancy of most people with mesothelioma is 1-2 years with treatment. Without treatment, survival beyond 6 months is rare, which is what makes Bob's case so unique.

Declining Health Leads to Mesothelioma Diagnosis

Bob first experienced trouble breathing in the 1990s, about 30 years after he left the Navy. In 2012, more serious breathing issues developed when doctors found two masses on his lungs. His wife said major issues began in 2019.



Bob and his wife credit the Patient Advocates at The Mesothelioma Center at Asbestos.com for helping them through the entire process.

Bob underwent eight hours of surgery in August 2019. Doctors told him he wasn't a candidate for another surgery because of his risk factors. He was diagnosed with mesothelioma one month later.

Beating the Odds Every Day

While Bob chose to decline treatment as a personal choice, most mesothelioma specialists recommend surgery, radiation and chemotherapy to increase life expectancy and improve prognosis. Veterans with mesothelioma may be eligible for treatment through the VA.

"Bob hardly complains at all. Even when the pain was terrible, I could tell by the expression on his face, but he has never complained about it," she said. "He's had lots of things wrong with him, but he's still fighting and still doing well."

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Noncancerous PSMA+ cells and other surrounding cells will also be impacted.

mCRPC, metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer; PSMA+, prostate-specific membrane antigen positive.



What is PLUVICTO® (lutetium Lu 177 vipivotide tetraxetan)?

PLUVICTO is a radiopharmaceutical used to treat adults with an advanced cancer called prostate-specific membrane antigen-positive metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (PSMA-positive mCRPC) that:

- has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic), and
- has already been treated with other anticancer treatments

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about PLUVICTO?

Use of PLUVICTO involves exposure to radioactivity. Long-term, accruing radiation exposure is associated with an increased risk for cancer.

Please see additional Important Safety Information on the next page and Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on the following pages.

About the clinical trial

The PLUVICTO clinical study measured **overall survival (OS)**. This is the total time men with metastatic prostate cancer were alive from the start of treatment. **Median OS** is the length of time half of the men were still alive.

In a study of 831 men with PSMA+ metastatic prostate cancer, 551 were treated with PLUVICTO once every 6 weeks (up to 6 treatments) plus BSOC as determined by their doctor. Another 280 were treated with BSOC alone.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

(continued)

What is the most important information I should know about PLUVICTO? (continued)

To minimize radiation exposure to others following administration of PLUVICTO, limit close contact (less than 3 feet) with household contacts for 2 days or with children and pregnant women for 7 days, refrain from sexual activity for 7 days, and sleep in a separate bedroom from household contacts for 3 days, from children for 7 days, or from pregnant women for 15 days.

PLUVICTO may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Low level of blood cell counts.** Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including:
 - Tiredness or weakness
 - Pale skin
 - Shortness of breath
 - Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding
 - Frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers
- **Kidney problems.** Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including passing urine less often or passing much smaller amounts of urine than usual

Before you receive PLUVICTO, tell your doctor if any of these apply to you:

- You have low level of blood cell counts (hemoglobin, white blood cell count, absolute neutrophil count, platelet count)
- You have or have had tiredness, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding, or frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers (possible signs of myelosuppression)

- You have or have had kidney problems
- You have or have had any other type of cancer or treatment for cancer, as PLUVICTO contributes to your long-term cumulative radiation exposure
- You are sexually active as:
 - All radiopharmaceuticals, including PLUVICTO, have the potential to cause harm to an unborn baby
 - You should use effective contraception for intercourse during treatment with PLUVICTO and for 14 weeks after your last dose
 - PLUVICTO may cause temporary or permanent infertility

Before administration of PLUVICTO, you should drink plenty of water in order to urinate as often as possible during the first hours after administration.

The most common side effects of PLUVICTO include:

- Tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Low red blood cell count
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in bowel movements (constipation or diarrhea)
- Vomiting
- Low blood platelet count
- Urinary tract infection
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain

These are not all of the possible side effects of PLUVICTO. Call your doctor for advice about side effects. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on the following pages.

Summary of Important Information

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- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Low red blood cell count
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in bowel movements (constipation or diarrhea)
- Vomiting
- Low blood platelet count
- Urinary tract infection
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain

These are not all of the possible side effects of PLUVICTO. Call your doctor for advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my doctor before receiving PLUVICTO therapy?

Before you receive PLUVICTO, tell your doctor if any of these apply to you:

- You have low level of blood cell counts (hemoglobin, white blood cell count, absolute neutrophil count, platelet count)
- You have or have had tiredness, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty to stop bleeding, or frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers (possible signs of myelosuppression)
- You have or have had kidney problems
- You have or have had any other type of cancer or treatment for cancer, as PLUVICTO contributes to your long-term cumulative radiation exposure
- You are sexually active as:
 - All radiopharmaceuticals, including PLUVICTO, have the potential to cause harm to an unborn baby
 - You should use effective contraception for intercourse during treatment with PLUVICTO and for 14 weeks after your last dose
 - PLUVICTO may cause temporary or permanent infertility

Before administration of PLUVICTO, you should drink plenty of water in order to urinate as often as possible during the first hours after administration.

How will I receive PLUVICTO?

- There are strict laws on the use, handling and disposal of radiopharmaceutical products. PLUVICTO will only be used in special controlled areas. This product will only be handled and given to you by people who are trained and qualified to use it safely. These persons will take special care for the safe use of this product and will keep you informed of their actions
- The recommended dose is 7.4 GBq (gigabecquerel, the unit used to express radioactivity)
- PLUVICTO is given approximately every 6 weeks for a total of 6 doses
- PLUVICTO is administered directly into a vein

- Your nuclear medicine doctor will inform you about the usual duration of the procedure
- If you have any questions about how long you will receive PLUVICTO, talk to your nuclear medicine doctor
- Your nuclear medicine doctor will do blood tests before and during treatment to check your condition and to detect any side effects as early as possible. Based on the results, your nuclear medicine doctor may decide to delay, modify or stop your treatment with PLUVICTO if necessary
- An overdose is unlikely. However, in the case of an overdose, you will receive the appropriate treatment
- If you miss an appointment for an administration, contact your nuclear medicine doctor as soon as possible to reschedule

After administration of PLUVICTO, you should:

- Remain hydrated and urinate frequently in order to eliminate the product from your body
- Limit close contact (less than 3 feet) with others in your household for 2 days or with children and pregnant women for 7 days
- Refrain from sexual activity for 7 days
- Sleep in a separate bedroom from others in your household for 3 days, from children for 7 days, or from pregnant women for 15 days
- The nuclear medicine doctor will inform you if you need to take any special precautions after receiving this medicine. This may include special precautions for you or your caregiver with regard to toilet use, showering, laundry, waste disposal, emergency medical assistance, unplanned hospitalization or traveling. Contact your nuclear medicine doctor if you have any questions

General information about the safe and effective use of PLUVICTO

Talk to your nuclear medicine doctor about any concerns. You can ask your nuclear medicine doctor for information about PLUVICTO that is written for healthcare professionals.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



VFW Chief Asks Congress to ‘Fight for Those Who Served’

The highlight of VFW’s annual Washington Conference featured a speech from VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento to House and Senate VA committee members. Combating “claim sharks,” stopping veterans suicide, providing retired military men and women earned benefits and helping active-duty troops make an easy transition to civilian life topped VFW’s agenda.

BY DAVE SPIVA

VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento addressed a joint hearing of the House and Senate VA committees on March 6 during the 2024 VFW Washington Conference.

Sarmiento began his testimony by thanking members of Congress for passing the *Honoring Our PACT Act* (PL 117-168) in 2022. Sarmiento noted that the law is the “most comprehensive toxic exposure legislation” ever passed by Congress. He said that the *PACT Act* has helped veterans who served in the Vietnam War through the post-9/11 wars.

“The men and women in this room are a cross-section of the VFW, a cross-section of our veteran population and a cross-section of America,” said Sarmiento, a Navy veteran. “This is why I call upon you as our leaders in Washington, D.C., to continue fighting for those who served, are still serving, and to every day, meet the challenge.”

CLAIM SHARKS

Sarmiento, a Navy veteran of 1991’s Persian Gulf War, testified that after the 2022 passage of the *Honoring Our PACT Act*, VFW witnessed an increase in online advertisements from predato-

ry unaccredited companies, or “claim sharks,” that target veterans’ earned VA benefits.

“They argue that the high fees they charge make them more effective in assisting veterans than the free services offered by VA-accredited veterans service organizations,” Sarmiento said. “That is false.”

Sarmiento said claims sharks “prey upon veterans and disregard the law.” He added that those companies need to be held accountable.

“They say that there is no way for them to seek VA accreditation — that is also false,” Sarmiento said. “Anyone

can seek accreditation, but they refuse to do so because they would no longer be able to charge exorbitant fees — especially for work they didn't do.

"It's distasteful that these claim sharks take money from veterans," Sarmiento continued. "But it's disgusting that they take money from survivors."

Sarmiento said VFW supports *H.R. 1139 — the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act of 2023 (GUARD VA Benefits Act)* — and noted that claim sharks are spending "millions of dollars" to fight the bill and similar ones across the country.

"New Jersey and New York have already made claim sharks illegal, and bills are moving forward through the legislatures all around the country," Sarmiento said. "Claim sharks have fought our bills in every state and continue to try to buy influence. But we will never give up because we have the law and moral high ground on our side."

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

During the testimony, Sarmiento touted VFW's network of veterans service officers around the world who provide free services to help veterans, military members and families file a VA disability claim.

"Every year," Sarmiento said, "VFW-accredited representatives assist approximately 20,000 service members with their Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims before they leave the military, meaning they can receive benefits almost immediately upon separation for free."

However, Sarmiento noted that "accredited representatives" for BDD claims are inconsistent.

"That's why the VFW highly recommends passage of the *TAP Promotion Act (H.R. 3933)*, which will ensure all service members have direct access to accredited representatives during Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes," Sarmiento said. "Transition is an important milestone in a service member's life, and the VFW believes we need to do everything we can to sup-

port that journey."

Sarmiento noted that recently transitioned former junior enlisted veterans have higher rates of homelessness, unemployment and suicide than other veterans.

"We must do everything we can to help ease that transition, especially for those who are at higher risk," Sarmiento said. "Trying to stop suicide or homelessness is meaningless if we ignore the root causes of a crisis."

VETERANS SUICIDE

Sarmiento, during the testimony, said VFW supports the *Not Just a Number Act (S. 928)*. If passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden, the *Not Just a Number Act* would require VA to examine veterans' benefits usage in an annual suicide prevention report to evaluate the relationship between VA benefits and suicide outcomes.

"VA's own research shows that factors such as financial stability, housing and jobs protect against crisis," Sarmiento said. "But if veterans have problems accessing benefits such as the GI Bill, why would they trust VA with their health care? After years of sounding this alarm, VFW is optimistic that VA may finally be listening, but we can do more."

RICHARD STAR ACT

Sarmiento said that VFW believes veterans should receive all benefits owed to them. The *Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1292)* would allow retired combat-wounded veterans with less than 20 years of service to receive both their disability compensation and retirement pay with no offset, also known as concurrent receipt.

"Year after year, and Congress after Congress, the VFW has advocated to fix concurrent receipt, and this year is no different because Congress has yet to finish the work it started — and promised to finish — 20 years ago," Sarmiento said. "Our government says it holds veterans in high regard, yet we keep using them as a way to save money."

