

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

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Veterans of Foreign Wars
of the United States




January, February, March 2024

Volume 42 Issue 3



Daniel Kell
STATE COMMANDER



Greetings Comrades,

With the Legislative Conference over with, I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to my Legislative Team for the outstanding job they did at our National Legislative Conference in Washington, DC in talking with our Senators and Congressman on National Legislative goals and our goals here in New York State.

We are continuing to do a great job in Membership this year, currently Department of New York is at 93.29% as of March 12, 2024, working toward achieving our goal of 102% by 30 June 2024. As a reminder, Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento has issued a challenge to all the Department Commanders with a Department Membership Challenge and will award the Department of New York \$2,750 for each of the following membership goals for a total of \$11,000. These funds if the goals are met will be added to the Department Membership Budget and will be available to assist the Department, District and Posts with their recruiting events:

1. 88% Membership by November 1, 2023 - \$2750.00 (Did not make)
2. 95% Membership by February 1, 2024 - \$2750.00 (Did not make)

State Commander continued on page 2



Robert Mitchell
STATE ADJUTANT



Comrades,

There continues to be confusion concerning the new Tin Tab Buddy Poppy that was introduced last year by the National organization. The new Tin Tab Poppy is not a replacement for the

State Adjutant continued on page 4



Daniel McMahon
STATE QUARTERMASTER



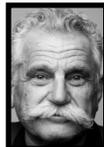
Comrades,

Recently, DNY received a check from the New York State Comptroller's office of unclaimed funds for over \$86,000.00. This from a post which closed several years prior. Over \$9,000.00 of the Total was for interest on the funds turned over to the comptroller's office. **NOTE:** This is not free money. Rather it is being used to offset the \$250,000.00

Quartermaster continued on page 3



Jody Treadway
Editor



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State Historian



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State Photographer



New York State Overseas Veteran

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Articles: Any and all articles involving and/or including Veterans of Foreign Wars, its members, member communities, awards and activities are welcome.

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Please prepare all articles in Microsoft Word (version 2003 or newer) or plain text. Email articles and pictures as attachments with sender's name, address and phone number in the base of the emails. Submissions from other sources must have complete credits such as publication name, address and dates published.

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If you are using regular mail, send the items to:

Jody Treadway
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Department of New York VFW
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Albany, NY 12205

State Commander continued from page 1

3. 99% Membership by May 31, 2024 -

4. 102% Membership by June 30, 2024 - \$2750.00

The Department of New York missed the first 2 thresholds set by National. With a little push and membership drives and with all the Districts participating, we can reach our next goal of 99% by May 30, 2024. In order to accomplish our mission in membership and meet 99% in membership by May 31, 2024, each district needs to communicate with the Department of New York Membership Chairman Mike Burke and his membership team to assist in any membership drives the Districts have set up. Working as a team and communicating with the Department of New York Membership Team will bring more results in membership and help put Department of New York at our goal of 102%. I also would like to congratulate those 50 posts who have attained 100% or higher in membership. "Let's Meet the Challenge" and get New York to 102% by 20 June 2024.

Community Service Reports, Inspections, Quarterly reports, and District All-American Dashboard reporting: Inspections are coming along great, looking at the Dashboard, the Department of New York is over 75% completion of Inspections.

All the District Commanders know my goal now is to have all the Inspections of the District and Posts completed by 1 April 2024. Community Service Reports are also about 75% or better on the Dashboard, but there are still many posts in the Districts that still have not reported any Community Service Activity.

Patriots Pen - I would like to congratulate our Department of New York Patriots Pen 1st Place Winner from District 3, Post 8692, Albany New York Gianna Zhang as well as all the other students who participated in this year's Patriots Pen Youth Essay contest. I would like to also congratulate our Voice of Democracy Department of New York Winner Abigail Jung from District 11, Post 10870, Smithtown, NY, who also placed within the top 13 at the National level and won the Daniel Sean Wallace National Youth Scholarship (NJ) in the amount of \$2,500.00. I would also like to thank and congratulate all the students who participated in both the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen competition for their essays they wrote.

I continue to visit many Districts and post within the District and want to thank the District Commanders for setting up numerous post visits within their District. The communication and comradeship at each post I visited in the Districts were very appreciated.

State Commander continued on page 3



State Commander continued from page 2

Spring Conference is here, and I am looking forward to seeing everyone there. Let's "Make it Happen" and "Meet the Challenge", working together as a team and communicate from the Department level down to the District, Post as well as our Auxiliary to have a successful year.

Meet the Challenge,

Daniel L. Kell

Department of New York State Commander

Quartermaster continued from page 1

we have yet to receive from the fiscal years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

The real reason I am writing about this, is due to the funds available to posts and auxiliaries in the Comptroller's office. I have repeatedly notified Post's of their funds and they are not applying for them. My suggestion, if a Posts doesn't want to go after these funds, please send them to the department. Have a motion at your next meeting to authorize the Department of New York to claim the money. If it passed, have the minutes notarized and send the minutes to me and I will obtain the fund for the Department of New York.

As I see it with many posts having financial issues, the Post trustees are not doing their job correctly. There is a booklet which anyone may download from the national or department website, which provides excellent instructions for completing the task at hand. **NO**, the Quartermaster does not complete the trustees' reports. The Quartermaster and Adjutant provides their records and the trustees review and compile the report.

Along with the Trustees manual there are manuals for the Post Commander and Quartermaster. Please download them **AND** use them.

Update on properties

Lovejoy - Property was sold and we have closed the deal. Full report

will be provided at the Spring conference.

Astoria - The trial part to evict the squatters has been completed

and the attorneys need to complete their summations before the

Judge rules on the trial. We have been advised there will most likely

be an appeal from the squatter's attorney.

Beekmantown, Baldwinsville, Stockton
we are waiting for the title and deed

Quartermaster continued on page 5



Leslie Crossett

SR. VICE COMMANDER



Comrades,

This year we had three department run OTI's and several District run OTI's which were very successful and very informative.

The Legislative committee and department officers went to Albany Capital to visit our Legislatures about the Department's 2024 Legislative Priorities, they were well informed about our priorities and made it easy to talk to them about the issues and concerns.

1. \$ 125,000 for the VFW chapter field service operations.
2. Guard VA Act.
3. Charitable Gaming.
4. Women Veterans Centers.

The Legislative Conference was held in Washington DC March 2-7, 2024 where a large group of New York VFW members went and presented our concerns to our representatives there. They also were informed about our priorities and understood the reasoning behind our visit to them.

I also visited an OTI in District 3 at Post 420 Saratoga Springs.

OTI in Lockport District 7 at Post 2535.

Visited a District 7 meeting Post 202 Holley.

Visited a District 8 meeting in Post 6433 Waterloo.

Went to the informational meeting for District 3 in Queensbury Post 6196.

Department Mid-Winter meeting in Albany

District 3 meeting in Oneonta Post 1206.

D2 meeting in Poughkeepsie Post 170.

District 7 meeting in Lockport Post 2535.

Attended the District 3 Gold Chevron meeting in Clifton Park.

It was good to visit these places and meet old friends and make new friends.

Yours in Comradeship,

Les Crossett

Sr. Vice Commander

State Adjutant continued from page 1

the traditional Legacy Poppy, it was designed to provide a cheaper, lower cost option for Posts that were concerned with the increase in cost of poppies. Tin Tab Buddy Poppies were in development for close to a year and were introduced on the National Mall during Memorial Day activities last year. They were very favorably received. During the development of the Tin Tab Poppy, the National organization narrowed its vendor search down to two companies, one of which was a US Company, and the other was Canadian. The National organization contracted its purchase of the Tin Tab Poppies with the US Company. As with the traditional Legacy Buddy Poppy, Tin Tab Poppies will provide credit towards the Commander-in-Chief's All American Membership Program which requires each Post to purchase three (3) poppies per member. Post Auxiliaries are required to coordinate their Poppy Orders with their respective Posts as a VFW Post Quartermaster's name, Member ID number and signature is required on the form. Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date. If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with the Department, please contact Department Headquarters to report that you have not received your order. If you do not report a missing order within 90 days of processing, the order will not be replaced free of charge and you will have to resubmit your order. The Buddy Poppy order form is available on the Department Website.

As we enter the final quarter of our administrative year, I would again encourage you to utilize the Department "Memstats" database to evaluate where your Post stands statistically. "Memstats" is a valuable resource that is available to assist you in your efforts to track your membership percentages, confirm you reporting requirements and aid you in your efforts to meet Post minimum requirements for Department All-State Program consideration. I would also encourage you to utilize the National "All-American" Dashboard to record your Post's National Reporting requirements and progress toward achieving National All-American for the 2023-2024 membership year. The Department's All-State and National's All-American Programs exist to recognize exceptional leadership, teamwork, and accomplishments in membership growth and VFW core programs.

Yours in Comradeship,
Bob Mitchell
State Adjutant



James MacArthur JR. VICE COMMANDER



Greetings Comrades

Well, I have been fairly busy since our last newsletter. February 25th I attended District 7 meeting in Lockport drove out Saturday beautiful day woke up Sunday morning a blizzard welcome to western N.Y. I also went to the Capital in Albany with Commander Kell and our Legislative team meeting with our representatives and lobbying for some of our priorities to support our fellow veterans. Next on my agenda I traveled to Washington again with our commander, our Legislative team and several other comrades from our great state of New York. I had the privilege of attending the testimony of our National Commander in Chief Duane Sarmiento in front of the joint Congressional and Senate Veterans committee. I also spent a day on the hill with our legislative team meeting with our representatives on both sides of the aisle. I just have to say our Legislative team lead by Ann Marie Hogancamp are an excellent team and know what their job is and do it pride.

As of this writing I have just returned from our Spring Conference in Binghamton N.Y., which was a well-attended event, we had the honor of our National Commander in Chief Duane Sarmiento attend our conference. Last evening at our Spring Conference dinner we honored our VOD and Patriot Pen first place winners both ladies reading their essay and both of them were well deserving winners. Congratulations to them both. CIC Sarmiento addressed the comrades and quests in attendance and believe me he had everyone laughing at times and he knows how command attention. Believe me when everyone left that room, they know they had just heard words of wisdom from a comrade who loves and respects veterans.

So, comrades I have a few more District meetings to attend before our Department convention in June at which time I will become Sr. Vice Commander of the Department of New York (Hopefully) and until then remember MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP we have work to be done let's get to it.

Yours in Comradeship,
James MacArthur
Jr. Vice Commander

NEW YORK STATE OVERSEAS VETERAN

Quartermaster continued from page 3**transferring the properties to our name and the sales will be completed.**

I would like everyone to seriously consider this year, that is being whether your Post should Recruit, Merge or Turn in your charter. Don't Like the sound of this? No. No one does. If you are not recruiting, retaining and or reinstating members, you are going to end up in one of these categories. Along with recruiting, the VFW Programs provide the greatest way to present the reasons for joining the VFW to the public and to veterans.

VETERANS ARE NOT COMING TO US UNDER OUR PRESENT TERMS, we need to attract them and ask them.

Yours in comradeship,
Daniel B. McMahon
Quartermaster
Department of New York
dmcMahon@vfwny.com
518 414-2605



Gene Ratigliano
PSC
NATIONAL COUNCIL
MEMBER



Hello Comrades:

I just returned from a very exciting National Legislative Conference which will now be called the Washington Conference in Washington, D.C. and the presentations of the annual awards for the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen contests. The reason for the name change is that much more is being done during this conference in addition to legislation and provides National more latitude in being able to invite guests from DoD and other agencies as part of the conference. It was again rewarding to see each of those students being recognized getting their scholarship awards and, in particular, the outstanding first place winners in the reading of the winning essays.

VFW National Commander Duane Sarmiento testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs. The VFW delivered its top legislative priorities of 'claim

sharks," fixing concurrent receipt, and combating veteran suicide. As part of the effort to crack down on these predators the VFW is urging the passage of the **GUARD VA Benefits Act** (H.R. 1139/S.740) which reinstates the criminal penalties against these claim sharks and just reinforces the law. A major push was also made for the **Major Richard Star Act** (H.R. 1282/S.344) which will enable Chapter 61 retirees to receive both retired and disability pay without any off-set.

