

Commander's Message



State Commander Harold "Butch" Schupska



Greetings Comrades and Auxiliary

Here we are at the end of another great year; still dealing with COVID, but not as bad as last year. The only thing COVID gave us was a new way to hold meetings, by Zoom, to conduct our VFW business.

I traveled the state this year, most of the time with the Auxiliary President Carol Vangi. It was a pleasure being with her. We talked about everything, from where we would be next year, to how our families were doing.

On January 21 I had rotator cuff surgery on my left shoulder, so I had to be driven around to visit all of the Post and District meetings. On February 2, Doug Hoffman took me to Richmond for the Charitable Gaming meeting. After we arrived, he parked the car, got out, closed the door, got his jacket from the back seat, and closed the door again. He started to walk to meet Ed Mann and the others, leaving me in the car, buckled in, knowing that I couldn't unbuckle myself. This happened to me a couple more times with my wife and President Vangi.

I want to thank the headquarters staff for all the hard work they do, and for keeping me straight on everything I needed to do on a daily basis.

Now to the best recruiting team in the world, it shows why Virginia has made 100% for the last six years. You gave up weekends your weekends to help the department to achieve its goal of 100% for all Posts and Districts.

This year's State Fair showed why the Department is where it is today. Records were broken every day with a grand total of 140 new, reinstated or transferred members from other states. Our team of recruiters has never let us down and I continue to be impressed with their motivation and professionalism.

Now to the best Auxiliary President that a Department Commander could ever ask for, President Carol Vangi. You and your line officers are top notch. Whenever I went to a District meeting with you or without you, the Auxiliary members treated me with respect and open arms during their meetings. With our year coming to an end, I will always be there for the Auxiliary, as we are family. Congratulations to President Vangi and the Auxiliary for making 100% in membership.

As I exit my position as your State Commander, I would say this has been an excellent year for all. We have had our ups and downs, but we came together and made it work in the end. I could never be prouder of each and every one of you.

My phone is never off to incoming officers for the Department and the Auxiliary. Just remember; full steam ahead for veterans.

Butch Schupska
State Commander



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The official publication of the Virginia VFW published by the
Department of Virginia, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US

Please visit our website at

www.vfwva.org

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From the Editor's desk



Welcome to spring time, and a new year with the Virginia Veteran. Please keep the state of Virginia VFW informed of all your accomplishments, by submitting your articles and pictures to me, for the Virginia Veterans Newspaper.

Randy Coker

Crew VFW Recognizes Young Patriots

Gold Star Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 recognized the winners of its annual Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy Scholarships at Kenston Forest with certificates and scholarship checks. The three Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts in Nottoway divide the schools with Crewe and Blackstone Posts covering Kenston Forest School and Nottoway Post 5313 covering Nottoway High School. The winners have advanced to District competition. If any win the District, they will be forwarded to State and possibly National competition.



Photo by Patricia Mahaney, Kenston Forest Director of Communications

(Pictured from left to right: Post Commander Greg Eanes, Patriot's Pen Third Place winner Eli Daniel (7th grade), Patriot's Pen Second Place winner Conner Parker (6th grade) Patriot's Pen First Place winner Jacob Seamans (6th grade) and Voice of Democracy winner Sadie Henshaw (10th grade). Standing behind the students is Kenston Forest Principal Lori Bacon, Head of School.

Virginia Veteran is published tri-annually by the Department of Virginia, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US and is available in electronic format on the Department website:

www.vfwva.org.

Articles may be submitted by email to:

news@vfwva.org

We reserve the right to edit all submitted articles for timeliness, clarity and syntax.

Note: Deadline for the next newspaper is:

July 15th, 2022

Christmas Cards for Veterans from Crewe Post



VFW Post 7819 Photo

Jase and Avery Reed of Crewe show VFW Post 7819's Christmas card for 2021 depicting American soldiers at the Valley Forge Encampment with the message: 'Merry Christmas from Gold Star Memorial Post 7819' and 'Lest We Forget'. A very limited number were available to the public to send to area veterans or active-duty sons and daughters. Interested persons could pick one up on

Friday, December 17th at the VFW table at Crewe Station during Operation VALLEY FORGE which lasted until George Washington's birthday on February 22nd, 2022. The boys are the sons of Crewe Town Councilman, Marine GWOT veterans and VFW Post 7819 Life members Aaron and Amanda Eanes Reed. They are also the great-grandchildren of Jane and former Burkeville Mayor Jim R. Eanes who host a Blue Star Banner with no less than six stars.

VFW Showing the Flag Crewe's Post Veteran, Mark Tuck



Photo by Greg Eanes

Comrade Mark Tuck, a 91year-old Korean War veteran, helped Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 show the flag during Crewe's annual Christmas parade. In addition to being a Life Member of VFW Post 7819 Mr. Tuck is a long-time member of the Crewe Kiwanis Club and the Crewe Baptist Church where he likely holds the record for Sunday School attendance; more than 42 years without missing a Sunday.

Post 10574 donates \$5000 to Post 12202 Building Fund

During the SGT Nicholas C. Mason VFW Post 12202 holiday party that was held on Tuesday 14 Dec, 2021, William I. Cooper VFW Post 10574 Commander Paul Nailor presented SGT Nicholas C. Mason Memorial VFW Post 12202 Commander Alex McKenna with a check for \$5000 for our building fund!

Post 12202 is a new Post that was instituted on May, 1 2021 and is currently raising funds for a new Post home. This very generous gift from Post 10574 will definitely help us in achieving our goal of getting a Post home sooner rather than later!



Pictured above, Post 12202 Commander Alex McKenna and Post 10574 Commander Paul Nailor

VFW Holiday Tradition Continues

Post 3150 Steps up to assist others in need

Article and Photos by C. D. "Doc" Crouch

Like numerous other VFW Posts throughout the world, John Lyon VFW Post 3150 in Arlington, Virginia stepped up to assist others in need of assistance during the past holiday season by providing food baskets and holiday gifts to children. Inasmuch as Arlington is located in a high-cost area, that outreach has been geared toward the families of active duty service members from the local region. This is a program that has been continuous for at least fifty years that we can verify and actually dates back to 1935 according to Post Adjutant and Historian J. Gary Wagner.

