



Department of South Carolina *SENTINEL*



An official publication of the Department of South Carolina Veterans of Foreign Wars
SUMMER FALL 2020

HAVING PROBLEMS? NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?...The “VETERANS CRISIS LINE” is open 24/7. Just call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. It takes an average of 8 seconds for your call to be answered. You are NOT alone!

HOT!! – The FCC has approved a new, 3 digit (988) crisis line (acts in the same principal as 911). It will connect with the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

VA WOMEN VETERAN HELP LINES...1-855-829-6636 or www.womenshealth.va.gov

The five signs of emotional suffering: PERSONALITY CHANGE, FEELING AGITATED, FEELING WITHDRAWN, POOR SELF-CARE AND FEELING HOPELESS.

If you are frequently in any one of those. PLEASE call one of the helplines listed above !

Want to stay current with VA & VFW issues? Go to vfwac@vfw.org and sign-up for “Action CORPS Weekly”.

Want to stay current with what is happening within the VFW in S.C.? Just go to VFWSC.org.

GET YOUR FLU SHOT !! 😊 😊

COMMANDER’S CALL –

Hello comrades, auxiliary members and friends. What a year it has been! COVID has tried its best to keep us down but we are continuing to grow. I am happy to report our Posts and Districts are getting out into the public, spreading the word about the VFW and not letting this pandemic hold them back. Unfortunately, we have had some of our members come down with the illness and with a few exceptions all are doing better.

On 2-4, October 2020 myself, Sr., Jr., QM, Assistant QM, D2 Commander, D4 Commander, D8 Sr. Vice-Commander, Auxiliary Jr. Vice, Treasurer and 2 past Auxiliary Presidents conducted a roundup consisting of three districts and 10 posts to meet the members of our Department, visit posts that may not have had a State visit, get to know the post members and to provide training and answer questions for post officers and members. Many thanks to the post members and staff of 9539, 3447, 9273, 10330, 6734, 11079, 8346, 9037, 4262 and 3354 for their warm welcome and hospitality. I really enjoyed meeting the members and sharing stories. We are planning two more state roundups before the end of the VFW year and I am looking forward to meeting more of our members and visiting their post homes.

It has been a very busy last few months. I have had the pleasure to attend a birthday celebration for a wonderful 100-year-old WWII veteran, represent the Comrades at our Department President’s homecoming at Post 10804 and spend a few days with the Auxiliary National President Sandra Onstwedder during her visit to South Carolina. In between all that, I had a chance to visit many posts and districts in the state and have meet some truly great veterans.

Something we have been working on for some time is the Department Website with the Community Service reporting online. The Community Service Chairman Nick Camera, put in a lot of hours and coordination with the web designer and now we are reporting in real time all the great work we do in the Community. Also live now is the Department Dashboard, which replaces the paper District and Post report cards. All members of the Department can now go online to the website; click the login link and log into the members' only side and see both the Program and Department dashboards. To help everyone out, below are some important links you need to save on your smartphones and computer.

- ❖ Department Dashboard - replaces the paper report card.
<https://vfwsc.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?nid=10>
- ❖ Department program Dashboard - find your community service standings here.
<https://vfwsc.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?nid=10>
- ❖ Department website - here you will find information about, programs and post and member information. www.vfwsc.org
- ❖ Department Calendar - current events for Dept., post and National.
<https://vfwsc.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=20523>

Comrades, it has been a great first half year and I am looking forward to even better second half. Safe travels during this holiday season. Please remember to watch out for the other person while driving, wear your masks and social distance while in public. I want to see everyone back next year. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all.

Ted



Does Your Post – say welcome fellow veterans from the outside? Does it identify itself as a VFW Post? This is the memorial entrance to the Post and parking lot for Georgetown Post 6444

From the Desk of Your Senior Vice-Commander – Dwight Hora

Hello VFW and Auxiliary members,

Thoughts on Veterans Day, and I cannot help but remember those that have gone before me. As a veteran, I know I made some sacrifices. I know I have slept in some interesting places. I have found heart break and love. I have made some lifelong friends and I have lost buddies due to war or self-inflicted wounds. The one thing that has come to mind this year is the sacrifice that others have made for me and for others to keep America safe and free.

The Department has been involved in many different events over the last few months. One was recently the burial of 4 unclaimed veterans at Beaufort National Cemetery. There were over 200 people

from the community there acknowledging and remembering what they did for their country. The sense of freedom in this country is still alive and celebrated through remembrance of those who have born the sacrifice of service and conflicts. We, as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, need to make sure we get out to businesses and organizations and share with them what we continue to do for veterans. I ask that the leaders of our Posts and Districts share the idea to continue to reach out to businesses to help support what you do to serve and remember veterans in your community.

As we continue to move through this year with Covid-19, I ask that we all continue to do our best to protect ourselves and others with masks and social distancing.

I thank you all for what you do and continue to do in and out of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for those that are in need.

I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, joyful Holiday Season, and a safe and fun New Years. Take care of yourselves and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Conference in January.

Yours in Comradeship,
Dwight Hora
Sr. Vice Commander

MEET YOUR Jr. VICE-COMMANDER Ed Stefanak, Jr. – Army

Ed Stefanak is a product of New York who joined VFW Post 1975 in Auburn, New York after his return from a stint in Bosnia. After moving to South Carolina, Ed joined Wildcat Post 3447 in 2008 where he served as Jr & Sr Vice and Post Commander. He later transferred to his current Post, Lake Murray Post 6740. Ed has also served his District (8) by being elected to the Jr & Sr Vice Positions and District Commander. He has also served as District Inspector, Adjutant and Programs Manager. Ed is a VFW Life Member!

