

Commander's Message



State Commander Geoffrey D Lyster

US Navy

Post 9835

“Our VFW remains viable as the oldest and largest combat service organization in Virginia”

Portsmouth, VA.- Geoffrey D. Lyster of Warrenton, Virginia was installed as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Virginia 100th State Commander during a change of command ceremony at the 100th Annual VFW Virginia State Convention, in Portsmouth, VA.

Commander Lyster assumes command of Virginia’s oldest war veterans service organization boasting nearly 40,000 members, including its Auxiliary. Virginia ranks as the seventh largest veteran state in the nation. The Department of Virginia VFW turns 100 years old this year.

“I stand before you, humbled, but ready to serve; I am

committed to our mission: to foster camaraderie among our veterans of overseas conflicts and to serve our veterans and their communities and advocate on their behalf.”

Commander Lyster is a retired U.S. Naval Officer who served on active duty from 1993-2013; retired at the rank of Commander. He earned his VFW eligibility five times including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Cmdr Lyster’s personal decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (with three gold stars), and Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal (with four gold stars).

Cmdr Lyster served as an All American Post Commander of VFW Post 9835 Warrenton from 2012-2015; as an All American District Commander of District 8 (in northern Virginia) and as State Inspector, State Chief of Staff, State Junior Vice Commander and State Senior Vice Commander before being elected State Commander.

He thanked all of the convention attendees from Post 9835 Warrenton: “out there in the beautiful Virginia Piedmont.” He explained to the packed convention, “it’s part of God’s Country, where the gentle slopes, and cool streams lead from the base of mountains to grassy plains and vineyards. Visit if you get a chance.” Commander Lyster has been living in northern Virginia since 1992; and has been a homeowner in Warrenton since 2008.



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Please visit our website at
www.vfwva.org

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Honor Guard Conducts Opening Ceremony at Department Convention 2022



Past Department Commander, Tom Gimble swears in Commander Geoffrey Lyster and the new Department Officers

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news@vfwva.org

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

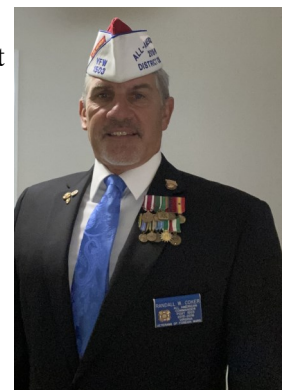
Note: Deadline for the next newspaper is:

October 17th, 2022

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



Was Halifax Man the First Virginian Killed by Communist Forces?

By Greg Eanes

Senior Vice Commander

Fourth District, Dept of Va

Halifax County native Corporal Alson W. Gray of 'K' Company, 339th Infantry Regiment might be the first Virginian documented as having been killed in action in a war against Communist tyranny.

In 1918 World War I was in full swing. The U.S. had entered the war and troop ships were traveling across the Atlantic in droves. Gray was originally assigned to the 89th Division headed for France. Records show he became sick and missed his unit's movement. This resulted in his reassignment to the 339th Infantry Regiment which was composed of men from Michigan and Wisconsin.

Gray was killed during an expedition that few Americans even remember today; *North Russia* also known as the *Polar Bear Expedition*. For background, the Communist Revolution against Russia's Provisional government led to Civil War. The Communists were called the 'Reds' and the Provisional Government were called the 'Whites'. Allied forces were sent to help the White Russians to keep them in the war against Germany. President Woodrow Wilson sent 5,000 Americans to aid our allies.

South Boston's Alson Gray arrived in Russia in Sep-

tember 1918 and immediately took part in offensive operations. By winter, the Americans were on defense. Gray's unit was thinly stretched. On multiple occasions, they were forced to fight off waves of Communist attacks inflicting hundreds of casualties on the Red Army. Pockets of Americans often found themselves surrounded and with no place to run. On November 8, 1918, Gray was severely wounded, shot in the leg. It is reported he "quickly bled to death."

Gray was one of 226 American soldiers that were buried in Russia. When the United States withdrew its forces, it failed to bring back at least 130 dead Americans. Gray was one of them. The United States did not have diplomatic relations with the Communist government so it fell to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to conduct a recovery mission in 1929. Gray's remains were found with 87 other American soldiers. He was still wearing his dog tag. This allowed for his identification and return home.

