



NEBRASKA VFW NEWS



Department of Nebraska Newsletter

August 2016

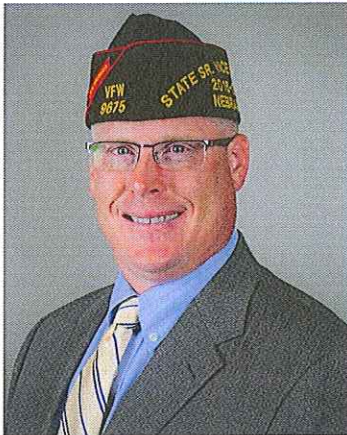
Plenty of Activities and a Warm Welcome in Charlotte for the VFW

The 117th Annual National VFW Convention was held July 23rd thru the 27th. It was a time to vote on organizational by-laws, attend business sessions and workshops as well as network with other veterans. The mission of the Conference was to approve new national priorities to guide the VFW as it lobbies Congress on issues important to the nation's veterans, service members and their families. Awards were presented on Monday including the All-American Posts. Two Nebraska Posts achieved All-American status. VFW Post 5289 in Pawnee City and VFW Post 4755 in Seward. Accepting the awards from then Commander in Chief John Biedrzycki are Post 5289 Commander Harold Schlender (left) and Post 4755 Commander Jeff Baker (right). They are also pictured together below.



Attending the meetings and pictured below are Department officers (left to right) State Surgeon Dan Kramer, Judge Advocate Joe Smith, Jr. Vice Commander Gary E Bush Sr., Sr. Vice Commander Larry Gerlt and State Commander Doug Whitaker.





J. Douglas Whitaker
Department Commander

Dear Comrades,

I wish to begin by thanking all members of this great organization for bestowing your trust and confidence in me as your Department Commander for the year 2016-2017. From the beginning of my journey through the chairs, I have been honored by the support you have shown me. I have heard many previous Commanders comment about how fast the time flies and I echo their sentiments. It has been a superb journey and I look forward to the coming year as I and Auxiliary President Sue Moore represent the members of the VFW and its Auxiliary.

Looking forward, there are some objectives that I wish to accomplish this year. First, I want to continue to build upon our membership program. The key to the VFW's success in advocating for veterans is our membership strength. As the number of Americans who have served in the Armed Forces continues to decline per capita, it is more important than ever that we keep our membership numbers high so that our voices will be heard in the Unicameral and the U.S Congress. To that end, I was approached by our State Adjutant with the idea of having a full-time membership chairman who would be responsible for assisting Posts across the state in recruiting and retaining members. I completely concurred with the idea and have appointed Senior Vice Commander Larry Gerlt as Membership Chairman, Past Commander Jim Pierce as his deputy and Past Commander Bernie Brosnihan as Life Membership Chairman. All three bring valuable

experience to the membership program and I hope that you take advantage of the services they can provide.

Second, I want the VFW to be more visible at the Unicameral. Nebraska veterans have a true friend in the Governor who has committed to exempting military retirement from state income tax. He has shown great leadership in working with our elected officials in the U.S. Congress to secure the mission of Offutt Air Force base which has a \$1.3 billion economic impact upon the state economy. Where we have not been successful is the Unicameral where advancing simple legislation such as a sales tax exemption on our Post's food sales has proven difficult. To that end, I have appointed Jeff Baker to be State Legislative Chairman and have asked him to develop a course of action for communicating to you important matters occurring in the Unicameral and mobilizing you to contact your State Senators. As we move into the 2017 Legislative Session, be on the lookout for regular emails from Chairman Baker on how you can help the VFW advance veteran related bills in Lincoln.

Third, also related to the Unicameral, I believe there is a lack of coordination within the state between the various veterans groups and the business community when it comes to advocating for pro-veteran economic policies. As the Governor recognizes, Nebraska's economic growth depends highly upon an educated and skilled work force which veterans bring to a local community. In an effort to coordinate the advancement of such policies, I have asked various groups and individuals to submit op-ed articles over the next year. The views expressed in the articles will be those of the writer, not the VFW, but the information will serve as a conversation starter between our groups.