The Post and Auxiliary started planning for the events during

September with planning on the part of Post Commander Nancy Springer and Auxiliary President Cathy Graham. They coordinated their efforts with Ms. Carla Moss, Joint Base Fort Myer-Henderson Hall Volunteer Events Coordinator, to ensure that those most in need of assistance were able to receive it.

The first part of the effort worked toward a "traditional" Thanksgiving meal of Turkey (donated by Trader Joe's) together with all the trimmings: Stuffing, potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans, corn, dinner rolls, pumpkin and apple pie. Additionally, the food baskets included a gallon of milk and enough appropriate food for breakfasts and lunches. With the transportation provided by House Committee Chair Fritz Gottschalk and the aid of eleven other volunteers, they were able to shop for, package and deliver the baskets in plenty of time.



Thanksgiving Basket Shopping:

(L-R) IS1 Maurice McCombs, LTJG J. L. Benton, IS2 Matt Gruzzo, IS2 Caelyn Charlton, AET3 Jouhan Rivera and Cathy Graham



Christmas Basket Shopping:

(L-R) IS1 Chris Bertini, LTJG J. L. Benton, ISC P. E. Kirby, MCPO J. Cabello, Cathy Graham and kneeling Martha Cabello



Thanksgiving Basket Delivery:

(L-R) J. Gary Wagner, Fritz Gottschalk, Cathy Graham, Nancy Springer, IS1 Maurice McCombs, IS2 Caelyn Charlton, AET3 Jouhan Rivera, IS1 Chris Bertini and Carla Moss



Christmas Wrapping Party:

(L-R) IS2 Andrew Rios, LT Benjamin Greene, IS2 Caelyn Charlton, Cathy Graham, Emilie Dajc, Dennis Gerrity, Ammie Dajc and Jodie La Fronierre-Dajc

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This year's efforts were aided immensely by the assistance of seven volunteers who are active duty members of U. S. Coast Guard Cyber Command: LTJG J. L. Benton, IS1 Chris Bertini, IS2 Matt Gruzzo, LT S. Huemme, IS1 Maurice McCombs and AET3 Jouhan Rivera. IS2 Caelyn Charlton not only volunteered to help out by shopping, packing and transporting the baskets but helped to recruit and coordinate the efforts of her fellow Coastguardsmen.

The efforts carried over into the rest of the holiday season along the same vein but with the additional need to plan for a holiday party for the children in the families. After finding out more about the families and their children, Auxiliary member Emilie Dajc was the primary shopper and Amie Dajc and Jodie La Fronierre-Dajc (Treas) helped her bring the gifts to the Post.

After getting that done they set up a wrapping party at the Post and were joined by President Graham, Dennis Gerrity and other Coastguardsmen: IS2 Caelyn Charlton, LT Benjamin Greene and IS2 Andrew Rios.

The next grocery shopping went ahead with a couple of changes. Instead of repeating the turkeys for a dinner, Ms. Karen Kelly at Trader Joe's provided us with free hams. Sweet potatoes, green beans, corn, potatoes, rolls, apple and cherry pies together with more lunch and breakfast items rounded out the baskets. This time President Graham's shopping party was by more Coastguardsmen, but with a twist: We not only had LTJG J. L. Benton, IS1 Chris Bertini and ISC P. E. Kirby with us, but when MCPO J. Cabello's wife, Martha, found out where he was headed that morning, she volunteered to help out as well.

On the day of the party Commander Springer and President Graham rallied the troops at the Post to get last minute items set up and ready for the festivities. Last minute gift additions brought by Coast Guard volunteers were wrapped and the food baskets were assembled together with last minute cleaning. Preparation and layout of a small buffet was aided by the Auxiliary members from Chefs Giving Back.

After the families had arrived, Christopher Alexander (JVC) took over as master of ceremonies in order to allow Commander Springer, Adjutant Wagner, President Graham and the ever helpful Dajc Family (Emilie and Jodie) to move among the families to talk and assist. Their efforts were aided by Coastguardsmen:

IS2 Caelyn Charlton, IS3 Joseph Clemensen, IS3 Joseph Gardner, ISC Timothy Midas and IS3 Brittany Rythy.

A Wonderful time was had by all and Santa was able to make an appearance in order to hand out gifts to the children and pose for photos with the families and volunteers. Santa might not have been able to find the Post if it hadn't been for an assist from his good friend, Mr. Daniel Garrigan.



Christmas Party:

(L-R) IS2 Brittany Rythy, IS2 Caelyn Charlton, Christopher Alexander, ISC Timothy Midas, Cathy Graham, Emilie Dajc, Jodie La Fronierre-Dajc, J. Gary Wagner and of course, Santa

While the gifts and food baskets were worthwhile efforts, it should be noted that food insecurity and hunger among active duty servicemembers and their families is a year round occurrence. It is estimated that approximately 14 percent of active duty enlisted families have endured a feeling of low food security or worse in the past year. While the VFW is working to help alleviate this problem, it is not going to go away any time soon and it won't go away without help from ALL of us.

The success of this year's efforts to aid families of service members in need of assistance went well because of good planning, Post and Auxiliary volunteers but also the great outpouring of support from our 17 Coast Guard volunteers who came on board and asked, "How can we help". We look forward to doing more and I'm sure all Posts and Auxiliaries are too.

