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<b>VFW Auxiliary</b>

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## Vietnam Veteran Elected to Lead Illinois VFW

Retired Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bobby Edwards, of Springfield, a life member of Northenders Post 10302, was elected State Commander at the Illinois VFW's 103rd State Convention, June 11.

Edwards, who served in the U.S. Army and the Army National Guard from 1972-2009, earned his eligibility to the Veterans of Foreign Wars after being drafted into the Army, with service in Vietnam. He deployed overseas more than 20 times during his 37 year career. His last deployment was to Kuwait and Iraq from 2005-2006.

Other state officers elected during the convention were:

State Senior Vice Commander - Brett Nila 5696-19

State Junior Vice Commander-Maurice Bridges-Post 4183-14

State Quartermaster -Joe Bartley -Post 10302-10

State Judge Advocate -Jayson Hoffman -Post 4763-10

State Surgeon -Eugene Blackwell -Post 311-16

State Chaplain -Gary Holmes -Post 2955-6

In addition, the following members have been appointed to serve in the respective offices by Edwards.

State Adjutant -Joe Bartley -Post 10302 -10

State Assistant Quartermaster - Lee Morgan -Post 4 763-10

State Assistant Adjutant -Dave Stout -Post 1308-12

State Veterans Service Chairman-Derek Giffin- Post 2378-4

State Chief of Staff -Ryan Higginbotham -Post 4226-13

State Deputy Chief of Staff-Duane Hisel -Post 4763-10

State Inspector -Robert Bailey -Post 7452-19

State Assistant Inspector

-Clarke Christiansen -Post 9545-18

State Illinois VFW News Editor -Barbara Wilson -Post 3455-15

State Sergeant-at-Arms -Samuel Scaife Jr. -Post 2024-3

State Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms - Raymond Bachewicz -Post 2298-5, Roy Johnson -Post 5220-3, and Jack Lamont - Post 3851-13

State Officer of the Day-Jeff Britt-Post 6865-14

Aides-De-Camp-Kyna Simpson -Post 311-16, Robert Migalich-Post 4763-10

Advisor to State Commander -Phil Maughan -Post 3873-19

Emblem & Supply Chairman-Lee Morgan-Post 4763-10

State Marketing/Public Relations Chairman - Barbara Wilson -Post 3455-15

State Membership Chairman -Matthew Willis -Post 6871-10

State All-State Program Chairman-Steve Eller-Post 7710-14

State Student Veterans Liaison -Georges Sanon -Post 311-16

State Assistant Student Veterans Liaison-Jayson Hoffman-Post 4763-10

State Americanism/Loyalty Day Chairman - Sean Conner -Post 10009-17

State Blood Donor Chairman -Chris Maynor - Post 7190-15

State Community Activities Chairman -Charles Ingle -Post 2955-6

State Homeless Veterans Chairman -Paul Bezazian -Post 8322-3

State Hospital & VAVS Chairman -Harold Olsen, Jr. -Post 4079-9

State Legislative Chairman -Michael Peck -Post 2486-5

State Assistant Legislative



**Bobby Edwards recites the oath of office as Illinois VFW State Commander, June 11.**

Chairmen - Jay Davis -Post 1197-19, Dutch DeGroot -Post 1337-4, and Jayson Hoffman -Post 4763-10

State National Home Chairman- Michael McGrath-Post 3873-19

State Assistant National Home Chairman-Paul Zinck-Post 805-14

State Veterans & Military Support Programs Chairman-John Metzger- Post 2671-15

State Parliamentarian -Victor Smith -Post 1239-10

State Photographer-Dutch DeGroot-Post 1337-4

State Buddy Poppy Chairman -Stephanie Kirksey -Post 6504-14

State POW/MIA Chairman-Clarence Caraker-Post 3455-15

State Safety Chairman -Les Durov -Post 1337-4

State Fair Chairman - Larry Carter -Post 10302-10

State Voice of Democracy Chairman -Dave Darte-Post 3912-12

State Assistant Voice of Democracy Chairman-Kyna Simpson -Post 311-16

State VFW/MOC Coordinator-John Jakoby-Post 2978-3

State Youth Activities Chairman-John Davin-Post 5917-18

State Assistant Youth Activities -Michelle Ramlow -Post 1756-10

State Scouting Chairman -Ron Milton -Post 4183-14

State Yellow Ribbon Chairman-Joshua Seed-Post 755-10

State Historian -Bobby Welch-Post 450-16

### Post Service Officer Training set Oct. 8

Post service officers or anyone interested in learning more about what a Post Service Officer does are invited to attend a Post Service Officer training course Oct. 8 from noon to 4 p.m. at the John H. Krause Post 454 in Bloomington, Illinois.

This will be a hybrid training course with the in-person live training taking place at John H Kraus Post 454, 1006 E Lincoln St, Bloomington, IL 61701. For those that cannot attend in person, the class will be presented on Zoom at the same time. Zoom details and link will be sent out at a later date.

State Veterans Service Officer Derek Giffin will be instructing the class and covering topics, such as:

- The duties and responsibilities of the Post Service Officer
- The Do's and Don't's of the Post Service Officer
- Resources for the Post Service Officer

This is a great opportunity for your Post Service Officer to get updated information as they help the veterans in your community.



**Newly-installed Illinois State Commander Bobby Edwards addresses those attending the installation of officers at the 103rd State Convention June 11.**



**State  
Commander**

**Bobby Edwards**

Working Together - Supporting Veterans



“Working Together - Supporting Veterans” is the vision in which we as the Greatest Fraternal Combat Veterans Organization in the world must continue.

Congratulations to all the newly elected and appointed officers for 2022-2023 year. I begin with this famous quote: “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” – Henry Ford, Industrialist.

Your Commitment to Excellence and Willingness to serve are a testimony to those who have come before you and will leave a legacy for those who will follow you.

As we continue in keeping the momentum and progress that the Department has estab-

lished during 2021-2022, we must continue working together for success. Parameters during Post and District Inspections and reviews of Quarterly Audits identified areas of concerns for the Department’s (Post, District, State) continuing success. Without you, the Department of Illinois will not function. Without you, Veterans’ service will fail. Without you, VFW programs will falter... You, the local leaders of the VFW, are the backbone of the Department and of the organization.

Your acceptance of the challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory is why we will not fail, we will not falter, this I know to be true because I have faith in your ability and your compassion for our fellow

Veterans. So, I say again, congratulations and welcome to the team.

“The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.” – Vince Lombardi.

