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JAN -MAR 2026

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Commander: TODD HAVILAND Auxiliary President: MARIETTA HILL

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It's not the price you pay to become a member,

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It's the price you paid to become eligible

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Looking for VA help and don't know where to go?? [1-800-MyVA411](tel:1-800-MyVA411) ([1-800-698-2411](tel:1-800-698-2411)) is always the right number



For WOMEN SPECIFIC issues call 855-829-6636

If you are a Veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838). Visit the [VA Homeless Programs](#) website to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness

SAY HELLO TO YOUR JR VICE COMMANDER, CHARLES HOLLOWAY



Charles Holloway was elected Junior Vice Commander for the Department of South Carolina on June 22, 2025. He served an impressive 19 years in the South Carolina Army National Guard, showcasing his dedication to duty and country. Charles began his military career in December 1991 as a heavy equipment operator, establishing a solid foundation for his long and commendable service. Charles was medically retired in September 2012. Charles earned his VFW eligibility by serving in Iraq. His leadership continues to drive positive change and inspire others.

During his military service, Charles received numerous awards, including the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal (2nd award), the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (4th award), the National Defense Service Medal (2nd award), the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal. Charles also received the Army CAB Badge during his deployment.

Charles joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in 2008 as a member of Saluda Post 6561 and later transferred to VFW Post 6740. He is also a member of the Military Order of the Cooties Pup Tent 15. Throughout his involvement with the VFW, Charles has held various positions at the post, department, and state levels.

In civilian life, Charles is employed by the Batesburg-Leesville Police Department, where he serves as the supervisor for the School Resource Officer (SRO) unit. He holds a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice, a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, and an Associate's Degree in Public Service. Additionally, Charles is a devoted father and grandfather.

VFW Awards and Accomplishments.

- *2019-2020 VFW SC Police Officer of the Year
- *2020-2024 VOD Chairman

- *2023-24 Department Patriots' Pen Chairman
- *2024-25 Department Teacher of the Chairman
- *2020-21 Most Outstanding District Quartermaster
- *2023-24 Most Outstanding Post Commander
- *2023-24 Most Outstanding District Commander
- *3- Time All-American Post Quartermaster
- *2024-25 All-American District Commander
- *2023-24 All- American District Commander
- *2023-24 All-American Post Commander
- *2022-23 All-American Post Commander
- *2020-21 All-American District Quartermaster
- *2023-24 All-State District Commander
- *2023-24 All-State Post Commander
- *2022-23 All State Post Commander
- *11- Time All-State Quartermaster

Goals for the VFW

1 Enhance Veteran Support and Resources: Elevate awareness of the benefits and resources available to veterans. Create informational programs and workshops, in collaboration with local organizations, to help veterans navigate the complexities of VA benefits, healthcare services, and educational opportunities.

2. Promote Community Engagement: Increase community involvement through outreach initiatives and public events that raise awareness of veterans' issues. Foster partnerships with local organizations to create a network of support and advocacy for veterans.

3. Strengthen Membership and Leadership Development: Focus on recruiting new members and cultivating leadership within the organization. Provide training and mentorship programs to empower members to take on leadership roles and promote the values and mission of the VFW at all levels.



The Secretary of the Veterans Administration has re-affirmed the VA'S commitment to ending sexual harassment, or sexual assault at any VA facility. If you see harassment or assault, or you are a victim of either. You are encouraged to tell a VA staffer you trust, or contact the VA at: www.va.gov/report-harassment

NOTE: This program was initially enacted to protect primarily female veterans. Since there can't be any sexual discrimination. This availability is open to all veterans.

AMERICA WITHOUT HER VETERANS WOULD BE LIKE GOD WITHOUT HIS ANGELS!
Claudia Pemberton

Your personal experiences equal advocacy actions



New VFW Story Banking Initiative: The VFW has launched VFW Voices of Service – Stories in Action, a new national initiative to collect veteran and family experiences that inform and strengthen our legislative advocacy. We will be gathering stories on a wide range of issues, including VA health care access; toxic exposures; concurrent receipt and the Major Richard Star Act; VA benefits and disability claims; education, employment and transition; mental health and suicide prevention; food insecurity; caregiver and survivor benefits; and other challenges facing the veteran and military community. Submissions will help us to identify patterns, gaps and real-world impacts that shape legislative priorities, congressional engagement, testimony, education and grassroots advocacy throughout the year. Every experience adds to the overall picture. [Share your story](#) and help turn your personal experience into advocacy action.

What the VA did in 2025

Most of us use the VA Care System in one form or another. There are those of us that like the VA Care we receive and there are those who do not like the VA (even though many of those non-likers still use the VA system).

The following is what the VA is touting as their accomplishments for 2025, all in the name of improving Veteran care:



VA is making major improvements

*The backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits is [down 57%](#) since Jan. 20, 2025, after it increased by 24% over the previous 3 years.