---What Unit in the Korean War Wore Blue Scarves? ---

Actress Audrey Dalton Recalls Visit to Entertain the Troops in Korea, 1953

By Greg Eanes

Commander, Post 7819

On March 15, 1953, the Korean War was still in progress with peace talks at Panmunjom well underway. Though an active war zone, it did not stop Hollywood from dispatching 'Girls from Pleasure Island' to entertain the troops including a young Irish lass named Audrey Dalton. She also has a question for Korean War veterans of Virginia's VFW: *What unit wore blue scarves as part of their uniform in March 1953?*

While attending the Williamsburg (Va) Nostalgia Festival on Veterans Day, the retired actress, now 87 and one of the stars of the 1953 hits *Girls of Pleasure Island* and *Titanic* (in which she played the legendary Barbara Stanwyck's daughter) recalled Korea and the faces of young soldiers at war.

"I went to Korea for Paramount to entertain the troops," she said. "It was arranged by Paramount to premiere the *Girls of Pleasure Island*. They shipped the three of us and Don Taylor in March. We flew [by the Military Air Transport Service] to Travis [AFB] then Hawaii, then I think it was Wake Island or Guam, I'm not sure which, then we went to Tokyo and on to Seoul." They arrived in Tokyo on March 18 "for a brief processing prior to flying to Korea with a print of the movie for world premiere in Seoul."

The trip was a joint effort by Paramount's 'G.I. Premieres', USO Camp Shows and the Department of Defense. The fictional comedy concerned the British governor of an isolated Pacific Island, his three lovely daughters in the waning days of World War II and the challenge he faced with his daughters when 1,500 American Marines land to build a base. Holding a movie premiere for troops in Korea was good public relations for Paramount but it also provided the soldiers an opportunity for some current entertainment. For Dalton, then a 19-year-old actress, professionally trained in London's Academy of Dramatic Arts, a trip to the war zone was a new adventure.

25 'Premieres' to Troops

The initial debut to American GIs was set for March 20. The movie was reportedly 'premiered' to United Nations troops as many as 25 times while the actors were in Korea. The troupe went on to make "as many appearances as possible" to include visits to the front lines to provide a small taste of home to American troops.

With Dalton and Taylor on the trip were co-star Joan Elan and new Paramount talents Katherine Grandstaff and Richard Shannon. The third female actress of 'Pleasure Island', Dorothy Bromiley, had gotten appendicitis and Grandstaff was substituted. The girls were dubbed by Paramount as the 'United Nations Girls' because they represented the U.S. (Grandstaff), Ireland (Dalton) and Ceylon (Elan). At each stop the troupe performed a 30-minute musical skit written by Director Hugh Hubert.

"We did a little skit for the guys in our Edith Head ballgowns," Dalton said. "Going to these different camps everyday with these long convoys and they [the guys] treated us so well. Everyone was so wonderful. They even gave up their egg rations so we could eat eggs for breakfast."

"They didn't whistle at us or make passes during the whole trip. But they did show us pictures of their wives, sweethearts, and children. They couldn't seem to stop talking about the girls they left back home," she is quoted as saying at the time.

She recalled, "Paramount did this thing to where we talked to guys, and they took a picture, and they got the address from the guy and then they sent the picture to the families at home. Now wasn't that a nice thing for them to do."

She remembered the "pouring rain, it was miserable. The tents, the buildings, the soldiers were all in mud." Dalton said it was "sad and depressing" to see the soldiers living in those conditions, but the actors did their best to try to bring some cheer to the troops.

Front Line Visits

Life in Korea for touring actors was not without its mishaps. Dalton recalled, "They flew Don Taylor and I up to the front lines. And there were these huge guns. And they flew us to the front in a helicopter, and of course it was muddy, and there was a group of guys waiting to greet us and, of course, I'm in my best 'movie star' style so I'm coming down [the ramp] waving my hand and I slipped and fall on my face. Flat."

While embarrassing at the time, she says, "Now I love the story because it's fun. But it taught me a lesson. Hang on [to the rails]."

The evening of March 22nd, they entertained a Signal unit "before a packed audience of 600" soldiers. On March 23rd at a visit to a field artillery battalion near the front it was reported the stars met some local celebrities: Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, Doris Day and Lilly Christine. These were the names of four 155mm cannons. Their visit happened to coincide with a fire mission as the four guns went into action and "clobbered a Chinese bridge" along a logistical line of communication. The GIs also gave them a ride in a tank and a tour of bunkers just behind the lines. They visited an infantry unit and a hospital on the 23rd of March.

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While the team was visiting one hospital it was reported, “an officer spoke up from his bed, ‘Please don’t come over here’. Dalton asked “Why?” The officer blushed and replied, “I got hurt playing volley ball.”

It was during this time Dalton said, “a very important incident occurred as we were leaving one camp, one I will never forget it.”

She said, “One of the men, one of soldiers, came up to me as we were milling around and getting into the vehicles for the drive to the next camp. He took off his light blue neck scarf and gave it to me as a ‘thank you’ for the entertainment we provided. We spoke for a few moments. I have forgotten what unit wore these scarves and have never been able to find out... I am presuming it was a uniform as others were wearing that same blue neck scarf tucked into their jackets, at least as I remember. I was so touched by his gesture. I still have the scarf and will continue to treasure it.”

Illness

On March 26th while visiting the Second Infantry Division and just before they were to perform for members for the 38th Infantry Regiment, the first of three shows scheduled for that day, Dalton became sick and had to be evacuated. She had been ill for the previous four days but, according to reports, “was determined to continue the trek across the front.” She was reportedly evacuated to a Tokyo hospital by air.

In April while in Minneapolis, Dalton made a phone call to the fiancé of one of the soldiers. Apparently, a message had been passed to Grandstaff who asked Dalton to make the call. But Grandstaff forgot to give Dalton the message, which it was determined later, was likely mailed by Grandstaff. Also making a phone call was star Don Taylor but he also did not have the message. Nevertheless, the fiancé was delighted to hear from two movie stars about her soldier’s service on the front lines of Korea.

Dalton continued to act in movies working with Bob Hope, Basil Rathbone, Alan Ladd and others before making an easy transition to television starring in episodes of practically every popular series, particularly westerns, between 1956’s *20th Century-Fox Hour* to 1978’s *Police Woman*. She retired from acting, went to college and became a high school librarian and later museum docent.