Ed's VFW Awards include; Outstanding District Commander 2019-2020, All State Commander in 2009 thru 2011, and then again in 2018 thru 2020. He was a Post All State Co-Captain in 2019-2020, Captain of the District All State Team. A two time All American Post Commander in 2009/2010 and 2019/2020, and an All American District Commander in 2019-2020.

Ed was medically discharged from the Army after nine and one-half (9 1/2) years of service (he joined the Army in 1998). He received various injuries while earning TWO Bronze Star's for Valor. One while in Afghanistan in 2001-2002 and the other while in Iraq in 2003-2004. During his medically abbreviated Army career, Ed also earned two Army Commendation Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, an Iraq Campaign Medal, Army Service Ribbon a NATO Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge and the Expert Infantry Badge.

Once settled in South Carolina, Ed entered and graduated from Greenville Technical College with a Culinary Arts degree, with a minor in Business Management. He worked as a Kitchen Manager and a General Manager in the culinary business for eight (8) years. He currently works for Squegee Clean of Irmo, SC.

Ed has four children Madelyn, Lily, Riley & Brody. He currently resides in Leesville, SC.



My Commitment to You and the S.C. VFW

As Department Jr. Vice Commander my plans are to learn more about how the Department operates, and assist Commander Tufts in any way he needs to be successful. I also plan to visit as many posts as I can, to build new relationships, assist posts that need help, and support as many events as I'm able to attend.

My message to the posts in this state is to focus on VFW programs, while strengthening membership levels. Being out in the community will help draw attention to new members, and it gives posts positive attention and visibility within their community, while letting them tell their story to potential new comrades. Membership is especially important to our organization. But we must not only increase our numbers, we must also teach members about the VFW while getting them involved within the post, while eventually getting them to upgrade to lifetime memberships. We need to work on developing new members, while finding their talents, but not rush them into holding elected positions until they are ready to do so. Let new members get to know the people at the post, and let them decide where and when they would like to volunteer. Members need to be given an opportunity to build relationships, and see how their post operates; hopefully they will want to learn more.

I am incredibly grateful and humble to have been elected as State Jr. Vice-Commander. I am going to be a very hands-on leader and I am a very personable VFW member, as many comrades have seen over the years. Being younger, I know I'm a little "different" from what comrades have seen in the past, but I will never sacrifice the hard work and dedication of the people that have come before me and I hope to pave a bright future for the greatest veteran's organization in the world the Veterans of Foreign Wars. No one does more for veterans!

Ed Stefanak, Jr.
Jr. Vice Commander

From the State Adjutant – Betty Hilliard

Comrades we are making it through this COVID crisis as best we can. Sometimes things are good and sometimes they are bad but all of us have to hang in there and hope for the best.

Regarding some areas that need to be looked at. Adjutants remember you are responsible for reporting items on the All American Dashboard. Post Adjutants first, then approval by the District Adjutants and then they get to me for review and I can either approve and it will go to National or reject and it will return to you.

We are looking forward to the upcoming Conference in Columbia, SC. Hopefully all will go well and everyone can have not only a good time but a time to work for the Department.

Thanks to all of you for what you do.

Betty Hilliard
State Adjutant

From the desk of the Department Quartermaster – Jim Fox

First, I would like to welcome aboard our Assistant Quartermaster Ella Calvert. Ella is, and will be, a great asset to the Department.

The office has been very busy since the start of the administrative year. We have processed Bonds, Buddy Poppy orders, Podium Books, Shirts, along with taking care of all the financial requirements of the Department. The state of the Department economy is excellent!

This will be my last year as Department Quartermaster; it has been an honor serving all the members of this great state.

Sincerely,
Jim Fox

Greetings From Your State Chaplain – Wilton Fowler

Greetings Comrades and Auxiliary, I pray this finds you all well and fired up and ready for a great year. We have suffered through many hardships already this year what with the Corona Virus Covid-19 and so many deaths related to it. I can't name a post that hasn't been affected in one way or another. My prayer to each of you is to do your best to stay safe, wash your hands, social distance and avoid large crowds, eat healthy and take your vitamins .

Comrades my desire is to be to you the members of the Department of South Carolina a spiritual leader and a listening ear for those who may have a need for such.

I ask that we pray for one another daily and lend a listening ear to anyone who may need to talk.

Remember strength comes in numbers so lets work together to make South Carolina the strongest it can be.

Here's wishing and hoping you all had a great Thanksgiving and that Christmas and the New Year will bring us all together in peace and love.

Yours in Comradeship
State Chaplain Wilton Fowler

Friendship, as well as good health, should be treasured each and every day.

Your Budget & Finance Committee Chairperson – Margo Sheridan

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE—who are these people and what do they do?

The Department Budget and Finance Committee fulfills several roles in support of Department operations. First, it serves as your independent eyes and ears into the management of the Department's financial and resource management matters. In essence, the Committee performs as your state-level trustee team.

In addition, the Committee works closely with the Department Quartermaster to streamline and improve financial operations and procedures, including an objective assessment of areas where

Department resources could be subject to fraud, waste, abuse or misuse. The committee also assists the Quartermaster and presumptive incoming Department commander to prepare the Department budget for the coming year.