VA has [eliminated the backlog of Veteran families waiting for VA health care](#).

VA is [processing record numbers of disability claims](#), reaching an all-time fiscal-year high of [three million claims processed thru Sept. 30](#).

- VA opened [25 new health care clinics](#), expanding access for Vets around the country.
- *Since Jan. 20, VA has offered Veterans more than 1.4 million appointments outside of normal operating hours. These early-morning, evening, and weekend appointments are giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.
- *VA [permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans](#) across the country in FY25, the highest total in seven years.
- *VA is spending [an additional \\$800 million](#) on infrastructure improvements to ensure department facilities provide safe and effective patient care. The additional funds will come from savings gleaned from various VA reform efforts.
- *VA has made it [easier](#) and [faster](#) for VA-enrolled Veterans to access care from non-VA providers at the department's expense.
- *VA has [made it easier](#) for women Veterans to access gynecology care.

- *VA is [accelerating the deployment](#) of its integrated electronic health record system, after the program was nearly dormant for almost two years.
- *VA partnered with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify and recover [\\$106 million in duplicate billing](#).
- *VA has brought tens of thousands of employees [back to the office](#), where we can work better as a team to serve Veterans.
- *VA has [terminated union contracts for most bargaining unit employees](#) and [redirected millions in wasteful union spending back to Veterans](#).
- *VA [ended DEI at the department](#), stopping more than \$14 million in DEI spending.
- *VA is [phasing out treatment for gender dysphoria](#). Frankly, this commonsense reform should have been done years ago,
- *VA [canceled previous Administration plans](#) to spend \$77 million on electric vehicle chargers and is instead spending the money to fight cancer and improve health care at facilities around the nation.



By now, all of you Post Commanders and VSO’S should know that there is no such thing as a Post VSO anymore. The title has been changed to ‘**BENEFITS ADVISOR**’ and the job description has been changed in the 2026 Manual of Procedure Section 218(a)(12) for Posts and Section 418(a)(14) for Districts. However, the training/information guide still listed by the VFW is 2024 version and still talks about “Post VSO’s”. However, the “Post Service Officer Guide Reference Page” even though outdated as a title, still lists those thing that a Benefits Advisor should have access to so that they can correctly refer a member to a necessary resource.

As a minimum, EVERY Post BENEFITS ADVISOR should have the following information sheet completed and be able to refer a veteran/veteran family to the best resource available, in your area, in response to a veteran’s needs. Hopefully it is on your post bulletin board?

The Post Service Officer Guide Reference Page PSO Reference page 1 of 1 As a VFW Post Benefits Advisor it is important to be kept up to date on available resources to help our veterans and their families. Below are some fields for common resources that can assist you and our veterans: My Post Number: _____

My Post Commander: _____

My Department Commander: _____

My Department Adjutant/Quartermaster: _____

My Department Service Officer: _____

My Department Service Office Contact: _____

My Department Chaplain: _____

Local VA Regional Office: _____

Local VA Medical Center: _____

Local VA Clinic: _____

Local Vet Center: _____

Local Veterans Home: _____

Local Elected Official Contact: _____

Local Social Security Administration Office: _____

Military Honors Coordination: _____

Local Community Center: _____

Local community shelter: _____

Local soup kitchen: _____

Local halfway house is located: _____

Veteran Job Resources: _____

Other local programs for veterans: _____



VA Warns About New Benefits Scam Targeting Veterans: The VA announced that scammers are impersonating its representatives to deceive veterans, surviving spouses and family members into believing their VA benefits have been overpaid and must repay immediately. These fraudulent contacts may arrive via letters, emails, text messages or phone calls and include fake VA logos, letterheads and spoofed phone numbers to appear legitimate. Veterans can protect themselves by only using official VA channels to resolve any real overpayments, never sharing sensitive information like VA login information, and being cautious of urgent demands for quick payment. Veterans who believe they have been targeted should contact the VA at 1-800-827-1000 and can file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission or at VSAFE.gov.

Feeling depressed, or have frequent depression bouts? There are some studies out there that tout the benefits of exercise to help combat depression. You don't need a full-blown exercise program (even though that would help). If you start feeling depressed, or have been depressed for awhile. Go out and take a walk or ride a bike, or play golf. Indoors, do some minor exercises, lift some weights, get on the treadmill, do some chair exercises. Anything to take your mind off your depression.

If you have persistent depression, you need to seek medical help!

