

Commander's Message



State Commander Gary Adams
 US Navy, Post

Dear Members of the Best Department in the country,

I hope this message finds you all in high spirits and with a sense of accomplishment. I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for your incredible efforts and dedication. Thanks to each, and

every one of you, our membership numbers are soaring,

and we are well on our way to reaching 95% in no time.

It is truly an honor to lead such an exceptional team. Your unwavering commitment to excellence, teamwork, and exceptional service has made my role as a leader both rewarding and fulfilling. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and I am confident that together we will surpass all expectations by achieving a remarkable 102% by the end of the year.

I want to emphasize how grateful I am for each contribution you make towards our collective success. Your passion, skills, and positive attitudes have created an environment where achievements become second nature. Your dedication makes leading this department an absolute pleasure.

Keep up the outstanding work! Remember that I am only a phone call, or email away if you need any support or have ideas that can further enhance our progress. Together, there's no limit to what we can achieve.

I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation for each, and every one of you. Your dedication, support, and unwavering commitment have been instrumental in keeping us on course throughout this journey.

To my line officers: Your leadership has been exemplary. You have guided our organization with wisdom and vision, ensuring that we stay focused on our mission and goals. Your expertise and guidance have been invaluable.

To the District commanders and committee members: Your tireless efforts behind the scenes have not gone unnoticed. Your contributions in planning, organizing, and executing various initiatives have played a significant role in our success. I am grateful for your dedication to our cause.

And last but certainly not least, to my membership team: I cannot thank you enough for your incredible support thus far. Your hard work in recruiting new members, engaging existing ones, and fostering a sense of community within our organization has truly made a difference. The growth we have experienced is a testament to your exceptional efforts.

Together, we have achieved great things. It is because of your collective passion, commitment, and teamwork that we continue to thrive. Please know that your contributions are deeply valued and appreciated.

As we move forward on this journey together, let us remember the impact we can make when we work collaboratively towards our shared goals. I am grateful for each of you and look forward to continuing this incredible journey with all of you by my side.

With heartfelt thanks,

Gary Adams



VFW DEPARTMENT of VIRGINIA
 403 LEE JACKSON HIGHWAY
 STAUNTON, VA 24401
 PHONE: 1-540-886-8112
 FAX: 1-866-416-0586

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

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Commander

Gary Adams

Senior Vice Commander

Mitchell L. Rubenstein

Junior Vice Commander

Doug Hoffman

Adjutant/ Quartermaster

Ed Mann

Judge Advocate

Mark Maggio

Surgeon

Charles Bush

Past Commander

Geoff Lyster

Chaplain

James Goebel, III

Chief of Staff

Tom Tines

Inspector

Randy Coker

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor

Randy Coker

Managing Editor

Ed Mann

Copy Editors

Doc Crouch, Janet & Rick
 Raskin

From the Editor's desk

I am excited to continue as your Newspaper editor for another great year. Please keep the Department of Virginia VFW informed of all your accomplishments by submitting your articles and pictures to me, for the Virginia Veterans Newspaper.



Randy Coker

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 or rwcocker1@gmail.com

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

Note: Deadline for the next newspaper is:

April 29, 2024



"Of the Veterans For the Veterans"

**Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department Commander Shirt
2024-2025**



Pre- order forms must be sent to **Department Headquarters**
no later than March 22nd, 2024 for VFW members
*Additional Shirts for the VFW members will be available to order at the 2024 June
Convention.*

Cost: Small – Extra Large: \$35.00 2XL: \$36.00 3XL: \$37.00

Name: _____ Size: ____ Number of Shirts: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Post # _____ District # _____

If you are unable to pick up your shirt at June 2024 Department Convention and have not made prior arrangements to have it picked up. Please add \$9.00 for shipping.