Dalton is no stranger to veterans. Her father Emmet Dalton was a decorated British Army officer earning the Military Cross in the Somme and later, at the age of 25, was a Major General and Chief of Intelligence for the National Army of the Irish Free State during its civil war. With that in mind, Audrey Dalton has a special place in her heart for veterans, and particularly for those Korean War veterans she helped entertain and who looked after her in the war zone. Her message to them still: “Take care of yourselves. Be safe and God bless you all.”

Korean Veteran Fan Mail

Audrey Dalton still occasionally gets fan mail. Any Korean War veterans wanting to share a memory of the entertainment visit by the ‘Girls of Pleasure Island’ can write to her at 22461 Labrusca, Mission Viejo, California 92692



STILL GOING STRONG

– Golden Age of Hollywood Actress Audrey Dalton, 87, on right, is pictured with her daughter Tara May (pronounced the Irish way as ‘TAR-ra) at the Williamsburg, Virginia Nostalgia Festival on Veterans Day 2021.

She is the star of *Girls of Pleasure Island* (with Don Taylor), the *Titanic* (with Barbara Stanwyck), *Drum Beat* (with Alan Ladd), *Casanova’s Night Out* (with Bob Hope) and multiple episodes of *Wagon Train*, *Bat Masterson*, *The Big Valley* and other television series between 1956 and 1978. Dalton reluctantly attended a Nostalgia show in 1997 and has been a regular ever since and continues to bring smiles to fans, young and old.



SCENE FROM *TITANIC* (1953). Pictured are Barbara Stanwyck (left) and Audrey Dalton.



PUBLICITY STILL – *THE GIRLS OF PLEASURE ISLAND* (1953). From left to right are Don Taylor, Audrey Dalton, Gene Barry, Joan Elan, Peter Baldwin and Dorothy Bromiley. (Paramount Publicity Photo)



GI ENTERTAINERS—This trio of Hollywood starlets will leave Travis Air Force Base today on a tour of Korea in which they will appear before U. N. troops in connection with their new picture. Left to right, Joan Elan, Audrey Dalton and Kathryn Grandstaff. —San Francisco Examiner Photo.

Elizabeth Lewis, a living legend

By Jerry Martin

Post 7589, Manassas



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis at 101 years old is Post 7589's oldest living veteran. During World War II, Elizabeth served as a surgical nurse in both the European and Pacific theaters of operation. She treated over 2,000 wounded soldiers from 1943 to 1945.

She was recently honored as a Living Legend by the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, Virginia.

The Military Women's Memorial Living Legend Program recognizes military

women whose stories of service provide inspiration and example for all to appreciate. These stories are deemed to be of interest or benefit to increase public awareness of women's contribution to America's national defense and deserve special recognition. Proclamations can be issued for any one of the following reasons:

1. Women Veterans reaching their 100th birthday.
2. Women whose stories of service are particularly inspiring.
3. Retirements from a career of notable service.

Elizabeth was selected for 1 and 2.

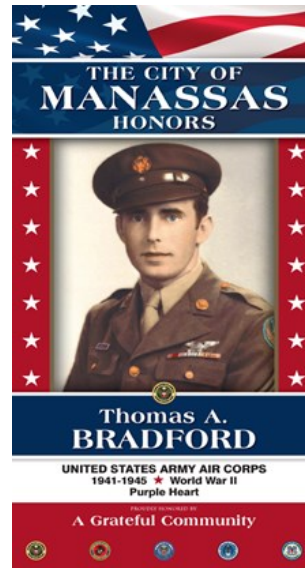
The Mission of the Military Women's Memorial is to honor women, past and present, who serve our nation by sharing their stories of service. The Memorial educates the public and empowers other young women. The Living Legend Program serves to ensure these stories and these women are not forgotten.

Elizabeth is one of 54 women nationwide who have been designated a Living legend.

Manassas Post will have Memorial Day Banners displayed in the city

By Gunny Lewis

Post 7589, Manassas



FRONT



BACK

Mock-up of how the banner will appear.

This year for Memorial Day week Manassas City has granted Veterans' Service Organizations (VSOs) the opportunity to place banners (two sided, 24" x 48", weatherproof) honoring our local deceased veterans on utility poles along Center Street in Old Town Manassas. A photograph of the deceased veteran along with their name and a brief description will be on one side of the banner and the other side will display the VSOs' emblem. Historic Manassas, Inc. (HMI) will place the banners on the poles at no cost to the VSOs. The cost of the banners will be borne by each individual VSO wishing to participate.

At this time the City has currently approved 12 banners for display. Post 7589 agreed to purchase four at a cost of \$99.00 each. The four veterans we will honor are: Francis Cannon, Joe Dazzo, Merle Hancock and Robert Swank.

In future years we may be able to display many more banners honoring many more veterans along the entire length of Center Street.

We thank *Jerry Martin* for initiating and following through with the project.

Home School Educator Named Crewe VFW ‘Teacher of the Year’



Contributed photo

TEACHER OF THE YEAR-Mrs. Sherri Doshier (center) accepts a \$100 check from Gold Star Memorial VFW Post 7819 Commander Greg Eanes (right) for being selected the local VFW’s ‘Teacher of the Year’. To the left is Kaitlyn Knight, a local home-schooler who nominated Mrs. Doshier for the award. Mrs. Doshier will be considered for District competition. Should she win there, she’ll compete at the state level and, from there, the National level.

Mrs. Sherri Doshier of Nottoway has been recognized as its 2021 VFW Teacher of the Year by the Crewe’s Gold Star Memorial VFW Post 7819. Her name has been forwarded for competition at the VFW District. Post Commander Greg Eanes said, “To the best of my knowledge, she is the very first Home School educator to win this recognition locally.”

While being recognized for her selection with a \$100 check for educational materials, Mrs. Doshier remarked that she attended high school in Chesterfield County and, while there, participated in the VFW’s Voice of Democracy competition winning it for the school. She said, “It’s kind of nice to come full circle, first as a student and now as a teacher. I’m very happy.”

