



$\begin{array}{c} 2022 \\ \text{veterans of foreign wars} \\ ANNUAL\ REPORT \end{array}$

VFW members are #StillServing in communities around the world. They work to help others as they did while in uniform, all while exemplifying the best of the American spirit.









David and Kimberly King enjoy their time during VFW's 123rd National Convention in July 2022 at the Kansas City Convention Center in Kansas City, Mo. Kimberly is currently commander of VFW Post 10904 in Manchester, Tenn., while David is its Auxiliary president. *Photo by Lauren Goldman/VFW*

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A MESSAGE FROM VFW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TIMOTHY BORLAND



VFW is a Beacon in the Community

VFW and Auxiliary members are pillars in communities around the world. With that in mind, VFW launched its #StillServing campaign less than three years ago. It is our goal to showcase the efforts of our members illustrating that "No One Does More For Veterans." Using the hashtag #StillServing, veterans share their stories of continued service on social media. I'm proud to say that more than 3 million people have engaged in the campaign. Nearly 550 stories have been written about the campaign's significance. We encourage veterans everywhere to share their stories of how they are #StillServing.

Last year, we took this initiative one step further as we introduced the inaugural VFW Day of Service. The first Saturday of every May will now kick off a month-long endeavor dedicated to serving communities around the world. More than 400 events were held worldwide last year. We expect even more this year as 98 percent of participating Posts last year have already said they will host again this year. At these events, 170 members signed up last year, and by living up to my slogan that "Every Veteran Counts," I'm positive that our recruiting efforts can double.

The VFW works in the community to promote education, which is why I also believe in a "future vision." Through its Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition, the VFW awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships and awards in 2021-22. Another \$1.4 was awarded to middle-school participants in the Patriot's Pen writing competition. Furthermore, since 2014, the VFW has awarded \$10.65 million to more than 2,372 veterans and service members through the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program.

We also help veterans and their families with direct financial assistance. The VFW's *Unmet Needs* program has distributed more than \$12.6 million to more than 11,200 military and veterans'

families since 2004. The program provides up to \$1,500 to veterans, service members and their families during times of financial hardship. It continues to touch so many lives every day because "Every Veteran Counts."

From the VFW office on Capitol Hill, the National Legislative Service department led the efforts in the passage of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act. The VFW considers this to be the most significant legislation for veterans in over three decades. Through the work from all of us using the Action Corps and our team on Capitol Hill, we prevailed.

Also in our Washington Office is VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) department. The VFW has more than 2,000 VFW-accredited service officers across the country ready to fight for veterans' benefits. We also staff service officers at 28 Pre-Discharge offices on military installations. Our service officers there offer VA benefits to help active-duty troops who are soon to be discharged.

For more than 100 years, NVS has been a beacon for veterans needing VA claims assistance. We do this free of charge and are fully accredited to help our veterans with their needs. In 2022 alone, the VFW recovered more than \$11 billion for veterans. We should all be proud of their efforts on behalf of our nation's veterans and their families.

This is but a snapshot of the magnificent efforts put forth by the VFW's outstanding workforce, not to mention our 1.5 million VFW and Auxiliary members around the world. Together, working as a team, we will continue each day to lead the charge for all veterans, thinking about future vision and my motto, "Every Veteran Counts." Thank you for all you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Auxiliary because "No One Does More for Veterans."



WE ARE THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VFW TAKES PRIDE IN ITS COMMITMENT TO VETERANS AND TODAY'S MILITARY. OUR PROGRAMS ENSURE NO ONE IS FORGOTTEN.

OUR CORE VALUES:

You've most likely heard of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The initials "VFW" are emblazoned on many of our 5,883 Posts worldwide. We are the nation's oldest major veterans' group, and we've been a part of the country's social fabric for 123 years.

We are an organization of 1 million veterans who have served overseas in war zones or areas demanding arduous duty, from mountains and deserts to jungles and swamps.

What you might not know about is our continuing commitment to our country and community. Our mission extends to troops serving overseas today and their families waiting back home.

Our Mission: To foster camaraderie among U.S. veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.

Our Vision: Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.

VFW MEMBERS CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT SERVING THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.

JUST AS WE PLEDGED DURING OUR TIME IN UNIFORM, WE AGAIN VOW TO SUSTAIN A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO THE NATION AND OUR COMMUNITIES.

VFW BY THE NUMBERS

MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION: Number of VFW and Auxiliary members

5,883: Number of VFW Posts worldwide

Six major wars and nearly **40** military actions since 1945 represented by VFW members.

A VENERABLE ORGANIZATION

VFW traces its origins to 1899 when 13 Spanish-American War veterans convened in Columbus, Ohio. By 1914, this group had merged with two other Spanish-American/Philippine War veterans' organizations to become known collectively as the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

VFW's supreme governing body is its National Convention. Each July, thousands of VFW members vote as registered delegates, determining policy by adopting resolutions and making important business decisions.

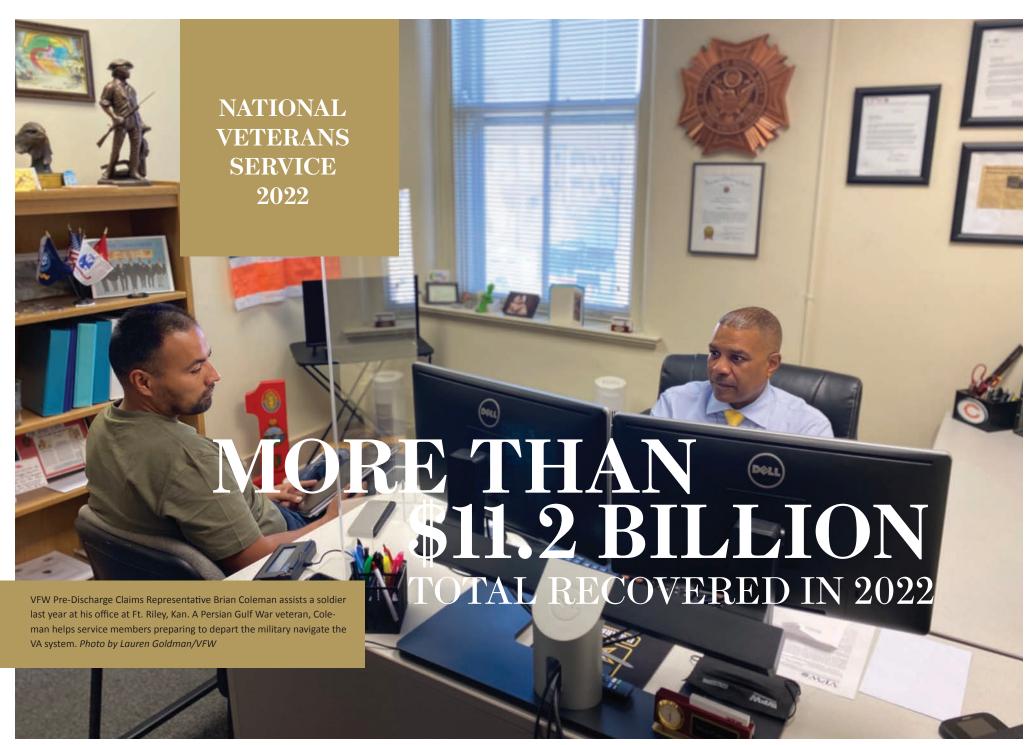
VFW's National Headquarters is in Kansas City, Mo., where the organization's administration and programs-related efforts are coordinated. Legislative-oriented activities are developed and implemented in VFW's Washington Office in the nation's capital.

