

# CHECKPOINT

NEWS FROM VFW'S FRONT LINES

*'Truly a Team Effort'*

## Posts Cross State Borders to Return Headstones

PHOTOS BY ADAM BRIMER/KNOXVILLE NEWS SENTINEL



Bob Letellier of the Volunteer State Veterans War Era Honor Guard presents Sharon Carmichael, daughter of Navy Reserve Seaman First Class George Tate, Jr., with a folded U.S. flag. A ceremony marked the return of three gravestones belonging to military servicemen at Post 1733 in Knoxville, Tenn., on Dec. 7, 2010.

**"It doesn't matter where they were from or when they served, they are our comrades as surely as the VFW members who attend our Post meetings today."**

**—Bill O'Donnell, senior vice commander, Post 10785, Bellevue, Neb.**



The headstone of George Andrew Tate, Jr., is one of three headstones of WWII veterans from Knoxville, Tenn., found abandoned in a garage in Omaha, Neb.

**A STRANGE DISCOVERY** in a vacant rental house led to Posts in two VFW Departments working together to solve a mystery.

In September 2010, cleaning crews found several military headstones—each belonging to a World War II veteran—scattered throughout a rental property in Omaha, Neb. Area police and local journalists conducted an investigation to unearth how the markers ended up on the property and to whom the markers belonged.

Though the investigation did not yield information regarding how the headstones ended up in the rental property, local journalists did find family members of the veterans legibly named on the grave markers in Knoxville, Tenn.

It was then that Bill O'Donnell, senior vice commander of Post 10785 in Bellevue, Neb., stepped in.

"I didn't want those grave markers sitting around

waiting for the government funds to be approved to ship them to Knoxville, or worse, for the families to have to bring them home at their own expense," O'Donnell said.

O'Donnell worked closely with Gary Laymance of Post 1733 in Knoxville, Tenn., to locate resources to safely transport the markers to the families. Community members volunteered transportation and storage services. Drivers Robert and Jill King of Orland, Calif., drove the markers from Nebraska to Tennessee at their own expense.

"It's profoundly gratifying to know that with one phone call, these folks committed to doing whatever was needed to make this event happen," O'Donnell said. "It was truly a team effort among people who, for the most part, had never met."

The two Posts held small presentation ceremonies for the families receiving the overdue grave markers.

The departure ceremony, given by Post 10785, included presenting capitol-flown flags to be placed atop the markers for the journey home. The Tennessee Post held a reception ceremony for the families at which it presented both U.S. flags and Tennessee flags.

"The markers were presented to the families with the utmost dignity, honor and professional pride," O'Donnell said.

Even though no one at either Post had any ties to the men honored on the headstones, they worked together to return the markers so that families could have some closure.

"It doesn't matter where they were from or when they served, they are our comrades as surely as the VFW members who attend our Post meetings today," O'Donnell said. "There were families who wanted to honor their loved ones, so our Post made it happen."

*E-mail kgibson@vfw.org*

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A California girl took home top honors and joined 52 other Department winners as they made friends and toured the historic sites of the nation's capitol.

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Send us photos of VFW members serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. You can earn your Post recognition and a free *Checkpoint* subscription.

## EXTRA! EXTRA!

### VFW OFFERS TICKETS FOR MICHIGAN RACE

Fans can now purchase the VFW Race Day offer for the VFW 200 race at Michigan International Speedway on Aug. 20. The package includes reserved grandstand seating, access to the VFW Hospitality Tent, and pit access with a guided pit tour.

To order, call **(517) 592-1285** and request the VFW offer. You do not have to be a VFW member to attend.

### AIRPORT SHUTTLES AVAILABLE AT CONVENTION

Transportation from the San Antonio International Airport to convention hotels will be available from Go Airport Shuttle.

Ticket booths are located in the baggage area in both terminals.

One-way tickets can be purchased for \$16, or \$28 for round-trip.

For advance reservations, call **(210) 281-9900** or book online and print a coupon at [www.saairportshuttle.com](http://www.saairportshuttle.com).

### LIFE MEMBERSHIP BOARD DETERMINES PAYOUTS

A professional actuarial firm recently evaluated VFW's Life Membership Fund. Based on the conclusions made by the Cottonwood Group of Overland Park, Kan., the Life Membership Board of Trustees—with the concurrence of the National Council of Administration—determined that, for the 2011-12 membership year, the Life Membership Fund will pay out to National Headquarters and respective Posts, Departments:

- \$3.34 for each Plan A, B and C life member.
- \$4.06 for each Plan D life member.
- \$8.72 for each Plan E life member. Payment will be made in September for all life members recorded as of Aug. 31.