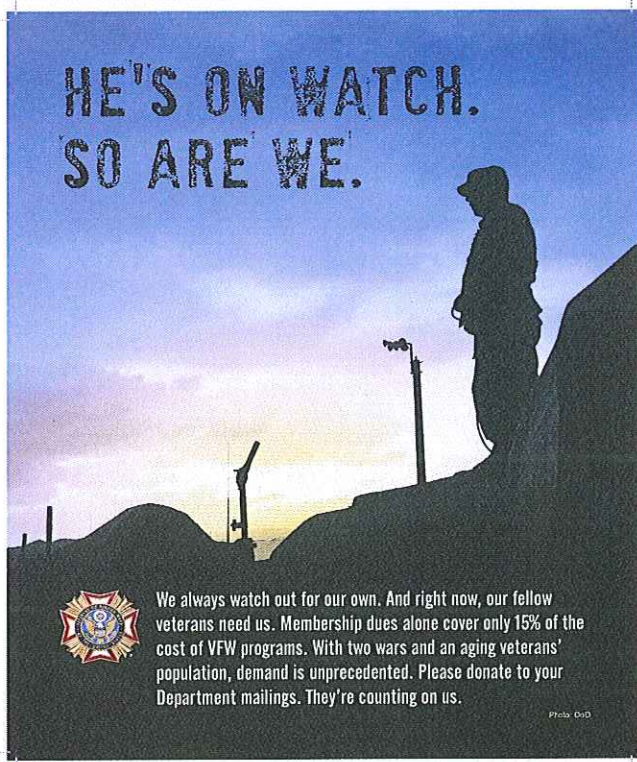
Finally, my last goal is to improve Post compliance with the National and State by-laws. Over the last five years, I have observed many Posts not complying with reporting requirements nor paying their delegate fees. Approximately one third of all Posts were ineligible to vote at this year's convention.

Please see next page, State Commander

State Commander, from previous page

The fact is these requirements are not too burdensome or expensive. Therefore, I have asked each District Commander to keep me informed of Posts who are falling behind in their reporting requirements as the year progresses. It is my intent to contact each of these Posts in order to ascertain the reasons for their lack of progress. In addition, if your Post was not eligible to vote at this year's convention, it is my intent to contact the Commander and Quartermaster in an effort to prevent this from occurring again. As Commander, I do not want to make matters difficult but compliance with the by-laws is something I find important. More importantly, if a Post has a Canteen and it is not meeting the reporting requirements, I will discuss with the Post Commander and Quartermaster the risk of having the Post Charter suspended for failing to report. If a Canteen can pay the liquor distributor and file quarterly tax reports, the Post can file a trustee's report.

Thank you for all that you do to make the VFW the premier VSO in the state.



**HE'S ON WATCH.
SO ARE WE.**

We always watch out for our own. And right now, our fellow veterans need us. Membership dues alone cover only 15% of the cost of VFW programs. With two wars and an aging veterans' population, demand is unprecedented. Please donate to your Department mailings. They're counting on us.

Photo: DOD



**Larry Gerlt
Sr. Vice Commander
and
Membership Chairman**

Membership – the key to the continued existence of your post!

Just 4 years ago, we had 165 posts in our department. Now, we have just 135! Why did these posts cease to exist? The common thread:

- A. none had any new or reinstated members
- B. only feeble, if any, attempt was made to collect dues from current members
- C. post leadership that was not dynamic or engaged enough to draw enough existing members to continue meetings, recruit, advertise their good works in their community, or continue to do anything for their community, let alone themselves

Is your post one of those that is going to go under in a few more years?

Is your post leadership leading the way to do all of the above things to keep your post alive?

More importantly, what are you doing to help your post?

I know many members, especially younger members (under 50) don't have time between family, work, education, or possibly frequent deployments. But if you can make time, if only to participate in the annual/semi-annual poppy drive, judge youth contest entries, or attend an occasional post meeting, you can help. You can make the difference!