Make checks Payable to: Department of Virginia VFW
For: Commander Shirt 2024-2025

Send Form to: Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Virginia
403 Lee Jackson Hwy
Staunton, VA 22401

SUPREME MOC COMMANDER COMES TO TOWN FOR TOMB TREK



Pictured on the right, MOC Supreme Commander, Mark Larkin as he visits Virginia and the annual Tomb Trek.



Pictured above and below, members of MOC & MOCA from all over the nation for Tomb Trek 2023



Pictured on the right, Virginia's MOC Grand Commander, Robert "Check" Adamczyk and Executive Director of the VFW's Washington Office, Ryan Gallucci



Post 7819 in Crewe, Patriots Pen Winners



CREWE VFW PATRIOT'S PEN WINNERS- The Crewe Gold Star Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7819 selected the top three winners following intense competition among over 40 entries for their 2023 VFW Patriot's Pen competition. VFW Post 7819 Adjutant Greg Eanes presented checks to winners who all attend the Kenston Forest School in Blackstone. Pictured, from left to right are Eanes, First Place winner Masyn L. Morton of Kenbridge, \$150; Second Place winner, Baylee E. Petery of Dinwiddie, \$100 and Third Place winner, Haydn S. Hudson of Crewe, \$75.00. The multi-county Fourth District competition winners were also announced on November 27th, revealing Crewe's Hayden Hudson took First Place in the District and Dinwiddie's Baily Petery took Third Place. As a first-place winner, Hudson's essay will advance to the VFW State Championship. District Four Scholastic Awards Chairman Mark Wilson said Miss Hudson, Miss Petery and other District winners received awards on January 20, 2024, during the District 4 meeting at Amelia County Post 8759. (Photo by Cam Williams)

VFW Post 9954 in Victoria hosts a Flag retirement ceremony.



Chesty Puller VFW Post 1503 Dale City, hosts the 248th Marine Corps Birthday Ball



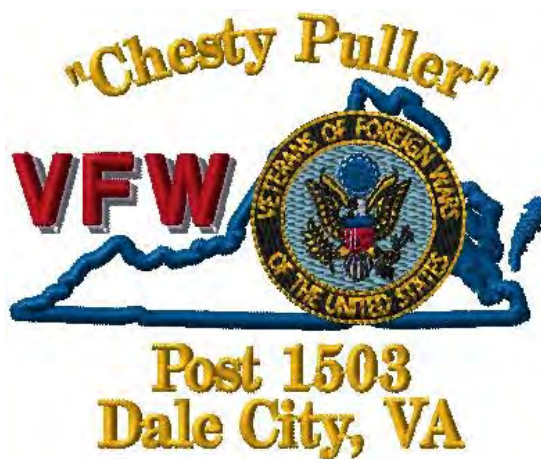
Retired Marine Kevin Simpson prepared to cut the Marine Corps Birthday cake for the 248th Marine Corps Birthday ceremony.



Post 1503 has a record crowd of over 300 participants at the 248th Marine Corps Birthday Ceremony on November 10th.



Post 1503 in Dale City had a successful Toys for Tots drive in the Northern Virginia, Dale City area.



Dale City, Chesty Puller VFW Post 1503 takes delivery of over 300 Christmas trees in November



Above: Comrades and Auxiliary assist in the Christmas tree delivery after Thanksgiving, Right: Auxiliary President Kelli Levitt and Auxiliary Treasurer Karla Coker work the sales table for Christmas trees.



Above The entire group of volunteers that offloaded the Christmas trees, posed for a group photo.

Left: A local resident stops by to pick up his tree with his antique truck.

Warrenton VFW honors 2 teachers and 6 students with citizenship awards



Lisa St. Ledger, a Marshall Middle School social studies teacher, was awarded a Citizen Education Teacher award by both Warrenton VFW Post 9835 and VFW's Virginia District 8. Courtesy Warrenton VFW Post 9835.

