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210 Glassmaster Road Lexington, S.C. 29072

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vfwsc.org admin@vfwsc.org 803-808-0317

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JUL – SEP 2025

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“All the Way”

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It's not the price you pay to become a member,

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It's the price you paid to become eligible

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TODD HAVILAND – Commander

MARIETTA HILL - President



South Carolina

*****Want to find out all the good programs and events YOUR Commander has planned for his 2025-2026 leadership role? Just go to vfwsc.org, sign-in at the members only, click on the “ABOUT” prompt, go to 2025-2026 Commanders Guidebook, click on it and start reading. AND THEN, get involved!**

Who makes up the Council of Administration (CofA), the State governing body? According to the National By Laws Section 522(a) – Composition includes:

And the Department of SC By Laws ARTICLE IX, section 1: It is the Commander, Senior & Junior Vices, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Chaplain and District Commanders (the District Sr or Jr Vice may act for the District Commander if not present), the immediate Past Department Commander (Sr or Jr Vice if Commander not available)), Judge Advocate, Chief-of-Staff, Inspector, Surgeon. Traditionally, there are 18+ CofA members in the SC CofA.

NOTE: At the start of the Department Convention, the CofA is dissolved and the Convention, right up through the elections, is the memberships Convention.

MONEY MONEY MONEY

There are many posts out there struggling to make ends meet and many posts that don't do the Youth programs (VOD/PP/Teacher awards) because they just don't have the money in the Post to do them. There are Posts out there that don't meet their annual obligations to their District or State.

Money is the root of all evil and the source of most all good, but how does a Post, or even a District, get the funds to meet their obligations? There are two good answers:

1. ***POPPYS:*** *Poppy's are not just for Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. They are for any day! All you have to do is buy a box or two and hold a Poppy Event (at a busy location) just once or twice. You could bring in upwards of \$1,000 in a single day. Your Post/District can make enough money to support most of your financial obligations as defined on the State Dashboard.*

Section 219 of the Manual of Procedure lets you do this.

2. ***GET A SPONSOR:*** *EVERY Post has a myriad of business within reasonable distance of their Post. Many of these businesses re looking for ways to get their name and product out to the general public. Many businesses will jump at the chance to partner with another organization to foster community service and good will. Your Post needs money for it's VOD/PP/Teacher/Scout recognition and awards. Say it costs your Post \$500 to purchase plaques/certificates, provide a monetary award. Go to the local grocery store, hardware store ANY store/business and explain to them your program and your need. Tell them that anything that has to do with whatever project your Post is supporting, will have that company's name promoted with the event. You can even take it to the point where you invite them to be part of the presentation ceremony.*

BUDDY CHECKS: It has been a long hot summer out there and many lonely veterans/lonely people suffered with trying to survive. The VFW is a firm believer in “BUDDY CHECKS”, looking in one those elderly, or disabled, or living alone veterans that you may know.

A **Buddy Check** is nothing more than checking in on someone to make sure they are OK and that they don't need any kind of help or assistance. You don't need to do this often, maybe once a month.

I make at least 10 Buddy Checks a month with veterans that I know. Most times, I will go to their home and talk to them personally. If not a home visit, I make a phone call, or I send them a "Thinking of You" VFW Card. If you have never done a Buddy Check before, you will be amazed just how much that person appreciates your taking the time to think of them.

The Winter is rapidly approaching. Put a couple of veterans on your Buddy Check list and make sure you check on them at least monthly during the course of the winter (the whole year).

Remember, reaching out might seem like a small gesture, but for someone facing loneliness or difficulty, it can mean the world. Don't underestimate the power of a simple conversation or a thoughtful card—sometimes, these acts are the lifelines that keep spirits high and forge lasting bonds within our veteran community. Together, we can ensure no veteran is left behind—every call, every visit, and every act of kindness builds the foundation of support that our service members have earned and deserve.

Looking for VA help and don't know where to go?? 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) is always the right number



For WOMEN SPECIFIC issues call 855-829-6636

Are you aware that South Carolina has a Department of Veterans Affairs with Resource Offices in every county? Looking for some VA type help, go to va@scdva.sc.gov. There you can find your County's VA office, or you can call 1-803-734-0200.