*****April starts the voting season within the VFW. Make sure you attend the elections meetings and vote for your favorite candidates. BETTER YET – This is YOUR chance to step-up-to-the-plate and throw your name into the ring. NO level of the VFW can exist without those willing to take on some form of leadership role. Is that going to be YOU??**

Mid Winter Conference 2026

The best laid plans of men and mice – went by the wayside for the Jan 22-25 Mid Winter Conference as Mother Nature reared her non-cooperating head and put a damper on many travel plans. Due to the severity of the storm that was to hit S.C. and a good part of the rest of the nation. Many planned attendees cancelled their travel plans and many left the conference early to stay ahead of the pending weather. With that being said. For those that came, for those that stayed. The conference went on and a full agenda was adhered to.

Thank you to the National Representatives, Adjutant General **DAN WEST** and Auxiliary Senior Vice President **DONNA MILLS** who made the trip in spite of the pending severe weather. Mrs. Mills had to leave early to make sure she was able to get back to PA.



Thank you to our VOD/PP/Teacher award winners for braving the elements to attend the banquet.



Patriots Pen – THOMAS SUMMER (\$500)



Voice of Democracy – REILLY DUKES (\$1,000)



Teacher – KRISTINE ADAMS (\$1,000)

Thank you to all the vendors who showed their resilience and dedication by defying Mother Nature: Our vendors in attendance were: **VFW National Home, Veterans Outreach, CenterWell Senior Primary Care, Military Women's Memorial, Humana, Neurolumen, Advocate Health Advisors, The Elwood team, Turmeric Skin Care, and Health is Wealth.**

Congratulations to all the Comrade Award Winners

**Our Early Bird Winners: (A \$200 check for making 101% or higher in membership)
Post 3096 – 3447 -5936 – 6738 – 8738 – 10256 – 10813 and 12102**

Some of your Conference Awardees





Golden Pen Awardee: Post 10256, Goose Creek

Social Media Awardees: Post 8738, Lexington – Post 9539 Spartansburg and District 2

Program Awards:

Public Servant – Firefighter

Post 3034 Sumter

Public Servant- Law Enforcement

Post 4262 Columbia

EMT of the Year -

Post 8738 Lexington

Life Saving -

Post 8738 Columbia



The SC VSO presented a special trophy to DWIGHT HORA for his foundations financial support of the SC VSO program

OUT AND ABOUT THE CONFERENCE



THANK YOU to the 20 people who donated blood!



THANK YOU – To the Conference Committee and the senior executives and all the volunteers for another successful conference.

Next step – The State Convention in June, in Columbia. Plan on being there!!! Talk it up amongst your Post members to try and get them to go.

****Convention dates June 19-21 with elections being held on June 21st with inductions being conducted shortly after the elections.**

It is after the State inductions that all Post and District Officers then assume their duties for the upcoming year.

The year is rapidly coming to an end. How does your Post Report Card look?
According to the Report Card listed on March 22nd. :

- *More than half the posts are showing no participation in VOD/PP/Teacher programs
- *More than half the posts are showing no donation to the National Home
- *More than half the posts are showing no contribution to the Commander's Special Project

- *More than half the posts showed no participation in a District Round-Table
 - *15 Posts showed no Poppy Purchases
 - *5 Posts show no participation in a Community Service project
- You still have time to correct most of these deficiencies.**



For those of you that don't know. Your SC VFW is the proud sponsor of a home at the National Home complex. Pictured are some of the National Home leadership presenting information on the home and presenting Commander Haviland with a picture of the S.C. home and the plaque that will go on the building showing SC VFW sponsorship.

MY notes from the Saturday morning CofA business meeting:

- *The issue of GUEST'S at a meeting was discussed. For those of you that don't know, the Commander or a Committee Chairman can approve a guest attending a Post business meeting. **NATIONAL BY LAWS ARTICLE II, SECTION 203 – Guests**
- *Discussion evolved around not letting disagreeable members ruin a business meeting.
- *With the changes in todays world. Posts cannot be static in their activities and the way the do recruiting. They need to look at new ideas, especially the younger, newer members.

*One Post recently closed their doors, was dissolved and their property sold. There was some discussion on what was done with the funds from that sle.

***EVERY** VW member has to be on the look out for what is happening in Congress. YOU can't let Congress take away any of your veteran rights. You have to be the advocate.

PRIME EXAMPLE: EVERY VFW member should be contacting their Congressional leadership to get them to bring the Richard Star Act to the floor for a vote.

*The VFW is in the process of putting together a CERTIFIED MENTOR PROGRAM to ensure all new members, all new leadership at the Post & District level has someone to help guide them.

*There are a couple of air conditioners that needed replacing at the State Headquarters. Since no monies were directly allotted to this repair, there was a motion to assess each post \$4.00 per member to help pay for the headquarters expenses.

This motion was squashed (not allowing a second) because a motion of this sort has to have a members vote (not just the CofA) and the only time that can happen is at the State Convention.

NOTE: The motion comes into bearing in regards to the fact there are those (members) out there that think the Headquarters complex should be sold because it is not used enough to warrant the expenses associated with its operation..