Let me begin by providing some especially important statistics of our department. At the beginning of 2014-2015 year the Department had 63,175 members. This figure consisted of Life, New, Reinstates, and Continuous members. At the beginning of the 2021-2022 year the department started with 41,279 members. As of June 30, the close of the 2021- 2022 membership accounting year our numbers were 39,790 with an additional 3,306 deceased Life members equating to a final number of 36,484.

Over the last seven (7) years our membership numbers have dropped by 26,691. Doing the math, this equates to an average of 3,813 members a year. This number is a combination of

members dying or continuous annual members not reinstating their membership.

Our Goal is 102% or 37,214. If this trend should continue, it would dramatically impact our Post, District and Department ability to serve our veterans, veterans’ families, and our communities.

We can achieve this by reaching out to Veterans who are eligible to join and to call those annual continuous members that have relocated to you ZIP Code. We must revitalize our Posts, Districts and Department. Your department is already providing Unpaid/Expired reports, by zip code, a list of members who currently belong to the department members-at-large in the area where your post is located. This is an additional listing that is in conjunction with the Post Unpaid and Continuous members listing, which are available to post leadership.

This year there will be continuing changes to the way we have done things in the past; we are still coming out of the pandemic that has kept us from

conducting our normal business. We have become complacent in daily operations of Post and Districts. We will continue to bounce back; we will be better, and we will be stronger. To do this we are going to increase the emphasis of involvement on our members and new members within our communities, participation in our core programs and mentorship within our organization. We must let our communities know that we are back and that we are coming back vigorously, our brothers and sisters in arms need to know that we are still here and that they turn to us for support. This is the only way forward.

“Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.” – George S. Patton.

In closing I want to leave you with the motto for this year: “Working Together, Supporting Veterans.”

We have a job to do, and we need to get it done, but let us not get wrapped up in completing the mission that we overlook the Veteran with their hand outstretched asking for help.

**State Senior Vice  
Commander**

**Brett Nila**



This past summer, I again attended both the State and National Conventions. And like last year, both resulted in new leaders, new friends, and new ideas.

June 10 & 11 was our 103rd Illinois VFW State Convention. I want to thank our members for electing me as Senior Vice Commander for the 2022-2023 year. I’ve met a great number of our members this past year

and have seen numerous District and Post leaders in action. I’ve also learned more about the working relationships between the Department, the Districts, the Posts, and the Auxiliary, and look forward to using the insights I’ve gained to support our new State Commander’s agenda.

I also want to thank our Junior Past Department Commander Bobby Welch, for his

leadership this past year. He instituted several new Department practices which are beneficial for all levels. As we go forward, maintaining a number of these practices will provide more consistency for our Districts and Posts.

Congratulations to Bobby Edwards, elected State Commander for the 2022-23 year. I look forward to helping in fulfilling his vision for our state. I also want to congratulate Maurice Bridges on his election as Junior Vice Commander for 2022-23 and welcome him to our Department leadership team.

July 16 through 21 was the 122nd National Convention, held this year in Kansas City. Over 35 VFW and Auxiliary members attended from Illinois.

It was a great opportunity to meet members for the first time, in addition to seeing a lot of familiar faces.

We corrected one shortfall we identified at last year’s National Convention; this year, we used group texts to keep our Illinois attendees informed and connected.

Whether to provide details on meeting for Illinois delegation business, or simply opportunities to gather for drinks and dinner, our attendees were more aware of our group activities. And ways to improve on that for next year have already been identified. Building camaraderie doesn’t always happen automatically; sometimes it needs a little help.

One common theme that I

noticed at both Conventions was that of “family orientation.” A majority of those experiencing growth in membership at the Post level, attributed it to fostering a more welcoming environment for families. Posts offering family activities and accommodations are starting to draw younger comrades.

In addition, that younger comrade often brings his or her spouse, who is interested in the Auxiliary. Thus, the strategy of partnering with Auxiliaries to develop family friendly events surfaced several times. While no one has cited family orientation as the sole key to attracting younger members, many have had good enough results to maintain, and even build upon that approach.

**State Junior Vice  
Commander**

**Maurice Bridges**



I’d like to begin by saying that I am humbly proud to be nominated, elected and installed to the high office of Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Illinois for the 2022-2023 term. I also would like to thank all who endorsed and supported me throughout my campaign during the 2021-2022 term.

As I traveled thru the state visiting Districts during my campaign, I met some very dedicated and outspoken proud comrades in this origination. In addition, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the warm hospitality I received during my travels. In the future, I look forward to meeting with and serving our comrades wherever I’m assigned. One thing I promise is this: If I don’t know the answer, I will find out the answer for you.

I had the opportunity to attend the VFW National Convention,

which was held in Kansas City Missouri from 16 to 21 July. As always, it was a very educational experience. You have the opportunity to meet comrades from all over the States, Europe and the Pacific area. I would like to share a couple of items with you.

As you know, the Bylaws, Manual of Procedures and Rituals are subject to change every year. In order to keep up with the latest Bylaws, Manual of Procedures and Rituals, you can purchase them from the VFW.org store or download an electronic edition from VFW.org.

The 2022-2023 version is not published yet but may be available around the September or October time frame.

Another item that I want to share with you is last year’s American Dashboard. Last year’s inputs into the American Dashboard could only be completed by the Adjutant and

Commander. This year it was changed to include the Sr Vice Commander, Jr Vice Commander and Quartermaster.

Another Bylaw change this year at the National Convention is that the Post, Districts and Departments shall have Bylaws. Additionally, a Chaplain is now an appointed position at the Post level instead of an elected position.

These are just a few changes that were made at the National Convention this year. Be sure to order or download you a Bylaws, Manual of Procedures and Rituals Podium Edition for the year 2022-2023 when it becomes available.

If you have the opportunity to attend a National Convention, I strongly believe it would be a great experience for you. The National Convention will be held in Phoenix Arizona in 2023. Hope you can attend.

Accessing your earned VA benefits can be frustrating. Lawyers are trying to make money off of our disabled veterans and their families. These lawyers are offering to represent disabled veterans and their families in filing claims. Since I have returned from the National Convention, I have seen numerous lawyer

commercials on TV. They are asking if you have lived on the Camp Lejeune Base and if you have drank any toxic water during a certain period of time or if anyone you may have known have developed any certain cancers or illness They want you to contact their Law Office.

Comrades, PLEASE NOTE, The VFW and other Veterans Congressional Chartered Organizations have Veterans Services Officers (VSO) who do not charge any money to disabled veteran or their families in filing claims. IT IS FREE OF CHARGE and they are better because they are trained professionals.

It was wonderful to see social media at work.

Our National Commander-in-Chief, Matthew M. “Fritz” Mihelcic put a call out at this year’s National Convention to notify your Congressman and Senators that passing the “PACT Act” was important and an immediate concern.