Sarmiento said that VA disability pay and military retirement pay should

be viewed as "fundamentally different" compensations. He said that the current law calls it "double-dipping." Sarmiento noted that the *Major Richard Star Act* would fix the injustice.

While the 117th Congress (2021-22) gained "overwhelming" bipartisan support from lawmakers, the bill was not sent to President Biden for approval.

"The VFW fears the 118th Congress will end with the same result," Sarmiento said. "We must pass the *Richard Star Act* so veterans receive the full benefits they have earned through their blood and sweat in their service to our country."

OVERSEAS HEALTH CARE

On behalf of VFW, Sarmiento called on members of Congress to "undertake substantial reform" of the VA Foreign Medical Program. Sarmiento, a Filipino American, said he knows people who live outside of the U.S. who earned VA benefits through their military service.

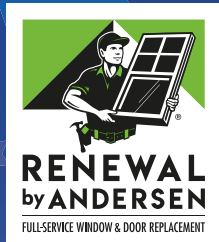
"We have to provide consistent access to care and support to veterans overseas," Sarmiento said. "VFW welcomes the opportunity to discuss these issues."

While Sarmiento acknowledged that health care around the world will "never be the same level of care" veterans receive in the U.S., he said veterans who reside overseas often face "indifference and apathy" from the U.S. government. He noted that "better beaches" are not the reason veterans live overseas.

"Many of these veterans are still employees who work for the Departments of Defense or State, supporting American interests and the military mission," Sarmiento said. "Cutting off services for overseas veterans should be viewed as a national security risk, which is why we need to enact common sense reforms for veterans living outside of the U.S."

To watch Sarmiento's entire testimony, visit <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/2024-vfw-washington-conference>. ★

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VFW Demands Action on Major Richard Star Act

VFW on March 5 held a press conference on Capitol Hill to address a critical disparity that has long plagued many retired veterans.

If passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden, the *Major Richard Star Act* (H.R. 1282/S. 344) would provide medically retired combat veterans who served less than 20 years in the military with full retirement and disability compensation.

Currently, only retired military members with at least a 50 percent VA disability rating and 20 years of service are eligible to collect full retirement and full VA disability pay. Others who do not fall into those parameters have their retirement pay offset by the amount of disability compensation they receive.

Presently, the Department of Defense gives combat-related disability pay to more than 50,000 retired veterans with less than 20 years of military service.

VFW Department of Montana Adjutant and Quartermaster Tim Peters spoke at the press conference and emphasized that there is already bipartisan and bicameral consensus around the *Major Richard Star Act*.

“Our veterans cannot afford to continue losing their full-earned military retirement pay because Congress insists on saving money at their expense,” Peters said. “It is time to stop talking about this bill and get it done.”

The press conference had a significant turnout of VFW members from around the world. VFW advocates were in Washington, D.C., at the time for the annual VFW Washington Conference. Also in attendance were Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Tonya Star, the widow of Army Maj. Richard Star.



PHOTO BY ROBERT COUTURE/VFW



DOD PHOTO

VFW Department of Montana Adjutant/Quartermaster Tim Peters speaks at a press conference on March 5 on Capitol Hill about the *Major Richard Star Act*. The legislation aims to permit combat-related medically retired veterans with less than 20 years of military service to receive full earned retirement pay and disability compensation without an offset.

LEFT: Army Maj. Richard Star, who died in 2021 from cancer related to his service.

At the press conference, Tonya Star encouraged VFW, other veterans service organizations and lawmakers to continue fighting for the passage of the *Major Richard Star Act*.

“It was, by far, Richard’s greatest goal to pass this [legislation],” Tonya Star said. “These men and women earned their retirements – the hard way. And, Richard made myself, along with many of you, promise to not stop until this is done.”

The bill is named in honor of Richard Star, who had to retire early due to terminal lung cancer caused during his service in Afghanistan and Iraq. He died on Feb. 13, 2021.



FOR MORE INFORMATION about specific legislation or VA benefits, contact VFW’s Washington Office at vfw@vfw.org. A member of VFW’s National Veterans Service staff will respond as soon as possible.

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kangaroo front pockets, knit cuffs and hem, a full front zipper, and silver-toned metal tippets on the hood drawstrings. Imported.

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VFW Recommends \$151.8 Billion for 2025 VHA Budget

VFW, Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America released the latest edition of *The Independent Budget* in February, which recommends \$151.8 billion for the VA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) for 2025.

The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 is an annual report that outlines a roadmap for lawmakers to ensure that VA receives adequate funding to serve veterans and their families. VFW believes that the recommendations noted in *The Independent Budget* will play a crucial role in guiding future spending decisions by Congress.

The Independent Budget report noted the absence of a timely budget for the VA, which is exacerbated by the recurring failure to pass a full-year federal budget for 2024.

VFW believes that the recommendations noted in *The Independent Budget* will play a crucial role in guiding future spending decisions by Congress.

VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci said that those actions have raised concerns among the veterans service organizations.

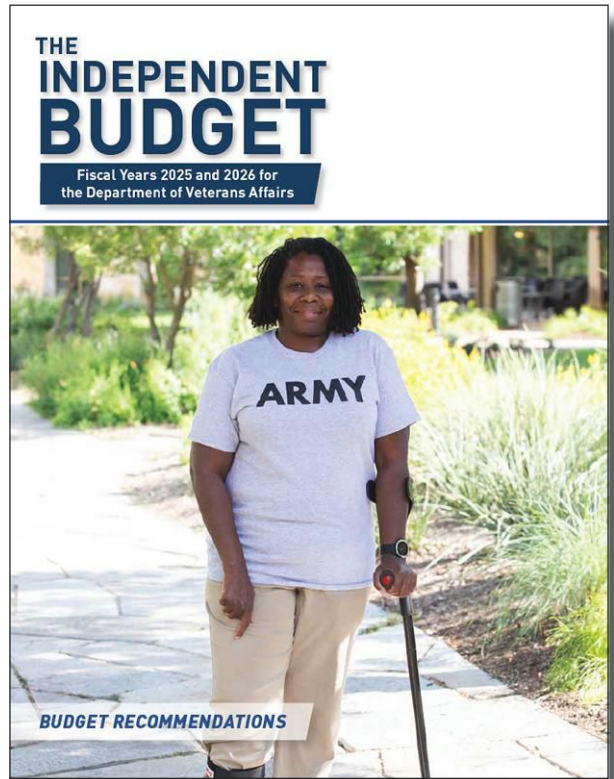
"While this year's *Independent Budget* is once again complete, it is now imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other stakeholders, to make the needs and interests of all veterans a top priority," Gallucci said.

"We have co-authored this report and offered budgetary recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care and earned benefits for the men and women who served."

The Independent Budget recommends \$90.4 billion for VHA medical services. Budget recommendations include:

- \$36.8 billion for medical community care
- \$13.6 billion for medical support and compliance
- \$11 billion for medical facilities
- \$1.05 billion for medical and prosthetic research

The Independent Budget report outlines funding allocations and enhancements for VHA programs. This includes, com-



The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 outlines a recommended budget for the Veterans Health Administration. It totals \$151.8 billion for next year, including \$90.4 billion for medical services to veterans.

pared to last year's amount, increases of:

- \$2.8 billion to fill clinical and support care vacancies
- \$2.3 billion to meet the needs of newly enrolled veterans
- \$1 billion for long-term care for aging veterans
- \$340 million for expanding dental care
- \$100 million for virtual health care

The Independent Budget recommends \$6.2 billion for the Veterans Health Administration for fiscal year 2025 to ensure timely and high-quality medical services for veterans. This is an increase from last year of about \$500 million.

The Independent Budget also advocates for increased funding of VA infrastructure projects, which totals \$6.1 billion for 2025. VFW believes the increased budget will address safety risks and backlogs. The report calls for additional construction management personnel at VA medical centers nationwide to effectively manage infrastructure projects. About \$333 million also was proposed for the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals to support IT system improvements and increase efficiency.

To read the full report, visit <https://www.independentbudget.org>



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Members of VFW Post 3442 in Custer, S.D., gather together on a Friday evening last October outside the Post home located on the town's main street. In addition to serving as a valuable community partner, the Post also is the go-to place for fun in Custer.

BLACK HILLS VFW POSTS SUPPORT COMMUNITIES AND OFFER TOURISTS RESPITE



Custer VFW Post 3442 and Rapid City VFW Post 1273 are just two examples of the many South Dakota Posts active in towns and cities across “The Mount Rushmore State.”

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

MOUNT RUSHMORE



DESTINATION POST SERIES



This month, *VFW* magazine continues its “Destination Post Series.” The series will feature 125 VFW Posts located in sought-after tourist destinations. Featured VFW Posts are those that make a real difference in the communities in which the Posts are located. This month’s article takes *VFW* magazine readers to South Dakota.

The small town of Custer is nestled in the valley of the Black Hills. Its main street, which is Mount Rushmore Road, looks like something that would appear on a postcard. There is an array of restaurants for nearly every palette, shops for the outdoorsman, bakeries, souvenir shops and a trading post.

In the middle of it all sits VFW Post 3442, which you cannot miss with “Old Glory” painted on the front of the building. No matter what time of day one drives by, it seems the Post is always the place to be in this community of some 1,600 people. Tourists lodging at nearby vintage motels such as the Chalet Motel can be seen walking to the Post in the evenings.

If you travel east out of town, you can drive into Custer State Park. The drive north out of town takes you by the Crazy Horse Memorial and through Hill City and on to Rapid City. You also can travel the scenic Iron Mountain Road, which is bookended by Mount Rushmore and Custer State Park. Wooden bridges and one-lane tunnels showcase the beauty of Rushmore. Or enjoy the drive to Keystone and on to historic Deadwood, where you will want to stop and check out VFW Post 5969.

Members of the Custer VFW care for their community in many ways, but especially when it comes to the youth. According to Post Junior Vice Commander Corey Virtue, Boy Scouts sometimes work dinners at the Post’s dining hall in the basement and keep the donations.

“When a group of students were raising funds to head to the nation’s capital, the Post gave \$500 to each one to help with the cost of the trip,” said Virtue, who served in 2007 and 2013 in Iraq with the 235th Military Police.

Post Commander Rick Hamm added

SOUTH DAKOTA FUN FACTS

South Dakota’s deposits of Sioux quartzite are red and pink in color, and some are estimated to be 2 billion years old. At Palisades State Park in the southeast portion of the state, the 50-foot quartzite cliffs and spires looming over Split Rock Creek contain catlinite, a rare, soft mineral used by Native Americans for making calumets (peace pipes). The sheer spires make the Palisades one of the best climbing spots in the state.

Although it is situated in the middle of the country, South Dakota has more miles of shore than Florida. This is due in large part to Lake Oahe, a 231-mile-long reservoir along the Missouri River but also to the many small lakes and tributaries of the Missouri.

- Just 20 miles north of Belle Fourche, S.D., is considered the geographic center of the entire United States, when considering Alaska and Hawaii.
- Clark, S.D., is home to a yearly mashed potato wrestling competition during the town’s annual Potato Days.
- Spearfish, S.D., holds the world record for having the greatest change in temperature in the shortest amount of time. On Jan. 22, 1943, the temperature went from minus 4 to 45 within 2 minutes — that’s a 49-degree change in just 120 seconds.

that when high school cheerleaders were traveling to Pearl Harbor for a competition, the Post chipped in to help them.