NEBRASKA AND ITS VETERANS

WHY NEBRASKA IS MISSING THE BOAT WITH VETERANS.

By Ronald J. Dupell

The views expressed by the Author are solely his and are not an endorsement by the VFW.

Nebraska should make the effort to retain its military veterans.

Why should veterans seek more benefits from the State of Nebraska? The Nebraska Veterans Coalition has been working diligently to actively persuade Nebraska leadership to make more efforts to incentivize veterans to maintain their residency or emigrate to Nebraska. Without doubt, veterans in general are solid citizens and possess a considerable amount of leadership qualities training, self-discipline, technical skills, and experience in accepting levels of responsibility far above most non-veteran groups.

Nebraska currently has a .002% growth rate in its labor force. Nebraska has considerable challenges in providing a skilled workforce for businesses it has tried to attract into Nebraska. According to Adam Weinberg of the Nebraska Platte Institute, Nebraska Ranks Below National Average in Job and Population Growth. He states that from 2004-2014, Nebraska lagged behind the national average in employment growth., which measures the gross amount of new jobs created. Nebraska also lagged behind the national average in population growth. If that trend continues, Nebraskans will create less wealth and opportunity than their counterparts in faster-growing states in the years ahead.

The Platte Institute has also opined that since 1992, out-migration of retirees has caused a "net

outflow of \$3 billion in annual adjusted gross income, and the people who created it, to leave Nebraska."

Why do retirees flee Nebraska? The main reason is taxation. Nebraska is one of only thirteen states who taxes social security and one of only five who tax social security and military retirement benefits. Why is this germane to the discussion? Because Nebraska needs people. A high-quality educated labor force, which in turn will create a wider base of tax revenue. Nebraska needs more businesses. Our military veterans provide a ready-made pool of well-trained, qualified and experienced leaders and workers in a wide variety of occupations. Nebraska has not made any substantial, concerted, or effective efforts during the past 40 or more years to retain veterans within the state. Many other states effectively recruit and retain veterans nationwide, and their efforts result in Nebraska being at the tail end of the pack in retention of veterans. There are many relatively simple efforts that Nebraska can undertake and should do to increase retention of veterans. Perhaps the two most effective avenues are to reduce taxation on military retirees benefits (as our border states already do) and make a concerted effort to attract and retain veterans to reside in Nebraska. Colorado exempts a large portion of military retired pay and increases that exemption at age 65; South Dakota and Wyoming have no state income tax; Iowa and Kansas fully exempt military retirement from state income tax,. Currently 17 states either have no state income tax or fully exempt military retirement income. Twenty-eight states exempt portions of military retirement pay at a set amount or base it on a formula.

Nebraska Night at National Convention

Nebraska Night included dinner and some time to socialize and talk about initiatives that affect Nebraska veterans and their families.



BB&T Ballpark Celebration

The Convention also included a Patriotic Celebration featuring the Oak Ridge Boys, a patriotic march and fireworks. It was held on Tuesday night at BB & T Ballpark.



VFW'S VANDER CLUTE MEMORIAL RIDE RAISES OVER \$47,000

This year's Vander Clute Memorial Motorcycle Riders raised over \$47,000 for VFW programs. The riders presented donation checks from the participating Departments to VFW's then National Commander-in-Chief John A. Biedrzycki upon their arrival in Charlotte on July 23rd.



OUR VISION: ENSURE THAT VETERANS ARE RESPECTED FOR THEIR SERVICE, ALWAYS RECEIVE THEIR EARNED ENTITLEMENTS, AND ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THE SACRIFICES THEY AND THEIR LOVED ONES HAVE MADE ON BEHALF OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY.