****The VFW Unmet Needs Program is now the VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members program. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at mherron@vfw.org or 816.968.1102.**

****As of June 2025, The Military Assistance Program (MAP) is now being named the Military Appreciation Program (MAP).**

WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE VFW WORLDWIDE LEVEL?

Every month the National Council of Administration publishes a National CofA Monthly Update. It is an extremely accurate footprint of what is happening within the VFW. Go to vfwsc.org, scroll over to RESOURCES, click on, scroll down to GENERAL ORDERS, click on, scroll down to National CofA Monthly Update, click on.



All things must pass... That includes us! Are you/your family looking at maybe keeping your memory alive, or doing something good in your name after you gone to that final "Roll Call"? It doesn't have to be much and in the case of your Post, it may be that donation that helps keep the Post afloat.

Some things I have seen in memory of a departed veteran:

- *A VFW family member I knew, paid off the Post mortgage.
- *Another member I knew, donated a few thousand dollars to the Post Building Fund to help keep the building in good repair.
- * Member families have provided funding for the various youth programs

*Family members have donated to Post Relief Funds

*Cars, trucks, boats, RV's have been donated in a veteran's name.

*The most frequent remembrance is just a donation to the post

NOTE: It is always a good thing for the veteran/VFW member to let the family know of their wishes, before they pass on. This can be done as an addition to a Will or an individual's signed letter?

SPEAKING OF PASSING ON: Are you aware that you (as the veteran) can pre-qualify (just like buying a house) for a burial reservation at a VA National Cemetery? (NOT Arlington)

All you have to do is figure out what National Cemetery you want to go to and then fill out the **VA Form 40-10007 APPLICATION FOR PRE-NEED DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR BURIAL IN A VA CEMETERY**. This has to be done "**before**" the veteran passes on. Once all the required proper paperwork is completed, you will receive an acceptance notice from the VA .



This National VFW publication comes out once a month and it highlights all the good things that VFW Posts are doing around the world. Is your Post doing something noteworthy? Want to get it published in CHECKPOINT, just send your event with pictures and an explanation to:

JDyhouse@vfw.org



This National VFW Publication keeps you informed on all things YOUR VFW is involved with in the political arena and all their legislative efforts.

You can join Action Corps Weekly on your phone by calling 50457 and texting VFW or

Go to <https://www.vfw.org/joinActionCorps>



Want to leave something of yourself for anyone to see after you are gone? The VA now offers you that opportunity through the US Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration.

Dear WILLIAM,

Imagine your Veteran and life story told in your own words being remembered for generations. You can now create your story using a new feature on the VA's Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) web site.

VLM is the VA's interactive online memorial site that honors nearly 10 million Veterans. Because you were determined to be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery, you can now privately share your unique military and personal journey by submitting images, military and life milestones, autobiographies, and historical documents that will be saved by the VA. When you pass away, all the content you shared will be showcased on your publicly visible VLM memorial page.

Log into VLM today and start creating YOUR story!

Learn more about the [Living Veterans Feature](#).

If you have any questions, please contact VLM Customer Support at 1-866-245-1490 or vlm@va.gov.

LET'S DO THE MATH – For all you 'continuous' (annual) members out there. If you are between the age of 51 & 70 and you have a life expectancy of at least '75'. You will be paying between \$500 and \$675 to keep your VFW membership on an annual payment basis. If you became a LIFE MEMBER you would only be paying \$335 for joining up to age 60 and \$290 if joining at 61+

With the added benefit that you would not have anyone VFW related, each year, trying to get you to renew your 'annual' membership. There is even a year-long installment plan where you would pay \$30 or less a month for one year. Then NO MORE Dues requirements.

Are you aware that: Only 18% of your states VFW budget is derived from membership? The rest comes from Corporate Sponsors, Business Donations, Individual Donations, Deceased Member memorial donations and various fund-raising projects.

Where does that Annual Membership dues go? (\$45)

*\$21.50 goes to National HQ with \$1.98 of that allocated for the production of the VFW Magazine

*\$9.00 goes to the State (Department)

*\$4.50 goes to the Post of record for an Annual Member

How are Life Membership funds distributed?

Each year, in September, the VFW Life membership Committee makes an annual payment to a Post and Department a sum of not less than \$10.50 per Life Member.

NOTE: These payments are based on an actuarial science licensed professional recommendations to the Life Membership Committee and can be raised or lowered according to the financial status of the VFW with the approval of the National Council of Administration.

