



*United We Stand*



# Indiana Combat Veteran

October 2016

Volume 60 Issue 1

*Message from*

## Commander Jerry Blake

Hello everyone,

I can't believe that we are already four months into this year. Everything is happening so fast that I am constantly thinking about the next month's events just to keep ahead of all the activities. We are in the middle of our VOD/ Patriot's Pen/Teacher of the Year program and along with that we are working hard to get our membership back up. I am asking everyone to push hard with their membership program until our next surge, which should be the middle of January when the members that

have a anniversary date of December 31st will be added to our membership roles.

One thing I have learned these past three years is it takes all of us to commit to making our great State better for veterans living in Indiana. If we don't pitch in and help each other, our State will continue to decline and veterans will move to another State to get the help they need. We have to get back to grass roots help and grow our membership to include our younger veterans if we have any chance at all to combat the politi-



**Jerry Blake, Commander**

cians that want to take away the benefits that we all are fighting to keep.

I am asking each officer that took the oath of office to stand up and do what they said they would do when they raised their right hand and said "I DO". I am asking you to get the members back that have walked out the back door for one reason or another. I am also asking you to work the VFW programs and get your local schools involved in these great programs.

If you need help, please don't wait until it's too late to get it. The District and State officers including the State Headquarters are here to help any post. If we work together, I really think we can get the great State of Indiana back to the top of the BIG 10 Conference and keep our great veterans from leaving this State for help in another State.

Let's work together to fulfill our motto "SUPPORTING VETERANS". Thank You.



(L to R): Past Department Commander Greg Baker, Sr. Vice Commander Johnny Capps, Surgeon Mike Sims, State Commander Jerry Blake, State Jr. Vice Commander Eric Billman, 10th Dist. Commander Jim Hankins at Indiana Veterans Home.

## Words From The State Officers

### **JOHNNY CAPPS** Senior Vice Commander



We are well in to the year and we are falling behind in our membership. Membership is crucial to our survival as an organization. Without members, we will not survive. The stronger our membership, the louder our voice is

on Capitol Hill. We need a strong voice so we can get all the benefits our comrades deserve.

Another important topic is community service. Every post does community service. Our problem is we don't report what we do in our communities very well. Our nonprofit depends on community service, so report all the good you do in the community.

We are coming down to the deadline on the VOD and Patriot's Pen programs. Get all your entries into the chairman of the committees on time so all the kids have the opportunity to show us how outstanding the youth in Indiana are.

Finally let's get turning on membership and completing the programs. If there is anything I can do to help you and your post meet their goals, don't hesitate to call me.

### **ERIC BILLMAN** Jr. Vice Commander



Time seems like it has absolutely flown by since our state convention. There has already been a ton of activities with the national convention, school of instruction, state golf outing, campout, trips to Eaton Rapids and Lafayette, as well as district and posts meetings and visits. Hopefully all posts are collecting papers and recordings for the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy programs as the deadline is approaching quickly.

I recently received an email from National HQ's Membership Dept. and as of the beginning of October, our

membership numbers are down almost 600 members of where we were last year at this time. Membership is the life blood of our organization and we need to get out and find new members as well as retain our existing members. For those members in your post that did not renew their membership from last year, take some time to contact them and find out why. Don't hesitate to contact Dave or the Indiana membership team or the membership team at National HQ for a list of veterans in your area. They are there to assist you and your post.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming Fall Conference. As always, quite a bit of information will be discussed during this conference. Please plan to attend with any questions you have especially with the upcoming changes with the Auxiliary and Men's Auxiliary.

As I make my rounds throughout the department, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have an upcoming event or if I can assist you or your post in any way. You can find my contact info in the state book or you can find me on Email, Facebook, and Twitter.

Thank you for all you do for the Veterans, our Troops and for the VFW.

### **MICHAEL L. SIMS** Surgeon



It just seems like it was yesterday that I was elected VFW State Surgeon of Indiana. I have been quite busy the first 4 months of my term, which includes the closing of Post 1342 Syracuse. I have attended 3 District meetings and several Post functions. I have also been honored to attend several patriotic ceremonies. I was very happy and proud to attend the Indiana Day at the National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, MI. and Indiana Day in Lafayette, IN. at the Soldiers Home. I would also like to add that, with a few minor repairs, the Children's Home is in great condition.