Virtue, who volunteers at the high school to help students build resumes, said there is a strong bond between the community youth and the Post.

“When students collected items and assembled care packages for troops, we paid the postage to deliver those packages,” Virtue said.

Most recently, the Department of South Dakota’s Voice of Democracy winner this year was sponsored by Post 3442. Lexi Brandt from Custer High School represented South Dakota in

SOUTH DAKOTA MUST-SEE TREASURES

For those traveling by car across “The Mount Rushmore State,” there is plenty to see and do. Here is a small sampling of some of South Dakota’s most treasured sites.

Falls Park

900 N. Phillips Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 367-7430

World’s Only Corn Palace

604 N. Main Street
Mitchell, SD 57301
(605) 995-8430
<https://cornpalace.com>

Wall Drug Store

510 Main St.
Wall, SD 57790
(605) 279-2175
<https://www.walldrug.com>

USS South Dakota Battleship Memorial

12th Street and Kiwanis Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 367-7141
<https://southdakotabattleship.org>

Bear Country USA

13820 US-16
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 343-2290
<https://bearcountryusa.com>

Mount Rushmore

13000 SD-244
Keystone, SD 57751
(605) 574-2523
<https://www.nps.gov/moru/index.htm>

Crazy Horse Memorial

12151 Avenue of the Chiefs
Crazy Horse, SD 57730
(605) 673-4681
<https://crazyhorsememorial.org>



PHOTO BY JANIE DYHOUSE/VFW

Navy veteran Sheri Deatherage, standing last October outside VFW Post 3442 in Custer, S.D., talks about what she likes best about being a member. For the physics and science teacher, the Post serves as a way of bringing people together.

Washington D.C., in March during VFW’s annual Parade of Winners.

‘WE CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS’

Post Quartermaster D.D. Couch said Post 3442 is nothing but welcoming, which is why veterans and their families choose to be a part of it.

“I have been a member nearly 40 years,” said Couch, who also is a past Department of South Dakota commander. “We had 126 members 40 years ago. This year, our membership stands at 441 so far. Post 3442 has been

a pillar in Custer for many years. When a member is not in this for him or herself, we can move mountains.”

A visit to the Post is a bit like the 1980s sitcom “Cheers,” where everybody knows your name. If the regulars do not know your name, Post leaders say they soon will.

Virtue said there have been VFW members from other states passing through town and enjoy Post 3442 so much that they have transferred their VFW memberships to the Custer Post.

“Our Post is nothing more than

NATURAL BEAUTY ABOUNDS

BADLANDS

PHOTO BY JANIE DYHOUSE/VFW



- A trip across South Dakota is not complete without a drive through the Badlands National Park. With 244,000 acres, there is plenty to see.
- Situated in South Dakota’s Black Hills, Custer State Park offers 71,000 acres of wildlife and clear mountain water. Take a drive on the Needles Highway for the best views.
- The Black Hills National Forest in western South Dakota and northeastern Wyoming offers 1.2 million acres of forested hills and mountains. Seen from a distance, these pine-covered hills appear to be black in color.

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Morgan Silver Dollar: First struck in 1878, the Morgan has a historic legacy as the coin that helped build the American West. Minted until 1904, then again in 1921, this 90% silver coin with its iconic Lady Liberty design is the most collected vintage Silver Dollar in the world. Extremely Fine (XF) condition coin included in set.

Peace Silver Dollar: Memorializing peace following the end of World War I, the 90% silver Peace Dollar was intended as a one-year only release struck in 1921—but it proved so popular with the American people, it was struck until 1928, then again in 1934-35. Extremely Fine (XF) condition coin included in set.

Eisenhower Dollar: The last circulating U.S. dollar coin, the Eisenhower Dollar, aka the "Ike Dollar," with its design featuring war hero President Dwight D. Eisenhower, backed by an image symbolizing the Apollo II moon landing. Struck in silver from 1971-1976, the Eisenhower Dollar in this set was struck in 40% silver for collectors, and you will receive a coin in Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition.

Silver Eagle Type 1: The first-ever U.S. Silver Dollar minted in 99.9% silver, these coins were first minted in 1986 following President Ronald Reagan's signing of the Liberty Coin Act into law on July 9, 1985, which authorized the U.S.

Mint to strike America's new silver bullion coin. This gorgeous Silver Dollar features the original, reversed Type 1 "Heraldic Eagle," and a Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition coin is included in set.

Silver Eagle Type 2: In honor of the popular 99.9% silver coin's 35th anniversary in 2021, the Silver Eagle received a new, esteemed Type 2 "Eagle Landing" reverse design. This is the current issued coin by the U.S. Mint. Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition coin included in set.

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extended family,” Post member Eric Lewis said, adding jokingly, “Maybe a little more like Cousin Eddie [from “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation”].”

Sheri Deatherage, a physics and science teacher at Custer High School and a Navy veteran, agrees. She is one of the newer members to Post 3442.

“I joined because this Post is very, very active in our community, and I love that we are able to be together as different branches of the military and get to interact with each other,” said Deatherage, who earned her VFW eligibility in 1999 in Kosovo. “We are so involved in the community, and it just brings a lot of people together.”

Virtue, whose great-uncle was a charter member of the Post, and whose father was a life member before dying from an Agent Orange-related illness, said the town of Custer may be small, but the Post keeps growing.

“The success of this Post is because of the community involvement we see,” Virtue said. “But the camaraderie we experience here is what I most love.”

On March 29, VFW Post 3442 celebrated 79 years in Custer.

‘WE OFFER FRIENDSHIP AND CAMARADERIE’

Located in downtown Rapid City, VFW Post 1273 is a hub of activity. Following the Indigenous People’s Day Parade in October, the sidewalk was lined with visitors trying to get into the Post. According to Post Commander Ralph Treece, this is common.

“We are like the house where you want to hang out,” Treece joked. “We want people to come in and see what the VFW is all about.”

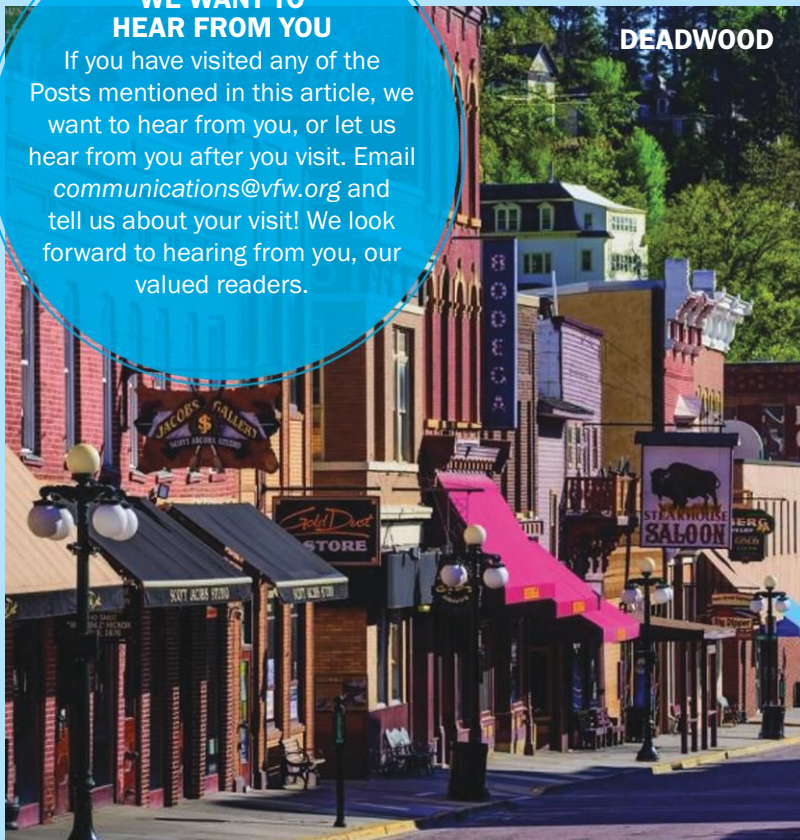
Treece attributes this to the good the Post members do in the community and surrounding areas.

The Post’s Boots on the Ground is one example of service. On Oct. 29, Post members, along with other organizations, worked at the VFW Post to feed, clothe and counsel, when needed, 125 individuals. Of those served, 50 were veterans.

Veterans were admitted from 11 a.m.–2 p.m., and the public was admit-

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you have visited any of the Posts mentioned in this article, we want to hear from you, or let us hear from you after you visit. Email communications@vfw.org and tell us about your visit! We look forward to hearing from you, our valued readers.



VISIT SOUTH DAKOTA PHOTO

DEADWOOD VFW OFFERS FUN FOR VISITORS

Since 1876, Deadwood, S.D., has been entertaining visitors. With casinos, spas, shopping and fine dining, this historic location offers something for everyone. Located in Deadwood is VFW Post 5969. With the distinction of being All-American, the Post supports its community in a variety of ways, including youth activities and supporting those who need a boost. Situated in the center of town, the Post is a hub of activity for those looking for a fun place to socialize.

If you are visiting the Black Hills, be sure to check out VFW Post 5969:
10 Pine Street
Deadwood, SD 57732
(605) 722-9914
Commander John Datka
<https://www.facebook.com/post5969>

ted for the last hour. Donations of clothing, boots and hygiene products were collected during “fill-the-truck” events at the Post leading up to the Boots on the Ground event. Sleeping bags and blankets also were distributed.

Items not handed out during the event were donated to other Rapid City veterans’ organizations for distribution.

The Post members also work closely

with Cornerstone Rescue Mission just a few blocks away. Area Boy Scouts can often be found volunteering at the Post as well.

“Any event we have with extra food, all goes down to the homeless shelter,” Treece said. “Always something going on for us giving back in the community that these guys here have done forever, and we have just kept that going.”



VFW Post 1273 members meet up last October outside their Post in downtown Rapid City, S.D., following the Indigenous People's Day Parade. Serving the homeless population and supporting area scouting endeavors are just two ways the Post gives back in this Black Hills community.

RIGHT: Chairs inside VFW Post 1273 are printed with areas of service served and military branches.



At about 20 members strong, the Post's Honor Guard stays busy. A VFW member since 1973, Marv Czerwonka heads up the guard, which averages 15 funerals a month and travels within a 60-mile radius.

The Post offers plenty of fun for its members and those passing by on Main Street. Monthly pancake breakfasts, Friday night fish fries, weekly bingo and cookouts are just some of the ways members enjoy themselves at the Post.

Aside from the fun times, Post members strive to inform as well. Displays showcasing military memorabilia aim to do just that. Gas masks, helmets, telegrams and even a bugle are encased.

"This is not so much a museum," Treece said, "but we want people who come through the doors to understand what the VFW is about and where we came from."

For Post Junior Vice Commander

Chuck Lanning, the Post's rich history is a draw.

"I came to this Post because I was involved with the VFW as a child with pancake breakfasts and such," said Lanning, who served in the Army twice in Iraq and once in Afghanistan. "I think that is one of the best things we do here on the first Sunday of the month is the pancake breakfasts. But I like the history here, as it goes back to the 1930s."

Original prints and artwork hang on the walls throughout the Post. In one area, barstools have areas of service and military branches printed on the back.

"People come in and maybe want to sit in a chair that represents where their dad served or the branch of military their grandfather was in," Treece said.