Corporal Gray was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in South Boston, Virginia in November 1929. He was perhaps the first Virginian to die fighting Communism. He would not be the last.

Halifax County Memorial Day

Fourth District VFW Senior Vice-Commander Greg Eanes supported the Halifax County Memorial Day service with historical research and a speech delivered by Dr. Gerald Burnette. The Halifax War Memorial lists over 700 names of local veterans that died in wartime. Commander Eanes' research identified two more names for the memorial. The two men were brothers in the American Revolution, one dying of disease at Valley Forge and the other killed in action at Guilford Court House. Eanes' research also identified Corporal Alson W. Gray, Co. K, 339th Infantry, a Halifax man who might very well have been the first Virginian killed in a war against



Contributed Photo

Communism. Gray was attached to the 89th Division in 1918 but got sick, was hospitalized, and later transferred to the 339th (a Michigan and Wisconsin unit) which was part of the famous AEF in North Russia or 'Polar Bear Expedition'. Pictured at the Halifax War Memorial, from left to right are, Commander Eanes, local historian Douglas Powell and Sons of the American Revolution Honor Guard member Mike Giesinger. All three men are members of the Dan River Chapter Sons of the American Revolution.

Post 7819 Youth Activity

Avery Reed, 6, 'mugs' for the camera as he and his brother Jase, 8, (on right) get a safety lecture from a VFW Post 7819 member on the types of knots used to secure hunters when they are using tree stands. Outdoor recreation safety lectures are a continuous topic during youth activities conducted by rural VFW posts which often take advantage of private and public lands for youth activities.



Photo by Greg Eanes

Avery & Jase Reed participate in VFW 7819 youth activities

Farmville VFW Post 7059 Participates in Community Food Drive



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2022 **A7** THE FARMVILLE HERALD

Food donated

VFW Post 7059 collected and donated over 400 pounds of food to the St. Teresa Food Distribution Center. The effort is in conjunction with the National VFW United To Combat Hunger program. The present economic situation has posed an increased demand for food banks to assist those in need. Pictured are VFW Post 7059 volunteers, from left front row, Commander Dean Lord, Auxiliary members Flora Lord and Clara Elder. Back row, Stephen Wray, and Fred Hill. Not pictured Sharon Perutelli.

Farmville VFW Post 7059 Receives Donation

Farmville VFW Post 7059 Commander Dean Lord (left) and Quartermaster Fred Hill (center) received a \$500 donation from Jake Romaine, co-owner of the North Street Press Club in Farmville during Independence Day celebrations in downtown Farmville on July 2nd. Romaine invited Post 7059 to set up an information and recruiting tent next to the bandstand resulting in multiple inquiries and donations. Romaine is also a member of the VFW.



Farmville VFW Post Recruiting Tent

Farmville VFW Post 7059 hosted a recruiting tent during Independence Day celebrations in the town of Farmville on July 2nd. The tent was erected adjacent to the North Street Press Club restaurant at the invitation of co-owner and VFW member Jake Romaine. It resulted in multiple visitations by veterans and other citizens simply wanting to say, 'thank you for your service'. Post Quartermaster Fred Hill in the celebratory Red, White and Blue shirt and Post Commander Dean Lord and his wife Flora, a VFW Auxiliary member, were among those working the tent.

Photos by Greg Eanes



Fourth District VFW Commander Starts New Year

Veterans of Foreign Wars Fourth District Commander Gus Villalobos of Victoria officially began a new term Saturday following a swearing in ceremony at the State VFW Convention in Portsmouth.

The 89-year-old retired Navy Master Chief shows no signs of slowing down as he promotes the work of the VFW throughout Southside Virginia. His district stretches from Buckingham to Clarksville, Farmville, South Hill to Amelia and everything in between.

Korean War

Born in El Paso, Texas and raised in Indiana, Gus joined the Navy at the age of 18. There was a war in Korea and he wanted to do his duty for his country. He reported directly to his ship, the USS SOUTHERLAND (DDR-743) and became a "Radioman Striker" which was basically an apprentice for on-the-job training.

In that capacity he learned Morse Code and became proficient in translating Morse messages for consumption by the ship's Captain and senior staff. He said, "Morse was the mode of communications. You had to type the dit-dots. You become very good at it." To this day, he can still read and transmit Morse Code.

