SEPTEMBER 2024

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VFW CELEBRATES 125TH ANNIVERSARY

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FAMILIES OF MISSING TROOPS GET UPDATES

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Need help? Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then press 1 or text 838255

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COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF Al Lipphardt

Leadership Highlights VFW Success

FW celebrates its 125th anniversary on Sept. 29. That milestone in our history of veterans service, legislative advocacy and community assistance will be commemorated over the next 12 months.

Our legacy is impressive because our leadership has been strong. As evidence, I point to eight VFW members, all of whom were war veterans and U.S. Presidents.

The first, Theodore Roosevelt, served in the Spanish-American War, which is the conflict that gave birth to our great organization in 1899. Roosevelt was an at-large member of VFW's Department of New York.

Harry S. Truman, an Army veteran of World War I and President from 1945-53, was a member of VFW Post 35 in Kansas City, Mo. Truman said that his VFW membership was a "source of pride and personal satisfaction."

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the nation's 34th President from 1953-61, was a member of VFW Post 3279 in Abilene, Kan. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe during World War II, told fellow VFW members that "as strong defenders of peace, you exemplify the high quality of American citizenship."

John F. Kennedy, who was President from 1961-63, was a World War II Navy veteran and a member of VFW Post 5880 in Brockton, Mass. Kennedy paid tribute to VFW members' "magnificent wartime service" and said, "As veterans, you serve with equal tenacity."

Lyndon B. Johnson was the country's 36th President (1963-69) and a World War II Navy veteran. Johnson, a member of VFW Post 856 in Austin, Texas, once noted that "the conviction of the VFW — that our heritage of freedom must be protected — is a signal to all your fellow citizens that courage and commitment continue to be honored and celebrated."

Richard M. Nixon served as U.S. President from 1969-74. Nixon served in the Navy during World War II and was a member of VFW Post 2081 in Whittier, Calif. He said that his VFW membership had "always been a source of pride" for him.

Gerald R. Ford was President from 1974-77. A WWII Navy veteran, Ford was a member of VFW Post 830 in Grand Rapids, Mich. Ford once said that members of the VFW and its Auxiliary are "men and women whose patriotism has been tested and proven."

George H.W. Bush served as President from 1989-93. Bush, a naval aviator in World War II, belonged to VFW Post 4344 in Houston. He congratulated VFW members "for the work you've done to enhance the lives and well-being" of veterans and their families.

Let us all remember these words as we lead our respective VFW units into the year ahead. Leadership — and the responsibilities that come with it — is what makes VFW the greatest veterans service organization in the world.



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MAIL CALL | LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Kudos to VFW Service Officers

In recounting my own recent experience in filing a claim for VA compensation, it is hard to imagine receiving more able, professional and on target guidance than I got from a VFW service officer. Despite my 27 years of experience with legalese and near inscrutable legislative language working in the VFW's National Legislative Service, it was clear from the start I needed help. And that is what I got, in spades, from a VFW service officer.

Everything from attaining the correct forms to properly filling them out and writing the required explanatory narratives (focus on the disability, do not talk about non-relevant problems, highlight but do not exaggerate, etc.) — he was with me all the way. I have now gone from 10 percent service connected to 70 percent.

It is with pride I note here the leading role our great organization is playing in fighting the scourge of VA claims sharks preying on veterans in need. There is no more noble cause. With respect to filing a claim for service-connected compensation, there is



no better assistance than that provided for free by a VFW service officer. **DENNIS M. CULLINAN** WOODBRIDGE, VA.

In the June/July issue of *VFW* magazine, then-VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento noted that "any veteran who believes he or she is eligible for compensation should consult a VFW service officer." I have been told many times over the years that this was a long and challenging task.

Although I am 78 years old and a Vietnam combat veteran, I did not request consideration for compensation until April 2023. The service officer completed all the paperwork, and it was submitted. For the next seven months, I completed many evaluations. It was an exceptionally smooth, professional, and friendly process. In November 2023, I was awarded service-related disability. Additional examinations were scheduled, and in April 2024, my disability was upgraded to a higher level.

I appreciate the attention to detail and the professionalism I was given in the process. I encourage all veterans to work with a service officer to determine the benefits they have earned during their service.

> **D. RAMSEY GEYER SR.** ST. JOHNS, FLA.

Destination Memphis

I enjoyed reading about VFW Post 7175 in Millington, Tenn. Next time I am in Memphis, I will be sure to visit that Post.

> **FRED POLITTLE** HILLSBORO, MO.

80th Anniversary of Tarawa Remembered

Thank you for the reminder of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Tarawa.

My father was a USNR coxswain (driver) of a Higgins boat (landing craft) during the invasion at the age of 18 years old. He never spoke about his experiences on Tarawa. I believe he had PTSD from that period of his service.

He had some funny stories about serving on PT boats as the Pacific War wound down. I miss him.

> **STAN HOCKETT** HILLSBORO, ORE.

Normandy Invasion 80 Years Later

Wondering why the author referred to the invasion as infamous. The definition of infamous is "well-known for some bad quality or deed."

> LARRY PARKS WAVERLY, N.Y.

"Mail Call" features letters from our readers in nine issues per year. If you have questions, comments or concerns about any subject or article from our most recent issue, letters can be emailed to *magazine@vfw.org*, with the subject line "Mail Call," or mailed to: *VFW* magazine, Mail Call, 406 *W.* 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111. Letters must be no more than 200 words, and *VFW* magazine reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length and accuracy.



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Silver Star Awarded for 'Black Hawk Down' Mission

A veteran of 1993's Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia received the Silver Star for his actions on March 25. Retired Army Maj. Larry Moores was recognized for his service in the bloody street fighting that was the basis for the movie "Black Hawk Down."

Moores, then a lieutenant with 3rd Bn., 75th Ranger Regiment, was part of Task Force Ranger. On Oct. 3, 1993, a planned raid to capture two local warlords turned into a rescue mission when Somalia militiamen shot down two U.S. Blackhawk helicopters.

Retired Army Col. Larry Perino, a fellow Ranger platoon leader who served with Moores during the Battle of Mogadishu, attended Moores' Silver Star acceptance ceremony at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia. Perino explained why Moores received the military's third-highest award for combat valor.

"Larry is deserving because he chose to go back to that street to try and break us out," Perino said. "Despite going out there and getting riddled with bullets time and time again and losing Rangers, he had the intestinal fortitude to lead his men to help us."

Moores said during his acceptance speech that he will wear his Silver Star "for my guys who can't wear their Silver Star,"



HOTO BY JEAN WINES/U.S. ARM

Army Gen. Gary Brito, left, presents retired Army Maj. Larry Moores with the Silver Star during a March 25 ceremony at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia as Moores' wife, retired Army Col. Kerry E. Moores, right, looks on. Larry Moores received the award for his actions during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia.

such as Sgt. Dominick Pilla, who Moores noted was killed in the fight.

"We lost 18 soldiers in battle and had more than 70 Rangers wounded," Moores said. "That was a tough experience because we were overwhelmed - with the odds against us. But it was amazing to watch the young Rangers still execute under very difficult circumstances."

National Hispanic Month Starts Sept. 15

From Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, the nation will recognize National Hispanic American Heritage Month in tribute to its citizens of Spanish descent. In recognition, here are some results of a study released last year regarding U.S. veterans of Hispanic heritage and how they compare to Latino civilians. It was conducted by the University of California-Los Angeles' Latino Policy and Politics Institute.

- While the U.S. veteran pop-• ulation shrank by nearly half between 2000 and 2021, the number of Latino veterans grew from 1.1 million to 1.3 million in the same time period.
- More than two-thirds of Latino veterans had completed some

college courses or graduated from college in 2021.

- More than 90 percent of Latino veterans had earned a high school diploma.
- In comparison, 42 percent of Latino civilians received some college education or graduated with a degree in the same time frame. Sixty percent graduated from high school.
- Homeownership rates among Latino veterans also outpaced rates of Latino civilians, 70 percent to 54 percent.
- On average, Latino vets earned \$18,000 more per year than their civilian counterparts. Latino civilians were almost



From left, retired Army Lt. Col. Alfred V. Rascon, former Army 2nd Lt. Carmen Lozano Dumler and retired Army Master Sergeant Raul Perez "Roy" Benavidez are all Hispanic American veterans who served with distinction. Rascon and Benavidez both earned the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War, and Dumler was one of the first Puerto Rican women to be an Army officer.

> twice as likely to live in poverty than those who served in uniform, 15 percent to 8 percent.



VFW National Home Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the VFW National Home located in Eaton Rapids, Mich., will be held at 9 a.m. EDT on Oct. 26. For more information, contact Lynn Bloomer, the Home's Chief of Staff, at lbloomer@vfwnationalhome.org or (517) 663-7023.



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ISSUES UP FRONT | CURRENT VETERANS CONCERNS



Longer Exposure to Burn Pits Leads to Higher Risk of Respiratory Ailments

New study links prolonged exposure to open burn pits to increased breathing and cardiovascular disease.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

study published in April found that prolonged deployments to bases with burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan put veterans at a higher risk for respiratory ailments.

Published by JAMA Network Open in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the study relied on declassified deployment data from the records of 459,381 veterans currently receiving treatment from the VA to determine the health effects of exposure to burn pits.

Through the study, titled *Deployment* to Military Bases With Open Burn Pits and Respiratory and Cardiovascular Disease, researchers found a correlation between longer deployments to bases with open burn pits and slightly higher risks of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and hypertension.

The study affirms what many in the veterans community and at VFW have suspected for years. It is why the organization pushed so hard for passage of the *PACT Act* in 2022. The law improves health care access and funding for veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service.

"I do not think it comes as a complete surprise, especially to anyone who served on bases or in areas where burn pits were used," VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli said. "That is why legislation like the *PACT Act* is so important to veterans. In addition to the benefits it provides, it has required VA to look at additional causes and effects and to continue to study these prolonged health concerns."

Conducted by a collection of researchers from different universities, the report states that while the associations were modest in magnitude, several million veterans could be affected by the findings. The study also is the most comprehensive look at long-term health outcomes associated with burn pit exposures, given that it considers a much larger number of veterans than past reviews, according to its researchers.

Prior to this recent study, research on the long-term effects of exposure to open burn pits had been limited despite public concern to date, according to the JAMA report. It also stated that while deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq have been associated with a higher risk of respiratory disease, researchers questioned whether exposure to something other than burn pits could account for the ailments.

Like many other veteran service organizations, VFW continues to be at the forefront of advocating efforts to continue studies such as this one to expand the knowledge of health complications a veteran can suffer from burn pit exposure.

"VFW has long advocated not only for proper benefits and health care for those exposed to toxins," Figlioli said, "but for continued study of the long-term health effects of such exposures."

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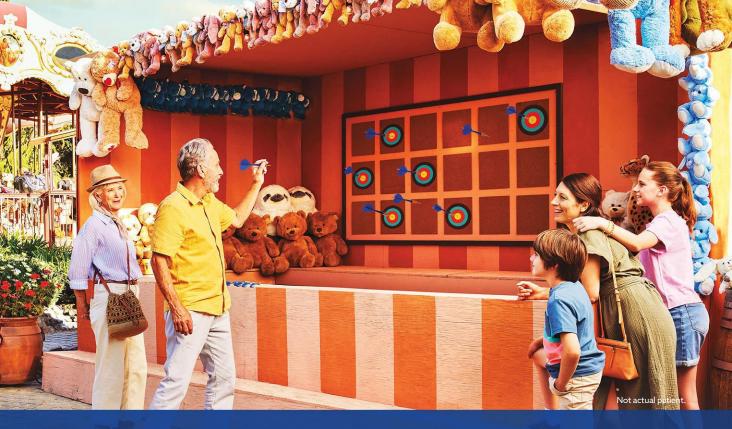
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mCRPC, metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer; PSMA+, prostate-specific membrane antigen positive.



What is PLUVICTO[®] (lutetium Lu 177 vipivotide tetraxetan)?

PLUVICTO is a radiopharmaceutical used to treat adults with an advanced cancer called prostate-specific membrane antigen-positive metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (PSMApositive mCRPC) that:

- has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic), and
- has already been treated with other anticancer treatments

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about PLUVICTO?