While veterans end up at VFW Post 1273 for different reasons, a common theme keeps them there – camaraderie.

"The reason this VFW Post in par-

SOUTH DAKOTA POSTS MAKING COMMUNITIES BETTER

VFW Post 2750

215 N. Main Street
Mitchell, SD 57301
(605) 996-9490
Commander Lyle Sunderland
<https://www.facebook.com/p/VFW-Post-2750-100063524951881>

VFW Post 628

1700 W. Russell Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 338-0869
Commander Hosea Bennett
<https://www.facebook.com/Sioux-FallsVFW>

VFW Post 3298

504 S. Wallace St.
Parkston, SD
(605) 630-0771
Commander Charles McKean
<https://www.facebook.com/parkstonvfw>

VFW Post 7319

113 2nd Street SW
Wagner, SD 57380
(605) 481-1338
Commander Carl Roberts
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100080772789794&locale=ms_MY

VFW Post 4726

321 S. Main
Brandon, SD 57005
(605) 582-3411
Commander Ronald Harris
<https://www.facebook.com/vfw4726>

ticular means something to me is that it is people getting together and just enjoying the camaraderie," member Ken East said. "And it is also about veterans taking care of veterans."

Czerwonka agreed, adding: "VFW Post 1273 is about veterans helping veterans to keep things going. We make sure their needs are met, and we offer friendship and camaraderie." ★

EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org

Doctor urges seniors to carry medical alert device

Seniors snap up new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills

People don't always do what their doctor says, but when seasoned veteran emergency room physician, Dr. Philip B. Howren, says every senior should have a medical alert device, you better listen up.

"Seniors are just one fall away from being put in a nursing home," Dr. Howren said. "With a medical alert device, seniors are never alone. So it keeps them living independently in their own home. That's why seniors and their family members are snapping up a sleek new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills ever," he said.

Many seniors refuse to wear old style help buttons because they make them look old. But even worse, those medical alert sys-

tems come with monthly bills.

To solve these problems Universal Physicians, a U.S. company went to work to develop a new, modern, state-of-the-art medical alert device. It's called "FastHelp™" and it instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"This slick new little device is designed to look like the pagers doctors wear every day. Seniors love them because it actually makes them look important, not old," Dr. Howren said.

FastHelp is expected to hit store shelves later this year. But special newspaper promotional giveaways are slated for seniors in select areas. ■



■ **NO MONTHLY BILLS:** "My wife had an old style help button that came with hefty bills every month and she was embarrassed to wear it because it made her look old," said Frank McDonald, Canton, Ohio. "Now, we both have FastHelp™, the sleek new medical alert device that our grandkids say makes us look 'cool' not old," he said. With FastHelp, seniors never have to worry about being alone and the best part is there are no monthly bills ever.

Seniors born before 1956 get new medical alert device with no monthly bills ever

It's just what seniors have been waiting for; a sleek new medical alert device with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button for a one-time \$149 price tag that's a real steal after today's instant rebate

The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

That's because for seniors born before 1956, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am this morning the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp™ One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"It's not like old style monitored help buttons that make you talk to a call center and only work when you're at home and come with hefty bills every month. FastHelp comes with state-of-the-art cellular embedded technology. That means it works at home or anywhere, any-



■ **FLYING OUT THE DOOR:** Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8114 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

time cell service is available whether you're out watering the garden, driving in a car, at church or even hundreds of miles away on a tour or at a casino. You are never alone. With just a single push of the One-Touch E Button you instantly get connected to free unlimited help nationwide with no monthly bills ever," said Jack Lawrence, Executive Director of Product Development for U.S. based Universal Physicians.

"We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design and most of all, the instant rebate that practically pays for it and no monthly bills ever," Lawrence said.

FastHelp is the sleek new medical alert device with the best of combinations: a quality, high-tech engineered device that's also an extremely great value because there are no monthly bills ever.

Better still, it comes with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever – which makes FastHelp a great choice for seniors, students and professionals because it connects to one of the largest nationwide networks everywhere cell service is available for free.

And here's the best part. All those who already have an old style monitored medical alert button can immediately eliminate those monthly bills, which is why Universal Physicians is widely advertising this announcement nationwide.

"So if you've ever felt a medical alert device was too complicated or expensive, you'll want to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device with no monthly bills," said Lawrence.

The medical alert device slugfest was dominated by two main combatants who both offer old style monitored help buttons that come with a hefty bill every month. But now Universal Physicians, the U.S. based heavyweight, just delivered a knockout blow sending the top rated contenders to the mat with the unveiling of FastHelp. It's the sleek new cellular embedded medical alert device that

cuts out the middleman by instantly connecting you directly to highly trained 911 operators all across the U.S. There's absolutely nothing to hook-up or install. You don't need a land line and you don't need a cell phone. Everything is done for you.

"FastHelp is a state of the art medical alert device designed to make you look important, not old. Old style

monitored help buttons you wear around your neck, or require expensive base station equipment or a landline are the equivalent of a horse and buggy," Lawrence says. "It's just outdated."

Millions of seniors fall every year and spend hours lying on the floor helpless and all alone with no help.

But seniors who fall and get immediate help are much more likely to avoid

getting sent to a nursing home and get to STAY living in their own home independently.

Yet millions of seniors are still risking their safety by not having a medical alert device. That's because seniors just can't afford to pay the monthly bills that come with old style medical alert devices.

That's why seniors born before 1956 are rushing to

cash in the whopping \$150 instant rebate before the 21 day deadline ends.

So there's no need to wait for FastHelp to hit store shelves later this year because seniors born before 1956 can get it now just by using the \$150 instant rebate coupon printed in today's newspaper before the 21 day deadline ends. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered. ■

HOW TO GET IT:

► **IF BORN BEFORE 1956:** Use the rebate coupon below and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8114

► **IF BORN AFTER 1956:** You cannot use the rebate coupon below and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-330-9423 DEPT. HELP8114

THE BOTTOM LINE: You don't need to shop around. We've done all the leg work, this deal is too good to pass up. FastHelp with the instant rebate is a real steal at just \$149 and shipping and there are no monthly bills ever.

PROS: It's the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts or deposits. It connects you to the vast available network of cellular towers for free and saves seniors a ton of money because there are no monthly bills ever making this deal irresistible. Plus it's the only medical alert device that makes seniors look important, not old.

CONS: Consumers can't get FastHelp in stores until later this year. That's why it's so important for seniors born before 1956 to call the National Rebate Center Hotline within the next 21 days. For those who miss that deadline, the sleek little medical alert device will set you back over \$300 bucks.



P7366 OF23372R-1

REBATE COUPON

EXPIRES 21 Days from Today's Publication Date

After Coupon Expires: The FastHelp is \$299.00 plus shipping & handling

\$150 Off

HEL P 8 1 1 4

FastHelp, the new medical alert device that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

USE THIS COUPON: To get \$150 off FastHelp you must be born before 1956 and call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8114 before the 21 day rebate deadline ends.

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HONORING VETERANS NATIONWIDE

In observance of Memorial Day, *VFW* magazine showcases a selection of eight memorials — established, recent and forthcoming — dedicated to honoring the men and women who served our country.

BY DAVE SPIVA

Castner Range National Monument, located on Fort Bliss near El Paso, Texas, is a former Army training site. In March 2023, President Joe Biden signed a proclamation that established Castner Range as a national monument.

Preserving the legacy of U.S. troops who made the ultimate sacrifice is central to the VFW's mission and existence. Many across the country have united in this endeavor to commemorate the valor of those honored and recognize the contributions of all who have served in the armed forces.

Here are eight memorials dedicated, authorized, refurbished or proposed over the last year.

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MEMORIAL

On Dec. 27, 2021, President Joe Biden signed into law the *National Medal of Honor Memorial Act (P.L. 117-80)*. The legislation authorized the establishment of a National Medal of Honor Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In 2023, supporters of the monument asked Congress to consider approving the National Medal of Honor Memorial to be located near the Lincoln Memorial. The location was selected to honor President Abraham Lincoln, who created the Medal of Honor, according to the National Medal of Honor Museum.

House members in November passed the *Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act (H.R. 2717)*, meaning that if the Senate and Biden approved the legislation, the monument would be located near the Lincoln Memorial.

The bill was named in honor of Medal of Honor recipi-

ent Hershel "Woody" Williams, who died on June 29, 2022. Williams, who was the last living World War II Medal of Honor recipient, earned the highest award for valor while fighting in the Battle of Iwo Jima. The Marine Corps veteran also is the namesake of the Woody Williams Foundation. (See Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.)

As of *VFW* magazine's print deadline, a design had not been selected for the monument. Learn more about the National Medal of Honor Memorial at <https://www.mohmuseum.org/the-monument>.

GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL MONUMENT

The Woody Williams Foundation was instrumental in installing more than 130 monuments to honor Gold Star families around the country. Gold Star families are those who have had a member die while serving in the military.

According to the Woody Williams Foundation, the creation of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument is intended to:

- Establish and provide a space that Gold Star families can call their own in honor of their families.
- Demonstrate to Gold Star families that their community cares for them and appreciates their sacrifice while also honoring the ultimate sacrifice of their loved ones.
- Establish and strengthen local Gold Star family

communities through Gold Star family outreach events in each monument's location.

- Educate the public about Gold Star families who endure the sacrifices made by their loved ones.

As of March 8, 133 monuments have been established and 53 more are in progress. The Gold Star monuments are located in all 50 states and on Guam. Gold Star Families Memorial Monument locations are available at <https://www.woodywilliams.org>.

2ND INFANTRY DIVISION MEMORIAL

On Oct. 26, the 106th birthday of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, the 2ID Memorials Foundation announced that the 2nd Infantry Division Memorial, located in Washington D.C., is undergoing modifications.

Originally, the 2nd Infantry Division Memorial was established in 1939. It was built and dedicated "to our dead," referring to 2nd Infantry Division troops who were killed in World War I.

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial was last modified in 1962. The alteration was made to include division troops who were killed in World War II and the Korean War. The latest update will honor those who lost their lives to conflicts in Korea's demilitarized zone.

The 2ID Memorials Foundation noted that the modifications will cost \$2.7 million and will be finished in fall 2025. The project is privately funded.

Learn more about the 2ID Memorials Foundation at <https://www.2idmemorialsfoundation.org>.



A Gold Star Families Memorial Monument is shown on April 22, 2022, in Moundsville, W. Va. The monument is located along the Ohio River in northern Appalachia and is one of more than 130 Gold Star family monuments developed by the Woody Williams Foundation.

USS HALYBURTON MUSEUM

The Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is working with the Navy to bring a decommissioned Oliver Hazard class guided-missile frigate, the *USS Halyburton (FFG-40)*, to its proposed home in Erie, Pa.

The Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard plans to display the *Halyburton* as a museum ship that will be open to the public. The organization aims to honor veterans and share the story of Oliver Hazard Perry, a Naval officer who is best known for his and his sailors' victory over the British Royal Navy during the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813.

"Ships are more than objects to those who serve on them,"

said organizers of the Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard. "They have a heart and soul. Visitors — students, families and veterans alike — will feel what life was like on board as they tour the vessel, participate in overnight visits sleeping like sailors, and hearing personal stories from those who served on the *Halyburton*."

To learn more about the Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard, visit <https://perryshipyard.org>.

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial in Washington, D.C., is shown. The memorial is undergoing a modification to honor U.S. troops from the division who lost their lives in Korea's demilitarized zone. The project costs \$2.7 million and will be finished by fall 2025.