VFW BY LAWS Article 1, Section 111(d)

How are Legacy Life Member funds distributed?

*Bronze Level: Each year a Post and a Department with Bronze Legacy Life Members will receive \$6.00 per LLM

*Silver Level: Each year a Post and Department with Silver Legacy Life Members will receive \$12.00 per LLM

Gold Level: Each year a Post and Department with Gold Legacy Life Members will receive \$18.00 per LLM

****Looking for a Job, full or part-time. According to SC Works and the Department of Labor, at any given time, there are over 130,000 jobs available in the state of South Carolina.** Horry County (the state's largest county) has an average of 7,000 jobs that go UNFILLED each month.

CHARLES P. MURRAY Jr. POST 641 HONORS A PAST COMMANDER



Recently, Charles P. Murray Jr Post 641 honored one of its own when they put together a Quilt of Valor presentation and the presentation of a plaque (with the Post Gavel) commemorating his three different stints as Post Commander. GARY HERSHBERGER (now a resident of an assisted living facility) was surrounded by family and friends. Along with Gary and some of his family and friends, were District 2 Commander Ginger Graham, D2 Chaplain Howard Barr, American Legion Quilt of Valor representative David Mills and members of Lake Murray Post 640.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE GARY!!

***How would you like to have the distinction of being recognized as “THE WORST SMELLING MAN IN CONGRESS”?? This title goes to a 34 year member from the state of New York.

DONATIONS TO A VA CLINIC



Do you know that your local VA Hospital or Clinic is always in need of your help. They all have lists of veterans and veteran families that are in need of certain, everyday life, things they can't afford. Most of the items provided to these veterans comes from donations through their "Volunteer Services" office.

You can make a difference in a veterans life by contacting your local VA Volunteer Services office and asking what you, your post can do to help. Your Post Relief Funds can be put to good use here.

MEMBERSHIP & ELIGIBILITY: The National Council of Administration meets each month. Each month they receive, or are made aware of, problems with membership eligibility. Most times this comes about when a member is elected/appointed to position at Post, District or State levels and they are required to provide "Proof of Eligibility" and the can not!

So far this year the NCOA has approved 32 membership terminations and an additional 47 members have voluntarily resigned (either from the VFW or an elected/appointed position:

NOTE: There Annual/Life Members out there that should not be members of the VFW, but took advantage of a loop-hole in the membership application process.

If you look at a "Member at Large" application. You will see that there is no place for a person trying to become a member, to provide "Proof of Eligibility". All they have to do is sign the form when they have stated they were a veteran of, say: Iraqis Freedom. Application goes to National, National takes their word, they are in the VFW. These people can stay a member as long as they don't apply for membership at a Post, or if the Post has not done its due-diligence and vetted the perspective member when they brought them into the post from a previous at-large membership.

I know Post and District elected officers who lost their position and VFW membership, because, when they got elected to their positions. They COULD NOT provide valid proof of eligibility.

SOME OF YOUR FELLOW STATE MEMBERS AND AUXILIARY AT 2025 CONVENTION





2024-2025 S.C. Auxiliary President DONNA MARIE KING being inducted into the Circle of Excellence at the National Convention. CONGRATULATIONS!

DAY of SERVICE: One program the VFW is immensely proud of and encourages maximum post participation in is their Day of Service program which happens each year in May. This year was a record-breaking year for this program. Over 2,300 Posts worldwide participated in a Day of Service. SADLY; **38 Posts in S.C.** were NOT recognized as being one of them. Let's not let this happen in 2026! THANK YOU! To the **26 Posts** in the state that did participate!

POW-MIA ACCOUNTABILITY

Officially, on the books, starting with WWII, there are currently **over 81,900** service members still listed as Missing-in-Action (MIA). This number is a bit misleading in that the Navy lists all Navy & Marine personnel lost at sea (**32,000+** bodies never recovered) as MIA. This leaves a real total of over **49,900** actual MIA'S. **There are 841 MIA'S from South Carolina.**

MEET YOUR 2025-2026 LEADERSHIP TEAM



Carol served in the U.S. Army from 1977 to 2013, earning her VFW eligibility by serving in Iraq. In recognition of her service, she received the Legion of Merit Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal (six), Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, among many others.