In addition, \$8.72 will be paid in January 2012 for each life member processed from September 2011 through December 2011 (Plan E) to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters.

For more information, call Robert Crider, VFW's director of Member Dues Processing, at **(816) 756-3390**.

### CONTACT VFW FOR LIFE INSURANCE INFORMATION

VFW National Headquarters has worked to find the best rates for high-limit term life insurance. Our vendor uses a vast product database to help secure coverage while saving money and providing financial security for VFW members and their family members.

These plans give access to coverage from \$100,000 to \$3 million. Plans require full underwriting and offer affordable rates to those who qualify. Get a quote online at [www.vfwinsurance.com](http://www.vfwinsurance.com) or call **1-800-715-5836, ext. 6829**.

### GET MORE FROM VFW, CHECKPOINT ONLINE

Is your Post keeping up with social media trends? If you think you are "too old," you may be surprised to find out that 54% of VFW magazine's Facebook fans are ages 35-54 and 16% are over 55.

Watch for a future *Checkpoint* article for information on how to use social media at your Post. To get an overview about what Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites are, check out the May 2011 issue of VFW magazine now.

Go online to visit VFW magazine and *Checkpoint*, provide feedback and read exclusive content.

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/vfwmag](http://www.twitter.com/vfwmag)

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Website: [www.vfwmagazine.org](http://www.vfwmagazine.org)



Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General

## USAA Donates \$250,000 for 'Return the Favor'

**WE HAVE A NEW PARTNER** to help us "return the favor" to the nation's veterans and their families. On March 7, USAA donated \$250,000 to the VFW Foundation for the Return the Favor campaign.

Return the Favor is an awareness and fundraising effort that aims to honor, celebrate and support active-duty troops, military retirees and their families. It provides programs and services that fill in governmental assistance gaps for troops abroad, deserving military families back home and America's veterans.

Specific services include financial assistance grants for housing, medical or basic assistance needs, assistance filing disability and benefit claims, and welcome-home and send-off events for troops.

USAA, which is now an official sponsor of Return the Favor, is a Fortune 500 financial services company offering banking, investing and insurance to veterans and their families.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Stephen M. Speakes, USAA's executive vice president for enterprise strategy and planning, presented the \$250,000 check



Larry Maher, Quartermaster General

## Time for Flag Replacement

**SPRING IS A GOOD TIME** to assess your personal, Post's and community's need to replace tattered or faded flags. It's a great community service project for a VFW Post to purchase flags and donate them to charitable organizations, schools or other places in your community. Why not pick a veteran, patriot or member who flies the U.S. flag every day and present him or her with a new flag on Flag Day?

The VFW Store is one of the top sellers of U.S. flags in the country. We have a flag adviser on staff who can help you choose the right flag for your needs.

We stock everything from light-weight, economical outdoor flags, to the toughest, longest-lasting flags available. We also offer top-quality grave markers and flags for Memorial Day. We are proud that all of our flags are made in the U.S.

Remind your members and local businesses they can purchase U.S. flags at rock-bottom prices through



to VFW Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank at VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, Mo. Chief Eubank said VFW deeply appreciates the gesture.

"This sponsorship reflects USAA's ongoing, total support for those who have served and continue to serve our nation," the Chief said. "USAA's exceptional benevolence on behalf of America's service members and veteran communities is truly remarkable."

Speakes said USAA's donation "will enable VFW to give the very best to the people who dedicated their lives to serving our country."

This isn't the first time USAA has generously supported a VFW cause. The group donated \$55,000 to our Operation Uplink program for a Free Call Day on Veterans Day 2009. It enabled some 70,000 troops serving overseas to call home and speak with their families and loved ones.

For more information about the Return the Favor campaign, visit [www.returnthefavor.org](http://www.returnthefavor.org). To learn more about USAA, access [www.usaa.com](http://www.usaa.com).

the VFW Store, where every penny stays in VFW and is used to help veterans, military troops and their families.

Did you know that the VFW Store has been providing emblematic and personalized merchandise to



members since 1915? If you don't see what you need in the catalog or online just give us a call. Chances are we can get it for you at very competitive prices.