A reminder! The deadline is drawing near for your entries on the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen. Please have them turned into the Post by November 1st.

Remember membership is the livelihood of the VFW, so please start making phone calls and mailing letters to get new life members and reinstates.

The most exciting part of my first 4 months of my term as State Surgeon is being able to attend the VFW National Convention that was held in Charlotte, NC. and getting to meet a lot of new veterans. I was also extremely pleased to hear Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump speak in person.

Remember that the Fall Conference is coming up October 29-30. It is extremely important to attend this conference because great information is given out at this conference.

Always remember to honor our Veterans overseas and here at home.

May God bless the United States of America.

## Words From The State Officers

### **TROY "DOC" KING** State Adjutant / Quartermaster



We are well into the year and we have held our School of Instruction and I hope all who attended returned home and shared your knowledge with your Posts and Districts. Let's all work hard on membership and VFW programs and make this a banner year for the Department of Indiana and Commander Blake.

Post Commanders, please insure

that Quarterly Audits are conducted by your trustees, and the Trustees Report of Audit is forwarded to Department Headquarters in a timely manner. On these reports we have noticed that some Posts don't have a relief fund or a Dues Reserve Fund. Both of these funds are required by our National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. Please refer to Section 219 for the Relief Fund and Section 717 for the Dues Reserve Fund.

Did you know that every VFW member can create their own account to the Online Membership System. Just go to VFW.ORG and click on login and follow the prompts to Create an Account. By creating an account on VFW's national website you will gain access to news releases, program information and other important information available to members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Last year we had 40 Post Officers removed as they failed to pay their annual dues prior to the expiration date of their membership. As of October 1,

2016 in the Department of Indiana we have 252 Posts Officers whose membership expires before the end of the administrative year ending on June 30, 2017. Of these 14 expire before December 31st, 130 expire on December 31st, and 108 expire after December 31st. Post Commanders and Quartermasters, please review your rosters and insure these officers renew their dues prior to their membership expiration date.

### **RICK FAULK** Judge Advocate



### **VFW By-Laws**

**Sections 220** - Removal of elective officers or committee members. Removal: Elective Officers or Committee members can be removed as prescribed in Section 220.

The Department Commander may, with respect to any Post within the Department, remove any Post Officer who fails to fulfill the duties of his/her office as required by Section 218.

Any elective Post officer removed by the Department Commander, by reason of failure to pay current dues by vote of the Post under the provisions of this section, shall not be eligible to serve in any Post office in the same Administrative year in which the officer is removed.

The manual of procedure and By-Laws have all the answers. Each Post should have a current copy of this manual at the Post for reference purposes. If I can be of any assistance please contact me. Email: lavfw-glo47@yahoo.com (317) 691-6749.

### **KEISTON R. HOLLOWAY** State Chaplain



Greetings Comrades and Auxiliary of the Post and District.

At the posting of this article, I hope all is well. I would like to say again if I can be of assistance, I am a phone call or email away. I want to give you a breakdown of my activities. I attended the 9/11 ceremony at Procter Park in New Whiteland, the National POW/MIA Recognition Day at the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis, The POW/MIA ceremony at

Crane and the POW/MIA ceremony at Greenwood Post 5864. I visited the National Home for Children on the bus for Indiana Day. I went to the Indiana Veterans Home on October 2nd as well. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall conference. I have sent out to date 2128 condolences and also sympathy cards and get well wishes. The holidays are rapidly approaching and I want to again encourage you to visit the nursing homes, hospitals and the Homebound. You may be the only visitors they have.

I want to thank you for the privilege of being your department chaplain. Please let me know if someone is ill or has passed on, so I can let the family know they are part of our VFW family as well.

May God bless America. May God bless our troops. May God bless the VFW and May God bless each and everyone of you.

## Words From The District Commanders

### **MARVIN R. JACOBS** 2nd District Commander



I am greatly honored to be elected to the position of District 2 Commander for a second year. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has a wonderful opportunity to continue supporting veterans and the community. We have to follow the leadership of our State and National Commanders to increase our membership and improve following up on our continuous and lost members.