Her motto: **"For Veterans by Veterans"**

"I am your sister by mud, by blood, by dust, by dirt, by sand, by land, by sea, by air ... I am a veteran first."

CAROL WHITMORE
Commander-in-Chief



Lois Callahan of Little Rock, Arkansas, was elected to the office of National President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) Auxiliary 112th National Convention in Columbus, Ohio

LOIS CALLAHAN
National President

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR POST & DISTRICT COMMANDER'S

ARTICLE II, Section 216 of the By Laws "The Service Officer" has been changed to:

ARTICLE II, Section 216 "BENEFITS ADVISOR"

Benefits Advisor. The Post Benefits Advisor shall advise members of the Post, their family members and survivors of benefits and services that are available in the local community such as homeless services, employment opportunities, and companies that offer discounted goods or services to veterans. The Post Benefits Advisor shall direct individuals seeking Federal benefits assistance to the Department Service Officer. The work of a Post Benefits Advisor shall be performed in accordance with the instructions contained in the VFW Guide for Post Benefits Advisor under the general supervision of the Post Commander. The Post Benefits Advisor shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office and as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority."



For those veterans hoping to get PTSD help with psychedelic drugs through the VA by way of the VFW encouraging congress to enact legislation that would allow the use of psychedelic drugs in a clinical environment.

It is NOT going to happen with VFW support this year, as the VFW rejected this proposal at this year's National Convention.

****A LITTLE KNOWN VIETNAM WAR FACT:** Most know that the U.S. was sending "Advisors" to Vietnam to help train the South Vietnamese Army against North Vietnam/China aggression long before we got actively involved in the fighting. Most of these 'advisors' were Army Green Berets. On 16 March 1962, somewhere between Guam and the Philippines, the U.S. Army lost 93 Green Berets who were on a Flying Tiger chartered aircraft. Somewhere over the Pacific Ocean the plane went down with no distress call or no wreckage ever found. There was a total of 107 people on board.

NOTE: None of those 93 are on the Vietnam Memorial Wall

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that it processed more than 2 million disability benefits claims for Veterans in fiscal year 2025, faster than ever before. VA achieved this milestone more than a month faster than the all-time record reached in FY 2024. VA had already awarded more than \$120 billion in compensation and pension benefits to Veterans and survivors in FY 2025. Since President Trump took office, VA has reduced the inventory of backlogged disability claims by more than 74,000. Veterans are also getting their claims processed more quickly--**the average wait time for a Veteran's claim to be processed fell from 141.5 days on Jan. 20, 2025 to 131.8 days on June 21, 2025.** "VA has reduced the claims backlog and has processed these claims faster than ever for a simple reason: their mission to help Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors get the care and benefits they've earned." VA encourages all Veterans to visit [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) to learn more and apply for the care and benefits they deserve.

“Nonagenarians” Wanted

Does your post have members 90 years old or older? If so, I would like to hear about them or from them. Their actual age, are they active in your post, their branch of service, maybe something about their military time, and where they earned their VFW eligibility and anything else you or they want to say about them/themselves.

These inputs can come from them or our most senior warriors. Send me a picture and a little story and I will create a page in the newsletter just for them/you.

Our post had a 102 year old member that made most monthly meetings, attended various post functions (including hob-knobbing with our Mayor (at a post event she attended) and even manned a shift at one of our Poppy fund-raisers. He passed earlier this year, shortly after his 103rd birthday.



Did you know that our Nonagenarians are the fastest growing segment (more people living into their 90's) of our population.

80 YEARS AGO



APRIL 18, 1942: The DOOLITTLE RAIDERS struck the 1st blow against mainland Japan. Here's some facts from that raid:

- *16 B-25's with a crew of 80 conducted the raid
- *4 planes crash landed in China, 11 crews bailed out over land, 1 crew made it to Russia
- *8 raiders were captured, 3 were executed, 1 died of starvation
- *62 of the 80 survived the war**

SPEAKING OF THE DOOLITTLE RAIDERS – Lexington Post 8738 – is hosting a Seminar and Dinner on Saturday November 8th from 5 PM (Dinner) 6PM (Seminar) to 7 PM. Tickets are \$15 in advance or (if available) \$20 at the door. This is a FUNDRAISER for the

National Home. This seminar on the facts of the Doolittle Raid will be presented by renowned Raiders researcher Bruce Cotner. Along with the dinner and seminar, you will learn more about the Midlands role in this event, there will be a silent auction and Historical Artifacts will be available for viewing. Looks like a GREAT night! District 2 Commander Ginger Graham is spearheading this event. If you can attend the event, are available to sell tickets, or can help out at the Post in any way for this event? Please contact GINGER GRAHAM at GINGERHEART@aol.com
Ginger is offering a \$100 prize to the individual or post that sells the most tickets for this event.