Use of PLUVICTO involves exposure to radioactivity. Long-term, accruing radiation exposure is associated with an increased risk for cancer.

Please see additional Important Safety Information on the next page and Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on the following pages.

About the clinical trial

The PLUVICTO clinical study measured **overall survival (OS)**. This is the total time men with metastatic prostate cancer were alive from the start of treatment. **Median OS** is the length of time half of the men were still alive.

In a study of 831 men with PSMA+ metastatic prostate cancer, 551 were treated with PLUVICTO once every 6 weeks (up to 6 treatments) plus BSOC as determined by their doctor. Another 280 were treated with BSOC alone.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

What is the most important information I should know about PLUVICTO? (continued)

To minimize radiation exposure to others following administration of PLUVICTO, limit close contact (less than 3 feet) with household contacts for 2 days or with children and pregnant women for 7 days, refrain from sexual activity for 7 days, and sleep in a separate bedroom from household contacts for 3 days, from children for 7 days, or from pregnant women for 15 days.

PLUVICTO may cause serious side effects, including:

- Low level of blood cell counts. Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including:
 - Tiredness or weakness
 - Pale skin
 - Shortness of breath
 - Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding
 - Frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers
- **Kidney problems.** Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including passing urine less often or passing much smaller amounts of urine than usual

Before you receive PLUVICTO, tell your doctor if any of these apply to you:

- You have low level of blood cell counts (hemoglobin, white blood cell count, absolute neutrophil count, platelet count)
- You have or have had tiredness, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding, or frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers (possible signs of myelosuppression)

You have or have had kidney problems

- You have or have had any other type of cancer or treatment for cancer, as PLUVICTO contributes to your long-term cumulative radiation exposure
- You are sexually active as:
 - All radiopharmaceuticals, including PLUVICTO, have the potential to cause harm to an unborn baby
 - You should use effective contraception for intercourse during treatment with PLUVICTO and for 14 weeks after your last dose
 - PLUVICTO may cause temporary or permanent infertility

Before administration of PLUVICTO, you should drink plenty of water in order to urinate as often as possible during the first hours after administration.

The most common side effects of PLUVICTO include:

- Tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Low red blood cell count
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in bowel movements (constipation or diarrhea)
- Vomiting
- Low blood platelet count
- Urinary tract infection
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain

These are not all of the possible side effects of PLUVICTO. Call your doctor for advice about side effects. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on the following pages.

Summary of Important Information

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- Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding
- \circ Frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat or mouth ulcers
- Kidney problems. Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including passing urine less often or passing much smaller amounts of urine than usual

The most common side effects of PLUVICTO include:

- Tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- · Low red blood cell count
- Loss of appetite
- · Changes in bowel movements (constipation or diarrhea)
- Vomiting
- Low blood platelet count
- · Urinary tract infection
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain

These are not all of the possible side effects of PLUVICTO. Call your doctor for advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my doctor before receiving PLUVICTO therapy?

Before you receive PLUVICTO, tell your doctor if any of these apply to you: • You have low level of blood cell counts (hemoglobin, white blood cell

- You have now level of block cen counts (nonlogicitin, white block cen count, absolute neutrophil count, platelet count)
 You have or have had tiredness, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath,
- bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty to stop bleeding, or frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers (possible signs of myelosuppression)
- You have or have had kidney problems
- You have or have had any other type of cancer or treatment for cancer, as PLUVICTO contributes to your long-term cumulative radiation exposure
- You are sexually active as:
- All radiopharmaceuticals, including PLUVICTO, have the potential to cause harm to an unborn baby
- You should use effective contraception for intercourse during treatment with PLUVICTO and for 14 weeks after your last dose
- PLUVICTO may cause temporary or permanent infertility

Before administration of PLUVICTO, you should drink plenty of water in order to urinate as often as possible during the first hours after administration.

How will I receive PLUVICTO?

- There are strict laws on the use, handling and disposal of radiopharmaceutical products. PLUVICTO will only be used in special controlled areas. This product will only be handled and given to you by people who are trained and qualified to use it safely. These persons will take special care for the safe use of this product and will keep you informed of their actions
- The recommended dose is 7.4 GBq (gigabecquerel, the unit used to express radioactivity)
- · PLUVICTO is given approximately every 6 weeks for a total of 6 doses
- PLUVICTO is administered directly into a vein

- Your nuclear medicine doctor will inform you about the usual duration of the procedure
- If you have any questions about how long you will receive PLUVICTO, talk to your nuclear medicine doctor
- Your nuclear medicine doctor will do blood tests before and during treatment to check your condition and to detect any side effects as early as possible. Based on the results, your nuclear medicine doctor may decide to delay, modify or stop your treatment with PLUVICTO if necessary
- An overdose is unlikely. However, in the case of an overdose, you will receive the appropriate treatment
- If you miss an appointment for an administration, contact your nuclear medicine doctor as soon as possible to reschedule

After administration of PLUVICTO, you should:

- Remain hydrated and urinate frequently in order to eliminate the product from your body
- Limit close contact (less than 3 feet) with others in your household for 2 days or with children and pregnant women for 7 days
- · Refrain from sexual activity for 7 days
- Sleep in a separate bedroom from others in your household for 3 days, from children for 7 days, or from pregnant women for 15 days
- The nuclear medicine doctor will inform you if you need to take any special precautions after receiving this medicine. This may include special precautions for you or your caregiver with regard to toilet use, showering, laundry, waste disposal, emergency medical assistance, unplanned hospitalization or traveling. Contact your nuclear medicine doctor if you have any questions

General information about the safe and effective use of PLUVICTO

Talk to your nuclear medicine doctor about any concerns. You can ask your nuclear medicine doctor for information about PLUVICTO that is written for healthcare professionals.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

PBS Broadcasts Claim Sharks Story Featuring VFW

In a story published in June, PBS interviewed VFW National Legislative Director Patrick Murray about the growing concern of for-profit companies that falsely claim to offer veterans help with VA disability claims.

During the interview on "PBS NewsHour," Murray said that so-called "claim sharks" tell veterans that their disability claims assistance will be "done better and faster if you pay for it." Murray added that it is illegal for claim sharks to take money from veterans regarding VA disability claims.

Claim sharks are often individuals or companies that charge veterans or their families a large amount of money for disability claims assistance, a service provided for free by VFW's VA-accredited service officers.

"Many of these veterans that we've spoken to didn't know this is illegal, or thought that this was just almost a fast-tracked way to get things done," Murray said. "Much like a passport, you can pay a company to walk it through for you. That's the way they advertise. But that's not true."

Murray also discussed how unaccredited companies exploit loopholes to charge "exorbitant fees" while not being held accountable for their activities.

"VA has sent multiple demand letters to these companies telling them to stop," Murray said. "It is illegal. And the agency of jurisdiction, the Department of Veteran Affairs, tells them what you're doing is illegal. However, sternly-worded letters are about as far as they can go because the criminal penalties were removed in 2006."

Murray noted that the passage of the Honoring Our PACT Act has "amplified" nonaccredited organizations looking to take money from veterans. Murray said that due to the Honoring Our PACT Act, VA has been "putting out so much more money into veterans pockets" that bad actors around the

country are working to "take a cut" of veterans disability compensation.

VFW encourages anyone who is uncomfortable working with an organization on their VA disability claims to contact a VA-accredited VFW service officer. Find one at https://www. vfw.org/service-officers. For more information about the Honoring Our PACT Act, visit https://pactactinfo.org.

VFW Pushes for Elizabeth Dole Act Passage

Multiple veterans groups, including VFW, held an event with lawmakers in July at the VFW Washington Office to advocate for the passage of a bill that could improve health care services for veterans who have caregivers.

With the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 8371), veterans and survivors can benefit from many of the bill's provisions, according to VFW.

If passed and signed into law, the *Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act* would require VA to:

- Expand access to a non-VA provider that would furnish all-inclusive care to elderly veterans living in the community.
- Update electronic capabilities to assist veterans and caregivers using long-term health care and support services.
- Start a pilot program that would address homemaker and health aide services to veterans.
- Give reports and conduct studies on programs that provide medical and health services to elderly veterans in their homes and communities.

VFW believes that VA must continue to enhance services and benefits to provide all veterans with access to care and

prompt mental health services. Caregivers also need the resources required to properly care for their veterans. Additionally, veterans should not be financially burdened when receiving ambulatory services for emergency care.

The bill is named after Elizabeth Dole, a former senator and Secretary of Labor, who has been a prominent advocate for caregivers and veterans' issues.

To contact lawmakers about the *Elizabeth Dole Act*, sign up for VFW's Action Corp by visiting *https://www.vfw.org/advo-cacy/grassroots-efforts/vfw-action-corps-weekly*.



VFW National Legislative Director Patrick

Murray speaks at an event in July at the

VFW Washington Office to advocate for

Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, a bill that

could improve health care services for

veterans who have caregivers.

the passage of the Senator Elizabeth



FOR MORE INFORMATION about specific legislation or VA benefits, contact VFW's Washington Office at vfw@vfw.org. A member of VFW's National Veterans Service staff will respond as soon as possible.



Members of the Warren Commission are shown in a conference room on Aug. 14, 1964, at the VFW Washington Office. The commission was established to investigate the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. VFW will again host an official government commission to investigate the Afghanistan War.

VFW Washington Office Hosts Afghanistan War Commission

VFW's Washington Office was selected in July to host the opening hearing for the Afghanistan War Commission. The meeting took place on July 12.

The Afghanistan War Commission was established after the passage of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (P.L. 117-81).* The commission comprises 16 members who will review key decisions made in Afghanistan from June 2001 to August 2021.

The Afghanistan War Committee, according to the 2022 NDAA, will examine all facets of the U.S. engagement in Afghanistan, encompassing military operations, the initia-

UPCOMING: FALL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

VFW is set to host a legislative conference later this month that will allow the organization an opportunity to influence veterans legislation on Capitol Hill.

Members of VFW's National Legislative Committee will convene at the nation's capital to meet with lawmakers to deliver the priority goals of the VFW. View VFW priority goals at https://www.vfw.org/-/media/vfwsite/files/ advocacy/prioritygoalsbrochure.pdf. tives of civilian government agencies and the collaboration among these entities.

The VFW Washington Office also was one of the locations where the Warren Commission investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The Warren Commission held meetings at the VFW Washington Office for nine months before submitting a full report to then-President Lyndon Johnson.

Then-Rep. Gerald Ford, who later became President, is a notable member of the commission. Ford, Kennedy and Johnson were VFW members (see page 2).

VA UPGRADES CLAIM STATUS TOOL

VA announced earlier this year that it has enhanced its online claim status tool, which is found at *https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status*.

This free service by VA allows veterans to access the status of their VA claim, decision review or appeal via the VA's website.

The recent upgrades were designed to facilitate more user-friendly ways to quickly view and manage personal information.

Learn more about the newly upgraded claim status tool at *https://www.va.gov/resources/claim-status-tool-faqs*.

BOOK CORNER



STAFF PICK



Back to the Dirt: A Novel By Frank Bill

Miles is a Vietnam veteran who's worried he's going to lose his job and with it his tenuous grasp on a stable life - over a fight with a co-worker. His PTSD and struggles to control his steroid-fueled violent tendencies also complicate his relationship with his girlfriend, Shelby, a stripper who only occasionally displays the proverbial heart of gold. She's certainly kinder and more generous than her brother, Wylie, who has been implicated in the deaths of two local Oxy dealers and is currently on the run. When Wylie kidnaps Shelby and holes up in Miles's country lair, it all threatens to become a bit too much for Miles.

As Frank Bill peels back the layers of Miles's history, going deep into his memories of the Vietnam War, Back to the Dirt gets to the root of the traumas that have caused Miles and his community so much adversity. In this blistering novel, Bill reaches for the core values - living close to the land, working with your hands - that have been obscured by generations of neglect, drug abuse and desperation. This is a profound and important story of an America that is only beginning to get its due attention - and Frank Bill is its most visceral, essential chronicler. Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Vietnam Beyond

By Gerald Augustine, life member, VFW Post 583, Middletown, Conn.