Each and every one of us has an event such as raising donations for veterans or the community. Please get a picture and the names with the event to the local newspaper. Please brag about yourselves. This is great information for the community to see and YOU just might find a veteran that just read about your efforts coming through your post doors wanting to be a member and wanting to help.

So, let's go comrades, let's go get those awesome veterans out there into our posts.

As your new 3rd District Commander, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your Commander. I have some big shoes to fill this year from the past District Commanders. Thank you for doing a great job over the years and Past Post Commanders too. Without your guidance and mentorship, I could not do this job. Thank you for helping me.

With the 3rd District Officers that we have now, we are going in the right direction. I am pleased that we have raised over \$1,600 for VOD and Patriot's Pen and we will be doing more this year as we go along. With that said, each Post is selling 3rd District tickets for our raffle fund raiser for \$20. Come into your post and get a ticket and a chance to win \$3000.

We had a great District golf outing this past May and congratulations to VFW Post 8972 (Bremen) that took first place. I look forward to seeing everyone next year. Thanks to all of you that volunteered for this great District of ours and to VFW Post 360 for donating the Hall for our dinner afterwards.

We have been busy in the Community this year. VFW Post 360 helped out with "Get Wet for a Vet" this past August. This is an organization that helps out in the community for the Homeless Veterans in our District. They raised over \$26,000 with the help of VFW Post 360. "Great job".

VFW Post 9820 hosted the POW-MIA remembrance service that was held at the South Bend Military Honor Park this past September. Thank you Gennie Pickens for all of the hard work that you did for this event and to the Auxiliary and the VFW Post 9820 did to make this service outstanding. I know that all the Post are doing what they can with a small group of volunteers but just remember why we are here .... "The VETERANS". We cannot do this alone. That's why we all have to work together. Some of the posts are working great together, with the merge of the Ladies' and Men's Auxiliary which is now called the "Auxiliary". With this change that takes effect 1 Jan. 2017, I see it going in the right direction. With the older veterans

### **ROBERT F. OLANDO JR.** 3rd District Commander



passing on and the younger veterans not joining, we needed the change. Change starts with "you" the member. Without your continuous support of the VFW, we cannot be here to help our veterans that we take care of now and the younger generation of veterans that will soon be joining this great organization in the future.

If you missed the National Home for Children and the IVH Day, you missed a great opportunity to see and meet some great people helping out in these both locations. Thank you State Commander Jerry Blake for your comradeship at the IVH Day. My wife and I had a great time with you and your wife and all of the comrades and Auxiliary members. Most of all, thank you VFW Post 1154 for your hospitality to all of us. To all of you that couldn't make it, you missed out on some great fun. For the Post Commanders (not all), we need more participation from you and your post when we go to these events. This is why we took office to help out these organizations of ours and to send the message of what the VFW is all about. That's why I took office so I can pay it forward and to make me understand better what the VFW does for me and other veterans that need our help.

Please help me to become the best District in the State this year by having 100% membership, attendance at our District and State conference. Until then, thank you for your service to this great country of ours and to the VFW.

## Words From The District Commanders

### **RICHARD LINEBERRY** 4th District Commander



The last couple of months have been busy for us. With all posts working on their membership, Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy, I can tell this will be a great year for us.

I had the opportunity to go on our last Honor Flight on 12 September. We had a WWII POW who was captured on 16 December 1944 at the Battle of the Bulge. What an honor it was to be on the same flight.

The VA at Ft. Wayne and Marion has a new director, Michael E. Hersman, COL, USA (Ret). He may be attending our 19 November 4th District meeting in Angola. He came out for the Honor Flight send off and he was having a great time talking to all the veterans that were there. He will be transferring his membership to the Kendallville VFW.

The VA has a couple of stand downs in our district coming up, first one is 21 October at Safe Haven, 2424 Fairfield Av, Ft Wayne and the second one is at the American Legion, 7760 W. Maumee St, Angota. If you have a chance, stop by and check them out. I will be at both.