Public School to Home School

Beginning her career in education as a public-school teacher Mrs. Doshier transitioned to serving as Homeschool teacher for the regional home school Co-Op allowing for more patriotic, religious, and civic character-based youth instruction. Many area families are part of that co-op.

Mrs. Doshier began teaching 8th grade American History and Civics in public schools in 1994. In the years following, while developing curriculum within local government, she served as a Junior Achievement volunteer, teaching civic lessons at the local elementary school. Since 2015 she has been instrumental in providing classes to a series of regional home school cooperatives to include Classical Conversations, Working Together Group and, most recently, Libertas.

To further citizenship education, Mrs. Doshier led the effort and was instrumental in coordinating a Washington, D.C. field trip including patriotic educational activities featuring the Lincoln Memorial and the White House. She demonstrated an innovative way to develop citizenship by designing and teaching American patriotic music lessons that corresponded with the history curriculum from the period of the American Revolution through the American Civil War. Another example of her innovation was illustrated by her writing the curriculum, designing, and teaching an American flag sun catcher activity to support a lesson on the national anthem in the home school co-op.

Recognizing the Veterans of Foreign Wars as an educational resource and unique way to broaden the educational experiences, she coordinated a regional home school activity whereby students and teachers supported Gold Star Memorial Post 7819 in its Memorial Day activities by placing American flags on the graves of local veterans. VFW members gave students lectures on the Buddy Poppy, a brief history on Memorial Day and brief lectures on many of the local veterans who served in conflicts and later returned home, turned their swords into ploughshares, and began giving back to their community through their small businesses and civic activities. Mrs. Doshier’s efforts were critical to the success of this joint event with the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Eanes said, “Mrs. Doshier’s passion for education is reflected in her sustained commitment to ensuring students fully understand and appreciate ‘God and Country’ both by teaching and by her development of patriotic curriculum for broader use in the extensive regional home school community. Her lifetime record of educational achievement and routine patriotic practices actively support VFW educational objectives of promoting civic responsibility, respect for the American flag and patriotism.”

News Release

For Immediate Release: 9 December 2021

---Town Emergency Services Professionals---
VFW Awards Public Service Citations

Crewe's Gold Star Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 will award three emergency services personnel in the volunteer service or employ of the Towns of Crewe and Burkeville with the Post level Public Service Citation. The three individuals have been submitted to the Headquarters, Department of Virginia for state and national VFW recognition consideration.

Fireman

The Crewe Fire Department nominee was David L. Roberts, 65, a Crewe volunteer fireman with 48 years' service. According to Fire Chief Val Wilson, Roberts has responded to "thousands of calls" over his career having served in practically every organizational position from Assistant Fire Chief to Sergeant and Quartermaster. Wilson said Roberts is "at the firehouse doing things all the time. You can always count on him." Post Commander Greg Eanes' observed Roberts and other volunteers of his generation represent a link to Crewe's past as they served with and learned from many of the men who were charter members of the Crewe Volunteer Fire Department. He said Roberts' "professionalism has served to inspire and motivate those around him. His lifetime of dedication and volunteer public service to the Crewe and Nottoway County community is unmatched. He is a doer, a leader, and a role model worthy of emulation."

**Emergency Medical Technician**

The Burkeville Fire Department nominee was EMT/First Responder Desiree Brown. A veteran of the U.S. Army, she started her emergency services career as a firefighter with the Ford Volunteer Fire Department training eventually transitioning to a full-time professional Advanced EMT with the Burkeville Fire Department. According to Burkeville Mayor Brian Weltch, Mrs. Brown is highly praised by her supervisors, colleagues and the citizens she serves. He said, "She is selfless and has a genuine love for what she does" while "dedicating herself to helping others. From serving in the military to serving her community, Desiree keeps raising the bar for herself and everyone she works with."

Law Enforcement

Crewe Police Officer James P. (Phil) Morgan was nominated in recognition of his 28-years of local community service as both a Crewe Police Officer and Virginia State Parks Law Enforcement officer where he started service in 1993 rising through the ranks to the position of Park Manager at Twin Lakes State Park. Officer Morgan's achievements include the writing of Department of Criminal Justice grants, the most recent resulting in over \$85,000 being awarded to the Town of Crewe for fleet vehicle replacement; utilizing prior State procurement training and VITA contracts to realize substantial savings to the department when purchasing IT equipment and in recent months working with the Town Manager and a software development team to develop and implement software for code enforcement to aid Town Ordinance enforcement. Post Commander Greg Eanes said Morgan's "lifetime of dedication to public service in Virginia State Parks, to the Town of Crewe and Nottoway and Prince Edward County communities is broad, diverse, and remarkable. His sustained superior performance, dedication to his profession, personal and professional leadership and commitment to the community and citizens he serves is worthy of public commendation and praise."

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION INCREASE FOR ALS VICTIM SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a fatal neuro-degenerative disease that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle function, eventually impacting the ability to move, speak and breathe; and

WHEREAS, numerous international institutes have been unable to determine causation or cure for ALS in more than a century of research, but have concluded that the incidence of ALS impacts veterans, especially deployed veterans, at nearly twice the rate that it impacts the general populations; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has acknowledged this disproportionate affliction in the veteran population to the effect that it has established presumptive causation between ALS diagnosis and military service of as short as 90 days duration; and

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is available to the survivors of veterans who die due to service-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, a monthly increase of DIC is available to those survivors who were married to veterans for eight (8) years prior to their death, if the VA had rated said veteran was disabled for a full eight (8) years prior to their death; and

WHEREAS, since its discovery in 1869, the prognosis for those stricken with ALS today has largely remained the same – death within an average of only two to five years; and

WHEREAS, the survival prognosis of this presumptive service-connected disease is insufficient to meet the eight-year rule; **THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the VA to carve out an exception to the eight-year disability rule to allow survivors of veterans who die from ALS to receive the increased monthly DIC payment; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to legislate and fund such action by the VA should the Department fail to act within 180-days of this resolution.