This book is not only a photographic account of a soldier's time while serving in a front-line infantry unit during the Vietnam War, according to author Gerald Augustine, but a study of human nature. When rank has its privileges, not only in the military but in civilian life as well, the author writes, you learn how a person with "power" will use his or her advantage over people at their most vulnerable time in their lives. This nonfiction book tells of officers and sergeants using their rank to their individual benefit. According to Augustine, readers also will learn how attorneys and even a senator used the legal system to their advantage when having control over a veteran's life. Dorrance Publishing

Seven Names Off the Wall

By Frank Slocum, VFW Department of Florida

This memoir captures the first five months of author Frank Slocum's service as an Air Force pilot in Vietnam, between 1968-69. The book focuses on the story of *Spooky 71*, an aircraft notoriously struck by an enemy mortar round mid-air. Slocum describes, in detail, the action taken by the young pilot in recovering the aircraft from the impending crash, as well as saving the lives of the seven American crewmen aboard. *Self-Published*

BOOK CORNER SUBMISSIONS

VFW magazine's "Book Corner" features select books written by VFW members. If you have written a book or an e-book bearing an ISBN or ASIN, contact the magazine for guidelines at *magazine@vfw.org* or by mail at: VFW magazine, Book Corner, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO, 64111. The subject of the book must relate to the military or veterans. VFW does not sell books featured in "Book Corner." Contact the book's publisher for more information.



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Exclusive Heel Pillow" holds your foot securely in place!



VFW's new Commanderin-Chief is a Purple Heart recipient and two-tour veteran of the Vietnam War. Al Lipphardt says he is committed to re-establishing VFW's traditional values.

Want to Make a

BY TIM DYHOUSE

l Lipphardt of Georgia is VFW's new Commander-in-Chief. Lipphardt, a Vietnam War veteran and life member of Post 2667 in Newnan, Ga., says that his slogan for the year, "Follow Me," is both a nod to his military training and the example he hopes to offer for leaders at all levels of the VFW.

"I am an infantryman, and that is the infantry's motto," he said. "I tie that into my life's mantra: Believe in what you do and do what you believe in. I want to restore the military values that we all learned in basic training."

Lipphardt, a Purple Heart recipient, highlights characteristics such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage that he hopes will mark his tenure.

"These qualities define leadership," he said. "Of those, integrity is the most critical because it is the only thing that truly belongs to the individual. The other qualities are earned, but integrity is yours and you only get it once."

Asked how he plans to guide America's oldest major combat veterans organization in the year ahead, Chief Lipphardt points to VFW leaders at all levels.

"I want to get people thinking," he said. "I want to make a difference in the lives of our VFW members, their families and the nation's active-duty troops. In order to make a difference, you must be the difference. As leaders, we must set the example, and that all hearkens back to 'Follow Me.'"

'THAT WAS HORRIFIC'

Lipphardt's journey to VFW's top spot began with his service in Vietnam. On Nov. 23, 1967 — Thanksgiving Day — Army 2nd Lt. Lipphardt was in Vietnam's Que Son Valley, 25 miles southwest of Da Nang. He was leading the 2nd Platoon of D Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf., 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

Earlier that day, brigade commanders had intercepted an enemy radio message from elements of the 3rd Regiment,

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RTESY OF AL LIPPHARDT



VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt in May tours the grounds of VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo. Lipphardt, a Vietnam War infantryman and business owner, will lead the VFW during its 125th anniversary celebration over the next year.

2nd North Vietnamese Army Division, which were dug in near Hill 63 in the valley's center.

"The enemy didn't use radios with small units, so we knew it was a significant force," said Lipphardt, who had earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge three months earlier during a firefight near Chu Lai. "They sent us out immediately while the signal was still fresh."

As Lipphardt maneuvered his platoon toward a flanking position near the base of Hill 63, he remembers "all hell breaking loose" on him and his men.

"Two machine guns opened up on us from about 20 feet away," he recalled. "We had guys go down immediately." Those killed in the ambush were Cpl. Kenneth S. Adams, Cpl. Philip F. Adams and Pfc. Robert D. Waddell.

"That was horrific," the Chief said. "I remember laying on the ground seeing the grass flipping next to me thinking, 'What is that?' Then I said to myself, 'Those are bullets. Someone can see me.""

Lipphardt said that the 4th Platoon, in a position above the 2nd, fired over them and took out the machine guns. After moving his men to a safer position, Lipphardt assessed the situation.

"My memory was that at the end of the battle there were six of us left with the majority of the platoon wounded," Lipphardt said. "My recollection of my first tour of Vietnam is exactly that my recollection. It's been 57 years, and I wasn't taking notes at the time."

Later that day, Lipphardt was wound-

Radio operator Spec. Roger Gross, 2nd Lt. Al Lipphardt, Cpl. Jack McKinnon, Cpl. Billy Lightfoot, Cpl. Philip Adams (top of his head) and Cpl. Kenneth Adams finalize their mission plan on Nov. 22, 1967, in the I Corps area of the Que Son Valley prior to the Nov. 23 battle known as *Operation Dorland*, or the Battle for Hill 63. Both Philip Adams and Kenneth Adams were killed in an ambush the next day.

ed in the neck, leg and hand by grenade fragments. Treated by his medic, he did not require evacuation from the battlefield and did not think his wounds were significant.

"It was superficial," said Lipphardt, who was promoted to first lieutenant in December 1967. "I didn't even know that I had earned the Purple Heart."

That firefight, which was "close quarters" and consisted of the enemy "throwing hand grenades at us and us at them," began when Cpl. Rodney E. Loatman was shot in the head and killed.

VFW'S LAST VIETNAM VET CHIEF?

After Christmas 1967, the Army reassigned Lipphardt as an intelligence liaison officer between troops in the field and commanders. The Chief's first Vietnam tour ended when he returned to the States in June 1968.

Lipphardt went back to Vietnam for another year-long tour in 1970 as a captain and military intelligence officer. He was assigned to the Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam in Saigon.

"Saigon was a wild west town," he recalled. "I couldn't carry a weapon. I thought to myself, 'Is the war still going on?" I guess in Saigon, they thought it wasn't."

Back in the States, the Chief

FAMILY LIFE

Al Lipphardt makes his home in Stone Mountain, Ga., where he is a Gold Legacy life member of VFW Post 2667 in Newnan, Ga. His family members all belong to the Post's Auxiliary.

Wife: Carol, married Feb. 24, 1967

Children: daughter, Elizabeth Griswold and husband, T.J.; daughter, Christina Mathis and husband, Russell.

Grandchildren: six grandsons and one granddaughter

Great-grandchildren: one great-grandson



2nd Lt. Al Lipphardt relaxes in the bunker he shared with his platoon sergeant, Master Sgt. "Sarge" Bates, in June 1967, several days into his first tour of Vietnam. The new VFW Commander-in-Chief said he learned quickly that he did not "do well in the sun" and found out that if "you can't adapt and overcome, you embrace the suck and ruck on."

served from 1971-74 at the National Photographic Interpretation Center in Washington, D.C. In that role, he analyzed aerial photos and "called the Yom Kippur War" based on images he was seeing in 1973.

From 1974-75, Lipphardt served with Army Forces Command at Fort McPherson, Ga. He worked for the deputy chief of staff for intelligence and managed the intelligence contingency fund for South America.

The Chief served in the Army Reserve from 1976-79 and departed the military on Aug. 1, 1979. Lipphardt plans to go back to Vietnam, "to Saigon," in July 2025.

"I could be the last Vietnam veteran to serve as VFW's Commander-in-Chief," Lipphardt said. "And while I have no interest in going back to the jungle, I am interested in going back to my last duty station."

'THAT'S HOW I COPED'

In addition to the four men killed on Thanksgiving Day 1967, Lipphardt noted that another of his men, Pvt. Lewis L. Sloan, had died the week before on Nov. 16, 1967, when he had stepped on a mine. Years later, the toll on Lipphardt's mental health from his time in combat became too obvious to ignore.

"I carried Loatman around in my head for 40 years because I thought that I had gotten him killed," the Chief said.

Lipphardt says he was persuad-

WORKING UP THROUGH THE RANKS

VFW Commander-in-Chief AI Lipphardt has served in VFW leadership positions at all levels. Here are the stops of his journey:

- VFW Post 12002 Commander, 2005-06
- VFW Department of Georgia District 3 Commander, 2009-10
- VFW Department of Georgia Commander, 2014-15
- VFW Triple Crown Commander, 2015
- VFW National Legislative Committee member, 2015-18
- VFW National Council of Administration member, 2018-2022

ed by members at VFW Post 12002 in Alpharetta, Ga., which he joined in 2002, to schedule a VA appointment. The appointment was specifically for Agent Orange exposure, but the topic of his discussion with the clinician soon shifted to PTSD. Lipphardt claimed he was fine, but she had her doubts.

"The clinician asked me some questions, and after about four, she stopped and said to me, 'Mr. Lipphardt, you have issues," he recalled. "So she made me an appointment with a psychiatrist."

During the appointment, Lipphardt relived the moment of Loatman's death. The psychiatrist stopped Lipphardt when the Chief took responsibility for it.

"I told the doctor that I had instructed Loatman to move right before he was shot," the Chief said. "I believed that if I had done that a split-second earlier, Loatman would have lived."

Lipphardt said the VA psychiatrist explained that an enemy soldier killed Loatman, not Lipphardt. The Chief said that the PTSD counseling and therapy he received convinced him he was not to blame for Loatman's death. It was the beginning of his recovery.

"I didn't drink, I didn't use drugs, I was a workaholic," he said. "I worked all the time, two and three jobs. That's how I coped."

The Chief is appreciative of the help he has received, but he also says memories of the war and the men he served with will never go away.

"You ask me when I was in Vietnam," he said, "I was there last night. It just comes and goes. You never know what might trigger memories. I'm still not back, but I never want to lose those memories. Those memories are who I am and why I do what I do. I don't ever want to lose that." After his Army service, Lipphardt turned his attention to the civilian world. For 10 years, from the mid-1980s until the mid-1990s, he sold wholesale electronic components for five major U.S. distributors in Alabama, Tennessee and Georgia. But for the Chief, it was not a rewarding experience.

MILITARY MADE HIM A LEADER

"There was no loyalty in that industry," he said. "I lost a sale over a penny, and I realized then that I had to get out of the commodity business."

So he went into business for himself. From 2001-2013, Lipphardt owned and operated Hangups, a picture-framing business, on Fort McPherson, Ga. He also opened Hangups stores in Lilburn, Ga., and two locations in Stone Mountain, Ga.

His daughter, Elizabeth, ran the business until Fort McPherson closed in 2013. Lipphardt says his military training offered him the resolve to be successful.

"It gave me discipline and commitment," he said. "I know you can't go into anything half way."

It's clear that his military training has guided Chief Lipphardt from the battlefields of Vietnam to VFW's top spot. He also relies on an inner strength to help him.

"God looks after me," Lipphardt said. "I have a great deal of faith."

All his life experiences have made Lipphardt the person he is today. For him, though, the crux of his character was forged in the Army.

"I'm an infantry guy," he said. "I don't hesitate to make decisions because I had to make life and death decisions. That experience set me on my way to being a leader."

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DESTINATION POST SERIES

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HASTA L

From left, VFW Post 7420 Junior Vice Commander Eric Gonzalez, Senior Vice Commander Angel Garcia, Commander Livier "Livy" Lazaro, Quartermaster Johnny Odom and member James Smith visit Chicano Park on May 25 in San Diego, Calif. VFW Post 7420 is located near Chicano Park in San Diego's Barrio Logan neighborhood.



This month, *VFW* magazine continues its "Destination Post Series." The series will feature 125 VFW Posts located in sought-after tourist destinations. Featured VFW Posts are those that make a real difference in the communities in which the Posts are located. This month's article takes *VFW* magazine to San Diego, Calif.

San Diego is known as a military town with beaches, nearby mountains and deserts. Visitors typically find themselves in tourist areas, such as Coronado Island, Seaport Village or Balboa Park. While these spots are popular, visitors typically do not get to see all of what San Diego has to offer.

A hidden gem is VFW Post 7420 in the San Diego neighborhood of Barrio Logan, the heart of the city's Chicano culture. The Post sits on the corner of Logan Avenue and South Evans Street near Chicano Park, which features Mexicaninspired murals painted on the underpass of the iconic San Diego-Coronado Bridge. Mexican-American influences are found throughout Barrio Logan, with shops, restaurants, street vendors and art galleries. The community is located just south of downtown San Diego and north of Naval Station San Diego.