Keep us in mind for quantity orders for Post and Department events—fundraisers, milestone anniversaries, golf or bowling events, shirts and caps for members and employees, gifts for incoming or outgoing officers. We can provide all this and more.

For pricing on quantity purchases, call Sonja Cutright at **(816) 968-1161**.

Order online at [www.vfwstore.org](http://www.vfwstore.org) or call **1-800-821-2606**.

## CHECKPOINT

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Correspondence can be sent to the editor at VFW National Headquarters.

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## Post Service Officer Focuses on Networking and Relationships

**MODEST IS A GOOD WORD** to describe Scott Bennett. For Bennett, being a service officer for Post 8126 in Havre de Grace, Md., is just another way to show his appreciation for VFW and the veteran community.

"I'm just another ordinary guy in the VFW, and I made an impact," Bennett said. "If someone needs help, I'm there. Anyone can do it if they're willing."

Bennett, a retired Army master sergeant, served during the Persian Gulf War. Much of his 20 years of service he worked doing casualty reporting.

Encouraged by a positive experience with VFW's Maryland Department service officer, and driven by the desire to better his Post, Bennett decided to help other veterans by becoming a Post service officer. He has acted in that role for four years.

"I like the idea of helping vets," Bennett said. "We [Post 8126] didn't have something like that, so I thought I'd give it a try."

It is Bennett's dedication to each case that truly makes an impact. He works a full-time job on top of his involvement with the Post, which includes serving as the Post's membership chair and regularly volunteering at Friday bingo nights, but he makes each veteran his top priority.

Recently, Bennett helped an 89-year-old World War II veteran receive retroactive benefits for his frostbite-damaged feet. The veteran was granted 70% disability benefits and received \$16,000 in back pay.

"You'd have thought I gave him the Taj Mahal," Bennett said. "It wasn't about the money. It was the fact that somebody would help."

For Bennett, knowing that he has reached out to help someone in need is the best kind of reward.

"It's not that you're trying to win any accolades," Bennett said. "Someone tells me they have a problem, and I say, 'Do you know that you have the VFW? They just want to help you.' You help someone who is vulnerable. It has nothing to do with money. It has to do with that personal relationship."

The best piece of advice Bennett has for other service officers is to be sure to attend the service officer meetings. Simply having the forms is not enough. Successful Post service officers have the knowledge required to recognize a case and to fill out the forms. Bennett also stresses the power of networking.

"Develop a relationship with the service office staff, because they really know the game," Bennett said. "If you have a relationship with them, it's much more effective."

His networking has benefitted those seeking successful claims, as well as helped boost the Post's membership. Making contacts by attending and hosting veteran events has expanded Bennett's pool of acquaintances, allowing him to share all of the services and support veterans can get through VFW.

"If you're willing to help vets, work on the strength of the Post," Bennett said. "Work on networking to run into more people to help. If you let the Post get small, your impact gets small."

Members of Post 8126 see Bennett as an invaluable resource. Post Commander Steve Koester often seeks Bennett out for wisdom and guidance.

"I am grateful to Scott for his tenacity in getting a prompt turnaround for members," Koester wrote in his recommendation of Bennett. "This is what VFW has to do: get and keep good people and recognize them. [Scott's] dedication to duty is above and definitely beyond."

Bennett hopes to grow roots for his Post by targeting potential members who plan to stay in the community for a long time. He said that without the strength of the Post, he could not possibly be as effective in his work.

"I give back at the VFW [Post]," Bennett said. "I go there because that Post and all the guys I work with magnify all I could do individually."

*E-mail kgibson@vfw.org*

Veterans can get help filing VA claims from VFW's network of service officers on the national, Department and Post levels.

To find a VFW service officer in your state or to get help filing a claim, access [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). Then click on "Assistance" (see above), "National Veterans Service." Select your Department from the drop-down menu (see right).

To get the address of the nearest VA regional office, call **1-800-827-1000**.



Scott Bennett, a service officer for Post 8126 in Havre de Grace, Md., was on active duty for 20 years and served in the Persian Gulf War. He works full-time on top of assisting other VFW members with anything they may need, and he said he wished he could devote all of his time to being a service officer like many who are retired do.

**"I'm just another ordinary guy in the VFW, and I made an impact. If someone needs help, I'm there. Anyone can do it if they're willing."**

**—Scott Bennett, Havre de Grace, Md., Post 8126 service officer**



## WANTED

### OUTSTANDING SERVICE OFFICERS

We would like to hear about the hard work your Post and Department service officers are doing. If you would like to see them receive some much-deserved recognition, send us a brief note explaining why.