VFW-AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Joining VFW to accomplish its mission are the VFW Auxiliary, the VFW Foundation, the VFW National Home and the Military Order of the Cootie, which is composed of VFW members dedicated to assisting hospitalized veterans.

NONPROFIT STATUS

VFW is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code and contributions are deductible under section 170(c).



VETERANS HELPING

"This is the greatest job I have ever had. This is the one that gets me out of bed in the morning because I know there are soldiers who are depending on me."

Brian Coleman, VFW pre-discharge claims representative at Ft. Riley, Kan.

HOW SERVICE OFFICERS HELP:

- Providing a lifetime of advocacy from the time a veteran files an initial claim, to helping survivors understand their benefits.
- Explaining benefits and helping vets navigate the oftenbureaucratic maze of procedures and paperwork.
- Guiding and supporting vets through months or even years of claims processing.
- Helping vets prepare necessary documents and evidence, monitoring cases and informing claimants of recent developments.
- Assisting veterans who can't personally get to VA regional offices.

VETERANS

Located on Capitol Hill, VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) has been serving veterans for more than a century. Advocating for veterans and their dependents to acquire their earned VA benefits is at the crux of NVS.

Annually, NVS budgets more than \$2 million for VFW Departments (state-run offices), which assist in filing VA benefit claim actions on behalf of the more than 560,000 veterans represented by the VFW.

NVS Director Ryan Gallucci said that service officers work tirelessly on behalf of veterans because that is the VFW way.

"Our VFW-accredited service officers are trained to provide a lifetime of advocacy to the veterans we represent," he said. "We do this free of charge regardless of VFW membership."

One such service officer is Jon Gohn, the claims director for VFW's Department of Minnesota, a position he has held since 2014.

From his office in St. Paul, Minn., Gohn oversees four employees. On average, his office works between 20-30 claims per day. Last year, the Minnesota office was the first to reach \$500 million for its veterans.

"Above and beyond, customer service is the most important thing we do," said Gohn, who started working 18 years ago as a service officer in South Dakota. "We are lawyers, medical experts and just an ear to listen. We can go from talking to a homeless veteran to a congressional liaison."

Gohn said that while the more common claims are hearing loss and musculoskeletal issues, his office does see a lot of vets with mental health concerns.

"We teach, preach and try our best to look outside the box," Gohn said. "This is where VFW's National Veterans Service is great. I've been to training with other organizations. VFW's training is far superior to anything else."

Gohn said after the passage of the *PACT Act*, his office has seen an uptick in inquiries. There has been a resurgence of Vietnam vets, he said, particularly due to hypertension claims pre-

viously denied. Iraq and Afghanistan vets experiencing chronic sinus and respiratory issues also are keeping the VSOs busy.

"Not even 24 hours after the *PACT Act* passed, we had more than 20 calls on it alone," said Gohn, who served in Iraq and later Kuwait with the South Dakota National Guard.

Gohn, who was named the 2021-2022 John A. Biedrzycki VFW Service Officer of the Year, said sometimes it is the connections he has that can be of greatest help to veterans.

Recently, a veteran called Gohn for help. The vet's wife had committed suicide in their apartment. The funeral home needed money and the vet also needed money for the professional cleanup of the apartment. He was no longer able to afford the larger apartment and was told he would need to pay \$3,000 to break his lease.

Working with the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, Gohn got the vet the assistance he needed.

"We had the connections to help him," Gohn said. "We wanted to do everything we could during that tragic period."

Gohn is quick to credit those working for him in St. Paul with the successes. In September, the office was named the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers Partner of the Year.

"As last year's VFW Service Officer of the Year, I would be remiss in recognizing that it is truly because of my dedicated team that allowed that to happen," Gohn concluded.

Another VFW-accredited service officer is Brian Coleman, the pre-discharge claims representative at Ft. Riley, about 130 miles west of Kansas City, Mo. Coleman, a Persian Gulf War vet, said he wishes he would have had the same level of service he provides to vets when he was discharged from the Army.

Oftentimes, when soldiers preparing to discharge from the military come to see Coleman, they don't realize they need their medical records and must request those.

"Everything has to be documented," Coleman said. "Then I screen those records to see what he or she may be eligible for.



LEFT: Jeff Cowell, Elissa Selleck, Jon Gohn, Steve Walker and Lynette Bonin take a break from their VA claims work in October at their office in St. Paul, Minn. As the claims director for VFW's Department of Minnesota, Gohn said his office works between 20-30 claims each week. VFW Photo

We are very thorough. I have some soldiers come in and they are surprised, especially the older ones."

Coleman, a member of VFW Post 8773 in Junction City, Kan., said the most common issue he sees is behavioral health issues such as PTSD, anxiety, depression and military sexual trauma.

The discharge process starts 180 days before a soldier is set to depart the military.

"This process is all about diagnoses, updated medical records and trying to navigate the day-to-day system with all the other things like moving your family," said Coleman who has worked for the VFW for five years. "I tell them, 'Let me help you with this.""

Coleman, who got his start as a Post service officer, said that while his primary mission is assisting soldiers, he can, and will, help those who have already left the military.

"This is the greatest job I have ever had," he said. "This is the

one that gets me out of bed in the morning because I know there are soldiers who are depending on me."

To achieve such a high level of service, VFW takes great pride in its service officer training, Gallucci said.

"Our service reps are regularly trained to provide the best possible service to our veterans," he added.

The multifaceted training program for VFW service officers includes in-person annual training where they learn about changes in law and regulatory changes.

Another facet to training is online or web conferencing. A third approach is NVS quality assurance, in which a team will meet regularly with new service officers to see if they need assistance.

"When a new service officer comes on board, we get out to their office during the first year to see what they need," Gallucci said. "Beyond that, we try to visit every office at least every three years."

The critical work done by VFW's service officers is free, very much unlike the current trend of "claim sharks," which are companies making big promises to vets while charging sometimes five times the amount of the veteran's retroactive compensation, potentially costing him or her thousands of dollars.

