

MARCH/APRIL 2025

VFW

M A G A Z I N E



CELEBRATING VFW'S WOMEN

'BE A PART OF THE TEAM'

VFW **FEMALE**
MEMBERSHIP SURGING

MARCH 29
VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY

'DESTINATION POST'
SERIES VISITS **GEORGIA**
AND **SOUTH CAROLINA**

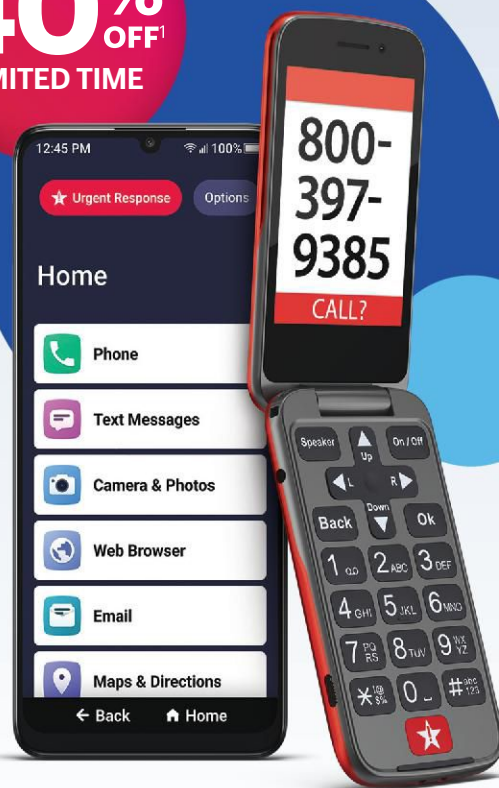
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COVER IMAGE: VFW members (from left) Debra Anderson, Stephanie Butler, Mary Spencer and VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore are photographed last December in Kansas City, Mo. VFW's number of female members has surged over the last several years, and that is being reflected in the organization's leadership. *Photo by Lauren Goldman*

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VFW's Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore represented VFW last year at the Patriot Leadership Award Gala in Arlington, Va. She said promoting VFW's mission was a highlight. **By Janie Dyhouse**

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VFW magazine's "Destination Post" series continues with a visit to Georgia and South Carolina. Posts in these states boast meaningful community service and camaraderie near the Atlantic Ocean. **By Ismael Rodriguez Jr.**

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VFW's fourth annual Day of Service is May 3. Here are some examples from last year of VFW Post members giving back to their communities by conducting relevant service projects. **By Janie Dyhouse**

48 RECRUITING WOMEN INTO THE VFW

VFW magazine asked female VFW members how to recruit more women. Overwhelmingly, they reported Posts should be more family-friendly and provide child care during meetings. **By Janie Dyhouse**



Need help? Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then press 1 or text 838255



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
Al Lipphardt

Women are Joining the VFW

March is Women's History Month, and the VFW has a lot to celebrate. We have seen impressive growth in the number of women veterans joining — and actively participating — over the last several years. Women members in the VFW are taking active leadership roles at the organization's top levels, too.

As of early January, VFW's Membership Department reported that more than 42,000 women were VFW members. That is an increase of more than 54 percent since 2019.

That surge in female membership is illustrated in VFW's national leadership. You'll notice the cover of this month's issue of *VFW* magazine includes VFW's Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore, who is in line to become the first woman to lead this great organization later this year. Pictured with Carol is Debra Anderson, who was the first woman to serve as VFW's Quartermaster General, which is the organization's top financial officer, from 2016-2022.

I am thrilled with the number of women joining our great organization. Their inclusion in VFW's ranks and leadership make us a stronger, more diverse force to help veterans and their families.

An example is the recent passage of *The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*, which is now *Public Law 118-210*. VFW's hard work getting this approved will help 7.8 million transitioning service members, veterans, caretakers and survivors. We are glad it passed, but let's not forget that veterans and their families waited needlessly while members of Congress played to their parties' bases.

In recognition of the unique needs, challenges and interests of female veterans, we recently established the VFW Women Veterans Advisory Committee. My hope is this committee will grow in importance as more women join.

Women are a growing segment of the veterans population. In 2023, VA reported that there were 2.1 million women veterans, which represented 11.3 percent of the total veterans population. VA estimates that by 2043, women will represent 17.2 percent of all veterans.

This is a trend we recognize and embrace. We want the VFW membership to be an accurate representation of the people who served the nation in uniform. The growing participation of women in the U.S. military and their service to the nation and their communities as active veterans should be shown in VFW's ranks.

As I conclude, I want to give a special shout-out to all Vietnam War veterans. The nation observes National Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29. I salute all my fellow veterans of that war and remember the sacrifices of those who never came home.

RECRUIT FOR
THE VFW



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VFW magazine is the official publication of the
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

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VFW magazine is protected through trademark registration in the United States and in the foreign countries where *VFW* magazine circulates. *VFW* magazine (ISSN 0161-8598) is published 6 times a year by Veterans of Foreign Wars, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. Non-profit standard class postage paid at Martinsburg, W. Va., and additional mailing offices.

Publications Agreement No. 1476947

Available on recording for those with disabilities that preclude reading material. Contact: magazine@vfw.org.

SUBMISSIONS

Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs must be accompanied by return postage and no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. **Poetry submissions not accepted.** Views expressed by freelance writers are not necessarily those of the VFW. Payment of membership dues includes \$1.98 for a year's subscription to *VFW* magazine.

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VFW OBJECTIVES

To ensure national security
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To speed the rehabilitation
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To assist the widows and orphans
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To promote Americanism through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live.

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Family Legacy of Serving

Thank you, VFW and Jane Blumenthal Martin, for the wonderful article honoring my great-grandfather's service for God and country. My children loved the article, too. We appreciate you all and pray you all have a blessed year.

JOSHUA BARELA
LYNCHBURG, VA.

National Home Turns 100

What a great article on the VFW National Home! Thank you so much for all that you put into it.

SUE ALVERSON
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
VFW NATIONAL HOME



Washington Wire

This regards the program that helps people with other-than-honorable discharges get help to try and get VA benefits. I don't know how other disabled veterans feel, but I think if you didn't serve your country honorably, you don't deserve any kind of VA benefits.

TOM TROGLIN
COLLINSVILLE, OKLA.

Destination Rhode Island

I was very excited to see the destination series highlighting Rhode Island. Unfortunately, my Post 449 is only mentioned on page 30. We do a lot in the community with Boy Scout Troop 31, Jaycees, West Warwick Veterans Council, Town of Coventry, West Warwick Wizards, The Tomorrow Fund and others.

DAVID M. SILVA
COVENTRY, R.I.

"Mail Call" features letters from our readers in six issues per year. If you have questions, comments or concerns about any subject or article from our most recent issue, letters can be emailed to magazine@vfw.org, with the subject line "Mail Call," or mailed to: VFW magazine, Mail Call, 406 W. 34th Street, Suite 523, Kansas City, MO 64111. Letters must be no more than 200 words, and VFW magazine reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length and accuracy.

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Two Airmen Receive Silver Stars

An Air Force pilot and his jet's weapons systems officer both earned Silver Stars for their actions last April in the skies over Israel. The two Air Force officers, Maj. Benjamin Coffey, the pilot of an F-15E, and Capt. Lacie Hester, the weapons systems officer, were recognized for helping to fight off more than 300 ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as one-way attack drones, launched by Iran targeting Israel.

In total, 30 U.S. troops received military decorations for their actions during the April 13-14, 2024, fight. The Air Force hosted a ceremony in November at Royal Air Force Base Lakenheath in England to present the medals. The other awards presented were:

- 14 Distinguished Flying Crosses
- 6 commendation medals



- 6 Air and Space Achievement Medals
- 2 Bronze Stars

With her receipt of the Silver Star, Hester is the third woman to receive the nation's third-highest award for valor in combat since World War II.

Air Force Capt. Lacie Hester is congratulated by fellow airmen on Nov. 12, 2024, at RAF Lakenheath, England, after receiving the Silver Star, the third woman to do so since World War II. Hester and Air Force Maj. Benjamin Coffey, both of whom received the Silver Star, were among 30 U.S. troops who received awards for their actions in the Middle East in April 2024.

PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN OLIVIA GIBSON

Vietnam War Dustoff Crews Honored With Gold Medal

Soldiers who helped get wounded troops quickly off the battlefields during the Vietnam War received official recognition last September when then-President Joe Biden signed the *Dustoff Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act (P.L. 118-87)*.

The medal recognizes all pilots, crew chiefs and medics "who served honorably during the Vietnam War aboard helicopter air ambulances." They were recognized at a Sept. 26 ceremony hosted by the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence at the Army Medical Department Museum at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Dustoff crews are credited with saving more than 900,000 lives during the war.



U.S. troops load a wounded soldier onto an air ambulance during the Vietnam War. On Sept. 26 last year, then-President Joe Biden enacted the *Dustoff Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act (P.L. 118-87)*, which recognizes all members of dustoff crews during the Vietnam War.

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VFW PRIORITY GOALS FOR 2025

WHERE VFW STANDS ON THE ISSUES

Listed below are VFW's official positions on issues impacting veterans, service members and their families, as well as national defense and homeland security. They are based on national convention resolutions and rated as priorities by direct feedback from VFW members.

BUDGET

To fully fund relevant programs for veterans, service members and their families, Congress must:

- Ensure sufficient, timely appropriations and proper budget oversight for VA.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.
- Modernize and reform VA and DOD programs that do not meet the needs of service members, veterans and families.

DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- Crack down on unaccredited claims consultants known as claim sharks.
- Study all toxic and environmental exposures, and implement programs to ensure health care and benefits are provided to all exposed service members and veterans.
- Properly oversee and update the modernized appeals process, digital claims processing and antiquated examination process.
- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, burial allowances and other benefits for survivors.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.
- Ensure that earned VA benefits are never unjustly reduced.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, Congress, VA, DOD, and DOL must:

- Improve education benefits through modernized online student housing allowances, child care stipends, parity for Guard and Reserve members and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Enhance outreach and counseling to veterans eligible for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program.
- Ensure parity of VA and DOD education programs with other federal programs.
- Expand small business, hiring preference, tax incentives and entrepreneurship resources for veterans and military spouses.
- Increase funding for HUD-VASH vouchers, grant and per diem payments and pilot programs to combat veteran homelessness.
- Conduct oversight of VA's Transition Assistance Program to ensure compliance with the law and require the inclusion of accredited claims representatives.
- Eliminate government bureaucratic delays preventing effective use of education and employment benefits.

HEALTH CARE

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA and DOD must:

- Eliminate service member and veteran suicide.
- Reform the dysfunctional community care program at VA.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research the efficacy of plant-based alternative therapies for PTSD.
- Improve oversight of Vet Centers to ensure adequate staffing, resources and funding.
- Enhance programs and services for women and underserved veterans.
- Preserve the integrity of TRICARE.
- Properly implement VA and DOD health IT systems.
- Expand nursing home eligibility and long-term care options.
- Modernize care for veterans outside of the United States.

MILITARY READINESS

To maintain a strong and ready all-volunteer force capable of protecting American interests, Congress and DOD must:

- Enhance quality-of-life and health care programs that allow service members to focus on the mission.
- Ensure equity of benefits for Reserve Component service members.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- Provide benefit enrollment for all transitioning service members.
- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- Ensure that military housing and work spaces are safe and modern.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.

NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND POW/MIA

To fully support the all-volunteer force, protect our nation's citizens and defend American interests around the world, Congress and DOD must:

- Ensure the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is fully funded to perform its personnel recovery mission.
- Deter threats to our national security by supporting our allies in Ukraine, Israel, Korea and Taiwan.
- Ensure all service members who served in harm's way — to include foreign nationals, translators and allies — receive the recognition, care and benefits they may have earned.

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Donald J.



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Rhonda J.



Getting this scooter has changed my life. I'm able to enjoy the outdoors with my spouse, without struggling with tiring so easily. I get a lot of compliments and feel confident again. Thank you.

Albert D.

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VFW Celebrates Passage of *Dole Act*

Thanks in large part to the advocacy of VFW, *The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*, also known as *P.L. 118-210*, was officially signed into law by then-President Joe Biden on Jan. 2.

The *Dole Act* will expand VA benefits, modernize health care delivery, and reduce bureaucratic delays that prevent veterans, caregivers and other beneficiaries from receiving the care and services they deserve.

Furthermore, this new law will:

- Expand caregiver benefits for elderly and infirmed veterans.
- Increase the cap for in-home care programs.
- Fix community care options for veterans outside of the VA healthcare system.
- Extend timelines, eligibility and availability for certain GI Bill programs.
- Provide funding for family caregiver mental health services and sheltering homeless veterans.