*National Headquarters is working on a program that will improve the efficiency of scoreboard reporting to the State and National headquarters.

*District 1 had to relinquish the District Membership Trophy to District 7

ITS CHANGE OF COMMAND TIME!, or IS IT?

Post, District and State elections are right around the corner – Men and women of the SC VFW, are you ready to make that move that could put you in a leadership role? Like with any living organism, YOUR Post/District/State needs new blood to continue to exist and thrive.

EVERY* leadership position is open for your consideration. Not just sure how much you want to be involved? Look at the Manual of Procedure ARTICLE II, Section 218 for Posts, Section 418 for Districts and Section 518 for State - Officers - and see if there is a position there that peaks your interest. Also, you can talk to anyone at any level who holds/has held any sort of leadership position and I am sure they will be quite willing to explain to you what it takes to be in that position.

Elected positions, except the House Committee, are done in April with induction into the office in May. Appointed positions are done by the newly elected Commander in time for the appointees to be part of the induction ceremony.

At the Post level:

ELECTED POSITIONS TO CONSIDER

Commander
Sr Vice Commander
Jr Vice Commander
Quartermaster
Trustee, 3 Year

APPOINTED POSITIONS TO CONSIDER

Adjutant
Chaplain (you don't need a religious background)
Judge Advocate (you don't need legal experience)
Surgeon (you don't need medical experience)
Officer of the Day
Benefits Advisor

***HOUSE COMMITTEE: there are traditionally seven persons elected/appointed to this committee. Their election, for our post, is normally done in May. Once the Committee is formed, at their first business meeting they will elect a Chairperson and a Secretary/Recorder.

***The new Commander is also responsible for selecting various Committee Chairpersons.

At the District Level

ELECTED POSITIONS TO CONSIDER

Commander
Sr Vice Commander
Jr Vice Commander
Quartermaster
Judge Advocate
Surgeon
Trustee (3 year)

APPOINTED POSITIONS TO CONSIDER

Chaplain
Chief of Staff
Inspector
Assistant Inspector

At the Department Level

ELECTED POSITIONS TO CONSIDER

Commander
Sr Vice Commander
Jr Vice Commander
Quartermaster
Judge Advocate
Surgeon

APPOINTED POSITIONS TO CONSIDER

Chaplain
Chief of Staff
Inspector
Benefits Advisor
Adjutant

NOTE: At the Post and District levels. For the most part, any position is open for election/appointment. Many posts/districts have officers who have held their position for many years (our QM served 19 years, another Post Commander has served over 10 years).

At the Department level. Once you make Jr. Vice Commander you progress “through the chairs”. That is, you will be voted to go from Jr Vice, to Sr Vice to Commander, without challenge. All other positions are open for anyone to be elected to them.

EX: At the State Commander level, you will elect a Jr Vice Commander, who, in 3 years, will be elected as State Commander. **State Commanders only serve a one year term!**

YOU CAN BE A NON-FLYER AND AT CERTAIN AIRPORTS GET A TSA PASS



Typically, the way it works is that online applicants provide their full name as well as the preferred day and time they would like to enter the airport. In some instances, applicants will be asked for a scan of their valid government ID (such as a [Real ID](#) or [passport](#)). Each application is then submitted to the TSA, and the approval window varies by airport; with some you’ll hear back right away, while others may not notify you until the day before your visit. If approved, you’ll be given instructions for when and how to enter the standard security screening like any ticketed flyer, after which you’ll be free to proceed into the terminal.

- Albuquerque International Sunport: [ABQ FlySide Pass](#)
- Capital Region International Airport (Lansing, Michigan): [LAN Visitor Pass](#)
- Cleveland Hopkins International Airport: [Hopkins Hangout Pass](#)
- Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport: [DTW Destination Pass](#)

- John Wayne Airport (Orange County, California): [OC AirPASS](#)
- Kansas City International Airport: [MCI Guest Pass](#)
- Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport: [MSY Guest Pass](#)
- Nashville International Airport: [BNA PASSport](#)
- Oakland San Francisco Bay Airport: [OAK Guest Pass](#)
- Ontario International Airport (California): [ONT+ Visitor Pass](#)
- Orlando International Airport: [Experience MCO Visitor Pass](#)
- Palm Springs International Airport: [PSP Stay & Play Pass](#)
- Philadelphia International Airport: [PHL Wingmate Pass](#)
- San Antonio International Airport: [SAT Pass](#)
- San Diego International Airport: [SAN Pass](#)
- Seattle-Tacoma International Airport: [SEA Visitor Pass](#)
- Tampa International Airport: [TPA All Access Pass](#)
- Tri-Cities Airport (Washington): [PSC Pass](#)
- Tulsa International Airport: [TUL Visitor Pass](#)

As you can see, there are NO airports in SC that allow this procedure.