Within an hour, there were six thousand e-mails from the convention hall to our Legislators. This was an outstanding example of “social media at work”.

As you know the PACT act was passed by the House then

sent to the Senate where it passed and was then sent back to the House. Due to a procedural issue, it never made it to the President’s Desk for his signature. Hopefully, by the time that this article is printed, the PACT Act will be signed by the President and is law.

Comrades, this is the begging of a new year therefore, let’s get started on our X-Sheet donations as well as Americanism, Safety, Community Service and all other annual donations. Schools will soon be back in session therefore, lets also get the word out to the schools and teachers concerning our VFW Patriot Pen and VOD program. I am not addressing membership at this time, because I know that Commander Edwards and Sr Vice Commander Nila will do that. As you may know, training is one of my highest priorities besides membership. I’m asking you to contact me and inform me of what Post and District level training that you would like to see. I can be contacted at “mbridges@ilvfw.org”.

In closing, I look forward to working for you and looking forward in providing you with more information in our next newspaper in December.



Cootie Corner

Kevin Keller  
Commander

Grand of Illinois



The Military Order of the Cootie 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.

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 domiciliary 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.



Greta Franke, Caitlyn Picuch, and Lauren Schiele were awarded the 2022 VFW Post 981 Wally Luettschwager Memorial Scholarship Grant. Greta received \$3,000 while Caitlyn and Lauren each received \$1,500.

Post 981 presents Luettschwager scholarships

Arlington Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 981 is pleased to announce the awarding of the 2022 VFW Post 981 Wally Luettschwager Memorial Scholarship Grant to Greta Franke, Caitlyn Picuch, and Lauren Schiele. At the award ceremony held on June 1 at the Post monthly meeting Greta received \$3,000 while Caitlyn and Lauren each received \$1,500.

Greta is a resident of Tower Lakes and graduated in 2021 from Barrington High School. She currently attends Emory University where she is majoring in pre-medicine and music with a GPA of 4.0. Her father is a disabled Vietnam War Veteran.

Caitlyn lives in Schaumburg and just graduated from Conant High School, attaining a GPA of 4.0. She is planning to attend the

University of Missouri to major in Radiography. She obtained a Certified Nursing Assistant certification through Harper College while in high school. Both her father and grandfather were in the armed services.

Lauren comes from Arlington Heights and attended Rolling Meadows High School prior to her 2022 graduation with a 4.6 GPA. She is expecting to major in Biology in college. Her grandfather served as an aircraft gunner during WWII.

Wally Luettschwager was a life-long resident of Arlington Heights, Illinois who served honorably in the US Army in combat during the Korean War. He came home and was an active member of Post 981 for over 60 years in many capacities including Commander. Wally played an integral part in the organizing and running of the Arlington Heights Memorial Day Parade which has been part of the community for over 100 years.



Mascoutah Educator wins Teacher of the Year

Neshala V. Warner was presented with the Mascoutah Post 7682 “Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award” in May, at the local district School Board meeting. Ms. Warner also won the award for all of District 14. This award recognizes Warner’s exceptional commitment to teaching Americanism to her students by enthusiastically promoting civic responsibility and patriotism in the classroom. Pictured, from left, Jason Milner, Post 7682 Commander, Warner, and David DiCenso, Special Aide de Camp to the Commander in Chief.



Past State Commander Bobby Welch presents Michael Isham with the 2022 Veteran of the Year award. It was presented at the Belvidere Post 1461 meeting on June 13, 2022.

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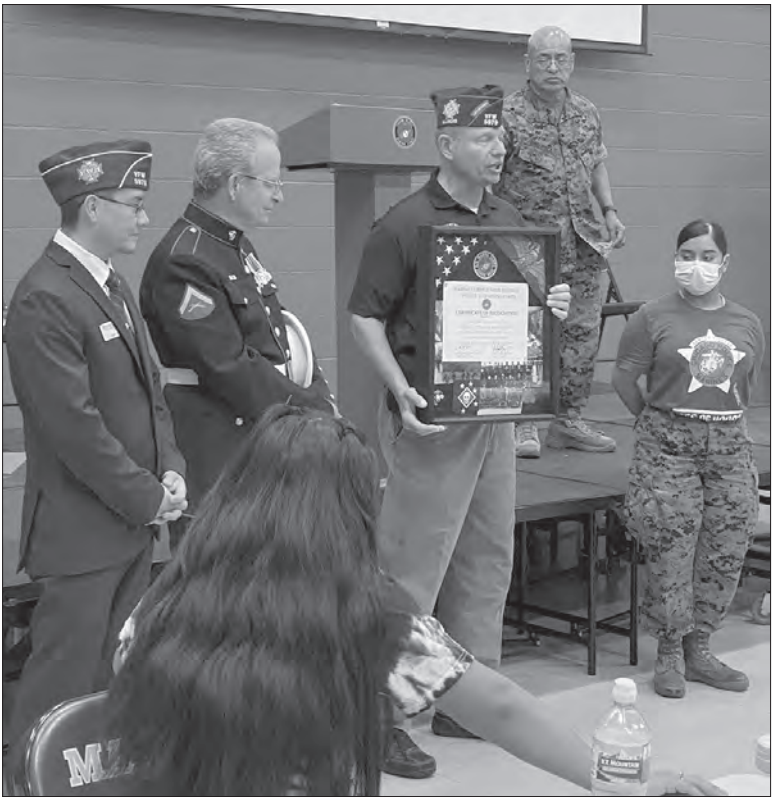
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St. Juvin Post 1336 honors Vietnam Veteran

On June 6th, the 78th anniversary of the D-DAY landing in Normandy, St. Juvin Post 1336 honored Vietnam Vet Gary Skubic of Diamond with one of their personalized tapestry throws recognizing his service to a grateful nation. Since 2013, St. Juvin Post has presented over 550 of these mementos to veterans representing about 25,500 dollars raised through Buddy Poppy events, raffles and generous donations from our community. While the bulk of the throws are presented around the holidays they are awarded year around. Each of the throws has the veteran’s name embroidered along with a custom label that reads “The members of St. Juvin post 1336 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Coal City IL presents this throw to you as a symbol of your service to a grateful nation. Pictured, St. Juvin Post 1336 Trustees Pete Dolan (left) and Don Tira present Vietnam vet Gary Skubic with his throw.