STARTED BY MEXICAN-AMERICANS

VFW Post 7420 was established on April 14, 1955, in downtown San Diego. The Post in the 1970s bought property in the barrio, where the Post sits today.

"Post 7420 was founded by World War II and Korean War veterans that were not being admitted to other veterans service organizations because they were Mexican," said Livier "Livy" Lazaro, commander of Post 7420. "So they just chartered their own VFW Post instead. They knew the importance of veterans service organizations."

Lazaro, a retired Army veteran, is the first female commander of VFW Post 7420, something she said that she takes pride in.

"It is an honor to be a caretaker of the Post," said Lazaro, as she sits in the Post's museum. "I'm just doing everything I can to make those who came



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you have visited any of the Posts mentioned in this article, we want to hear from you, or let us hear from you after your visit. Email communications@vfw.org and tell us about your visit. We look forward to hearing from you, our valued readers.

David Kinyua Bariu, a former deported U.S. veteran from Kenya, stands next to a mural raising awareness for deported veterans on May 24 at VFW Post 7420 in San Diego, Calif. Bariu, who is an Army and Air Force Reserve veteran, was deported from the U.S. in 2008, but is now a U.S. citizen. before me proud."

Lazaro said VFW Post 7420 strives to be an integral part of the community, welcoming in veterans and their families. There is always something happening at the Post, she said.

For example, the Post hosts steak nights on the last Friday of each month. Guests can expect a full steak dinner at a reasonable rate. Such dinners include entertainment by musicians such as Bill Caballero, a Latin jazz musician.

Regular karaoke nights, dance nights and events such as comedy shows hosted at the VFW Post attract visitors as well.

HONORING DEPORTED VETERANS

This year, on the afternoon of May 27, Memorial Day, VFW Post 7420 members held a ceremony at Friendship Park in Tijuana, Mexico, to commemorate deported veterans who died in exile. Along with Post 7420 members, deported U.S. veterans living in Tijuana attended the ceremony to honor fellow deported veterans. The names of known deceased veterans were recited, one after another.

"The list gets longer and longer each year," said Johnny Odom, a retired Army veteran and VFW Post 7420 quartermaster. "It's a shame that this is happening to our own veterans. They served honorably just like everyone else, but they are treated with disrespect and forgotten about by our government. In some cases, deported veterans have started families while away from the U.S. Many want to come back home, but some just want to be able to get health care services at VA. They don't have access to it being deported."

One of the veterans who attended the ceremony was Olivan Acosta, a Marine Corps Reserve veteran. He was deported in 2022.

Acosta said that due to a misunderstanding in 2014, he was arrested at his home for domestic violence, for which he ended up not getting charged. However, he broke probation when he tried to contact his wife. Acosta claims he was just trying to get her to "come back home," but scared her in the

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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process. Acosta was sentenced to serve time in jail for one year and three months.

"I thought that when I left the jail, I would be deported," Acosta said. "But they told me to go home."

After his release, Acosta lived in a halfway house, then later lived with his son, a Navy chief petty officer, who lived on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. However, Acosta said officials came to his house two years later to deport him. Acosta said he did not understand why he was being deported.

"I already served my time," Acosta said. "I feel like I'm being doublepunished. I've never had a criminal mindset. I've never even had a speeding ticket. We are human, and we all make mistakes."

Acosta said he is hopeful to come back to the U.S. someday.

"It's always been home," Acosta said.

'DEMORALIZING' DEPORTATION

But not all deported veterans have a criminal record. One such veteran is David Kinyua Bariu, from Kenya.

Born in Nairobi, Bariu came to the U.S. in 1998 for an education in business administration at Southern Arkansas University. At the age of 22, Bariu received a student visa, but he then later joined the U.S. Army.

"I talked to an Army recruiter who told me that I was eligible to join because I had a student visa," Bariu said.

Two weeks later, Bariu was at boot camp in Fort Benning, Ga. He served at Washington's Fort Lewis soon after. But two years later, things changed.

"My recruiter was court-martialed for illegally recruiting international students into the Army to receive bonuses," Bariu said. "As a result, I was honorably discharged."

Bariu found himself in immigration court, where a judge said he was in violation of his student visa. In an opinion article for the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Bariu wrote that he was told that he had to "accept a voluntary departure" back to Kenya.

"I was lucky enough to get a lawyer in Texas, and I filed for naturalization under *Section 329* of the *Immigration and*



SAN DIEGO-AREA POSTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Listed below are other VFW Posts near San Diego. The Posts listed are just a small sampling of the many outstanding Posts in the area.

VFW Post 2422 in Coronado

557 Orange Ave Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6917 Commander Boyd Zbinden

VFW Post 5985 in San Diego (Pacific Beach)

853 Turquoise St San Diego, CA 92109 (858) 488-3631 Commander Michael Hill https://www.facebook.com/vfw5985

VFW Post 9578 in Alpine

844 Tavern Rd Alpine, CA 91901 (619) 445-6040 Commander John Sullivan https://www.facebook.com/AlpineVFW9578

VFW Post 7907 in Poway

12342 Old Pomerado Rd Poway, CA 92064 (858) 748-7907 Commander William Kimble https://www.facebook.com/VFW-Post7907

VFW Post 7264 in Joshua Tree

6402 Veterans Way Joshua Tree, CA 92252 (760) 366-2717 Commander Frank Clark https://www.facebook.com/VFW7264JT

VFW Post 2080 in Campo

301 Sheridan Rd Campo, CA 91906 (619) 478-9212 Commander James Collins https://www.facebook.com/CampoVFW

VFW Post 1513 in Escondido

515 W Valley Pkwy Escondido, CA 92025 (760) 877-6229 Commander Andres Aguilar https://www.facebook.com/vfwpost1513

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Please print the branch name and 10-digit branch code from above right:

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Mrs. Mr. Ms.		
Nan	ne (Please Print Clearly)	
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email (optional)		
*Plus a total of \$17.99 shipping and service		
Please allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for	or shipment. Subject to produ	uct
availability and order acceptance.		

PLACES FOR VETERANS TO VISIT IN SAN DIEGO





Being a military community, San Diego County features hundreds of veterans monuments, museums and historical locations throughout the area. Here are a few popular locations for veterans to visit:

Cabrillo National Monument

1800 Cabrillo Memorial Dr. San Diego, CA 92106 https://www.nps.gov/cabr

USS Midway Museum 910 N. Harbor Dr. San Diego, CA 92101 https://www.midway.org

Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial 6905 La Jolla Scenic S. Dr. La Jolla, CA 92037 https://soledadmemorial.org

SAN DIEGO

MUSEUM

AIR & SPACE

Liberty Station (former Naval Training Center) 2701 Lytton St. San Diego, CA 92106 https://libertystation.com

San Diego Air & Space Museum

2001 Pan American Plaza San Diego, CA 92101 https://sandiegoairandspace.org

Veterans Museum and Memorial Center

2115 Park Blvd. San Diego, CA 92104 https://balboapark.org/arts-culture/ veterans-museum-at-balboa-park Nationality Act, which extends citizenship to non-citizen service members during periods of hostilities," Bariu said. "This process kept me legally in the country and allowed me to join the Air Force Reserve, where I served for over five years at Carswell Air Force Base in Texas."

Even after joining the military for a second time, Bariu's immigration troubles were about to get worse.

"Unfortunately, all of my military service, work history and education was disregarded in 2007 when Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents came to my Irving, Texas, residence and detained me," Bariu said in the article. "They confiscated my military certifications and Department of Veterans Affairs ID card, and I was detained for one year at the ICE Rolling Plains Detention Center, in Haskell, Texas, before being unceremoniously deported back to Kenya in 2008."

Bariu cited "racial profiling and racism" for the reason he was deported.

"It made me mentally damaged, because I considered America my home," Bariu said.

Bariu added that the deportation to Kenya also was "demoralizing" and put his life at risk.

"It was a hostile environment, because Al-Shabab terrorizes Kenyan citizens," Bariu said. "Being a deported U.S. veteran in the region didn't make it easy on me. I was in danger for years."

After years living in Kenya, traveling the country for work, he finally received word from the Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative that he was eligible for return to the U.S.

Bariu said if it were not for help from the Black Deported Veterans of America and members of VFW Post 7420, he would not have been able to travel back to the U.S. for a naturalization interview. Bariu's 14-year immigration battle finally ended in 2023 when he became a U.S. citizen.

"I was still serving when they detained me," Bariu said. "I thought I would never be able to come back home. I feel blessed now that I'm back."

Black Deported Veterans of America

Co-Director James Smith, a member of VFW Post 7420, said he joined VFW Post 7420 after finding out that members at the Post have the same passion of bringing deported veterans home.

"When I first started working with the Post, they made me feel at home," said Smith, who served in the Marine Corps from 1981 to 1987. "Joining the Post gave me a reason to be proud of being a veteran. They were serious about community service and bringing home deported veterans. And working with the VFW has given Black Deported Veterans of America more opportunities to tell legislators about deported veterans."

To learn more about Black Deported Veterans of America, visit *https://www.bdva.us.*

'ONE BIG FAMILY'

In addition to the Post's efforts working on behalf of deported veterans, its members keep busy in the community. One such example is the Post's partnership with Feeding San Diego. Members can be seen distributing food to those suffering from food insecurity.

In January, historical levels of flooding took place, and many local families were displaced and in need of meals. VFW Post 7420 members and volunteers immediately started preparing hot meals, an estimated 400 meals

a day, for flood victims in shelters and hotels.

"It is a collective effort with everyone here at Post 7420," said Odom. "We are one big family here. We do everything we can to help our community and veterans. It is self-rewarding to be a part of this organization."

VFW Post 7420 Senior Vice Commander Angel Garcia said he grew up in Barrio Logan close to the Post. Before even considering joining the Marine Corps, Garcia said he attended holiday events with his family at the Post, including receiving Christmas gifts



VFW Post 7420 Junior Vice Commander Eric Gonzalez and his wife, Mayra, hold their children, Lilah and Emma, on May 25 at VFW Post 7420 in San Diego, Calif. Gonzalez said he brings Mayra, a VFW Post 7420 Auxiliary member, and children to the Post regularly and loves the friendly environment, music and culture of the Post.

that were distributed by VFW members.

Garcia, who served from 1993 to 1997, called it a "full-circle" moment when he became a member of the Post.

"The VFW is such an exclusive club of war veterans, and it is an honor to be a part of that," Garcia said. EMAIL dspiva@vfw.org





VFW was Born o

Veterans of three units — the 17th U.S. Infantry, 1st Colorado and 28th Volunteer Infantry regiments — would return home to form separate veterans organizations in different states at varying times. Within 14 years, they would all come together to create the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This year, the VFW celebrates 125 years as America's oldest major organization of overseas combat veterans.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE



On Sept. 29, 1899, 14 veterans of the 17th Infantry Regiment met in Columbus, Ohio, to form an association. They created the American Veterans of Foreign Service — the forerunner of the VFW. This painting by Jim Burke was specially commissioned for VFW's 100th anniversary in 1999. From its humble beginnings in a tailor shop in Columbus, Ohio, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has a rich history of service to those who have served in uniform to protect our freedoms — it is a history that spans 125 years as of this month.

The VFW traces its roots to Spanish-American War veterans of Cuba and the Philippines who established separate groups in three locations: American Veterans of Foreign Service in Columbus, Ohio; Colorado Society, Army of the Philippines in Denver, Colo.; and Philippine War Veterans in Altoona, Pa.

Throughout VFW's history, its members and leaders have achieved a great many milestones, including leading the charge on Capitol Hill for veterans care. From the *War Risk Insurance Act Amendments* in 1917 to the *GI Bill of Rights* in 1944 to the most recent *PACT Act*, VFW has been at the forefront of veteran-centric legislation throughout its history.

From day one, VFW has advocated for veterans' rightfully earned benefits. The formation of the VFW National Service Bureau (NSB) in 1919 ensured the returning Doughboys of World War I were properly cared for.

Now called National Veterans Service, headquartered in VFW's Washington Office, it is still the essence for which VFW stands.

As VFW continues to carry the torch for veterans everywhere, its members will celebrate this momentous occasion throughout the year.