As mentioned previously, the application process is different at each airport, so be sure to carefully read the instructions before submitting an application.

POST CLOSED DUE TO THE WEATHER – Over the last couple of days of January and first couple of days of February. This was a familiar posting for many posts in S.C. Some posts were closed multiple days (my post it was three days).

As you sat home with nothing to do, or no place to go, because you could not go to your favorite hangout, YOUR VFW Post. How did it make you feel that you could not get out and be with many of your friends and comrades at the post? After a day or two, were you ready to get back inside the friendly confines of YOUR Post?

As a short period of time goes by, you notice that there are less and less comrades coming into the Post and less and less members participating in the various Post activities. Prices are going up to offset the dwindling participation and YOUR Post is doing less and less VFW and Community Service stuff!!

Now imagine this. That **CLOSED** sign hanging on YOUR VFW Post because there is not enough membership to support YOUR Post being open. That empty feeling you now have knowing you just lost one of your most favorite places to go. Are you part of the problem that caused this? Have you promoted the VFW to any veterans you come across? Have you actively gone out and recruited JUST ONE member? Have you participated in VFW activities designed to put YOUR Post in the public eye and thus create an avenue for eligible veterans to want to join YOUR Post?

In the last five years the S.C. VFW has lost three posts, including one just a couple of months ago. Is YOUR Post next? The answer lies with YOU!!



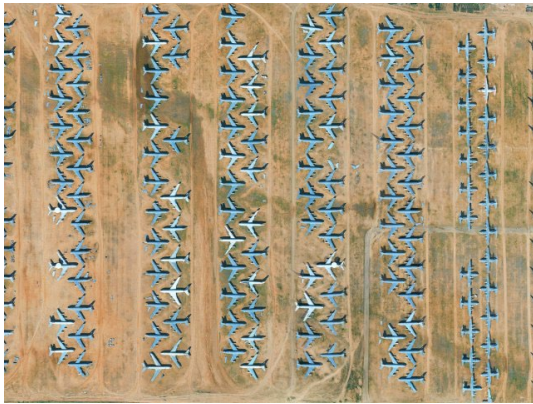
The declining WW II Veteran

population: A couple of years ago I published a chart showing the declining population of ours, and other primary countries WW II veterans.

The following is an update on info I could get that covers 2025:

- *U.S. - There is an estimated **45,400** WW II veterans remaining. Less than 3,000 were left from the D Day invasion. An estimated 747 live in S.C. When I last reported, there were 119,500.
- *Germany – 8,000 – when I last reported there were 70,000
- *Japan – 25,000 – when I last reported there were 100,000
- *Great Britain – 12,000 – when I last reported there were 70,000
- *Russia – 40,000 – when - I last reported there were 75,000
- *Canada – 3,200 – when I last reported there were 8,000
- *Australia – 2,500 – when I last reported there were 3,000
- *New Zealand – 300 – when I last reported there were 1,300

NOTE: For the U.S. There are an estimated 37,900 Korean War veterans remaining and an estimated (as of 2024 – no 2025 stats available) 610,000 Vietnam veterans remaining. , The youngest age for a U.S. veteran to have served even 1 day in W II would be 97/98.



AIRPLANE HEAVEN – Where most aircraft go when they outlive their usefulness. This heaven is known as DAVIS MONTHAN, in the Arizona desert and it is home to over 3,500 US aircraft. At the end of WW II there were over 65,000 excess aircraft that had to be stored somewhere. At the time it was at 30 different airfields around the country. Now it is only Davis Monthan. Not all aircraft go here to bask in the sun for eternity. Some are upgraded and returned to DoD. Some are kept functional and used as target practice for various anti-aircraft armaments. Some are used for

parts, with an average of 10,000 parts being salvaged for other aircraft at a savings of over \$500 million each year. Once an aircraft has outlived its total usefulness, it is then shredded for one last grab at any valuable metals or minerals it may still contain. Davis Monthan receives about 300 new arrivals every year! It is NOT open to the public!!

*****Did you receive any gift-cards (fast food, restaurants, stores, golf, etc) for Christmas or your birthday, or? – Did you use them yet? –** Do you know that over \$1 Billion in gift-cards go unused every year. That is a 100% pure profit for the card issuer, and a 100% loss on your part.

*****Do you like to fly a lot? Do you have a favorite airport?** You may be happy to know that Myrtle Beach Airport has been voted #4 in the top ten small airports in the country. It might be worth it to take that extra drive to Myrtle Beach next time you want/need to fly somewhere!

ELECTION TIME IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER FOR POSTS AND DISTRICTS. STATE ELECTINS ARE HELD AT THE STATE CONVENTION IN JUNE.

Now is the time for you to start thinking about taking that step-up and getting more involved with the VFW. You might not want to step into an Elected or Appointed officer position and that is fine. Maybe being a Committee or Program Chairperson is more to your liking.