“Thanks to the hard advocacy work of VFW-Student Veterans of America fellows getting the VFW-championed



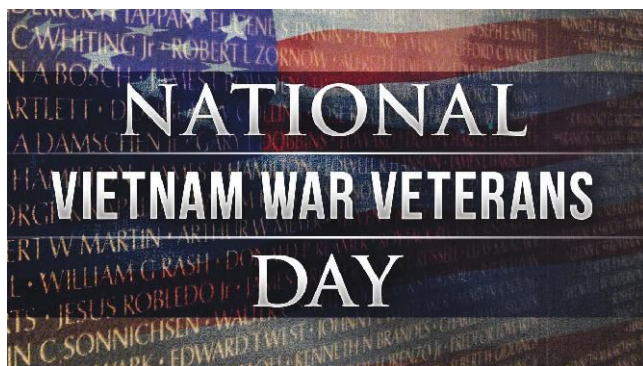
Former Sen. Elizabeth Dole speaks in support of *The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act* last July at VFW's Washington Office on Capitol Hill. VFW members and employees worked hard to ensure this important piece of caregiver-related legislation, which was enacted into law on Jan. 2, was approved.

Not Just A Number Act included as a provision within this comprehensive package, we believe the *Dole Act* also will help reduce veteran suicide,” said VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt. “We commend those members of Congress whose dedication and leadership garnered the bipartisan support in getting this flagship, bicameral veterans package passed on to the President’s desk.”

VFW championed the *Dole Act* from day one. Whether it was talking with members of Congress, hosting press

conferences or calling on its membership to contact individual lawmakers, VFW was a leader in the charge to pass this vital piece of legislation.

“Continuing to pass legislation like this signals to the more than one million service men and women in the Armed Forces to include the thousands currently deployed to war zones throughout the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, that Congress and the Administration will honor the contract which all service members and veterans signed,” Lipphardt said.



Recognize Vietnam War Veterans on March 29

March 29 is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. It marks the day in 1973 when all U.S. ground troops departed Vietnam. Only U.S. embassy personnel and support staff remained in South Vietnam until the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975.

This day is set aside for Americans to recognize every Vietnam War veteran to include those who are still unaccounted for.

From February 1961 to May 1975, more than 3.4 million Americans served in support of U.S. military operations in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. More than 58,000 gave their lives, and nearly 1,580 service men remain unaccounted for, according to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.



FOR MORE INFORMATION about specific legislation or VA benefits, contact VFW's Washington Office at vfw@vfw.org. A member of VFW's National Veterans Service staff will respond as soon as possible.

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'Your Voices Need to be Heard'

During the Student Veterans of America (SVA) 17th Annual National Conference held in January, in Colorado Springs, Colo., VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan addressed the conference's general session.

"Even though I wear this hat and these ribbons, I constantly get asked if it was my father or husband who served," she said. "For all you student veterans out there who no longer wear the uniform, for those who aren't always seen as 'real' veterans, know that your voices need to be heard, and your stories need to be told, even to Congress."

VFW accredited service officers, led by VFW National Veterans Service Assistant Director of Field Operations Cindy Noel, assisted hundreds of student veterans at a claims clinic on site. Additionally, VFW National Legislative Associate Director Joe Grassi participated in the event's Meet Your Veteran and Military Service Organizations panel discussion.

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows for the 2024-2025 class were announced at the conference. They are:

- Jose Ayon, Army veteran, University of Southern California



VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan addresses attendees in January at the Student Veterans of America (SVA) National Conference in Colorado Springs, Colo. The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows also were announced at the event.

- Jennifer Ross, Air Force veteran, Cornell University
- Noah Sorseth, Army veteran, George Fox University
- Casey Stege, Army veteran, Baylor University
- Terry Traylor, Marine Corps veteran, North Dakota State University
- Polina Washington, Army veteran, The University of Texas at Austin



VFW Washington Office staff discuss veterans issue in January on #StillServing: The VFW Podcast at VFW's Washington Office. Those participating were, from left, Rob Couture, Kristina Keenan, Joe Grassi and Brittany Dymond Murray.

Listen to VFW Podcast to Stay in the Know

Join VFW Public Affairs and Strategic Outreach Director Rob Couture monthly as he hosts "StillServing: The VFW Podcast" out of the VFW Washington Office located on Capitol Hill.

In addition to some familiar faces from the Washington Office, podcast guests include congressional leadership, Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs senior officials, and everyday veterans.

Each show tackles critical issues, challenges and legislation affecting veterans, service members and military families worldwide. "StillServing: The VFW Podcast" is truly a program for veterans, by veterans.

Get the inside scoop at <https://www.vfw.org/Podcast> or wherever you get your podcasts.

VA Adds Presumptive Service Connections

As of January, VA has established presumptive service connections for urinary bladder, ureter and related genitourinary cancers, leukemias, multiple myelomas, myelodysplastic syndromes and myelofibrosis.

Eligible veterans must have served on active military, naval, air or space service in Somalia or the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after Aug. 2, 1990; or in Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon or Yemen on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

VFW encourages eligible veterans to contact a VA-accredited service officer to learn about possible compensation and benefits. Visit <https://www.vfw.org/service-officers> to find one nearby.

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A photograph of two women standing in front of a podium. The woman on the left is older with short white hair, wearing a black VFW hat with 'VFW 9127' and a black off-the-shoulder top. The woman on the right is younger with dark hair, wearing a black VFW hat with 'VFW 605' and a black sleeveless top with several medals pinned to her chest. The podium is purple with a circular logo that reads 'MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL' and 'HONORING HER SERVICE' around a central emblem. The background features several flags, including the American flag and various state flags.

MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL PRESERVES THE STORIES OF FEMALE VETERANS

For more than 27 years, the memorial to women veterans in Arlington, Va., has served as a proud reminder of the service and sacrifice of women who have served the country.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore and Deputy Director of VFW National Legislative Service Kristina Keenan attend the Patriot Leadership Award Gala last October at the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, Va. The gala recognized actors Kerry Washington and Sean Astin for their support of the military.

As March is set aside as Women's History Month, VFW can think of no better time to recognize the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, Va.

Located at the ceremonial entrance to Arlington National Cemetery, the memorial opened in October 1997. VFW members donated \$70,000 toward the \$21.5 million project. The memorial is a half-circle of granite, 30 feet high and 226 feet in diameter, with the Great Seal of the United States on the ground in the center.

Seals of the armed services are set in gold leaf on the ceremonial gateway. In the center of the memorial's semicircle is a 60,000-gallon reflecting pool that represents the pooling of women's voices over the course of history.

A 33,000-square-foot education center includes an exhibit gallery which chronicles the collective story of women's service to the nation, a Hall of Honor, gift shop, and the Vaught Center, a multipurpose conference center.

The heart of the memorial is the Register, a one-of-a-kind, interactive database which tells the individual stories of women who have served. It currently houses nearly 317,000 individual records of women's service.

'INCREDIBLE GATHERING OF WOMEN VETERANS'

Last October, VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore attended the Patriot Leadership Award Gala at the Military Women's Memorial.

Representing the VFW, Whitmore and VFW Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan joined members of Congress, leaders in the military community and others at the gala of which the Daughters of the American Revolution was the presenting sponsor.

The purpose of the gala was to recognize women and men whose actions and leadership have paid tribute to and empowered U.S. military members. This year's award recipients were actors Kerry Washington and Sean Astin.

"Award-winning actors, activists, advocates, philanthropists and steadfast supporters of our men and women in uniform as well as our veteran community, both Ms. Washington and Mr. Astin are exceptionally deserving recipients of this prestigious award," said retired Army CW5 Phyllis Wilson, the Memorial Foundation president.

Washington most recently starred in the film "The Six Triple Eight," as Army Maj. Charity Adams (Earley). Adams led the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, which was the only predominately Black Women's Army Corps unit to serve overseas during World War II. In 2022, the 6888th was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

"I felt like these women were with us in the process," Washington said during filming. "You felt their spirit all the time."

Astin served as the Army's ambassador from 1995-2005. In 2022, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth awarded Astin CASA Emeritus status — a lifetime designation — for his continued support of service members and their families.

"I hope to support the recruiting command with creativity and purpose," Astin said upon receiving the title.

Whitmore, who is on track to become VFW's first-ever female commander-in-chief this summer, said she enjoyed seeing other women warriors and hearing their accomplishments and contributions to the military.

"The highlight for me was spending time with other fellow veterans," Whitmore said. "This was especially true at the end of the evening listening to Taps played on bagpipes with my friend, Phyllis Wilson, the director of the memorial."



From left, Deputy Director of VFW National Legislative Service Kristina Keenan and VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore, far right, visit with Dee Dee Kiesow last October during the Patriot Leadership Award Gala at the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington, Va. Kiesow served as the auctioneer for the evening's festivities.

Keenan said a poignant moment for her was meeting former POW Shoshana Johnson, who had been captured in Iraq in 2003.

"I had the honor to spend time with her, and she spoke in detail about being wounded and captured," Keenan said. "She also described how she was rescued and said that she remains close friends with the U.S. soldiers who risked their lives to bring her to safety. Meeting her and hearing her story was one of the most memorable and moving interactions I've ever had.

"It was an incredible gathering of women veterans, particularly those who continue to be leaders in their civilian lives. We have many shared experiences, including not always being seen as 'real' veterans."

Visit <https://www.womensmemorial.org> to learn about the many programs and activities offered throughout the year. ★

EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org

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ASK ABOUT

PLUVICTO



Actor portrayal.

What is PLUVICTO® (lutetium Lu 177 vipivotide tetraxetan)?

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- has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic), and
- has already been treated with other anticancer treatments

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about PLUVICTO?

Use of PLUVICTO involves exposure to radioactivity. Long-term, accruing radiation exposure is associated with an increased risk for cancer.

To minimize radiation exposure to others following administration of PLUVICTO, limit close contact (less than 3 feet) with household contacts for 2 days or with children and pregnant women for 7 days, refrain from sexual activity for 7 days, and sleep in a separate bedroom from household contacts for 3 days, from children for 7 days, or from pregnant women for 15 days.

PLUVICTO may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Low level of blood cell counts.** Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including:
 - Tiredness or weakness
 - Pale skin
 - Shortness of breath
 - Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding
 - Frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers
- **Kidney problems.** Tell your doctor right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including passing urine less often or passing much smaller amounts of urine than usual

Before you receive PLUVICTO, tell your doctor if any of these apply to you:

- You have low level of blood cell counts (hemoglobin, white blood cell count, absolute neutrophil count, platelet count)
- You have or have had tiredness, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than

Please see additional Important Safety Information on the next page and Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on the following page.

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MONTHS

The VISION trial measured OS. Median OS is the length of time half of the men in the study were still alive. Results have been rounded. Men treated with PLUVICTO plus standard therapy lived a median of 15.3 months vs 11.3 months with standard therapy alone.

It also measured **ORR**, which measures the impact of PLUVICTO on tumors. **30%** of men saw their tumors shrink or disappear compared to **2%** with standard therapy alone. ORR includes Complete Response (CR) and Partial Response (PR).

- CR: 6% with PLUVICTO + standard therapy vs 0% with standard therapy
- PR: 24% with PLUVICTO + standard therapy vs 2% with standard therapy

In the trial, 831 men with PSMA+ prostate cancer that spread outside their prostate were evaluated. PLUVICTO was given once every 6 weeks in up to 6 doses to one of two groups evaluated.

Talk to your
doctor



Scan to see the
discussion guide.

mCRPC, metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer; ORR, overall response rate; OS, overall survival; PSMA+, prostate-specific membrane antigen positive.

*Standard therapy was chosen by a doctor from among existing approved treatments and did not include chemotherapy, immunotherapy, systemic isotopes like radium-223 (²²³Ra), or drugs still being studied.

normal or difficulty stopping bleeding, or frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers (possible signs of myelosuppression)

- You have or have had kidney problems
- You have or have had any other type of cancer or treatment for cancer, as PLUVICTO contributes to your long-term cumulative radiation exposure
- You are sexually active as:
 - All radiopharmaceuticals, including PLUVICTO, have the potential to cause harm to an unborn baby
 - You should use effective contraception for intercourse during treatment with PLUVICTO and for 14 weeks after your last dose
 - PLUVICTO may cause temporary or permanent infertility

Before administration of PLUVICTO, you should drink plenty of water in order to urinate as often as possible during the first hours after administration.

The most common side effects of PLUVICTO include:

- Tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Nausea
- Low red blood cell count
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in bowel movements (constipation or diarrhea)
- Vomiting
- Low blood platelet count
- Urinary tract infection
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain

These are not all of the possible side effects of PLUVICTO. Call your doctor for advice about side effects. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on the following page.

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 **PLUVICTO**[®]
lutetium Lu 177 vipivotide tetraxetan
INJECTION FOR INTRAVENOUS USE

Summary of Important Information

What is PLUVICTO® (lutetium Lu 177 vipivotide tetraxetan)?

PLUVICTO is a radiopharmaceutical used to treat adults with an advanced cancer called prostate-specific membrane antigen–positive metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (PSMA-positive mCRPC) that:

- has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic), and
- has already been treated with other anticancer treatments

What is the most important information I should know about PLUVICTO?

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 - Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty stopping bleeding
 - Frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat or mouth ulcers
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- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain

These are not all of the possible side effects of PLUVICTO. Call your doctor for advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my doctor before receiving PLUVICTO therapy?