VFW Posts are encouraged to sign up for the VFW 125th Anniversary Commemorative Community Service Post Program. VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their families during this anniversary year.

Additionally, encourage communities to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Be sure to check out *VFW* magazine's 125th VFW Destination Post Series. The series will feature 125 VFW Posts located in sought-after tourist destinations. Featured VFW Posts are those that make a real difference in the communities in which the Posts are located.

The VFW Store offers a line of 125th commemorative items. See p. 40 or visit *https://www.vfwstore.org.*

Visit *https://vfw125.org* to be in-the-know on all things 125th anniversary. There, you also can view a video on the history of the VFW.

However your VFW Post plans to celebrate, *VFW* magazine wants to hear about it. Send in your celebration photos and be sure to include contact information. You may see the photos in a future issue of the magazine or *Checkpoint*.

In this section, find the VFW Family Tree and read a firsthand account of the first meeting on Sept. 29, 1899.

Happy 125th Anniversary to all VFW members. C EMAIL *jdyhouse@vfw.org*



VFW IS BORN

This is a first-hand account of the historic evening of Sept. 29, 1899. It was written by a founding father, James Romanis, for VFW's Golden Jubilee in 1949. He wrote it as though he were an outside observer.

BY JAMES ROMANIS

"The world will be kind to you for 10 days," Col. Teddy Roosevelt told the famous Rough Riders in a farewell address to his troops on Sept. 4, 1898. "Everything you do will be all right. After that, you will be judged by a stricter code, and if you prove worthless, you will be considered as spoiled by going to war."

BORN IN A TAILOR SHOP

It was just about one year later, on the evening of Sept. 29, when Francis Dubiel, the proprietor of a modest tailoring store, located at 286 Main Street in Columbus, Ohio, pulled down the shades in his front door window to let his customers know that his labors for the day were over. His brow was furrowed with concentration as he stirred the fire in the pot-bellied stove.

Dubiel was expecting company. During the next hour, 14 men had arrived. The meeting was no casual get-together of old cronies. The very silence bespoke the serious matters that brought them into Dubiel's store.

A tall man rose to his feet to break the silence in the little room. The war in Spain had ended officially on April 11, 1899. James Romanis had recently returned with the 17th U.S. Infantry (Regiment) from its campaign in Cuba.

He looked about the group as though mentally calling the roll of other 17th Infantry vets present. There sat George Kelly and Jim Putnam. Nearby were Bert Du Rant, John Malloy and Oscar Brookins. Beyond the stove, Walker Waddington sat on a high stool, while Simon Heiman and Charles Click shared a wooden box, and David Brown, Andrew Grant, John Clark and George Beekman stood leaning against the wall under a small window. Dubiel, the store's proprietor, stood a little apart, leaning against a stack of bolted fabrics.

"Men," Romanis said quietly, "you all know why we are here. We've talked about this among ourselves for several weeks now. Thousands of our comrades are in desperate need. Something's got to be done to help them. We've waited long enough for the government to act, but nothing's happened."

Daily, from the window of the pharmacy where he worked, just outside the gate of Columbus Barracks, Romanis had watched the exodus of discharged veterans. For many of them, their worldly goods consisted of their discharge papers and the paltry few pennies of their final pay. Some of them lived in Columbus and they came to the pharmacy where Romanis worked to buy quinine and other medicines in an effort to cure the recurring attacks of tropical fever, skin disease and stomach disorders. Romanis felt a deep compassion for these "forgotten men" — his comrades who had volunteered and had fought gallantly to win the adulation of a grateful nation, only to come home and find their brave deeds forgotten, their jobs gone, their families suffering from hunger and neglect.

INDIFFERENT PUBLIC

"The public is indifferent," Romanis said, his voice rising with his indignation. "People are too busy making money to think of veterans who can't support their families because they are sick and unable to work. Something's got to be done to help these men."

A murmur and a nodding of heads greeted his statement. "That kind of puts it up to us since no one else seems interested, doesn't it?" suggested Jim Putnam.

"It certainly does," Romanis replied. "And what's more, it's up to us also to see that this country is better prepared if we have to fight another war, or if our sons are called on to be volunteers."

Romanis went on to call for the formation of an organization, "right here and right now." The group of men listened attentively as Romanis continued.

"We want to organize an outfit that will speak for the overseas veteran," Romanis said. "When we speak up for national defense or a fair deal for veterans, the people will know that we speak from experience. We pledge to work together for the benefit of our country, and for all men who are required to serve in our boundaries of the United States in time of war."

As Romanis concluded his remarks, Waddington spoke up: "We've got an organization, now what about a name?"

Several from the group offered suggestions, but none seemed to rightly describe the newborn society. Finally, Du Rant got to his feet and said, "I think I've got it. What about American Veterans of Foreign Service?"

It was voted on with no dissent, and the name became official. Thus, it was under this name that a new veterans group was chartered by the state of Ohio on Oct. 11, 1899.

James Romanis was the first adjutant of the Columbus, Ohio-based American Veterans of Foreign Service and later commander-in-chief. He died Dec. 7, 1954, at age 76.



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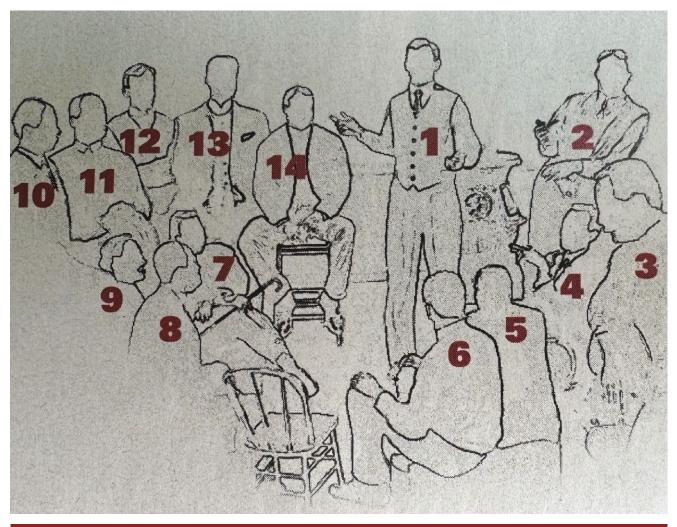
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IDENTIFYING THE FOUNDING FATHERS





Above is the key to identifying the 14 men who attended the first meeting in 1899, as illustrated on pages 28-29.

- 1. James Romanis
- 2. James Putnam
- 3. Francis Dubiel
- 4. John Malloy
- 5. Simon Heiman
- 6. Charles Click
- 7. Oscar Brookins

- 8. Bert Du Rant
- 9. George Kelly
- 10. David Brown
- 11. John Clark
- 12. George Beekman
- 13. Andrew Grant
- 14. Walker Waddington

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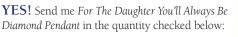
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AMERICAN VETERANS OF FOREIGN SERVICE, COLUMBUS, OHIO







Maj. Will S. White* 1900-01-02



James Romanis⁴ 1902-03-04-05

ARMY OF THE PHILIPPINES, CUBA AND PUERTO RICO, DENVER, CO.



Gen. Francis V. Greene* 1900-01

Capt H.A. Crow*

1907-08



Maj. P.J.H. Farrell* 1908-09

AMERICAN VETERANS OF FOREIGN SERVICE PENNSYLVANIA

PHILIPPINE WAR VETERANS ALTOONA, PA.

H.O. Kelley* G.O. Knoghton* 1901 1902

Capt. Robert S. Hansbury*

1903-04



Gen. Irving Hale* 1901-02-03



1903-04

1909-10





Col. Charles L. Jewett*

Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf* 1904-05



S. Frost* 1905-06

Col. Alfred



AMERICAN VETERANS OF PHILIPPINES AND CHINA WARS, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Capt. Robert S. Hansbury* 1902

AMERICAN VETERANS OF FOREIGN SERVICE OHIO AND PENNSYLVANIA



1905-06

Charles H. Devereaux* 1906-07

> David T. Nevin* 1907-08

J. Alfred Judge* 1908-09-10



Gen. Arthur MacArthur

1906-07

Robert G. Woodside* 1910-11-12-13



Rice W. Means* 1913-14, Colorado



H.O. Kelley*

1904-05

Thomas Crago* 1914-15, Pennsylvania

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



Gus Hartung* 1915-16, Colorado



Albert Rabing* 1916-17, New York



William Ralston* 1917-18, Pennsylvania



F. Warner Karling* 1918-19-20, Missouri

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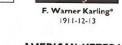
PHILIPPINE WAR VETERANS PITTSBURGH, PA.

G.H. Smith* James La Belle* William A. Wein* 1901 1902 1903







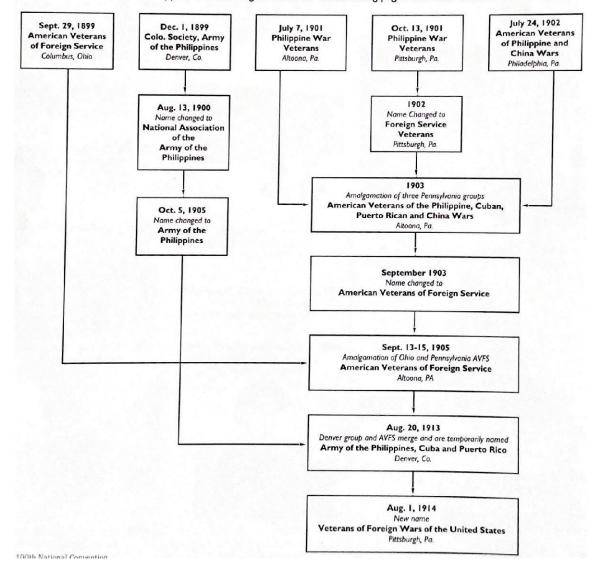




VFW Family Tree

The Veterans of Foreign Wars traces its origins to veterans of Cuba and the Philippines who formed separate groups in Ohio, Colorado and Pennsylvania. All had similar aims and were founded at, or shortly after, the turn of the century. Because of their common purposes, they all eventually united to form the premier veterans organization of America.

The tree below charts the VFW's organizational stages, showing all the parent groups and their paths to the creation of what we know today as the VFW. Leaders of both the predecessor groups and VFW appear in chronological order on the following pages with their terms in office.





AMERICAN VETERANS OF FOREIGN SERVICE

James C. Putnam*	
Maj. Will S. White*	
Maj. Will S. White*	
James Romanis*	
James Romanis*	
James Romanis*	
George Metzger*	
Charles H. Devereaux*	
David T. Nevin*	
J. Alfred Judge*	
J. Alfred Judge*	
Robert G. Woodside*	
Robert G. Woodside*	

ARMY OF THE PHILIPPINES, CUBA AND PUERTO RICO

Gen. Francis V. Greene*	
Gen. Irving Hale*	
Gen. Irving Hale*	
Gen. Charles King*	
Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf*	
Col. Alfred S. Frost*	
Gen. Arthur MacArthur*	
Capt. H.A. Crow*	
Maj. P.J.H. Farrell*	
Col. Charles L. Jewett*	
A.H. Anderson*	
F. Warner Karling*	
F. Warner Karling*	
Robert G. Woodside*	

AMERICAN VETERANS OF FOREIGN SERVICE

(Eastern Branch)

Capt. Robert S. Hansbury*	1903-04
H.O. Kelley*	1904-05

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Rice W. Means,* Colorado 1913-14
Thomas Crago,* Pennsylvania 1914-15
Gus Hartung,* Colorado 1915-16
Albert Rabing,* New York 1916-17
William Ralston,* Pennsylvania 1917-18
F. Warner Karling,* Missouri1918-19-20
Robert G. Woodside,* Pennsylvania
1920-21-22

PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

To honor their service, VFW's past Commanders-in-Chief are listed in chronological order since the inception of the organization.