An extensive workshop was held for National Council members where a comprehensive review of the National budget was reviewed. As of December 31st the VFW's total unrestricted cash and investments are \$68.8 million which represents an increase of about \$8.4 million since August 31st. Fundraising has done very well over the past few months. Most budget items are on track and we should be in good shape by the end of the year.

The Council authorized the following Life Membership payouts for the 2024-25 fiscal year:

Plan ABC - A total payout of \$10.50 for each life member (\$3.50 to each Post, Department and National).

Plan D - A total payout of \$11.46 for each life member (\$3.82 to each Post, Department and National).

Plan E - A total payout of \$22.62 for each life member (\$7.54 to each Post, Department and National).

As I prepare this article, the Department of New York is at 93.24%. Last year at this time we were at 95.53%. We need 2,483 new and reinstated members to reach our goal of 102%. Spring is before us and many malls are starting to have boat shows, home shows and the like and is a good time to set up a recruiting table to reach those veterans in your community.

It is also a good time to review the requirements of the Commander's All-State Program as well as the National Commander's Program if you are looking to become an All-State or All-American Post. The membership program requirements are on the Department of NY website at www.vfwny.org. As we near the end of the membership year MemStats will be updated accordingly.

Nominations for elective office are now being held in the month of March and concluding with the elections in April. To preclude any issues as we move into the new year let's ensure that Post election reports are prepared accurately and entered in the On-Line Membership System (OMS).

National Council Member continued on page 6

National Council Member continued from page 5

Additionally, take the time to review the officers who are being elected or appointed and ensure that their dues are paid if they are not currently life members. If you find that an elected or appointed officer has not paid their dues for the upcoming year, have them pay their dues immediately. As I write this article there are currently 14 officers whose membership will expire on March 31st and 24 who will expire on April 30th. During the year we had officers who were unpaid and had to vacate their office for the remainder of this administrative year. Let's keep that from happening this coming year. When you hold your election review their dues status and have those who have not paid pay.

If you are planning on attending this year's National Convention in Louisville, KY general housing opens on March 18th. Now is the time to get those reservations made. Information is posted on the National website at www.vfw.org.

As I continue to remind, look to your District Commander for assistance if you need it. If there is any way the Department can assist please do not hesitate to contact the State Adjutant Bob Mitchell or me by phone or e-mail. Keep up the good work that you do!

Yours in Comradeship,
Gene Ratigliano
 Gene Ratigliano
 National Council Member



Ben Thompson,
PSC
JUDGE ADVOCATE



Comrades,

As we approach the time of year when we elect Post and District officers for the ensuing VFW year, all Post and District Commanders should familiarize themselves with National Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure sections that pertain to their respective levels.

For Post Commanders it would be:
 Sec.215 – Eligibility to Office.

- Sec 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.
- Sec 217 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office
- Sec 218 – Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.
- Sec 222 – Delegates, District Conventions & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

The Post Election Report form will be mailed to the Post Quartermaster with instructions that they complete the form online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or they can complete the form and return directly to National Headquarters immediately following the election of Post Officers but not later than June 1. Avoid having your Post Charter being suspended by ensuring the Post Election Report is filed on time.

For District Commanders it would be:

- Sec 415 – Eligibility to Office
- Sec 416 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees
- Sec 417 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office
- Sec 418 – Officers: Duties and Obligations
- Sec 421 - Voting

A properly completed District Election Report shall be submitted to National Headquarters prior to the convening of the Department Convention.

To all the Past Commanders at the Department, District and Post levels, remember, it is our responsibility and duty to assist our officers with all the counsel and experience we gained during our term of office.

Let's all work together to finish this year on a high note and have a banner 2024 – 2025 VFW year.

To all of my Comrades, if I can be of assistance to you, I am only a phone call or email away.

Good luck and remember, we are One Team.
 Ben Thompson, PSC
 Judge Advocate

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*Spring Conference
Doubletree Hotel
Binghamton, NY
March 15-16, 2024*





Jon Michael
State Surgeon



Art Scheuneman
*National Home
Chair*



Comrades,

January 16, 2024, I visited the Albany VA hospital and spoke with the patient service officer and the director of Volunteer services. We discussed a few things that have been going on this year. During our meeting we talked about upcoming changes the hospital had plans for, such as updating and bringing in new equipment to help serve our comrades better. They also spoke about upcoming renovations, which will make the hospital more appealing. The visit was educational, knowing that the hospital and staff had the best intentions for our veterans. I also toured throughout the hospital and talked with veterans after they had received care that day, all were very appreciative to see a representative of the VFW looking out for them. Most veterans knew of the VFW and had a minimal understanding of what our organization does. I took the time to sit down with as many as possible and answer as many questions as I could. I directed several to our VSOs for further assistants.

I am looking forward to continuing my visits in the following months. Last but certainly not least I want to acknowledge the comrades who have extended their knowledge, guidance, and mentorship to me during my tenure. Luke Magliaro, PSC Mike Hoag, Commander Dan Kell, PSC Tom Todaro, without these comrades and their assistance my tenure would have been extremely difficult.

Yours in comradeship,

Jon Michael

Department of New York Surgeon



Comrades,

The end of January and into the beginning of February I made the trip to the National Home for our Mid-Winter Board Meetings. The weather was nice upon arrival, but Mother Nature had different plans once we were there. We got to see the new plow trucks in action; couldn't miss the bright red one with the Cooties on it.

The NH is in the process of building a new ADA home on the site of the Pollett House. The Pollett House was the original home on the grounds. The roads are also being redone as the winter weather has taken its toll on them over the years. The last big thing that needed to be addressed was the electrical service throughout the campus. The majority of the electric poles and all of the transformers are in need of replacement.

A couple of things of note are: We, the board voted to realign the twelve districts that make up the areas each trustee is responsible for. Our district, district two, lost the Department of New Jersey but gained the Departments of Connecticut and Vermont.

The VFW National Home is pleased to announce that our Board of Trustees has approved a district realignment plan at our February 2024 meeting. This decision was made after careful consideration and analysis of the current district boundaries. The main objective of the realignment was to align the districts better geographically.

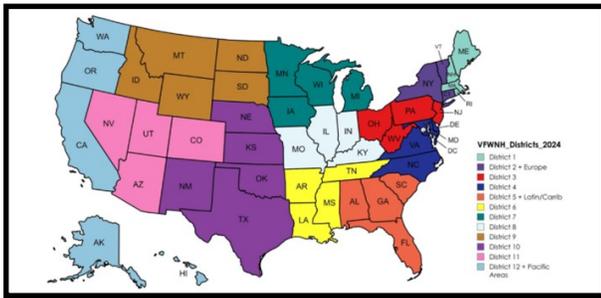
The new district boundaries below will take effect immediately. We understand that this may impact some of our volunteers and supporters, but we are committed to ensuring a smooth and seamless process. We believe that the realignment will ultimately benefit our charity's mission and help us to better serve our constituents across the country. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our cause.

District One – Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island

National Home Chairman continued on page 9

National Home Chairman continued from page 8

- District Two – New York, Europe, Vermont, Connecticut
- District Three – Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, New Jersey
- District Four – Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, Virginia
- District Five – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Latin/Caribbean
- District Six – Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas
- District Seven – Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota
- District Eight – Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Kentucky
- District Nine – North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming
- District Ten – New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Nebraska
- District Eleven – Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada
- District Twelve – California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Pacific Areas



Coming Soon! 2025 is the National Homes Centennial year and we will be rolling out a Centennial Membership Program

Centennial Membership Program

Coming Soon! We're excited to announce the Centennial Life Membership program, which will begin April 1, 2024, and end December 31, 2025, in honor of our 100th anniversary. For just \$100, you can join this special program by upgrading your existing membership or becoming a new member.

As a Centennial Life Member, you'll receive a special centennial membership pin and membership card that will allow you to display your affiliation with pride. Plus, you'll enjoy discounts on souvenirs and apparel that are not available to regular members.



DON'T MISS OUT!!!
VFW State Commander's
Save our Veterans Golf Tournament

Friday May 17, 2024
 Briar Creek Golf Course
 Duanesburg, NY

Saturday May 18, 2024
 Casolwood Golf Course
 Canastota, NY

Sunday May 19, 2024
 Chautauqua Golf Course
 Chautauqua, NY

<https://vfwny.com/uploads/documents/2023-2024/StateCommander'sGolfTournament.pdf>



Ron Jubis
Scouting Chair



Comrades,

The 2024 VFW Scouting application deadline for a VFW Post to submit a Scout application to the Scouting Chairman by April 1, 2024. Posts submitting a Scout application should thoroughly review the eligibility criteria needed to meet the requirements to submit their application. The post review committee should as follows:

The application should clearly explain in detail the scout's Eagle Award project; how were the funds obtained to complete their project; did they have a fund raiser to get supplies; any



Thomas Todaro PSC

**DIRECTOR OF
VETERANS SERVICES**



Comrades,

Below is an article on Public Guidance on Elective Option for Camp Lejeune Justice Act Claims .

This Guidance Document explains the voluntary framework that has been adopted by the Department of the Navy and the Department of Justice to evaluate and potentially settle claims brought under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act (“CLJA”) that are pending administratively or are newly filed (the “Elective Option” or “EO”). The EO allows claimants to resolve certain CLJA claims more quickly and more efficiently than in litigation, which might otherwise require resolution of uncertain legal and factual issues through potentially burdensome discovery, motions practice, and bellwether trials. The EO is available to certain claimants with Qualifying Injuries and who resided or worked at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days.

As explained in greater detail below, certain claimants who have previously received healthcare or disability benefits related to Camp Lejeune from the Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) may rely on those benefits to establish eligibility for an EO offer. Accepting an EO offer will not affect the claimant’s VA benefits. Additionally, an EO settlement will not be offset due to a VA benefit through a reduction in the settlement amount for benefits paid or a VA lien. The EO process thus allows those who have obtained a disability award, payment or benefit related to Camp Lejeune to retain that award, payment or benefit without the offset that would be statutorily required if the claimant were to proceed to trial and win a judgment. This Guidance Document is intended to explain the government’s approach to reviewing and potentially settling certain claims asserted under the CLJA.

This Guidance Document does not have the force and effect of law. Unless expressly stated otherwise, this Guidance Document does not represent the Department of the Navy’s or Department of Justice’s interpretation of any regulations, statutes, common laws, or constitutional provisions. Nothing included herein

can be used against the United States, in any way, in the CLJA court litigation. Neither this Guidance Document nor the mere existence of the EO confers any rights or constitutes an offer of settlement. Both this Guidance Document and the EO may be amended or revoked in the future.

Part One of this Guidance Document provides a general overview of the EO’s structure and guiding principles. The general EO process is also illustrated in an attached flowchart. Part Two addresses specific questions likely to arise under the EO.

I. Overview of the EO

The EO provides a framework for resolving certain CLJA claims quickly, equitably, and transparently. A claimant seeking a recovery under the CLJA must first submit an administrative claim to the Department of the Navy. 1 The Department of the Navy then has six months to review the administrative claim.

The EO allows the Department of the Navy to focus its review on a few key aspects of the claim, such as the type of injury alleged and the amount of time the claimant worked or resided at Camp Lejeune. Narrowing the scope of the Department of the Navy’s review will allow it to validate claims and extend settlement offers more quickly. The EO will provide similar settlement offers to claimants with similar exposures and injuries for which there is similar scientific evidence of causation.

Claimants who are not eligible for an EO offer may still file a CLJA claim with the Department of the Navy. The Department of the Navy will evaluate those claims and coordinate with the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice and the Department of the Navy may also develop additional frameworks to resolve CLJA claims, particularly as the scientific evidence and litigation develops. Developing and applying these additional frameworks may require greater time and resources than the EO. Alternatively, a claimant may file a lawsuit in federal court, provided that the claim has either been formally denied by the Department of the Navy or six months have passed since the claim was initially filed.

A. The Elective Option Grid The

EO applies a two-by-three “Elective Option Grid.” With one exception explained below, the EO includes illnesses or conditions that the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (“ATSDR”) identified as having evidence at an “equipoise and above” level or higher for a causal link to one or more contaminants detected in the

***Director of Veterans Services continued on
page 11***

National Home Chairman continued from page 9

Celebrate the upcoming VFW National Home Centennial in style with a personalized engraved brick in our 2025 Centennial Garden. Whether it's to honor a loved one, commemorate a special event, or simply leave your mark on this historic occasion, our 8x8 engraved bricks offer a timeless way to do just that. And for a limited time only, you can secure your place in history for an unbeatable price of only \$500.