"VFW service officers act as a veteran's power of attorney when it comes to handling VA disability claims," Gallucci said. "This is something unaccredited consulting groups are not legally allowed to do. The reason VFW can do that is because we carry accreditation with the VA."

Gallucci added that veterans can expect to receive full claims assistance service when working with a VFW service officer.

"It's our job to help navigate the system for veterans," Gallucci said. "The VA claims process can be daunting and that is why we are here."

UNITING TO COMBAT HUNGTO COMBAT COMBAT



Dean Anzai, commander of Post 10276 in Oahu, Hawaii, and his wife, Auxiliary member Sheryl, sort and pack potatoes for the Uniting to Combat Hunger initiative during the 123rd VFW National on July 16 in Kansas City, Mo. The program has provided more than 2 million meals for food insecure families. *Photo by Ismael Rodriguez Jr./VFW*

Since 2018, VFW has teamed with Humana to establish the *Uniting to Combat Hunger* campaign. It remains a staple in fighting not only hunger, but also food insecurity across the country.

Since the beginning of the *Uniting to Combat Hunger* initiative, the program has provided more than 2 million meals for food insecure families. The U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2021 said more than 34 million people, including 9 million children, experience food insecurity in the U.S. during the year — that is about 1-in-10 households in the country.

At July's 123rd VFW National Convention in Kansas City, VFW and Humana held a food drive that provided about 12,000 meals — about 10,000 pounds worth of food — to families and individuals in need.

Feeding America says that about 125,000 active-duty military troops experience food insecurity — about 7 percent of troops in the active military. However, according to the Department of Agriculture, only about 2 percent of active-duty troops qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Feeding America also says 1-in-4 Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans are affected by food insecurity.

VFW and Humana are alarmed at the number of active-du-

"VFW and Humana are alarmed at the number of active-duty troops and veterans who suffer from food insecurity."

ty troops and veterans who suffer from food insecurity. This is the reason why VFW and Humana wanted to give healthy meals to needy Americans as a part of *Uniting to Combat Hunger*.

Food insecurity is defined as a lack of consistent access to food for individuals and families. But food insecurity is not just about people going hungry. Food insecurity also means that families have limited access to healthy food and fresh produce, such as fruits and vegetables. It's also an issue for people living above and below the poverty line.

Since 2021, the VFW Foundation has offered grants to VFW Post and Auxiliaries supporting the *Uniting to Combat Hunger* campaign. For every dollar raised by local VFW Post and Auxiliaries, the VFW Foundation will match the full amount up to \$5,000. Also, for every hour that a VFW Post or Auxiliary member volunteers to address food insecurity in their communities, the VFW Foundation will provide a dollar match in the form of an unrestricted grant. A minimum of 500 hours must be documented to qualify for the volunteerism grant.

For more information about *Uniting to Combat Hunger*, visit www.vfw.org.

FOOD INSECURITY BY THE NUMBERS 34 million: The amount of people in the U.S. who suffer from food insecurity. **9 million:** The number of food insecure children in the country. **125,000:** The approximate number of active-duty armed service members who experience food insecurity. **1-in-4:** The amount of food insecure Afghanistan and Iraq veterans. **2 million:** About the number of meals that have been provided by VFW and Humana's Uniting to Combat Hunger initiative.



PLATFORM FOR VETERANS

For more than 123 years, VFW has played an integral role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation signed into law.

VFW advocates daily on Capitol Hill to improve care and benefits for U.S. service members, veterans and their families. The enthusiasm of the more than 1.5 million VFW and Auxiliary members' influence helps the organization achieve its goals.

The VFW's National Legislative Service (NLS) monitors all legislation affecting active-duty service members, veterans and their families. The NLS team regularly testify at congressional committee hearings and directly work alongside Congress and the president's administration to accomplish VFW's annual priority goals and fight back against bad proposals that would eliminate or cause harm to veterans' earned benefits.

For more than 70 years, Congress has provided an opportunity for the organization's leaders and activists to speak with policymakers of their respective states.

The VFW Action Corps is a grassroots-level network that enables more than 300,000 VFW members and patriotic supporters to stay informed on issues facing the veteran and military communities. Participants stand ready to email, write, call or visit our nation's lawmakers to make VFW's voice heard on Capitol Hill.

Over the past couple of years, the Action Corps has played an important role in making the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act a law. Since the beginning, VFW urged the



Comedian and activist Jon Stewart speaks to the press about the importance of the *Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021* on April 19, 2022, outside VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo. Alongside VFW, Stewart was one of the key supporters of the *Honoring Our PACT Act. VFW Photo*

"The amount of support and resources that the VFW has to change veterans' lives for the better boggled my mind. It was a whole new world that opened up to me."

passage of the *Honoring Our PACT Act*, which the organization believes is the most significant legislation for veterans in history.

Alongside VFW, comedian and activist Jon Stewart was a key supporter of the *Honoring Our PACT Act*. Stewart spoke at several press conferences featuring VFW and other veterans service organizations. Stewart attended a press conference outside of VFW National Headquarters on April 19, 2022, in Kansas City, Mo. During a live virtual message at the VFW 2022 National Convention, which took place in Kansas City, Stewart called on all VFW members to contact senators and urge the legislators to vote in favor of the *Honoring Our PACT Act*. The call to action garnered more than 6,000 emails from VFW members who contacted senators from across the country.

Another key part of VFW's legislative efforts is the VFW-Student Veterans of America (SVA) Legislative Fellowship program. Since 2015, members of VFW and SVA have had the opportunity to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill. VFW-SVA fellows get to meet lawmakers and administrators responsible for implementing veterans' policy in the nation's capital.

VFW's collaboration with SVA provides student veterans a semester-long academic experience



involving research, action, reporting and advocating for veterans' policies. One of the students that participated in this year's program was Alex Ortiz.

Ortiz, who during the fellowship attended Rhode Island College in Providence, graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in accounting. He currently is working on obtaining a law degree from Puerto Rico's Inter American University.

Ortiz, who medically retired from active duty in 2013 after seven years of service, said his proposal for the fellowship was changing a provision in the *Post-9/11 GI Bill*. The bill, which was signed into law in 2008 after years of VFW advocacy, gives its beneficiaries 15 years to use the higher education benefits. Ortiz, a life member of VFW Post 10011 in Providence, said he wants to change that.

Ortiz says the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of student veterans to postpone their education, which could lead to the veterans not being able to use the fully earned benefits. For Ortiz, his inspiration for his interest in the *GI Bill* came from his friend. His friend's experience spurred Ortiz to fix the 15-year provision in the *GI Bill*.

"He got a notice from the VA saying that he had 22 months left on his *GI Bill* benefits," Ortiz said. "He thought he didn't have any benefits left, but he still received the notice."