Please send information to:

**Checkpoint**

**Attn: Outstanding Service Officers  
406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111**

**Phone: (816) 968-1171**

**E-mail: [tdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:tdyhouse@vfw.org)**

# Voice of Democracy Winner

PHOTO BY MICHAEL DOYLE



Representing the Department of California, Kelsey Woo receives the \$30,000 first-place T.C. Selman Scholarship in VFW's Voice of Democracy competition in March in Washington, D.C. Presenting Woo the check is Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank and Ladies Auxiliary Senior Vice President Gwen Rankin.

**WHEN CALIFORNIA'S KELSEY WOO** thought about the 2011 Voice of Democracy (VOD) theme, "Does My Generation Have a Role in America's Future?" she couldn't help but think of celebrities near her age.

"It was apparent to me that who truly represents our generation and has a huge role in our future are the men and women who selflessly serve," Woo said.

Her essay, which won her VFW's first-place \$30,000 T.C. Selman Scholarship, begins with an Army private serving in Afghanistan. Two days later, the private's family back home in Nashville receives word that he has been killed.

Woo said he is a representation of her generation. She wrote: "The news footage from Afghanistan is the reality TV show that represents my generation—not Jersey Shore, not the Kardashians. Young Americans are fighting and dying on the battlefield and coming home to be fitted for artificial limbs. That is why our generation will not allow ourselves to be defined by the media as selfish, spoiled young adults."

A senior at Harvard-Westlake School in North Hollywood, Woo found out about the VOD program through a family friend whose daughter had previously participated. Competing in the 2010 competition last year, Woo was runner up for the Department of California.

When Woo found out she had won in the state this year and would be competing at the national level in Washington, D.C., in March, she was excited.

"I was thrilled," she said. "I was ecstatic to represent the Department of California."

She was one of 53 youth (the Department of Wyoming winner couldn't make it due to inclement weather) to travel to the nation's capital for several days of site-seeing and an awards ceremony.

Sponsored by Post 10694 in Santa Ana, Calif., Woo said her first call after finding out she won was to her boyfriend because her parents also had traveled to Washington for the ceremony.

"My parents were elated and so grateful for the wonderful experience," Woo said.

**"It was apparent to me that who truly represents our generation and has a huge role in our future are the men and women who selflessly serve."**

**—Kelsey Woo, 2011 Voice of Democracy winner**

While she has not yet decided what college she will attend in the fall, she has narrowed down her fields of interest to writing/journalism, music and the classics.

Next month the VOD winners will travel to Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa.

*E-mail [jblankenship@vfw.org](mailto:jblankenship@vfw.org)*

## What to Know about VOD

VFW established the Voice of Democracy program in 1947 to provide students in grades 9-12 the opportunity to express themselves in regards to democratic ideas and principles.

Each year, more than 51,000 high school students from across the country enter to win a share of the \$2.2 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded at VFW's Post, District, Department and national levels through the audio-essay competition.

The national first-place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's university, college or vocational/technical school. Other national scholarships range from \$1,000-\$16,000 and the first-place winner from each Department (state competition) wins an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

# Defends Her Generation



On their visit to the nation's capital in March, students had the opportunity to visit all the major tourist sites such as the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery and the Holocaust Museum.



During their week together, lasting friendships were formed among the students from all walks of life.

PHOTOS COURTESY CASSIA WAGNER, TANYA GODIN



The Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall is always a popular destination with the VOD winners on their site-seeing ventures. The National WWII Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and Vietnam Memorial were stops, too.



Department of Montana winner Cassia Wagner enjoys a statue of George Washington in the rotunda at the U.S. Capitol building.



Ladies Auxiliary Senior Vice President Gwen Rankin and VFW Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank, center, are joined by the VOD winners prior to the awards ceremony in March in Washington, D.C. These students represented more than 51,000 who entered the audio-essay competition this year.

# World War II Veterans Leading VFW Posts from Coast to Coast

THE CHECKPOINT STAFF EXTENDS A HEARTY "THANK YOU" to all our World War II Post leaders, members and veterans. And we want to recognize those who still devote time and energy to VFW causes.