Leadership Academy honors VFW, Legion Posts

Members of the Central Leyden VFW Post 5979 and River Grove American Legion Post 335, a combined post where 93 percent of the members belong to both, were presented with a shadowbox in appreciation of their support with sponsoring the Marine Leadership Academy in Chicago Illinois, grades 7 through 12. Accepting the award were post members (in the first picture with shadowbox) from L-R, Jaime Fernandez, Quartermaster Richard Wojewnik & Barney Dufner in the dress blues. Dufner, a Vietnam veteran, was asked to wear his dress blues so the cadets could see his decorations, including a Silver Star, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster, EOD and basic parachutist badge. A video of the cadets receiving awards for archery and hiking can be found on the posts' YouTube channel: Check our YouTube channel: Chicagoland veterans command post.

Belvidere Post 1461 Provides 1,220 Meals to Local Food Pantry

By Rob Bland

Post 1461 in Belvidere, IL used the United to Fight Hunger Campaign to provide meals to Empower Boone, a food pantry in Boone County, IL. The Post used \$550 dollars to buy 630 lbs. of food, which will provide 1,220 meals to members in the Community who are food insecure.

The United to Fight Hunger Campaign is a grant through the VFW in partnership with Humana to help feed our fellow citizens. The VFW Foundation will reimburse Posts for donations and volunteering at a food bank. The IL Humana representative is Timothy Delaney, a fellow VFW member.

When Post 1461 decided to utilize the United to Fight Hunger Grant, we reached out to Timothy Delaney to get the specifics on how to use the grant. With his guidance we quickly developed a plan to partner with a local food bank and local grocery store.

The Post reached out to Empower Boone to see what donations were needed. After receiving a list of critical needs, we went to Aldi to see if they would be able to support. The Belvidere Aldi quickly said they would support us and would special order what was requested. We coordinated a day that we would be able to pick up the food and Empower Boone said they would have their truck come out to pick up the donation.

On a bright Saturday morning, 5 members of the VFW and 1 member of the VFW Auxiliary showed up to Aldi before they opened and met up with the driver for Empower Boone. When the store opened, we went in to pay for the donation. \$550 later we walked out with 630 lbs. of food in 4 grocery carts. We loaded the truck, providing the 1,220 meals.



Post 1461 VFW and auxiliary members in front of the donation.



Post 8322 visits newly-opened Chicago Veterans Home

Members of VFW Post 8322, commander Paul Bezazian, quartermaster Bob Arens, and past commander Mike Pfeffer held the inaugural Memorial Day service at the new Chicago Veterans Home. After the service the members, along with Julia Moreno the activity manager and her staff, served refreshments. Also, we presented Chicago fire department shirts to the veterans. Also outfitters apparel donated 2 boxes of much needed clothing for them. It was a great turnout for the event being held for the first time.

Poppy Displays take top honors at State Convention

Congratulations to the following First Place Poppy Display Winners.

Category 1 - Public Promotion of Poppy Sales Metzger-Crook Post 6504-14 and its Auxiliary, Waterloo, Illinois Scott Post 4183-14, Belleville,

Illinois

Category 2 - Memorial or Inspirational Displays Ybarra-Gomez Post 8890-8 and its Auxiliary, East Moline, Illinois Chicago Bridgeport Post 5079-3 and its Auxiliary, Chicago, Illinois Hometown MmTay Post 9773-3

and its Auxiliary, Hometown, Illinois

Category 3 -Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies Sgt. Charles A. Fricke Post 805-14 Auxiliary, O'Fallon, Illinois LaFore Lock Post 755-10 and its Auxiliary, Springfield, Illinois

State Commander Bobby Edwards and State Poppy Program Chairman Stephanie Kirksey present Smith Spaid Post 1293, Waukegan, the Buddy Poppy Program award for Membership Category 1.



State Commander Bobby Edwards and State Poppy Program Chairman Stephanie Kirksey present Roscoe Post 2955, Roscoe, the Buddy Poppy Program award for Membership Category 2.



State Commander Bobby Edwards and State Poppy Program Chairman Stephanie Kirksey present Joshua H. Harris Brookfield Post 2868, Brookfield, the Buddy Poppy Program award for Membership Category 3.





# Anna to Vienna Highway Honors Simpson Soldier Sgt. Brian Romines

By Barb Wilson  
Illinois National Guard  
Public Affairs Office

A ceremony renaming a 15 mile stretch of Highway 146 from Anna to Vienna, Illinois, the Sgt. Brian Romines Memorial Highway was held June 6, in Anna, 17 years after the Illinois Army National Guard Soldier from Simpson, Illinois, was killed in action when an improvised explosive device detonated near the vehicle he was travelling in near Baghdad, Iraq.

“The Sergeant Brian Romines Memorial Highway will not only honor a fallen Illinois Army National Guard Soldier, a loving son, and an exuberant friend, but will also ensure our solemn promise to never forget,” Brig. Gen. Rodney Boyd, of Naperville, Illinois, Assistant Adjutant General – Army and Commander of the Illinois Army National Guard told family and friends. “Brian is a hero who lived to help others and make us laugh. We will not forget. His life and his sacrifice, like so many others, are the cobblestones that pave the roads of freedom.”

Romines, a 2003 graduate of Vienna High School, enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in October 2002 and



**Randy Romines, father of fallen Illinois National Guard Sgt. Brian Romines, with some of the Soldiers who were serving with Romines when he was Killed in Action June 6, 2005. Highway 146 from Anna to Vienna was renamed the Sgt. Brian Romines Memorial Highway in honor of his sacrifice.**

attended the Field Artillery Cannonmember Course in 2003. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery, based in Milan, Illinois.

“There are some things which happen to you in life that change you,” said retired Maj. Gen. Johnny Miller, from Tamms, Illinois, who served as Romines’ battalion commander on June 6, 2005. “June 6, 2005 was one of the hardest days in my 32-year military career. He didn’t have to join the Army – he volunteered to join. He volunteered

to go to Iraq and he volunteered to go on that mission. He’s a hero. He represents the best of our nation, our state and our area. His sacrifice will never be forgotten.”

Melinda Clary, Romines’ mother, who worked with local state legislators, State Rep. Patrick Windhorst and State Sen. Dale Fowler, to get the joint resolution passed through both the Illinois House and Senate, said she is appreciative of the support she has received.

“I appreciate the kindness. It

helps us to heal,” Clary said. “I think to know that people truly care and want to show they appreciate his sacrifice.”

Windhorst said the renaming ceremony was a great way to pay tribute to a Soldier who fought and died for our country.

“It’s important for us to recognize and honor sacrifices made by our brave service men and women,” Windhorst said. “We owe our freedoms to the sacrifice made by our military and their family. This is a very appropriate way to honor the

sacrifice by Sergeant Romines.”

Fowler agreed the dedication was an appropriate tribute and one he was honored in which he played a role.