However, Ortiz said, that was an error on VA's part. His friend then moved his family to start a new semester of school. However, at the end of the semester, the school told Ortiz's friend that the *GI Bill* benefits expired.

"He had a bunch of debt, and there was no way for him to cover his household expenses," Ortiz said. "He was counting on that housing allowance."

Ortiz — who served in Iraq in 2008 and 2009 and in Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011 with the 10th Mountain Division — said the bill he proposed will allow anyone who earned the *GI Bill* and served after Dec. 10, 2001, (90 days after Sept. 11) would be able to keep their *GI Bill* benefits longer than the current limit.

"It was a learning process for me on how bills are negotiated and made, as well as what VFW does for veterans," Ortiz said. "I was very grateful for the experience. The amount of support and resources that the VFW has to change veterans' lives for the better boggled my mind. It was a whole new world that opened up to me."

Student Veterans interested in the fellowship can get more information about the program by visiting: www.vfw.org/studentfellowship.

A life member of VFW Post 10011 in Providence, R.I., Alex Ortiz was one of five student veterans who participated in this year's VFW-Student Veterans of America Fellowship in Washington, D.C. Ortiz made a proposal to extend the 15-year limit for using the *GI Bill* by post 9/11 veterans. *Photo courtesy of Alex Ortiz*

EMERGING LEADERS



(From left to right) VFW Post 4763 Commander Kimberly Fuiten, alongside Post member Dave Lewis, speaks at a ceremony honoring VFW Department of Illinois Assistant Quartermaster Lee Morgan in March 2022. Morgan is the namesake of the Lee C. Morgan Hall in Chatham, Ill. VFW Post 4763 Photo

Last year, members of a VFW Post in a suburb of Springfield, Ill., voted to install three women as the chair officers of the Post.

VFW Post 4763 in Chatham, Ill., located about three miles south of Springfield, voted in:

Kimberly Fuiten

VFW Post 4763 Commander Navy veteran

Jeanie Howard

VFW Post 4763 Sr. Vice Commander Navy veteran

Stephanie Wells

VFW Post 4763 Jr. Vice Commander Illinois Army National Guard veteran Wells, a member of VFW Post 4763 since

2021, said she wanted to be around more people like her.

"I had a friend who I served with who passed away," Wells said. "While it was a sad

time, I got to see all my old military buddies. It reminded me that I miss visiting and talking to military members and veterans."

Wells said she wanted to experience the camaraderie she once had in the military. That's why Wells decided to join VFW.

Wells, who served from 2003 to 2009, is an Iraq War veteran. She deployed to the country from 2005 to 2006. She said when she attended her first Post 4763 meeting, she "immediately was received with open arms" by her fellow members.

"It's a new generation. We are trying to make a difference in our communities. We are working to make the VFW known as something more."

Fuiten said more veterans need to be involved in the organization, adding that VFW's "current generational shift" is younger veterans with families.

While in the Navy from 2002 to 2006, Fuiten deployed to the Persian Gulf and served as an aviation boatswain's mate aboard the *USS Boxer (LHD-4)*. She said it is important to show everyone, including veterans, their spouses and the community, that VFW is evolving.

"It's a new generation," the Post commander said. "We are trying to make a difference in our communities. We are working to make the VFW known as something more."

Wells also believes that more women and younger veterans should be involved with the organization. She added that having women and younger veterans in leadership roles will entice more to join the VFW.

"I think it's good for representing our Post and the VFW," Wells said. "I think it will show others that they are welcome here."



Air Force veteran John Lawrence is photographed with his two children in Sugar Hill, Ga. Lawrence received an *Unmet Needs* grant which paid for a month of childcare, allowing Lawrence to pursue job interviews and eventually find a new job. *Photo courtesy of John Lawrence*

HELPING WHEN FANTLIES NEED IT MOST

John Lawrence joined the Air Force to go to school, learn a trade and travel the world. He served for six years as an electrician and spent part of that time in Tokyo, Japan.

Today, he lives in Sugar Hill, Ga., with his wife, Heta and their two children, Elsa and Niilo. He still copes with service-related injuries, including a stretched wrist ligament, bad knees and lower back and neck pain.

Most notably, Lawrence suffers from severe anxiety. To manage it, he undergoes monthly counseling, does yoga and meditates. Even so, it can be a struggle.

After a series of panic attacks at work, coupled with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Lawrence was let go from his job. He was encouraged to seek financial support and discovered the VFW's *Unmet Needs* program.

Before receiving the grant, Lawrence feared he would have to choose between paying his mortgage or childcare. "I really don't know what I would have done," he said. "This assistance means the world to me. It covered a month of childcare while I went on interviews. With the help, I was able to land a new job in a less stressful environment."

Lawrence got back on track financially and is thankful to the VFW and its donors for helping him along the way. He hopes others realize the impact they can make.

"For those considering giving, know your donation can change a family's situation," he said. "It will alleviate stress and financial burdens brought on by unexpected circumstances."

As soon as Lawrence can, he plans to give back and donate to the VFW himself. He hopes to help fellow veterans in need and offers advice following his own experience.

"Don't be too proud to ask for help," he insisted. "Your family depends on you."

"For those considering giving, know your donation can change a family's situation."

UNMET NEEDS BY THE NUMBERS More than \$12.6 million: The amount of financial grants awarded to military families since 2004 to help cover basic needs in times of financial hardship. 11,249: Number of service members/veterans and their families who received assistance through *Unmet Needs* since 2004.

VETERAN RECEIVES

HELP A HERO SCHOLARSHIP

"It was an incredible relief to find this scholarship. Each semester is a struggle, and the scholarship just makes it easier on me and my family."



Army veteran and recipient of the VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship Jeremy VanLaningham is shown with his wife, Crystal; son, Zachary; and daughter Savannah. VanLaningham said that the scholarship enables him to attend school full time. Photo courtesy of Jeremy VanLaningham

VFW's Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship has afforded a former Army Ranger the opportunity to attend University of Minnesota full time.

Jeremy VanLaningham began the three-year, full-time nurse anesthesia program at Minnesota University in 2020. The Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran said he is on track to finish the program at the end of August.

The demanding program leaves VanLaningham with no time for a job. And, since he has a wife and two children, he said he needs all the help he can get.

"Without the VFW's scholarship program, I would not be able to attend this program," Van-Laningham said. "It is incredibly expensive, and I have already exhausted all of my GI Bill benefits from previous schooling."

The former Army Ranger learned about the VFW's *Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship* from scouring the internet for military-related scholarships. He eventually found www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support, where he learned about *Help a Hero*. VanLaningham said it was an easy process to apply for a VFW scholarship.

"It was an incredible relief to find this scholarship," VanLaningham said. "Each semester is a struggle, and the scholarship just makes it easier on

me and my family."