The Committee meets monthly to review financial transactions and reports, and it prepares a written monthly summary of its reviews. Committee findings are provided to the Certified Public Accountant who conducts our annual independent financial review and prepares our annual IRS 990 tax return. All VFW members are welcome to attend the Committee's monthly committee meetings, which are currently conducted via Zoom on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 1300 (1 PM). If you are interested in participating, please contact Chairman Margo Sheridan at Zontagal@gmail.com for meeting information.

Volunteering/donating at your VA facility – Did you know that VA Clinics and Hospitals are extremely dependent on volunteers who work in the facility, drive veteran transport vehicles and donate goods and items the VA needs for patients, but cannot readily get funding for from the VA.

In FY 19 – 61,000 VA volunteers and 7,400 VA partnering agencies/groups put in 9.2 million volunteer hours. They gave over \$99 million in gifts and donations and saved the VA more than \$332 million. EVERY VA facility has volunteer needs, either in working in or donating goods and services. If you have some free time/money, consider being a VA volunteer or goods provider. It's as simple as contacting your nearest VA Volunteer Services Office and telling them what you would like to do (work/donate).

Homeless Veterans and the S.C. VA – SC ranks 8th highest in the country in the number of homeless veterans. SC ranks 4th highest in poverty amongst homeless veterans, with 38% of all SC homeless veterans being Vietnam Veterans. There are 462 'known' homeless veterans in SC.

To this means, SC has three housing assistance facilities and is in the process of increasing that number to 7 before the end of 2022. Each facility can house for 104 veterans.

THE VA/DoD and COMBAT CONCUSSIONS/TBI – Since October 2019, Virginia Commonwealth University has been working on these issues thanks to a \$50 million grant from the VA & DoD. The study will also cover concussions received from sports, injuries, and vehicle accidents. The study is expected to last four (4) years. Part of the study is to try and finally understand combat concussions and their linking to secondary conditions such as dementia. Prior studies suggest that service members who were exposed to explosions or sustained concussions may experience headaches, cognitive impairment or even severe neurological complications.

Past Commander-In-Chief Doc Schmitz told a joint House/Senate meeting that "now more than ever, we are seeing service members who are returning from combat with injuries as a result of explosions and the VA has been slow to provide a long-range solution" (Taken from VFW Magazine).

RICHARD BELL – I was remiss in not congratulating Richard Bell on being appointed to the National VFW position of INSPECTOR GENERAL by the new VFW Commander-In-Chief. A great honor for him and South Carolina. Until I read his job description, I was kind of perplexed by Richard always having a dazed and confused look about him.

This is his official job description – *INSPECTOR GENERAL – Under the supervision of the Commander-In-Chief, the Inspector General shall perform the duties incident to the office as the Commander-In-Chief and National Council of Administration may require and such other duties as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.*

My apologies Mr. Bell. After reading this, I am also dazed and confused – Bill La Monte

WANT TO GET MORE OUT of YOUR VA BENEFITS EXPERIENCE? – Sign up for MyHealthVet by going to www.myhealth.va.gov-register go to VA patient then veteran under relationship. You will be asked to fill out VA Form 10-5345a-MHV. This will give you access to, for example, ordering prescriptions on line. If you receive VA benefits through the Charleston VA Hospital. You can call 843-789-6880 for all the details.

If you receive VA benefits from any other VA facility? Just contact that facilities Community Specialist.

***The more you get involved in your VA experiences, the better off you are!!

Hey all of us Vietnam Vets – Did you know that COSTCO foods grows and purchases (from Vietnamese farmers) every bit of the black pepper they sell in their stores from the farm fields of Vietnam. There is a major push to expand the growing area, but there is a problem because of the tens-of-thousands of pieces of unexploded ordinance that still litter the country-side. Something that COSTCO, the American & Vietnamese Governments are working to correct.

Speaking of Vietnam Veterans – Do you have any of the below-listed ailments/conditions and you served in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, the Blue or Brown Water Navy and are NOT under the care of the VA? Then you need to contact your local VA medical facility or a veterans Service Officer and fill out the necessary paperwork asking for consideration of receiving VA benefits and treatment.

The presumptive Agent Orange Conditions currently recognized by the VA are:

Chronic B-Cell leukemia	Hodgkin's Disease
Multiple Myeloma	Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
Prostrate Cancer	Respiratory Cancers
Soft-Tissue Sarcomas	AL Amyloidosis
Chloracne	Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
Ischemic Heart Disease	Parkinson's Disease
Early onset Peripheral Neuropathy	Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

Tax Laws & Your Post – Post's need to be aware of South Carolina's **Taxes- Code of Laws, Title 12 Taxation, Chapter 37, Article 3 – Property Tax Exemptions:** A section within this article states that "Pecuniary Profit" the sale of alcohol to others than members or "verifiable" guests of a member is grounds for that alcohol sale to be taxed – ALONG with that portion of a tax exempt building (say a canteen area) can now be subject to Property Taxes.

Post's with canteens/bars need to be careful how they advertise events in these facilities in regards to who can attend the event, make use of the services available. Advertising – "Open to the public" leaves your post open to tax law enforcement by the state, if they so choose.

ARE YOU AWARE – That 19 years after the fall of the twin-towers. There are still over 1,100 persons who were in those towers, whose remains have never been identified!