Our bricks are made from the highest quality materials and engraved with the latest technology, ensuring that your message will last for generations to come. Not only will your brick be a lasting tribute to your contribution to celebrate our 2025 Centennial, but it will also add to the beauty and legacy of the garden for years to come.

With only a limited number of bricks available now is the time to act. Don't miss your chance to be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Order your personalized engraved brick today for only \$500 and be a part of history. Place your order at vfnationalhome.org.

Loyally,
Art Scheuneman
National Home Trustee
District 2 2019 - 2025
State National Home Chairman
Department of N Y VFW
WdStock44@Yahoo.Com
585-689-5975

Director of Veterans Services continued from page 10

Camp Lejeune water. There are two categories of Qualifying Injuries. Where the ATSDR has identified evidence at the "equipoise and above" level, the group of Qualifying Injuries is referred to as "Tier 2." Where the ATSDR has identified additional evidence of causation and reported that the Qualifying Injuries have "sufficient" evidence of a causal link to one or more contaminants detected in Camp Lejeune water, the group of Qualifying Injuries is referred to as "Tier 1." There are also three categories of Duration of Exposure: (1) exposures between 30 and 364 days; (2) exposures between 1 and 5 years; and (3) exposures longer than 5 years. The Elective Option Grid is depicted here:

Elective Option Grid:

	<u>30 to 364 Days</u>	<u>1 year to 5 years</u>	<u>More than 5 years</u>
<u>Tier 1 Qualifying Injury</u>	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$450,000
<u>Tier 2 Qualifying Injury</u>	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$400,000

In addition, claims that show a Qualifying Injury resulting in death will be offered an additional \$100,000. Accordingly, the maximum EO offer is \$550,000.

Qualifying Injuries are divided into two "Tiers," as listed below:

Qualifying Injuries

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Qualifying Injury</u>
Kidney Cancer	Tier 1
Liver Cancer	Tier 1
Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma	Tier 1
Leukemias	Tier 1
Bladder Cancer	Tier 1
Multiple Myeloma	Tier 2
Parkinson's Disease	Tier 2
Kidney Disease / End Stage Renal Disease	Tier 2
Systemic Sclerosis / Systemic Scleroderma ²	Tier 2

"Cardiac Birth Defects" are not included in the EO, even though the ATSDR determined there was sufficient evidence of causation for this category of illnesses. Cardiac birth defects include a wide range of illnesses that are difficult to evaluate similarly without fact-intensive investigation.

The CLJA is limited to individuals who had a Duration of Exposure of "not less than 30 days." The Duration of Exposure is based only on residential and occupational exposures for claimants who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune. The EO includes an exception for in utero claims that are based on the mother's residential or occupational exposures for at least 30 days during the 9-month period before the claimant's birth. The EO defines Camp Lejeune as including both Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River.

Claimants with similar exposures and injuries for which there is similar scientific evidence of causation will receive similar settlement offers. Additionally, claimants with diseases that the ATSDR has determined are more strongly associated with exposure to contaminants in Camp Lejeune water or who were exposed to Camp Lejeune water for a longer period of time will receive greater settlement offers than others whose diseases do not fall in the highest categories or whose exposures were not as long.

Importantly, except for claims involving death, these groupings do not make judgments about the relative severity of different injuries, the claimant's income-level or medical expenses, or other proxies for need or severity. Rather, groupings primarily reflect the strength of causation (for this program

Director of Veterans Services continued on page 12

Director of Veterans Services continued from page 11

only, as categorized by the ATSDR) as a legal element, without consideration of individualized factors that could affect causation. 4 The additional offer amount recognizes the different nature of claims involving death.

B. Additional Requirements

In addition to showing a Qualifying Injury and the Duration of Exposure, an administrative claim must meet three additional basic requirements.

1. Presentment Requirement An administrative claim must be properly presented to the Department of the Navy to qualify for the EO. Pursuant to § 804(h) of the CLJA, submission of an administrative claim is required.

2. Onset Requirement The injury must have been first diagnosed or treated before August 10, 2022. The CLJA applies "only to a claim accruing before the date of enactment of this Act," i.e., before August 10, 2022.

3. Latency Requirement The earliest date of diagnosis or treatment must be not less than two (2) years after the claimant's first exposure and not greater than thirty-five (35) years after the claimant's last exposure. A single 2-year minimum latency and 35-year maximum latency for all injury types allows easier and quicker review of claims. A single Latency Requirement also reduces burdens on claimants. If proceeding outside the EO, claimants may be required to present expert testimony regarding latency as part of their proof of causation. The EO offers certain claimants an opportunity for settlement without the costs of meeting this burden. Claimants who are unable to satisfy the EO's Latency Requirement may still offer proof of causation outside the EO.

C. Evidentiary Standards

To show a Qualifying Injury, there must be medical documentation showing the claimant was diagnosed with or treated for that illness or condition before August 10, 2022. Appropriate medical documentation may include medical records, treatment notes, test results, billing records, death certificates, or a letter from a medical doctor. Medical documentation must be signed or certified by a medical doctor. Medical documentation must be originals, or certified copies of the originals, unless it is impossible to obtain an original or certified copy of the original. If it is impossible for a claimant to provide an original or certified copy of an original, the claimant must provide a written statement under oath with the uncertified copy setting forth

Director of Veterans Services continued on page 20



Ronald Sorrentino
SERVICE OFFICER
JOURNAL AD CHAIR



Comrades,

thank you!

Once more I want to say **Thank You** to all the Post, Auxiliaries and Members who donated to the Service officer Raffle and Journal this year. We had \$7,950.00 in prize money with 73 prizes being drawn. The Journal had 73 Ads five more than last year how great is that. This year we raised a total of \$15,005.00 from Raffle ticket sales.

I just want to repeat and say **Thank You** to all Comrades for the great response to this deserving cause. We are so grateful to all who have participated in the Service Officer Raffle and Journal. As I said before, without your generous support, we would not be able to raise the additional funds needed to continue the service provided by our Service Officers. The work they do, as you know, is essential in both counseling our Veterans and helping them with their claim so they can receive the benefits they need.

I hope to continue as the Chair of the Service Officer program once again. I will graciously accept this Chairmanship. With all your help as in the past, I know we can have another great Program next year. In closing I would like to congratulate all the winners in the raffle!



Ronald Sorrentino

Ronald Sorrentino

Veterans Service Officer Journal & Raffle Chairman



William Moore

VOD CHAIR



Comrades,

This year's theme was "The Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy".

Personally, I would like to say thank you to comrades, auxiliaries, District Commanders, and VOD Chairmen, who helped respective posts run this contest.

The NYS Competition was held in Red Hook, NY at Post #7765 with 5 judges. We had overall 58 posts, 18 auxiliaries, 474 students, 72 posts having winners who advanced.

From the 11 districts, Abigail Jung, from Post 10870 in District 11 emerged as the NYS winner. Congratulations!

Competition standings are as follows:

2nd place from Post 369 District 5, 3rd place Post 7172 District 2, 4th place Post 4660 District 3, followed with District 7 Post 374/ District 4 Post 7227, District 8 Post 412, District 6 Post 8734, District 10 Post 9592.

Scholarships and Awards totaled \$17,180.00.

Additional money expended and awarded \$5875.00.

District Awards totaled \$3075.00. Additional District expensed a total of \$575.00. The State of New York totaled \$5650.00.

Our program is very important work. Sometimes it is a lot to organize, judge, keep accurate accounting but I received one thank you note from a participant that sums up why it is important in doing the Voice of Democracy.

From E.B, Frankfort, NY:

"I would like to thank you and the local VFW post for taking time to consider my application and essay for the Voice of Democracy Youth Scholarship. Although I did not receive this scholarship, I am honored to express my viewpoints and opinions on a larger level. Thank you for your service and all you do to improve our country and its citizens to the best of your ability."

William C. Moore, PDC

NYS VOD Chairman



Matthew VanEtten

PATRIOT'S PEN CHAIR



Comrades,

I would like to start of with thanking all the Posts and Districts that participated this year in the Annual Patriots pen Essay Competition. With a Subject titled "How are you inspired by America" we had 1,311 students participate and gave out more than \$24,000. That is 292 more students participating and giving out \$5,422 more in monetary awards than last year.

8 out of 11 districts submitted their first-place winners to advance to Department judging. Assisted by Joan Barnhart. Our Dept Aux Youth Activity Chair. We held judging at Yorkville VFW post 6001. I would like to thank the 6 judges that took time out of their day to read these entries and chose our department winners.

3rd place out of district 6 Gianna Lazzaro sponsored by Post 6251.

2nd place District 7 Lauren Marie Fay sponsored by Post 26

1st Place District 3 Gianna Zhang Sponsored by Post 8692

In Closing I Would like the thank Commander Kell for the Appointment this year and District Commanders ensure that you and your posts are reporting this program on the All-American dashboard.

Matthew VanEtten

Patriot's Pen Chairman





James Brooks

State Inspector



Greetings Comrades,

It has been a pleasure to meet and talk with some of you throughout the year. Outlined below, you will see what each District Commander, District Inspector, and Post Commander should pay attention to on the Post Inspection Form.

Question 1. Has the Post adopted Bylaws in accordance with Section 202 of the National Bylaws? Post Bylaws must be submitted to the Department for the Commander to review by next year. Do not submit them with your inspection as they are to go to the Department as a separate document.

Question 9a. Community Service Report needs to be filled in where it says, "Date of last submission." Community service reports must be completed online on www.vfwny.com in the Members only Section of the Website. A guide and instructions can be found under Programs then Community Service within the website.

Question 12. Does the Post distribute Buddy Poppies? If you have marked, "Yes," then 12a. "Date of last distribution:" needs to be filled in. These first three won't keep your Posts Inspection from being accepted this year.

The following will be considered a deficiency.

Question 15. Do the elected Trustees audit quarterly all books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant and any activity clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of Post? If so, 15a. "Date of last quarterly audit" must be filled in.

Question 16. Post Funds is a big issue and cause for inspections not being accepted at the end of the year. Question 16. (Post Funds a) - h) must ALL be filled in. Post Funds (a-f) must come from the most recent Trustee Report of Audit submitted. That way, I can verify the numbers off the Trustee Report. Reconciliation on Trustee Reports must be filled out correctly. One prevalent error on Trustee Reports is that Box 15 does not match the final line of Box 17. Reconciliation of Cash & Investments. If a Trustee Report is not completed correctly, please follow up with your posts to instruct them on how to

do it properly. The Trustee Reports must be up to date with the Inspection with three Trustee Signatures and the Commanders Signature.

Question 17 Name of bonding company must be filled in correctly, along with the expiration date. The Bonding requirements must be in accordance with Section 703- Bonds of the National Bylaws.

Question 19g. Date of last 990 filing is a big issue within the Department, Posts MUST complete a 990 yearly, some Posts have not filed a 990 for years which jeopardizes the Posts tax exempt status. You must provide a copy of a Post's full 990 whether it is completed with Form 990 or Form 990-N (e-Postcard.)

Question 20. Post Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN) must be filled in correctly. Please be sure the Post has their own EIN and is not sharing with another organization such as an Auxiliary or Association.

A Post Inspection cannot be done by your own Post therefore contact your District Commander to schedule an inspection. Finally, please follow up with the Memstats on www.vfwny.com under Programs to ensure a post has been inspected yearly. If a post was not inspected last year, the post MUST be inspected this year. District Commanders, **please ensure each inspector is adequately trained on the use of the form.**



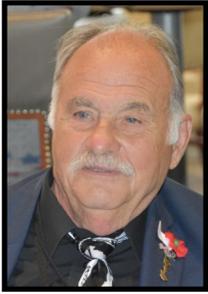
These are the issues facing Posts on their respective inspections this inspection year. If you have a deficiency on your Inspection Report, it can be fixed to which I will review and approve. If you need to send documents, please send them to the New York Department Headquarters noting that a document has been resubmitted for approval, "Attn State Inspector Jim

Brooks."

I want to thank the District's who have fully turned in their inspections and those who are assisting posts efficiently. Please remember, the yearly inspections are to help a Post succeed and you are there to help them.