ON THE ROAD WITH YOUR STATE COMMANDER



Since taking office and not letting the grass grow under his feet. YOUR State Commander, along with other state leadership, has been traveling the highways and biways in his efforts to do everything he can to promote the SC VFW and all its veterans . So far he has traveled to:
Greenville, Charleston, Beaufort, Columbia, Sumter, Des Moines, DC

A WORD FROM YOUR VSO TEAM



YOUR VSO office has been quite busy since the start of the new SC VFW year. From June 1 to August 31, your VSO Team has processed **218 claims**. Along with the claim process, the VSO Team has had **four** Board of Veterans Appeals hearings with a judge in Washington DC, **one** Predetermination hearing with a local RVSR, **10** informal conferences with Decision Review Officers, and they attended the National Convention. This contributes to the 2024-2025 yearly total of **\$105,293,942** going to S.C. Veterans. This is an increase of over **\$10.8 million over** the previous year.

September 11, 12 13 saw us at Greenville for a Veteran Clinic. During those 3 days there were about 550 veterans who came to the event. Your VSO helped 28 veterans file 45 forms. They included Power of Attorney, Intent to File, Initial claims, claims for increases, appeals, dependency claims and all supporting documents for these claims.

Keep up the great work JJ, NICOLE and JERRI!!

Uniting for Veterans



Uniting To Combat Hunger (UTCH) Becomes
Uniting for Veterans
Together with Humana, the VFW announced
during the Joint Opening Session that the UTCH
program will now be known as Uniting for
Veterans in an effort to reflect the program's
expanded focus and our united dedication to
addressing the evolving needs of our military
and veteran communities.



The VA HAS CHANGED ITS SIGN-IN for GETTING ON LINE WITH THE VA

After Sept. 30, 2025, Veterans will have two secure options to sign in to VA.gov and VA mobile apps—a Login.gov account or ID.me account. Most Veterans have already made the switch. If you're still using a DS Logon username and password, we want to make sure you're prepared when this option is discontinued by the end of September. Visit [Creating an account for VA.gov](#) for detailed instructions on setting up your Login.gov or ID.me account.

Speaking of the VA – Every year, traditionally in September or October, and usually on a Friday, every VA Hospital and Clinic holds a “**STANDDOWN**”, a dedicated day (maybe more) in which they provide for their area homeless veterans and veterans at risk. Each and every one of these facilities could use a little help in providing the goods they provide to the veteran. Want to know how your Post or District can help? Just contact the VOLUNTEER SERVICES office of the VA facility nearest to you.

WHAT IS A STANDDOWN? - Stand Downs are typically one-to-three-day events during which VA staff and volunteers provide food, clothing and health screenings to homeless and at-risk Veterans. In addition, Veterans also receive referrals for health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling and other essential services.

MEMBERSHIP & ELIGIBILITY: It is early in a new VFW Year and Post Commanders are eager to meet their recruitment requirements. Some new (and even some older) members are stepping up and volunteering to take on leadership positions.

There are more and more Post's accepting 'transfer' membership from persons on the State "Member at Large" ranks.

When a Member at Large is accepted into your Post, let's hope your Commander and Membership Committee have done their due diligence in reviewing that new member's eligibility (DD 214).

WHY?, because more Post and District officers lose their job and their VFW membership because when a proper review of their eligibility is conducted (proof of eligibility when elected/appointed to

an officer position), it is found that the person with a 'member-at-large' membership was not eligible to be a VFW member in the first place.

HERE'S THE PROBLEM: If a veteran does NOT want to belong to a particular post, A veteran can apply for a State VFW membership through the "Member-at-Large" application process. These go directly to VFW National.

The problem: The Member-At-Large membership application does NOT require a 'proof-of-eligibility' by the applicant when submitting their application. All the **applicant** has to do is certify that they are eligible.