Tillinghast Huston,* New York	1922-23
Lloyd M. Brett,* Washington, D.C	1923-24
John H. Dunn,* Massachusetts	1924-25
Fred Stover,* Pennsylvania	1925-26
Theodore Stitt,* New York	1926-27
Frank T. Strayer, * Indiana	
Eugene P. Carver,* Massachusetts	1928-29
Hezekiah N. Duff,* Michigan	
Paul C. Wolman,* Maryland	
Darold D. DeCoe,* California	
Robert E. Coontz,* Washington, D.C	
James E. Van Zandt, * Pennsylvania 1933	
Bernard W. Kearney,* New York	
Scott P. Squyres,* Oklahoma	
Eugene I. Van Antwerp,* Michigan	
Otis N. Brown,* North Carolina	
Joseph C. Menedez,* Louisiana	
Max Singer, * Massachusetts	
Robert T. Merrill,* Montana	
Carl J. Schoeninger,* Michigan	
Jean A. Brunner,* New York	
Joseph M. Stack,* Pennsylvania	
Louis E. Starr,* Oregon	
Ray H. Brannaman,* Colorado	
Lyall T. Beggs,* Wisconsin	
Clyde A. Lewis,* New York	
Charles C. Ralls,* Washington	
Frank C. Hilton,* Pennsylvania	
James W. Cothran,* South Carolina	
Wayne E. Richards,* Kansas	
Merton B. Tice,* South Dakota	
Timothy J. Murphy,* Massachusetts	
Cooper T. Holt,* Tennessee	
Richard L. Roudebush,* Indiana	
John W. Mahan,* Montana	
Louis G. Feldmann,* Pennsylvania	1959-60
Ted C. Connell,* Texas	1960-61
Robert E. Hansen,* Minnesota	1961-62
Byron B. Gentry,* California	1962-63
Joseph J. Lombardo,* New York	1963-64
John A. Jenkins,* Alabama	1964-65
Andy Borg,* Wisconsin	1965-66
Leslie M. Fry,* Nevada	1966-67
Joseph A. Scerra,* Massachusetts	1967-68
Richard W. Homan,* West Virginia	1968-69
Raymond A. Gallagher,* South Dakota	1969-70
H.R. Rainwater,* California	1970-71
Joseph L. Vicites,* Pennsylvania	1971-72
Patrick E. Carr,* Louisiana	1972-73
Ray R. Soden,* Illinois	1973-74
John J. Stang,* Kansas	1974-75

Thomas C. Walker,* Connecticut 1975-76	
R.D. "Bulldog" Smith, Georgia 1976-7	
John Wasylik,* Ohio 1977-78	
Eric Sandstrom,* Washington 1978-79	9
Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.,* New Jersey 1979-80	С
T.C. Selman,* Texas (died in office) 1980-82	1
Arthur J. Fellwock,* Indiana1980-81-82	2
James R. Currieo,* Arizona 1982-83	3
Clifford G. Olson Jr.,* Massachusetts 1983-84	4
Billy Ray Cameron,* North Carolina 1984-85	ō
John S. Staum,* Minnesota 1985-86	6
Norman G. Staab,* Kansas 1986-8	7
Earl L. Stock Jr.,* New York 1987-88	8
Larry W. Rivers, Louisiana 1988-89	9
Walter G. Hogan, Wisconsin	C
James L. Kimery,* New Mexico 1990-9:	1
Robert E. Wallace, New Jersey 1991-92	
John M. Carney,* Florida 1992-93	
George R. Cramer, Illinois	
Allen F. Kent,* Arizona	
Paul A. Spera, Massachusetts	
James E. Nier, Texas	
John E. Moon, Ohio	
Thomas A. Pouliot, Montana	
,	
John W. Smart, New Hampshire	
John F. Gwizdak,* Georgia	
James N. Goldsmith,* Michigan	
Raymond C. Sisk,* California	
Edward S. Banas Sr., Connecticut 2003-04	
John Furgess, Tennessee 2004-05	
James R. Mueller, Missouri 2005-06	6
Gary Kurpius, Alaska 2006-07	
George J. Lisicki, New Jersey 2007-08	8
Glen M. Gardner Jr., Texas	9
Thomas J. Tradewell Sr.,* Wisconsin 2009-10	С
Richard L. Eubank, California 2010-12	1
Richard L. De Noyer, Massachusetts 2011-12	2
John E. Hamilton, Florida 2012-13	3
William A. Thien, Indiana 2013-14	4
John W. Stroud, Nevada 2014-15	ō
John A. Biedrzycki Jr.,* Pennsylvania 2015-16	6
Brian Duffy, Kentucky	7
Keith Harman, Ohio 2017-18	8
B.J. Lawrence, New Mexico	9
William "Doc" Schmitz, New York 2019-20	
Hal Roesch II, Virginia	
Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic, Illinois	
Timothy Borland, Arizona	
Duane Sarmiento, New Jersey	

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Reviews

Joe Namath, Superbowl III MVP **MDHearing Aid User**

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Doctor urges seniors to carry medical alert device

Seniors snap up new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills

People don't always do what tems come with monthly bills. their doctor says, but when seasoned veteran emergency room Physicians, a U.S. company went physician, Dr. Philip B. Howren, to work to develop a new, modern, says every senior should have a state-of-the-art medical alert demedical alert device, you better listen up.

from being put in a nursing home," Dr. Howren said. "With a medi- tracts, no deposits and no monthcal alert device, seniors are never ly bills ever. alone. So it keeps them living independently in their own home. That's signed to look like the pagers doctors why seniors and their family members are snapping up a sleek new medical alert device that comes important, not old," Dr. Howren said. with no monthly bills ever," he said.

style help buttons because they cial newspaper promotional givemake them look old. But even aways are slated for seniors in seworse, those medical alert sys- lect areas.

To solve these problems Universal vice. It's called "FastHelp™" and it instantly connects you to free un-"Seniors are just one fall away limited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no con-

"This slick new little device is dewear every day. Seniors love them because it actually makes them look

FastHelp is expected to hit store Many seniors refuse to wear old shelves later this year. But spe-



NO MONTHLY BILLS: "My wife had an old style help button that came with hefty bills every month and she was embarrassed to wear it because it made her look old," said Frank McDonald, Canton, Ohio. "Now, we both have FastHelp[™], the sleek new medical alert device that our grandkids say makes us look 'cool' not old," he said. With FastHelp, seniors never have to worry about being alone and the best part is there are no monthly bills ever.

Seniors born before 1956 get new medical alert device with no monthly bills ever

It's just what seniors have been waiting for; a sleek new medical alert device with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button for a one-time \$149 price tag that's a real steal after today's instant rebate

The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

That's because for seniors born before 1956, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am this morning the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp[™] One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"It's not like old style monitored help buttons that make you talk to a call center and only work when you're at home and come with hefty bills every month. FastHelp comes with state-of-the-art cellular embedded technology. That means it works at home or anywhere, any-



FLYING OUT THE DOOR: Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8235 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

time cell service is available whether you're out watering the garden, driving in a car, at church or even hundreds of miles away on a tour or at a casino. You are never alone. With just a single push of the One-Touch E Button you instantly get connected to free unlimited help nationwide with no monthly bills ever," said Jack Lawrence, Executive Director of Product Development for U.S. based Universal Physicians.

"We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design and most of all, the instant rebate that practically pays for it and no monthly bills ever," Lawrence said.

FastHelp is the sleek new medical alert device with the best of combinations: a quality, high-tech engineered device that's also an extremely great value because there are no monthly bills ever.

Better still, it comes with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever - which makes FastHelp a great choice for seniors, students and professionals because it connects to one of the largest nationwide networks everywhere cell service is available for free.

And here's the best part. All those who already have an old style monitored medical alert button can immediately eliminate those monthly bills, which is why Universal Physicians is widely advertising this announcement nationwide.

"So if you've ever felt a medical alert device was too complicated or expensive, you'll want to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device with no monthly bills," said Lawrence.

The medical alert device slugfest was dominated by two main combatants who both offer old style monitored help buttons that come with a hefty bill every month. But now Universal Physicians, the U.S. based heavyweight, just delivered a knockout blow sending the top rated contenders to the mat with the unveiling of FastHelp. It's the sleek new cellular embedded medical alert device that cuts out the middleman by instantly connecting you directly to highly trained 911 operators all across the U.S. There's absolutely nothing to hook-up or install. You don't need a land line and you don't need a cell phone. Everything is done for you.

"FastHelp is a state of the art medical alert device designed to make you look important, not old. Old style

HOW TO GET IT:

monitored help buttons you wear around your neck, or require expensive base station equipment or a landline are the equivalent of a horse and buggy," Lawrence says. "It's just outdated."

Millions of seniors fall every year and spend hours lying on the floor helpless and all alone with no help.

But seniors who fall and get immediate help are much more likely to avoid getting sent to a nursing home and get to STAY living in their own home independently.

Yet millions of seniors are still risking their safety by not having a medical alert device. That's because seniors just can't afford to pay the monthly bills that come with old style medical alert devices.

That's why seniors born before 1956 are rushing to

cash in the whopping \$150 instant rebate before the 21 day deadline ends.

So there's no need to wait for FastHelp to hit store shelves later this year because seniors born before 1956 can get it now just by using the \$150 instant rebate coupon printed in today's newspaper before the 21 day deadline ends. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered.

▶ IF BORN BEFORE 1956: Use the rebate coupon below and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8235

▶ **IF BORN AFTER 1956:** You cannot use the rebate coupon below and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-330-9423 DEPT. HELP8235

THE BOTTOM LINE: You don't need to shop around. We've done all the leg work, this deal is too good to pass up. FastHelp with the instant rebate is a real steal at just \$149 and shipping and there are no monthly bills ever.

PROS: It's the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts or deposits. It connects you to the vast available network of cellular towers for free and saves seniors a ton of money because there are no monthly bills ever making this deal irresistible. Plus it's the only medical alert device that makes seniors look important, not old.

CONS: Consumers can't get FastHelp in stores until later this year. That's why it's so important for seniors born before 1956 to call the National Rebate Center Hotline within the next 21 days. For those who miss that deadline, the sleek little medical alert device will set you back over \$300 bucks.

no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

the 21 day rebate deadline ends.

FastHelp, the new medical alert device that instantly connects you to free un-

limited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts,

USE THIS COUPON: To get \$150 off FastHelp you must be born before 1956 and call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8235 before

EXPIRES

REBATE COUPON

\$299.00 FastHelp^{**} One-touch help. Anytime. Anywhere. One-touch help With no monthly bills ever. Anytime. Anywhere. FastHe P7366 OF23502R-1 FastHelp' 21 Days from Today's Publication Date After Coupon Expires: The FastHelp is \$299.00 plus shipping & handling One-touch help. Anytime. Anywhere. With no monthly bills ever.



DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE MAKE 911 CALLS WHEN CEL CCTION BEFORE USE, SEE O NED ON, DR. HOWREN IS A (DN. OH RESIDENTS ADD 6.5°

H E L P 8 2 3 5



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Est. 1899

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Ladies'

Men's

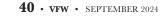
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GRAY CAP Six-panel, medium profile with embroidered logo in black. 100% polyester with perforated sides and back. Hook-and-loop closure. Imported; decorated in the USA. 7339 \$23.95

From left, the family of two missing sons from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor — Charles Sr. (father), Emmett (brother), and Christina Skiles (mother) — stand at the bottom of the USS Braxton's gangplank to welcome sailors and soldiers home from the Pacific.

We Deserve to Have Our Family Home

A Missouri woman said she is holding hope that the remains of relatives who died in World War II will be returned home to the family. The federal agency in charge of a full accounting of missing troops is asking family members of MIAs to donate DNA.

BY DAVE SPIVA

Ramilies across the country are hopeful that one day the remains of their loved ones who went missing in war will be returned home. This includes the family of three sailors who died in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Karen Grantham, of Richmond, Mo., attended a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) family update on March 23 in Kansas City, Mo. Three of Grantham's family members still are missing more than 80 years after their deaths.

Grantham said two of her uncles, Charles and Eugene Skiles, died while aboard the USS Arizona (BB-39). Garold Skiles, Grantham's cousin, also died in the attack while aboard the USS Oklahoma (BB-37).

"Something that my grandma wanted was for her boys to come home," Grantham said. "I hope we can get them home one day."

The remains of Charles Jr. and Eugene Skiles have not been identified. Grantham said that while there is a headstone for her cousin, Garold Skiles, at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, it is uncertain where his remains are located. Grantham said she attended the DPAA family update in Kansas City to learn of any details on her missing family members. More than 400 people attended.

"I don't want to belittle the work DPAA does, but it has been more than 80 years since their deaths," Grantham said. "We deserve to have our family home or to at least know where they are."