Pictured on right: Ava Price, an 11th grade student at the Wakefield School, and Nathan Torres, an 8th grade student at the Wakefield School, won first-place awards in the Warrenton VFW Post 9835 patriotic essay contest. Courtesy Warrenton VFW Post 9835



Warrenton VFW Post 9835 recently recognized three local middle school students, three local high school students and two local teachers as winners in its annual citizenship education and patriotic essay contests. The local VFW post solicited teacher nominations from all elementary, middle and high schools in Fauquier County and awarded Lisa St. Ledger, a Marshall Middle School social studies teacher, and Dr. Catherine Croft, a Fauquier High School science teacher, with their annual awards for Citizen Education Teachers of the year, according to Jeff Dombroff, adjutant for VFW Post 9835.

St. Ledger and Croft were chosen based on their efforts both in and out of school to “encourage and/or model good citizenship and community involvement and stimulate students with new things,” Dombroff wrote in a news release. St. Ledger went on to be selected as the top middle school teacher in both the VFW’s District 8 and State competitions, surpassing 12 other candidates. St. Ledger will now compete against all for the VFW’s National Middle School Teacher of the Year, which will be announced sometime in May, Dombroff said.

The VFW’s *Patriot’s Pen* essay competition for middle schoolers dates back to 1947 and is open to all students, including home-schooled students, in the sixth through eighth grades. This year’s topic was “How am I inspired by America?” The winning Fauquier County students who received certificates, medals and prizes ranging from \$100 to \$225 were:

- 1st place: Nathan Torres, an 8th grade student at the Wakefield School
- 2nd place: Matthew C. King, an 8th grade student at Wakefield School
- 3rd place: Avery Q. Waddell, a 6th grade student at Auburn Middle School

The VFW’s *Voice of Democracy* essay competition is open to students in the 9th through 12th grades and requires a recorded essay on a selected topic. This year’s topic was: “What are the greatest attributes of our democracy?”

The winning Fauquier County students who received certificates, medals and prizes ranging from \$150 to \$300 were:

- 1st place: Ava E. Price, an 11th grade student at Wakefield School.
- 2nd place: Grace Faulk, a 10th grade student at Fauquier High School.
- 3rd place: Elizabeth Berman, a 10th grade student at Fauquier High School.

Grace Faulk was also selected as the runner up in the District competition, Dombroff said.

PULLER Veterans Care Center set to Open in Summer of 2024



The new Puller Veterans Care Center (Puller VCC) is being built on the former Vint Hill Farms Station in Fauquier County, which previously served as a United States Army and National Security Agency facility. The site played a critical role in eavesdropping on enemy communications during World War II, when it intercepted a message that helped lead to the D-Day invasion of Normandy. The new care center will deliver top-quality care to Virginia veterans in a home-like setting. The 128-bed facility will feature all private rooms that will be organized into households and neighborhoods that surround a central community center.

About the Puller Family Legacy

General Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller was born in West Point, Virginia and served with distinction in Central America, WWII and the Korean War before retiring in 1955. He is one of only two people to receive five Navy Crosses and is one of the most decorated Marines in history. He retired to Saluda, Virginia and passed away in 1971. Lt. Gen Lewis B. Puller, Jr. served in Vietnam in 1968, where he was wounded when he tripped a booby trapped howitzer round, losing his right leg at the hip, left leg below the knee, left hand and several fingers on his right hand. Because he was out in front of his platoon, he saved most of them by taking the hit. He was awarded a Purple Heart and several other military honors. He graduated from William & Mary Law School and ran for Congress in 1978. He died in Alexandria, Virginia in 1994, shortly after winning the Pulitzer Prize for his autobiography.