“One of my greatest honors is to be able to recognize heroes,” Fowler said. “It reminds us each day and each moment is precious. We never know when we will get that knock on the door.”

Highway 146 has a high volume of travelers each day, and Boyd said those motorists will be able to reflect on Romines’ service and sacrifice.

“Each year tens of thousands of commuters and travelers will pass through this section of highway and reflect on Sergeant Romines’ service and sacrifice to our state and nation,” Boyd said. “Brian’s school mates from Anna Junior High and Vienna High School will drive this highway and remember their friend.”

Clary said it was only fitting the dedication ceremony be held on the anniversary of his death, but told everyone it is the least that can be done in memory of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

“This isn’t just for Brian. It’s for all who didn’t make it home,” Clary said. “We want it to represent all of them. They all should have this same honor and dignity and respect. Their sacrifice should never be forgotten.”

# Evanston Colonel, Post 311 member retires after 32 years of service

A dream that began with playing with toy Army men as a child and continued as the Hyde Park Academy Junior ROTC battalion commander ended this month after more than three decades in the Illinois Army National Guard including a brigade command and a combat tour in Afghanistan.

Col. Nick Johnson, a native of Chicago and resident of Evanston, and a life member of Benjamin O. Davis Post 311, retired from the Army with more than 32 years of service during a May 14 ceremony at Illinois National Guard headquarters on Camp Lincoln in Springfield. He started as a Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) cadet with the Illinois Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment while enrolled in the ROTC program at Chicago State University. He was commissioned as an Infantry officer through ROTC in 1992.

He supported military operations and exercises in Panama, Poland, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Afghanistan, Jordan, and Ukraine during his career. Recently, he assisted the Polish military in setting up the Polish Territorial Defense Force, which has many similarities to the National Guard in the United States. In addition, he played a critical role in the Illinois National Guard’s COVID-19 response as the deputy com-



**Col. Nick Johnson, who commanded the 65th Troop Command Brigade, stands at attention during a retirement ceremony May 14 at the Illinois Military Academy on Camp Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois. Johnson, who served for 32 years, is a life member of Benjamin O. Davis Post 311 in Richton Park, Ill.**

mander of the Illinois National Guard’s Joint Task Force.

Maj. Gen. Rich Neely, the Adjutant General of Illinois and Commander of the Illinois National Guard, said Johnson served “incredibly” throughout his career. “He should be very proud of what of what he has given to the Illinois National Guard, the Army, his state, and to his country throughout his life,” Neely said.

The early part of his career was with the 1-178th Infantry,

where he held two company commands (C Company and the headquarters company) and the battalion command. “The 178th Infantry is his home,” Neely said.

Johnson is an active member of the 8th Infantry Association, which celebrates and commemorates the history of the Illinois National Guard’s all-African-American Fighting 8th Infantry Regiment. The 8th Infantry Regiment fought in the Spanish-American War,

World War I and World War II. In World War I, it fought as the 370th Infantry Regiment – under French command because of institutional racism in the U.S. Army at that time. The regiment’s valor during the war is celebrated by the Victory Monument at Martin Luther King Drive and 35th Street in Chicago. The 1-178th Infantry holds the lineage to the 8th Infantry Regiment. Several members of the 8th Infantry Association attended Johnson’s retirement ceremony and served with him in the 1-178th Infantry.

After command of the 1-178th Infantry, Johnson went on to serve as commander of the 244th Digital Liaison Detachment and then brigade commander of the 65th Troop Command. He has held multiple staff assignments in logistics and operations from the battalion level to the state headquarters level. He deployed to Afghanistan with the Illinois Army National Guard’s 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team from 2008-2009, where he served as the operations officer and executive officer of the Counter Narcotics Infantry Kandak Embedded Training Team.

Johnson said his career fulfilled a “lifelong dream of service.” He thanked many people in his comments, but singled out Susan King-Wieczorek, the Gold Star Mother of Sgt. Robert Weinger. He discussed how much “Momma Sue’s”

friendship has meant to him since March 15, 2009; the day her son, Spc. Norman Cain and Sgt. Christopher Abeyta were killed in Afghanistan when their vehicle was attacked by a roadside bomb. Another Soldier serving under Johnson, Sgt. Lukasz Saczek, was in the vehicle with the three Soldiers on March 15. Sgt. Saczek died from non-combat-related injuries on May 10, 2009.

Johnson also thanked several of the senior NCOs he served with, particularly in the 1-178th Infantry. “I truly stood on their shoulders. I’m glad their shoulders were broad and strong.”

Johnson’s military education ranges from the U.S. Army Infantry Officer Basic and Advance courses to the U.S. Army War College, where he earned a master’s degree in strategic studies.

His civilian education includes a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Chicago State University, a master’s degree in counseling from Governors State University and a doctorate in clinical psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology.

As a civilian, Johnson is a clinical psychologist with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at the Naval Station Great Lakes’ Recruit Evaluation Unit. He is the father of an adult daughter, Ashley, and grandfather to Elijah.



# Highlights from 103rd Annual State Convention



Americanism Chairman Sean Conner and Past Commander in Chief Hal Roesch present Theresa Rompala, Elwood CCSD #203 Teacher of the Year award for Grades 6-8.



Americanism Chairman Sean Conner and Past Commander in Chief Hal Roesch present Tracy Skinner, Lewis & Clark Elementary School, Teacher of the Year award for Grades K-5.



Americanism Chairman Sean Conner presents Stephanie Kerzios, Elk Grove Village High School Teacher of the Year award for grades 9-12 to Les Durov, Commander, Mt. Prospect Post 1337.



Scouting Chairman Ron Milton presents Emma Wiker, a national certificate as the Department Scout of the Year winner.



Scouting Chairman Ron Milton presents Jackson Mills, the department's Boy Scout of the Year award.



State Commander Bobby Welch and Past Commander in Chief Hal Roesch present the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award to Eric Hunt, Tim Shaughnessy and Mark Soustek, Joliet Police Department.



Auxiliary President Rhonda Borkgren receives her license plate from Greg Curran, Secretary of State office.



State Commander Bobby Welch receives his license plate from Greg Curran, Secretary of State office.



Dutch DeGroot, editor, Mt. Prospect Veterans newsletter, placed second in the National Publications Contest.



Community Activities Chairman Chuck Ingle and State Commander Bobby Welch presents Kim Fuiten, Chatham-Auburn Post 4763 with the Community Activities Record Book award.



The joint opening ceremony for the State Convention are conducted in Springfield.



State Commander Bobby Welch and Past Commander in Chief Hal Roesch presents Rob Bland, Post 1461, the News Media Professional of the Year award for Evan Leake, WREX, Rockford.