The *USS Halyburton (FFG-40)* transits the Gulf of Aden in January 2013. The Oliver Hazard Shipyard organization is working with the Navy to transfer the decommissioned guided-missile frigate to Erie, Pa. The organization plans to install a new museum ship.

CASTNER RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

In March 2023, President Joe Biden signed a proclamation that established the Castner Range National Monument, located on Fort Bliss near El Paso, Texas.

The more than 6,600-acre plot of land is a former training and testing site for the Army from World War II to the Vietnam War. Training at the site ended and the Castner Range was closed in 1966. Castner Range was home to myriad indigenous people, including Apache and Pueblo peoples, as well as the Comanche Nation, the Hopi Tribe and the Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma.

“The Castner Range area contains more than 40 known archaeological sites, including living structures, hearths, remnants of pottery and other tools, as well as a myriad of petroglyphs and images on the rock faces that make up the canyons and mountains of Castner Range,” according to a White House press release.

As of *VFW* magazine’s print deadline, Castner Range is closed to the public. To learn more about Castner Range National Monument, visit <https://www.castner-range.org>.

MILITARY WORKING DOGS TEAM NATIONAL MONUMENT

A ceremony to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Military Working Dogs Team National Monument took place on Oct. 27 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas.

A multiservice color guard posts colors during the Military Working Dog Teams Monument’s 10th Anniversary commemoration ceremony on Oct. 27, 2023, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas.



VA HAS 10 MILLION NAMES IN ONLINE LEGACY MEMORIAL DATABASE

VA announced in November that nearly 10 million veterans have been added to the department’s electronic Veterans Legacy Memorial.

The Veterans Legacy Memorial began in 2019 and started as an online memorial for those interred in VA national cemeteries. The online database now features about 5 million additional profiles of veterans who were interred at non-VA cemeteries.

According to VA, the Veterans Legacy Memorial now honors the memory of veterans interred in:

- VA national cemeteries
- VA-grant-funded cemeteries
- 27 Department of Defense-managed cemeteries
- Two National Park Service national cemeteries
- Thousands of private and other non-VA cemeteries

“The Veterans Legacy Memorial gives all of us a way to pay tribute to our nation’s veterans and service members, long after they’re gone,” VA Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Matt Quinn said. “We encourage all Americans to visit VA.gov/Remember and help commemorate these heroes who honorably served our nation.”

The event highlighted the contributions of past and current military working dog teams. Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland is the world’s largest training center for military dogs and handlers, according to a press release from the Air Force Air Education and Training Command.

The monument features a 9-foot-tall bronze dog handler, four bronze statues depicting military working dogs and a “Not Forgotten Fountain.”



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VFW POSTS HONOR HOMETOWN HEROES

Past VFW Post 3482 Commander Greg Schlieve, who spearheaded the project for the Jerry Taylor Veterans Plaza and has overseen the development since the first walls were installed in 2014, stands along one of its 22 current granite walls on Aug. 3, 2023, in Sunnyside, Wash.

Four new and ongoing local memorials were unveiled in 2023 to recognize veterans and their families around their communities.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

For nearly 125 years since its inception, one of VFW's priorities has always been the remembrance of veterans who died fighting for their country.

As the oldest combat veterans organization in the nation, VFW's efforts to commemorate the sacrifices of these veterans have led to war memorials sprouting across the country, from small towns to large metropolitan cities.

Commemorated through an array of permanent markers that include monoliths, cemeteries, streets and memorial parks bearing their names, honoring



The City of Murrieta, Calif., dedicated the latest installment to its growing Veterans Memorial at Town Square Park following its annual Veterans Day Parade on Nov 11, 2023. It added a Vietnam War monument to its already standing World War II and Korean War monuments.

veterans has always been a tenet of VFW's existence.

Here are a few examples of memorials created in 2023 through the help of local VFW Posts, whose memorials honor those who fought to protect and preserve the existence of the nation's values.

'I HOPE WE CAN SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE'

What began as an idea in June 2022 culminated in the first Vietnam War Veterans Monument in Oakland, Ill.

Donated by VFW Post 3637 members to honor all local Vietnam War veterans, the large granite monument was unveiled at Oakland's town square on May 27 to a large crowd that attracted local and state dignitaries to the town of 900 residents.

Engraved on it are the names of 147 Vietnam War veterans, which include three local women and Pfc. Donnie Joe Clough, who was killed in action on Sept. 9, 1969. A rifleman with F Co., 2nd Bn., 5th Marine Regt., 1st Marine



The Vietnam War Veterans Monument was donated by VFW Post 3637 and unveiled during a ceremony on May 27, 2023, at their town's square in Oakland, Ill.

Div., Clough is also the namesake of Memorial Highway 133, which runs 52 miles from east to west in Illinois.

"I hope we can serve as an example for other small towns to honor their veterans," Post 3637 Service Officer Jim Taber said. "As we all know, the Vietnam veterans did not come home to flag-waving parades, etc. This is our way of honoring them forever."

JERRY TAYLOR VETERANS PLAZA

The Jerry Taylor Veterans Plaza in Sunnyside, Wash., has blossomed into one of the largest memorials for veterans in the Northwest since its first two walls were installed in 2014.

Spearheaded by past VFW Post 3482 Commander Greg Schlieve, the Jerry Taylor Veterans Plaza is now halfway complete, with 22 of its projected 42 granite walls installed, each engraved with plaques of veterans from the northwest part of the country.

"It is very important to us that individual soldiers be recognized for their service to our country," said Schlieve, a Vietnam War veteran who deployed in 1969 with C Co., 5th Bn., 7th Cav., 1st Cav. Div.

Schlieve, who overlooks the project, added that the goal is to install two walls every year to honor more and more veterans. Each year, he collects orders from local veterans and families who want to order plaques for themselves or their loved ones.

Each year, the new walls are unveiled



From left: VFW Post 7402 Commander Richard Attaway; Col. Wayne Waddell, USAF retired; Kenneth Koch; and Gunnery Sgt. Lyndon Smith, USMC retired stand in front of the Gold Star Family Memorial Monument following its unveiling ceremony at Veterans Park in Bremen, Ga., on March 29, 2023.

in a special ceremony that Schlieve, along with Post 3482 and his Legion Post 73, coordinate and run alongside the town of Sunnyside for those in attendance.

"Our Post's Honor Guard is there, and we ring the bell as names are read off at the end of the ceremony, along with the wife of one of our members' wives who played "Taps" for us," Schlieve said. "It is a special ceremony."

VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL WALL

During its Veterans Day parade last November, the city of Murrieta, Calif., unveiled the latest installment to its growing Veterans Memorial at Town Square Park.

"It joins our World War II and Korean War monuments, which are all done in black granite with photographic imagery specifically chosen by teams of veterans who served in each of these wars," said Bob DeCubellis, a member of VFW Post 4089 in nearby Temecula, Calif.

THE GOLD STAR FAMILY MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Many local and Georgia Gold Star families served as honorary guests at the Veterans Park in Bremen, Ga., for the unveiling of the Gold Star Family Memorial Monument.

In conjunction with Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29, 2023, the unveiling ceremony welcomed VFW Post 7402 members from Bremen and other state and local dignitaries for the unveiling of the first monument of its kind in the state.

"This was a Woody Williams Foundation Gold Star Family Monument, which our Post helped fund," said Kenneth Koch, a VFW Post 7402 member. "At the ceremony, retired Col. Wayne Waddell, a POW in North Vietnam for five years and eight months, was a keynote speaker at the ceremony." ★

EMAIL irodriguez@vfw.org



'We Keep This Sacred Promise Alive'

VFW's Buddy Poppy continues to serve as a reminder of those who have sacrificed their lives on behalf of the nation.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE



BUDDY POPPY PROCLAMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

To enhance VFW Buddy Poppy campaigns, VFW has a proclamation available. It urges citizens to show their full support for the VFW Buddy Poppy and to wear the red flower in gratitude to the men and women who have died in uniform.

To obtain a fillable Buddy Poppy Proclamation to provide to your city government for possible use, visit <https://vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/buddy-poppy>. Online readers of VFW magazine can click **here** to directly access the proclamation.

VFW Post 2210 Commander Dennis M. Grass and VFW Post 2210 Auxiliary Americanism Chairman Sharon Giesler donate VFW Buddy Poppies last fall to Ste. Genevieve Elementary and Bloomsdale Elementary schools in Ste. Genevieve, Mo. The Buddy Poppies were presented to the students during their Poppy Day at school.

The VFW became the first veterans service organization to distribute poppies as a tribute to fallen World War I veterans. Since 1922, the VFW has conducted poppy drives, making the red flower of remembrance the official flower of the VFW.

Just two years later, on May 20, 1924, the VFW was granted trademark rights for the name Buddy Poppy under the classification of artificial flowers. To this day, no other organization, firm, or individual can legally use the name Buddy Poppy.

VFW Posts take pride in Buddy

Poppy distribution, especially around the Memorial Day holiday. In communities around the world, VFW members stand in front of businesses, on street corners or other high-traffic areas for pedestrians. Donations given in exchange for the Buddy Poppies fund Posts' veterans relief services, and a portion also goes to the VFW National Home for Children.

"It is important for us as the VFW to commemorate our war dead during the sacred time of Memorial Day," VFW Programs Director Lynn Rolf said. "We live by the old saying 'Honoring

the Dead by Helping the Living' and by distributing the Buddy Poppy, we keep this sacred promise alive and well."

VFW updated its Buddy Poppy distribution last year with the release of a new poppy tin tab. The VFW Store sells both versions for distribution by VFW Posts. Visit <https://www.vfwstore.org> for more information and to place an order.

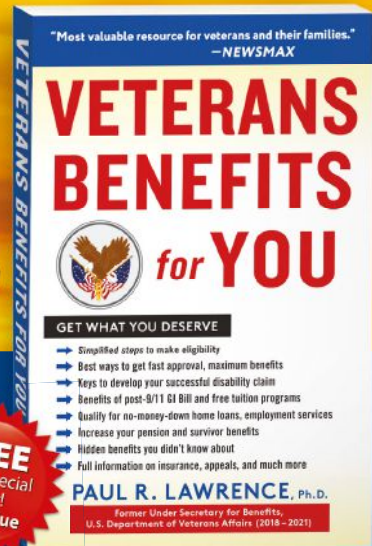
VFW magazine would love to see photos of your Buddy Poppy events. Please email photos with identifying information to magazine@vfw.org. ★

EMAIL jdhouse@vfw.org



ATTENTION: ALL VETERANS

Get the VA Benefits You've Earned



Tough time understanding your VA benefits? Don't know which benefits you're entitled to or why you got rejected?

Millions of retired and active-duty service members miss out on critical VA benefits every day because the system is too confusing. Those days are over with **Veterans Benefits for You: Get What You Deserve**.

This **NEW book** is your easy-to-understand, comprehensive, step-by-step "how to" road map. Direct from a VA insider, you get clear answers and expert guidance on getting the benefits you deserve — including hidden benefits you didn't know about!

This Book Is Written by Paul R. Lawrence, Former Undersecretary for Benefits U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs



For almost three years, Paul served as the undersecretary for benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs. As undersecretary, Paul led a team of 25,000 people with an operating budget of \$4 billion, administering \$120 billion in benefits annually. He serves on the board of directors of Vets2Industry, a nonprofit helping veterans pursue a career in the private sector.