VanLaningham served on active duty from 1998 to 2002. He deployed to Afghanistan with 3rd Ranger Bn., 75th Ranger Regt., from 2001 to 2002. VanLaningham then joined the Army Reserve, serving from 2003 to 2005.

In 2006, VanLaningham was activated into full-time service and deployed to Iraq with the 558th Signal Company, an Army Reserve unit based in Maineville, Ohio. He was discharged from the Army in 2008.

Because of VFW's help with his tuition, VanLaningham said he became a Gold Life Legacy member of VFW Post 4452 in Cannon Falls, Minn.

"I wanted to give back," VanLaningham said.
"I want to return the favor since VFW is affording me this opportunity."

Sponsored by the hair care franchise Sport Clips, the *Help A Hero Scholarship* is now in its eighth year. Individual recipients receive up to \$5,000 through the scholarship program.

As VFW's official haircutter, Sport Clips began working with VFW in 2005 to raise funds for a former program called *Operation Uplink*. In 2013, Sport Clips became the primary supporter of the *Help A Hero Scholarship* program.

SUPPORTING TROOPS AND THEIR HALLES

In order to serve as a cushion for the perils of deployment, VFW Post 7192 in Midwest City, Okla., adopted the 552nd Air Control Wing out of nearby Tinker Air Force Base in March.

As a retired radio operator for the 552nd Air Control Wing in 2000, Post 7192 Commander Lee McCullum understood at an intimate level the benefits VFW's Adopt-A-Unit program could have on his former unit.

"I was excited because I know what VFW's assistance programs can do for active-duty troops," McCullum said. "I know how important it is to build supportive relationships with units before, during and after deployments."

McCullum, who also serves as president of the Airborne Early Warning Association (AEWA) chapter in Midwest City, pitched the idea to the 552nd AWC commander, Col. Keven Coyle, during a monthly breakfast event hosted by the chapter.

"The AEWA is an organization of retired AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) members, and Col. Coyle was in attendance at one of our monthly breakfasts," McCullum said. "He asked if we could mentor the active-duty members, and we accepted."

McCullum invited VFW's Department of Oklahoma and District commanders into the conversation, where they further explained what the VFW could offer active-duty troops.

"We told him about our Adopt-A-Unit program and all that it entails," McCullum said. "He was impressed with the vast network of free resources for military members and their families that the VFW offers."

Through the VFW's Adopt-A-Unit program, which currently supports more than 121,000 active-duty members and their families, McCullum highlighted special events that included family days, welcome-home ceremonies and deployment sendoffs, holiday parties, support seminars and community projects.

McCullum also spoke about the program's direct assistance before, during and after deployments, which can include accommodations for wounded service members in the form of lawn care, auto repairs and home renovations.

"We're a very active Post, and as a result, we are the first Post to reach our recruiting quota in the state," McCullum said. "A lot of the members of the AEWA have joined our Post, and even a few active-duty guys."

He was impressed
with the vast network
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DISASTER RELIEF

Each year since its inception more than 120 years ago, VFW members' pursuance and duty to help local communities ravaged by natural disasters remains a staple of the organization.

Across the world, VFW members annually devote themselves to serving in any capacity necessary to help combat the harsh aftermaths of tornadoes, floods, wildfires, typhoons or hurricanes destroying communities.

When a long-tracked tornado stormed across western Kentucky on Dec. 10, 2021, ravaging numerous towns that included Mayfield, Princeton, Dawson Springs and Bremen, the VFW Department of Kentucky exemplified what it means to be #StillServing.

A relentless network of VFW Post members in Kentucky answered the call to action, quickly creating fundraising efforts, food and supply storage as well as driving in and out of the areas hit hardest to provide such relief.

"I put out a call for needed goods that I was going to take down in a trailer to Bowling Green as Mayfield was getting all the news coverage and Bowling Green needed help also," said then-VFW Post 1170 Commander Calvin Shaak Jr., who is now the Department of Kentucky quartermaster. "Before I could get back to the Post our local community had dropped off so many supplies that our hall was full."

Shaak and Post 1170 members in Louisville, Ky., also received backing from Penske and Rider truck rental companies, as well as donations to cover fuel from Powerhouse Gaming, a game manufacturing company in Bullitt County, Ky.

"I drove a truck down as Post and Auxiliary members would load the other truck," Shaak said. "So, I was able to jump into the now full truck and go again."

Shaak worked closely with VFW Post 1298 Commander Glenn Skaggs in Bowling Green, as well as Amvets Post 130 Commander Gerald Mounce.

"Glenn set up his Post as a distribution point, working around the clock to ensure people who needed anything could get it," Shaak said. "He worked tirelessly receiving, unloading and coordinating to get added help and storage containers as support was coming in quicker than he could get it out at first. He also worked with local government offices to get supplies to people in need."

This network of Posts answered the call to action once again when an unfortunate cycle of flash flooding happened between late July and early August.

"We as a state received and distributed to needy vets' monies sent from across the U.S.," Shaak said. "I cannot think of a state VFW and Auxiliary that has not helped with money and supplies. I would give a personal thanks to the VFW family, as we have come together to help our comrades in need."

Through the efforts of former Department Commander Edwin Vincent and newly elected commander Nathan Sesco, the Department dispensed more than \$118,000 during the year.

"We are not only here for veterans, but to serve the community in their time of need," Sesco said.

"Commander Ryan Buchanan with VFW Post 6291 helped bring in supplies, and I know Post 5829 Quartermaster Tony Adams and Kentucky State Police trooper Jay Perkins from Post 1178 in Harlan were in the water on boats and rescued more than 20 people in Whitesburg."





ABOVE: Members of VFW Post 1170 in Louisville, Ky., take a break after loading food and supplies for communities ravaged by a tornado on Dec. 10, 2021. BELOW: Lisa Epley, an Auxiliary member, organizes donations at VFW Post 1298 in Bowling Green, Ky., on Dec. 10, 2021, following a disastrous tornado that ripped through western Kentucky. *Photos courtesy of Calvin Shaak Jr.*

EDUCATING AMERICA'S

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

Each year, VFW provides high school students in the United States and certain areas overseas with an opportunity to voice their ideas through a democratic-themed essay.

Through this premiere scholarship program, *Voice of Democracy*, VFW presented Daniela Mare with its first-place \$30,000 *T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship* during a virtual ceremony on April 7, 2022.

Sponsored by VFW Post 9486 and its Auxiliary in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y., Mare's winning essay on "America: Where Do We Go from Here?" compared America to a paint pallet.

"Each unique color represents the individuality of every U.S. citizen and every color has an equal opportunity to change the painting in its own distinct way," she wrote.

A junior at Sachem High School North in Lake Ronkonkoma, Mare wrote that America — "a nation so divided on perceptions of right and wrong" — must embrace the notion of unity to move forward.