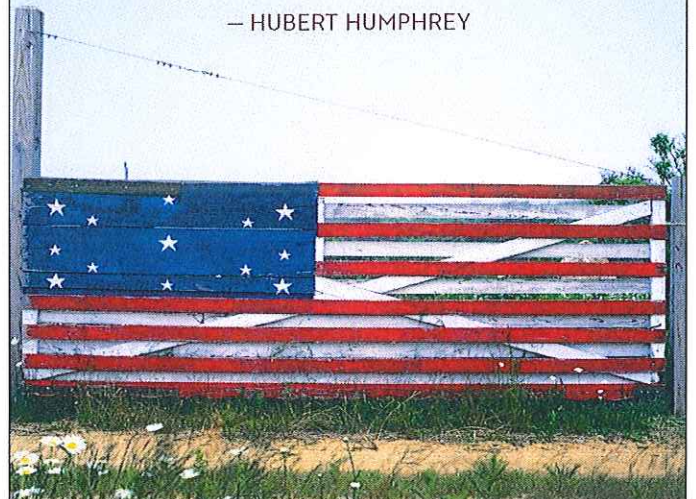
Get the on-campus support and resources you earned and deserve.



The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and Student Veterans of America are now accepting applications from student veterans interested in participating in the 2017 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program. Now in its third year, the fellowship offers 10 selected student veterans the unique opportunity to meet face-to-face with their members of Congress during the annual VFW National Legislative Conference, as well as provides additional opportunities for fellows to address veterans' issues in their communities.

“WHAT WE NEED ARE CRITICAL LOVERS OF AMERICA – PATRIOTS WHO EXPRESS THEIR FAITH IN THEIR COUNTRY BY WORKING TO IMPROVE IT.”

– HUBERT HUMPHREY





ANNUAL NEBRASKA VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS GOLF TOURNAMENT 2016

September 2, 2016 (Friday)
Willow Lakes Golf Club

1:00 PM Shotgun Start
12301 South 25th St., Bellevue NE

Willow Lakes is the only Robert Trent Jones designed course in Nebraska

Format: Four Person Texas Scramble

*Cost: (\$80.00) Per Person Money raised goes towards New Buses needed for the Veterans Homes and the MAP Program

Entry fee includes: Golf/Golf Cart
FoodFlag Prizes**Door Prizes**

Questions or for reservations: call Joe Smith (402-661-9875)
Or email: vfwgolfhack@cox.net

Mailing address: Joe Smith
1416 Betz Rd
Bellevue, NE 68005

Sign up early: Entry Deadline 21, AUG 2016

Soft spikes or soft soled shoes only
Golf appropriate attire

Lunch will be served at the course before we tee off.

*AGF Holders (\$65.00, E1 – E4 \$75.00)

Clip and Mail To: Joe Smith; 1416 Betz Rd; Bellevue, NE 68005
Make checks payable to: VFW Post 2280 (Memo VFW GOLF)

Names: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Entry fee enclosed: \$ _____ (\$80.00 per person, \$320.00 per team)(Tax deductible)

Total remitted \$ _____

Calendar of Events

August 2016

14 Dist 6 Mtg in Beatrice at Post 1077 at 1:00.
Auxiliary same time and place. No Lunch.

Rep: **Sam DeJohn**

21 Dist 9 Mtg in Ashland Post 9776 to host, the
VFW at the Fire hall 2402 Silver St. at 2:00 pm,
the

Auxiliary to meet at the post. Rep: **Larry Gerlt**

September 2016

1 Bonds Due in Department

18 Dist 3 Mtg in Bloomfield. Post 4996 to host at
Bloomfield Community Center at 12:00.

\$5.00 reg fee. Lunch at 1:00. Auxiliary same
time and place. Rep: **Bernie Brosnihan**

18 Dist 11 Mtg in Pleasanton Post 9481 to host at
Community Center at 2:00. \$1.00 reg fee.

evening lunch, Auxiliary same time and place.

Rep: **Harold Schlender**

18 Dist 4 Mtg in North Platte at Post 1504 at 1:00
pm CDT. Noon lunch.

Auxiliary same time and place.