Get Veterans Benefits for You with FREE OFFER! (A \$25 value)

Veterans Benefits for You reveals which benefits are available to you, how to know if you're eligible, exact steps to apply, pitfalls to avoid, and much more. Disability, grants, loans, pensions, survivor's benefits, insurance, appeals, counseling, special compensation, employment help, the post-9/11 GI Bill — it's all in here.

"Veterans need this book!"

— **Robert L. Wilkie**,
10th Secretary of Veterans Affairs

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- ➔ 3 ways to connect your injury or disability to your time in the military
- ➔ VA benefit decisions can be appealed — discover which ones and how to appeal
- ➔ **Get peace of mind knowing your mortgage is paid if you die**
- ➔ Help for homeless, jobless, and incarcerated vets
- ➔ **Learn length of service requirements**
- ➔ 6 insurance programs — 3 for vets and 3 for service members
- ➔ **Learn how to appeal a decision**
- ➔ Learn how to get accrued and survivor benefits
- ➔ **Dependent education assistance — a survivor benefit!**
- ➔ Learn which forms to fill out
- ➔ **Get more money from the GI Bill**
- ➔ Get military pay and disability compensation
- ➔ **Free checking accounts at select banks and credit unions just for military vets — and your money is insured!**
- ➔ Why you don't want to miss the window on signing up for life insurance or you won't be eligible
- ➔ **And more!**

Thanks to the **Veterans Benefits for You: Get What You Deserve**, you'll know exactly which VA benefits you're eligible for, discover benefits you didn't know about, and find out how to get your benefits faster — without the confusion or rejection. Hurry! **Order your FREE COPY today with our special offer.** Supplies are limited.

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★ A FINAL SALUTE ★

VFW magazine presents this memorial listing in tribute to 27 U.S. troops who died **overseas** in 2023. All of the following fatalities happened in non-hostile incidents.

AUSTRALIA

MARINE CORPS

- **Cpl. Spencer R. Collart**, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Sqdn. 363, Marine Rotational Force — Darwin, Arlington, Va.
- **Capt. Eleanor LeBeau**, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Sqdn. 363, Marine Rotational Force — Darwin, Belleville, Ill.
- **Maj. Tobin Lewis**, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Sqdn. 363, Marine Rotational Force — Darwin, Jefferson, Colo.

GERMANY

AIR FORCE

- **Tech. Sgt. Lionel Rhone Jr.**, 569th U.S. Forces Police Sqdn., Anderson, Ind.
- **Senior Airman Christopher Rocha**, 86th Security Forces, El Paso, Texas

ARMY

- **Dexavion Sanders**, 367th Maintenance Co., Mississippi Army National Guard, Memphis, Tenn.
- **Staff Sgt. Travon Walker**, 2nd Cav Regt., Richmond, Va.

JAPAN

AIR FORCE

- **Capt. Terrell K. Brayman**, 21st Special Operations Sqdn., Pittsford, N.Y.
- **Staff Sgt. Jake M. Galliher**, 43rd Intelligence Sqdn., Pittsfield, Mass.
- **Maj. Jeffrey T. Hoernemann**, 21st Special Operations Sqdn., Andover, Minn.
- **Senior Airman Brian K. Johnson**, 21st Special Operations Sqdn., Reynoldsburg, Ohio
- **Tech. Sgt. Zachary E. Lavoy**, 1st Special Operations Sqdn., Oviedo, Fla.
- **Maj. Eric V. Spendlove**, 1st Special Operations Sqdn., St. George, Utah
- **Staff Sgt. Jake M. Turnage**, 21st Special Operations Sqdn., Kennesaw, Ga.
- **Maj. Luke A. Unrath**, 21st Special Operations Sqdn., Riverside, Calif.

NAVY

- **Operations Specialist 3rd Class Romario Clennon**, *USS Ralph Johnson*, Atlanta, Ga.

KUWAIT

AIR FORCE

- **Maj. Stephen Khou**, 32nd Weapons Sqdn., Philadelphia, Pa.

ARMY

- **Spc. Jayson Reed Haven**, B Co., 1st Bn., 118th Inf. Regt., 218th Maneuver Enhancement Bde., Aiken, S.C.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

ARMY

- **Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shane M. Barnes**, 1st Bn., 160th Special Operations Aviation Regt. (Airborne), Sacramento, Calif.
- **Chief Warrant Officer 3 Stephen Dwyer**, 1st Bn., 160th Special Operations Aviation Regt. (Airborne), Clarksville, Tenn.
- **Staff Sgt. Tanner W. Grone**, 1st Bn., 160th Special Operations Aviation Regt. (Airborne), Gorham, N.H.
- **Sgt. Andrew P. Southard**, 1st Bn., 160th Special Operations Aviation Regt. (Airborne), Apache Junction, Ariz.
- **Sgt. Cade M. Wolfe**, 1st Bn., 160th Special Operations Aviation Regt. (Airborne), Mankato, Minn.

NORTH SEA

NAVY

- **Chief Gunner's Mate Caprice L. Pryor**, *USS Rampage (DDG-61)*, Chicago, Ill.

QATAR

ARMY

- **Staff Sgt. Felix Berrios**, 25th Signal Bn., 160th Signal Bde., Army Network Enterprise Technology Command, Houston, Texas

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

MARINE CORPS

- **Lance Cpl. Nicholas Maurice Dural**, U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville, Lafayette, La.

THAILAND

ARMY

- **Maj. Andrew Cotter**, 17th Field Arty Bde., I Corps, DuPont, Wash.

Editor's note: If there are other troops missing from this memorial listing, send their name, unit information, hometown and cause of death to magazine@vfw.org.



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Gravestones are shown on Aug. 30, 2023, at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Ill. VA reported that the department delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits during the 2022 fiscal year.

VA Expands Burial Benefits for Veterans

VA in October raised the burial and plot allowances for veterans who died in nonservice-related incidents. The department also asks veterans and families to plan ahead for VA's "end-of-life benefits."

BY DAVE SPIVA

The VA last year announced new burial allowance rates for veterans who have died in nonservice-related incidents since October.

VA announced several updates to burial benefits aimed at providing support to veterans and their families. These updates, according to VA, reflect the department's commitment to honoring U.S. veterans around the world.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

In the past, VA covered costs for transporting remains to eligible national cemeteries. Now, this benefit has been extended to include transportation expenses to state and tribal veteran cemeteries.

"[For service-related deaths], VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to Sept. 11, 2001," according to VA. "If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed."

For nonservice-related deaths, VA will pay a \$948 burial allowance and \$948 for a plot if the veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2023. If the veteran died between Jan. 5, 2023, and Oct. 1, 2023, VA would pay an \$893 burial allowance and \$893 for a plot. Learn more about allowance rates at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance>.

PLAN 'END-OF-LIFE BENEFITS' NOW

VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs noted in a VA press release that in fiscal year 2022, VA delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits to families.

"Expanding burial benefits means we are able to ensure veterans are honored in their final resting place and assist their family, caregivers and survivors during the difficult time of their loved one's passing," Jacobs said.


VA's national cemeteries provide benefits for traditional casket or cremation burials. For eligible veterans and family members, VA national cemetery

burial benefits include:

- Opening and closing of the gravesite
- Inscribed headstones or markers
- Burial flag
- Award of the Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Perpetual care of the gravesite

For those being placed in private cemeteries, benefits only include:

- Headstones, markers or medallions for the gravesite
- Burial flag
- Presidential Memorial Certificate

VA also may provide burial allowances to assist with a family member's burial and funeral costs for those eligible. VA encourages veterans to consider their "end-of-life benefits" provided by the department. To learn more, visit <https://www.va.gov/plan-ahead>. More information about VA burial benefits can be found at <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials>. 

EMAIL dspiva@vfw.org

State Residents hit Jackpot with 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls

Next 21 days only: Casino Rolls loaded with old rarely seen American Eagle Ike Large Dollar Coins just like the old Casino Slots paid out

► **American Eagle Casino Roll Handout:** All those who beat the deadline get a free U.S. Government Issued Lady Liberty Presidential Dollar Coin never to be minted again

"It's like hitting the jackpot on an old Vegas Slot Machine decades ago" said Mary Ellen Withrow, retired 40th Treasurer of the United States of America and Executive Advisor to Lincoln Treasury.

That's because for the next 21 days readers can get these rarely seen 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls.

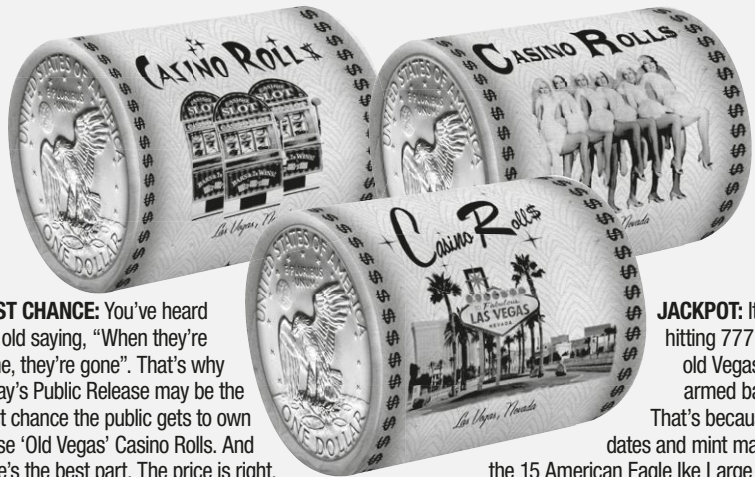
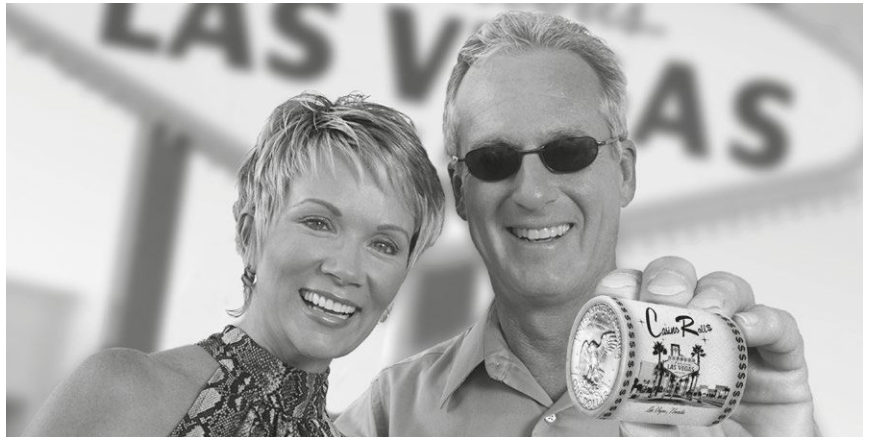
These full 15 count 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls are filled with historic American Eagle Ike Large Dollar coins like the ones from 1976 and earlier that were used decades ago in slot machines in the world famous Casinos.

It's amazing that these Old Vegas Casino Rolls are up for grabs. Just holding one in your hand reminds you of walking down the Vegas Strip in the glory days of Elvis, Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford and Joey Bishop. It just makes you feel good.