State VFW Fall Conference is 28 & 29 October at the Marriott E, Indianapolis and our District Christmas Party is 10 December, 13:00 hrs. at the Kendallville Post.

Hope this finds everyone doing well and enjoying the early Fall weather. At this time the 5th District has been busy working on Buddy Poppy sales and also doing our inspections. At this time we have 7 posts already inspected and with the way we are going, I anticipate having all posts done before our Fall Conference. We all have to remember to get all our quarterly audits done on a timely manner. There is no reason for these not being done. The state gives us a month to get them done and sent in, so work hard and get all the audits in.

At this time the 5th District is now 79.15% for membership, so I have three words for you, MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP. We are currently quite a ways behind from last year's figures and need to work hard to get new and reinstated members to sign up. Comrades, it's as simple as making a phone call, mail a reminder to your members or even going to their house and just talk to them about renewing their dues for another year.

As a great organization, we have a lot of good things going for us to help the communities. So don't forget your

### **MICHAEL OGDEN** 5th District Commander



core programs and work hard to get as many youth involved in VOD/PP. As we all know, these two programs are due on November 1st to each post and due to the districts by November 15th. November meeting is the 19th in Frankfort and January meeting is the 21st in Kokomo. I look forward to all who can attend and remember, we need 100% participation from all posts at district meetings.

We did good this past Sunday at the Indiana Veterans Home. It was such a nice visit and we raised over \$8,000 for the home. Let's all work hard to make this a great year and try to work hard for our Commander Jerry Blake.

### **JIM HANKINS** 10th District Commander



First of all, I ask each and everyone out there to give 100% support to our State Commander Jerry Blake during his 2016 and 2017 year. Not only will we make Jerry look good, we will also grow our membership and better our community.

I feel fortunate to be given the opportunity to serve another year as your 10th District Commander. I have

learned a lot from last year and I hope from what I learned that I can continue to serve the VFW and our Veterans.

As officers, we took an oath that we would carry out our duties and responsibilities to the best of our abilities. We need to get all members involved and work as a team to accomplish our goals. One of our main goals was to get out in the communities that we serve and let people know what the VFW does. We are hoping this will help our post grow in membership.

The opportunities are out there to get new and younger veterans to join our great organization so we need to form committees to get out in the community and pass the word about our VFW and set up booths anywhere we can to try and get new members.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone that has supported me this year and last year. I hope all of you have a great year.

## Words From The District Commanders

### ROY BARRETT 6th District Commander



As I write this, we are well into the month of October, and our dues are slow coming in. I would like to congratulate Post 3318 Attica for being 100% in membership. We have several posts that are doing wonderful things:

- Post 1431 Crawfordsville hosted the traveling wall along with other veterans organizations in their community. They hosted a POW/MIA dinner and had a local POW in attendance. He was very interesting to talk to as he told his story. Thank you Department Commander Jerry Blake and Department Auxiliary president Donna Brogan and their spouses for joining us.
- Post 6246 Noblesville had a special day where they honored one of their

own veterans with a dinner and beautiful cake.

- Post 10003 Carmel had many activities. One was a Fall Festival day with a dunk tank and bounce house with many other fun activities, food and games .

- Post 8756 - I accompanied my wife Marcia and Jean Haggard from 7th district on the VFW Celebrating America's Freedom event to Mt. Rushmore Keystone, SD. Since we drove there on our own, we also went to Crazy Horse, SD. What a glorious site!

I plan on attending Big Ten Conference in Kalamazoo, MI October 21-23 2016.

Department Commander Jerry Blake has asked that the Commanders and the Quartermasters attend this very important Fall Conference Meeting, Saturday October 29, 2016 To start at 9 :00 AM and should end by 3:00 PM.

Again we cannot stress membership enough. Membership is the life blood of our great organization. This is each and every member's responsibility, not only the officers. Lets get those dues in and make Commander Jerry's year shine for Indiana.

### TODD THALHEIMER 9th District Commander

I want to take the time and thank everyone for their service to our great country and the veterans of Foreign Wars. We just completed our School of Instruction and it's time to get busy for the New Year. Posts have finished or are close to finishing their annual inspections.