KOREAN WAR – The battle of Chosin Reservoir was one of the key battles of the war. Afterwards, 17 Medals of Honor were awarded for that battle alone. Of the 17, there were nine (9) who received the medal posthumously.

As of today, 7,578 Americans remain unaccounted for in that war. Of those, an estimated 5,300 are thought to be in North Korea.

M.O.C. Military Order of the Cootie History

The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States is a non-profit Veterans Service Organization. We are known as "**The Honor Degree of the VFW**" and our members are comprised of the officers and leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Membership in the **MOC** is recognition of outstanding service to the VFW and its programs.

Founded in New York City on September 17, 1920, the **MOC** is based on the principals of good humor and fun. Over the past ninety years, the Cooties have provided social and entertainment programs to members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. as an Ancillary unit within the organization. Since 1923, our first year as a part of the VFW, the Cooties have worked hard to further the aims of the VFW while adding to it the frivolity known as Military Humor to the serious work of our parent organization. What would ultimately become known as the VFW National Home for Children, a sprawling campus of homes located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, started out as the brainchild of the MOC. We firmly believe in caring for the widows and children of our Armed Forces. Literally millions of dollars have been raised and donated to help "our kids" over our history; starting with the library, the swimming pool, the Fire Department, and a host of other projects designed to make life fun and educational for the children during their stay at the National Home.



Grand of South Carolina – James "Smokey" Stover

With the outbreak of World War II, the Cooties recognized a need to entertain hospitalized troops and veterans during their confinement and rehabilitation at Veterans Administration facilities throughout the country. Our service program is described as a directive to "**Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White.**" Each year the Cooties volunteer thousands of hours of time worth over ten million dollars to DVA Hospitals and domiciliaries throughout the United States. This work, in addition to the hours of service donated as active members of the VFW, set the members of the **MOC** apart as Foreign Service and Combat Veterans who are fully engaged in their communities, and their fellow comrades in arms and their families. Our distinctive red hat and unusual uniform sets us apart and draws attention to the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves. We sacrifice a little of ourselves to bring a smile or a laugh during what is normally a difficult time for our heroes. We seek others like us to join and help us help them in their times of stress and anxiety.

Do you like to make veterans smile by visiting them in a hospital, at home, or a nursing type home. Well then, maybe being a "COOTIE" is for you? For more information on the

South Carolina COOTIES (MOC). You can contact the Grand of South Carolina James “Smokey” Stover smostover@aol.com or 843-345-9560, or Supreme Junior Vice-Commander Dwight Hora at horadm@hotmail.com or at state headquarters 803-808-0317.

AROUND THE VFW STATE

**** Below is me (Bill La Monte)** – delivering 1,000+ pounds of non-perishables and some clothing items that were collected between a food drive at Post 10804, the Auxiliary and the Post Golf League (Post 10804 contributed over 400 pounds and \$ 280 in cash and gift cards). Additionally I put out a “HELP” request for food in the community in which I live (Country Lakes, Little River). They responded with over 700 pounds of food and some necessary clothing items requested by the VA Clinic in Myrtle Beach. All told, over \$5,000 (VA estimate) in food and clothing was donated by the two groups to the VA Clinic’s “Curbside Pickup” Food Bank. Delivery was made to the VA Clinic a scant 5 days after I received their request for help from them.



Me delivering food to VA Clinic



Part of Post 10804/Auxiliary loading crew



Country Lakes loading crew



Picture 1: George Pullie and some of his friends celebrating Post 6091 naming a room at the Post the “George M. Pullie Room” for his dedication to the Post and the VFW.



Picture 2: Post Commander Theonis Brown, District 2 Commander Erick Rothering and Department Commander Ted Tufts II recognizing Post 4262’s 75 Years of serving the VFW.



Picture 3: Some state VFW members who, on September 5th, attended the burial of an ‘Unclaimed Veteran’

Are you aware? – That the first National Cemetery in the state of Wyoming is now open!



Department Commander Ted Tufts and District 1 Commander Bill King deliver food to the Charleston VA Hospital Food Bank

HOMELESS VETERANS – Many veterans. C.B Anderson of the Florence does more than talk. For the intrepid band of donors in the Florence home. Along with the home placement, start up/maintain her home.

(C.B.'s latest effort is for an Army release statement from this veteran



talk about doing something to help homeless Veterans Welcome Home and Resource Center of second time in as many months, C.B. and his area, has placed a homeless veteran in her own she also received many of the items necessary to

veteran of Korea. C.B. does have a signed press authorizing the use of her picture and story)

Great job by C.B., ECHO (a homeless placement agency), The Elks Lodge of Florence, Humana Insurance of Florence, Carolina Academy of Lake City and the many private citizens who donate and support C.B.'s efforts.

NOTE: For the **8th** time this year C.B. and his supporters have placed a veteran in a home of their own.

Rodney Burne heard the Department was having some financial issues so he took it upon himself to grow banana plants. He now has a road-side stand in front of the HQ building selling bananas for a worthy cause (State HQ)! I heard he was looking for some part-time banana sales people to man a stand??



State HQ landscaping by Rodney Burne and his band of elves !



Picture 1: Korean War POW George Kashmer of Gaston, SC addresses Post 8738's POWMIA Day event at the post. Mr Kashmer was in an aircraft shot down over Korea and he spent 18 months as a POW.

Picture 2: Post, Auxiliary and family members ride on their Post 8738 Veterans Day parade float.

Did You Know – The first product to be sold with a 'Bar Code' on it was – Wrigley's Chewing Gum??