A VFW membership application to a Post requires proof of eligibility (mostly DD 214's) be submitted to the membership review committee for review/approval. If the applicant is accepted, the DD 214 can be given back to the applicant, or destroyed (applicant's choice). It does NOT need to be kept on file.

A little historical trivia:

OK – is one of the most widely used words in the American English language. Several books have been written about it. It has undergone a variety of reference meaning changes over its life.

Here's the rest of the story – In 1840, When President Martin VanBuren was on his re-election campaign (he lost), he used to sign off on any correspondence with "Oll Kerrect" to signify his approval. The original OK was actually a press created abbreviation for VanBuren's age and hometown- They initially referred to him as OLD KINDERHOOK The press and the country developed many terms for OK (thus the many books).

In 1844 when the telegraph was invented. The standard response from the receiving station was OK. This signified that the message had been received.

How many times a day do you use this Presidential created term? **OK**



ACTIVE SHOOTER ACTION:

Unfortunately, Active Shooter situations happen all too often. Homeland Security recommends that if you are in a situation that involves an active shooter, and you are not in a position to do anything about it (armed), you should **R – H – F:**

1. RUN - Evacuate If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to: • Have an escape route and plan in mind • Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow • Leave your belongings behind • Help others escape, if possible • Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be • Keep your hands visible • Follow the instructions of any police officers • Do not attempt to move wounded people • Call 911 when you are safe.

2. HIDE - If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should: • Be out of the active shooter's view • Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door) • Not trap you or restrict your options for movement To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place: • Lock the door • Blockade the door with heavy furniture. If the active shooter is nearby: • Lock the door • Silence your cell phone and/or pager • Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions) • Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks) • Remain quiet If evacuation and hiding out are not possible: • Remain calm • Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location • If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

3.FIGHT - Take action against the active shooter As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by: • Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her • Throwing items and improvising weapons • Yelling • Committing to your actions.

Did you know – That a study, published in the Journal of Military Medicine in 2022, revealed that 8% of men and 19% of women who were “trauma exposed” while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan self-reported (to the military and VA) symptoms of eating disorders. This eating disorder has been linked to PTSD.

COURTESY: DAV Magazine

The SENTINEL – Is YOUR Newsletter. It provides information pertinent to our VFW membership by way of researching useful information at the VFW National level, the VA, the DAV, Congressional activities pertinent to the VFW, State veteran information along with other sources. It is all designed to keep you, the VFW members of S.C. informed.

Another part of the SENTINEL is promoting all those various good things that your Post or District is doing to support the veteran (VFW member or not) and your local civilian community. THE PROBLEM IS – I can’t promote you, if you don’t provide me with all those good things you are doing.

I know that most of you are using a Post Website, or a Post Facebook page, and a scant few using a Post newsletter. KUDOS to District 1 for their District Newsletter and to District 2 for the information packages that you send to your Post Commanders. The thing is, that all that good work is primarily staying in the District, or Post information systems.

The SENTINEL, through the VFWSC website, has the opportunity to be seen by every VFW member in S.C. Additionally, I send a copy to National HQ so they can see all the good things the SC VFW is doing for veterans and their communities. If you want to be part of this action. Just send your good deeds to me at 4william6@gmail.com or call me at **252-308-3507** and we can discuss ways to get your Post or District recognized beyond your own doors.

100 CONSECUTIVE MONTHLY EDITIONS AND STILL GOING STRONG

Pictured below is the cover page of North Myrtle Beach Post 10804’s monthly newsletter. I started This newsletter in June of 2017 and I have been the sole writer/editor for that entire time.

I once tried to start a Post Newsletter to let the 90+% of the membership that did not attend the monthly post meeting know what was going on within their post. The Post Commander at the time said “If the members want to know what is going on at the post, they need to attend the post meetings”. Fortunately, that person was voted out of office and with the blessings of the new Commander, I started a Post Newsletter. Each successive Commander has asked me to keep it going. NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GET TO 100 EDITIONS.

Each edition is reviewed and approved by the Commander before it is email’d to EVERY post member who has an email listed with the post. A hard-copy is posted on the bulletin board, a copy goes to State and National HQ.