Thank you,

Jim Brooks
State Inspector
Department of New York



Pat Iuliucci
POW/MIA
CHAIR



Historical Significance: Revolutionary War 1776-1782



The Prison Ship Martyrs monument is located in Fort Green Park in Brooklyn, New York. Below the monument lay the remains of over 11,500 American Prisoners of War, the largest single Revolutionary War grave in the country. These men were held on British prison ships in Wallabout Bay, now know as New York Harbor, near the Brooklyn Navy Yar. These are America’s first martyrs. Our POWs suffered outrageous and indefensible cruelty resulting in lingering torturous deaths made more painful by starvation, regular beatings and diseases. Fatal diseases included yellow fever, and smallpox, which spread throughout the overcrowded, filthy prison ships. One notorious ship, the New Jersey, was built to hold 400 prisoners, but when used as a British prison ship, held 1,400 Americans, with the portholes sealed to prevent escape. These men spent years suffering from intolerable circumstances: the blistering heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter.

These ships, 12 known, became pestholes where prisoners died at rates of five to ten a day – their bodies tossed overboard and whose bones and remains washed upon the shores. At any time, prisoners could have walked off these ships with their lives had they agreed to defect and enlist in the British Armed Services. With very few exceptions,

they all said no and chose a horrid death rather than forsake their new beloved country and leader General George Washington.

The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument was designed by Architect, Standford White. Built by Sculptor, Adolph Alexander Weinman. Made of Bronze, and Deer Isle granite materials the monument stands H: 114’ D: 17’6”, total H: 143’. Its notable features are Doric column surmounted by a bronze urn, on a terrace approached by 100 steps. Today this monument serves as a park and a museum.

During the Revolutionary War an estimated 20,000 Prisoner of War were recorded.

Currently, as of March 1, 2024, according to DPAA there are: WWII – 72,115; Korea – 7,482; Vietnam – 1,577; Cold War – 126; Gulf War -5; Eldorado Canyon – 1.

Pat Iuliucci
 POW/MIA Chair



Scouting Chair continued from page 9

donations; number of hours to complete their project.

3X5 photograph in complete uniform.

High School Participation

Letters of recommendation.

The Scout application must be signed by the District and Post Commanders. I am available to receive either emails or phone calls for assistance. Together we can select a scout candidate from the Department of New York for consideration as the VFW National Scouter of the year.

Completed Scout applications are to be mailed to my home address. When I receive a scout application, I will notify the Post that I have received their scout application.

Ron Jubis
 Scouting Chairman

At this year's Department of New York VFW Spring Conference held in Binghamton, New York held March 15-16, 2024, our Department was honored to host the Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento, Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz, State Commander of Pennsylvania David Gyger, State Commander of New Jersey Jeff Walding, State Commander of Connecticut Richard DiFrederico, Eastern States Chairman Glenn Umberger, Jr. and Eastern States Senior Vice Chairman Bernard Thompson, PSC. It was truly an honor for New York to have so many distinguished guests at our Spring Conference.





**Marcello
Rotunda**
**STATE SAFETY
CHAIR**



Comrades,

We had 5 Districts participate in the safety awards for 2023, 2024 The following are the winners from the judging that was held on January 4, 2024

1. Police officer - Patricia Vincent from District 2
2. Fireman - Dylan Barnhart from District 2
3. EMT - Karen Gavin from District 7
4. Dispatcher - Kristopher Mason from District 2

Yours In Comradeship,

Marcello J. Rotunda
Department Safety Chairman



The Spring Conference officially began with the Council of Administration Dinner on Friday March 15, 2024. In addition to the members of the Council of Administration that were in attendance, there were several honored guests: Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento; PCIC Paul Spera; PCIC & PSC William "Doc" Schmitz; State Commander David Gyger of Pennsylvania; State Commander of New Jersey Jeff Walding; State Commander Richard DiFrederico of Connecticut; Eastern States Chairman Glenn Umberger, Jr. and Eastern States Senior Vice Chairman Bernard Thompson, PSC.



Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5350 held our Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen awards ceremony on January 25th., along with honoring our Hampton Bays High School Teacher of the Year Mrs. Rachel Kelsh. Students from Westhampton Beach, Hampton Bays, Quogue, East Quogue, Raynor Country Day School and Remsenburg-Speonk School all received awards for their outstanding oratorical and essay submissions.



Ron Sorrentino

COMMUNITY SERVICE CHAIR



Comrades,

The department Community Activity total to date is 37,973 volunteer hours with a donation dollar amount of \$2,062,806. I know at this rate with a little over three months to go we will top last year's total; I am sure we can accomplish this. So far for the 2023-2024 District 3 with a total of \$ 534,786.64 is in first place, followed by district 11 with \$343,198.34, then district 10 with \$ 270,901.66. Let's put the peddle to the metal and full steam ahead to beat last year's total. I know it can be done.

Just to repeat

On reporting of community service, you must remember that the VFW year goes from 1 July - 30 June, to have your reports count it must show that the activity happened within the 1 July - 30 June time frame. Also, the description on the reports must have more than a one-word explanation, one word is not a description.



Ronald Sorrentino

Ronald Sorrentino
Community Activity Chairman



Madison Fletcher

COMMANDER DISTRICT 2



Comrades,

Happy Spring, it felt like a long winter here, but the sun is back out. This year I had the pleasure of



attending the Washington Legislative Conference and was able to see firsthand the hard work our legislative team and leadership does. We were able to advocate for our comrades focusing on four legislative priorities. It was great to see what the VFW does for veterans on a national level.

Back at home in district 2 Mahopac Post 5491 held a Polar Plunge calling it Operation Ice Splash.



District 2 Commander continued on page 19

District 2 Commander continued from page 18

The temperature outside for the event was 45 while Lake Glenida was a balmy 35 degrees. They included events for children as well as the adults and gave out prizes for the best costume. All in all, they were able to raise \$15,000 to go towards helping veterans in the community. They have decided that this will now be an annual tradition moving forward.

On Sunday, 03/02 VFW Post 5444 of Amenia had their monthly breakfast working together with Vet2Vet to include a food drive for their veteran's pantry. Also working with Vet2vet Albany Stratton hospital donated new children's coats that we were able to donate to Vet2vet.



We held our District 2 winter meeting at Post 170 in Poughkeepsie with Electronic Gaming commission, Castle Point resource coordinators and those running for offices as guests. Our focus is rewriting the by-laws at the moment. The last time they were written was in 1999. Times have changed and its fortuitous to change with them. Our District 2 convention will be held at Heritage Field also known as Dutchess Stadium on May 11th.

As a district we are working hard to achieve the commanders challenge of 102%. We are currently at 92% with 3 recruiting events coming up this month at West Point. One thing that stood out in my mind at the Legislative Conference was that 124 years ago our organization was started to fight for the rights that veterans have earned, and today we still are rooted in the same ideals. We are here to fight to endure that every veteran gets the benefits they deserve. To be successful in our endeavors, we need members. Please keep recruiting let's get to that 102% and work together for our comrades.

Madison Fletcher
District 2 Commander
2023-2024



**Harold
Patchen**
COMMANDER
DISTRICT 3



Comrades,

I'd like to begin this article by congratulating Post 1938 Valley Falls, who as of this writing is at 112.50% membership. Commander Mike Squires is doing a great job. Keep up the good work Mike. We have seven posts at or above the 100% mark with many closing in on it. My hope is that we as a district will meet the 102% challenge. Post 6196, Queensbury, took me up on my 1st membership challenge. They reached 100% and had 5 new members. In doing so, Post Commander received \$50.00, from me to cover the cost of his meal at our District Gold Chevron Awards dinner. I still have one challenge out to the Commanders in the district. The first post to achieve 100% membership **and five (5) new FEMALE members, by May 1st** will send their Commander and wife or significant other to the District Convention dinner at my personal expense. I hope that someone will meet or exceed my challenge too.

We had a good year with Patriot Pen, VOD, Teacher of the Year and Law Enforcement awards.



Above are the VOD winners from Post 3275 Ft. Plain.

District 3 Commander continued on page 22

Director of Veterans Services continued from page 12

the reason why it is impossible to provide an original or a certified copy of an original.

To show Duration of Exposure, there must be housing or employment documentation showing that the claimant (or the claimant's mother while the claimant was in utero) resided or worked at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987. Appropriate housing or employment documentation may include military service records, tax returns, drivers' licenses, pay stubs, employment contracts, or similar documentation. Claimants who alleged they were exposed to Camp Lejeune water while living on base with a service member may rely on that service member's housing or employment documentation, if the claimant can show a relationship with the service member, such as a marriage certificate or birth certificate. For purposes of the EO, secondary evidence, such as a sworn affidavit, statement, or declaration, is not sufficient to show a claimant resided or worked at Camp Lejeune because such evidence is less reliable.

Claimants who have previously received healthcare or disability benefits related to Camp Lejeune from the VA may rely on those benefits to establish a Qualifying Injury, a Duration of Exposure of between 30 and 364 days, or both.

To show that a Qualifying Injury resulted in death, there must be medical documentation showing that the illness or condition caused or contributed to causing the decedent's death. Appropriate medical documentation may include a "long form" death certificate that includes a medical report detailing the cause of death, or a signed letter from the decedent's treating physician.

D. Process for Reviewing Administrative Claims for the EO

1. Step 1: Determine "Perfection" An administrative claim must be properly presented to the Department of the Navy in order to satisfy the "Presentment Requirement" for review. Claimants should use the form provided on the CLJA website for filing a claim. Upon review of a claim, Department of the Navy personnel will contact claimants if additional information is required to "perfect" their claim. There is no need to refile administrative claims that have already been filed and are currently pending with Navy.

2. Step 2: Screen Perfected Claims for a Qualifying Injury The Department of the Navy shall screen perfected claims to ensure that they allege a Qualifying Injury. Claims that allege multiple injuries may proceed to Step 3 so long as at least one of

those injuries is a Qualifying Injury.

3. Step 3a: Department of the Navy-initiated Investigation The Department of the Navy shall investigate perfected administrative claims asserting a Qualifying Injury to determine (1) whether the claimant was diagnosed or treated with a Qualifying Injury (Qualifying Injury); (2) when the diagnosis was made or treatment performed (Date of Diagnosis); (3) when the claimant began residing or working at Camp Lejeune (Date of First Exposure); (4) when the claimant stopped residing or working at Camp Lejeune (Date of Last Exposure); (5) the duration of any absences (Days Absent); and (6) whether the Qualifying Injury resulted in or contributed to death (Death).

After determining (1) the Qualifying Injury and (2) the Date of Diagnosis, the Department of the Navy can determine the appropriate Qualifying Injury Tier and whether the claimant satisfies the EO's Onset Requirement. After determining (3) the Date of First Exposure, (4) the Date of Last Exposure, and subtracting any (5) Days Absent, the Department of the Navy can determine the appropriate Duration of Exposure. By referencing the (2) Date of Diagnosis in conjunction with (3) Date of First Exposure and (4) Date of Last Exposure, the Department of the Navy can also determine whether the claimant has satisfied the 2-35-year Latency Requirement. Finally, the Department of the Navy should determine whether the EO offer should be increased because the Qualifying Injury resulted in or contributed to (6) Death.

The Department of the Navy shall first internally investigate perfected claims before requesting substantiation from claimants. In addition to documents that the Department of the Navy already has in its possession, the Department of the Navy may request documentation supporting proof of harm and proof of exposure from other government agencies. If eligibility for the EO can be established from government records, then further substantiation is unnecessary and an EO offer can be recommended.

4. Step 3b: Claimant Substantiation

If further documentation is necessary to show eligibility for the EO, then the Department of the Navy may request substantiation from the claimant. A substantiation request may ask the claimant to provide additional supporting documentation, such as medical records or birth certificates. A substantiation request may also provide the claimant with the documents the Department of the Navy reviewed as part of its EO investigation (step 3a), if proper releases and authorizations are provided.

Director of Veterans Services continued from page 20

The Department of the Navy may deny a claim if the claimant fails to provide sufficient supporting documentation.

The Department of the Navy may repeat its internal investigations (step 3a) and substantiation requests (step 3b) as appropriate.

5. Step 4: Department of the Navy Finalization and Request for Payment from the Judgment Fund

The Navy will propose eligible EO offers to the Department of Justice. If the Department of Justice confirms that the claimant meets the requirements for the EO and approves the Navy's EO determination, then the Navy will notify claimants (through their attorneys, if represented) of the EO offer.

