Indiana VFW Posts Donate Service Flags to County Veterans Court

The flags help remind veterans they're not alone

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Post 5864 in Greenwood, Ind., makes an extra effort to reach out to community leaders, first responders and civic groups each year. So when approached by Greenwood Veterans Court Director Brandon Pettijohn about adding service flags to the courtroom, Post Commander Steve Milbourn enthusiastically agreed to help in any way necessary.

“We decided to put service flags up in the court so that maybe the veterans will recognize those when they come in and give them the idea that [judges] aren’t really as tough,” Milbourn said. “We are a friendly face.”

The effort initially was fully funded by the Greenwood Post, but Milbourn also reached out to Post 6978 in New Whiteland, Ind., and American Legion Post 252, located only five blocks from the Greenland VFW Post. They both donated to the project, “so we split it three ways,” Milbourn said. “We got three vet groups together for a good thing.”

The Greenwood Veterans Court is the only veterans court in Johnson County, Ind., where nearly 140,000 people live. The court hears veterans’ cases and favors guidance and rehabilitation, rather than traditional, punitive measures such as jail time or fines. The goal is to help remove the veteran from the criminal justice system, taking into account potential war-related issues such as PTSD and TBI.

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"Having those flags there… if I were in court or in minor trouble, and I saw those I would think, 'Someone here is a veteran or they must be friendly to veterans,'" Milbourn said. "As far as the vet courts are concerned, we are committed to helping out any other projects they have."

Pettijohn, who is an Afghanistan veteran, accepted the flag donation, along with Greenwood Veterans Court Judge Lewis Gregory.

Photo caption: Greenwood Veterans Court Director Brandon Pettijohn (left) helps Post 5864 Commander Steve Milbourn assemble flags from each military service to display in the courtroom. The flags were donated by Post 5864 in Greenwood, Ind., and Post 6978 in New Whiteland, Ind., as well as American Legion Post 252.

By Kelly Gibson, senior writer, *VFW* magazine