Before you receive PLUVICTO, tell your doctor if any of these apply to you:

- You have low level of blood cell counts (hemoglobin, white blood cell count, absolute neutrophil count, platelet count)
- You have or have had tiredness, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, bleeding or bruising more easily than normal or difficulty to stop bleeding, or frequent infections with signs such as fever, chills, sore throat, or mouth ulcers (possible signs of myelosuppression)
- You have or have had kidney problems
- You have or have had any other type of cancer or treatment for cancer, as PLUVICTO contributes to your long-term cumulative radiation exposure
- You are sexually active as:
 - All radiopharmaceuticals, including PLUVICTO, have the potential to cause harm to an unborn baby
 - You should use effective contraception for intercourse during treatment with PLUVICTO and for 14 weeks after your last dose
 - PLUVICTO may cause temporary or permanent infertility

Before administration of PLUVICTO, you should drink plenty of water in order to urinate as often as possible during the first hours after administration.

How will I receive PLUVICTO?

- There are strict laws on the use, handling and disposal of radiopharmaceutical products. PLUVICTO will only be used in special controlled areas. This product will only be handled and given to you by people who are trained and qualified to use it safely. These persons will take special care for the safe use of this product and will keep you informed of their actions
- The recommended dose is 7.4 GBq (gigabecquerel, the unit used to express radioactivity)
- PLUVICTO is given approximately every 6 weeks for a total of 6 doses
- PLUVICTO is administered directly into a vein

- Your nuclear medicine doctor will inform you about the usual duration of the procedure
- If you have any questions about how long you will receive PLUVICTO, talk to your nuclear medicine doctor
- Your nuclear medicine doctor will do blood tests before and during treatment to check your condition and to detect any side effects as early as possible. Based on the results, your nuclear medicine doctor may decide to delay, modify or stop your treatment with PLUVICTO if necessary
- An overdose is unlikely. However, in the case of an overdose, you will receive the appropriate treatment
- If you miss an appointment for an administration, contact your nuclear medicine doctor as soon as possible to reschedule

After administration of PLUVICTO, you should:

- Remain hydrated and urinate frequently in order to eliminate the product from your body
- Limit close contact (less than 3 feet) with others in your household for 2 days or with children and pregnant women for 7 days
- Refrain from sexual activity for 7 days
- Sleep in a separate bedroom from others in your household for 3 days, from children for 7 days, or from pregnant women for 15 days
- The nuclear medicine doctor will inform you if you need to take any special precautions after receiving this medicine. This may include special precautions for you or your caregiver with regard to toilet use, showering, laundry, waste disposal, emergency medical assistance, unplanned hospitalization or traveling. Contact your nuclear medicine doctor if you have any questions

General information about the safe and effective use of PLUVICTO

Talk to your nuclear medicine doctor about any concerns. You can ask your nuclear medicine doctor for information about PLUVICTO that is written for healthcare professionals.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



Post 4337 Commander Jesus Acosta and his wife, Auxiliary President Lorinda Acosta, display their respective meeting gavels at the Post in Inverness, Fla. The duo say leading the Post and Auxiliary together has been “nothing but positive.”

‘THEY ARE OUR CORNERSTONE’

Husband and wife lead a VFW Post and Auxiliary in Florida.
They say their partnership is a benefit to the organization.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

VFW Post 4337 in Inverness, Fla., is being led by a husband-and-wife team. Post Commander Jesus (Joe) Acosta and Auxiliary President Lorinda (Lori) Acosta lead the Post and its Auxiliary in community endeavors.

A Vietnam veteran, Joe was based at Long Thanh North from 1969-1971 with the 210th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade. He joined the VFW in 1977 while he was stationed in Lawton, Okla.

Now in his third non-consecutive term as Post commander, Joe said having Lori serving alongside him has been the easiest term thus far.

“During our morning breakfast, we just chit-chat about how we can help each other’s organization,” said Joe, who has been married to Lori for seven years. “But we respect each other’s position. The Auxiliary is always willing to assist and lend a hand with planning, promoting and with the execution of our events. In reality, they are our cornerstone.”

Lori, who joined the VFW Auxiliary in 2020, was an EMT with the Flanders Fire Department Rescue Squad. She was one of the many who responded to the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

As the immediate and past Post Auxiliary president, she said serving next to Joe has been nothing but positive.

“We trust each other in decision-making for the betterment of the Post and membership of both organizations,” Lori said. “If there are problems, we work together to resolve

any issues. The role of the Auxiliary is to help our veterans to the best of our ability.”

Among the many Post activities, the Auxiliary support is weekly bingo, food drives, potluck dinners and representing the Post in the Buddy Poppy contest at the fall conference.

“In general, the Auxiliary members are here to be a helping hand whenever we can be of service,” Lori said. “Or a friendly shoulder or ear if someone just needs to vent.”

The duo channels the membership’s efforts in providing scholarships to high school students, recognizing first responders and helping needy veterans who need a hand up. Most of all, Joe said, they “delight in the camaraderie” of the VFW community.

“Members of the VFW join to mingle with people who understand them and respect those boundaries,” Joe added. “On the other hand, the people who join the VFW Auxiliary join as a tribute to their spouse or a loved one who has endowed them with the privilege of membership.”

Joe is quick to commend his wife, a two-time cancer survivor, for being an inspiration to other women who are just beginning their own cancer journeys. He said Lori plays softball and has been a bowler for 26 years, including competing twice in Reno, Nev., in the national championship games.

“A significant milestone for our Post was the conversion to a non-smoking establishment,” Joe said. “Despite nay sayers stating otherwise, our Post is thriving and is a hub of camaraderie.” ★

EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org



MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

During the month of March, the VFW pays special tribute to the trailblazing women who have admirably served our country in uniform. Their service paved the way for the newest generation of female veterans. March 29 also commemorates National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Featured is Army Nurse Corps Lt. Diane Carlson, one of the approximately 7,500 U.S. service women who served in Vietnam. To all women veterans, VFW salutes you.

Carlson (above) assists an injured service member with his crutches while serving in Vietnam in 1968-1969. Carlson, now Diane Carlson Evans, served in the burn unit of the 36th Evacuation Hospital in Vung Tau and at Pleiku with the 71st Evacuation Hospital, 30 miles from the Cambodian border in the Central Highlands. Carlson Evans went on to create the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project in 1984. The Vietnam Women's Memorial was dedicated in 1993 because of this group. The bronze sculpture depicts three uniformed women with a wounded soldier. One nurse comforts the soldier, one kneels and one looks upward. Carlson Evans is a life member of VFW Post 4393 in Helena, Mont.

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DESTINATION POST SERIES

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If you have visited any of the Posts mentioned in this article, we want to hear from you, or let us hear from you after your visit. Email communications@vfw.org and tell us about your visit. We look forward to hearing from you, our valued readers.



Members of VFW Post 660 stand outside their Post on Oct. 16, 2024, in Savannah, Ga. Besides being a hub for the local veterans' community, the Post grounds have been the location of six major motion pictures, including "Halloween" and "Juror #2."

ARE HERE'

This month's VFW Destination Post Series travels to Georgia and South Carolina. The Posts offer beaches, interesting military sites and VFW camaraderie.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.



VFW magazine continues its "Destination Post Series" this month. The series will feature 125 VFW Posts located in sought-after tourist destinations. Featured VFW Posts are those that make a real difference in the communities in which the Posts are located. This month's article takes *VFW* magazine to two coastal cities in Georgia and South Carolina.

Renowned for its rich blend of art, history and antebellum architecture, the charming city of Savannah, Ga., exudes a unique sense of permanence that extends to its large veterans' population. At the heart of this community stands VFW Post 660, as much a fixture of the city as the Spanish moss and blooming pink azaleas that decorate the cobblestone squares.

Chartered in 1932, Post 660 comprises more than 400 members from 23 to 94 years old, ranging from post-9/11 veterans to those of the Vietnam and Korean wars. This blend of generational wisdom and unity has established the Post as a significant presence in the community, demonstrated through its monthly events and fundraisers, volunteer efforts, partnerships, and provision of food and clothing for those in need.

With an active Auxiliary, Riders Group and Military Order of the Cootie, the Post offers its members and visiting veterans ample opportunities for engagement and camaraderie.

"We strive to maintain an atmosphere of openness and inclusion within our veterans community," VFW Post 660 Commander Charles Fillyaw said. "Whatever your background or current situation, we want all veterans to know they are welcome here."

For Fillyaw, the southern hospitality and warm decorum his membership extends to all who visit Post 660 is a source of personal pride, tied to why he joined in 2018.

"I had just lost my best friend, and I really needed to be around veterans," Fillyaw said. "When I walked through the doors of Post 660, I got exactly what I needed. Since taking over as commander, I have welcomed everyone who walks through the door. The members of the Post and Auxiliary all do the same thing. That, to me, is why our Post is so special."



VFW Post 660 member and Riders Group president Kyle Roberts displays his motorcycle outside VFW Post 660 on Oct. 16, 2024, in Savannah, Ga.

SAVANNAH MUST-SEE SITES



OLD FORT JACKSON

Old Fort Jackson

1 Fort Jackson Rd.
Savannah, GA 31404
<https://www.chsgeorgia.org>

Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum

41 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Savannah, GA 31401
<https://www.shipsofthesea.org>

Fort Pulaski National Monument

101 Fort Pulaski Rd.
Savannah, GA 31410

Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum

460 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Savannah, GA 31401
<https://www.rmgcivilrightsmuseum.com>

Webb Military Museum

411 E. York St.
Savannah, GA 30401
<https://www.webbmilitarymuseum.com>

Located on the outskirts of Savannah and hiding along the shade cast by tall oak trees and Spanish moss, VFW Post 660 also has become a hotbed for Hollywood producers to film anything from slapstick comedies to dramas to cult classics.

Since 2016, Post 660 has been part of the backdrops for six major motion pictures to date, including Adam Sandler's "The Do-Over" (2016), "Galveston" (2018), "Peanut Butter Falcon" (2019) and "Halloween Ends" (2022), as well as the recent releases of Tyler Perry's "Divorce in the Black" (2024) and Clint Eastwood's "Juror #2" (2024).

"Every time these films come out, they recreate their sets inside our Post, and we always get to keep part of the set intact at our Post as part of our history," Sr. Vice Commander Justin Howe said. "They can range from small items to major renovation projects. It's all very cool and draws in movie fans from all over the place, especially movies with cult followings like 'Halloween.'"

THE POST ON THE COAST

Up the coast is the location of VFW's next featured Post. Sitting less than 20 minutes from Charleston, S.C., lies the Isle of Palms, home to VFW Post 3137.

Nestled at the heart of this beach community, along the red cobblestone of Ocean Boulevard and surrounded by skinny palm trees and large pastel colonial houses of different colors, Post 3137 boasts a membership of more than 1,500 members.

With military landmarks such as Joint Base Charleston, the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum, the Vietnam Experience Exhibit, and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and Museum nearby, Post 3137 often serves as a hub for camaraderie.

"Because of these veteran-friendly attractions, our Post serves many visiting comrades from other Posts, as well as active-duty soldiers stationed close by," VFW Post 3137 Commander Bryan Brooks said.

Open to the community, VFW Post 3137 Quartermaster Clayton Johnson believes what makes his Post special is the balance between work and play, between service and respite.

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Like millions of older Americans, I struggle with mobility. For years, I watched my quality of life slip away, as I was forced to stay home while friends and family took part in activities I'd once enjoyed. I thought I'd made some progress when I got a mobility scooter, but then I realized how hard it was to transport. Taking it apart and putting it back together was like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Once I had it disassembled, I had to try to put all of the pieces in the trunk of a car, go to wherever I was going, and repeat the process in reverse. Travel scooters were easier to transport, but they were uncomfortable and scary to drive, I always felt like I was ready to tip over. Then I found the **So Lite® Scooter**. Now there's nothing that can hold me back.

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- Easier to operate
- FAA Compliant

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VFW Post 3137 Commander Bryan Brooks, right, talks with fellow Post members outside of VFW Post 3137 on Oct. 15, 2024, in Isle of Palms, S.C. The Post, dubbed "The Post on the Coast," boasts a membership of more than 1,500 members.

From volunteering at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston to sitting on a beach chair, watching the turquoise Atlantic and listening to the faraway sound of bands playing along the beachfront bars, Post 3137 offers a unique duality.

"Post 3137 redefines your perceptions of who and what the VFW is," Johnson said. "You will find fresh beach air and beachfront views, but most importantly, you will find a unique connection among its veterans, young and old alike, and the opportunity to serve a vibrant community and build true, genuine relationships."

The Post also provides an array of opportunities for its members to bond, from large dinners to frequent morale and welfare-boosting events and pre- and post-deployment gatherings for active duty, Reserve and National Guard units in the area.

"Whether you come to the Post to relax and cheer on your favorite football team, enjoy our monthly fish fry, or have some quiet time by the flag overlooking the beach with the sound of waves crashing in the background," Brooks said, "our Post offers a variety of experiences for its members." ★

EMAIL irodriguez@vfw.org

CHARLESTON-AREA MUST-SEE SITES



If you want pristine white sand beaches on which to relax, Isle of Palms is the place for you. Rent a golf cart or bicycle to see the beauty of the island. If you want more robust activities while on vacation, Charleston, S.C., is just about a 40-minute drive. Here is a look at some of the things you will not want to miss.