Americanism Chairman Sean Conner and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Americanism Award, Category 1, to Post 4226, Olney.



Americanism Chairman Sean Conner and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Americanism Award, Category 2, to Post 3873, Naperville.



Americanism Chairman Sean Conner and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Americanism Award, Category 3, to Post 6865.





District Americanism Award District 14



District Americanism Award District 18



District Americanism Award District 19



State Voice of Democracy Chairman Dave Darte, along with Assistant Kyna Simpson and State Commander Bobby Welch present District 4 Commander Steve McInnis with a plaque for Niles Post 3579 for sponsoring the Voice of Democracy State Champion Natalie Sissac.



State Youth Activities Chairman Robert McLeod and State Commander Bobby Welch present State Surgeon Eugene Blackwell with a plaque for Bremen Post 2791 for sponsoring the Patriot's Pen State Champion Parker Tade.



State Youth Activities Chairman Robert McLeod and State Commander Bobby Welch present the District Youth Activities award to District 19 Commander Rob Bailey.



State Youth Activities Chairman Robert McLeod and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Youth Activities program award, category 1 to Commander Les Durov, Post 1337.



State Youth Activities Chairman Robert McLeod and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Youth Activities program award, category 2 to Post 2244, District 13.



State Youth Activities Chairman Robert McLeod and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Youth Activities program award, category 3 to Commander Ron Milton, Post 4183.



National Home Chairman Mike McGrath, National Home District 8 Trustee Jerry Blake and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the National Home award to Judd Kendall Post 3873.



Hospital VAVS Chairman Harold Olsen and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Hospital VAVS award, Category 1, to Post 10396, District 19.



Hospital VAVS Chairman Harold Olsen and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Hospital VAVS award, Category 2, to Post 2244, District 13.



Hospital VAVS Chairman Harold Olsen and State Commander Bobby Welch presents the Hospital VAVS award, Category 3, to Post 3873, District 19.



Blood Donor Post Award to Post 1377, District 12.



Blood Donor Post Award to Post 2244, District 13.



# VFW Post 2486 Re-Dedicated as Major Paul R Syverson III Memorial

*By Carl Sorensen*  
July 9, 2022 at a special ceremony in Memorial Park, Wauconda, VFW Post 2486 was officially Re-Dedicated at “Major Paul R. Syverson III, Memorial VFW Post 2486. Syverson grew up in Arlington Heights, but resided in Lake Zurich, IL . Paul Syverson’s parents, Paul II, his mother Joy Syverson, as well as VFW Illinois Sr Vice Commander Brett Nila, VFW Post Commander Marie Honeywell, and Past Post Commander Mike Peck and members of 5th Special Forces were in attendance for the ceremony. Syverson served with 5th

Special Forces in the early days of Afghanistan as a member of ODA 595, one of several Special Forces ODA Teams deployed to Afghanistan to topple the Taliban. Major Syverson was one of five Special Forces members sent to retrieve the body of CIA Officer Johnny “Mike” Spann, killed in a prison uprising. Syverson was killed in a mortar attack and was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. The entire story is told in “Horse Soldiers” by Doug Stanton, (later the movie, “12 Strong”)



VFW Post 2486, Wauconda, was rededicated as the Maj. Paul R. Syverson III Memorial Post 2486 Aug. 9. Pictured from left, Past Commander Mike Peck, Syverson’s parents Paul II and Joy, Post Commander Marie Honeywell and State Senior Vice Commander Brett Nila.

## All American Commanders



Mount Prospect Post 1337 Commander Les Durov with Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic.



Major Paul R. Syverson III Memorial VFW Post 2486 Commander Mike Peck with Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic.



Kahokian Memorial Post 5691 Commander Alonzo “Skip” Skipper with Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic.



Jackson County Post 7190 Commander Christopher Maynor with Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic.



Great turnout at Judd Kendall Post 3873, Naperville, for the folding of the 20 foot x 30 foot flag that had hung on the side of Naperville’s City Hall building for 10 years before its retirement. Marty Walker was the recipient of this flag from the city, and relayed the story about how the past Mayor, A. George Pradel, had begun flying this flag right after 9/11 as a show of Americanism and pride in America. The intention is to build a “flag box” for it and donate it to the VFW for display.



Rich Luemen, District 3 Commander, Roy Johnson, Past District 3 Commander, and Paul Bezazian, Past 1st District Commander and Homeless Veterans Chairman Paul Bezazian, awards VFW Civil Air Patrol awards to Cadet Chief Master Sergeant Stephanie Klosa (pictured above) and Civil Air Patrol Major Soren Koh (pictured below).







**Judd Kendall Post 3873 assists Naperville Responds with Quilts of Valor presentations at July 4 festival**

Naperville’s Judd Kendall VFW Post assisted Naperville Responds for Our Veterans in identifying veterans who had not already received a Quilt of Valor.

Twelve veterans including Post Commander Leo Jaime (at top, sixth from the left) received their Quilts on the entertainment stage during Naperville Responds’ 4th of July festival, SALUTE.

Two other post members were not able to attend the event. Lou Wegerer, 99 year old WWII vet (pictured at left, seated) received his quilt at his senior living facility from past Post Commander Charlie Vladika. Bob Fife, 89 year old Korean veteran will receive his shortly.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF) was founded in 2003 with a mission to cover our nation’s military touched by war – with quilts to honor their service. Quilts of Valor provides the quilts (individual quilters’ names are not disclosed). Over 40 Judd Kendall members have received quilts in the past. (Photos by Jim Hoch.)

St. Juvin Post marks Memorial Day

St. Juvin Post members assembled at Coal City’s historic Intermediate School, formally Coal City Township High School and home of the Community Veterans Memorial, for the community Memorial Day observance.

Post members fired the traditional volley followed by the placing the ceremonial wreath and Taps played by Pete Bianchetta. Post Life Member Jack Micetich read the names of those 24 veterans, members of the community, who Abraham Lincoln spoke of as “giving the last full measure of devotion”. Post members were assisted by Coal City Boy Scout Troops 466 and 444 in placement of the wreath and raising the colors and the service flags to full staff at 12 noon.

About 75 members of the community attended the observance.

This year’s observance had two new features. Last fall two new flag poles and flags were added to the memorial one for the newly formed Space Force and for the WWII Merchant Marine. There are at least 3 Merchant Mariners listed on the memorial. Funds for this addition were from the Community Veterans Memorial Fund held by the Coal City Bank 85 S Broadway St. and administered by St. Juvin Post 1336. Donations to the Memorial Fund are always welcome and are only used to maintain and improve the memorial.