Posts should start going to the schools and getting the Voice of Democracy and the Patriot's Pen, start early suspense to the Posts are November 1st.

The next major hurdle is our membership; we want to try to be at 100% by Jan. 1st. It is important for posts to have a representative at all district meetings.



I hope to see all at the Fall Conference. Congratulations to the new officers, and let's be a success for our new State Commander Jerry Blake.

### VINCENT J. MISURACA 8th District Commander



It's been a busy three months, beginning with the National Convention in NC. At our 1st District meeting, I talked about the changes for the Auxiliary that came out of Convention, which was followed up by further discussion from Commander Jerry Blake, who was our State Representative. Following on the heels of the District meeting, the School of Instruction was in Indianapolis, with about 50% of the Posts having a representative present.

I am busy working on District Inspection, and I believe I will have most of the Posts done by Fall Conference. The second District meeting was held on September 18, 2016, where we had our own School of Instruction for all the Posts in attendance.

Coming up next in our course of events is Indiana Day at the National Children's Home, with lots of good fellowship along the way, as many of us take the bus trip up to the Home. The following week is Indiana Day at the Veteran's Home in West Lafayette, always good to see the Home and the many Vets that they have in residence.

Later in October, we head to Kalamazoo MI for the Big 10 Conference – Oct 21-23, and then right into the Fall Conference for the State of Indiana from October 28-30. To go along with this ,we have Southern Indiana's 5th Honor Flight going to Washington DC to see the monuments built in their honor, as well as the Post planning for Veterans Day Programs.

We have to "Lead by Example" to keep the Veterans of Foreign Wars strong.

**God Bless America and all our  
Men and Women in uniform**

## Words From The District Commanders

### MIKE CURL

#### 7th District Commander



First, I would thank Senior Vice Commander Keith Rohloff and Junior Vice Commander Joe Goldman for stepping up and taking charge of the 7th while I was out for recovery from my surgery. Thanks for all your prayers in wishing me a quick recovery.

The 7th has been busy this 1st quar-

ter of the year, with 10 of the 20 Posts being visited by one of the three of us. By the time you read this, our District Inspectors, Bill Clark and Charlie Turner should have completed most of the Post inspections with a goal of having all inspected by 1st December.

The District has had a representation at the following events: the State Golf Scramble hosted by Clay City Post 6606, the District Campout at Lake Melissa, the State Campout at S&H Campground, various POW/MIA events including the Department POW/MIA in Indianapolis, Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane Division in Crane, and holding a joint POW/MIA during our District Meeting. We were at the Indiana Day at the National Home for Children and the Veterans Home in West Lafayette.

We are gearing up for the deadlines of Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy

that are approaching quickly. Before we know it, the Holiday Season will be here.

At the time of this article, we are 77.3% in membership and will continue working hard to improve these numbers. I am confident that by the end of the year, we will be 100%. I am hoping that all the Post in my District will take advantage of National's VFW Website Solution Program like the Crane Post did. You can see their new website [www.vfw9297.org](http://www.vfw9297.org). In this program, for \$360 that the Post will pay for the second year renewal, National will pay for the setup and housing of your new website. Information for this program was sent out via VMAIL on August 29th. If you need any information about this please email [vfw9297@hotmail.com](mailto:vfw9297@hotmail.com) and they will help in any way they can. I hope to see you in my travels throughout the 7th District and the Department.

### On the 7th District bus heading north to Eaton Rapids with Troy and Buzz



## Words From The District Commanders

### DAVE HAMMONS

#### 11th District Commander



The 11th District has gotten off to a great start for the year 2016-2017. I'm proud to announce that the 11th District is 100% inspected. I would like to thank my inspection team for a job well done. Myself, and the Sr. Vice have visited all nine posts in the District, and attended each post meeting.

I'm very impressed with the things our posts are doing, to list a few things:

- Post 261 has had a First Responders day, where they honored Police, Fire Fighters, and EMT's. The police chief had each shift have a Rolling Roll call at their post.
- Post 1587 hosted the 11th District POW/MIA ceremony.
- Post 2999 has had a Flag Retiring ceremony.
- Post 2839 has had a Buddy Poppy Drive at Tractor Supply and Sam's Club. and brought in \$4000.
- Post 1120 is getting the VFW name out there with their fire truck at parades.
- Post 908 has had their community hog roast and fund raiser to send less fortunate children from Decatur Townships schools to Washington DC.