Fort Sumter Visitor Center at Liberty Square

340 Concord St.
Charleston, SC 29401
<https://www.nps.gov/fosu/index.htm>

Fort Moultrie

1214 Middle St.

Sullivan's Island, SC 29482

Magnolia Plantation and Gardens

3550 Ashley River Rd.
Charleston, SC 29414
<https://www.magnoliaplantation.com>

South Carolina Aquarium

100 Aquarium Wharf
Charleston, SC 29401
<https://www.scaquarium.org>

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum

40 Patriots Point Rd.
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
<https://www.patriotspoint.org>

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in the hood, two front pockets, knit cuffs and hem, a full front zipper, and chrome-look metal tippets on the hood's drawstrings. Imported.

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Several VFW Auxiliary members partake in a picnic within the sprawling area of their VFW Post 660 grounds on Oct. 16, 2024, in Savannah, Ga. Post 660 has a membership of more than 400 members.



Members of VFW Post 3137 and its Auxiliary stand outside of their Post on Oct. 15, 2024, in Isle of Palms, S.C. The Post has a beachfront view, one of its many enticing recreational features.



GEORGIA POSTS

The state of Georgia boasts 92 VFW Posts. Listed below is a small sampling of the many VFW Posts in Georgia working to make communities better.

VFW Post 658

4864 Harrison Rd.
Macon, GA 31206
(478) 474-3663
Commander Lamar Pounds
<https://www.facebook.com/vfw-post658>

VFW Post 3563

2401 Lyons Hwy.
Vidalia, GA 30474
(912) 583-4028
Commander Jeffery Bowen

VFW Post 4583

436 Project St.
Jessup, GA 31545
(912) 427-3838
Commander Kenneth Bohannon
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1222791167747855>

VFW Post 5262

275 Moose Loop Rd.
Canton, GA 30114
(770) 213-8944
Commander Nathaniel Smith
<https://www.facebook.com/VFW-Post5262>

VFW Post 5659

9995 Greenville Hwy.
Quitman, GA 31643
(229) 263-7626

Commander George Constanzo
<https://www.facebook.com/people/VFW-Post-5659-Quitman-GA/100083603250632>

VFW Post 6449

6000 Rivertown Rd.
Fairburn, GA 30213
(770) 964-2718
Commander Craig Anderson
<https://www.facebook.com/VFW-POST6449>

VFW Post 12149

711 Zitterour Dr.
Rincon, GA 31326
(912) 826-1971
Commander Cleveland Williams
<https://www.facebook.com/VFW12149>



SOUTH CAROLINA POSTS

The Palmetto State boasts 64 VFW Posts. Here is just a small list of the great many outstanding Posts in South Carolina.

VFW Post 4262

5821 N. Main St.
Columbia, SC 29203
(803) 754-1614
Commander Charles Smith
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/140771393012817>

VFW Post 6091

2042 Hwy. 9 East
Dillon, SC 29536
(843) 506-0504
Commander Chris Norris
<https://www.facebook.com/vfw.6091.dillon>

VFW Post 6500

2317 Sandy Bay Rd.
Kingstree, SC 29556
(843) 401-4036
Commander Vincent Staggers
<https://www.facebook.com/post6500>

VFW Post 8738

424 Cedarcrest Dr.
Lexington, SC 29073
(803) 359-8738
Commander Darren Wiseman
<https://www.facebook.com/NewVFW-POST8738>

VFW Post 10624

1411 Stuart Engles Blvd.
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 884-0062
Commander William King

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Mt-Pleasant-VFW-Post-Auxiliary-10624-61558511078139>

VFW Post 11079

2462 Bowen St.
Elgin, SC 29045
(803) 549-7254
Commander David Spivey
<https://www.facebook.com/vfw11079>

VFW Post 12136

7057 Henry Harris Rd.
Indian Land, SC 29720
(803) 493-4361
Commander Robert Suzansky

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REUNIONS



To publicize your unit's reunion, email maga-zine@vfw.org. Submit at least four months in advance of reunion date. VFW members only.

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Homestead AFB/ARB: Waler Horlacher
(954) 245-4609; <https://www.flamingowingassociation.org>

RED HORSE and Prime BEEF Assn.: Dick Aldinger (407) 399-8937; raldinger@rhpbpa.com

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40th Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Reunion:
Denny Houska (308) 233-1133; patsbuzz@gmail.com or www.vetsreunion.com

ARMY

585th Eng. Co., DT, Vietnam: Jerry Kinyon
(941) 962-4897; jkinyon@comcast.com
Delta 1/5 Cav Div., Vietnam, Cambodia,
1966-74: David Michalak (734) 777-5019;
dmich1248@gmail.com

MARINES

A Co., 1st Bn., 5th Marine Regt., 1st Marine Div.: Vincent Rios (817) 847-9954; vmarine@msn.com

Lima Co., 3rd Bn., 5th Marine Regt., 1 Marine Div., Vietnam, 1966-71: Dan Cantrell (360) 739-6104; dancantrell1@yahoo.com

Marine Corps Disbursing Assn.: Bennie Helton (619) 787-3609; usmcdisbursers@hotmail.com

NAVY

USS Donner LSD-20: Dennis Heimbach (610) 775-7539; dennisheimb@gmail.com

USS NOA DD-343/DD-841: Robert and Karen Barrie (727) 289-6534; barrie7@gmail.com

USS Pearl Harbor Plankowner LSD-52: Erica Morris (325) 232-0790; goldanchor52@gmail.com

USS Seawolf SP "A" Div., 1978-84: Scott L. Jaklin (262) 818-3400; www.ssn575.com

USS Spiegel Grove LSD-32: Joe McMahon (609) 214-0723; josephmcmahon1958@gmail.com

USS Wallace L. Lind DD-703: Ed Bauscher (502) 876-2137; eb62vette@aol.com

USS Worden DLG-18: Jim Richmond (972) 978-3967; jrichmond@sbcglobal.net

USS Skagit AKA-105: Carl Newman (619) 997-6055; cfnsln@aol.com

USS Ashtabula AO-51: Bruce Rosenberg (920) 425-3168; ashtabula2020@gmail.com

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Doctor urges seniors to carry medical alert device

Seniors snap up new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills

People don't always do what their doctor says, but when seasoned veteran emergency room physician, Dr. Philip B. Howren, says every senior should have a medical alert device, you better listen up.

"Seniors are just one fall away from being put in a nursing home," Dr. Howren said. "With a medical alert device, seniors are never alone. So it keeps them living independently in their own home. That's why seniors and their family members are snapping up a sleek new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills ever," he said.

Many seniors refuse to wear old style help buttons because they make them look old. But even worse, those medical alert systems come with monthly bills.

To solve these problems

Universal Physicians, a U.S. company went to work to develop a new, modern, state-of-the-art medical alert device. It's called "FastHelp™" and it instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"This slick new little device is designed to look like the pagers doctors wear every day. Seniors love them because it actually makes them look important, not old," Dr. Howren said.

FastHelp is expected to hit store shelves later this year. But special newspaper promotional giveaways are slated for seniors in select areas. ■



■ **NO MONTHLY BILLS:** "My wife had an old style help button that came with hefty bills every month and she was embarrassed to wear it because it made her look old," said Frank McDonald, Canton, Ohio. "Now, we both have FastHelp™, the sleek new medical alert device that our grandkids say makes us look 'cool' not old," he said. With FastHelp, seniors never have to worry about being alone and the best part is there are no monthly bills ever.

Seniors born before 1961 get new medical alert device with no monthly bills ever

It's just what seniors have been waiting for; a sleek new medical alert device with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button for a one-time \$149 price tag that's a real steal after today's instant rebate

The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

That's because for seniors born before 1961, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am this morning the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp™ One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"It's not like old style monitored help buttons that make you talk to a call center and only work when you're at home and come with hefty bills every month. FastHelp comes with state-of-the-art cellular embedded technology. That means it works at home or anywhere, anytime cell service is available



■ **FLYING OUT THE DOOR:** Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8483 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

(Continued on next page)

whether you're out watering the garden, driving in a car, at church or even hundreds of miles away on a tour or at a casino. You are never alone. With just a single push of the One-Touch E Button you instantly get connected to free unlimited help nationwide with no monthly bills ever," said Jack Lawrence, Executive Director of Product Development for U.S. based Universal Physicians.

"We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design and most of all, the instant rebate that practically pays for it and no monthly bills ever," Lawrence said.

FastHelp is the sleek new medical alert device with the best of combinations: a quality, high-tech engineered device that's also an extremely great value because there are no monthly bills ever.

Better still, it comes with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever – which makes FastHelp a great choice for seniors, students and professionals because it connects to one of the largest nationwide networks everywhere cell service is available for free.

And here's the best part. All those who already have an old style monitored medical alert button can immediately eliminate those monthly bills, which is why Universal Physicians is widely advertising this announcement nationwide.

"So if you've ever felt a medical alert device was too complicated or expensive, you'll want to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device with no monthly bills," said Lawrence.

The medical alert device slugfest was dominated by two main combatants who both offer old style monitored help buttons that come with a hefty bill every month. But now Universal Physicians, the U.S. based heavyweight, just delivered a knockout blow sending the top rated contenders to the mat with the unveiling of FastHelp. It's the sleek

new cellular embedded medical alert device that cuts out the middleman by instantly connecting you directly to highly trained 911 operators all across the U.S. There's absolutely nothing to hook-up or install. You don't need a land line and you don't need a cell phone. Everything is done for you.

"FastHelp is a state of the art medical alert device designed to make you look

important, not old. Old style monitored help buttons you wear around your neck, or require expensive base station equipment or a landline are the equivalent of a horse and buggy," Lawrence says. "It's just outdated."

Millions of seniors fall every year and spend hours lying on the floor helpless and all alone with no help.

But seniors who fall and get immediate help are

much more likely to avoid getting sent to a nursing home and get to STAY living in their own home independently.

Yet millions of seniors are still risking their safety by not having a medical alert device. That's because seniors just can't afford to pay the monthly bills that come with old style medical alert devices.

That's why seniors born before 1961 are rushing to

cash in the whopping \$150 instant rebate before the 32 day deadline ends.

So there's no need to wait for FastHelp to hit store shelves later this year because seniors born before 1961 can get it now just by using the \$150 instant rebate coupon printed in today's newspaper before the 32 day deadline ends. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered. ■

HOW TO GET IT:

► **IF BORN BEFORE 1961:** Use the rebate coupon below and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8483

► **IF BORN AFTER 1961:** You cannot use the rebate coupon below and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-330-9423 DEPT. HELP8483

THE BOTTOM LINE: You don't need to shop around. We've done all the leg work, this deal is too good to pass up. FastHelp with the instant rebate is a real steal at just \$149 and shipping and there are no monthly bills ever.

PROS: It's the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts or deposits. It connects you to the vast available network of cellular towers for free and saves seniors a ton of money because there are no monthly bills ever making this deal irresistible. Plus it's the only medical alert device that makes seniors look important, not old.

CONS: Consumers can't get FastHelp in stores until later this year. That's why it's so important for seniors born before 1961 to call the National Rebate Center Hotline within the next 32 days. For those who miss that deadline, the sleek little medical alert device will set you back over \$300 bucks.



P7366 OF23823R-1

REBATE COUPON

EXPIRES 32 days from Today's Publication Date
After Coupon Expires: The FastHelp is \$299.00 plus shipping & handling

\$150 Off

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FastHelp, the new medical alert device that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

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FastHelp™

One-touch help. Anytime. Anywhere.
With no monthly bills ever.





VFW DAY OF SERVICE SHOWCASES COMMUNITY SERVICE ENDEAVORS

With May just around the corner, it is time for VFW Posts to plan Day of Service activities.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

The 2025 VFW Day of Service launches on May 3. As a part of the VFW's #StillServing campaign, the Day of Service aims to unite VFW members to illustrate to the world the positive impact they make in their communities.

While the Day of Service officially kicks off on May 3, events are encouraged to take place throughout the remainder of the month.

Start planning today and visit <https://www.vfw.org/DayofService> to sign up, register your event and secure your place on the Day of Service map. ★

EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org

Members of VFW Post 10018 and its Auxiliary in Tacoma, Wash., gather on May 4, 2024, at Baltimore Park to spread mulch for its 2024 VFW Day of Service project. Tacoma Metro Parks provided the materials and tools for the 13 volunteers to spread about 40 yards of mulch around trees and along the path in just over two hours. Baltimore Park is located across the street from Narrows Bridge VFW Post 10018.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA BARELA

Joshua Barela, a VFW Legacy life member with the VFW Department of Florida and his family are photographed on May 12, 2024, outside the Seven Hills Rehabilitation and Nursing Facility in Lynchburg, Va. The Barela family represented the VFW for a Day of Service project, including performing live music with piano and violin accompaniments. During lunch, the family visited with residents to spread cheer, according to Barela, who added that he hopes his children will become VFW Auxiliary members when they are of age.

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‘SO MUCH TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR WAR’

A VFW Post member in Missouri spearheaded the state’s first *Operation Desert Storm* commemoration ceremony to honor those who fought alongside him.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

When members of VFW Post 1828 and their families gathered at the Veterans Memorial in West Plains, Mo., to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the end of *Operation Desert Storm* last year, it marked an historic first for the “Show-Me State” Post.

Led by Gulf War veteran and Post 1828 Junior Vice Commander David Scott Buennemeyer, the ceremony on Feb. 28, 2024, honored the poignant stories of two pilots from his unit who were killed in action. It also included the recitation of the names of 10 Missourians who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Hahn Air Base in Germany, decided to organize Missouri’s first *Desert Storm* ceremony following his arrival to the state in 2022.