VFW FUNDS FAMILY TRIP

Grantham's grandmother wrote a letter to then-President Harry S. Truman a few years after the deaths of her sons. She expressed her family's desire to witness the arrival of a homecoming ship from the Pacific.

"The experience, they indicated, would help compensate, in a small measure, for the loss of their two sons," according to the April 1946 issue of *Foreign Service*, the predecessor of *VFW* magazine.

According to *Foreign Service*, the Navy was not able to transport the Skiles family, so VFW National Headquarters agreed to pay for the Gold Star family's transportation from Kansas City to California. The couple, along with Grantham's father, who was 15 years old at the time, arrived in Los Angeles in February 1946 at the request of Truman to witness the arrival of the USS *Braxton (APA-138)*.

Accounting for all missing war veterans has been a VFW priority goal since 1929 when the Soviet Union allowed a VFW Department of Defense DNA Operations Director for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner Service Timothy McMahon gives a brief during a March 23 Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Family Member Update in Kansas City, Mo. DPAA personnel continuously work toward locating, recovering and identifying the remains of U.S. service members who are still missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and other conflicts.

recovery party to search for war dead in the Archangel area of Russia. There, U.S. and allied troops had fought Bolshevik troops shortly after World War I.

'WE NEED DNA'

Since 1995, DPAA has served as a vital connection for families of missing U.S. troops, ensuring regular updates to facilitate communication. DPAA continues to organize gatherings to inform families about the government's global mission to locate missing troop remains. During these events, families exchange insights and updates with each other. DoD officials guide these discussions by briefing families on the mission's objectives and providing updates on specific cases.

DPAA-affiliated officials, experts and scientists, including Department of Defense DNA Operations Director for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner Service Timothy McMahon, attended the Kansas City family update meeting.

According to DPAA, DNA can be used to support the anthropological and archaeological results from the missing service member's recovered skeletal remains, along with any associated circumstantial evidence to identify an individual."

McMahon explained to attendees that it is vital that the DPAA have DNA samples from families to help identify remains of U.S. troops found around the world.

"When we deal with the Vietnam, Korean and Cold wars, we don't have a DNA reference on hand as we do with today's service members," McMahon said. "So, we need DNA from a family member that we can use as a reference, whether it is through the mother for the mitochondrial DNA, the father for the Y-chromosome DNA or a sample from a sibling."

McMahon added that even if remains have not been found yet, it is vital to have DNA references to identify troops missing in action.

"If we have remains of a service member that we cannot identify, it may just sit as an unknown sample," McMahon said. "This is why we want to collect family samples ahead of time."

Learn more about DPAA's mission at https://www.dpaa.mil.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Garold Skiles, Charles Skiles Jr., Eugene Skiles.

RECOVERY MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

The following, according to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, is the number of troops missing from each conflict:

Vietnam War: 1,577 Korean War: 7,483 World War II: 72,114 Cold War: 126 SOURCE: Data provided by DPAA on March 20, 2024

SOURCE. Data provided by DPAA on March 20, 2024

UPCOMING DPAA FAMILY MEETINGS

DPAA officials ask those interested in attending a family meeting to register 23 days before an event. Here are some upcoming events that DPAA is hosting throughout the country: Nov. 2 – Portland, Maine Feb. 22, 2025 – Sacramento, Calif. March 22, 2025 – New Orleans, La. May 3, 2025 – Tacoma, Wash. Learn more about registering for a DPAA family event at *https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/ dpaaFamilyEvents.*



VFW REMEMBERS AMERICA'S POW/MIAS

A day in September is set aside to pay proper tribute to those men and women who were held prisoner in times of war and those whose remains are yet to be repatriated.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

▶ ince 1998, the third Saturday of each September is set aside to commemorate National POW/MIA Recognition Day. It is a day to honor those who were prisoners of war as well as those still listed as missing in action.

It also is one of six national observances when the POW/MIA flag can be flown. The other five observances are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

VFW Posts are known to recognize this day of reverence with solemn ceremonies and recognition.

In DeSoto, Mo., VFW Post 1831 has a 30-foot-by-50-foot POW/MIA flag, which serves as the backdrop to its annual POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony.

According to Quincy Myrick, senior vice commander for the Department of Missouri and a member of VFW Post 1831, the flag is hoisted between two telephone poles outfitted with pullies.

"It is a team effort to get it up," Myrick said. "We also have flown it in honor of MIAs that have been repatriated. It was flown in nearby Festus when the Traveling Wall was brought in."

Myrick added that the Post had eight members that were POWs in World War II, and each of them are remembered every year.

VFW Post 1831 will host its remembrance event on Sept. 21.

REMEMBERING ON 'HOLLOWED GROUND'

VFW Post 2485 in Angeles City, Philippines, partnered with the American Battle Monuments Commission last September to mark



FAR LEFT: Members of VFW Post 2485 in Angeles City, Philippines, gather following its National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony last September. The program was held at the Cabanatuan American Memorial, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, and included remarks by former prisoner of war John (Spike) Nasmyth.

LEFT: A 30-foot-by-50-foot POW/MIA flag serves as the backdrop to an annual ceremony hosted by VFW Post 1831 in DeSoto, Mo., to commemorate National POW/MIA Recognition Day. The Post membership included eight prisoners of war from World War II who are remembered each September.

BELOW: Then-Air Force 1st Lt. John (Spike) Nasmyth, forefront, in January 1973 prepares to be released from the Hanoi Hilton in North Vietnam, where he was a prisoner of war for over 6 years. Nasmyth spoke during a National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony last September in the Philippines. The event was a joint effort of VFW Post 2485 in Angeles City and the American Battle Monuments Commission.

POW/MIA Recognitions Day at Cabanatuan American Memorial, Nueva Ecija, Philippines.

According to then-VFW Post 2485 Commander James Collins, four out of five Department of the Pacific District 7 Posts were represented at the event. More than 200 people attended, including Scout troops.

A local motorcycle club escorted two buses from the Angeles City VFW Post two hours to the memorial.

The ceremony, which included a picnic hosted by Post 2485, took place on the site of a World War II POW camp.

"This is hallowed ground where many American troops gave their last full measure of devotion to our country and flag," Collins said.

Among the many notable speakers at the event was retired Air Force Maj. John (Spike) Nasmyth. He was held for $6\frac{1}{2}$ years — 1966-1973 — in Hanoi, North Vietnam.



Nasmyth was with 1st Lt. Raymond P. Salzarulo Jr., on Phantom flight when the pair was shot down over North Vietnam on Sept. 4, 1966. They were over Bac Thai Province, about 10 miles southwest of Thai Nguyen.

Held at the notorious Hanoi Hilton, Nasmyth was released in February 1973 in Operation Homecoming. The North Vietnamese deny knowing how Salzarulo was killed. His remains were returned to the U.S. on Sept. 13, 1990. Collins said having the Scouts in attendance at last year's POW/MIA event was important because the VFW aims to teach the youth about their sacrifices made throughout history.

"This also is about making sure that when the children of today hear the history lessons and traditions of our great country, they know that it would have not been possible without veterans," Collins concluded.

EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org

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New Blood Flow Breakthrough Helps Men Enjoy Strong, Long-Lasting Intimacy – At Any Age

Men across America are raving about a newly enhanced performance supplement that helps achieve healthy blood flow on demand

After age 40, it's common knowledge that performance begins to decline in many men. However, a new, performance empowering pill is showing that any relatively healthy man can now enjoy long-lasting, and frequent intimacy – at any age.

This doctor-designed formula, created by leading anti-aging expert Dr. Al Sears, has already helped men overcome low and sinking libido -- and has recently undergone a potencyenhancing update – with remarkable new results.

When the first pill -- **Primal Max Black** -- was first released, it quickly became a top-selling men's performance helper, promoting intimacy across America.

It worked by supporting healthy testosterone levels. However, Dr. Sears soon realized that this isn't the only challenge men face with performance. That's when he turned his attention to blood flow.

And this became **Primal Max Red**.

THIS PROVEN SOLUTION IS MORE MECHANICAL THAN HORMONAL

Truth is, once blood flow slows down for men, no matter how exciting it is, it won't be enough without the necessary amount...

So enjoying intimacy without healthy blood flow becomes difficult for most men.

Luckily, a Nobel prizewinning scientist discovered the simple answer to help support performance strength and confidence -- by boosting vital blood flow -and enhancing this essential

performance function.

Using this landmark Nobel Prize as its basis, **Primal Max Red** enhanced healthy blood flow for untold millions of men around the world with the use of strong nitric oxide boosters.

While **Primal Max Black** helped maintain optimal testosterone, **Primal Max Red** tackles a lesser-known challenge.

Director, Al Sears MD, who has authored over 500 scientific papers and has appeared on more than 50 media outlets including ABC News, CNN, ESPN, Discovery, Lifetime, and many more say, "Less than optimal blood flow can be part of a huge problem that affects a lot of men. And it needed to be addressed once and for all, so men would not dwell on it. Then, once we optimized it and had a great deal of success, we set out to see if we could do even better."

The former formula had excellent results. However, new research showed that for even faster, anytime, anywhere results, increasing the dose of a key compound was needed.

So, one of the three nitric oxide boosters in the new **Primal Max Red**, L-Citrulline, was clinically boosted to 9000 mg, and the results were astounding. Which is no surprise considering that 5000 mg is considered a "normal amount" -- giving the new version nearly doubled the blood flow boosting power.

Men who had previously been unsure about their power and stamina were overjoyed to be back to their old selves and to get and maintain a healthy bloodflow



A new discovery that increases nitric oxide availability was recently proven to boost blood flow 275% - resulting in improved performance.

when they needed it.

BETTER BLOOD FLOW, STRONGER RESULTS

The best way to promote healthy blood flow throughout the body is with the use of **Primal Max Red**. By using it, when exciting signals leave the brain, blood flows much faster like it used to.

This critical action is how men across the country are enjoying full and satisfying performance at any age. No need to bother with testosterone-boosting shots, blue pills, or shady capsules that have no effect.

Primal Max Red can effectively promote healthy blood flow that most men can use for maximum intimacy. This is leading to more greater capacity and satisfaction, coupled with long-lasting performance.

"There was a time when men had little control when it came to boosting their blood flow," Dr. Sears said. "But science has come a long way in recent years. And now, with the creation of nitric oxide-boosting **Primal Max Red**, men can perform better than ever, and enjoy intimacy at any age."

Now for men across America, it's much easier to stay at their performance peak as they get older.

HOW TO GET PRIMAL MAX RED (AND FREE PRIMAL MAX BLACK):

To secure free bottles of Primal Max Black and get the hot, new Primal Max Red formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at 1-800-827-9008 TODAY. "It's not available in retail stores yet," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer." Dr. Sears feels so strongly about Primal Max, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back.

Call NOW at **1-800-827-9008** to secure your supply of **Primal Max Red** and free bottles of **Primal Max Black**. Use Promo Code **VETPMAX824** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!



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REVISITING A VFW MEMBER'S BRUSH WITH 'THE GREATEST'

Two years after sharing his little-known time in the boxing ring against one of the sport's most iconic figures with *VFW* magazine, Henry Hooper's now famous story has earned him an Emmy Award as well as a Presidential Lifetime Achievement nomination.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

hen Henry Hooper II first sat down with *VFW* magazine to speak about his brief boxing career in 2022, he had no idea it would lead, in a couple of years, to an Emmy Award and later a Presidential Lifetime Achievement nomination.

An acting member of VFW's National Council of



Administration at the time, Hooper had shared this little-known period of his life with *VFW* magazine in the article "A VFW Member's Brush With 'The Greatest" in the February 2022 issue.

Steeped in nostalgia, the story provides a glimpse into Hooper's amateur boxing career as a wiry 20-year-old Marine, which had been, until then, a topic of curiosity for many of the VFW members he served with on VFW's National Council of Administration.

"So many of my comrades always ask about my boxing background, but I really never talk about my fights," said Hooper, a life member of VFW Post 11333 in Cordova, Tenn. "I doubt if more than a handful of councilmen know that little bit of my history."

As if dug up and curated from some vestige of time, Hooper's candid telling of his days as one of the top young boxing amateurs in the country, with a winning record across several weight classes, culminated in a shot to represent his country in the 1960 Summer Olympics.