Today's callers need to remember these are not ordinary rolls of coins you get at a bank or credit union. These 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls contain old American Eagle Ike Large Dollar coins commemorating the Rat Pack days of the early 1970's when Las Vegas Casinos were all the rage. These rolls are now being released from the private vaults of Lincoln Treasury, each with 15 U.S. Gov't issued American Eagle Ike Large Dollar Coins dating back to 1976 and earlier.

We won't be surprised if thousands of people claim the six roll limit before they're gone. That's because after the rolls were sealed with these U.S. Gov't minted American Eagle Ike Large Dollar Coins, each verified to meet a minimum collector grade quality of very good or above, the dates and mint marks are unsearched to determine collector values and the rolls are now securely sealed. That means there's no telling what's in each roll.

All readers who beat the deadline get the Free Lady Liberty U.S. Government issued presidential dollar coin never to be minted again with every 'Old Vegas' Casino Roll. Call the Hotline at 1-888-498-6621 and give the PROMO CODE IKE142 before the deadline ends or follow the instructions to get them by mail, or go to LincolnTreasury.com/casino.



LAST CHANCE: You've heard the old saying, "When they're gone, they're gone". That's why today's Public Release may be the best chance the public gets to own these 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls. And here's the best part. The price is right, in fact it's a steal for callers lucky enough to beat the 21-day deadline and get the 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls for less than \$7 per coin.

JACKPOT: It's like hitting 777 on an old Vegas "one armed bandit". That's because the dates and mint marks of the 15 American Eagle Ike Large Dollar Coins from decades ago are now sealed away in each roll exclusively by Lincoln Treasury so you never know what you might find.

► How to get the 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls:

The Call-In Hotlines open at 8:30am (EST) this morning. Callers who beat the release deadline are guaranteed to get them for less than \$7 per coin that's only \$98 for the full 15 count 'Old Vegas' Casino Rolls loaded with decades old American Eagle Ike Large Dollar Coins. Everyone who beats the deadline gets a free U.S. Government issued Lady Liberty Presidential Dollar Coin never to be minted again with each Casino Roll they claim. Important: if any remain after the 21-day deadline the price skyrockets to \$255 per roll.

By Phone: For fastest service to beat the deadline, have your credit card handy and telephone toll-free 1-888-498-6621, PROMO CODE IKE142

By Mail: Simply write "Casino Rolls" on a piece of paper, print your name and full address and mail postmarked Monday or earlier with your remittance of \$98 for a single roll or \$294 for all three rolls and send it with your check or money order to: Lincoln Treasury, PROMO CODE IKE142, PO Box 9971, Canton, Ohio 44711

Online: LincolnTreasury.com/casino

VFW GEARS UP TO MEET IN 'DERBY CITY'

This year marks the fourth time in VFW's history that members will convene in the city of Louisville, Ky., to conduct the important business of the organization

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

REGISTER NOW FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION IN LOUISVILLE

As a reminder, Sect. 222 of VFW's *Manual of Procedure* states that each Post will pay, in advance, a national convention registration fee of \$25. This entitles the Post to a convention packet, materials and one registered delegate for the VFW National Convention.

Each additional delegate will pay a \$10 fee if the Post has paid the mandated \$25 advance registration fee. All advance registrations should be mailed to:

*VFW National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111*

Attn: Convention Registration

You also can register online by logging into the Online Membership System.

Please note that housing for the convention opened March 18. Housing reservation information is located on the convention website accessed through the main VFW website at <https://www.vfw.org/convention>.



The 125th VFW National Convention will take place from July 27-Aug. 1 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in downtown Louisville.

Convention housing opened on March 18, giving attendees an extra month to register. Please note that shuttle service will not be available this year during the convention.

While the convention's main purpose is to allow VFW delegates to vote on resolutions, attend workshops and hear from prominent speakers, it also offers a time for camaraderie. Below is just a small sampling of all that the city of Louisville has to offer for those attending this year's convention.

Be sure to check out <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/125th-vfw-national-convention> for the latest on convention news.

Fourth Street Live!

411 S. 4th Street

Louisville, KY 40202

<https://www.4thstlive.com>

This entertainment and retail district near the convention center offers something for everyone. Laugh Louisville is a comedy club sure to entertain. Howl at the Moon is a dueling piano bar offering fun times. Restaurants such as Guy Fieri's Smokehouse and Brazeiro's will delight the tastebuds after a full day of meetings.

Kentucky Derby Museum

704 Central Avenue

Louisville, KY 40208

<https://www.derbymuseum.org>

Phone: (502) 637-1111

General admission includes a 30-minute walking tour of Churchill Downs racetrack and access to two floors of museum exhibits, where you can see Derby fashions over the years, watch every Derby race dating back to 1918, learn the history of African Americans in horse racing and see a replica of Churchill Downs' famous Winner's Circle. Also included is an 18-minute film about the Kentucky Derby, which provides a look at what it is like to be at the Derby on the venue's most important race day. Be sure to check out the gift shop and the Derby Café.





2ND ANNUAL CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT SET FOR LOUISVILLE

Presented by the veteran-owned KC Crew, the largest adult sports league in Kansas City, Mo., the 2nd Annual VFW National Convention Cornhole Series will take place on Sunday, July 28, and Monday, July 29. All proceeds from the competition go to VFW PACT Act benefit assistance.

For more information and to sign up for this event, which was an instant hit last year in Phoenix, visit <https://kccrew.com/leagues/vfvcornhole-tournament>.

Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory Store

800 West Main Street

Louisville, KY 40202

<https://www.sluggermuseum.com>

Phone: 1-877-775-8443

From items used by Babe Ruth to life-like sculptures of some of the best to ever play, there is no shortage of history to witness in the museum gallery. Hank Aaron's bat used to hit his 700th home run in 1973 is on display. The museum's "Hold a Piece of History" exhibit features at least one bat from every major league baseball team. "Where Wood Meets Wonder" provides an opportunity to see how baseball's most iconic baseball bats are made.

Muhammad Ali Center

144 N. Sixth Street

Louisville, KY 40202

<https://alicenter.org>

The six-story multicultural center and museum celebrates the life and legacy of heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali. Through the museum's exhibits, follow Ali's journey from his Louisville childhood through the three world heavyweight titles and humanitarian efforts that made him a global icon. Take the opportunity to punch and jab in a re-creation of the Deer Lake training camp where Ali reshaped his technique to regain his title.



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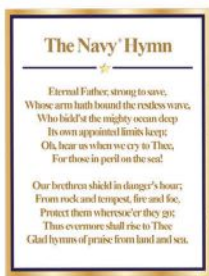
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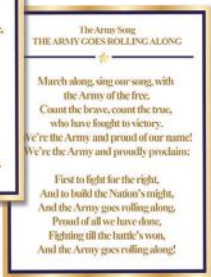
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EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Check out these fun facts about Louisville, Ky.

- Founded in 1778 by George Rogers Clark, Louisville is named for King Louis XVI of France in appreciation for his assistance during the Revolutionary War.
- By 1830, Louisville had secured its place as the largest city in Kentucky.
- In the reform-minded progressive era of the 1880s the city was the first in the nation to introduce the secret ballot, significantly reducing voter fraud.
- Camp Zachary Taylor opened in 1917 in Louisville to train soldiers for World War I but closed three years later. It was named for Louisville resident and U.S. President Zachary Taylor. Its name (and some of its buildings) live on as the Camp Taylor neighborhood of Louisville. Army 2nd Lt. F. Scott Fitzgerald, stationed at Camp Zachary Taylor during World War I, was a frequent visitor to the bar at the Seelbach Hotel, immortalized in Fitzgerald’s novel “The Great Gatsby.”
- Known as the “City of Parks,” Louisville’s park system is the last designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the “Father of American Landscape Architecture.” It is one of only five such systems across the country. Known nationally as the defining park system of Olmsted’s career, it stands today as one of his best-preserved works.

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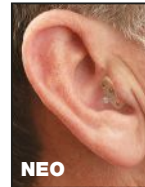
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Terry Teruo Kawamura

‘With Honor and Distinction’

VFW recognizes some of the most influential veterans of Asian-American and Pacific Islander descent during Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

With May serving as custodian to national holidays such as Memorial Day, the spring month also dons the title of Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Established as an annual observance in 1992, Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month encompasses more than 50 ethnic or linguistic groups living in the U.S. and its territories.

For VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento, a Filipino-American himself, the month is a special one as it honors the lasting imprint Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders have left throughout U.S. military history.

“From their service with John Paul Jones in the Revolutionary War and Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans to *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and *Operation Enduring Freedom*, Asian-Americans have served our country with

honor and distinction,” Sarmiento said.

Beginning with Army Pvt. Jose Nisperos receiving the Medal of Honor for his actions on Sept. 24, 1911, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders have received the military’s highest honor for valor 31 times in America’s ensuing wars and conflicts.

Among them is MOH recipient Cpl. Terry Teruo Kawamura, a Hawaii native who served with the Army’s 173rd Engineer Co., 173rd Airborne Bde., during the Vietnam War.

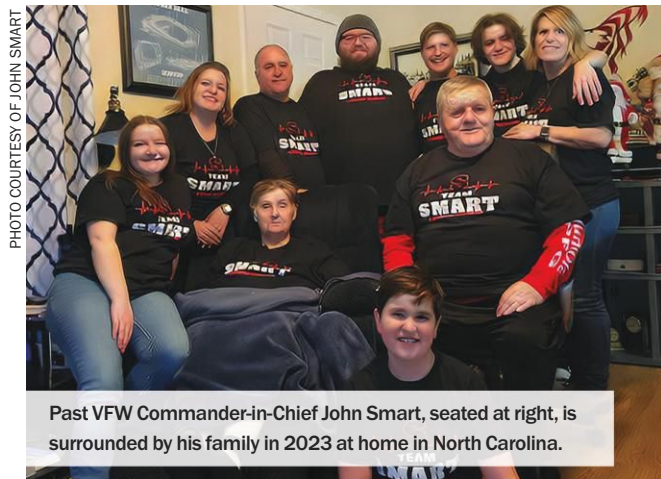
Kawamura’s selfless heroics came while stationed at Camp Radcliff in central Vietnam on March 20, 1969, when an enemy demolition team infiltrated the unit quarters area and opened fire with automatic weapons.

Disregarding the intense fire, Kawamura ran for his weapon when a violent explosion tore a hole in the roof and

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

VFW magazine's series about VFW's past Commanders-in-Chief continues in this issue. Each month, we feature two past chiefs and look at their time since they held the organization's highest office.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE



Past VFW Commander-in-Chief John Smart, seated at right, is surrounded by his family in 2023 at home in North Carolina.

JOHN SMART, 1999-2000 VFW POST 1503, DALE CITY, VA.

Following his year as VFW Commander-in-Chief, John Smart received a presidential appointment to work for the VA in Washington, D.C., for four years. He followed that with eight years working for the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment in Quantico, Va.

Smart and his wife, Mary, live in Clayton, N.C. Their children and most of their grandchildren live in Raleigh, N.C. He has one granddaughter who lives with her husband in King George, Va.

"I still enjoy taking VFW Department assignments when asked," Smart said. "It gives me the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones and to promote the goals and objectives of our organization."

Prior to being elected as Chief, Smart and his two eventual predecessors, John Gwizdak and Jim Goldsmith, met with media professionals. The trio wanted to be proactive in getting the VFW message out. The outcome was that Departments were required to set up media opportunities when the leadership visited.

"This gave the chair officers the opportunity to present our goals three to four times a day," Smart said.