A former District 9 commander for the VFW Department of Illinois, Buennemeyer participated for nearly a decade in the state’s annual *Desert Storm* Remembrance ceremony, which takes place each February at the Illinois State Capitol Rotunda in Springfield to commemorate its 17 service members killed in combat.

“I was involved with state political leaders and state veterans’ affairs leaders at every ceremony for over eight years,” said Buennemeyer, a former member of VFW Post 5506 in Marseilles, Ill. “I also held annual Post and District-level *Desert Storm* ceremonies at the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial in Marseilles, the only memorial built while the wars were being fought.”

Buennemeyer believes the inaugural ceremony last year, which was concluded with a rendition of *Taps* by Post 1828 Commander Dan Brown, also provided others in the state with a model for how Posts and towns can honor and celebrate their Gulf War veterans.

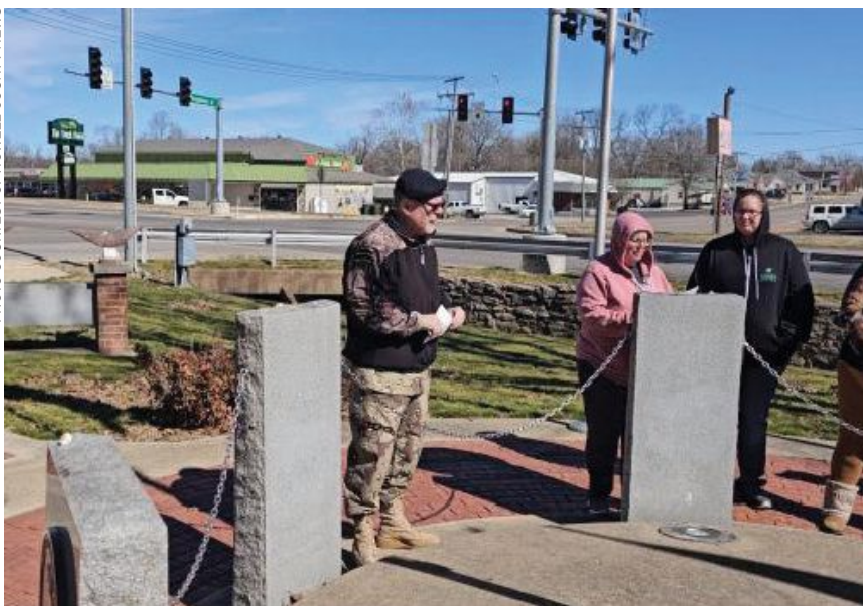
Buennemeyer intended to host a second annual ceremony at the Veterans Memorial in West Plains this Feb. 28. As of the completion of this article in January, his goal was to expand public coverage and invite state VFW leadership, congressmen and senators.

“I want my new state to know and honor the sacrifice of its citizens and to hold annual remembrance ceremonies,” Buennemeyer said. “We can never forget each and every person who paid the ultimate price. We need to read their names out loud and remember them.”



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PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWELL COUNTY NEWS



VFW Post 1828 Junior Vice Commander David Scott Buennemeyer, left, speaks to those gathered on Feb. 28, 2024, at the Veterans Memorial in West Plains, Mo., during a ceremony commemorating the 33rd anniversary of the end of *Operation Desert Storm*.

“I feel our war is the modern forgotten war, much like the Korean War,” said Buennemeyer, a retired Air Force master sergeant who led a ground combat unit during *Desert Storm*. “It is a story that I believe has been eclipsed by the Iraq and Afghanistan era, but there is so much to remember about the significance of our war.”

Buennemeyer, who served during the Gulf War with Echo Flight of the 50th Security Police Group out of

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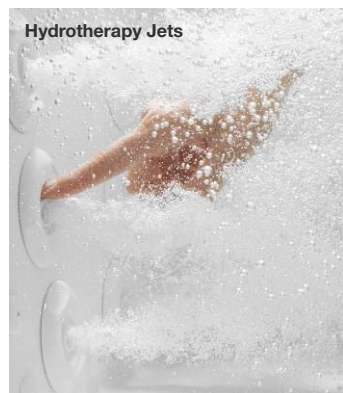
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'THIS POST IS A COMMUNITY CENTER'

A VFW Post in "The Natural State" with a rich history of community service celebrated its 100th anniversary in February. The Post commander said that the engagement rate has never been higher.

BY DAVE SPIVA



VFW Post 1322 member and Navy veteran Mark Schultz retires a flag during a flag retirement ceremony in September 2024 in Van Buren, Ark. Post 1322 Commander Matthew Hicks said the Post retires an estimated 1,500 to 1,600 U.S. flags per year. INSET: Members of VFW Post 1322, located in Van Buren, Ark., celebrated the Post's 100th anniversary in February. Post 1322 is claimed to be the "oldest VFW Post in Arkansas."

From honoring the legacy of its namesake, Robert Jack, to starting modern initiatives such as a monthly hiking program, a 100-year-old VFW Post in Arkansas continues to carry on Post traditions of community service and fellowship.

Founded on Feb. 13, 1925, VFW Post 1322 in Van Buren, Ark., is the oldest VFW Post in the state and in recent years has flourished into a hub for veterans and their families. Van Buren, a suburb of Fort Smith, is in western Arkansas near the Oklahoma state line.

Post 1322 Commander Matthew Hicks said that members focus on community activities, which he said has led to more engagement.

“We’re going into our third year with a project called Operation Daily,” said Hicks, currently a medic with the Army National Guard. “We now have our building open every day. Folks can come in, have a cup of coffee, eat a donut, play some games, watch TV, use one of our computers or have conversations with others. This Post is a community center — not a canteen.”

‘A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE NATURE’

Hicks said that one of the Post’s priorities is the Hiking for Mental Health program, which was established in 2019. He said it allows veterans to connect with nature and build camaraderie among other hikers. Hicks said that each month, hikers meet at the Post and then carpool to a hiking location.

“Arkansas is under rated when it comes to the beauty of the state,” Hicks said. “We don’t do hard hikes, so people of all ages are welcome to come, even if they are not veterans. We make sure everyone gets a chance to experience nature in their own way and deal with whatever thoughts they have.”



Post History Ties to VFW Founder

James Putnam, VFW’s first Commander-in-Chief and co-founder of the organization, attended the grand opening of VFW Post 1322 in Van Buren, Ark., in February 1951 on the 26th anniversary of its establishment.

According to Post 1322 archives, Putnam, who lived his later years in Arkansas, “personally installed the officers of the Post in the new building.” Putnam’s remains were buried at Arkansas’ Fayetteville National Cemetery.

Other Post 1322 initiatives include donating to the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program, flag retirement ceremonies and adopting two Van Buren cemeteries — Gill Cemetery and Gracelawn Cemetery. Volunteers laid nearly 1,000 wreaths at the cemeteries in December.

“Public fundraising campaigns helped us purchase those wreaths,” Hicks said. “We laid them at the headstones of four of the Post’s founding members and all the other service members in those cemeteries.”

‘IT’S AMAZING WHAT THEY’VE DONE’

Hicks attributed the longevity of the Post to its strong community ties and active involvement. He added that if it were not for a few of the Post’s older members “holding it together,” the



Post 1322 Named for Local WWI Veteran

Robert Jack VFW Post 1322 in Van Buren, Ark., is named in honor of a local World War I soldier.

Robert Jack, who enlisted in the Army’s 2nd Arkansas Infantry Regiment during the Great War, died on Sept. 22, 1918, in France during the Battle of Saint-Mihiel. Jack’s remains were buried in the St. Mihiel American Cemetery on the western edge of Thiaucourt. A monument in his honor was placed in Van Buren.

facility and its contribution to the community would not be here in the present day.

Korean War veteran Robert Layes was one of those members. The Navy veteran, who served aboard the USS Kearsarge (CVA-33), said the Post is a “completely different place” now that younger veterans have joined.

“It’s amazing what they’ve done with the place,” said Layes, who served from 1950 to 1954. “I don’t get to go as much anymore, but I still participate sometimes.”

Layes, 93, added that he appreciates newer members for growing the Post into what it is today.

“I am very proud to be a VFW member,” Layes said. “Our Post has changed for the better, and I’m happy it has.” ★

EMAIL magazine@vfw.org



NAVAL STATION NORFOLK BDD SITE

VFW Service Officer:

National Pre-Discharge Claims
Representative Abigail Heffernan

Naval Station Norfolk
1683 Gilbert St.
Building J-50 (Annex), 3rd Floor
Norfolk, VA 23511

Monday-Friday
7:45 a.m.-4 p.m.

(757) 319-1940
aheffernan@vfw.org

VFW National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative Abigail Heffernan greets a sailor at Naval Station Norfolk VA in December. Heffernan said that transitioning from military to civilian life is a challenging process for service members.

'It's What Service Members Need'

VFW service officers at Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) sites provide a simplified process for service members who are separating from the military. The BDD site at Virginia's Naval Station Norfolk helps those troops during the process.

BY DAVE SPIVA

Being the largest Navy base in the world, Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia is home to a vast number of sailors and Marines, and VFW's Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) site on the base provides an essential service to those military members.

VFW National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative Abigail Heffernan said that a common concern among troops is how "daunting" the VA claims process is.

"Having BDD representatives on military bases can alleviate the stressor of getting VA claims done — and done right," Heffernan said. "Filing a dis-

ability claim also provides supplemental income to service members during a very critical period in their transition from military life."

Heffernan, a retired Navy career counselor, said that she mostly gets "word-of-mouth" referrals and gives briefings about the claims process during Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes. Heffernan added that, as one of VFW's BDD representatives, she undergoes service officer training every six months, all while processing about five claims per day.

Heffernan said that, even as a career counselor, she quickly realized during

her transition out of the military that it was going to be more difficult than she anticipated.

"While in the Navy, I was responsible for preparing sailors for separation out of the military," Heffernan said. "I felt that I was pretty good at my job and that I was well-prepared for my transition. But there were so many things that needed to be done and very little direction on how to do it. This is an example why BDD sites are so important. It's what service members need." ★

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DAY OF SERVICE

The VFW Day of Service is part of the VFW's #StillServing campaign and unites VFW members in a common goal — to show the nation the meaningful impact we make in our communities.

The 2025 Day of Service kicks off May 3 with events taking place throughout the remainder of the month. Start planning today and visit vfw.org/DayofService to sign up, register your event and secure your place on our Day of Service map.

VFWDayOfService.org



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TBI App Offers Tools for Medical Providers

More than half a million service members have suffered a traumatic brain injury in the past 25 years.

BY JANICE PHELAN

Assistance for military service members and veterans with a traumatic brain injury — also known as a TBI — is continuing to expand through the Military Health System. A recent addition to these resources is the Warfighter Brain Health Provider Toolkit app, released last year.

Designed as a resource hub for Military Health System providers, the smartphone app offers health care providers an easy way to access tools that assist in assessment, evaluation and treatment of individuals with mild TBIs as well as patients with symptoms related to a potential threat to the brain.

One advantage of the Warfighter Brain Health Provider app is that it is accessible offline and can be used in any environment or location. The app was developed by experts at the Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence, a Defense Department office offering care, support and research for TBIs.

Through the app, caregivers are able to proceed in a logical order through the steps of TBI evaluation. This valuable tool also offers an information summary designed to assist in injury management and treatment.

Dr. Stephanie Maxfield-Panker, clinical affairs section chief for the Defense Health Agency's Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence, recently shared additional information about the app and the importance of ensuring that these tools are easily accessible to providers in an article from the Military Health System website.

"Medical personnel will have brain health resources in one location, at



their fingertips, in the deployed setting, in garrison or home base, online or offline," she said. "It is important for medical personnel to always have the most up-to-date tools they need to assess and manage TBI and other brain health threats — anytime, anywhere."

Traumatic brain injuries are common among veterans and active military service members, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Worldwide, the Department of Defense estimates that approximately 509,000 individuals suffered a TBI from 2000 to 2024. Of these injuries, close to 82 percent were considered mild, around 12 percent were classified as moderate, and 2.1 percent were either severe or penetrating.

By definition, TBIs are an injury to the head which disrupts the person's brain function. More serious brain injuries may result in ongoing symptoms or chronic health issues, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

These injuries can be the result of motor vehicle accidents, falls or an incident involving a sudden blow or jolt to the head, according to the VA. Veterans

who believe they have suffered a TBI are encouraged to contact their nearest VA health care facility for a comprehensive screening.

Annually during March, the Brain Injury Association of America and the Defense Department promote Brain Injury Awareness Month to help educate the public about this medical condition and to share resources available to service members, veterans, family members and health care professionals.

The TBI Center of Excellence website also is a valuable resource for patients and their families. The website includes an informational booklet and fact sheets on specific TBI issues and treatments, along with helpful guides for patients and caregivers.

To visit the website and for more information on the Warfighter Brain Health Provider Toolkit app, visit: <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Traumatic-Brain-Injury-Center-of-Excellence>.

EMAIL magazine@vfw.org

Janice Phelan is a freelance writer based in Lee's Summit, Mo.