Life Scout Ethan Bach assists Jr. Vice-Commander and Air Force Vet Jim Richards in raising the Air Force service flag to full staff at noon on Memorial Day.



New signage adorns the Kewanee Post 8078’s building.

Kewanee Post 8078 displays new signs on building thanks to community partners

Kewanee VFW Post 8078 is proud to display a new sign depicting the new national VFW logo on the east side of their building at 200 W. 5th Street.

“The VFW is such an amazing organization! The new sign makes it easier for people to notice us,” said Post Quartermaster Ron Saey.

In support of the project, several Kewanee businesses and individuals donated materials and time.

VFW Post 8078 would like to thank:

- Steve Saigh, Great Dane employee, for his many hours spent coordinating with VFW Quartermaster Ron Saey and Great Dane on the sign project.
- Great Dane Kewanee Plant Manager Derek Dunlap for his support of the project and the materials donated for the frame construction and metal logo, letters and stripes.
- Great Dane employees Mike Haptonstall for frame construction; Troy Kaiser for designing the program to produce the logo;
- Dave Robinson as the laser operator assisted by Cliff Holmes.
- Rich Lewis, owner of Lewis Auto Body, Inc., for painting the logo stripes and lettering.
- Breedloves Sporting Goods for donating the decal at the bottom of the sign denoting “Veterans of Foreign Wars”.

2021-2022 ALL-STATE TEAM OF POST COMMANDERS AND QUARTERMASTERS		
POST #	CMDR.	QM.
DISTRICT 4		
Post 981	Matthew Voss	Roger Santagato
Post 1337	Les Durov	Charles Ohrn
Post 2868	Eric Morales	Robert Gatch
Post 7186	Charles Spivey	Rehova Nemo
DISTRICT 5		
Post 2486	Michael Peck	Ken Samborski
Post 4600	Ben Keefe	Peter Kim
Post 11020	Marie Honeywell	Patrick Fissette
DISTRICT 6		
Post 1461	Gregory Kelm	Robert Bland III
Post 8739	Jason Stoll	Tina West
DISTRICT 7		
Post 2131	Dave Kroll	Al Weedon
DISTRICT 9		
Post 5506	Billy Jennings	John Finnegan
DISTRICT 10		
Post 4763	Kim Fuiten	Bob Migalich
Post 10302	Robert Painter	Dave McLean
DISTRICT 11		
Post 99	Joseph May	Fred Whobrey
Post 5346	Seth Floyd	Lawrence Gordon
DISTRICT 12		
Post 976	Anthony Avers	Tim O'Donnell
Post 5691	Alonzo Skipper	Robert Grayson
Post 7678	Ronald Knapp	Curtis Berrey
DISTRICT 14		
Post 805	John Pietrusinski	James Stover
Post 2698	Kenneth Hall	Jeremy Wiley
DISTRICT 15		
Post 7190	Christopher Maynor	Jesse Elder
DISTRICT 16		
Post 311	William Browne Jr.	Aretha Johnson
DISTRICT 17		
Post 3601	Donald Haupt	Charles Thomas
DISTRICT 19		
Post 1197	Jeff Swanson	Bryan Kelsey
Post 5036	James Patinka	Jake Wyatt
Post 5819	Robert Rose	Donald Guinta
Post 7452	Rob Bailey	Tim Juillett
Post 10396	Richard Hildenbrand	Glen Schwartz

Post 311 holds clothing drive for Chicago’s homeless veterans for VFW’s Day of Service initiative

On Saturday, May 14, 2022 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Benjamin O. Davis Post 311 as a co-host with the Village of Richton Park and Chicago Heights Vet Center held a very successful clothing drive for homeless veterans in support of the VFWs Day of Service initiative.

Several members of the Post 311 were present including Post Commander Bill Browne, Senior-Vice Commander Rupert Evans Sr., Junior Vice-Commander Sasha Douyon, Quartermaster (Post Commander-Elect) Aretha Spurlock, Post Member Eleanor Wilson, David Brown of the Chicago Heights Vet Center and representatives of Humana Insurance.

During the month of May VFW Posts hosted veteran-led events aimed to engage veterans, service members and community advocates while making a meaningful difference in their communities.

The clothing was delivered to the Founder and Executive Director, Melanie G. Anewishki and her staff on May 15, 2022 by Benjamin O. Davis Post Commander Bill Browne and Post Life Members Arnold Taylor and Art Gipson. Featherfist is the largest homeless outreach nonprofit agency in Chicago.



Benjamin O. Davis Post 311, Richton Park, participated in a clothing drive May 14 as part of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Day of Service. The clothing was delivered to Featherfist, Chicago’s largest homeless outreach nonprofit agency.



# VFW Auxiliary

## Auxiliary President

**Marvie Wisniewski**



It is an honor to be serving as Department President for the 2022-2023 Year. This year's focus is on our Auxiliaries and our members. Recognizing their efforts in supporting our Veterans and their families.

My Theme is ***"Boots on the Ground for Our Veterans"*** which is a call to action for our members to actively participate in our programs and work with communities to bring awareness to the mission of our organization.

Membership is another key focus! We need to join forces with our VFW members to grow and mentor our membership. We were able to reach 100 percent plus last year and we are looking forward to a repeat!

Membership is vital to be able to continue our mission today, tomorrow and in the future.

My special project is the **Road Home** Program. The mission of the **Road Home** Program is "to compassionately care for Veterans, service members and their families by providing individualized care and navigation of services to help the individual wounds of war".

This program focuses on families working together to address PTSD and how to overcome together. Currently, there are two locations: Chicago and Effingham. They offer in person and online support groups.

I am looking forward to travelling the state and working with our members, "spotlighting" our Auxiliaries, their work in their communities and with our Veterans.

I am also looking forward to

working with our Department Commander Bobby Edwards as we promote "Team Illinois." WE will be encouraging VFW and Auxiliary members to combine forces for the good of our organization. When we work together, we can and will achieve more – more for our Veterans, more for our communities and more for our members!

"There is immense power when a group of people with similar interest get together to work towards the same goal." - Idowu Koyenikan

Thank you for your continued support and friendship. Looking forward to a fun and successful year.