Lt. Gen Puller met his wife, Toddy, while she was a school teacher in Woodbridge, Virginia, after graduating from Mary Washington College. In 1991, she won a seat in the House of Delegates. In 1999, she won a seat in the Senate of Virginia. She carried the legislation to create Virginia Veteran and Family Support, the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, and last year’s legislation to build the two new care centers. There is not a part of the Department of Veterans Services unaffected by her legislative efforts, which were always propelled by the memory of her husband and father-in-law. She lives in Alexandria, Virginia. Lt General Puller is a charter member of the Lewis B “Chesty” Puller Post 1503 in Dale City.



How TRICARE Covers Ambulance Services

By TRICARE Communications

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – In some emergencies, an ambulance could be the difference between life and death. Fortunately, your TRICARE plan covers ambulance services in these situations. “TRICARE covers ambulance services when medically necessary, based on the condition of the beneficiary receiving the service,” said Elan Green, chief of TRICARE Health Plan’s Medical Benefit and Reimbursement Section at the Defense Health Agency. “It’s good to know how TRICARE covers these services before you have an emergency. This can help you avoid surprise costs.” If you have TRICARE For Life, you must follow Medicare’s rules for ambulance services. This doesn’t apply if you live outside the United States and U.S. territories. For other plans, read on to learn how TRICARE covers ambulance services.

LINK to Medicare rules: <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/ambulance-services>

Outpatient and inpatient ambulance services

Your location plays a role in the type of ambulance service you receive. **Outpatient ambulance service** happens when an ambulance takes you from your home, an accident scene, or another location to a hospital. **Inpatient ambulance service** happens when an ambulance takes you from one hospital to a hospital more capable of providing the care you need. These services have out-of-pocket costs based on:

- Your TRICARE plan
- Your beneficiary group
- Whether you go to a network hospital or a non-network hospital
- Whether the ambulance service is inpatient or outpatient

Woodbridge Post 7916 former Eagle Scout & Sea Scout (2021) earns honorable mention as “Guardian of the Week” at West Point.

At West Point USMA, 3dBN “rearguard. The energy and talent of 3rd Battalion on full display! The “BEAM TEAM’s **CDT James Ye** is our Guardian of the Week. As the PAO, he has gone above and beyond: producing great SITREPS, running the 14 Instagram, posting positivity and morale in the entire Battalion. CDT YE also won the BN PT competition for his company, demonstrating a commitment to physical fitness, grit and victory.



Left: James Ye pictured on the pull up bars.



Right: James Ye (center) poses with two of his fellow West Point Cadets.

First two of many unmarked veteran graves finally unveiled

Article and Photos By Rick Raskin

In a joint effort with the Haymarket American Legion Post 1799 and VFW Posts 7589 (Manassas) and 12218 (Haymarket) the first two of 30 unmarked veteran graves at Stonewall Memory Gardens finally received proper marking. Leading the effort Post 1799 Commander Carlos Collat and Post 7589 Commander Wayne Moore were able to secure enough funding to mark the two graves. Post 12218 also participated.

On Saturday, December 16 the families of the two veterans and representatives from the VFW and American Legion along with Scouts from BSA Troop 670 (Manassas, Grace UMC) gathered to unveil the two markers.

Post 1799 Chaplain Chuck Berge offered prayers and Post 1799 Commander Carlos Collat was the MC. Past VFW State Commander Rick Raskin also offered comments. VFW 7589 Auxiliary President Mary Corkhill led the placement of wreaths on the two graves.

The goal is to continue to raise funds until all of the unmarked graves are identified and marked.

Out of respect for the families' privacy, the decedents' surnames are not shown in the text or the pictures.



Clockwise from top left:



Crowd gathers for the ceremony

- **Mary Corkhill escorts family of Harold *******
- **MC Carlos Collat**
- **Members of Post 12218**
- **Marker for Harold *******
- **Scouts unveiling a marker**
- **Marker for Delbert *******
- **Scouts from Troop 670**



The Joint Leadership Council Day on the Hill — January 17 in Richmond



MITCH RUBENSTEIN



RICK RASKIN

Student Veterans of America JLC Representative Katherine Martinez and VFW JLC Representative Rick Raskin

Past Department Commander Tom Gimble (Post 1503) spoke about the state of charitable gaming at the JLC Conference on January 17. Rick Raskin also spoke on pending legislation to ban Claim Sharks. Ken Wiseman and Doug Hoffman led a VFW delegation to meet with legislators on the same issue.