DO YOU and your significant other have your estate planned out? If not, or you don't know where to go? YOUR VFW has FREE Estate Planning Kits. One kit is a **Lesson Book** – that helps you plan an effective estate. The other book is the **Record Book** – which shows you how to properly inventory your assets. Just go to VA.gov and enter Estate Planning

BLUE WATER NAVY, Agent Orange, Disability Claims – The VA recently announced that it has processed 34,415 of 69,570 Blue Water Navy VA disability claims since January 1st. Of these 24,328 have been approved for VA disability. No word on when they will finish the 50% of claims to be evaluated

Hey Y'all – Do you want to help Dentist Harvin in one of his jobs (Legislative Chairman)? You can put him out of work and at the same time find out EVERYTHING that is happening in the VFW political arena in Washington by joining **ACTION CORPS WEEKLY**. This electronic publication will keep you accurately informed. Its simple to join; Just go to vfwsc.org, click on **Programs**, click on **Legislative**, click on **Action Corps** and follow the prompts. In a matter of seconds you will be as informed as Dentist.

The VA and Veteran Suicide: The latest update

*In 2018 there were 17.6 veteran suicides a day reported.

*In 2020 the reported suicide rate decreased by 2.4%

*There is NO VA data that supports an increase in veteran suicides because of COVID 19

*There is NO VA data that supports an increase in emergency room visits by veterans because of suicide attempts brought on by COVID 19.

Honor guard gives each soldier a final salute

Melanie Aves

For The Lancaster News

Pete Sturtevant, captain of VFW Post 12136 Honor Guard in Indian Land, is passionate about his work as a volunteer.

"It's a full-time job," said the Marine veteran. "The need is great, and we've become one of the best honor guards in South Carolina."

In the last three years, the group has performed at 184 funerals and 80 community events.

Formed in 2016, the Indian Land honor guard now has 22 members; 18 are residents of Lancaster County, three are from York County and one is from Mecklenburg County in North Carolina.

After 20 hours of intensive training at Fort Jackson in Columbia, the group became certified. The average age of those serving in the Honor Guard is about 75, according to Sturtevant. Although women may serve in an honor guard, all those now serving locally are men. Members must buy their own equipment and uniforms for about \$275 apiece.

Why would a bunch of senior men be willing to devote so much time and personal money to perform at strangers' funerals and ceremonies?

"We have a bond," said George Baker, a retired Navy veteran. "When you faced challenges and danger together when you were young, you're connected for life. It never goes away."

"Our ceremonies can be quite unusual," Sturtevant said. "We recently drove about 90 miles round-trip to a hard-to-find cemetery on the side of a hill on a lonely road. We waited in 90-degree heat for the hearse, which arrived an hour late from the church service. Still, we completed the rifle volley, the flag-folding and the playing of taps. Then yesterday, we performed services at a farmhouse."

Anyone who served honorably in any branch of the United States military is eligible for military funeral honors. In most cases, a two-soldier detail from the deceased's branch of service per-



Honoring our Veterans ♦ November 7-8, 2020

Courtesy of VFW POST 12136 HONOR GUARD

VFW Post 12136 Honor Guard members, from left, Robert Suzansky, Roger Terry, Glenn Lucas, Denver Tenney, Greg Beckwith, Manny Vargas and David Jordan wait for instructions from Capt. Pete Sturtevant, behind them, as they prepare to fire off a volley in a final salute to Navy veteran James Harold Clements on Jan. 31, 2019, at Lancaster Memorial Park.



FILE PHOTO

The Honor Guard from the Capt. John P. Monahan Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12136 carries the colors down Lancaster's Main Street in the Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 11, 2017. Robert Suzansky carries the Army flag. James Jones calls cadence. Tom Windt carries the American flag, and Rich Dwyer carries a ceremonial rifle and acts as the American flag guard.

forms "Veteran's Honors," which include playing taps, folding the American flag and presenting it to the next of kin.

However, when available, a soldier qualifies for "Full Honors" performed by a seven- to nine-soldier detail. The Indian Land honor guard offers this service, which includes optional pallbearers, a rifle volley, the playing of taps, the ceremonial folding of the flag and presentation of it to the next of kin. This service typically honors a career service soldier, a soldier killed in action, a sergeant major, a general officer or a Medal of Honor recipient.

The highest form of funeral recognition is "Special Full Honors," which requires a 21-soldier detail and a chaplain, in addition to the other services. Because of the large number of personnel required, this service is seldom used.

In addition to its duties at funerals and memorial services, the honor guard also acts as a color guard, serving at community functions, such as parades, dedications and other ceremonies upon request. This year, the group demonstrated flag folding at The Blake and assisted the Boy Scouts in a ceremony for disposing of unusable American flags.

While the honor guard meets at the Indian Land Recreation Center on the second Wednesday of each month, the whole Indian Land VFW Post 12136 meets at Brew's Tavern on the third Saturday of each month. Brew's owner, Robert "Duffy" Piefke is very supportive of veterans.

"We don't just hang out there to drink and waste time," Baker said. "We always have so much going on. We're in the process of looking for land to build our own post because we need more space."

"We want land close by," Sturtevant said. "We really need to have our own facility, so we can continue to grow with our community."

With close to 200 members, the Indian Land VFW holds two or three fundraisers each year, and if it can acquire land, it will have to raise even more funds for a building.