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH VFW POST 10804

Commander – BOB SEDELOW

Auxiliary President – MO SEDELOW



**111 Hwy 57 North, Little River SC 29566
843-399-0877 or You can find us on Facebook
Open 7 Days a Week Noon to at least 7PM
Post/Auxiliary Meets 2nd Saturday of Each Month
(Auxiliary 10:30AM, Post 11AM)**

NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2025
100th consecutive monthly edition

"Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A veteran doesn't have that problem."

– RONALD REAGAN

You have a VA Disability Rating of 70%. The VA just approved 30% for a condition not previously evaluated. Congratulations! You are now at 100% disability.....WRONG!!!****

You are actually at 79% which would be rounded up to 80%. The following may be confusing to you, but it is the VA disability math, and their math is the only math that counts!

How Does VA Rate Disabilities?

When it comes to service-connected compensation claims, VA takes the view that it should not add whole numbers together to get your rating but, instead, VA takes percentages of percentages. It is as if VA says if you are 10% disabled then you are 90% healthy. Therefore, the next rating is not added but is used to take a percentage of the 'healthy' 90%. So for a veteran with two 10 ratings the first ten percent rating would be 10% of 100, which is 10%. The second ten percent rating would be 10% of the 90% (again the 'healthy' percent of the veteran), which is 9%. So the combined rating would be 19%. The percentages are all rounded up or down to the nearest ten percent. Here, the rating would be rounded to 20%.

The combined rating system starts to work against a veteran when he gets closer to 100%. It gets harder and harder to get that higher rating, especially once a veteran is over 50%. For instance, if a veteran has a ratings of 50% for [PTSD](#), 50% for Sleep Apnea, a rating of 20% for diabetes and 20% for a back problem the combined rating is 80%. So even though $50+50+20+20$ equals 140 in real math; it is only 80 in VA math.

The difference that it leads to in compensation is huge. According to the [VA compensation rating table](#), a veteran, with no dependents, rated at 80% would receive \$2,044.89 per month. A single veteran rated at 100%, on the other hand, would receive \$3,831.30 per month. This veteran receiving a rating of 100%, which is only 20% greater than the 80% rating, gets almost 100% more money a month!

What Other Factors Does VA Take Into Account for Disability Ratings?

There are other factors that make the ratings change too. For example, if a veteran has a rating on each leg or each arm then those ratings are combined together and give the overall combined rating an extra boost. Also, if a veteran has too many ratings on one arm or leg then VA stops counting those ratings. Further, a veteran can step up to [100% through total disability](#) due to [individual unemployability](#). That veteran must show that he cannot work and that he meets a [certain rating](#).

The only help VA offers veterans is to provide a chart and a couple dozen rules and exceptions. Ironically, VA does not even use this chart. Instead, VA has its own combined rating calculator. VA employees actually call it the Combinator.

GOT IT!!!

Are you maybe originally from Utah and were thinking that you would like your final resting place to be back home. The VA's National Cemetery Association has just made it a little easier for you, in that, they have just opened a new National Cemetery in CEDAR CITY, UT.



VA Dedicates New National Cemetery: The VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) dedicated the Southern Utah National Cemetery in Cedar City, Utah, that is anticipated to eventually accommodate 13,434 gravesites containing both casketed and

cremated remains. As one of eight cemeteries established under NCA's "Rural Initiative," this site supports the NCA's goal of ensuring that 95% of veterans have a VA national cemetery or VA-grant funded burial option within 75 miles of their homes. Currently, nearly 94% of veterans meet that standard.



You all know this state! Many of you probably know that S.C. has 46 Counties, 71 Cities and 200 Towns

Most of you don't know (unless you keep tabs on the State Report Card) that SC VFW ended FY 25 with 64 Posts, started FY 26 with 63 Posts and now has 61 Posts. **We are going in the wrong direction!!**

With 271 locations to choose from. One would think it would be easy to start a new post. Part of it is easy. The VFW will train you on how to recruit and help you with recruiting materials. To start a new post you need 25 members, 10 of which must be new members of the VFW. The other 15 could be State Members at Large, members who may be disenchanted with their current post, previous members of a post that lost its franchise, or members who don't like how far they have to drive to get to their current post. Getting 25 members isn't really that hard.