Resolution was approved by VFW Post 2894 membership at their meeting of 12 January 2022.

Chris Mulholland
National Deputy Chief of Staff
Adjutant, VFW Post 2894, Chesapeake, Virginia

ACCELERATING ACCESS TO CRITICAL THERAPIES FOR ALS ACT (ACT FOR ALS)

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a fatal neurodegenerative disease that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle function, eventually impacting the ability to move, speak and breathe; and

WHEREAS, since its discovery in 1869, the prognosis for those stricken with ALS today has largely remained the same – death within an average of two to five years; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States signed into law the “Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Act,” directing the Department of Health and Human Services to identify factors, procedures, and medications aimed at prevention, diagnosis, mitigation treatment and cure of ALS; and

WHEREAS, numerous international institutes, while unable to determine causation or cure for ALS in the 123 years since it was first identified, have concluded that the incidence of ALS impacts deployed veterans at nearly twice the rate as it impacts the general populations; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has acknowledged this disproportionate affliction in the veteran population to the effect that it has established presumptive causation between ALS diagnosis and military service of as short as 90 days duration; and

WHEREAS, the United States Armed Forces have deployed more than 14 million military men and women since the Gulf War; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States – the Nation's oldest Congressionally chartered veterans service organization, and largest organization composed of combat-zone veterans, that we fully support the “Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Act” (“the Act”); and further

BE IT RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to extend and continue to fund “the Act” beyond its current five year program completion date, should the goals of “the Act” not be fully realized by that date.

Resolution was approved by VFW Post 2894 membership at their meeting of 12 January 2022.

Chris Mulholland
National Deputy Chief of Staff
Adjutant, VFW Post 2894
Chesapeake, Virginia

COMBATING ALS IN THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a fatal neuro-degenerative disease that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle function, eventually impacting the ability to move, speak and breathe, and;

WHEREAS, from World War II through Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and even in peacetime, multiple studies have consistently shown that the rate at which veterans develop ALS is twice that of non-veterans and;

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has acknowledged this disproportionate affliction in the veteran population to the effect that it has established presumptive causation between ALS diagnosis and military service of as short as 90 days duration and;

WHEREAS, the prognosis for a veteran diagnosed with ALS today has largely remained the same as 150 years ago – death in an average of two to five years with no known cause or cure; every day three more veterans are diagnosed with ALS while another three die from it; and

WHEREAS, those who wore a uniform bear an outsized burden from this disease with three times more veterans lost to ALS since 9-11 than troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined (21,100 vs 6,896); and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of ALS in Post-9/11 veterans is in some cases up to ten times higher than the general population; that these veterans are also being diagnosed at progressively younger ages, with some as young as their 20's and 30's; and

WHEREAS, veteran suicide is a significant problem in our nation, the suicide rate for veterans with ALS is four times greater than for those without ALS; now, therefore **BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States – the Nation's oldest Congressionally chartered veterans service organization, and largest organization composed of combat-zone veterans – that we call upon Congress to dedicate more resources towards research on causes, development of therapies, and expanded access to treatments for veterans stricken with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis to ensure that our military men and women are at no greater risk for ALS than other Americans.

Resolution was approved by VFW Post 2894 membership at their meeting of 10 November 2021.

Chris Mulholland
National Deputy Chief of Staff Adjutant,
VFW Post 2894 Chesapeake, Virginia

Leesburg Post 1177 provides *Sweats for Vets*

BY POST 1177 COMMANDER RAY DELPESCHE

Sometimes the thing needed most is a simple sweat suit. For VFW Post 1177 in Leesburg, the “Sweats for Vets” campaign helps to fill the need that a number of veterans leaving a veterans hospital have on an annual basis.

“It started with 34 sets of sweats and has grown into a campaign the entire community supports,” said Post Commander Ray Delpesche. This year’s effort saw over 1,100 sets collected. They were distributed to the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers in Washington, D.C. and Martinsburg, WV along with several Loudoun County nursing homes to support elderly patients.

Commander Delpesche recounted how the entire project started with past Post Commander Philip Rosciolelli and the Knights of Columbus. “This has become a signature project for us each year and the community support could not be greater” he said. Boxes around town can be found during the collection period and a number of businesses and individuals also donate money to support purchases.

For this year’s campaign, more than \$4,500 was collected in addition to those sweat suits donated. “The support is overwhelming and we seem to find new partners each year” Commander Delpesche stated. Their biggest donation was 500 complete sets of sweats with a promise for future support.

Boxing Day, traditionally a holiday in the United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries, is the day for preparing everything at the Post. Items are sorted and bundled with volunteers coming from the VFW and Auxiliary, Knights of Columbus, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (an organization of Irish Catholics), cadets from the Civil Air Patrol, local Scouts, and Leesburg Mayor Kelly Burk. Keeping to its roots, Boxing Day is celebrated on the day after Christmas and is a day traditionally meant for helping those less fortunate.



Crewe Post World War II Veteran Dies in January



Gold Star Memorial VFW Post 7819 Life Member John T. Atkinson died on January 8, 2022. It was his 96th birthday. At the time of his passing, he was one of two Post 7819 members that were Crewe World War II veterans.

According to his military records, Mr. Atkinson was a Warehouseman and Private First Class with the General Headquarters, Army Forces Pacific in Japan from 23 August 1945 to 3 October 1946. Based on his records, he arrived in Japan exactly two weeks after the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki effectively ending the war and ten days before the formal Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on September 2. It was a period of questionable stability as there was no certainty all Imperial Japanese forces would accept the surrender and the International War Crimes trials began.

Mr. Atkinson was a trained infantryman and warehouseman. He served as a warehouseman while stationed in Japan for a period of nine months. In that capacity he received and checked quartermaster supplies into a warehouse and checked them out again to the individual units conducting Occupation duties. He supervised the activities of six Japanese civilians in loading, unloading, and stacking the supplies for issue to U.S. Occupation Forces. He held the Asiatic-Pacific Service medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the World War II Victory Medal and the Occupation Medal with Japan Clasp.