"We enjoy getting together and sharing our stories," Sturtevant said. "We also feel it's our duty to give each soldier his final salute. When somebody's grandchild asks the firing detail for one of the shells that was fired during the three-volley salute, and then looks you in the eye and says thank you, you always feel what an honor and privilege this duty is!"

If you are interested in becoming a part of the Indian Land VFW Post 12136 Honor Guard, call Sturtevant at (440) 915-7218 for more information.

INDIAN LAND POST 12136 IN THE NEWS..GREAT ARTICLE!!

Debt Collection & COVID 19: Many veterans are in a situation where they can't pay their bills due to unemployment/underemployment caused by COVID 19. This may bring about an unwanted strain on family life because of a form of bill collection called – DEBT COLLECTOR'S!

Debt collectors are brought in when you don't pay a legitimate bill (EX: Rent, furniture/car/credit card payment, etc). Debt collection is a lucrative business with debt collectors receiving up to 50% of the money you owe a company. Money you pay because of the constant harassment by a debt collector.

There are over 7,800 different debt collection agencies registered in the country (there are many more that are not).

Debt collection agencies can start contacting you as soon as 30 days after a payment is missed. They call you (they frequently do, as you may know), email you or send you collection notices in the mail. They are only allowed (by law) to call you between 8AM and 9PM.

Illegally, they will threaten you, harass you, call you after 9PM, or even sue you.

What can you do? Ask for Silence! By way of a cease-and-desist letter. This forces the legal debt collectors to STOP calling, writing, emailing you. The downside to this is that by stopping them this way, their next step is usually to **SUE** you.

Work out a payment plan with whomever you owe the money to. You still **DO OWE** the debt, so anything you do to help pay on it will help you. Most businesses will work with you if you make an effort to pay something (EX your car payment is \$400 a month and you can pay \$200 a month. Most retailers will be happy to get that rather than nothing).

Once you resolve your debt problems. Make sure you clear your CREDIT RATING! Debt collection action/law suits WILL have an adverse effect on your credit rating that could last up to seven (7) years.

REMEMBER – Debt collection agencies CANNOT attach your Social Security, VA checks and some assets, including some retirement accounts.

The prime debt collection agencies are: Encore, Capital Group, PRA Group, EGS Financial Care, Global Receivables Solutions. If you are harassed by a collection agency? You can contact CFBP@consumerfinance.gov/complaint or call **855-411-2372** or your State's Attorney General's office or your own attorney.

YOUR VA – Supports over 200 "CANTEENS" throughout the VA system by way of the **Veteran's Canteen Services**. Every VA Hospital has one, as do many of the clinics. Most Canteen services are by way of a cafeteria-style place to eat or a store that sells a variety of goods. All purchases are 'tax-free'! VCS merchandise can also be purchased online at VAcanteen@public.govdelivery.com

The VA Canteen Services support a myriad of VA programs that include, but are not limited to; National Rehabilitated Events, Homeless Veteran Assistance, Suicide Prevention, Women Veteran Issues, Fisher House and Emergency Disaster Relief.

Money spent on Veteran Canteen Services is money that goes to helping veterans! To find out more about VCS, just use any browser and type in Veteran Canteen Services. This is a great place to do some tax-free, discounted, holiday shopping.

COUNCIL of ADMINISTRATION – October 17, 2020 – Some highlights!



Prior to the start of the CofA, 'The Charter' was 'draped', and a moment of silence was observed, to honor the loss of Past State Commander – HERBERT BOZARD !

*The Council of Administration purpose is to 'be responsible for administering the affairs and transacting the business of the Department between Department Conventions'.

*The Council of Administration is made up of: Department Commander, Sr & Jr Vice-Commanders, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Chaplain, District Commanders (or their Sr or Jr Vice if they can't be there), immediate past Department Commander, Judge Advocate, Chief of Staff, Inspector, and Surgeon.

*Any member in good standing can attend a CofA meeting, but only the CofA members can vote on issues requiring a vote.

This CofA utilized modern technology in that it applied ZOOM so that CofA members and others, who could not make it, could attend the meeting by video conferencing. Several took advantage of this option.



Picture 1: Kate Brock controlling ZOOM efforts at the Joint-Meeting of CofA

Picture 2: Some of zoom members in attendance by way of video conferencing

Picture 3: Cassandra Thompson, QM of Post 11079, is the ZOOM-master for the CofA

Commander Tufts introduced each member of the CofA (there, in-person and electronically). Each gave an update on the status/happenings of their area of responsibility.

***Recruiting** – The Jr. Vice provided a video training program on how to recruit, retain, re-instate members using telephone contact practices.

*Effective Monday, 20 October, "STATE CARES" Grant applications will be available for non-profits (the VFW) with paid employees, to be able to apply for grants to continue payment of employees during this pandemic. To get more info, go to acceleratesc.org

*VFW National is having a hard time securing Buddy-Poppy's and putting them together once they get them. If your Post wants to make some money assembling Poppy's (you have to take them in batches of 150,000)?, **contact Jim Fox at qm@vfwsc.org**

***Department of Louisiana VFW** – Sent a thank you! for the Department's donation to the Louisiana VFW hurricane relief fund.

***CONGRATULATIONS!** To Post 3746, Rock Hill on building a new Post building. They have run out of funds to complete projects that will allow them to get their state "Occupancy Permit". If you can help, please contact them!