At the State/Department level. There are around 15 of these positions appointed each year by the incoming State Commander. You can see all of these positions by going to VFWSC.org, scrolling over to **ABOUT**, click on, scroll down to State Commander go to **the State Commanders Guidebook** click on it and then scroll down to the **GENERAL ORDER-Appointments**. There you will see all the Appointed positions. Many of the chair persons will be returnees. Each year there are a few of the positions that become vacant. I know that as of right now, the Teacher, Membership and State Editor positions will not be returning next year.

Tony Brown will be the next State Commander. If you are interested in anything at the State level, Contact Sr Vice Commander Tony Brown at tony@empirepmgroup.com and let him know of your interest in any of the Chairman positions. The sooner, the better!

Maybe you don't want to be the Chairperson, but you would like to be on one of the Committees. Just contact Tony.



COFFEE drinkers were right – A recent study of over 131,800 coffee and tea drinkers conducted by MIT, Harvard and Mass General Hospital, concluded that drinking 2-3 cups of caffeinated coffee or 1-2 cups of caffeinated tea a day lowers your chances of getting dementia and also lowers your chances of experiencing cognitive decline. The study recommends, the earlier in the day you drink the coffee/tea, the better.

Within the same study, researchers found that person's getting 6 hours or less sleep a night have a MUCH HIGHER risk of getting dementia.

TRICK QUESTION – Which one is the VFW Logo??



ANSWER: The first picture is the 'official' VFW logo. The Cross of Malta is the VFW official 'seal'.

Does your post have some money in your Relief Fund and you are looking for a good place to use it. Try contacting your local VA Facility and find out when they are having their next “STANDDOWN” and what they need to support it?



VA Stand Down events are an annual occurrence. They are initiatives designed to provide essential services and support to homeless and at-risk veterans, including food, clothing, health screenings, and referrals for various assistance programs.

Overview of Stand Down Events

Stand Down events are typically organized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in collaboration with local agencies and community organizations. These events usually last from one to three days and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for veterans in need. The services offered during these events include:

Basic Needs: Veterans receive food, clothing, and hygiene products to help meet their immediate needs.

Health Services: Health screenings and medical care are provided, along with referrals to mental health and substance use treatment services.

Housing and Employment Assistance: Veterans can access resources for housing solutions, employment opportunities, and social services.

Community Support: Stand Down events foster a sense of community and camaraderie among veterans, helping them connect with peers and service providers.

Veterans interested in attending a Stand Down event can find information about upcoming events through the VA's official website or local VA Medical Centers. These events are designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that veterans receive the support they need to improve their circumstances.

Looking for VA help and don't know where to go?? [1-800-MyVA411](tel:1-800-MyVA411) ([1-800-698-2411](tel:1-800-698-2411)) is always the right number



For WOMEN SPECIFIC issues call 855-829-6636

*****The VFW National Day of Service (May 2nd)** – is rapidly approaching. Has your post signed up to participate in this year's event? Your post can only get VFW credit for your participation, if they have registered their "Day of Service" event with the VFW. Even though the event is scheduled for May 2nd. If your post does any community activity event during the month of MAY, your post will get credit for participating. BUT, your post event has to be registered with the VFW.

Last year, less than half the posts in SC participated in the National Day of Service. Let's do a lot better this year!!

Commander Haviland and Jan Owens at the new SCVFW National Home



In February they went to Eaton Rapids Michigan to dedicate the home that is now sponsored by YOUR State VFW.

In May, the Jr Vice Commander (and others) will be taking funds to the National Home complex to support the SC VFW sponsored home. Let's make it BIG BUCKS!



CONGRESS AT WORK – During 2025 there were:

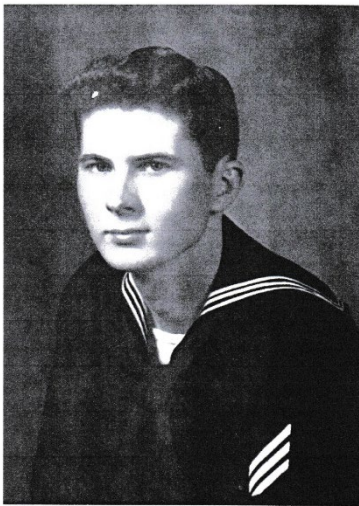
- ★
- *12,341 Bills introduced to Congress
- *Congressional Committees decided there were 1,185 worth looking into
- *Of that, 958 were introduced to the floor for consideration
- *Of that, 88 passed both chambers
- * Of that, 70 went to the President for signature
- *Of that, the President signed 61 into law.

“Nonagenarians” Wanted

Does your post have members 90 years old or older? If so, I would like to hear about them or from them. Their actual age, and are they active in your post, their branch of service, maybe something about their military time, and where they earned their VFW eligibility and anything else you or they want to say about them/themselves.

