

VFW Elects New National Commander

Jul 22, 2015

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (July 22, 2015) — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) concluded its 116th National Convention by electing Pittsburgh-native John A. Biedrzycki Jr. as its new national commander.

Biedrzycki served in the U. S. Army from 1967-1970. He served in Korea with the 7th Infantry Division, and his decorations include the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Korean Defense Medal. He is a VFW Legacy Life Member and served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, County, District and Department (state) levels prior to his elections to national office. He has been a member of the VFW for 46 years, having first joined the VFW at Post 418 in McKees Rocks, Pa., in 1969.

In [his acceptance speech](#), the VFW's new leader called on the organization's nearly 1.4 million members to recommit themselves in service to others, which was one of the primary reasons his organization's founders formed in 1899, and formerly merged here in Pittsburgh in 1914. He also urged everyone to consider how much poorer the country would have been had the VFW never existed.

"If not for the VFW, who in our communities will help organize and participate in patriotic salutes to our nation and remember those who serve or fell?" he asked. "If not for the VFW, who will help America's veterans and troops navigate the complex VA claims system, or ensure their individual needs are properly taken care of? And if not for the VFW, who will give a collective voice on Capitol Hill against all the noise generated by 30,000 registered lobbyists who, other than lip service, don't have the best interest of veterans, service members and families first on their agendas?"

While addressing convention delegates, Biedrzycki had high praise for the work being done by VFW members in communities across America. He cited several examples of projects and programs that well-illustrate the VFW's mission to stand up for veterans, service members and their families.

A retired high school history teacher, Biedrzycki also stressed that "freedom isn't free" – something America tends to forget.

"The success of America was built on the service and sacrifice of many Americans, but our continued freedom falls squarely on the shoulders of those who wear the uniform. Everyone in the VFW understands that," he remarked.

During his tenure he will log thousands of miles within the U.S. and internationally to promote the VFW, veterans' issues, and quality of life initiatives for active-duty, Reserve and Guard members, and all their families.

Also elected were Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Brian J. Duffy of Louisville, Ky., and

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Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Keith E. Harman of Delphos, Ohio.

Biedrzycki will lead under the theme Loyalty, Honor and Service for the ensuing year; values that have long-guided the VFW and its new national commander alike.

Watch his acceptance speech below.