Myself and Sr. Vice attended the 9/11 Memorial Ride. Sr. Vice Russell Pryor and Post 908, Post 1120 and Post 2839 attended the Stand Down event for veterans at AMVETS Post 99. My chief of staff Richard Ellis and

a few post attended the State POW-MIA Ceremony downtown at the War Memorial. We also had a bus trip to the VFW National Home for Children. It has been a great start to the year.

I have started a project in the 11th District - Project Give Back. I have asked all nine posts in the District to donate \$100 to the District for a total of \$900 at the District Convention. We will buy one member a Lifetime Membership and one Life Member a Legacy Membership. It is a way to give back to the one's doing the work.

My goal for the 11th District is to help all nine Posts reach All State status. I know my Post Commanders can get this done. I cannot thank the membership of the 11th District enough for all they do for our veterans in our communities and our great organization. For they are the reason why no one does more for veterans than the VFW.

## TAPS

### VFW 1157

Ted Kutter  
Dale Moran  
Earl Wolfe  
Richard Whaley  
Terry Dupire  
Bill Toth  
Albert Dollahan  
Albert Kimball  
Alan Painter

### VFW 1114

Donald V. Anderson  
Jack L. Ashby  
Charles W. Cain,  
Clarence E. Coomes  
Albert E. Grossman  
Richard E. Hall  
Hugh B. Koenig  
Ronald L. "E.T." Sandleben  
Julius A. Schenk  
Donald Wenderoth  
Russell H. Commens  
William R. "Bill" Cook  
Donald J. DeShaney  
Elroy F. Gores  
James H. Hammers  
Wiley H. Hazelip  
Robert A. Hirsch  
Otho Holmes  
Roy J. Mandel

Paul L. McDaniel  
Alfred A. Mohr  
Harold K. Moore  
Allen C. Newman  
George Weigele  
Kurt Yestingsmeier  
Dennis E. Barker  
Daniel J. Bitz  
Charles E. Bodell  
Ivan R. Bradley  
Arvie Burklow  
Harold L. Crawford  
John W. Freeman  
Richard C. Gooch  
Ralph F. Fettscher  
Henry M. Preske  
Joseph R. Ruby  
Oscar E. Schauss



# MENTAL WELLNESS CAMPAIGN

VFW National Commander Brian Duffy and VFW Auxiliary National President Colette Bishop have come together to commission the VFW Mental Wellness Campaign, a new nationwide campaign designed to focus on mental wellness within the military and veterans' communities.

Joined by three high-profile national partners, Give an Hour, One Mind, and PatientslikeMe, the campaign kicked off during a joint press event inside the National Press Club September 13, 2016.

The VFW Mental Wellness Campaign leverages the power, influence and reach of nearly 1.7 million members in more than 6,600 VFW Posts around the world with the nation's leaders in mental health care, research and peer-to-peer support.

The campaign's goal is to raise awareness, foster community engagement, improve research, and provide intervention for veterans, service members, and their loved ones who may be suffering from invisible injuries or emotional stress.

Part of the VFW Mental Wellness Campaign's focus has been working closely with Give an Hour to train VFW-accredited service officers and state leadership to "Know the Five Signs" of emotional suffering as a way to better serve clients coping with invisible injuries, and to help change the narrative on mental health in America through its Change Direction campaign.

In addition to the press event, the VFW and Give an Hour hosted a "Day to Change Direction" on Saturday, Oct. 8. Individual VFW Posts and state departments worked hand-in-hand with Give an Hour's nationwide network of

mental health providers and volunteers, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, to help facilitate peer-to-peer discussions on mental wellness, as well as participate in a community action or event designed to empower Americans to "Change Direction" on mental health and well-being.

Over the coming months, the VFW will also work closely with Seattle-based One Mind to encourage VFW members to participate in online communities to better understand and improve their own brain health. They can also volunteer patient and caregiver input to research aimed at developing new evidence-based diagnostic and treatment options.