Better than cannabis, better than CBD

New Joint-Supporting “Miracle Oil” Capsule Delivers Hip, Knee, and Shoulder Comfort in Just Days

Thousands of Americans are rediscovering normal freedom of movement thanks to a “miracle oil” capsule that’s outperforming hemp in promoting joint comfort.

According to the official figures from the CDC, more than 58 million Americans are living with joint discomfort. This epidemic has led to a search for alternative approaches – as many sufferers seek relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears is leading the way with a new formula he calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

The capsule is based on a “miracle oil” historically treasured for its joint health-supporting properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And to this day, Ayurvedic practitioners rely on it to promote optimal joint health.

Now, with a modern twist backed by science, Dr. Sears is making this natural solution for joint health available to the public.

Your Body’s Hidden “Soothing System”

Joint health research changed forever with the discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) in 1992. Up until that point, research on cannabinoids focused on psychoactive effects. Now, scientists were looking at a new way to fight occasional aches and pains.

Your ECS serves as a central “signaling system” that tells your body how to react to things you do every day. It controls several critical bodily functions such as learning and memory, sleep, healthy immune responses – and your response to discomfort.

A recent study revealed a direct link between the ECS and creaky, sore joints. Researchers at the University of Edinburgh studied the aging of mice with endocannabinoid deficiencies versus “normal” mice.

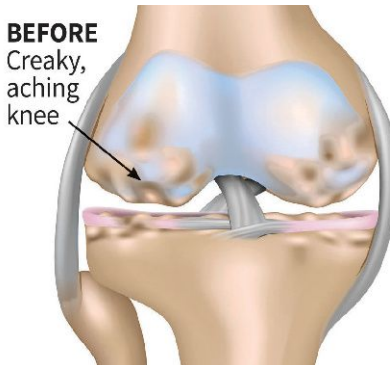
As they aged, the deficient mice had a whopping 60% more joint degeneration than the mice with a healthy ECS.

As the name suggests, the ECS responds to cannabis. At the time it was discovered, scientists assumed that was the best way to support it. But thanks to Dr. Sears’ all-natural solution, you can power up your ECS without marijuana.

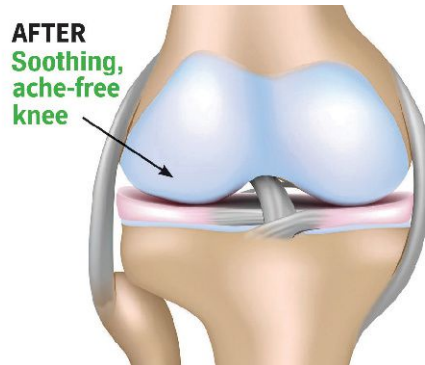
“Calling it the ‘endocannabinoid system’ was a misnomer from the very beginning,” Dr. Sears explained. “Modern research reveals that you don’t need cannabis to activate this incredible system. You don’t need to ‘get high’ to get joint relief.”

A scholarly review found that plants and herbs that don’t produce mind-altering effects can support the ECS and help it maintain its healthy functions.

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aching
knee



AFTER
Soothing,
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knee



The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days

This includes common foodstuffs, such as kava, chocolate, black pepper, and most significantly – the star ingredient to Dr. Sears’ own **Mobilify** formula - frankincense.

Modern scientists say this natural ingredient meets “cannabinoid tetrad” – the signs used to determine if something supports the ECS. While it doesn’t produce a “high” like cannabis does, it binds to the same receptors to support a healthy response to discomfort.

All the Benefits of CBD – Without Cannabis

Indian frankincense, the chief ingredient in **Mobilify**, has been shown to provide all the benefits of cannabis without any feelings of sluggishness or sleepiness.

And studies show that users don’t have to wait long for the comfort they’re looking for.

In a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian frankincense “significantly” supported healthy joint function and relieved discomfort in as little as five days.

Additional research linked regular use to lasting comfort.

In another study, 48 participants were given an extract made from frankincense for 120-days. When the results came in, researchers determined the extract strongly supported joint comfort – especially in the knees.

These results were all achieved without marijuana. Research continues to back up the idea that you can support smooth, strong, and healthy joints naturally – without tiredness or sluggishness.

Get Moving Again with Mobilify

Mobilify has already helped thousands of Americans stay on their feet and breeze through their daily activities with ease.

One user even reported getting results the same day it was used.

“**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness, and mild temporary discomfort,” Joni D. said.

Larry M, another user, compared taking **Mobilify** to living a completely new life.

“After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness, and minor aches went away...it’s almost like being reborn,” he said.

Dennis H. said it helped him get back to his favorite hobby.

“I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried,” he said.

How to Get Mobilify

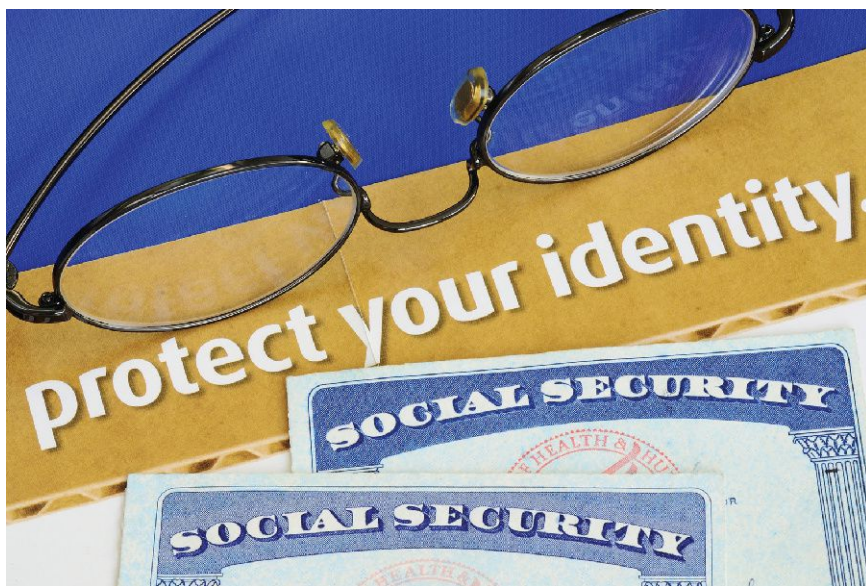
Right now, the only way to get this powerful, unique **Mobilify** formula that clobbers creaking joints without clobbering you is directly from Dr. Sears. It is not available in stores.

To secure your bottle of this breakthrough natural joint discomfort reliever, buyers should call with Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-462-1815**. “The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers.”

Dr. Sears believes in this product so much, he offers a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I’ll send you your money back,” said Dr. Sears.

The Hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow them to restock. Call **1-800-462-1815** to secure your limited supply of **Mobilify**. If you are not able to get through due to extremely high call volume, please try again! Call NOW to qualify for a significant discount on this limited time offer. To take advantage of this exclusive offer use Promo Code: **VETMB225** when you call.

Beware of Scammers and Protect Your Identity



National Public Data is a data broker that conducted background searches for different businesses, including obtaining criminal records and other personal information through shared software programs. It reportedly gathered data

by scraping information about individuals from non-public sources without the person's knowledge or consent.

Many victims do not know their information has been leaked unless they have a monitoring service to alert them.

Due to this breach, criminals are using personal information to open new accounts or gain access to bank accounts, retirement assets, tax returns, credit lines and even medical care.

There are two important tasks to help prevent fraud. Here is what you can do:

1. Place a security freeze on your credit file. While it means you will have to unfreeze your credit should you want to open a new credit card or take out a loan, it also means crooks cannot use your social security number to do so.
2. Get an Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) to file your taxes. It will help stop the misuse of your social security number in filing fraudulent tax returns to steal your refund.

To learn more about protecting your identity, call the VFW Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606.

Travel Tips Lead to Savings

If you have spring break or summer travel plans, you are likely aware gas is not cheap these days. Why pay full price for flights, rentals and hotels when you could be saving hundreds every trip?

Before you set off to your next destination, here are some travel tips to help you spend less on your next trip.

BOOK RENTAL CARS ONLINE, NOT AT THE AIRPORT

One of the easiest ways to save on rental cars is also one of the simplest — booking well in advance. Rates are significantly cheaper for rentals booked a few weeks in advance of travel. This is especially true compared to what you will pay after stepping out of the airport.

FIND GOOD DEALS ON FLIGHTS

While an airline loyalty card might offer savings, the real deals are found in using an online flight search service

to find flights that will potentially cost hundreds less.

KEEP AN EYE ON HOTEL SAVINGS

Even more so than rental cars or flights, you can get great deals on hotels if you know where to look. One of the best ways to get big savings on hotel stays is through an online discount program, where you can regularly find top hotel rooms listed for 30, 40 or even 50 percent off for both domestic and international travel.

There is no denying that compiling the best flights, hotel bundles and rental cars all in advance to get your savings can be a headache. Take away the pain of planning by looking into discount savings plans. For more information on savings programs for VFW members, call the VFW Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606.



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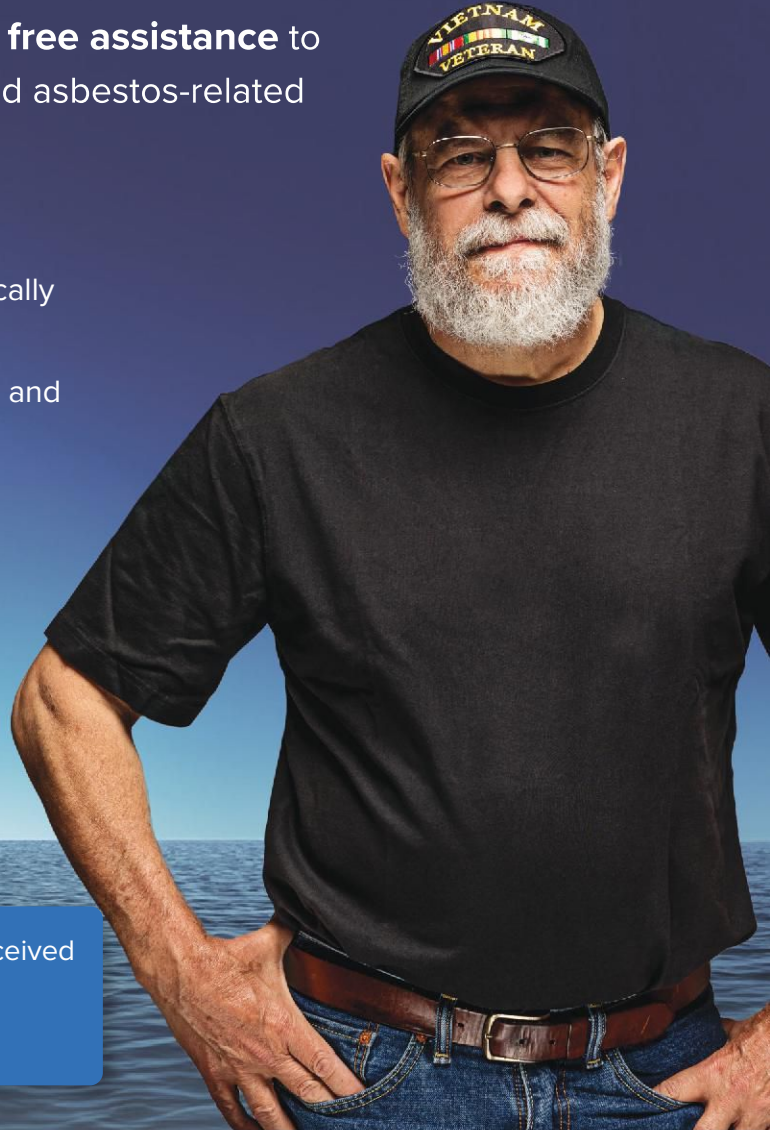
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Women in VFW Share Ideas for Growth Potential

Assuming females are not eligible for membership in VFW is a hurdle many women vets still face.

BY JANIE DYHOUSE

PHOTO BY ROB COUTURE/VFW



From left, Deputy Director VFW National Legislative Service Kristina Keenan, Associate Director VFW National Legislative Service Nancy Springer, Assistant Director of National Veterans Service Katherine Cassell and Associate Director VFW Communications and Public Affairs Brittany Dymond Murray gather in December at VFW's Washington Office on Capitol Hill. They are four of several women VFW members employed by VFW.

man served. We must ask every female if they served before we just assume they are a spouse of a veteran. This question should be as common as asking a male."

Brittany Dymond Murray | Associate Director, VFW Communications and Public Affairs

"It's going to take time for VFW to appeal to more women veterans. Depending on what their service looked like, they may fear a repeat of an in-service experience. We must do better telling the stories of women veterans engaged in VFW from the Post to national levels, and not just during specific times of the year. I joined my first Post because it was part of the student veteran community at the university I attended immediately after I was discharged from the Navy. Upon joining the Post, I was quickly welcomed, accepted and integrated into Post leadership roles."

Nancy Springer | Associate Director, VFW National Legislative Service

"I think part of it will be a 'showing by doing' and by personal contact with women combat veterans — those currently serving and those no longer serving. I have learned that veterans join VFW to do things that serve veterans, not to sit around and watch TV. Women VFW members should be an active part of their Post's recruiting drives and should serve in Post (and above) officer positions, both appointed and/or elect-

As the number of women serving in uniform has grown significantly over the past 25 years, so, too, has the number of female VFW members. At press time, VFW has nearly 41,000 women members. That is nearly 14,000 more than in 2019 when the organization finished the year with 27,281 female members.