"In order to thrive, 'to go from here,' we must unify," she concluded. "So where do we go from here? The answer is simple. We must pick up our paint pallets and begin painting our unified picture."

The *Voice of Democracy* audio-essay competition drew nearly 25,000 students for the 2021-2022 year. The contest received support from VFW partner Twisted X, which donated \$130,000.

PATRIOT'S PEN

Syed Ali earned top honors in VFW's 2021-2022 Patriot's Pen

youth essay contest. His essay on the theme, "How Can I Be a Good American?" earned Ali the \$5,000 North End Post 144, Paul A. Spera Past Commander-in-Chief Award.

An eighth-grade student at L.J. Alleman Middle School in Lafayette, La., Ali was one of nearly 69,000 students in grades six through eight to compete in the contest. He was sponsored by VFW Post 1982 and its Auxiliary in New Iberia, La.

The first-place recipients from each Department in the *Patriot's Pen* contest shared the \$55,000 in awards, distributed accordingly to each based on placement.

To learn more about the *Voice of Democracy* and *Patriot's Pen* youth programs, visit www.vfw.org/YouthScholarships.

SMART/MAHER NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD

A proud daughter, wife and mother of Navy and Air Force veterans, Lisa Russell is infused with a sense of patriotism, citizenship and community service.

In instilling these pillars and ensuring her students at East Elementary School in Mountain Home, Idaho, remain proficient in all subject areas, Russell was presented VFW's 2021-2022 Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher Award in July at VFW's 123rd National Convention in Kansas City, Mo.

"It means a lot to be honored by this group of heroes, and it is inspiring to me how much you have given during your military service and your continued service to our country," said Russell, who represented VFW Post 5423 in Mountain Home. "This experience has been both exciting and humbling. I love teaching first graders and am filled with joy every day by teaching these young people."

EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

\$2 Million:

Amount of awards presented at all levels of VFW during the 2021-22 *Voice of Democracy* competition.

\$1.4 Million:

Amount of awards presented at all levels of VFW during the 2021-22 *Patriot's Pen* competition.

73,132:

Number of Patriot's Pen student participants in 2021-22.

26,007:

Number of *Voice of Democracy* student participants in 2021-22.

\$59,257:

Amount of awards distributed at the Post, District and Department levels for the *Smart/Maher* award in 2021-22.

1,664:

Number of teachers who participated in the 2021-22 Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year Contest.

64:

Number of teachers who have been honored since 1999.

YOUTH



Then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic and VFW Auxiliary President Jean Hamil present Daniela Mare with the first-place *Voice of Democracy* award on April 7 during the VOD Parade of Winners live on Facebook. A high school junior, Mare won the *T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship*, a top prize of \$30,000. She represented the Department of New York on behalf of VFW Post 9486 and its Auxiliary in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y. *VFW file photo*

RIGHT: Patriot's Pen winner Syed Ali, an eighth-grader at L.J. Alleman Middle School in Lafayette, La., was awarded the North End Post 144, Paul A. Spera Past Commander-in-Chief Award, a top prize of \$5,000. Ali represented the Department of Louisiana on behalf of Post 1982 in New Iberia, La. Photo courtesy of Syed Ali





Lisa Russell, right, is pictured with her husband Mark Russell. Russell is the recipient of the 2021-2022 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award. Russell, who was nominated by VFW Post 5423 at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Mountain Home, Idaho, has been a teacher at East Elementary School in Mountain Home since 1999. Photo courtesy of Lisa Russell



VFW Post 9951 members and Auxiliary members gather food and beverages last May in Bangkok, Thailand, to support the Place of Grace food bank. While the Post began its support of the food bank in 2020, it came together for the inaugural VFW Day of Service to continue its generosity.

Photo courtesy of Post 9951

#STILLSERVING

VFW members have long been known for their volunteer endeavors. To that end, VFW launched the Day of Service in 2021. The inaugural event saw more than 400 Posts worldwide engaging in activities benefiting communities.

According to VFW Communications Director Randi Law, 98 percent of Posts participating in 2022 have already said they will host events again in 2023 when the VFW Day of Service kicks off May 6.

"Our members show up when there's a need," Law said. "Day of Service offers a great way for them to demonstrate what they stand for, and that's service to others. It should be noted that while the first Saturday in May has been designated as the VFW Day of Service, Posts can host events at any time throughout the month."

This day of serving was created following the success of VFW's #StillServing campaign which launched in 2020. The so-

One such VFW Post making a difference is VFW Post 11079 in Elgin, S.C. Members there opted to serve their community throughout the entire month of May. Beautifying the community, helping at-risk pets and offering resources to those in need were on the schedule for the month.

The Post's day — or month — of service kicked off with its members venturing out into their local community.

"The comrades and incoming Auxiliary president completed a community cleanup," Post Commander Christine Rogers said. "We collected 17 bags of trash along the roads near our Post."

Next, members geared up to host a food drive. All donations were delivered to a local food pantry in dire need.

"We found out that they had to close every other week due to not having enough food donations," Rogers said. "We collected over 2,500 pounds of food. This drive came at the right time."

Recognizing both an urgent and ongoing need, the Post intends to continue helping. Partnering with a local food bank, they hope to make monthly donations.

Overlooking no one, the Post also held a collection for animal friends, inviting the community to donate food, towels, blankets and toys for distribution to local pet shelters.

The Post held its final event on May 21. All proceeds from the Support Your

Local Heroes Benefit went to area firefighters and veterans. Partnering with the Blaney Fire Department, Post members organized an event that included a dunk tank to "dip" firefighters as well as games for all ages. Local vendors also were available to share information and resources with veterans.

"Bringing veterans and the community together to make a meaningful difference is what the VFW does."

cial media campaign recognizes VFW members' commitment to community service. Since then, more than 3 million people have engaged in the campaign.

"Bringing veterans and the community together to make a meaningful difference is what the VFW does," Law said. "Our members are still serving."

REMEMBERING OUR HAT A TOUR

"I felt a great deal of pride and was humbled to think that our service then would be commemorated with previous conflicts that we grew up studying."

John Muckelbauer, VFW's General Counsel



Then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic, a Gulf War veteran himself, speaks during The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial groundbreaking ceremony on July 14, 2022, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. VFW Photo

VFW has long felt it a privilege to preserve the memory of America's war dead. That's why the organization supports initiatives that pay tribute to Americans who have lost their lives in war. Over 40 years, VFW members have contributed more than \$7.2 million to eight major memorial efforts in Washington, D.C.

When the groundbreaking ceremony for The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial happened on July 14, then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic was among the many in attendance.

For Mihelcic, who served in the Air Force as a security

policeman with the 131st Tactical Fighter Wing in Saudi Arabia during *Operation Desert Storm*, the momentous occasion was both nostalgic and a long time coming.