During Smart's acceptance speech, he called for the resignation of then-VA Secretary Togo West for failing to provide timely health care or reduce waiting times for claims. Another big-item issue was, according to Smart, the Clinton Administration's failing to meet the needs of the military.

"I believe this program was successful and got the attention of the President, Congress and the general public," Smart said. "This was a time when the VFW could not be politically correct and had to do what was right for our veterans and military."



Past VFW Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer with his wife, Theresa, on June 12, 2016, in Massachusetts, after renewing their wedding vows on their 50th wedding anniversary.

RICHARD DENOYER, 2011-2012 VFW POST 1012, MEDFORD, MASS.

In the years following his time as VFW Commander-in-Chief, Richard DeNoyer has been a traveler. He and his wife, Theresa, live in Middleton, Mass., a town they have called home for 19 years. The couple has made numerous trips to Ireland and Hawaii. Yearly, they travel to Florida and Maine.

A Marine for 22 years, DeNoyer served in Vietnam. During his year as Chief, he traveled to Italy, France, Germany, Russia and Southeast Asia, among many other locations.

DeNoyer is enjoying his retirement years. He said a typical day for him is to go for a walk, read and maybe accompany his wife on shopping trips.

"We both spend as much time as possible with our six grandchildren, who are now all grown and attending college," the past Chief added.

One of the many highlights for DeNoyer during his tenure at the helm was visiting troops at Kabul and Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan in the fall of 2011. The trip was sponsored by the DoD.

While in Afghanistan, DeNoyer met with Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, who commanded all coalition forces at the time. He also met with Army Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, the 1st Cavalry Division commander, and with Special Forces' commanders who were training Afghan troops.

Another highlight for DeNoyer was traveling to Israel, a trip hosted by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

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‘Let Them Know VFW is Here’

VFW’s Membership Department has a multitude of training videos accessible to all members to help meet this year’s membership goal.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

As the end of the membership year draws near, the VFW Membership Department encourages all members to keep pushing toward the 102 percent membership goal.

“We are on track to meet Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento’s goal of 102 percent in membership,” Assistant Membership Director Matt Nute said. “Don’t stop now but keep recruiting to contribute to this collective goal.”

According to Nute, more than 30 Departments are projected to show membership growth this year.

“We also are outpacing where we were last year at this time,” he added.

Nute noted that the VFW Membership Department offers a variety of recruiting tools and tips, including videos on best recruiting practices. Scan the QR code shown on this page to access the Membership Training Video Playlist.

A visit to the VFW Membership Facebook page offers a look at past sessions of Membership Monday training seminars, which occurs once a month via Zoom. Nute said the training sessions are available for all members to attend.

“Anyone can be a recruiter,” Nute said. “It is all about talking to your fellow veterans. Be sure to let the vet know how the VFW has helped you personally. The personal touch is the best recruiting tool we have.”

With the spring weather here, Nute said to be present at fairs and festivals,



Steven Woodward, left, of Post 2224 in Pullayup, Wash., recruits a veteran last year during an event in Washington state. Woodward is one of the top three VFW recruiters throughout the entire organization.

or other community events. As always, he added, keep an eye out for signs that someone is a veteran. Such signs are branches of service hats and attire or stickers on cars.

“You cannot rely on veterans coming to you to sign up for membership,” Nute said. “Let them know VFW is here for them and ready to welcome them.” 🌟

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Scan here for the Membership Training Video Playlist

MEMBERSHIP MONDAY VIDEOS

Check out Membership Monday videos at the Facebook link below. Look for the “video” button and click on it to view a multitude of videos to help in recruiting. <https://www.facebook.com/VFW-Membership>



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12 dozen \$168.00

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VFW GRAVE MARKER

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U.S. VETERAN GRAVE MARKER

Emblem measures 6"
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U.S. VETERAN GRAVE MARKER

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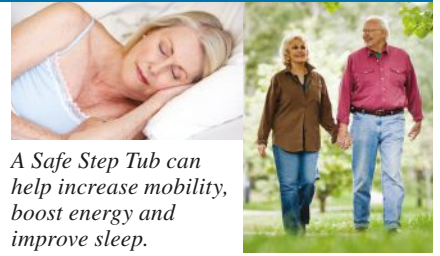
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New Blood Flow Breakthrough Helps Men Enjoy Strong, Long-Lasting Intimacy – At Any Age

Men across America are raving about a newly enhanced performance supplement that helps achieve healthy blood flow on demand

After age 40, it's common knowledge that performance begins to decline in many men. However, a new, performance empowering pill is showing that any relatively healthy man can now enjoy long-lasting, and frequent intimacy – at any age.

This doctor-designed formula, created by leading anti-aging expert Dr. Al Sears, has already helped men overcome low and sinking libido -- and has recently undergone a potency-enhancing update -- with remarkable new results.

When the first pill -- **Primal Max Black** -- was first released, it quickly became a top-selling men's performance helper, promoting intimacy across America.

It worked by supporting healthy testosterone levels. However, Dr. Sears soon realized that this isn't the only challenge men face with performance. That's when he turned his attention to blood flow.

And this became **Primal Max Red**.

THIS PROVEN SOLUTION IS MORE MECHANICAL THAN HORMONAL

Truth is, once blood flow slows down for men, no matter how exciting it is, it won't be enough without the necessary amount...

So enjoying intimacy without healthy blood flow becomes difficult for most men.

Luckily, a Nobel prize-winning scientist discovered the simple answer to help support performance strength and confidence -- by boosting vital blood flow -- and enhancing this essential

performance function.

Using this landmark Nobel Prize as its basis, **Primal Max Red** enhanced healthy blood flow for untold millions of men around the world with the use of strong nitric oxide boosters.

While **Primal Max Black** helped maintain optimal testosterone, **Primal Max Red** tackles a lesser-known challenge.

Director, Al Sears MD, who has authored over 500 scientific papers and has appeared on more than 50 media outlets including ABC News, CNN, ESPN, Discovery, Lifetime, and many more say, *"Less than optimal blood flow can be part of a huge problem that affects a lot of men. And it needed to be addressed once and for all, so men would not dwell on it. Then, once we optimized it and had a great deal of success, we set out to see if we could do even better."*

The former formula had excellent results. However, new research showed that for even faster, anytime, anywhere results, increasing the dose of a key compound was needed.

So, one of the three nitric oxide boosters in the new **Primal Max Red**, L-Citrulline, was clinically boosted to 9000 mg, and the results were astounding. Which is no surprise considering that 5000 mg is considered a "normal amount" -- giving the new version nearly doubled the blood flow boosting power.

Men who had previously been unsure about their power and stamina were overjoyed to be back to their old selves and to get and maintain a healthy bloodflow



A new discovery that increases nitric oxide availability was recently proven to boost blood flow 275% - resulting in improved performance.

when they needed it.

BETTER BLOOD FLOW, STRONGER RESULTS

The best way to promote healthy blood flow throughout the body is with the use of **Primal Max Red**. By using it, when exciting signals leave the brain, blood flows much faster like it used to.

This critical action is how men across the country are enjoying full and satisfying performance at any age. No need to bother with testosterone-boosting shots, blue pills, or shady capsules that have no effect.

Primal Max Red can effectively promote healthy blood flow that most men can use for maximum intimacy. This is leading to more greater capacity and satisfaction, coupled with long-lasting performance.

"There was a time when men had little control when it came to boosting their blood flow," Dr. Sears said. "But science has come a long way in recent years. And now, with the creation of nitric oxide-boosting **Primal Max Red**, men can perform better

than ever, and enjoy intimacy at any age."

Now for men across America, it's much easier to stay at their performance peak as they get older.

HOW TO GET PRIMAL MAX RED (AND FREE PRIMAL MAX BLACK):

To secure free bottles of **Primal Max Black** and get the hot, new **Primal Max Red** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-902-5489** TODAY. "It's not available in retail stores yet," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer." Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Primal Max**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back."

Call NOW at **1-800-902-5489** to secure your supply of **Primal Max Red** and free bottles of **Primal Max Black**. Use Promo Code **VETPMAX324** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!



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‘The Response Was Overwhelming’

A VFW Post in Pennsylvania worked with its city to provide a viewing area for senior veterans during one of the country’s oldest Memorial Day parades.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

Heralded as one of the oldest of its kind in the country, the Memorial Day parade in Doylestown, Pa., added a new feature to its longstanding tradition during its 155th annual event last year.

Spearheaded by VFW Post 175 to accommodate its senior veterans and those wheelchair-bound, a new seating area was designated to make it easier for them to attend the parade, which averages about 15,000 spectators per year.

“Prime viewing areas are occupied hours before the 10 a.m. start, and due to street closures, access to the parade route is challenging, as is nearby parking,” Post 175 Commander Steve Fischer said. “In the past, these circumstances have made it difficult for senior veterans, wheelchair-bound and/or those residing in area nursing homes to attend the parade.”

Fischer, who on behalf of Post 175 brought the idea to the Doylestown parade committee prior to the parade last year, left city hall pleased with the answer he had received.

“Doylestown Borough Parks and Facilities Department decided to set aside a prime viewing area for senior veterans and their families,” Fischer said. “They brought a 40-seat bleacher and two portable restrooms.”

The bleachers and portable bathrooms were set up along a stretch of the 1.5-mile route, which begins at the local high school and moves east and north and back east toward the Doylestown Cemetery, where it ends with a 30-min-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL OLENICK

Senior veterans and their families watch the 155th annual Doylestown Memorial Day parade from a new viewing area spearheaded by VFW Post 175 on May 29, 2023, in Doylestown, Pa.

ute memorial service, during which veterans of Doylestown place wreaths to honor their own.

In order to get the veterans to the designated seating area during the event, the parade committee also coordinated with Doylestown police and public works departments to allow shuttle and private vehicles carrying senior veterans to access an adjacent space designated for dropoff and parking.

“As this was the first time this was done, the Post decided not to fully promote the area but anticipated a larger crowd,” said Post 175 member and Senior Committee Chairman Michael Olenick. “We also received help from Doylestown American Legion Post 210 and their Legion youth baseball team, who set up 40 seats next to the bleachers provided by the borough.”

On Memorial Day, Post 175 members welcomed more than 60 senior veterans and their families into the private viewing area for prime seating along a leg of the 155th annual parade. As they sat down, Post members presented them with baseball caps that had their respective service embroidered on them.

With many of them coming from one of the eight local nursing homes in the area, Olenick added that their grat-

itude left an impression on him.

“The response was overwhelming,” Olenick said. “Other veterans groups during the parade would stop, face the bleachers and salute them. Emotions were very high. The senior veterans and family members who attended were most appreciative of this and were still talking about it and thanking us well after the event.”

To build on the success of the parade last year, Post 175 members plan on adding another element to the senior veterans viewing area for the upcoming 156th annual Doylestown Memorial Day parade on May 27.

They hope to enlarge the seating area to include disabled veterans, as well as providing a tent with snacks and refreshments and additional volunteers to help, since many Post members participate in the marching that takes place during the parade.

“We think this is a very important thing to continue to build upon,” Olenick said. “This parade honors those who gave their all for this country, and our senior veterans deserve to have the opportunity to pay their respects to them, some of whom were known to our senior veterans.”



EMAIL irodriguez@vfw.org

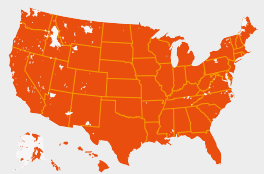


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