The SOUTHERLAND was a radar-picket destroyer; equipped with sensitive radar equipment that increased the range of detection of enemy aircraft and surface vessels. Gus recalled the ship conducting shore bombardment on Communist gun batteries and threats to Allied ground forces further inland. It also conducted coastal patrols and escort duty for U.S. aircraft carriers in the Sea of Japan and Yellow Sea. On one occasion the SOUTHERLAND was hit by a Communist shore battery, but damage was minimal.

Gus recalled, "Excitement! It happened so fast I wasn't scared." He also recalled the Communists floated mines in the waterways to sink the American ships and all onboard.

Gus earned a Combat Action Ribbon, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal for Korea and the China Service Medal during that deployment. He was also authorized the Republic of Korea's War Service Medal.

He left the Navy after his first hitch to attend college but re-enlisted within 90 days as a Radioman First Class. In time he cross-trained as a Cryptologic Technician and earned the top enlisted rank of Master Chief Petty Officer retiring in 1974. He was the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Naval Security Group in Rota

Spain at the time.

VFW Work

After retiring from a second civilian career, Gus and his wife Aggi, herself a Hoosier navy veteran, moved to Lunenburg where her two brothers and their families had moved. Gus joined the VFW twelve years ago as a member of the Victoria Post and has held many leadership positions in the Post and District, serving as District Commander on four occasions.

This week he was at the VFW State Convention proudly watching four Posts in the District receive awards for the All-American Team and other recognitions. "Across the District, our members are doing good things for their communities, from our youth programs to aiding veterans and their families," Gus said. "Seeing our local members get recognition for their work is a good thing."



"Our desire for the new 2022-2023 year is that all of our District Posts earn All-American rank," he said. "That means we also need to reach out to eligible wartime veterans to welcome them 'home' so they can enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of our veteran community."

Individuals interested in the Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars can visit <https://vfwva.org> to find a VFW Post near them.

Department Convention Comes to Portsmouth



2022 Department Convention State, District and Post awardees



Photos from top left to right: Honor Guard member Howard Minton & Past Dept. President Betty Gimble / State Commander Butch Schupska and Post 1503 Commander, Tom Levitt / Our Department HQ team, Adj-QM Ed Mann and Administrative Assistant Angie Lipscomb.



Department of Virginia Auxiliary being sworn into office



Department of Virginia Auxiliary exchange the gavel





Two Nottoway Posts Recognized

Haywood Anderson, Commander of Nottoway VFW Post 5313 and Greg Eanes, Commander of Gold Star Memorial VFW Post 7819 in Crewe represented their organizations when officially recognized with the coveted 'All-State' award at the Department of Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars annual convention in Portsmouth. In addition to the certificates, the commanders received 'All State Team' hats which are white service caps versus the traditional green service cap. To earn All-State recognition Post members must exceed membership requirements, support VFW National programs such as Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen and show a record of public service to their communities. Commander Anderson is a retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major and veteran of Global War on Terror deployments. Commander Eanes is a DESERT STORM and GWOT veteran.



Photo by Greg Eanes



VFW Virginia Photo

Fourth in the State

Farmville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7059 earned Fourth Place and a \$200 check for their Community Service Book at the VFW State Convention in Portsmouth. Farmville Post Commander Dean Lord said, "It was a complete surprise. I heard our Post called out and couldn't believe it." Lord said a lot of time and effort was devoted to the book which documents the work of the local Post in the Farmville and Prince Edward communities. Pictured on left is Fourth District Commander Gus Villalobos congratulating Commander Lord (right) on the convention floor. Commander Lord is a Vietnam veteran having served 23 months in operational waters on the USS VALLEY FORGE and the USS HECTOR

South Hill VFW Makes All-State Team

South Hill Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7166 was recognized at the VFW State Convention in Portsmouth for earning the much coveted 'All-State' recognition. In addition to the certificates, the commanders received 'All State Team' hats which are white service caps versus the traditional green service cap. To earn All-State recognition Post members must exceed membership requirements, support VFW National programs such as Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen and show a record of public service to their communities. Pictured, from left to right are Commander Rolinda Gillam (giving the 'thumbs up' sign for a job well done), Junior Vice-Commander Karo Gilliam, both formerly of the 61st Maintenance Squadron in Korea (1989-1990) and Quartermaster Clinton Lewis, formerly with the 301st Signal Brigade in Afghanistan (2004-2005) In addition to taking 'All-State', the Post Auxiliary received a Certificate of Outstanding Service to the community.