A claimant shall have 60 days to accept or decline an offer under the EO. If a claimant takes no action after 60 days, then the Navy may choose to deny the claim. If a claimant declines an offer under the EO and files a lawsuit, the claimant cannot request a subsequent offer under the EO.

If the claimant accepts the settlement offer under the EO, the claimant shall within 14 days execute any documents necessary to release any and all claims against the United States under the CLJA and the FTCA related to exposure to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune and for payment of the settlement from the Judgment Fund. The release will also require an affirmation, under penalty of perjury, of the information supporting the EO determination. This release will not affect a claimant's rights to any disability award, payment, or benefit awarded by the VA. The Department of the Navy will process the documents for payment with the U.S. Treasury for payment of the settlement within 60 days.

II. Common Concerns and Questions

A. What Are the Benefits of Accepting an EO Settlement Over Filing a Lawsuit? Claimants who accept an EO settlement offer are guaranteed payment. Recovery outside the EO—whether through an administrative claim that is not eligible for the EO, or through filing a lawsuit in Federal court—is not guaranteed because such recovery requires proof that the contaminated water was at least as likely as not the cause of the plaintiff's illness. This process must account for the level of exposure and all potential alternative risk factors for the illness. In addition, recovery obtained through other administrative processes, trial, or settlement are subject to offsets to reflect any disability award, payment or benefit related to water exposure at Camp Lejeune.

Claimants who accept an EO settlement can expect to receive payment within 60 days or less, provided they accurately complete all necessary payment documentation in a timely manner. In court, litigation may require multiple months of discovery, motions practice, and potentially trial.

The EO also reduces the number of factual issues a claimant must establish. For example, the EO utilizes a base-wide approach to exposures. So long as the claimant resided or worked at Camp Lejeune during the statutory time period (even if the claimant did not reside or work at areas served by the contaminated water systems—Tawara Terrace, Hadnot Point, or Holcomb Boulevard), the claimant will receive payment, provided the claimant meets the other EO requirements. In court, plaintiffs may need to provide evidence of exposure to contaminated water from one of the contaminated systems to recover. Finally, as mentioned above and in contrast to CLJA damages awards obtained through litigation, EO offers will not be offset by disability awards, payments, or benefits received through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

B. What If I Decline an EO Settlement? Claimants who decline an EO settlement offer may keep their administrative claim with the Department of the Navy. The Department of the Navy and the Department of Justice are continuing to develop additional frameworks for resolving CLJA matters. These additional frameworks may require greater time and resources than the EO, after which recovery is not guaranteed and offsets may be applied. Alternatively, a claimant may file a lawsuit in federal court, provided that the claim has either been formally denied by the Department of the Navy or six months have passed since the claim was initially filed.

C. Does the EO Apply to Claims Already in Litigation? No, but the Department of Justice will investigate and offer to resolve claims currently in litigation consistent with the EO ("DOJ-EO"). If a claimant filed a civil litigation complaint in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, then the Department of the Navy lacks authority to investigate and potentially resolve that claim under the EO. A claimant may not dismiss his or her lawsuit in order to return to the administrative claim process.

To avoid prejudicing claims already in litigation, the Department of Justice will screen and investigate already-filed lawsuits using a similar process as the Department of the Navy. Claims for which a district court complaint was filed between August 10, 2022

Director of Veterans Services continued on page 24

District 3 Commander continued from page 19



Above are the three Patriot Pen winners from Post 3275.

I was honored to be able to give these young people and Teacher awards. The event was well attended by the winners' families and Post members. Job well done.

Today we commenced with "Operation Coloring Book" through which our Post and Auxiliary distributed official VFW coloring books and other patriotic materials to the students in grades 3 through 5 at Catskill Elementary School. The coloring books are themed "Home Safety," "My Heroes," and "I Love America" and include Crayola crayons. This event was put on by **Catskill Post 770. Post Commander Nicole Borgan and QM Jason Borgan appear in uniform.**



We held our District Gold Chevron Awards Dinner on March 8, 2024 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Clifton Park, N.Y. The Department of New York representative was Judge Advocate and Past State Commander Ben Thompson.

District 3 Commander continued on page 23



Susan Rogers

COMMANDER DISTRICT 5



Comrades:

What a great time it's been being the District 5 Commander and we are not finished yet. Our focus is to increase membership and engagement with our posts in District 5. Our plan which was created by our new district officers in June 2023 is working perfectly with adjustments from time to time. We are at 95 % in membership with the assurance we will be at 100 % in no time!

I have been visiting each post in my district to explain our plans and see if there is anything we can do to help, and I am proud to say I have an amazing group of veterans and auxiliaries. They are all going in great force to help other fellow veterans and their communities. Since Officially taking office in 2023 we have been busy, but recently on February 15- 17th 2024 we had the pleasure of having VFW department commander Kell come and spend some time with our posts in the southern tier. **Moravia VFW Post 7127** and **Endicott Post 1449** and a **HUGE** shout out to **Tioughnioga Post #2354, Cortland**, for hosting our district meeting that same weekend. I am happy we were able to keep it "Lite" and informative and fun along with packed with a lot of comrades! Our posts enjoyed hearing our Commander speak about several legislations being worked on to help increase funding for our veterans and their families, and the protections being put in place against the claim sharks. Our own adjutant and legislative chairman Annmarie Hogancamp is in the thick of it! we are all very proud of her to say the least.

On March 13th -17th the department of NY spring convention was also held in our district in Binghamton. It was an honor and privilege to meet our Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento and being able to bring him to our **Corning Post 524** and to our **Endicott Post 1449 was awesome!** **Thank you so much to each post for the refreshments and comradery!**

The outbreak sessions during the conference were many and full of things that I in the coming months will be bringing to my posts if not already. Stay Tuned!

Yours In Comradeship:
Susan M. Rogers
District 5 Commander

District 3 Commander continued from page 22

Here are a few pictures from this event.



presentation. Each one was well received. The parents of these awardees can be very proud of their child. I'm sure that one or more will be on stage at a future Washington Conference. I look forward to seeing these youth and more participating in our annual VFW Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy programs in the future. Following this we ended the weekend with our District meeting the following day.

I couldn't leave this picture out. When Isaac, our 2nd place awardee read his Patriot Pen essay, he mentioned a few notable people who have influenced his life. The likes of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. etc. and he included me. The room roared with laughter. Jim Haas asked him how much I paid him.



In closing I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Easter and enjoyable spring. If any post in District 3 needs help in any way just give me a call (518-899-4976) or shoot me an email (HJP5551@gmail.com) and I'll see that you get the help you need.

In Comradeship,
Harold Patchen
District 3 Commander
Dept. of N.Y. VFW

Mark your calendars for
Department of New York VFW's
State Convention
June 6-9, 2024
Albany Marriott

I believe that everyone enjoyed themselves at our cocktail hour, dinner and essay presentations. The VOD and Patriot Pen Awardees each read their submissions. Their eagerness to read their essays showed in their

Director of Veterans Services continued from page 21

and 30 days after the announcement of the EO are referred to as "Group A" claims. As with the EO, DOJ-EO settlement offers extended to Group A claims shall expire after 60 days. Upon acceptance of a DOJ-EO settlement offer, a Group A claimant shall fully complete DOJ's "Stipulation for Compromise and Settlement Release of Claims Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2677" and related documentation, U.S. Treasury Judgment Fund forms necessary for payment, and a certification stating that the district court complaint will be dismissed with prejudice within 14 days of receipt of the DOJ-EO settlement payment. As with the EO, Group A claimants who timely accept a DOJ-EO settlement offer shall not have their VA benefits offset because of their settlement.

Any other claimant ("Group B") who files a complaint more than 30 days after the announcement of the EO will be considered to have "opted-out" of the EO and DOJ-EO.

D. Why Do Only These Nine Diseases Qualify under the EO? Compensating specific qualifying diseases is consistent with other government programs. The EO relieves the claimants of the burden of submitting expert testimony regarding causation and relieves the United States of the cost of evaluating that expert testimony.

Some claimants with Qualifying Injuries may be unable to prove causation in tort litigation. On the other hand, some claimants with injuries that are not Qualifying Injuries may be able to prove causation in tort litigation. In both instances, however, claimants would bear the burden of proving general and specific causation through expert testimony. On balance, the ATSDR Assessment of the Evidence provides a principled basis for settling cases in the administrative claim phase.

As noted above, "Cardiac Birth Defects" are not included in the EO, even though the ATSDR determined there was sufficient evidence of causation for this category of illnesses. Cardiac birth defects include a wide range of illnesses that are difficult to evaluate similarly without fact-intensive investigation.

The VA treats certain additional illnesses as "presumptively service-connected" to service at Camp Lejeune. These additional diseases are not included in the EO because, according to ATSDR, there is less scientific evidence of causation and because additional, fact-intensive investigation would likely be required in litigation.

E. Why Are Qualifying Injuries All Treated Similarly If Some Injuries Are More Severe than Others? The EO does not attempt to compare the severities of different illnesses. This is the case for at least three reasons. First, assessing the severity of an illness is a

fact-intensive and time intensive inquiry that might require examining a claimant's medical records, deposing the claimant or the claimant's family-members, and eliciting expert opinion testimony regarding the effects of an illness. Second, assigning different values to different types of illnesses based on their severity may be inappropriate at the administrative claim phase because of the inherent complexity of such an assessment and the equities it would implicate. Third, the Qualifying Injuries are nearly all cancers or other terminal or chronic illnesses.

F. What If I Have More than One Qualifying Injury?

A claimant may recover under the EO for only a single Qualifying Injury. The EO considers settlement on a "per-claimant" basis rather than a "per-injury" basis. If a claimant has more than one Qualifying Injury, the claimant will be compensated for one such injury, at the level that will provide the greatest compensation for the claimant. Thus, if a claimant has both a Tier 1 and Tier 2 Qualifying Injury, the claimant will receive compensation for the Tier 1 Qualifying Injury.

G. Will Accepting an EO Offer Affect My VA Benefits?

No, accepting an EO offer for a CLJA claim will not affect the claimant's VA benefits. VA will not assert a lien or offset over EO payments. Awards or settlements made outside of the EO may be offset by the value of VA benefits.

H. What Percentage of My EO Payment May Be Collected as Attorneys' Fees?

Claimants should consult their attorneys.

I. How Do I File My Administrative Claim with the Navy?

An administrative claim should be filed with the Department of the Navy. The administrative claim should not be filed with the Department of Justice, the Department of Veterans Affairs, or the United States Marine Corps.

Further information on how to file an administrative claim with the Department of the Navy can be found at: www.navy.mil/clja. Claimants who have already filed a claim with Navy do not need to refile their claim in order to take advantage of the EO.

The United States cannot advise claimants on whether they should retain an attorney to assist in filing a claim.

J. How Can I Check the Status of My Administrative Claim?

At this time, the Department of the Navy and the Department of Justice are unable to provide updates on the status of individual claims. Claimants who are represented by an attorney may discuss the status of their claims with their attorney.



**Marcello
Rotunda**
**COMMANDER
DISTRICT 6**



Comrades,

We had an open house at the American Legion with the VFW (Post 53) and Amvets Post 726 and the American Legion Post 149 to recruit new members or for members that didn't pay their dues. As of now Membership for 6th District is at 93% with needing 323 for 100%.



Yours In Comradeship,
Marcello J. Rotunda
6th District Commander



VFW Post 5350 had the honor and privilege to honor public servants last evening. Firefighter Brian Tuzil, Deputy Sheriff Corey Finn, Dispatcher Taylor Kern, Middle School Teacher Elizabeth Silva, Scout of the Year Trevor Hayes, EMT Lisa Fotopolous, Friend of the Post Charles Palumbo. It was a fabulous evening and on board to help us honor these fine men and women were Suffolk County Executive Edward Romaine, Southampton Town Supervisor Maria Moore, Suffolk County Legislator Ann Welker and Southampton Town Clerk Sundy Schermeyer.

**THE SOLAR
ECLIPSE IS
COMING!!!**



Perinton Memorial VFW Post 8495 is going to be a viewing area for the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. We would like to let anyone who is planning on attending this event that all are welcome to view this from our Post. The Post has 1,000 pair of glasses available.