Listed below are 42 WWII veterans who serve VFW Posts in official capacities. Checkpoint has recognized a total of 990 such Post leaders since the March/April 2009 issue. We will continue to feature this section in subsequent issues until every WWII Post leader whose name is submitted is recognized.

If you would like to recognize a WWII veteran who *currently* serves your Post, please send us his or her name, official Post position and your Post's location. Send information to:

Checkpoint  
 Attn: WWII Leaders  
 406 W. 34th Street  
 Kansas City, MO 64111  
 E-mail: [tdyhouse@vfw.org](mailto:tdyhouse@vfw.org)

Name	Position	Post/Location
Elmer Allemann	Chaplain	Post 4182, Hermann, Mo.
Frank Andrews	Trustee	Post 1761, Bangor, Maine
Billy Armogost	Chaplain	Post 7311, Absarokee, Mont.
James Bailey	Commander	Post 9053, Long Bottom, Ohio
Ralph Ballard	Chaplain	Post 9053, Long Bottom, Ohio
Claude H. Belisle	Surgeon	Post 3641, Pueblo, Colo.
Pete Bertram	Service Officer	Post 7311, Absarokee, Mont.
George Betz	Quartermaster	Post 7878, King of Prussia, Pa.
Raymond J. Blackwell	Chaplain	Post 3641, Pueblo, Colo.
Joe Chestnut	Chaplain	Post 4964, Washington C.H., Ohio
Frank Cimino	Chaplain	Post 9086, Torrington, Conn.
Paul Colburn	Judge Advocate	Post 1761, Bangor, Maine
Charles Diefenbacher	Commander	Post 2782, Norwich, N.Y.
John Dietz	Sr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 34, Newport, Pa.
Richard Fagner	Guard	Post 44, Clifton Springs, N.Y.
Wilbert Finton	Service Officer	Post 34, Newport, Pa.
Gene K. Foster	Commander	Post 3974, Eldora, Iowa
R. Gene Fout	Commander	Post 4964, Washington C.H., Ohio
Robert Frederick	Trustee	Post 2751, Somers, Wis.
Joseph D. Gregory	Commander	Post 10112, Cos Cob, Conn.



Name	Position	Post/Location
B.L. Herring	Trustee	Post 6125, Encampment, Wyo.
Harold J. Holman	Judge Advocate	Post 1230, Sheboygan, Wis.
Ben Jamison	Comm. Chrmn.	Post 4964, Washington C.H., Ohio
Ray Killian	Commander	Post 1373, Cle Elum, Wash.
Elton Knutson	Guard	Post 3088, Sturgeon Bay, Wis.
Bill Linden	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 9086, Torrington, Conn.
Tony Marzullo	Aide de Camp	Post 10112, Cos Cob, Conn.
John Mastrocola	Officer of the Day	Post 9086, Torrington, Conn.
Ed Meyer	Trustee	Post 4964, Washington C.H., Ohio
Donald Micco	Service Officer	Post 6846, Geneva, Ohio
Felix "Sonny" Minelli	Trustee	Post 9086, Torrington, Conn.
Walter Moore	Trustee	Post 8759, Amelia Court House, Va.
Joseph Murry	Service Officer	Post 5852, Lutcher, La.
George Neckermann	Jr. Vice Cmdr.	Post 5741, Park Hills, Mo.
Vince Pale	Trustee	Post 5343, Villas, N.J.
Tom Riley	Honor Guard Chrmn.	Post 4964, Washington C.H., Ohio
Benjamin Roujansky	Commander	Post 1615, Orangeburg, N.Y.
Joseph E. Schweitzer	Chaplain	Post 1060, Newark, Ohio
Sam Sheldon	Officer of the Day	Post 4182, Hermann, Mo.
Delbert Smith	Trustee	Post 9053, Long Bottom, Ohio
Leigh Smith	Service Officer	Post 44, Clifton Springs, N.Y.
Frank Woods	Monument Chrmn.	Post 4964, Washington C.H., Ohio

## Post Sponsors Dinner for Single Airmen



AIR FORCE PHOTO BY ERICKA ENGBLOM

Members of Post 3280 in Clovis, N.M., serve food during the Single Airman's Dinner on Dec. 14, 2010, at Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico. More than 300 airmen attended the Post-sponsored event, which also included dancing and prizes, such as iPods, gift cards and a flat-screen TV.