AROUND THE COUNCIL of ADMINISTRATION (Oct 2020)



Picture 1: Chelsea & Hannah of Columbia Walgreens talk about the programs and shots available to veterans

Picture 2: Walgreen's Pharmacist administer Flu, Shingles and other shots to members during the CofA

Picture 3: Chad Coble, of Columbia Sports Clips, discusses the ways they support veterans nationwide.



At the joint-session, Department Sr Vice-Commander Dwight Hora presented Department President Cathey Farley and Auxiliary Scholarship Chairman Boyd Comer with POW MIA Coins for their service to veterans.

At the CofA, Sr Vice Hora presented each District Commander with a POW MIA Coin and face-mask.

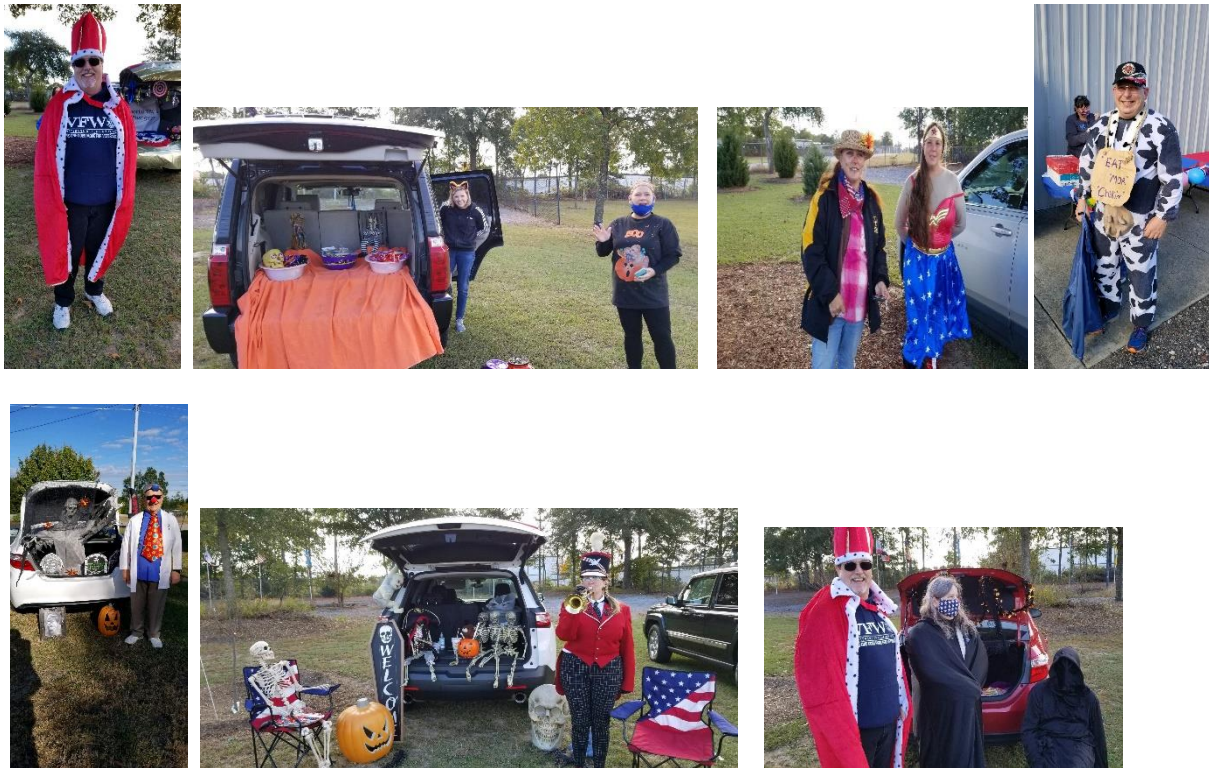
Some of those in attendance at the Joint-Meeting of the CofA.





Four members of the Department received “Recruitment Awards”. Unfortunately, none were in attendance. So pictured above is their stand-in’s. Award Winners Are: Greg Miller, Post 3433 -8 new members, Hugh Gunter, Post 8738 – 7 new members, Edward Mura, Post 10420 – 6 new members, Christine Rodgers, Post 11079 – 5 new members.

CONGRATULATIONS TO POST 3096 of District 6 for earning “Early-Bird” 100% Membership Status !



YOUR Department held a “Trunk-or-Treat” at Dept. HQ. to provide a safe place for kids to go trick-or-treating. It was quite a success with over 100 children showing up. THANKS to everyone who helped make it a success.

P.S. I see plenty of “big-kids”, where’s the youngins’???



Myrtle Beach had a gun-show the weekend of 31 Oct- 1 Nov. Mike Mishue (1st picture, standing), District 7 Sr. Vice, put together a VFW recruiting drive at the gun-show with District 7 posts contributing the man/woman power necessary to make the recruitment drive a success. Pictures 1 & 2 shows some District 7 volunteers. THANKS MIKE!!



On a very rainy, dismal day in November, YOUR Department hosted a blood drive at the headquarters building. 28 donors were accepted. Thanks to the donors and volunteers who helped make this a great success!

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE SC VFW?

Since July 1st, 143 of our comrades in arms have stood their final watch. We salute you!!