REMINDER

Post Elections must be held after April 1, 2024 for the 2024-2025 VFW Year.

Quartermasters make sure to enter your election reports at VFW.org using OMS.

All election reports should be entered no later than May 31, 2024.

Any post that does not submit an election report through National by June 1, 2024 risks having their charter suspended.



Jeffrey Molitor Commander District 11



We are incredibly proud of Miss Abigail Jung, the first-place winner in the Department Voice of Democracy from Post 10870 (Smithtown). Well done to the Smithtown Post and our VOD Chairman, Tom Najdzion.

Our District will distribute Poppies and hold recruitment tables throughout our Communities during Memorial Day. We continue to support the SAR (Suicide Awareness and Remembrance Day); New York and New Jersey currently have legislation to adopt the SAR flag OFFICIALLY and to ANNUALLY recognize September 22nd as "Veterans Suicide Awareness & Remembrance Day."

Comrades,

Spring is in the air! The Posts from District 11 are looking forward to one of our most busy times of the year.

We continue with our mission to 'honor the dead by helping the living.' We continue taking care of VFW Programs, with the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, Teacher of the Year, and Scouting being completed. The Posts have been recognizing their winners throughout the quarter. (Posts pictured 5350 and 2937)



All American Rocky Point Post (Post pictured 6249) continues with their museum, and Posts are marching in the St Patrick's Day Parade and bringing in new members (Post pictured 4927)



Our Riders support the monthly NOA Ceremony at Calverton Cemetery and held their first meeting of the season.



District Commander 11 continued from page 26



State Commander Dan Kell was able to attend our District 11 meeting which was held on the Tuesday evening February 27, 2024

Our Cooties Pup Tent 65 visited the LI Veterans home and delivered blankets and sundry items.

VFW Day of Service is May 4th, 2024 and we are looking forward to a continued, successful year.

To say that I am proud to be the District 11 Commander is truly an understatement.

Yours in Comradeship,

Jeffery T. Molitor

District 11 Commander 2022-2024



Thomas Todaro
PSC

**DIRECTOR OF
VETERANS SERVICES**



At the direction of President Biden, VA is expanding health care eligibility to millions of Veterans — including all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11 — years earlier than called for by the PACT Act.

WASHINGTON — Today, VA announced that all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military — at home or abroad — will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. This means that all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without

first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll.

As directed by President Biden, this expansion of VA health care eliminates the phased-in approach called for by the PACT Act — meaning that millions of Veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law. This is a critical step forward because Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed nonVA hospitals in overall quality ratings and patient satisfaction ratings. Additionally, VA health care is often more affordable than non-VA health care for Veterans.

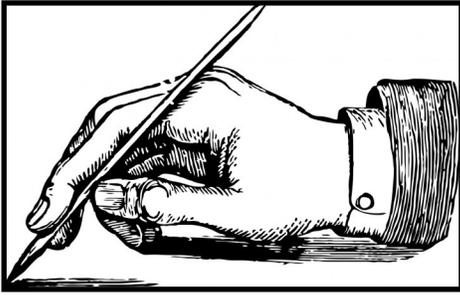
VA encourages all eligible Veterans to visit VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800- MYVA411 to learn more and apply for VA health care beginning March 5. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law on August 10, 2022, more than 500,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care.

“If you’re a Veteran who may have been exposed to toxins or hazards while serving our country, at home or abroad, we want you to come to us for the health care you deserve,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “VA is proven to be the best, most affordable health care in America for Veterans – and once you’re in, you have access for life. So don’t wait, enroll starting March 5th.”

“Beginning March 5, we’re making millions of Veterans eligible for VA health care years earlier than called for by the PACT Act,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D. “With this expansion, VA can care for all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11. We can also care for Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty here at home – by working with chemicals, pesticides, lead, asbestos, certain paints, nuclear weapons, x-rays, and more. We want to bring all of these Veterans to VA for the care they’ve earned and deserve.”

In addition to expanding access to VA care, this

Director of Veterans Services continued on page 34



The Battle of the Bulge by Richard V. Acritelli

"God deliver us from our friends. We can handle the enemy."

General George S. Patton, September 1944.

These were the words of Patton that symbolized the major challenges that faced the Allies during the last phase of World War II. While Patton created some problems for Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces General Dwight D. Eisenhower, his long-time friend, agreed with this assessment over the partnership to wage continued fighting. Under the direction of Eisenhower, it was a difficult task from the establishment of the Allies before the Operation Torch landings in North Africa in November of 1942 right up until final victory in May 1945. Even as the Allies were on the cusp of victory in December 1944 and moved eastward through France, there was friction that was felt through this alliance. Some seventy-nine years ago, there was a noticeable combination of tenacious fighting by the Americans and the British and friction between these two major nations right until the end of World War II.

On December 16th, 1944, all seemed to be quiet on the Allied lines, as Eisenhower's Broad Front campaign continued to move through the borders of France, Belgium, and Luxembourg towards Germany. After the heavy fighting from the June 6th, 1944, Normandy landings, the summer months saw the Germans reel from continual defeats and there was the wide-scale belief that the enemy was almost defeated. These Allied victories were glaring as some of the German military figures feared that a total collapse was possible against the battlefield onslaught that faced their forces. These fears were seen through the communications of Hitler's confident Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel who asked Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt what should be against enemy advances, Rundstedt accurately shouted, "Make peace you fools! What else can you do?" (No End Save Victory, 521).

Like his generals, Eisenhower was confident that his armies were on the correct path towards achieving overall victory with the notion that the Germans were

unable to reverse their battlefield losses. Both Eisenhower and Montgomery bet each other a year before hand on October 11th, 1943, in Italy about the possible end of the war. They wagered five pounds where Eisenhower believed that the war would be over before Christmas of 1944 and Montgomery stated after this time. As the Germans were ready to launch their secret attack against the unknowing American front lines, Montgomery asked Eisenhower for leave to see his son in London for the holiday and the payment of his bet. Eisenhower who was one of the best card players in the army informed Montgomery that he still had nine days to make good on this bet and that he would receive this money within his "Christmas stocking" on this date. (Butcher, My Three Years with Eisenhower, 722). Montgomery spoke about future operations towards Rhine River and the Ruhr Valley, but there was no mention of the military calamity that was in the process of being utilized against this portion of the Allied lines.

As he guided this massive alliance, at this time, Eisenhower was nominated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to earn his fifth general star that elevated him to one of the strongest military leaders in American history. He was also the special guest at the wedding ceremony of his orderly Mickey McKeogh married a WAC driver Pearl Hargreaves. During a brutally cold gathering within an older French chapel that was created by the government of King Louis XIV, there seemed to be a reprieve in operations.

With the Allies pushing towards Germany, there were noticeable supply and man-power concerns within the front lines stretched from the North Sea to the Swiss border. At the same moment of this wedding, Colonel Oscar Koch, Patton's Third Army G-2 for intelligence, warned that an attack was imminent. The Germans cut off their communications and Koch reasoned that the American army conducted these communication matters in the same way and that Luxembourg could be hit by the enemy. Patton was one of the few generals within the Allies who believed that the war could still be lost by the West and that the Germans were capable of fighting, as they approached their own borders.

After this ceremony, Eisenhower met with General's Omar N. Bradley, Walter "Bedell" Smith, Carl Spaatz, and Tedder when they first learned of this assault. Through Hitler's last-ditch attempt to

Battle of the Bulge continued on page

Battle of the Bulge continued from page 28

gain a peace with the western allies, it was the German goal to drive a wedge between the Americans and British by pushing them beyond the Meuse River and towards the Belgian port of Antwerp. Whereas the Germans were hit hard by a two-front war with the Soviets pushing eastward through Poland and towards their border, Hitler gambled with his armies limited resources to wage this secret campaign. At first the American First Army that was led by Bradley was presented with deciphered reports from Rundstedt that a German attack was imminent in the West. While Bradley was made aware over the prospects of a planned assault, they were unsure over the creditability of these plans that targeted a weakly held line by American forces. These secret plans shocked everyone over the resources that were still held by the Germans to carry out such an aggressive plan. Even the methodical planner and organizer in Bradley was totally caught off guard on the ability to complete push American forces backward through the determination of a well-coordinated attack of veteran German infantry and armor. From the beginning, the fighting took heavy losses on American military forces who were caught off-guard. There were daunting losses as the 110th Infantry Regiments that started out this fight with 3,117 officers and soldiers in the line as completely demoralized from this battle. This regiment was devastated in the first two days of this battle, as a bulk of the soldiers were killed, wounded, and taken prisoner, where they only had 587 men left to carry out resistance against the enemy. (Mansoor, GI Offensive in Europe, 218)

German forces were organized with the sole purpose of using the poor weather and the element of surprise to smash through the unknowing American forces who were in the need of winter clothing, ammunition, and additional soldiers. Rundstedt secretly had three armies of twenty-eight divisions with twelve of them as Panzer. Seventeen enemy divisions spearhead this significant attack that was the only German counter-offensive of the fighting that was waged in northwestern Europe. (D'Este, Eisenhower, 639). Behind American lines, Germans were engaged in hurting the transportation, communication, and leadership of the Allies, as they were dressed up in American uniforms. These Germans who looked like Americans were engaged in changing road signs and causing havoc in our lines. American soldiers feared any member in the uniform whom they did not know and often asked difficult questions about American history and sports teams as challenges, once they learned that enemy special forces were trying to kill the top American military leadership.

The confusion of this assault left Bradley unsure of the true German plans, it was made clear that plans

had to be made to prevent the wider-ranging goals of the Germans to push well beyond Allied lines. The 101st Airborne Division with parts of the 10th Armored Division, along with a collection of other units were directed to the crossroads of the strategic town of Bastogne. And the 82nd Airborne Division was ordered to quickly move the movements of the Germans who were operating towards Malmedy and St. Vith. As it became an overall American battle, Eisenhower on December 19th called for a meeting at Verdun by his senior figures in how to handle this spirited German battle. Before departing, Patton informed his staff to plan for a possible northern change in direction of the Saar campaign against the Germans with an expected move to relieve the pressure that was placed on the armies that were under the command of Bradley.

With many of the Allied leaders in place that included Tedder, Bradley, Patton, and Devers, Eisenhower openly wondered how to contain the German military of 200,000 who opposed the American lines of about 80,000 soldiers. Many of these soldiers were replacements with almost no experience in the field and Hitler's plans did gain some success through its ability to shock American soldiers that they could still be defeated. This was seen through the 106th Infantry Division that was comprised of many replacements that fought against the Germans and surrendered in large numbers as they began to run out of ammunition and food. During this battle, this division had the largest number of soldiers who were captured and became prisoner with 6,800 hundred men who headed eastward towards prisoner of war camps. The destruction of this infantry division was so great that the American military leadership never re-instituted this organization back into battle and it became the only fighting force to be destroyed by the Germans. (Mansoor, GI Offensive in Europe, 222)

Eisenhower also examined the fact that the Germans succeeded in creating its bulge that was only one hundred miles away from Antwerp, with the lines already being pushed back forty miles, and were only three miles from the Meuse River. The "bulge" by this attack penetrated well into American lines, as German forces continued to move forward, and encircle American armies who refused to surrender. Whereas as the Germans had the momentum in this fight, the American military had to hold on and buy time for Eisenhower to re-organize his armies and bring reinforcements into this battle. And once the weather cleared up from the snow and haze that were over American

Battle of the Bulge continued on page 31



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2:00 - POLAR PLUNGE

4:00 VFW AFTER PARTY - LIVE MUSIC WITH DON SYSKA (ALL INVITED)

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Battle of the Bulge continued from page 28

held areas, they were able to drop supplies against an enemy that was beginning to run low of fuel and resources. Time was of essence and while American soldiers were pushed back, they were not destroyed.

It was a poor predicament that faced Eisenhower and his officers who were tasked with not only fighting the ferocity of the enemy, but the weather through this uncertain battle. Looking around the table of General's that included key members of their staff, Eisenhower began to understand the severity the German undertaking, but he looked at his officers and told them, "I want only cheerful faces." It was the direct understanding that holes in the line had to be reinforced, there was no more being pushed back, and the Allies mostly under Patton would begin major attacks to go on the counter-offensive. (Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 730) The Germans stuck their heads out and now it was the chance of the Allies to overrun their efforts and continue the war into their own territory.