PHOTO COURTESY ERNIE BAKER

Department of Michigan Buddy Poppy Chairman Mike Lipka recognizes Post 334 members Jim Trumble, who organized the Post's effort to raise some \$14,000, and Jim Hubbard, who distributed \$1,903 worth of Poppies, on July 8, 2010, at a Post meeting. District 5 Commander Jim Galen (far right) participated in the presentation.

### 98-Member Post Excels in Campaign

## Post's Poppy Drive Reaches \$14,000

POST 334 IN LAKE ORION, MICH., distributed more Buddy Poppies than any other Michigan Post during its annual three-day Poppy drive in May 2010.

Post member Jim Trumble chaired the Poppy drive, which raised \$14,721.19. The money supports the Post's community service activities. Another Post member, Jim Hubbard, handed out \$1,903 worth of poppies, the highest total of any VFW member in Michigan.

VFW as an organization has been distributing Buddy Poppies since Memorial Day 1922. To this day, Poppies are still assembled by disabled and needy veterans in VA hospitals.

An All-State Post in 2009-10, Post 334 also contributes to *Operation Uplink* and *Adopt-A-Unit*, raises funds for cancer research, supports Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs, and conducts community service.

E-mail [kvonlunen@vfw.org](mailto:kvonlunen@vfw.org)

# 'Info Session' Encourages Younger Membership in Wisconsin

PHOTOS BY LARRY DUER, POST 6709



Commander Frank Mesa of Post 6709 in Waupun, Wis., explains the benefits of joining VFW to several service members from the Wisconsin National Guard, A Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment. The Post set up an informational session Dec. 4, 2010, at the Waupun National Guard Armory to educate the unit about VFW.

**IN AN EFFORT** to recruit more young members, Post 6709 in Waupun, Wis., offered an informational meeting about the benefits of becoming a VFW member for a group of some 125 soldiers gathered at the National Guard Armory in Waupun.

Members of Wisconsin National Guard, A Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, listened to Post members discuss the importance of joining VFW during the unit's Dec. 4, 2010, training session.

Armed with applications and the incentive of one year paid dues should the service member still be on active duty, Post Commander Frank Mesa promoted VFW's commitment to troops' families, strong lobbying background and vast support system.

"The biggest thing we found out is you need to

**"The biggest thing we found out is you need to emphasize that VFW offers support and help."**

**—Frank Mesa, Post 6709 Commander**

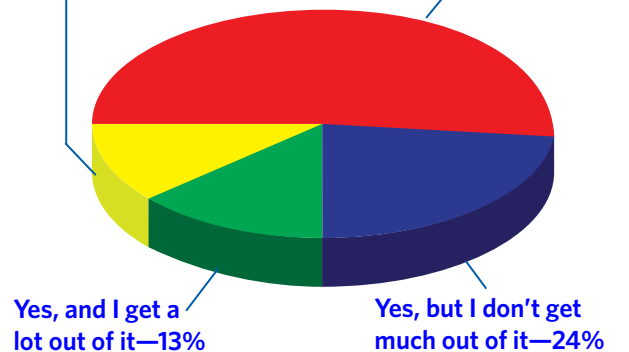
emphasize that VFW offers support and help," Mesa said.

Many of the attendees had heard about VFW, whether from friends or from family members who had been a part of the organization. But some still had questions, particularly about the difference between VFW and American Legion. Mesa said that he and

## Online Survey: Veterans Groups

A Jan. 24-Feb. 7 *Military Times* online survey asked Iraq and Afghanistan vets if they were members of any national veterans groups. Here are the results.

No, the groups don't offer what I need—11%  
No, I haven't thought about it—52%



Source: *ArmyTimes.com*, *NavyTimes.com*, *AirForceTimes.com* and *MarineCorps Times.com*

## Locate Posts Online

Visit <http://www.vfw.org/oms/findpost.aspx> and enter your ZIP code to find Post locations nearby.

other Post members explained that VFW and American Legion Posts work closely together in his community. He added that meeting leaders were sure to stay positive about both groups. The Post got six applications back immediately following the informational session.

Mesa said several attendees assured him that once they knew where they were going to settle down, they would join a Post near them.

"When you come back, you might not have time to be active, but we're always there," Mesa said. "Wherever you may move there is a VFW Post."

The Post held a follow-up session during the unit's April 1-3 training at Waupun to answer any remaining questions regarding the benefits of joining VFW.