These inputs can come from them, our most senior warriors, or you. Send me a picture and a little story and I will create a page in the newsletter just for them/you.

MEET 91 YEAR OLD DICK HESTER



Mr. Hester is a Navy veteran, not a VFW member. He joined the Navy in 1952. After Basic Training, he was sent to Little Creek, VA and assigned to the USS BURDO APD-133. After about six months on the ship, he was given the job as “Dispersing Clerk” (you Navy veterans loved this guy because he made sure you got paid).

The USS BURDO was sent to the Mediterranean in 1953 and 1954 where it served as a “Good Will Ambassador” stopping in many ports in Greece, Spain and Italy. Part of their good-will mission was to train some of the Naval military personnel from those countries. Their military personnel would go out to sea with us and when our mission was complete, we would take them back to their home ports. After their Mediterranean deployment, they were sent to the Caribbean Sea where their primary function was to train for anti-submarine warfare. In between deployments, we would always return back to Little Creek. During a visit to Cuba, the crew was treated to free meals at the homes of the oil executives living on the island.

In 1955 the USS BURDO went to Charleston, SC for an overhaul. Navy Third Class DK, Dick Hester was discharged from the Navy on January 21, 1956, in Charleston. He and his wife moved to Ocean Drive Beach, but he was not finished with the Navy. He joined the Navy Reserves and did his weekly time and meetings in Georgetown. After 13 years in the Reserves, Mr. Hester had to give it up when

they moved the Reserve commitments and meetings to Charleston and it was just too far for him to try and drive after work.

Dick and Judy Hester raised three children. Dick & Judy were married 68 years, before her recent passing.

Mr. Hester's civilian career is quite impressive. He has served on the local Parent Teacher Organization, the local School Advisory Board. He was elected to the Horry County Board of Education. He was part of the Committee that accomplished the incorporation of Cherry Grove Beach, Ocean Drive Beach, Crescent Beach, and Windy Hill Beach into what is now known as North Myrtle Beach. Mr. Hester was elected Mayor of North Myrtle Beach in 1984. He has also served as City Executive Officer of the first full-service bank in Ocean Drive Beach "The Farmer's Bank". He was President of the SC Eye Bank (by way of the Lions Club). Mr. Hester is a 'founding father' of the N. Myrtle Beach Area Historical Museum. He is/has been a columnist for the local newspaper since 1999.

Mr. Hester credits a lot of his success to the training and discipline he learned while in the Navy and Navy Reserve.

A life well lived Mr. Hester. Keep up the great work!!

WASHINGTON HOUSE SENATE CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 2026



YOUR VFW Commander-in-Chief in Washington, in March, testifying before a special House and Senate Committee on Veteran's Affairs.

A contingent of SC VFW also attended this event, led by Commander Todd Haviland.

While Commander-in-Chief Whitmore, and many other VFW members, were at these meetings, an attempt was made to get the Major Richard Star Act (S-1032) passed by the Senate ranking member asking for a "Unanimous Consent" of the Senate for passage of the bill. Senator RON JOHNSON of Wisconsin blocked the passage. Previously Senator ROGER WICKER of Mississippi had done the same. Veterans of these two states. When it comes election time, I hope our veteran brethren in these two states remember these two names, supposedly representing you, when it comes to elections.



Americans living abroad (not counting US military): It is estimated (s of 2022, the last figures available) that there are about 5.5 million US citizens living in foreign countries (most of these numbers derived by individual country census information). The top 10 countries for Americans are:

Mexico – 1,182,346
 Canada – 1,050,898
 United Kingdom – 325,321

Israel – 281,137 Germany – 238,652 Australia – 218,216
 South Korea 129,499 France – 117,462 Japan – 112,111 Spain – 108,684

DEPARTMENT ELECTIONS - Any Post in arrears for any financial obligations to the District or Department shall not be entitled to vote at the Department Convention. Financial arrears to the District is defined as a Post who has not paid their District (dues) to the District. Department arrears is defined as: Post Q/M not bonded, failure to submit all Post Trustees Reports of Audit or proof that an IRS 990 was not filed. Posts in arrears to the District or Department shall be deprived of all representation at the Department Convention. Financial obligations (arrears to the District or Department) must be cleared by the Department Quartermaster or their designated representative not later than fifteen (15) days prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY, THE WW II YEARS



DID YOU KNOW – That of the approximate 350,000 women who served in the military during WW II. That during WW II there were all female flight crews and nurse teams on air-evacuation flights of sick and wounded GI’s from the European, Pacific and Asian theatres of war. All told, these flight nurse teams helped over 1.5 million GI’s get to treatment destinations and that during that time, these nurses only lost 46 patients in the air. The female flight crews flew C-46’s, C-47’s and C-54 aircraft that were modified for air-

evacuation service.