Rep: **Dan Kramer**

25 Dist 7 Mtg in Dodge at Post 8597 at 1:30. Even-
ing lunch. Auxiliary same time and place.

Rep: **Dan Peterson**

25 Dist 15 Mtg in Columbus Post 3704 to host at
2:00. Lunch will be served. Auxiliary same time
and place. Rep: **John Iossi**

October 2016

(T-2) Trustee Quarterly Report to Department
(July1 to Sept 30)

7-8 VFW Fall Conference & Homecoming Cobble-
stone Inn & Suites 127 Trotter Ave. Ord NE.

9 Dist 10 Mtg in Omaha Post 2503 to host at
2:00. Auxiliary same time and place.

Rep: **Joe Smith**

16 Dist 1 Mtg in Gering Post 1681 will host at
2710 N 10th St at 1:00. \$5.00 reg. fee. 12:00 lunch
before

Meeting. Auxiliary same time and place.

Rep: **Larry Gerlt**

August Calendar Winners

1	\$40.00	Melissa	Johnson	4155
2	\$40.00	Tyson	Bauer	4071
3	\$40.00	VFW Post 7102		4929
4	\$40.00	Eugene	Kremlacek	1418
5	\$40.00	Peggy	Kuser	2457
6	\$40.00	William	Palmer	93
7	\$40.00	Phil	Gygi	2515
8	\$40.00	Donald	Wren	4830
9	\$40.00	Mary	Wiegert	1721
10	\$40.00	Fred	Meyer	4985
11	\$40.00	Steven	Winheim	4368
12	\$40.00	Steven	Grueber	3700
13	\$40.00	James	Chlopek	730
14	\$40.00	Allison	Harrach	3562
15	\$40.00	VFW Post 1077		2723
16	\$40.00	Doug	Pick	3718
17	\$40.00	Gayle	Lang	1181
18	\$40.00	Bily	Claborn Sr	2607
19	\$40.00	Ron	Hatch	4297
20	\$40.00	James	Edins	1425
21	\$40.00	VFW Post 1077		2727
22	\$40.00	Tom	Rother	100
23	\$40.00	Sonya	Howell	3777
24	\$40.00	Nathan	Cheek	2882
25	\$40.00	George	Rathmann	3932
26	\$40.00	Lisa	Brand	3186
27	\$40.00	Jacob	Simmons	4241
28	\$40.00	James	Caniglia	3182
29	\$40.00	Mike	Shively	3779
30	\$40.00	Gary	Swanson	4198
31	\$40.00	Mark	Long	87

IT'S A PARTY

If you have not made your reservation for Homecoming and the Fall Council meeting, please do so. The rooms are limited in Ord so, if you want to join the party, call Department Headquarters for a room.

We would love to hear what is going on at your posts as well as communities.....

Send articles to

Department of NE VFW

John Liebsack

PO BOX 4552

Lincoln, NE 68504

Email: johnl@vfwne.org

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR VETERANS.



As a Legacy Life Member, future generations will know you not only for the sacrifices you made as a veteran but for the contributions you made as a member. That's a legacy to be proud of.

Membership as of Thursday, August 4, 2016

Life membership Year end: 12732 = 79%

State	Post	Dst	Life	New	Reinst	Cont	Total	Adjusted Prior Year	Percent
District Totals		1	0	0	0	12	12	637	1.88%
District Totals		3	0	1	0	24	25	1486	1.68%
District Totals		4	0	0	1	20	21	1164	1.80%
District Totals		6	0	2	0	29	31	1409	2.20%
District Totals		7	0	0	0	18	18	1132	1.59%
District Totals		9	0	1	0	26	27	1964	1.37%
District Totals		10	0	12	3	89	104	4508	2.30%
District Totals		11	0	1	0	23	24	1158	2.07%
District Totals		13	0	2	0	20	22	1195	1.84%
District Totals		15	0	1	0	8	9	921	0.97%
District Totals		99	0	2	1	18	21	1072	1.95%
State Totals			0	22	5	287	314	16646	1.88%