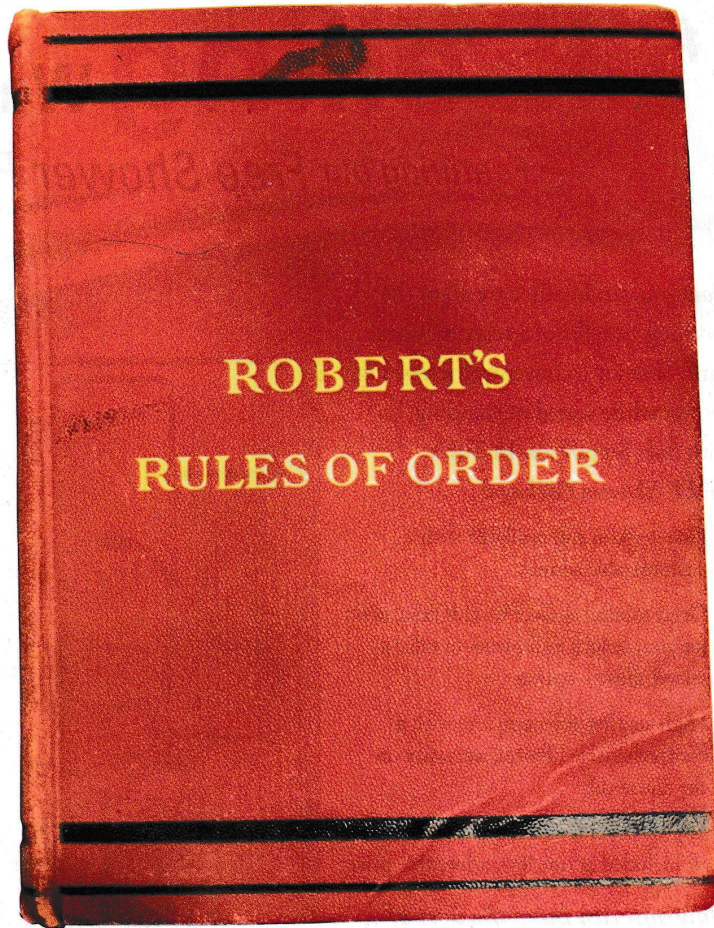
Photo by Greg Eanes

Robert and His Rules

Army officer created set of parliamentary procedures used by American Legion, other organizations.

BY DOUGLAS E. OSBORN

After presiding over a contentious public meeting at a church in New Bedford, Mass., Army engineering officer Henry Martyn Robert wrote his own manual on parliamentary procedure, now in its 12th edition.



Many organizations claim to use Robert's Rules of Order, but just as many either don't understand them or don't use them correctly. As a result, the world is filled with well-intentioned organizations where these rules are used improperly, irregularly or only partially. But where did these rules come from? Who invented Robert's Rules of Order? And what has their influence been over the past century?

The man behind the rules is Henry Martyn Robert. Born in South Carolina, Robert received his appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point when he was 16. In 1857, he graduated fourth in his class and was commissioned as a second lieutenant assigned to the Corps of

Engineers. When the Civil War began, Robert remained loyal to the United States. He helped plan defenses around Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia Harbor, and was subsequently promoted to first lieutenant. Soon thereafter he was transferred to New Bedford, Mass.

Robert was elected chairman of a public meeting at the First Baptist Church in New Bedford. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss harbor defense, but discussion devolved into disorderly chaos. Embarrassed by his lack of knowledge about how to run a meeting, Robert used this experience to begin collecting information about parliamentary procedure on note cards that he carried for several years.

Transferred to San Francisco, he was asked to take a leadership role at the First Baptist Church of California, and soon learned that people from various parts of the country had many different ideas of how a meeting should be run.

Recognizing a need for a general reference tool, Robert began to seriously research and study parliamentary law – the basic rules of order that originated in England. He researched both the historical and current rules to develop a set procedure that could be used by modern-day meetings. His research resulted in a short reference guide in 1869, created for himself and his friends to facilitate church meetings.