- *17 flight nurses were killed in aircraft crashes in WW II.
- *67 nurses became prisoners of war when Corregidor fell in 1942.
- *At the end of WWII there were about 57,000 flight nurses.

The first woman flight nurse to get her newly authorized Flight Nurse wings was GERALDINE DISHOON in 1944. She was part of the FIRST Air Evac team to land on Omaha Beach shortly after D Day.

S.C. DISTRICTS

(According to me)



Many of you may not be aware that ARTICLE IV, Section 401 of the National By Laws, requires Departments (SC) to establish their Districts with “Geographical Boundaries” . The above picture shows the geographical layout of SC Districts. “Technically”, when you have geographic boundaries, they are NOT supposed to overlap.

As you can also see. There are large parts of the state with NO VFW Posts. The hardest part of starting a new post is finding a place to meet. Once you cross that hurdle, it is not that hard to establish a NEW Post.

PS: The above map is my doing. Every post in the state is identified with a ‘dot’ (even though you can’t see many of them).

SC VFW has a map that shows the Districts according to what Counties each District is in.

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Back



Front



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#STILLSERVING DECAL Back adhesive. 5 x 1 3/4". 3441 \$1.50
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#STILLSERVING DRAWSTRING BACKPACK Nylon with two-color printing. Poly drawcords with tabs. 13.5 x 16". Made in the USA. 1876 ~~\$16.95~~ NOW \$10.00
While quantities last.



Prices valid through 8/31/2026

To place your order, call 1.833.839.8387 or go online to VFWSTORE.ORG



SOME VA RESOURCES

- For any questions or requests, [1-800-MyVA411 \(1-800-698-2411\)](tel:1-800-MyVA411) is always the right number.
- [Veterans Crisis Line: 988](#) and press 1 , [Chat](#), or Text [838255](tel:838255)
- [Vet Centers: 1-877-927-8387](#)
- [Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838](#) or [Chat](#)
- [Ask VA](#)
- [Schedule a 1-on-1 Appointment with a VA Benefits Expert](#)
- [Find a VA facility near you](#)

For non-urgent questions, you can reach VA using the [VA Health & Benefits App](#) or [MyHealthVet](#) secure messaging to schedule an appointment, refill prescriptions, and access your medical records.

GIFTS TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES –

The growing sentiment towards the TSA employees because they are not getting paid has raised the question of how can we help them? Basically, WE CAN'T!

Many years ago when most members of the Coast Guard at Georgetown suffered personal losses and food losses at their station because of the power being out for days that was caused by a Hurricane and Tropical storm that struck the area within one week of each other. VFW posts, including mine, and community organizations raised thousands of dollars in donated food and clothing items. All of this was brought to the Coast Guard station.

Because of the laws governing government/federal employees receiving gifts. **EVERY BIT of the donated items received by the Coast Guard had to be re-donated, by them, to local food banks and charitable organizations seeking hurricane relief. The Coast Guard could not keep any of it!**

There are all kinds of rules and regulations concerning federal employees giving/receiving gifts, but the bottom line is that there is a \$20 one time limit in accepting a gift and \$50 total for one year.

Shutdown furloughs—Legal Advisory 19-01 at www.oge.gov says that employees put in unpaid status during a government shutdown may accept free meals or discounts offered to all federal employees, as well as assistance from organizations that provide aid to members of the general public, such as food banks or religious institutions. Employees also may accept financial gifts based on personal relationships as long as the circumstances make clear that the relationship is the motivating factor, rather than the

employee's federal position. However, ethics rules restricting acceptance of gifts from co-workers and certain entities that do business with the agency still apply.

STORM SEASON is right around the corner. Are you ready? Do you know what to do in the event of a tornado, a hurricane, severe tropical storms and wild-fires?

HONORING OUR VIETNAM VETERANS



Iraq War Marine veteran Stephen Root, Adjutant Post 8131, speaks at a Vietnam Veteran's Banquet held on March 29th to honor Vietnam veterans. There were about 70 people that attended the banquet hosted by Post 8131.

This was a community supported and financed event. Donations were received by local businesses, private citizens and an auction which, along with paying for the banquet, offered several prizes to those veterans in attendance.

The Guest Speaker was Air Force pilot Dave Grant, a Vietnam Prisoner of War.

A great deal of comradeship was shared by all who attended. Not bad, signing up 4 new recruits.

Adjutant Root and Post 8131 hope to make this an annual event.

Great job Post 8131!! In **not forgetting** our fellow veterans of the Vietnam War!

March 29th is Vietnam Veterans Day. Several posts within the state held various events to honor our Vietnam Veterans. In Post 8131's case. It was fitting that an Iraq War veteran wanted to do something special for our Vietnam War comrades.

Bill La Monte

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