December

- 1 – Winter uniform required
- 5 – District 5 meeting at Post 9138 starting at 9AM
- 7 – Pearl Harbor Ceremony at the Yorktown
- 12 – Wreaths Across America Day
- 15 – VOD/PP packages due to state HQ
- 17 – Joint staff meeting at HQ
- 19 – Handicap Christmas Party at HQ

January

- 1-Public Servant National Award nominees due at state HQ
- 6 – VFW Podcast
- 16 – District 7 meeting Post 10804, 10AM
- 20 – Podcast
- 28-31 – Department Mid-Winter Conference at Embassy Suites

GO TO VFWSC.org to see what's happening in the state in future months.

VETERANS & COVID 19 –

The VA has reported that as of November 1st, there have been 81,957 cases of COVID with veterans enrolled in VA health care. There has been/are 60,469 veterans in convalescent care with 7,164 currently hospitalized. There have been 4,162 known veteran COVID deaths.

NOTE: VA Hospitals around the country are doing clinical studies with some of the new COVID 19 serums that are being developed and tested. In SC, Charleston & Columbia VA Hospitals are part of the study. If you would like to be a test case volunteer? Contact either of these two hospitals.

Some Navy History: July 30th marked the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the USS Indianapolis. It had a crew of 1,195. Between the sinking and the sharks (most lost their lives to the sharks), only 316 survivors were rescued. As of July 30th, only eight (8) crew members remain.

NOTE: The loss of 879 sailors from that ship, remains the single most loss of lives in Navy history.

WANT TO REALLY FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE OFFICES OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE VFW (National & State)? –

Go to VFWSC.org, sign in, go to **RESOURCES**, scroll down to **GENERAL ORDERS**. In there you will find NATIONAL GENERAL ORDERS, DEPARTMENT SPECIAL ORDERS, NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETINS, NATIONAL PLANNING CALENDAR and NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ORDERS. In these documents you will find the latest on updates or changes happening at the National or State levels. Some things you'll find are:

*Nationally, 33 Posts have applied for and received permission to combine post charters. Most are 2 posts to 1, but in one state 3 posts combined to 1. There was one (two post) combined charter approved in S.C. There was one new VFW Charter approved (not in SC).

*That the top two recruiters in the nation are 79 new recruits by a member in Montana and 71 by a member in Arizona

*This year, Posts do NOT need to buy Buddy Poppies to be eligible for All State consideration.

*Under Department Special Orders you will find such things as The By-Laws Committee, consisting of Johnny Wilson, Robert Holsclaw, Betty Hilliard and Ella Calvert.

* Ever wonder who selects the recipients of the state awards that are handed out each year. The committee consists of a chairperson and the commanders of the eight districts by way of a Department Special Order.

SAR Chapter and VFW Post to Honor 41 Vietnam Vets With a Cross of Gallantry

Indian Land, South Carolina, November 19, 2020 – Major Robert Crawford Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 12136, have partnered to present an award to Vietnam veterans that was authorized during the Vietnam conflict, March 1, 1961 - March 28, 1973, and re-instituted for the final years to April 30, 1975.

The Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, equivalent to the French Croix de Guerre, is a symbol of gratitude to American and Allied soldiers who worked, fought and sacrificed themselves for the freedom of the Republic of Vietnam. Acknowledgement of the award was published by Military Assistance Command, Vietnam DAGO, 8, in 1974, 46 years ago.

Certificates and ribbons will be presented to 41 Vietnam Veterans at the January 16th meeting of VFW Post 12136, Indian Land, SC. This will be one of the largest presentations of the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry within the South Carolina VFW.

SAR's Major Robert Crawford Chapter, which provided research, will assist in presenting certificates and ribbons to the Vietnam veterans. Greg Beckwith, Adjutant of VFW Post 12136 as well as SAR Chapter JROTC Chairman, initiated the project. All U.S. military branches will be represented in the ceremony: 22 from the Army, 10 from the Air Force, 7 from the Navy, 1 Marine and 1 Coast Guard.

James (Jim) Taylor, Post 12136 and District 5 Commander, said, "This is a great example of how our organizations can work together." Taylor also serves as Sr. Vice President of the SAR Major Robert Crawford Chapter.

John L. Marker, President of SAR Major Robert Crawford Chapter, added, "Our organizations have mutual interests, such as youth programs and Honoring Our Veterans. Each year both organizations take part in the 'Buford Massacre Battlefield' for Memorial Day and Veterans Day."

The Sons of the American Revolution is the leading male lineage society that perpetuates the ideals of the War for Independence. As a historical, educational, and patriotic, non-profit corporation, SAR seeks to maintain and expand the meaning of patriotism, respect for national symbols, the value of American citizenship, and the unifying force of "E Pluribus Unum" that was created from the people of many nations -- "One Nation and One People."

John Marker
Post 12136

*****Army Settles Court Case on Bad Conduct Discharges:** On Wednesday, the U.S. Army announced that it had reached a [nationwide settlement](#) in a case brought by veterans who received other-than-honorable discharges. As part of the settlement, the Army agrees to review decisions of the Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB) issued on or after Oct. 7, 2001, for certain veterans with mental health conditions, including PTSD and TBI. The Army will automatically reconsider all eligible ADRB decisions issued on or after April 17, 2011. Veterans who received a decision issued by the ADRB between Oct. 7, 2001 until April 16, 2011, will be permitted to file for reconsideration. [Learn how to apply for a discharge upgrade.](#)

America without her Soldiers would be like God without his Angels !!

Claudia Pemberton

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PS: Special THANKS to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. It is YOUR newsletter and I will be looking for inputs from you for the next newsletter. Effective immediately!!