The biggest detriment to starting a new post is WHERE ARE THEY GOING TO HOLD THEIR POST MEETINGS ON A REGULAR BASIS?? Finding a home may be the determining factor on what day/time the post meeting is held.

Anyone wanting to start a new post needs to resolve this issue FIRST.

Some options include a local Community Center (with a meeting room), a Community Senior Center, a church or school with some kind of meeting hall, a restaurant where you have a private room, use of vacant office in a municipal building, a local Chamber of Commerce meeting room. You get the idea!

S.C. needs to grow its VFW population. There has been only one new post started in S.C. in the last 10 years. That was Post 12207 by ANITA WILSON and her team. Want to know how to start a post?, ask her!

YOU ALL CAN AND SHOULD DO BETTER – in making S.C. a leader in the VFW in 2026.

The following is my (Editor Bill) summary and thoughts in regards to the 2024 and 2025 Department Report Cards:

*In 2025 there were **25** Posts that did not report any activity in the VOD/PP/Teach programs. In 2024 there were **29**

*In 2025 there were **25** Posts that did not report any activity in Youth Activities. In 2024 there were **25**

*In 2025 there were **23** Posts that did not contribute to the Commander's Special project. In 2024 there were **31**

*In 2025 there were **27** Posts that did not contribute to the National Home. In 2024 there were **31**

*In 2025 there were **15** Posts that did not record a Poppy buy. In 2024 there were **12**

*In 2025 there were **30** Posts that showed no contribution to the VSO. In 2024 there were **28**

*In 2025 there were **7** Posts that did not report a Community Service project. In 2024 there were **12**

Most of these posts will probably say that they didn't have the money. At the beginning of this newsletter, I identified a couple of very simple ways for a Post/District to make the money necessary to support almost all of your financial needs in regards to Report Card requirements. Having a lot of RED on your report card deprives your membership of their right to be able to vote at certain events and at the State Convention.

S.C. can do a lot better than this, but it takes the cooperative-efforts of all the District and Post Commanders. Commander Haviland and his staff are working hard for you. How about giving them a hand and put lots of GREEN on that Report Card.

CONGRATULATIONS to the 26 Posts that were ALL GREEN last year.

*****To take this a little further. Here are some facts (straight from the National Memstats reporting as of September). Back in 2021 Anita Wilson (Post 12207) and I worked on a Redistricting plan for the State. The following is part of what SC had in June 2021 (according to our research at the time) and now has in 2025.**

***Since 2021 SC has lost 11 Posts. Gained 1 Post 12207**

***In 2025, SC has 4 Posts with less than 25 members (25 is the VFW required minimum startup number for starting a new post)**

***In 2025 there are only 8 Posts with membership numbers larger than 2021**

***In 2025 there are currently 22 Posts with 50 or fewer members.**

Deadline for the next SENTINEL will be December 26th

Your Posts and Districts are always looking for volunteer help of some kind! PLEASE Do your part to keep the S.C. VFW a leader . Contact your Post or District and ask what you can do?

**Bill La Monte
Writer/Editor**



4william6@gmail.com

**"Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A veteran doesn't have that problem."
– RONALD REAGAN**

LOOKING FOR SOME HELP, GUIDANCE, INFORMATION – TO TALK

VFW

816-756-3390 or VFW.org

VFW Auxiliary

816-561-8655 or vfwauxiliary.org

VFW National Home

Military and Veteran Family Helpline
800-313-4200
Vfwnationalhome.org/get-help

Veterans Crisis Line

800-273-8255 or veterancrisisline.net

Military OneSource

800-342-9647
militaryonesource.mil

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Benefit Line: 800-827-1000
va.gov

Military.com

www.military.com

TRICARE

www.tricare.mil

Veteran Employment and Training Service

866-487-2365
dol.gov/vets

Assistance for Homeless Veterans

877-424-3838 va.gov/homeless

Center for Women Veterans

855-829-6636 va.gov/womenvet

VA Caregiver Support Line

855-260-3274 caregiver.va.gov

Military Connection

militaryconnection.com

Make the Connection

Militaryconnection.com

National Military Family Association

703-931-6632 militaryfamily.org

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

988 or 800-273-8255 988lifeline.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233 thehotline.org

ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline

800-422-4453 childhelphotline.org

Military Kids Connect

militarykidsconnect.health

S.C Department of Veterans Affairs

<https://scdva.sc.gov>