*E-mail kgibson@vfw.org*

## Post Gets a Facelift

# Students Turn 'Ugly' Wall into Work of Art

**MEMBERS OF POST 1083** in Crothersville, Ind., had long wanted to have a mural painted on the prominent wall behind the pool table at the Post home.

"It was an ugly, blank wall," Post Quartermaster Ed Hall said. "I called the high school and worked something out with the art teacher there."

Art instructor Adam Robinson visited the Post last summer to take a look at the space. Once school started, it only took the students 90 days to get the mural finished.

The students drew the intricate design on a circular board and later painted it. The board was then mounted to the wall at the Post.

The mural shows the historic scene of Marines raising the U.S. flag on Iwo Jima. It is set against a blue star as the background. The points of the star represent the military's five services. Each service also is depicted with a circular scene.

Art supplies cost the school \$150. So in return, the Post donated \$600 to the high school art program.

Hall, who spent 29 years in the Navy, worked as a substitute teacher for many years at Crothersville High School. He said the Post has a "great relationship" with the school.



"If we need something, they are here for us," Hall said. "And if they need anything, they know to just call us."

The Post sponsors the Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition and Patriot's Pen essay competition in the schools. And when school groups are seeking donations or assistance with events like carwash fundraisers, Post members are eager to help.

PHOTO COURTESY CROTHERSVILLE TIMES  
Students from Crothersville High School art classes designed and produced a patriotic mural for Post 1083 in Crothersville, Ind. Art students Jared Davis and MiMi Manoopun presented the mural to Post manager Gina Lee. Art teacher Adam Robinson spearheaded the design.

Located about 35 miles north of Louisville, Ky., Crothersville has 1,800 residents. And with 85 Post members, 125 Ladies Auxiliary members and 35 Men's Auxiliary members, 90% of Post funds go back into the community.

"That's what we're here for," Hall said, "to look out for the community."

*E-mail jblankenship@vfw.org*

**Posts with the Most**

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS  
OR MORE AS OF APRIL 6, 2011

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members
1	1114	Evansville, IN	2,606
2	1503	Dale City, VA	2,176
3	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ	1,977
4	8862	Vicenza, Italy	1,769
5	6506	Rosedale, MD	1,746
6	4647	North Highlands, CA	1,651
7	628	Sioux Falls, SD	1,649
8	392	Virginia Beach, VA	1,646
9	27	Wiesbaden, Germany	1,623
10	4372	Odessa, TX	1,601

Rank	No.	Location	Members
11	2485	Angeles City, Philippines	1,575
12	972	Terre Haute, IN	1,551
13	6873	Abilene, TX	1,502
14	63	Boise, ID	1,483
15	9785	Eagle River, AK	1,464
16	1146	St Clair Shores, MI	1,460
17	7686	Alamogordo, NM	1,404
18	7234	Ocean View, DE	1,394
19	1296	Bloomington, MN	1,390
20	2503	Omaha, NE	1,389
21	10097	Fort Myers Beach, FL	1,380
22	5958	Titusville, PA	1,369
23	1079	Elyria, OH	1,364
24	7330	Oakville, CT	1,363
25	2111	Chula Vista, CA	1,332
26	1599	Chambersburg, PA	1,317
27	4809	Norfolk, VA	1,309
28	9534	Mannheim, Germany	1,308
29	1308	Alton, IL	1,237
30	8951	West York, PA	1,232
31	1273	Rapid City, SD	1,224
32	788	Cedar Rapids, IA	1,218
33	1326	Bismarck, ND	1,216
34	1512	Lemon Grove, CA	1,199
35	401	Albuquerque, NM	1,197
36	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany	1,190
37	10047	North Las Vegas, NV	1,187
38	549	Tucson, AZ	1,175
39	10420	Murrells Inlet, SC	1,170
40	969	Tacoma, WA	1,135
41	10436	Kitzingen, Germany	1,128
42	56	Leavenworth, KS	1,118
42	7175	Millington, TN	1,118
44	3282	Port Orange, FL	1,108
45	1170	Middletown, KY	1,099
46	5555	Richfield, MN	1,089
47	379	Yakima, WA	1,088
48	7674	Fort Walton Beach, FL	1,057
49	7564	West Fargo, ND	1,047
50	10209	Spring Hill, FL	1,045
51	8541	San Antonio, TX	1,036
52	9927	Kettering, OH	1,025
53	3579	Park Ridge, IL	1,013
54	7041	Vista, CA	1,009
55	8696	Palm Coast, FL	1,005

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