RICK RASKIN



FROM KATHERINE MARTINEZ

JLC Members and guests attended the House of Delegates session.

The VFW and SVA were well represented at the January 17 Day on the Hill in Richmond.



Veteran earns national honor for working to improve the Suffolk community

SUFFOLK, Va. – A veteran who served in the military for over two decades is being honored for a different type of service: working to improve a local community, which happens to be in Hampton Roads.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) – a nonprofit veterans service organization - launched its #StillServing campaign to highlight America’s combat veterans who are serving their local communities after their time in the military. The nonprofit's most recent honoree is Commander Robert Meade, who carries out community service in Suffolk.

Meade served from 1981 to 2002, according to VFW. He first served in the U.S. Army as a Nike Hercules Missile Fire Control Crew Member, and later a Patriot Missile Fire Control Crew Member. In 1986, he transitioned to the U.S. Navy and served as a Survival Equipment Man before retiring as an Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Parachute Rigger.



The Veterans of Foreign Wars

Meade (pictured right) with one of the flags donated to a local elementary school

VFW says Meade helped set up its post in Suffolk, which has held the Holland Founders Day Parade and the Veteran Grave Marker cleaning on Memorial Day. The post has also donated school supplies and U.S. and state flags to a local school, participated in a Toys for Tots campaign, and more.

VFW’s Suffolk-based post that Meade helped get up and running recently won the title of "Best Charitable Cause" in the Suffolk/Holland community, following a vote from residents.

The nonprofit says Meade earned its #StillServing honor not only for serving the Suffolk community, but also for providing a place for veterans to be with other veterans. Congratulations, Commander Meade!

Post 4809 Member Andy Valero honored by The Battle of Bulge Association

Submitted by Ron Riffle, Past All-American Post Commander, VFW 4809, Norfolk, VA

To commemorate the 79th Anniversary of The Battle of the Bulge, The Battle of Bulge Association hosted Bulge veterans and family members on January 24-26, 2024, in Washington DC. World War II Veteran and Post 4809 Member Andy Valero was honored and excited to attend. The group placed a wreath at the WWII Memorial, observed a wreath placement at the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington, and attended a reception hosted by the Embassy of Belgium.

Thanks to VFW Post 4809 Life Member and VFW Rider Noel “Nogger” Lumanog for escorting our great treasure.

If you haven’t met Andy and other WWII Veterans that frequent VFW Post 4809 yet, arrive a little early prior to our next Post Meeting and enjoy a story or two.



PHOTOS BY NOEL “NOGGER” LUMANOG, VFW POST 4809 AND CHRIS HAUTH VFW POST 8469

Winter Council of Administration Meeting — Williamsburg — January 11-13

PHOTOS BY DOC CROUCH





Department presents Educational Awards at the winter council banquet



First Place Patriots Pen winner Samantha Schillo receives her award from Patriots Pen chair Lou Filippone and State Commander Gary Adams. Samantha was sponsored by Fredericksburg Post 3103.



First Place Voice of Democracy winner Andrew Miller receives his award from State Commander Gary Adams, Auxiliary Chair Kathy Birch and PDC/VOD Chair Geoff Lyster



Andrew Miller delivers his speech to the banquet attendees.



Teacher of the Year (K-5) Jessica Albright, sponsored by Falls Church Post 9274, with CDR Gary Adams and PDC/Teacher of the Year Chair Chris Birch.



Teacher of the Year (6-8) Lisa St. Ledger, sponsored by Warrenton Post 9835



Teacher of the Year (9-12) John King, sponsored by Williamsburg Post 4639