The inclusion of the peer-to-peer perspective via PatientslikeMe is equally important to the VFW's campaign. The online network helps people living with any one of 2,500 conditions, including post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury, to compare treatments, symptoms and experiences; connect with others like them for support; track and learn what impacts their health; and give data for research. The tools and support provided by PatientslikeMe are invaluable to patients, potential patients, and their families.

Though this is a joint campaign commissioned during the one-year leadership terms of Duffy and Bishop, the VFW's goal is to build a sustainable program through which all levels of the organization can remain proactive advocates for those coping with emotional stress, which will build upon the VFW's century-plus legacy of veterans' advocacy, service and assistance to others.

# MORE FACTS ABOUT THE VFW



## IMPROVING LIFE IN AMERICA

### 8.6 million

Number of volunteer hours contributed by VFW members annually.

### \$49.4 million

Amount donated annually to local community service projects by VFW members.



## HONORING THE FALLEN

### 10 million

Number of VFW "Buddy"® Poppies distributed by the VFW last year.

### \$13 million

Amount raised through the VFW "Buddy"® Poppy program for needy veterans.



## THE VFW BY THE NUMBERS

### Nearly 1.7 million

Number of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members.

### 6,651

Number of VFW Posts worldwide.



## HELPING VETERANS GET JUSTICE

### 66,913

Number of favorable VA claims filed by the VFW's nationwide force of VA-accredited service officers in 2015.

### 13,279

Number of VA claims filed by VFW Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) offices in 2015.

### 20

Number of Benefits Delivery at Discharge offices across the nation, including the military district of Washington, D.C., area.



## HELPING STRUGGLING MILITARY FAMILIES

### 3,956

Number of grants provided to military families facing financial hardship through *VFW Unmet Needs* since 2004.

### \$2,782,906

Amount of grants provided through *VFW Unmet Needs* covering housing for struggling military families since 2004.

### 2,079

Number of military families who received assistance with housing needs since 2004.



## INSPIRING PATRIOTISM IN YOUNG PEOPLE

### 36,435

Number of high school students who competed in the 2015-16 Voice of Democracy competition.

### 132,162

Number of students who competed in the 2015-16 Patriot's Pen competition.

The VFW has fought for veterans, service members and their families since 1899.

Learn more about the VFW's programs and services at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

# VFW FACT SHEET



**As the nation's oldest major veterans' organization,** the VFW has an impeccable and longstanding record of service and stewardship. More than 4 million patriotic Americans, both members and non-members, entrust the VFW with financial contributions and dedicate millions of volunteer hours.



**YOUR DONATION OF**

# \$20

**ENSURES THE VFW CAN**

- ★ Educate a separating service member about his or her well-earned VA benefits through a private benefits counseling session with a VFW Service Officer
- ★ Help cover rent, utilities or groceries for a military family struggling with the hardships of war
- ★ Provide training to 4 VFW Service Officers on signs of emotional suffering so they can better direct veterans to programs and services
- ★ Serve 5 morale-boosting "welcome home" meals for service members recently back from combat

## 1,839

Number of VFW-accredited representatives across America and abroad, helping veterans fight for the VA benefits they have earned.

## 7.6 million+

Number of connections between deployed service members and loved ones made possible by the VFW's "Free Call Days."

## \$4.5 billion

The amount in VA benefits the VFW network helped more than 255,000 veterans recover in the last three years.

## 2,092,267

Number of service members and their family members hosted at VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP) events since 2005.

## 25

Number of times the VFW has testified before Congress in the last 12 months alone. The VFW has been instrumental in virtually every major legislative victory for veterans in the 20th and 21st centuries.

## \$3.3 million

Amount of scholarships, monetary awards and other incentives the VFW distributes annually to middle and high school students through two major patriotic essay competitions.

## \$5.8 million

Value of financial assistance awarded to military families since 2004 to help cover basic needs in times of crisis. 47% of the funds covered basic housing needs.

## \$2.4 million+

Amount of scholarships awarded to more than 580 veterans and service members through VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" since January 2014.

Learn more about the VFW's programs and services at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

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## NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.®