"It was a very moving time to be a *Desert Storm* veteran," Mihelcic said. "And to provide remarks on behalf of the VFW was very special for me."

In 2015, the VFW pledged more than \$500,000 toward the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association's efforts to build a memorial that would capture the history and heroics of the most decisive victory in modern U.S. history.

The long-awaited memorial will be located about 300 yards from the Lincoln Memorial, across from the Institute of Peace and near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a nod to many senior

leaders during the Gulf War who are Vietnam veterans.

"A lot of people didn't want to share the risk," said Scott Stump, president of the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association. "VFW stepped up when nobody else would at that level. VFW's donation has been critical to the success of where we are today."

Stump added that the memorial will serve as an in-depth look into a war that carried more than it took to fight it.

"It was so much more than a 100-hour war," Stump said. "And at the end of the day, people will remember those who served and learn this story."

Sharing Stump's sentiments among many *Desert Storm* veterans in attendance during the groundbreaking ceremony in Washington, D.C., was VFW's General Counsel John Muckelbauer.

"It brought back a ton of memories and a flood of emotions," said Muckelbauer, who served with the Fourth Marine Division during *Operation Desert Storm*. "What was most astounding was the recognition that those of us who deployed to *Desert Shield*, which became *Desert Storm*, were part of history. The idea that I would ever have any aspect of my military service honored on the hollowed ground of the National Mall is something that was never anticipated."

Like many VFW members and Gulf War veterans, Muckelbauer's chest swelled at the thought of his veterans' organization once again paving the way to honor those involved in yet another war as a way to keep history alive.

"I felt a great deal of pride and was humbled to think that our service then would be commemorated with previous conflicts that we grew up studying," Muckelbauer said. "And to know that the VFW was the first organization to push for this memorial, and remains the only veterans organization to stay engaged in the process, makes me very proud to be a member."

The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial is slated to open on Nov. 11, 2024.

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Mr. James T. Knowles Mr. Melvin Koga Ms. Alice Koncsol Mr. Steve Kornacki Carol Korte Io Krenisky Mr. Stephen Kruger Gary Kruse George H. Kuhl Mr. Laszlo Kulcsar Jerry L. Kunsman William E. Kunz Mr Gerald La Favre Bonita La Torre Mike Lakin Ms. Lillian M. Lang Philip Lange Mr. Harry D. Larabee Ms. Karen Larkin Ms. Judy A. Latanation Mr. David Latchford Nicholas D. Latrenta Mr. Phillip Laugen Loyd T Lavender Jeffrey H. Lawton Mr. Richard C. Leclaire Dorothy LeMay Mr. Edward C. Leonard Marvin D. Lerfald Frank J. Levanti Jr. Kenneth Lew Jennifer A. Lewis Mr. H. W. Lichtenberger Mr. W. Henry Lingle IV Mr. John E. Linton Ms. Barbara Liphart George S. Littell Mr. Charles E. Little Mr Ronald Lively Samuel C. Long Dennis A. Lopez Mr. Albert & Margaret Low Mr. John A. Lowry Raymond Ludtke Mr. Raymond Lugo Mr. Richard Lugovich Kurtice Luther Scott D. Lutjens Mr. James Lvon Mahel B. Fischer Grant Foundation Mr. Paul Mackin Madigan Family Foundation Mr. Steve Magnuson Bradley A Mahany Ms. Mary Ann Mahoney Mr Daniel Mairs Richard A. Majeres Judy Manaro James E. Manderfield Robert & Sylvia Mapel Dr. Lawrence Marcotte Mr. Mary Mars Mr. Judy Marshall Bonnie Marshall Clark Martin Mr Richard C Mary Ms. Veronica Master Mr. Morgan T. Matthews Iames Maucere Iames Mauldin Donald A. Mawhinney William Mayrose

Albert R. Mazza

Mr. Steven R. Mazzola

Ms. Kathleen Mc Carthy

Sandra Kelly Mc Kinney Terry & Marie Mc Kinney Ms. Edna McAdoo Ms. Dianne J. McClelland John &Paula McCrossan Mr. Leland McGill Ms. Bernadette McHugh Derek McLoughlin Joan McNerney Patricia McPherson Alice McPherson Tim Meggison Mr. Gary L. Mellema Mr. Donald R. Mengel Mr. Dewitt Mercer Dr. Frank W. Merrick Ms. Becky Messner Mr. John Metzko Jimmy Meyer Mr. James Meyer Ms. Karleen Miller Mr. William Monahan Mr. Frederick Monticone Ms. Joy Mooney Al Moore Harold & Helen Moore Mr. Daven Morey Lee C. Morgan Susan Morgan Kathleen Morrison Iames Morrison Philip & Rhonda Moses Mr Gary R Mudd Dr Marlies Mueller Mr. Ivan Muetzel Andrew K. Mull Mr. Gary Mullen Ms. Barbara Mullins Michael E. Mushinskie James Muth Donald S. Myers Mr. Iames M. Myers David Nattras Jeff Neisen Leonard Nelson Steve Nelson John I Nero Mr. William Ness Mr. Jeffrey G. Nichols Mr Paul Noe Thomas Noone Mr. Noel Nowe S. Nugent Dennis Nyhus Wayne A. O'Shana Claude Obar Ms. Marilyn Obrien Mr. John O'Brien Randall ODonnell Scott Orenstein Mr. Robert L. Orgill Ir. Timothy Osborne Mr. Jon Oscher Richard Ostermeier Carol Oukron Helen Owens Mr. Vernon Pack Madeleine Palacin Mr. Kay Parkinson Norman Patterson Patricia Paylenco Carolyn Pedone Lawrence D. Pelis Cheryl K Pelton

Mr Frank Perrotta

Mr. Philip Persi

Carol A Pfaff George R. Phillips Paul Phillips Ms. Sandra Pierce Arthur Pietrusiewicz Calvin Pingree Ms. Elaine Platt Mr. Hal Pliska Mr. V Pockrandt Mr. Robert Poli Dennis Pope Mr James O Powell Dr. James S. Prawat Mr. Robert Prentice Ms. Linda Prescott Mr Wayne H Price Mr. Stanley Pushkarsky Dennis J. Quinlan Mr. Richard Quinn Mr. Gary Radtke Robert W. Rahe Rask Enos & Cherie Rasnick Mr. Sandra Rea Dr. Robert S. Reimers Mel Reinthal Roger Reiser Ms. Iill Remick Mr. William Renaut Ir. John B. Renwick Susan Rey Corinne H. Richardson David Richman Mr. Alfred Richter Mr. Carole B. Riley Barbara Risius Mr. Mark Ritchie Reinaldo Rivera Russell Robideau Mr. William Robinson Mr. Robert Rodriguez Harry K. Rogers Ir. Walt & Mary Rogers Dan Rommel Mr. John Romnes Richard Rosenberg Ms. Sue Ross Mr. John & Ruth Roth Dr. John Roueche Andrew Roy Robert D. Rucinski Brad Ruesch Mr. Stephen B. Russell James P Russell Mr Randy Rutter Jeffrey & Barbara Sadar Albert Saia Mr. Joseph Salamone Donald W Salo Mr. Michael Saner David Sawicki Dr. Lisa Scheffler Loretta Scherer Mr. John B. Scheumann Ir. Mr. Robert E. Schjerven Mr. Jacqueline Schlate Ms. LeRoy D. Schmaus Joseph W. Schmidt Mr. John L. Schoolev Pete & Pam Schroeder Gregory Schuh Al Schweitzer Mr. Clayton Sealy Donald E Seymour Io Ann Sevmour