VFW magazine asked women leaders in the organization as well as those employed by VFW their thoughts on what more VFW can do to attract more female vets. The most common responses included continuing to make the Posts more "family-friendly" and offering child care during Post meetings.

The comments from those who responded to our request are as follows and have been edited for length.

VFW EMPLOYEES

Donna Yawn | Pre-Discharge Rating Representative, NVS

"I think it would be beneficial and important to show that more women and women of color are in leadership positions within the VFW. I joined the VFW when I was in the Army stationed in Hawaii. I joined the VFW because of the camaraderie I witnessed and seeing VFW help active-duty service members who were in need."

Cynthia Archuleta | Regional Quality Assurance Specialist, NVS

"Many female veterans are never asked about what they did. By the time someone else may say 'Oh she served,' it's too late. Everyone always assumes the

ed. My Post is fortunate in that aspect as it currently has three women Post officers, one woman who serves as a District officer, and recently had a woman commander. I had been an At-Large member for a few years prior to military retirement. I attended a Post meeting where the Post officers approached me to learn my name and to welcome me. I returned and quickly transferred from At-Large status to this Post. A few weeks later, I became a Life member.”

Sonia Coley | National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative

“The VFW could attract more women to the organization by doing outreach and letting women know that they are eligible for the VFW. I joined the VFW because I retired with no help from a service officer. I learned that the VFW does claims and wanted to help people that were in my position have an easier transition.”

Abigail Heffernan | National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative

“I think that highlighting women more will show that the VFW is not just a men’s club. Focus on the diversity and the uniqueness of the individuals that the VFW has within its ranks. I think articles like this are important as well because it sheds light on the fact that there are quite a few women that are in the VFW. I joined the VFW because I was offered a job by the VFW, and I felt I needed to become a member. However, since I became a member, I have found a family. I now tell any veteran I see that they need to join and get involved because it is an amazing group of people.”

Denise Southall | National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative

“A lot of women veterans feel that they’re not recognized for their service. I feel that programs or events that are specifically designed for women veterans would attract more of them. I joined the VFW because of the claims assistance that I received from Tom Parker, Fort Cavazos National Pre-Discharge Claims Representative, when I retired. I appreciated it so much, and I wanted to pay it forward.”



PHOTO BY LAUREN GOLDMAN/VFW

From left, VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore, former VFW Quartermaster General Debra Anderson, Administration Operations Assistant Coordinator Stephanie Butler and VFW Unmet Needs Coordinator Mary Spencer share a laugh last December in Kansas City, Mo., prior to the VFW Headquarters employee holiday gathering.

ON THE COVER

**Carol Whitmore
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief**

“The VFW is slowly turning a corner in acceptance. Treat women as any other veteran ... on their merits. When I joined the VFW, I did so because VFW is THE tip of the spear over any other service organization.”

**Debra Anderson
Former VFW Quartermaster General**

“Female veterans need to see people like them (in terms of gender, age, and race) to feel comfortable and accepted in the VFW. Otherwise, they see no reason to join. I was invited by a friend and fellow Gulf War veteran to join. I enjoyed the camaraderie and a shared sense of accomplishment. Veteran organizations like the VFW are great for helping you connect with like-minded veterans. You don’t know how much fun you’ll have until you jump in.”

**Mary Spencer
VFW Unmet Needs Coordinator**

“The main thing for me is to present more of a family-friendly atmosphere. Between work and family obligations

and our children’s schedule, time is very limited. Posts need to be innovative and branch out from what has always worked and create new programs and/or offer some sort of child care during events or meetings. Many service members have families and children and if they see that other children/family members are involved in the VFW community, then that can be a factor in whether they see it as a good fit for their family. I joined the VFW on the recommendation of someone I trust and respect. It also was a way to stay connected to the military when I was done wearing the uniform.”

**Stephanie Butler
Administration Operations Assistant Coordinator**

“I believe that having an incoming female Commander-in-Chief is a huge start in attracting more female veterans. The VFW has so much potential with younger veterans, especially female veterans if they would support women the way they have supported men in the past. The VFW could most definitely work with the VA to fix the women’s clinic.”

**Katherine Cassell | Assistant
Director of National Veterans Service**

"It is important to lead by example, meet them where they are and understand their needs. When I became active in the VFW, I worked with my Post/Department leadership in having meetings that were family-friendly. It is good for VFW members to recognize that military/veteran children represent more than 63 percent of those who join the military. My initial experience in joining the VFW was initially unfavorable and felt like a slap in the face from the VFW Post that I grew up in as a child. Fast forward 10 years and another move across the country, and I was at a veteran-engaged event sponsored by my university's student veteran program. At that event, I ran into another woman veteran of a VFW Post who was in a leadership role. After talking with her and seeing the positive changes that VFW had made offered me hope, and I joined."

**Cindy Noel | Assistant Director,
Field Operations, NVS**

"Even in 2025, the older male VFW members still don't see us as veterans while we are wearing our hats. At each convention, the female combat veterans like myself are never represented. We are given 45 minutes in a small room with no participation. No men show up to support. I deployed during numerous campaigns — Saudi Arabia, Kosovo, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, and Kuwait — but none of that counts to my male VFW counterparts who still see me as a girl. We are educated, we served and we are still serving. When female non-members see themselves in the organization, they will come. I joined the VFW after an excellent, patient and kind VSO who assisted with my VA claim prompted me to join the VFW."

**Kristina Keenan | Deputy Director of
VFW National Legislative Service**

"The best way to attract more women veterans to the VFW is to be welcoming and open to all veterans when they walk into a Post for the first time. The VFW does a great job highlighting women veterans in the *VFW* magazine, on the VFW website and through social media. I was

excited to join the VFW as soon as I was eligible, which was just after my first deployment in the early 2000s. When I returned to the United States and stepped on to American soil, there were veterans from the VFW waiting at the gate. They shook my hand, handed me a cell phone and said, 'Welcome home. Now call your mother and let her know you're OK.' That gesture really moved me, and soon after, I was motivated to join the organization that I had heard about my whole life."

VFW DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS

**Kimberly Napoleon | Department of
Michigan Commander**

"It is imperative that veterans' organizations such as VFW intentionally seek to create safe opportunities for female veterans to share their perspectives. Many female veterans served in male-dominant units and feel isolated when it comes to a male-dominant organization. The newly formed National Women's Veterans Committee by Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt is a start. With representation from each state, female members have the opportunity to develop initiatives that focus on the issues that are most relevant to the female veteran. I joined VFW because I was invited by a Vietnam veteran who happened to be a family friend. I was the only female in my Post, and today I am one of three after 20 years. Furthermore, I am the first female to be elected in 105 years of Department of Michigan's chartering."

**Deborah Johnson | Department of
California Commander**

"Most people assume that it takes women in the VFW to recruit women into the VFW. Although that helps, I have seen a better response with male members telling women their eligibility and their value. Most women are resistant to membership in male-dominated organizations because of their personal experiences in the military. Leadership in the VFW as a woman is very challenging. Although I have been a member for more than 30 years, I still get comments

about why my service or my gender does not qualify me for a leadership position. I returned home from Desert Storm in 1993 and was asked to join a local VFW Post where I lived. It was an honor to be asked to join the VFW because I was not aware that I was eligible since I served in the National Guard."

**Andrea Summerlin | Department of
Oregon Commander**

As the first female commander in our Department's 103-year history, the responsibility is not lost on me that I am a role model. My mentor, John Wrinkle, (past Department Commander and Council member) was a visionary leader. He created the Department's Women's Veterans Committee, and I was the first Chair. The Committee is now chaired by a dynamic and energetic leader, and she is doing outreach, surveys, meetings, has created a resource guide and so much more. Despite us being in the 21st century, the majority of women are still primarily responsible for child care and household duties. Having child care for meetings would be helpful as well as having meetings at convenient times. Not all women will be like I was, seeking out the VFW, and that is why it's so important to spread our message to others. Ignore the naysayers and be a part of the team."

**Barbara Loncar | Department of
Pennsylvania Commander**

"When having a recruiting event, seek out the females in the crowd. Don't just ask the males because they are wearing a veteran hat or shirt. I was raised in the VFW starting as a Junior Girl then transferred to Auxiliary at 16. My mom's family were very active in our VFW. When my husband and I came back from Desert Storm, my uncle was the Post Commander. He encouraged us to join the VFW. Join so you can help keep your VA benefits. We encourage members to attend meetings, but if the female veterans are raising a family, it isn't easy. We need to have Posts provide child care during meetings."

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Ingeborg Conley | Department of Texas

“To attract more female veterans to the VFW, I would suggest more advertisement on our female veterans who are currently in the VFW, from the top down all the way to Post commander and Post member. I served 20 years on active duty in the U.S. Army from 1975-1995. I joined as a WAC, and I missed the family atmosphere, and the feeling of belonging. I would tell female veterans the many advantages you receive while joining the VFW, such as the satisfaction of helping your community, the patriotism and being with comrades that understand what you have been through.”

Dawn Napier | Department of California

“It takes just one man to tell a woman trying to join the VFW that she needs to join the Auxiliary and she will not forget that. This continues to happen to this day and then that story blows up on social media. I think now that more

women are holding positions of leadership, and we will finally have a female Commander-in-Chief at the helm is why we are seeing growth. Stand up for yourself you earned your eligibility to be a member of the VFW. Find a great female mentor because we're out here to help you.”

Barbara McKean | Department of South Dakota

“The VFW needs to continue to advertise to attract more female veterans to the VFW to remind them it is not the old veteran's club some remember it to be. They need to show that it is a family-friendly organization. Local Posts need to reach out to their female veterans in their communities and invite them to join in veteran activities and Post events. They need to make sure they review options for child care so females can attend meetings and bring their children if necessary. When I retired and moved to the community my local Post was in, I saw the need for more veteran involvement in our local VFW Post. I

felt I could make a difference, so I went to a meeting and joined that same night. Contrary to everything I'd heard about this male-dominated veteran's group, they were welcoming, kind, encouraging and supportive of my involvement in the VFW and our Post.”

Denise Perry | Department of Maryland

“Women veterans are serving in more roles than in the past. A significant number have served in combat with distinction. More women are considering the benefits that they would receive and the opportunity to serve in the military and to make a difference in their communities. I joined the Army about a year after I graduated from high school. I was born on the Fort Meade Army base. I joined the Army in 1976 for a four-year term. There were very few career opportunities where I lived, so I used the G.I. Bill to complete my education. The Post only had one female veteran. The Post commander took the females under his wing and showed us the ropes in the VFW.”



EMAIL jdyhouse@vfw.org



RECRUITING MADE EASY

You have likely noticed QR codes on VFW brochures, advertisements and other materials. QR codes are all about convenience and up-to-date information with a scan of the code from a smartphone.

The QR code shown here is linked to a VFW membership application.

Simply open the camera app on your smartphone, hold it over the QR code and wait for the yellow line reading “oms.vfw.org” to appear. Tap the link in the yellow line, and you will be taken to the VFW membership application.

With the use of QR codes, recruiting has never been easier.



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Prostate Relief Pill Combats All-Night Bathroom Urges and Embarrassment: Thousands have snapped up this safe & affordable way to get relief from prostate woes

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-Too many bathroom trips, which disrupt a good nights sleep

-When it can seemingly take forever for our flow to start

-And when our flow does start, it's a weak stream, which causes us to have to stand seemingly forever to go

-When it feels our bladders are not emptying, which makes us very uncomfortable

Saw Palmetto has been kicked around for years as being helpful for prostate issues..

But the Amish have found that while taking some Saw Palmetto can be helpful—There are several other herbs that are just as helpful if not more so, and the Amish take a combination of all of them!

And over the past several years there is one product on the market many Amish men now swear by as being a key to improved prostate health—And that product is Prost-Fix.

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Zinc: There's more zinc in one's prostate than in any other part of the body. One study supported the premise that zinc is needed for a healthy prostate.

Copper: Copper helps the body maintain healthy blood circulation, which is helpful for the prostate.

Selenium: In several studies Selenium has been shown to help protect the prostate.

Cernitin flower pollen extract: In one study helped improve prostate symptoms in a majority of men participating in one study.

Quercetin: Help fight prostate problems within cells.

Pumpkin Seed Extract: Helps maintain a healthy flow.

Nettle Root Extract: Very popular in Europe for prostate issues.

Vitamin B6: Helps boost your immune system.

And that's just a few of the ingredients found within each bottle of Prost-Fix. These ingredients have helped thousands get their prostate issues under control.

"I ordered this product for my father who is healthy and just turned 64. He had issues with frequent bathroom trips. Since taking this product for four weeks, he has noticed a fewer number of bathroom trips. We very much appreciated this product!" -James Wilson

If you're looking for help for prostate issues then you need Prost-Fix!

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The Amazing Bedroom Secret Every Man Needs To Know!

*Even Men in Their 70s and 80s
Are Shocking Their Partners—Here's How!*

A Secret Any Man Can Use...