John was born in Nottoway County, January 8, 1926 to Samuel and Rosalie Owen Atkinson. He was one of fifteen children raised on a tobacco farm. When not attending Crewe High School Mr. Atkinson had worked on a 150-acre family farm near Crewe. He planted, cultivated and harvested corn, tobacco, wheat, oats, rye, potatoes, and vegetables. He worked a tractor and three mules. He raised and tended cattle, hogs, and poultry.

After World War II he returned home and married Alice Verser and was employed as a conductor on the Norfolk and Western Railroad. They had two sons, John, Jr. and Robert who he taught "the life skills of fiscal responsibility, the value of hard work and the love of family." He survived two brain tumors, a concussion, colon cancer, prostate cancer, a broken back, COVID-19, and multiple trips to the ER for high blood pressure. His son said, "Throughout all these adversities, he never complained and his standard reply on his condition, even in the ER under tough circumstances, was 'Feeling pretty good for an old man'." He was predeceased by his parents, his wife Alice and all but one sibling. He is survived by sons John Atkinson, Jr (Cindy) of Richmond and Robert Atkinson (Kelly) of Farmville and one brother Jack Atkinson (Lula Mae) of Crewe, eight grandchildren and numerous extended family.



VFW Commander Talks 'Revolution'

Gold Star Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 Commander Greg Eanes served as the keynote speaker for the inaugural event recognizing General Nathanael Greene's 1781 Bannister River encampment at Halifax Courthouse on Friday, February 18th.

The 10-day encampment occurred after Greene's successful 1781 'Race to the Dan River' in which he narrowly escaped British forces under Lord Charles Cornwallis. Eanes spoke on 'Halifax County Patriots in the Revolution' detailing activities during the "ten days that changed the world".

It was during the Halifax encampment that Greene was resupplied by Halifax citizens and was reinforced by Southside Virginia militia including over 200 men from Amelia County and Nottoway Parish. These were the men that fought the March 15, 1781, Battle of Guilford Courthouse which some scholars say started Lord Cornwallis on the 'road to Yorktown'.

Eanes was also presented with a Sons of the American Revolution War Service Medal by the Dan River Chapter, SAR in recognition of his wartime service in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The Bannister River Encampment has been incorporated into annual 'Crossing of the Dan' events Halifax communities use for heritage tourism and recognition of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

VFW District 4 Winners and VFW Comfort Bears

VFW FOURTH DISTRICT WINNERS – Two local students have been selected winners in VFW Fourth District competitions for **Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen**. Jacob Seamons of Drakes Branch was taking third place in the District for his Patriot's Pen essay earning a \$100 check. Sadie Henshaw of Sutherland took first place in the Voice of Democracy competition earning \$300 for excellence. Sadie's entry will advance to State competition. They were advanced to District competition after selection and sponsorship by Gold Star Memorial VFW Post 7819 in Crewe. Both are students at Kenston Forest School.



Photo by Patricia Mahaney

Pictured, from left to right, are Head of School Lori Bacon, Sadie Henshaw, Jacob Seamons and VFW Post 7819 Commander Greg Eanes presenting checks on behalf of Fourth District Commander Gus Villalobos.

COMFORT BEARS – Crewe's Gold Star Memorial Post 7819 Adjutant Harry Seymour recently presented 'comfort bears' to area law enforcement officials. This batch went to the Blackstone Police Department. The bears are used to provide comfort to children following crisis events.



Photo by Greg Eanes

Home School Educator Named District VFW 'Teacher of the Year'

Mrs. Sherri Doshier of Nottoway was selected as the Fourth District VFW Teacher of the Year. She was recognized with a \$100 check for educational materials and her nomination package has been forwarded for competition at the State level.

She is thought to be the first 'home school' teacher so recognized in the Fourth District and represents a growing population of home schoolers. According to sources, the Home School community has grown by 40% over the last two years. She is part of the area Libertas Consortium and develops curriculum for home school families.

Mrs. Doshier remarked attended high school in Chesterfield County and, while there, participated in the VFW's Voice of Democracy competition winning it for the school effectively coming "full circle" in the VFW competitions.

The Fourth District consists of 12 VFW Posts scattered over Southside Virginia from Emporia to Clarksville and Buckingham.



Photo by Sam Knight

TEACHER OF THE YEAR- Mrs. Sherri Doshier (center) accepts a \$100 check from the Fourth District Veterans of Foreign Wars from Greg Eanes (right), Commander of Crewe's VFW Post 7819, presenting on behalf of Fourth District Commander Gus Villalobos, for being selected the Fourth District VFW's 'Teacher of the Year'. To the left is Kaitlyn Knight, a local homeschooler who nominated Mrs. Doshier for the award.



State Commander Butch Schupska prepares to drive a veteran (unnamed) to the Veterans Hospital for her appointment



Department and Auxiliary attending the Southern Conference for 2021-2022



Virginia State Commander Butch Schupska with West Virginia State Commander Jeff Elkins along with Commander in Chief Fritz Mihelcic at the west Virginia state convention



The new Post 9274 Auxiliary



From Left to Right: Department Auxiliary President Carol Vangi, State Commander Butch Schupska, Donna Webster, MNOCA Grand President, Ronnie steel MOC Grand Commander Sandy Dunbar District 2 President and Mike Chism District 2 Commander



State Surgeon Doug Hoffman at Richmond the day on the hill For charitable gaming



Department President Carol Vangi installing their new Post President of Post 9274



Kathy Goodall and Craig Dudley recruiting at the great Dismal Swamp, supporting The Bataan Death March



District 6 Commander David Jarrett and Post 9808 Commander Doris Wollett at the state fair. Doris was working the doughnut stand and brought us some.

VFW Members Learn About Service Dogs

Crewe VFW Commander Greg Eanes was among 30 veterans and VFW members learning about service and security dogs from Top Tier K9 in Madison, Florida.