Hooper traveled to San Francisco for the U.S. boxing team's Olympic qualifying trials at the Cow Palace that May, where he was one boxing match victory away from earning his spot on Team USA.

His opponent: A young light heavyweight Kentuckian named Cassius Clay.

Hooper, now 85 years old, holds no qualms about the result of that bout, which would catapult Clay, who later became Muhammad Ali, into one of the world's most iconic and polarizing figures, often dubbed "The Greatest" in the sport of boxing. Hooper was defeated by technical knockout in the third round.

VFW life member Henry Hooper, center, holds an Emmy Award presented to the Lt. Col. Luke Weathers Jr. VA Medical Center's Public Affairs Office in Memphis, Tenn., for its video essay on Hooper's story during the 2023 Nashville/Midsouth Emmy Awards on Feb. 17 in Nashville, Tenn.



The VFW life member would instead go on to serve in the Marine Corps before enlisting in the Army as a Green Beret, deploying to Vietnam with the 5th Special Forces Group as a combat medic from June 1963-1964.

With more than 11 years in the military, and several more as a Secret Service agent to four U.S. Presidents, Hooper's own exploits outside of the ring have since enveloped that part of his story.

But *this* was the story that sat on Hooper's lap, opened to page 30 of *VFW* magazine's February 2022 issue, as he wait-

ed for his doctor's appointment at the Lt. Col. Luke Weathers Jr. VA Medical Center in Memphis, Tenn.

While reading the magazine, Hooper caught the attention of Willie Logan, a former Memphis VA public affairs officer, as she walked by. Hooper, who serves in the advisory board at the hospital, answered her questions and eventually let her borrow the magazine.

"When I came out of my appoint-

ment, Mrs. Logan got to talking to me about letting them do a story on this for Black History Month," Hooper recalled. "I was reluctant at first, but she was a longtime friend, so I agreed to it in the end."

Orchestrated by Logan and filmed by Visual Information Specialist Romeo Lucchesi of the Public Affairs Office at the VA in Memphis, the short documentary was later submitted for the 2023 Nashville/Midsouth Emmy Awards video essay category, and won.

"It was exciting, but sort of a surprise," Hooper said of winning the Emmy for the film, titled *The Green Beret Who Fought Muhammad Ali*. "And it all came to fruition after people started reading the article you wrote in *VFW* magazine. It would not have been known if not for that initial article from VFW."

The popularity of the short, 6-minute video essay also has, since winning an Emmy, led to other avenues of recognition, including an Aster Award, which honors the best in healthcare advertising.

And most recently, to Hooper's newfound surprise, it found its way to the Ali estate, which nominated him for a Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award last May.

"Initially, I was told by the Auxiliary President of my Post

"And it all came to fruition after people started reading the article you wrote in *VFW* magazine."

– Henry Hooper

[11333]," Hooper said. "It appears that it was introduced to the Ali family, who then made the recommendation for me to receive this award."

Hooper added that, with all the current travel he has been conducting since officially retiring from his health insurance business, the news was both a pleasant surprise and humbling. While he now awaits word about the ceremony at the White House, he plans to continue to work on authoring two books that have been in the works for some time.

The first is his memoir, and the second is another little-known part of his story, much like his brief boxing career, that details his 48 years alongside his late wife.

EMAIL irodriguez@vfw.org

Understanding the Impact of Inflation on Medicare

Inflation has slowed significantly since June 2022, when inflation hit a 40-year high. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual inflation rate is down from 8 percent in 2022, with 3 percent expected in 2024.

Though inflation is trending down, consumers and businesses may still be feeling the effects of increased prices.

BEAT INFLATION WITH THESE TIPS

While inflation may not directly cause health insurance costs to increase, there are many underlying factors that have an impact, including supply chain disruptions, labor shortages and rising medical costs.

Try these tips to save money on your health insurance:

- Stay on top of routine appointments and procedures

 Preventative health measures can catch issues earlier when they may be more easily treated, helping reduce more serious and costly procedures.
- Plan for urgent and emergency care visits Know which scenarios require a visit to the emergency room and which can be sufficed with a trip to urgent care.
- Review your coverage Do not automatically renew the same plan. Consider changes in your health and finances over the past year. The right coverage can help protect you from paying rising medical costs out-of-pocket.

YOUR MEDICARE OPTIONS

Medicare plays a key role in providing health and financial security to more than 67 million Americans, covering health services such as hospital stays, physician services and prescription drugs. There are multiple Medicare options from which to choose. Here is a look at each option.

MEDICARE PART A

Medicare Part A is hospital insurance that helps cover inpatient care in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, hospice and home health care.

Most people 65 and over are entitled to Medicare Part A if they or their spouse are eligible for Social Security payments and do not have to pay a premium for Part A if they paid payroll taxes for 10 or more years.

MEDICARE PART B

Medicare Part B is medical insurance that helps cover:

- Services from doctors and other health care providers
- Outpatient care
- Home health care
- Medical equipment such as wheelchairs and walkers
- Preventive screenings and vaccines

Many Part B benefits are subject to a deductible and coinsurance of 20 percent.

MEDICARE PART C OR MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

Participants must be enrolled in the standard Medicare Parts A and B plans to enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan. Beneficiaries receive their Part A or Part B coverage plus prescription drug coverage.

Many Medicare Advantage plans also provide extra coverage, such as vision, dental, hearing and health and wellness programs.

MEDICARE PART D

Medicare Part D is a prescription drug benefit that helps make prescription drug and prescription drug insurance premium costs more affordable for Medicare recipients. To receive Part D coverage, you must choose and enroll in a plan offered through insurance or other private companies.

MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTAL

Medicare Supplement Insurance also is known as Medigap and supplements your Medicare plan, helping cover gaps in standard coverage. Medigap helps pay for co-payments, co-insurance, deductibles and more.

For more information about these plans, call the VFW Member Benefits Department at *1-800-821-2606*.



U.S. zip codes turn up silver for residents Sealed Vault Bags full of State Silver Bars are actually being handed over to today's

readers who find their state listed in today's publication and call before the Twenty-One day order deadline ends to claim the bags full of pure silver bars

Operators at the National Silver Hotline are struggling to keep up with all the calls.

That's because Silver Vault Bags loaded with pure .999 State Silver Bars are now being handed over to everyone who beats the order deadline.

"That's why today's readers will be hoarding all the silver bars they can get their hands on before the deadline ends. This comes as no surprise after the standard State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury was dropped for everyone who gets the Silver Vault Bags making them a real steal," said Mary Ellen Withrow, the emeritus 40th Treasurer of the United States of America.

The State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury is just \$390 for each State Silver Vault Bag which is just \$39 for each pristine Silver half ounce bar as long as they call the National Silver Hotline at 1-888-459-4709 before the deadline ends.

Phone lines open at precisely 8:30 A.M. Be sure to mention promo code SMB194 when claiming these state silver bars. "As executive advisor to the private Lincoln Treasury, I get paid to deliver breaking news. And here's the best part. This is great news for U.S. residents because the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury is a real steal," said Withrow.

This morning phone lines are expected to be flooded by U.S. residents looking to cash in on the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury to date. That's why U.S. residents who find their zip code on the distribution list today are being urged to call.

Since this special advertising announcement can't stop anyone from buying up all the new 2024 Edition U.S. State Silver Bars they can get their hands on, the Lincoln Treasury has not set a limit of how many Jumbo Silver Ballistic Bags residents can get. Each Vault Bag contains 10 individual, capsulized silver bars with the selected style. Everyone who gets these will be glad they did.

"Residents who want to cash in on the reduced State Minimum set by the private Lincoln Treasury better hurry. We're bracing for all the calls and doing the best we can, but with just hours left before the deadline ends, residents who find the first 2 digits of their zip code listed in today's publication need to call the National Silver Hotline," Withrow said.



READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION: If you find your zip code on the distribution list printed in today's publication (below) then immediately call: **1-888-459-4709 PROMO CODE: SMB194.** You can also claim your State Silver Bars online at: **LincoInTreasury.com/State** and enter promo code SMB194 at checkout. Or if you prefer, mail your remittance of \$390 for each sealed vault bag to: **LincoIn Treasury, PROMO CODE SMB194, PO Box 9971, Canton, Ohio 44711**

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"If you want to know where I am, look to the front, that's where I'll be."

VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt



Scan the QR code above for VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt's complete 2024-2025 membership program.

'Take Up the Vision of Courage'

VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt's membership plan offers numerous recruiting incentives. He encourages members at all levels to recruit, mentor and retain.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

By now, VFW members should be fully immersed in *Operation: ALL IN*, which commenced on Aug. 1, under the leadership of VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt.

Operation: ALL IN is the Chief's membership plan for his year at the helm of VFW. Under his theme "Follow Me," Lipphardt is calling on all VFW members, including Post, District, Department and national leaders, to work on the following:

- Achieve 102 percent in membership.
- Recruit and mentor at least one new member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new VFW Posts and/or revitalize existing VFW Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.

The Chief's plan includes three pillars of membership: recruiting, mentorship and retention.

- Recruiting is vital to bring in new members and recover lapsed members.
- Mentorship is the key to engaging new members and keeping them active and interested. Training the leaders of the future also is included in mentorship.
- Retention means keeping members currently on the roster. To accomplish this, welcome eligible veterans of all generations, backgrounds and walks of life.

'YOUR WORD IS YOUR BOND'

Numerous awards are administered by the VFW Membership Department at National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo. One such award is the "Operation: All In" award. This will be awarded to the top two Post commanders and top two District commanders in each division who achieve 102 percent membership by June 30, 2025. Recipients will be awarded a five-night hotel accommodation at next year's VFW National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

Post and District commanders going past the 102 percent membership mark by June 30 will be entered into the 105 percent "Above and Beyond" drawing. Twenty Post commanders and 12 District commanders will receive a \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.

VFW National Headquarters offers multiple membership resources to help in recruiting efforts. Training guides, videos and webinars are available in the Training & Support section at https:// www.vfw.org

Also available on the website are promotional tools such as radio spots, sample advertisements, public service announcements and media kits.

The VFW Membership Department can be contacted directly at *1-888-JOIN-VFW* as well as the VFW Member Service Center at *1-833-VFW-VETS*.

Lipphardt's membership plan calls for the Team Tribe 24-25 commanders to focus on courage.

"Take up the vision of courage and never, ever compromise your integrity," the Chief states in his plan. "Your word is your bond. If you want to know where I am, look to the front, that's where I'll be. Follow me."

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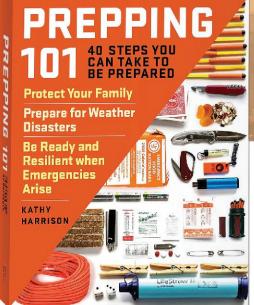
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- Water Storage and Purification: The proper way to create and store a clean water supply. *Page 18*



- Food Storage: How to create a well-rounded, long-lasting food supply without stockpiling canned foods. *Page 32*
- Building a Proper First Aid Kit: What to stock up on for any medical emergency. *Page 40*
- Getting Prepared on a Budget: How to bargain shop for all the needed essentials. *Page 78*
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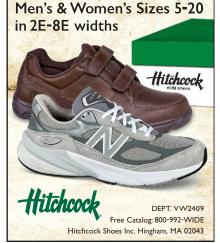


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- Marine Corps Sqdn., VMFA: Patti Kaas (717) 422-6796; vmfa115reunion@gmail.com or https://115marinereunion.com

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Army

B Co., 2nd ID, 1/5th (M) Inf., August 27, 1990-November 27, 1991 – Seeking anyone who served with me under Captain

Fox, Company Commander, who had a dog, to substantiate a claim. Jose A. Huizar (714) 785-2281; jahuizar82@gmail.com

Navy

HS-9, CVW-8, USS Nimitz CVN-68, September 1979-August 1982 – Seeking A. Collazo, J. Murphy, R. Miller or anyone else who served with me to substantiate a claim of concussion head injury, skeletal damage and hearing loss resulting from the EA-68 Prowler crash, fire, weapons detonations damage control efforts on the flight deck on May 26, 1981. David Bryan Robertson #489246, 1412 Plunkett Rd, PO Box 750, Unadilla, GA 31091

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