Robert's research continued into the spring of 1874, and although it was ready to go to press he couldn't find a publisher for his work. It was at this point, at the suggestion of his wife – who felt the rules might be too complex – that he added two new sections. The first section dealt with practical matters such as the scheduling of meetings and preparation of agendas. The second addressed legal rights of assemblies and the correct procedures for regulating behavior at meetings.

Once the manuscript was completed in 1875, Robert paid to have 4,000 unbound copies of "Rules of Order" typeset and printed by Burdick & Armitage, printers in Milwaukee. In early 1876, again with his own money, he paid publisher S.C. Griggs & Co. in Chicago to manage the sale and distribution of the "Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies."

Officially published on Feb. 19, 1876, 1,000 copies of the first edition were given free to civic leaders, educators, church groups and parliamentarians across the United States. That act helped create a tremendous demand, and the remaining 3,000 copies were sold out by May.

At the end of Robert's military career, on April 30, 1901, President William McKinley



Henry Martyn Robert Wikimedia Commons

rewarded him for his 44 years of service, promoting him to the rank of brigadier general and appointing him chief of the Corps of Engineers. Just two days later, on his birthday of May 2, he retired from the Army at 64.

Robert spent the rest of his life writing new rules and revising old ones, answering questions on points of order and accepting suggestions that were incorporated into the later editions of his book.

In 1915, "Robert's Rules of Order, Revised," featuring new material and a new copyright, was published. "Parliamentary Practice: An Introduction to Parliamentary Law" was published in 1921.

On May 11, 1923, Henry Martyn Robert died at 86 in Hornell, N.Y. The Robert family was active as the owner of the rules up through the sixth edition in 1951. They established the Council of the Robert's Rules Association, which currently owns the copyrights and continues to maintain the rules.

A quick internet search reveals more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. Robert's Rules of Order has withstood the test of time and is generally specified in the bylaws of most of these nonprofit organizations nationally as well as worldwide. In 2003, when the Hussein regime was toppled, the Iraqi Parliament was provided a translation to guide their new democracy. Today, government bodies, city and town councils, planning boards, school committees and every one of the more than 12,000 American Legion posts continue to rely on Robert's Rules of Order as the foundation for effective meetings. 🌐

Douglas E. Osborn is a retired lieutenant colonel who served 25 years in the Army, with assignments to Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and the continental United States. He is a member of Stafford American Legion Post 290 in Virginia.

Chesty Puller Post 1503 in Dale City and comrades from District 10, participate in National Day of Service

In partnership with the VFW 10th District of Virginia, more than 10 volunteers from VFW Post 1503, Dale City, Virginia; VFW Post 1503 Auxiliary, Dale City, Virginia; and VFW Post 8469, Fairfax Station, Virginia swung hammers, peeled off rotting boards and repaired more than 1,600 feet of fence at the Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP).



VFW #DayofService volunteers arrived early in the morning while it was sprinkling in Northern Virginia. Many volunteers including VFW Post 1503 Com-

mander Tom Levitt and VFW Post 1503 Junior Vice Commander Ben Guinan took a day of vacation to participate in the VFW #DayofService at NVTRP.

The VFW #DayofService at NVTRP began with an introduction from Kelsey Gallagher, the NVTRP Executive Director who welcomed the group as clouds broke up over Northern Virginia. Like the VFW #DayofService volunteers Kelsey first started with NVTRP as a volunteer in 2001 and continued to get more involved as she recognized the profound difference that NVTRP makes in people's lives. Now as Executive Director, her responsibilities include setting the strategic development and financial management of the organization, collaboration with the board of directors to accomplish the organization's mission and vision, and ensuring continued quality services. Working with the maintenance staff the #DayofService volunteers pried off rotting boards, then measured, sometimes more than twice, and cut the boards for the fences.



Top left, Comrade's Ken and Marcia Eggars cutting lumber, Lower left, Post 1503 Auxiliary President, Kelli Levitt ripping a board for installation, top center— Post 1503 Auxiliary presenting a donation check to Kelsey Gallagher, the Executive President of NVTRP. Top right— Post 1503 Auxiliary member Jan Kiecker attaching fence boards, Lower Right 1503 Post Commander attaching boards to fence post.