Mr. R. I. Shaffer Mr. Larry E. Shaffer Mr. Eric R. Shapiro Mr. David M. Shea Kevin Shea Mr. Thomas Shields Ian Shirley Blair Shouse Mr. Thea Shupe Ms. Allmut Siepe Leonard Signeski Ronald Simons Kenneth R Sinihaldi David Sippel Ms. Debra Slocum Lynn H. Sluder Blaine H. Smith Jr. Buster R. Smith Mr. Thomas W. Smith Maxine Smith Gordon Smith Doyle Smith Mr. Glenn Snyder Ruth & Dennis Sokol Mr Thomas Soleau Frederick Sontag Mr. James Spoth Ioan Srednicki Mr. Nicholas St George Ms. Donna F. Stannard Mr. Bond Starker Jerome E. Stauber Larry Sterner Mr. Diane W. Stevens Mr. Michael Stevison Mr. William Stewart Dorna Stewart Mr. Roger Stoehr Mr Martin N Stone Mr Timothy Stormer Hayes and Patricia Stover I. W. Straight Marvin Strehlow Leslie N Strong Johnie F. Sturgeon Ms. Geraldine Styler Brian Sullivan Mark & Diane Sult Mr. Thomas Sumner Mr. W. Stuart Sykes Patti Taft Mr. Richard Talbot Maurice Tanner Peter Tate Mr Steven Taydus Mr Robert Taylor William Taylor TD Ameritrade Mr. Fred G. Teal Herhert I Terdin Jean Terlizzi The Alexander S Alacche Foundation The Marksmen Company The Park Foundation William Thibodeaux Paul A. Thomas Jr. Mr. Ross Thomas Mr. Anton Thomasen Ms. Keturah Thunder-Haab Julie R. Tipps Inajean Todd

Ms. Novella Troy Leonard P. Trzeciak Ronald Tuchschmidt Mr. Noel A. Tursi Ms. Kay Unverderth Mr. Margaret T. Upchurch Richard Urell Mr John II'Ren Mr. Garv F. Vaida Lawrence G. Vanden Plas John Vander Feen Sherida Vandiver Mr. George Varsam Mr. Walter Vasil James A. Vaught Lee W. Verhulst Beatrice Vicks Mr. Michael Vilbert Floyd J. Vlasak Mr. Nancy Vogelman Olaf Von Ramm Ianina Voss W. K. Russell Family Foundation John & Mary Anne Wagner Marilyn Waldrep Hickey Larry Walker Jack W. Walker M T Walker Mr Christian Walsh Ms. Lana Wanles Peter Wasilkoff John Wasleff Mr. Jim Waterfield Mr. Tom Webster Eileen & John Weida Mr. Allen J. Welcome Mr. Harry Wellenkotter Mr. James Wheeler Mr John A White Mi Susan I. White Mr. Olin D. Whitescarver Thomas R & Deborah K Whitesell Ms. Linda Whitney Gary T. Whitworth Wieler Family Foundation Mr. Norman A. Wilfong Sr. H. L. Wilson Michael Wilson A P Wind Winiarski Family Foundation William Witcraft Mr. Ron Witschy Gerard J. Wolfe Mark Wolfendale Woltien Family Foundation Mr. Art T. Wong Frank Woods Ms. Francine E. Wooldridge Ms. Patricia Wright Mr. Stan Wrightsmar Mr. Florence Yankosky Zhou Yong Roderick S. Zehrung Ms. Sonia Zeringue Mr. Mattias Zhabinskiy Mr. Robert Zupan Richard Zurek Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous

Mi. Erna Tomisei

Constance Travesi

Travis Foundation

Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position August 31, 2022

ASSETS

ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$4,257,549
Investments	213,509,931
Receivables	8,689,573
Inventory	1,814,497
Property and equipment, net	7,925,838
Pension and postretirement asset	2,558,751
Prepaid expenses	3,519,546
Total assets	\$242,275,685
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$10,768,092
Life member dues for future	
distribution — state and posts	75,120,108
Deferred revenue	34,105,898
Total liabilities	119,994,098
Net assets	
Without donor restrictions	113,935,569
With donor restrictions	8,346,018
Total net assets	122,281,587
Total liabilities and net assets	\$242,275,685

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets Year Ended August 31, 2022

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Contributions and gifts	\$71,611,717
Investment return, net	(16,012,558)
Membership dues	7,430,833
Supply, Buddy Poppy and other sales	6,424,870
Advertising revenue	2,719,754
Other revenue	3,810,601_
Total support and revenue	75,985,217
EXPENSES	
Program Services:	
Veterans service activities	27,961,021
Fraternal activities and member services	19,718,176
Community service and public awareness	13,739,252_
Total program services	61,418,449
Supporting Services:	
Fundraising activities	32,734,372
Management and general	4,038,146
Membership maintenance	1,296,127_
Total support services	38,068,645_
Total expenses	99,487,094
Change in net assets before pension-related	
changes other than pension service costs	(23,501,877)
Pension-related changes other than	
pension service costs	654,449
Change in net assets	(22,847,428)
Net assets, beginning of period	145,129,015
Net assets, end of period	\$122,281,587



Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position August 31, 2022

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$2,583,460
Investments	14,675,252
Receivables	389,405
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment	40,789
Prepaid expenses	177,418
Total assets	\$17,866,324

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$348,431
Total liabilities	348,431
Net assets	
Without donor restrictions	12,073,161
With donor restrictions	5,444,732
Total net assets	17,517,893
Total liabilities and net assets	\$17,866,324

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets Year Ended August 31, 2022

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Contributions and gifts	\$4,500,719
Investment return, net	(1,829,002)
Total support and revenue	2,671,717
EXPENSES	
Program Services:	
Veterans service activities	2,562,038
Community service and public awareness	1,034,683
Supporting Services:	
Fundraising activities	598,246
Management and general	585,165
Total expenses	4,780,132
Change in net assets	(2,108,415)
Net assets, beginning of period	19,626,308
Net assets, end of period	\$17,517,893

CONTACT US

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