**District 13 Auxiliary President John Watters, second from right, was selected as the Department of Illinois Auxiliary President of the Year with District 15 Auxiliary President Patricia Caraker, right, selected as runner-up. Also pictured are Department Auxiliary President Rhonda Borkgren, left, Past Department President Ruth Smit, second from left, and Past Department President Pat Martyn, center.**



**The Department Auxiliary's Color Team at the altar during the Auxiliary's State Convention in Springfield.**



**The Department of Illinois Auxiliary's Color Team performs the Cross of Malta during the Auxiliary's State Convention in Springfield, Illinois.**



**District 15 Auxiliary President Patricia Caraker, pictured with District 15 Commander Bill Hatfield, was invited to deliver the keynote address at the Johnston City, Illinois, Memorial Day program. Caraker, who served as a nurse in the U.S. Army, spoke about the meaning of Memorial Day and why it is important to remember the service members who gave their lives in service to our country.**



**Past Department of Illinois President Mary Spindler was appointed to the position of National Hospital Ambassador for 2022-23 by National President Jane Reape. Her theme is Hands that Serve, Hearts that Care. The Hospital Program is one of the oldest of the VFW Auxiliary, having been created at the very inception of the organization in 1914. The duties of the position include promoting the program in all 50 Departments, encouraging recruitment of both member and non-member volunteers and engaging them in the work of the Hospital program, tracking the hours and dollars in the various Departments, and monitoring activities to help determine National awards. As Hospital Ambassador, Spindler presented the program to members attending the VFW National Convention in Kansas City.**





## Auxiliary Membership

Danielle Krull



Membership is such an important part of both the VFW and VFW Auxiliary. So, why are we declining or only gaining a few members over our previous numbers year after year? Some may have their own conclusions, and some may be right, but the biggest reason is we are taking “No” as an answer too quickly. We are not *investing* the time into these rejoin prospects or new member opportunities by *LISTENING* to the *WHY* and then doing something about the reasons.

**WHY** are you not joining either organization when you are eligible?

*If a previous member,* **WHY** do you not want to come back to these organizations?

**WHY** are you saying NO?

**WHY** are we not re-asking our family members that are eligible?

Once we know the answers to these questions, we are frequently or often not *investing* the time into changing or adjusting the **WHY**. I am not saying to change everything about your local post/Auxiliary just because of one person! I am just asking for you to listen and then act on the reasoning, if possible. If you are hearing the same reason then you need a change to better your image for members, previous members, and future members.

After you have invested that time to learn why there is a hesitation and what

needs changing, remember to *invite* these new/future members to your events, every event. Just because they say “No” at first does not mean to stop including them in your events. If they are eligible, recurrently inviting them to events and fundraisers for them to continuously see what we do as an organization might just turn their “no” into a “YES!” They might notice that their previous assumptions about who and what we are as an organization are false and they will see firsthand what we truly do as a Veterans organization.

I challenge you to *invite* someone back that has left us or has said no to joining our organizations. *Invest* in their hesitations, views, and concerns and then *change* something. This does not have to be a substantial change, something small to show them that we are organizations that listen, learn, and adjust to become better for our Veterans!

## Past President Wrap-up

Rhonda Borkgren



I want to thank all the Auxiliaries and Posts in the Department of Illinois. Without you, none of this would have been possible. We received the Circle of Excellence award for the first time in several years. We did it the old-fashioned way. We worked hard! We did what we needed to do. We worked our programs, we paid our bonds on time, we sent in our Installation reports when as needed. We made sure all our officers paid dues before the December 31st deadline. All the excitement of knowing we were in the best place we could be, for the first time in years and I tested posi-

itive for covid on the day I was supposed to leave for Convention. Thanks to all of you who went to the Circle of Excellence ceremony and celebrated my award for me! I sat at home watching on my laptop.

I want to congratulate Laura Knackstedt second place in Hospital awards! Fantastic job!

Congratulations Laurie Sparwasser Second Place in Scholarships! You rocked it!

Sue Edwards member for Best Patriotic Education program in your Auxiliary! Congratulations!!

Congratulations to Danielle Krull and Sar-

ah Higginbotham for getting FIRST place in Membership! Without the wonderful job you did in getting Illinois to 100%, we would not have gotten the Circle of Excellence! It is a 50/50 award, half is membership and half are leadership! I am so happy to have you on my team! You did exactly what I thought you would do!

The last person I would like to recognize is Billie Guthals, National Assistant Conductress. I am sure you did an excellent job!

Once again, thank you for all the challenging work everyone done this past year. As I said when I went in, it takes all of us working together to do good. And you were all great working together with me! Thank you. I hope you do the same thing again this year to help Marvie.



Billie Guthals, National Assistant Conductress, working hard at the Auxiliary National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri.



Illinois Auxiliary at the Circle of Excellence Celebration - front row, from left, Susan Rolando, Janie Crum, Cheryl Michel, Terry Adams, Sarah Higginbotham, Nancy Rieke, Danielle Krull. Second row, Linda Armstrong, Billie Guthals, Doris Zobrist, Martha Cline, Lynda White, Janet Kays, Lynn Smith, Diane Ahrens, Mercie Woolfolk and Cathy Sullivan.



President Deb Kirby Poczatko from Hometown Murray Auxiliary 9773 awarding prizes to winners of the coloring contest at Hometown School and St. Alberts.



Patricia Martyn, Past Department President, presents the Fammel family (from left to right Zoe, Revick, Veteran Gary Fammel and Morgan) a check for \$750 from All Saints Lutheran Church where Martyn attends. Thanks to Paster Don Borling and fiancé Peg Sullivan and others at church who were able to raise money for this Veteran in need's family.



Sarah Higginbotham and Danielle Krull, Co-Membership Chairmen, and Laura Knackstadt, with their awards from National Convention.



45 year attendees Martha Kline, Doris Zobrist, and Nancy Rieke.





Blood Donor chairman Robert McLeod and State Commander Bobby Welch presents Post 1461 the blood donor program award for Membership Category 3.



District 4 Commander Steve McInnis and State Commander Bobby Welch present Mt. Prospect Post 1337 Commander Les Durov with the Safety Award for Membership Category 1.



State Safety Chairman Les Durov and State Commander Bobby Welch present the Safety Award for Membership Category 2 to Post 2955.



State Safety Chairman Les Durov and State Commander Bobby Welch present the Safety Award for Membership Category 3 to Post 3601.



POW-MIA Chairman Clarence Caraker and State Commander Bobby Welch presents Olney Post 4226 the Dennis Nelson POW-MIA Award.



Cantigny Post 367 presents JROTC awards to Joliet students

On April 27, Cantigny Post 367, Joliet, presented JROTC awards to four Joliet Central High School students. From left, Quartermaster James Clausen, Lilly Luangsomkahn, Tylee Ferrer, Ivette Nunez, Emily Reyes and Service Officer Anthony Arellano.

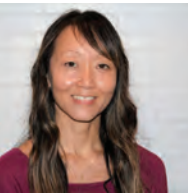
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