Speaking to the different officers on their capabilities in helping support this situation, Eisenhower enquired to Patton on how the Third Army could help relieve the immense pressure of this one-sided fight. Looking at Eisenhower, Patton already set forth plans to halt this German offensive was asked, "When can you attack?" Patton stated, "On December 22nd, with three divisions; the 4th Armored, the 26th, and the 80th." (Patton Papers II, 599) Although Patton was known for his boasts and his suggestions presented a stir in the room, this was one of his finest moments in the war. Eisenhower would count on the "war face" that Patton brought to Verdun to engage the Germans and relieve the destructive pressure that was placed on Bastogne. For the American combat soldier that fought in this bloody battle, it became a matter of pride to hold on long enough to contain the German assault and to defeat them within open fighting. They caused a stir within American lines to carry out Hitler's last-ditch offensive in the West, but Eisenhower and now Patton on the road with his army, saw this as an opportunity to destroy the limited strength of the German forces.

Ever the optimist, Eisenhower appreciated the willingness of Patton to move against the enemy but told him to not oppose the Germans in haste, and if he had to wait for a stronger blow, that would be fine with him. General Jacob L. Devers would relieve Patton's Saar Campaign, and this allowed the Third Army the chance to head directly towards Bastogne. As the leaders of this meeting began to depart, Eisenhower said to his old friend, "Every time I get a new star, I get attacked." Patton wittingly

responded, "And every time you get attacked, I pull you out." (Patton Papers II, 600) During this fight, parts of the armies were shifted to meet the demands on the battlefield with generals either gaining or losing some of their forces. This was the case with Bradley who was stripped of the First and Ninth Armies that were led by General's Courtney Hodges and William H. Simpson. By moving these armies to Montgomery, the remaining Americans that were left under Bradley's command of the Twelfth Army Group only held the strength of the Third Army. With these forces operating closer towards Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery and the feeling that communications would be better under his authority.

As Bradley was correct to be leery of the motives of Montgomery, who by this time had many detractors amongst the American military leadership, it was far easier for him to maintain a closer communication with Hodges and Simpson. The German penetration into the front lines had for a time created a separation that alarmed Eisenhower to accept this change in command. But the conservative mannered Bradley for the rest of his life believed that Eisenhower bowed to the pressure of Montgomery to take these men to become the overall ground commander. Bradley was furious over the loss of these American forces that now fell under British command. Blaming both Eisenhower for being too weak towards the British and the continued prying of Montgomery, Bradley never forgave Eisenhower's orders that diminished his army group. Speaking to Eisenhower, Bradley vehemently opposed the diminishing of his forces and told the Supreme Commander, "By God, Ike, I cannot be responsible to the American people if you do this. I resign." Eisenhower who considered Bradley one of his finest officers told his subordinate, "Brad, I – not you-am responsible to the American people. Your resignation therefore absolutely means nothing." After continued arguing, Eisenhower told him, "Well, Brad, those are my orders." (Atkinson, *The Guns at Last Night*, 448)

As this was certainly a bright moment for Patton's ability to push his forces towards Bastogne against the Germans, there was a loss of confidence in Bradley by the British and perhaps by Eisenhower, who believed that he never had a full grasp of this battle. While leaders were shocked about the strength of the Germans, Bradley oversaw all American ground forces who

Battle of the Bulge continued from page 31

were reeling from the worst American defeat during this war since Kasserine Pass. It presented the vulnerability of American forces who were stretched beyond their supply lines and ability to stave off an attack against a beaten, but not defeated foe, or were still fully able to fight in Europe. Bradley was scouring over the maps with Major General Leven C. Allen, and he surprisingly exclaimed, "Pardon my French, Lev, but just where in the hell has this sonuvabitch gotten all of his strength." (Bradley, A Soldier's Story, 466)

As the plans and orders that were established by Eisenhower were set into motion, this battle was still raging. With poor skies over Bastogne, there was little that the American Army-Air Force could do to alleviate the pressure that encircled forces under Brigadier General Anthony C. McAullife faced against the German forces who were poised with overrunning them. When McAullife was told by the opposing enemy general to surrender, the American response of "Nuts!" became a rally cry against the strength of the German Wehrmacht. The Americans had no intention of giving up this strategic town that was the home to seven roads that head in and out of Bastogne. On November 23rd, Eisenhower expected to turn the battle against the enemy and told his troops to turn Hitler's "great gamble into his worst defeat." He continued to look at this fight as an opportunity to overcome a disastrous beginning with the ability to achieve a victory with the Germans out in the open. Eisenhower told his forces, "to rise now to new heights of courage, of resolution, and of effort. Let everyone hold before him a single thought - to destroy the enemy on the ground, in the air, everywhere - destroy him!" (15 Stars, 297)

Every leader that was present would agree that this German offensive had to be prevented from going any further. Whereas Patton presented the ability of the Third Army to push forward to relieve Bastogne, there were elements of his soldiers who were fighting 125 miles away in the Saar Region. Through the sheer difficulties of weather, terrain, and the enemy that laid in front of these soldiers, they began their pursuit of relieving this beleaguered town that was on the brink of German destruction. While the American soldiers were bent on keeping Bastogne, the German assaults were getting increasingly vicious against forces that were barely holding on. Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams, who would later become the Chief of Staff during the Vietnam War was one of the finest armor commanders in Europe. Even Patton who rarely took a backseat to any figure admitted the abilities of Abrams to widely hit the enemy with parts of the 4th Armored Division. Abrams briefed his soldiers about the German attack and their efforts to

hit the enemy and relieve American forces at Bastogne. As his tanks were preparing to move out, Abrams told his men, "This may provide us an opportunity to seriously defeat a major part of the German Army and shorten the war." (Thunderbolt, 70).

Patton put every possible man in the line, as clerks, tailors, artillerymen, and cooks became rifleman, as they helped bolster the forces that were heading towards harm's way to break through to Bastogne. Traveling on the ice that created hectic road conditions, Abrams 37th Tank Battalion pushed out against the enemy and in the words of Patton, they "drove like hell" to support the 101st Airborne. There were points that the weather was an adversary against the American armor that was already pushed to the brink of its usefulness from the several months of heavy fighting and movement. But through the difficulties of the conditions, Patton right away set out to relieve the southern part of Bastogne, where his efforts surprised Rundstedt and brought some ease to Eisenhower. Battling the adverse weather conditions and the enemy, Patton ordered the chaplain for the Third Army to write a prayer that would be issued for his soldiers. Looking for help from every direction, the prayer was designed to seek better weather for the prospects of overcoming a "oppressive" and "wicked" enemy. Understanding the severity of this military situation, Patton was extremely proud of his soldier's endurance to overcome the hardships that were presented against them to quickly operate under these dire conditions. All parts of the Third Army was set into motion to support this major objective, where Patton's soldiers were the key players.

On the road during Christmas, American soldiers tried to bring the gift of reinforcements and military support to their comrades feared that it was a matter of time before this part of Belgium was completely taken over by the Germans. It was an alarming moment to be at Bastogne as members of the 101st Airborne reasoned that the "end was at hand. That night many of them shook hands with their comrades. They said to one another that it would probably be their last night together." (Thunderbolt, 70) By December 26th, there were two welcome signs of hope, Patton's forces reached Bastogne, and there was just enough break in the weather to drop supplies to the cut off American forces, and to attack the Germans. Rundstedt's operations to carry out Hitler's plans were not achievable, fuel was low, as

Battle of the Bulge continued from page 32

tank and truck drivers and soldiers marched away from the advancing American armies. Eisenhower called for the destruction of the German forces that caused an immense amount of panic and destruction. But the German advance was ended and now they would be targeted by American air and land forces. As our leadership at home fully followed this story, they read from *Stars and Stripes* that the "Yanks Stop Nazi Attack, Unleash Biggest Air Blow, Bulge Stabilized; Columns Halted 29 Miles from Sedan - 550 Plans Rock Enemy." (Butcher, My Three Years with Eisenhower, 735)

When Patton was at Verdun with Eisenhower he promised the movement and results to stop the bleeding of Hitler's ill-fated attack. Several days later, Eisenhower was elated over the actions of Patton to lead this desperate action that saw his men overcome the snow, traveling conditions, and the enemy to support Americans at Bastogne who were on marked time. As he spoke to the senior American and British Forces at Verdun, Patton looked at the map, could almost envision the task in front of him and stated, "The Kraut's stuck his head in a meatgrinder. And this time I've got hold of the handle." (Showalter, Patton & Rommel, 393) With the support of Eisenhower and Bradley in the background, Patton led American soldiers in one of the most heroic moments within our national history. Through all of the negative elements and against a tenacious enemy, American soldiers demonstrated that under the most adverse conditions crack Wehrmacht and SS forces were unable to deter the Third Army. A thankful Eisenhower fully appreciated the drive of Patton during a bleak moment and quickly turn it into a national victory. Eisenhower reasoned that he had to push Marshall to do something "nice" for Patton, which meant that as Bradley would shortly receive his fourth general's star, one would also be given to Patton. He also regained the spirit of the American Army that was certainly shaken during the lowest points of this battle, while Montgomery often stated how valuable he was as a leader, who should be running the ground war, at this moment, he did nothing to help alleviate this situation. Marshall often worried about the presence of Montgomery gaining too many favorable decisions by Eisenhower at the expense of the American forces, he surely supported the assessment of Patton who stated, ".....Monty is a tired little fart, War requires the taking of risks and he won't take them...." (Patton Papers II, 608)

There was also the fear that the unrelenting Montgomery would successfully take over the full command of Allied ground forces in the West. General George C. Marshall often warned Eisenhower from

giving away too much authority and praise to the British, as America emerged as the supreme country in the West through its contributions of soldiers and resources. Whereas Montgomery was never shy to present his own opinions, the British forces in the North had done little to come to aid of the Americans. The Battle of the Bulge was an American affair under the direction of Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton. Days later on December 26th, Montgomery believed that it was his chance to criticize the fighting efforts of Eisenhower and his forces. He continued to lobby for all of Bradley's forces under his direction to attack into the Ruhr during the height of this battle. Eisenhower barely staved off a terrible defeat was unable to fathom the willingness of Montgomery to openly criticize him and Bradley during the height of this battle. Montgomery had a selective memory as he over-looked his failures and slowness at Caan and during Operation Market Garden, and the later hesitancy that he demonstrated to cross the Rhine River. Eisenhower was furious at the notion that he did not heed the warnings of Montgomery over a possible attack through the Ardennes and more so angered over his view that he should be given reinforcements, rather than counter-attacking the enemy.

Eisenhower was a staunch support of Allied unity, but he refused to adhere to the beliefs that the Battle of the Bulge was a complete failure of the American Army.

About the Author

Richard V. Acritelli is a member of VFW Post 6249 Rocky Point. He served 9 years in the Army Reserves and Air National Guard. He has been a Social Studies teacher at Rocky Point High School and adjunct Assistant Professor at Suffolk Community College. He holds a Bachelor degree in History, and Masters degrees in Arts of Liberal Studies and Military History He has been the driving force behind the Rocky Point VFW 6249 PTSD 5K Run and the curator for the VFW Post 6249 Suffolk County World War I and Military History Museum which opened on December 7, 2023. Richard created the Veterans Wall of Honor at his school which has over 130 plaques that has a picture, name armed service and graduation year. This year Richard V. Acritelli was named the grade 9-12 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year for the Department of New York VFW.

Director of Veterans Services continued from page 26

decision makes it quicker and easier for millions of Veterans to enroll. Many Veterans believe they must apply to receive VA disability compensation benefits to become eligible for VA health care, but this is not correct. With this expansion and other authorities, millions of eligible Veterans can enroll directly in VA care – without any need to first apply for VA benefits.

This expansion of care covers Vietnam Veterans, Gulf War Veterans, Iraq War Veterans, Afghanistan War Veterans, Veterans who deployed in support of contingency operations for the Global War on Terror (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Resolute Support Mission), and more. This expansion also covers many Veterans who never deployed as a part of a conflict but were exposed to toxins or hazards while serving in the U.S. Specifically, under this expansion of care, any Veteran who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (TERA) — at home or abroad – is eligible for VA health care. VA has determined that Veterans who were exposed to one or more of the following hazards or conditions during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training participated in a TERA: air pollutants (burn pits, sand, dust, particulates, oil well fires, sulfur fires); chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, depleted uranium with embedded shrapnel, contaminated water); occupational hazards (asbestos, industrial solvents, lead, paints including chemical agent resistant coating, firefighting foams); radiation (nuclear weapons handling, maintenance and detonation, radioactive material, calibration and measurement sources, X-rays, radiation from military occupational exposure); warfare agents (nerve agents, chemical and biological weapons); and more. VA will use all available information to determine if Veterans participated in a TERA, including military records and service connection.