Eanes said, “Top Tier K9 was born from a need identified by Florida VFW member and Air Force Gulf War veteran Jeff Minder, a former Air Force Survival instructor.” Now a retired computer software developer and business executive, Minder had his own service/guard dog for many years but noticed shortfalls in both dog and dog owner education. Using his Air Force training background, computer expertise and business acumen (he’s a certified Project Management Professional) Minder has developed what has become recognized as the top dog training school in the world.

Sniffing COVID

Working on an early COVID Task Force, Minder proved canines were capable of detecting COVID enzymes leading to the first trained COVID detection dogs. In January 2021 the Miami Heat was the first team to use them to open up sporting events.

Top Tier K9s dogs have been placed in sports arenas, theme parks, prisons, schools and have been sent to meet overseas requirements in Israel, Italy, and Argentina. Minder said, “The dogs are used as a filter. When someone is recognized as having COVID, they can be separated from the group and a more traditional laboratory test is administered to confirm the dog’s work.”

Minder’s findings have since been confirmed by academic studies which found them 94 to 99% accurate and his model is being replicated in other countries. He says, “We specifically chose elements of the virus believed to be a common part, regardless of mutation or variant.” In this way, the dog, once trained will continue to be effective in its detection work however long the COVID threat may last.

Duane Pickel, an instructor at Top Tier K9, was also the first to train a dog to find cancer cells and Minder has trained service dogs specifically for diabetics. The animal can tell from the owner’s scent that blood sugar levels have significantly changed. When that happens, it alerts the owner, even when they are sleeping. Minder explains the dog’s nose has 300 million scent receptors compared to man’s five million. He said, “If one can isolate the scent, one can train the dog to hit on the scent. That’s what we do.”

Service to Others

Minder is committed also to helping his fellow veterans, women veterans, first responders, people with disabilities and developing young entrepreneurs. For veterans, Top Tier K9 has three programs: ‘Build a Battle Buddy’, ‘Buy a Battle Buddy’ and ‘Emotional Support Dogs for Veterans’. Top Tier partners with a 501c3, ‘Forgotten Coast K9’ (www.forgottencoastk9.org), to provide the services needed to train disabled veterans or first responders on how to train and handle their own service dogs.

Eanes observed, “While the majority of the cost is covered by donations, the recipient is required to pay for a portion of their own training to ensure the new potential owner is ‘vested’ in the process. A person investing their own time and money in an animal is less likely to quit the program or abandon the animal.”

Minder said, “Our research and experience has proven that simply giving a service dog to someone is the wrong approach and seldom works. We developed this program to ensure the veteran receives an education, trains their own service dog and can replicate that training in the future to train his next service dog. It is about long-term success for the dog and the dog owner.” This training has various levels of certification and includes, for those who want to start their own business as a dog trainer, an Advanced Business and Project Management workshop. Several students, including women, veterans and first responders, have already opened their own shops to take advantage of the \$72 billion pet industry.

K9 Warriors for Women



Top Tier K9 has also broken ground in reaching out to abused women and women veterans who have experienced violence. Minder said, “One in three women have experienced some sort of abuse. That could include living in an abusive household, abusive relationship or even while working in business or government where leadership allows a hostile work environment. These types of environments deny women a sense of security, belonging and self-esteem. They go into ‘survival mode’. No one should have to live like that.”

Minder and his team, which includes victims of abuse, have developed a training regime for service dogs that are also protection dogs or ‘K9 Warriors’. Their K9 Warrior program includes an online training course to prepare women to handle and manage a protection dog and is administered through the Top Tier K9 Academy for Dog Trainers which has been rated as one of the top in the nation. Women learn the basics of dog training, communications, health, nutri-



Cambrie Schroder is a Brand Ambassador for Top Tier’s ‘K9 Warriors for Women’ program. She said, “It’s not about what happened to you, it’s about how you choose to move forward, taking responsibility to protect yourself and making sure it doesn’t happen again

(Continued from page 20)

tion, and first aid. They also learn the psychology of victimization, learn how to fight back and learn how to “use their dogs to climb out of survival mode and begin living without fear.”

One of the female trainers observed, “Some women are not comfortable carrying a gun. A service/security dog is always ready, will detect the threat before he gets near and serves as a deterrent. And your dog won’t leave you.”

Eanes observed, “Addressing Military Sexual Trauma (MST) has become a high priority within the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration. Among many women veterans the physical, mental, and emotional wounds are as real as those inflicted by bullets and bombs. Top Tier K9’s outreach to women veterans is needed and timely. The dogs though are for any woman who has suffered abuse and needs a combination service dog and guard dog. It’s an impressive program.

Abused women or women veterans can learn more about the Top Tier K9 program at (<https://www.toptierk9.com>).



VFW MEMBERS LEARN ABOUT SERVICE DOGS – Gold Star Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 Commander Greg Eanes of Crewe (left) was recently in Florida to attend an orientation on service and security dog programs for disabled veterans and women veterans. The event was in conjunction with an Air Force Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) reunion, both of which were hosted by Jeff Minder (center), CEO of Top Tier K9 and Top Tier Programs in Tallahassee. Also pictured on right is retired Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Al Bobst. All three VFW members worked SERE issues during the first Gulf War.

Shriners honor State Senior Vice Commander Geoff Lyster

On Saturday [March 26], VFW leaders gathered to help Shriners honor State Senior Vice Commander Geoff Lyster who finished his term as Commander for the International Association Legions of Honor Mid-Atlantic Region. The organization is for veterans who are Shriners and the Mid-Atlantic Region stretches from Virginia to New York.

State Commander Butch Schupska led the delegation and gave remarks. Joining Butch was State Judge Advocate Mitch Rubenstein and Past State Commander Ken Wiseman.

Geoff also serves as an international officer of the association and oversees an area stretching from Kansas to Saskatchewan. Congratulations!



VFW VIRGINIA FACEBOOK