Department Commander participates in groundbreaking ceremony of the Desert Storm Memorial

By Geoff Lyster

On July 14, 2022 I attended the National Desert Shield-Desert Storm Memorial groundbreaking.

VFW National Commander in Chief Fritz Mihelcic spoke on the prominent role the VFW played in the development of this memorial. The VFW donated \$500,000 for the site plan and development. It was through our development effort that this memorial gained approval by Congress, and subsequent funding by the government of Kuwait.

The memorial site is at the SW corner of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street NW, across the street from the



Vietnam Memorial. The design for the memorial will not include names of the fallen soldiers but will instead represent all who served (according to the Desert Shield-Desert Storm Association). The memorial is expected to be completed by 2024.

The goal of the memorial is to create an educational and meaningful experience for visitors about the historical events of Desert Storm and Desert

Shield. It is also expected to illustrate the significance of the 34-nation coalition that united to liberate Kuwait from Iraq and defended Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula from further invasion.



VFW National Commander in Chief Fritz Mihelcic and Department of Virginia Commander Geoffrey Lyster

WWII Vet Reads Poem to Wife of 77 years Pete Anastasi is a long time member of Post 7589

A Manassas couple is marking more than seven decades of marriage, their courtship starting during WWII. Pete Anastasi dedicated this sweet poem to his wife, Betty. *[If you are reading this online you can] listen to [Pete read it here](#).*

Cheers to Pete and Betty. Party time!! 77 years! They had a champagne toast, Anniversary Wedding cake, Delicious food and Pete's favorite soft pretzels. In addition to friends and family, Channel 4 news and Manassas mayor Michelle Davis-Younger were there to help Pete & Betty celebrate. The reception was held at the Freedom Museum in Old Town Manassas.



PHOTOS FROM FACEBOOK

The 122nd VFW National Convention



Part of the Virginia delegation to the National convention



Commander in Chief Fritz Mihelcic



VFW Auxiliary National President Jean Hamil



Kansas City Mayor Quentin Lucas



General Martin Dempsey—Distinguished Service Award



Taiwan Vice-minister of Veterans Services Wu Chih-Yang



Missouri governor Mike Parson



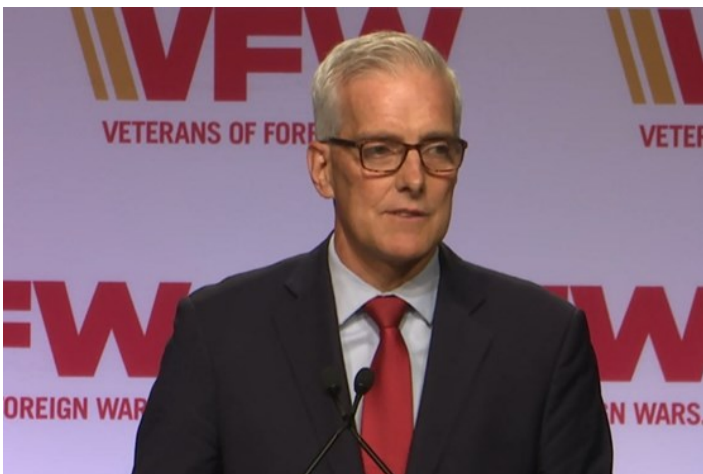
Daniela Ware National Voice of Democracy winner



John Wayne Troxell VFW National Ambassador



Past Commander in Chief Hal Roesch receives the outstanding service award



VA Secretary Denis McDonough



State Commander Geoff Lyster presents Aurora, the VFW National Home Buddy Poppy Child, a \$250 donation from our Virginia delegates

Virginia All-Americans honored at the National Convention



Troy Wagers — Post 392



Tom Levitt Post — 1503



Todd Taylor Post — 3103



Richard Jefferson — Post 2239



Linda Endyke — Post 4639



Ron Riffle — Post 4809



Doris Wollett — Post 9808



Alex McKenna — Post 12202



Mike Chisolm — District 2



Ken Shannon — District 3



Jeff Dombroff — District 8



Robert (Check) Adamczyk — District 10



Butch Schupska — Department of VA



Southern Conference Commanders receive the trophy for best in class