This week I got a letter from a reader in Texas about a "little secret" making her love life absolutely explosive! (Texas women tell it like it is)

Tina writes: Dear Karen,

For years my husband and I had a great love life, but when he reached his 50s, he lost some of his old spark, especially in the bedroom. He tried every product out there, but nothing worked and I found myself thinking "My strong, passionate husband has become a bedroom weakling." I had no idea how fast it would all turn around!

Last month, he came home from a business trip in Europe and shocked me with more sexual energy, passion, and power than he's ever had! Hard as a rock, he took me right to our bedroom and gave me a night I'll NEVER forget! It was incredible—and so exciting!

He flat-out wore me out that night with the most intense, toecurling 'moments' I've ever had, and our love life has been like that ever since! So here we are, more intimate than ever... in our late 50s!

On his trip, his hotel room was next to a Norwegian couple who he heard passionately making love every single night! He figured they were newlyweds, but was shocked to meet them in the lobby and learn they were in their 70s!

One night my husband asked the man his secret. A nutritionist by trade, the man smiled, took a small pack of tablets from his satchel, gave it to my husband and said "These come from a small village up north where they're milled from naturally pure extracts, packed with densely rich sexual nutrients. Believe me, they will give you the most powerful erections of your life! Then he laughed and said "You will perform in the bedroom even better than you did as a young man!"



*"My husband absolutely shocked me!
It was incredible and so exciting!"*

Karen, these past few weeks have been a dream. My husband's desire for me is through the roof, he takes me whenever he wants, and he even wakes up most days with a 'morning salute!' like he did years ago. I love it! He's beaming with confidence, and our marriage is stronger than ever.

I'm writing because the pack of tablets is almost empty and we both desperately want more. Do you know about these Euro tablets and how to get some in the States?

**Sincerely, Tina C.,
Fort Worth, TX**

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Wow, so there you go, Tina! TWO FREE PACKS, Shipped FREE within 24 Hours! Just give them a call and use the direct hotline he gave me so you'll be on and off the call in 5 minutes or less! The number is **1-800-206-0091**.

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Karen



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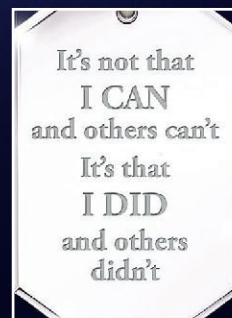
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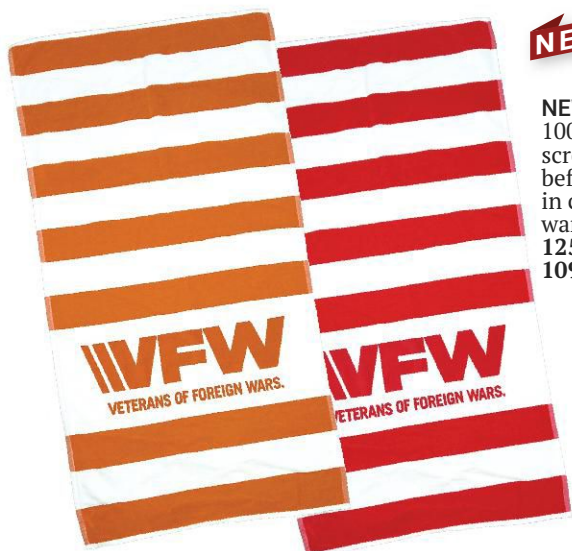
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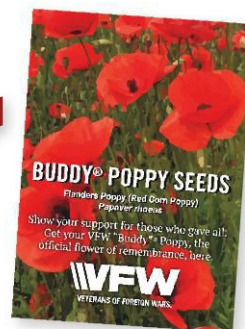
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New Blood Flow Breakthrough Helps Men Enjoy Strong, Long-Lasting Intimacy – At Any Age

A new discovery that supports nitric oxide production and healthy blood flow gives men across the country new hope for a satisfying bedroom performance

After age 40, it's common knowledge that performance begins to decline in many men. However, a new potency formula is showing that any healthy man can now enjoy strong, long-lasting, and frequent performance at any age.

This doctor-designed protocol, created by leading anti-aging expert Dr. Al Sears, is celebrating its highly effective 5th generation formula, which is already helping men support a healthy performance and libido.

When Dr. Sears released the first pill — Primal Max Black — it quickly became a trusted men's performance helper, promoting bedroom fun across America.

It worked by supporting healthy testosterone levels. However, Dr. Sears knows from almost 30 years in private practice that testosterone isn't the only performance challenge men face. That's why his dual strategy includes attention to blood flow because no amount of testosterone will replace the need for healthy blood flow for successful intimacy.

And this second formula became Primal Max Red.

SUPPORTING THE MECHANICS IS AS IMPORTANT AS SUPPORTING THE HORMONES

While Primal Max Black helped maintain optimal testosterone, Primal Max Red tackles a lesser-known challenge.

Truth is, we ignore the importance of blood flow and circulation for supporting a man's sex life. Because without blood flow, nothing happens.

Luckily, a Nobel prize-winning

scientist discovered a means to help support performance, strength, and confidence by supporting vital blood flow, which is essential for a satisfying performance.

Using this landmark Nobel Prize as its basis, Primal Max Red supports healthy blood flow by using a key ingredient to support nitric oxide production. Nitric oxide is the molecule that allows blood vessels to relax and expand, thereby increasing blood flow.

Al Sears MD, who has authored over 500 scientific papers and has appeared on more than 50 media outlets including ABC News, CNN, ESPN, and many more says, "Supporting optimal blood flow is an essential component of maintaining sexual health as men age. Then, once we optimized it and had a great deal of success, we set out to see if we could do even better."

Conventional nitric oxide supplements are limited to smaller doses of key ingredients because everything must fit into small capsules. But Dr. Sears followed the science and introduced a revolutionary new powder version of his Primal Max Red formula.

This new powder formulation enabled him to include bigger doses of the key nutrients, which matched the doses used in published clinical studies. Not only is the formula more effective because it uses proven doses, it also means you get a delicious drink instead of more and more pills.

HEALTHY BLOOD FLOW DELIVERS SATISFYING RESULTS

Primal Max Red is the best



IMMEDIATE GAME CHANGER FOR AMERICAN MEN: Doctors are now recommending Primal Max Red for its ability to support the vital but overlooked need for healthy blood flow during intimacy.

way to maintain an active life. It works by supporting blood flow and the production of nitric oxide.

This critical support is the reason men across the country are enjoying a full and satisfying performance at any age. Because testosterone is not the only factor men need to consider.

Primal Max Red effectively promotes healthy blood flow that men can use to support intimacy in the bedroom. The unique and powerful blend of ingredients in Primal Max Red supports the kind of sexual health and performance men are looking for.

"There was a time when supporting healthy blood flow for men was impossible," Dr. Sears said. "But science and technology have come a long way in recent years. And now, with the creation of nitric oxide-supporting Primal Max Red, men can feel more confident and more in control while they enjoy intimacy at any age."

Now for men across America,

it's much easier to support peak performance as they get older.

HOW TO GET PRIMAL MAX RED ALONG WITH COMPLEMENTARY BOTTLES OF PRIMAL MAX BLACK

To secure the new Primal Max Red formula, readers should contact the Primal Max Red Health Hotline at **1-800-910-2247** and use promo code **VETPMAX225** within 48 hours. And to cut down on the cost for customers, it can only be purchased directly from the company.

READERS ALSO GET AN EXTRA BONUS SUPPLY OF PRIMAL MAX BLACK

Every order of Primal Max Red gets a matching supply of Dr. Sears' testosterone formula Primal Max Black for no additional charge.

All orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. If any user is not satisfied, just send back the bottle(s) or any unused product within 90 days from the purchase date, and you'll get all your money back.

'A Valuable and Noble Profession With Purpose'

A VFW member from Rhode Island spearheaded a gardening program to assist veterans interested in farming. She believes it offers the necessary knowledge and skills for success.

BY ISMAEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

Overwhelmed by the pressures at work and the birth of her second child in 2017, Tricia Lourenco Boucher sought a reprieve from her mounting PTSD and anxiety symptoms.

A member of the Air Force Reserve at the time, Boucher turned to the VA for help and, through several treatment options, discovered that the act of gardening outdoors cultivated the most profound sense of catharsis.

"I found getting my hands in the soil and using my body to dig, crawl and haul things around the yard really helped me to process my big feelings," said Boucher, the senior vice commander for VFW Post 916 in Wakefield, R.I. "Plus, the reward of smelling sweet flowers and eating delicious ripe fruits and vegetables with my little ones made my heart happy."

These mental health benefits prompted Boucher, who served with the Rhode Island Army National Guard, the Army, and the Air Force Reserve from 2000 to 2011, to shift her career focus.

After earning a bachelor's degree in psychology while in the Reserve, Boucher returned to the University of Rhode Island (URI) in Kingston to pursue a second bachelor's degree in 2020, this time in plant science and sustainable crop production.

"The goal was to learn about plants, so that I could connect veterans with gardening so they, too, could heal," said Boucher, who deployed in 2004 with the Army's 1st Infantry Division to Tikrit, Iraq. "I started working at the URI agronomy farm, assisting with

vegetable crop research and growing vegetables for students to study and for donation to the on-campus free farmers market and local food pantries."

Boucher also completed the URI Master Gardeners Training program and became a master gardener program coordinator at URI's Teaching Garden, which provided her with the necessary experience to take a step closer to helping fellow veterans.

When she graduated in 2023, Boucher promptly applied for a Department of Agriculture grant to launch a veteran-friendly program called Boots-2-Bushels through the URI Cooperative Extension in 2024. The program offers comprehensive nine-month market gardening training courses specifically designed for beginning farmers, military veterans and their families.

Boots-2-Bushels provides New England-based veterans and beginning farmers courses in the winter and spring, taught by agricultural experts from across the Northeast. These experts connect participants with knowledge and resources to build a business plan and marketing strategy and develop scientific growing practices, among other things.

Winter courses run from Jan. 21 through March 27, with classes held via Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRICIA LOURENCO BOUCHER

Tricia Lourenco Boucher harvests lettuce in September 2024 at the University of Rhode Island's Boots-2-Bushels Market Garden in Kingston, R.I. Boucher created the Boots-2-Bushels program to provide an opportunity for fellow veterans to enter the world of agriculture and hopefully build relationships with each other.

evenings from 6 to 7:30 p.m. In the spring and summer, the courses also offer optional farm tours and workshops across Rhode Island and Maine, expanding on opportunities to learn and build relationships with farmers.

"I am grateful that this program provides an opportunity for veterans to enter the world of agriculture and build relationships with each other and the tight-knit farming community," said Boucher, who serves as program coordinator. "Growing food for our neighbors and stewarding the land is a valuable and noble profession with purpose. It requires grit, determination and skill, which are values deeply embedded in our veterans. I have high hopes that this program will continue to grow and continue to serve as a hub of knowledge and community."

Applications to participate in 2025 classes opened last fall and closed by Dec. 31.

✪ **EMAIL** irodriguez@vfw.org

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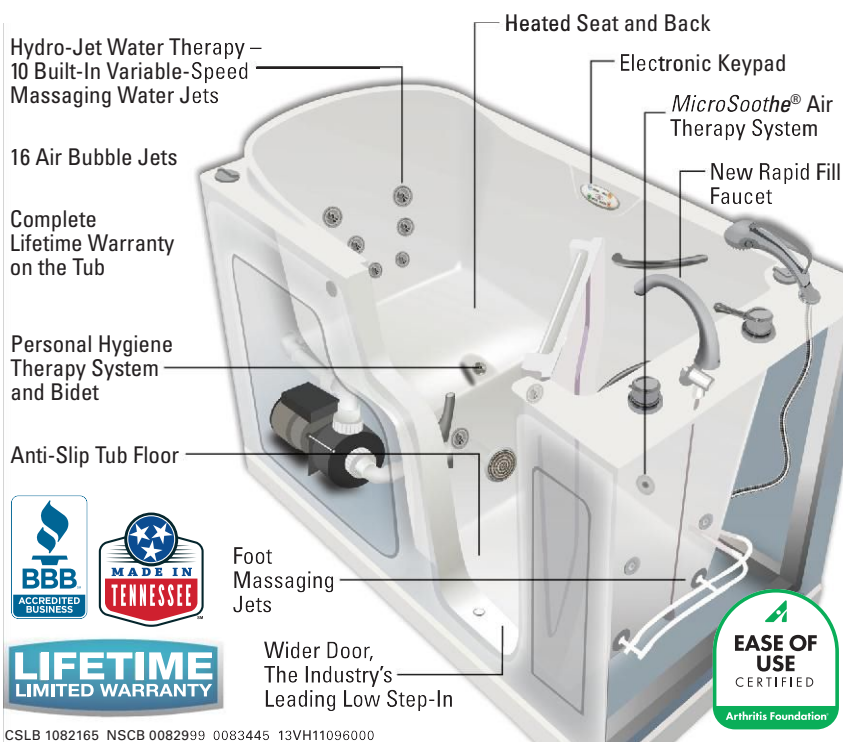
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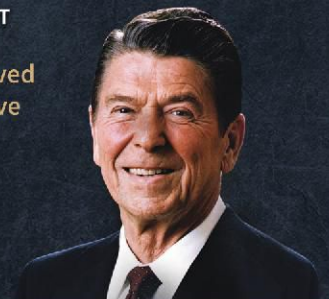
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