VA is executing a nationwide campaign to ensure that as many Veterans as possible enroll. To date, VA's PACT Act outreach campaign has included more than 2,500 events nationwide, \$13 million in paid advertising, 88,000 earned media clips, more than 400 million emails and letters to Veterans, VA's first-ever text messaging campaign, the creation of a one-stop-shop PACT Act website, and more. This is the largest outreach campaign in VA history, which has one goal in mind: ensure that all Veterans —and their survivors — get the health care and benefits they deserve under the PACT Act.

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping Veterans and their survivors, visit VA's PACT Act Dashboard. To apply for care or benefits today, visit VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MYVA411. More information on eligibility can be found at VA.gov/PACT.

VFW 125th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Louisville, KY – July 27-August 1, 2024
NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING OPEN

Reservations for the 125th VFW National Convention opened on March 18, 2024.

All members who desire to make room reservations for the convention are directed to use one of the following procedures:

- 1) Online: It's the quickest and easiest way to book a room. Visit vfw.org/convention to access the housing website.
- 2) By phone: Toll free 800-743-3100. (Agents available 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. ET, Monday– Friday) International: 1 502 561 3100 – 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Mon-Fri. In order to take advantage of the special convention rates, be sure to book your reservation by June 10, 2024. All reservations require a valid credit card for guarantee at time of confirming reservations. The card will NOT be charged at the time of booking. Credit Card will be charged if reservations are cancelled within the cancellation period or if a 'no-show' at the hotel. Reservations received without a valid guarantee will not be processed.
- 3) CANCELLATION POLICY • Reservations canceled in their entirety starting May 15, 2024, will be charged a \$50.00 cancellation fee. • Reservations canceled starting June 10, 2024, forfeit one night's room and tax to the hotel. This housing procedure gives our membership the most efficient and effective method of making and ensuring room reservations in Louisville.



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

This year's Service Officer raffle was record breaking in support of our dedicated hardworking Service Officers. There were a total of 73 prizes with a payout of \$7,950 to the winners. There were 3,594 tickets sold totaling \$15,130 in sales along with a record breaking 73 ads in the Service Journal for a total of \$5,400.00. Thank you to each and everyone who contributed to making this year's Service Officer Raffle the best one yet!

Prize	Donated by	Winner
\$50.00	Sullivan-Teator VFW Post 770	VFW Post 5444
\$50.00	VFW Auxiliary Lincoln Post 1483; Linda & Ernie McEarthron	Ginger Kusak
\$100.00	Daniel McMahon	Harry Hood
\$100.00	Wayne & Cindy Campbell	VFW post 7552
\$100.00	Bill & Judy Lefebvre	Helen Weeks
\$100.00	PSC Ben Thompson	VFW Post 1470
\$100.00	James and Andrea MacArthur	VFW Post 6196
\$100.00	James and Andrea MacArthur	VFW Post 2721
\$100.00	VFW Auxiliary 9487 Franklinville, NY	Maurine Baker-Stein
\$100.00	James Longendyke, PSC	VFW Post 8647
\$100.00	James Longendyke, PSC	William Farber
\$100.00	Dayton-Soehlke-Ohlhorst VFW Post 5350	Debbie Fox
\$100.00	VFW Auxiliary Post 7227	VFW Post 4821
\$100.00	Jean & Eugene J Ratigliano, PSC	VFW Post 420
\$100.00	Robert & Carol Mitchell	VFW Post Auxiliary 745
\$100.00	Harold J. Patchen	VFW Post Auxiliary 6196
\$100.00	Harold J. Patchen	VFW Post 9486
\$100.00	VFW Post 1498	District 11
\$100.00	VFW Post 3350	VFW Post Auxiliary 170
\$100.00	VFW Auxiliary 1975	VFW Post Auxiliary 6533
\$100.00	Very Rev Edward R P Kane, V F	Pamela Phelps
\$100.00	Michael and Ionna Pacal, PSC	Harold & Christine Leavor
\$100.00	Bronx VFW Post 95	VFW Post 347
\$100.00	VFW Post 5499	VFW Post 6340

Prize	Donated by	Winner
\$100.00	VFW Auxiliary Post 6764	VFW Post 3054
\$100.00	Lewis County Memorial Post 6912	VFW Post 1231
\$100.00	VFW Post 686	District 3
\$100.00	Saugerties Memorial VFW Post 5034	VFW Post 7009
\$100.00	Goodrich Smith VFW Post 8649	VFW Post Auxiliary 1938
\$100.00	RomaJane & Dave Simpson	Ginger Kusak
\$100.00	Leonard Post Jr. VFW Post 6251	William Johnston
\$100.00	Peru Memorial VFW Post 309	VFW Post 3350
\$100.00	VFW Auxiliary Post 5444	VFW Post 9251
\$100.00	Members of VFW Post 3054	VFW Post 5350
\$100.00	Olean VFW Auxiliary Post 1619	John Sanford
\$100.00	Orchard Park VFW Post 6247	Cyndee Butler
\$100.00	Rome VFW Post 2246	Kyra Vost
\$100.00	Waterloo VFW Post 6433	Olga Tenney
\$100.00	James Daley VFW Post 200	Rob Green
\$100.00	State Commander Daniel Kell	VFW Post Auxiliary 1384
\$100.00	VFW Post 1895	VFW Post 8113
\$100.00	Officers & Members of VFW Post 7763	William Johnston
\$100.00	Arcadia Memorial VFW Auxiliary 2883	Matt VanEtten
\$100.00	Marcello J. Rotunda, 6th District Commander & Beth Ecker	VFW Post Auxiliary 161
\$100.00	Marcello J. Rotunda, 6th District Commander & Beth Ecker	District 11
\$100.00	Allan Milk Memorial Post Auxiliary 7276	VFW Post Auxiliary 6776
\$100.00	VFW Post 9486	VFW Post 1455
\$100.00	Lake Chautauqua Member VFW Post 8647	Neil Jordan
\$100.00	Chester James Carkard Post 1938	VFW Post 309
\$100.00	VFW Post 5005	Harry Hood
\$100.00	Members of VFW Post 170	VFW Post 53
\$100.00	Robert L. Weininger VFW Post 8692	Bernard Thompson
\$100.00	John F. Ahrens Post 5296	VFW Post 8113
\$100.00	Bing C. Reaves Sr	Robert Flavin
\$100.00	Michael Hoag, PSC	Julie Stacy
\$100.00	James Longendyke, PSC	Ronald Sorrentino
\$100.00	Terry & Dennis Sullivan, PSC	VFW Post 7552
\$100.00	Pine Valley Memorial VFW Auxiliary 2522	Inwood Veterans Association
\$100.00	Silas Wainwright Auxiliary Post 6338	VFW Post 917

Prize	Donated by	Winner
\$100.00	Michael & Marcia Andreadakis	Bruce Fein
\$100.00	Auxiliary 7765 to Post 7765 Red Hook	VFW Post 9486
\$100.00	Peter Vitulli VFW Post 3350	Miguel Martinez
\$100.00	VFW Auxiliary 313	VFW Post 5444
\$100.00	Andres E. Veiga Jr.	VFW Post Auxiliary 161
\$100.00	District 11	VFW Post 9486
\$100.00	VFW Post 3185	VFW Post 1470
\$100.00	Aaron A. Lewis VFW Post 6396	Mary Kreuzer
\$100.00	Queensbury VFW Post 6196	VFW Post Auxiliary 2721
\$150.00	Pfc John J. Oliveri Post 1582	VFW Post Auxiliary 9257
\$200.00	Chris & Mick Leavor, PSC	VFW Post 6196
\$200.00	The Reape Family	VFW Post Auxiliary 358
\$200.00	Robert Barnhart, PSC	Anthony & Deanna Borrello
\$500.00	Ron & Marge Sorrentino	VFW Post 7172

thank you!





Don't forget to Like and Follow the
Department of New York Veterans of Foreign Wars



@VFWNEWYORK



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

VFW Membership Mail-In Application

Yes! I want to join the VFW as a member-at-large and continue serving my country, my community and my fellow man.

PLEASE ENTER YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Birthdate: _____ Social Security #: _____

SERVICE INFORMATION Army Marine Corps Navy Air Force Coast Guard Space Force

Eligibility (choose all that apply)

- WWII Afghanistan Combat Action Ribbon SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia
- Korean War Iraq Expeditionary Medal Imminent Danger/
- Vietnam Korean Service (7/1/49 to present) Occupation Medal Hostile Fire Pay
- Persian Gulf War Kosovo Inherent Resolve Other: _____

Dates of Service: _____ to _____ Service Location: _____

Name of Campaign Ribbon or Medal: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (please select one)

- ANNUAL (\$45.00)
 - Please bill me annually for my membership.
 - I would like to enroll in the Automatic Payment Plan.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (one-time)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (installment plan)

Automatic Payment Plan and Installment options require credit/debit card for processing. By signing this application you acknowledge and agree to the terms and conditions of the Automatic Payment Plan and Installment options, if selected.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEE SCHEDULE

AGE as of Dec. 31st	ONE-TIME PAYMENT	LIFE MEMBERSHIP INSTALLMENT PLAN
		initial payment 11 payments of
THROUGH AGE 30	\$425.00	\$45.00 \$38.64
31-40	\$410.00	\$45.00 \$37.27
41-50	\$375.00	\$45.00 \$34.09
51-60	\$335.00	\$45.00 \$30.45
61-70	\$290.00	\$45.00 \$26.36
71-80	\$225.00	\$45.00 \$20.45
81 AND OVER	\$170.00	\$45.00 \$15.45

Automatic Payment Plan Terms and Conditions: You authorize the VFW to initiate electronic debit entries or affect a charge by any other commercially accepted practice to your account set forth above for the payment of dues reflected on this application. You understand such charges may be made within 2-3 business days of payment due date. For installment payments, charges will be made on or around the 1st or the 15th day of the month. This authorization will remain in full force until VFW has received notification from you of its termination or upon completion of the installment payments. Annual dues are subject to change. By completing this authorization, you acknowledge that you will only receive notice when the payment would differ by more than \$10.00 from the most recent payment. Contact VFW Member Services at 1.833.VFWYETS (1.833.838.8387) or write VFW Member Services, 406 W. 34th St., Suite 316, Kansas City, MO 64111 to inquire about or cancel a payment, or to report problems such as bank closures, lost or stolen account numbers, closed accounts, or unauthorized transactions. Cancellation requests must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Central Time ten business days prior to the scheduled payment date. If you are unaware of the charge date for your account, please contact VFW. If a payment is returned by your financial institution (e.g., due to insufficient funds, incorrect account information, closed account, etc.) the VFW will contact you at the address we have on file, explain why the payment could not be processed, and provide alternate payment options. The privilege of making payments under this agreement may be revoked by VFW if any item is not paid upon presentation. You may have additional rights and responsibilities under the Electronic Funds Transfer Act.

The VFW life membership installment plan allows any VFW member/applicant to purchase a life membership by making an initial payment of \$45.00 and (11) monthly payments. The member will be issued an annual membership card at the time of enrollment. A permanent life membership card will be issued upon the completion of payments. The life membership fee is determined from the schedule using the applicant's age on December 31 of the year in which the application is submitted. Delinquencies of 31-120 days can be corrected through make up payment(s) or plan end date pushed forward. Member will be dropped from the installment plan after 120 days delinquent and all monthly payments made to date will be applied to future years annual dues.

PAYMENT INFORMATION Check/Money Order Mastercard VISA Discover AMEX

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____ Amount to be charged: \$ _____
(if using Life Membership installment plan, amount is \$45.00)

VERIFICATION & SIGNATURE

I attest that by forwarding this application that I have confirmed my eligibility for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I further give authority to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to verify my eligibility for membership.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Mail form to: Membership Department, VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111
Questions? Call (888) JOIN-VFW (888-564-6839) or email us at membership@vfw.org