Volume 65 Issue 4 May 2023

From the Commanders Desk:



What a great time we had at the Spring Conference Banquet. It was such an honor to present awards of \$5,000.00 to the Voice of Democracy winner, \$3,500.00 to the second-place winner, then to award \$1,500.00 to the first-place winner in Patriot's Pen. This year we awarded a total of \$14.400.00 to our State winners. Thanks to everyone who help make these awards meaningful. I am not sure how big a hit the Student Breakfast was, but I understand from Keith, Bryan, and several of the students/parents, the trip to the War Memorial was a huge hit. I think only one had been there before. If you haven't been you should go and take a tour the Indiana War Memorial is a fabulous place. In case you didn't know one of the buildings on the War Memorial grounds, Building 777 the Veterans Center is where the original GI Bill was signed!

Post and District Commanders there is still plenty of time to make <u>All State and All American</u> the deadline for both program is <u>June 30, 2023</u>. Keep working on membership, for All American get the Dashboard updated. For All State get the All State program score sheet and work you score. The All State program is in your Commanders Manual and on line at <u>www.vfwin.org</u>, under - Resources, Commanders Manual 2022-2023. It is also under Resources, 2022-2023 Membership Plan - All State. Last weeks deadline was to allow us to get in the awards in, in time for the State Convention – you have until June 30, 2023, to complete both All State and All American program, you will receive your awards at Fall Conference.

Auxiliary President Harriet Figg and I had our testimonial at the Carmel VFW in April, we were really humbled by the outpouring of support and gifts. Thank you again to everyone who attended, we really enjoyed having you there to celebrate our year with us. Thank you to VFW Post 10003 in Carmel for all the hard work, the tremendous volunteers, and the flexibility in putting on such a great event.

The VFW 2023 State Convention June 8 through 11, if you haven't made your plans to attend, it's time. We are going to have a great Convention with several good speakers, bylaws changes to vote on, hopefully a huge awards ceremony at the banquet, gaming in the new hospitality room, and of course visiting with old and new friends. But very importantly we are going to be voting on some important positions like the 2023-2024 Surgeon – right now we have three good candidates, Jorge Perez, Leslie Ackerman and Dave Hammons. We will also vote on the 2023 – 2027 National Council member to represent Indiana at National – either Johnny Capps or Jerry Blake. You should first of all make sure your Post is eligible to "VOTE" and secondly you need to take time to speak with each candidate. Of course, we need to vote on things like the new State Commander, Senior Vice Commander and Junior Vice Commander, don't miss it, check with your Post Commander to ensure your Post can "VOTE".

The 2022-2023 VFW year is winding down but there is still a lot to be done. I will continue to work up until the last day and then some. Indiana has a great opportunity to make over 100% in membership, let's keep recruiting new members and working on reinstating past due members.

Yours in Comradeship,

Richard Leirer, Commander

Department of Indiana VFW









Greeting Comrades,

I hope this finds you well. Memorial Day is just around the corner! I'm sure most of you have already made plans to visit your local cemetery to place flags on Veterans graves. I have had many personal experiences with folks coming up to us, thanking us for not forgetting their family members who served their country.

Not to be a broken record, but if you notice your fellow veteran or family member is acting outside "the norm": If you know, or suspect, someone is wrestling with feelings of desperation, hopelessness, or <u>suicidal</u> ideation TAKE ACTION.

- Be direct—talk openly and matter-of-factly. Ask if they are thinking about suicide. This will not encourage
 anyone to think about killing themselves. In fact, knowing you are talking about it openly and directly can
 give that person encouragement and builds hope.
- Be willing to listen.
- Be involved and available.
- Take action. Do not leave them alone. Remove items, such as guns or stockpiled pills to reduce access to lethal means.
- Get help from professionals specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. Get to know the resources available in your area.
- Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. As uncomfortable as it can be, you may end up saving their life.



Yours in Comradeship,

Sheila Corcoran

Sheila Corcoran Senior Vice Commander Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Indiana









Greetings Comrades,

Hopefully you are all wrapping up one successful year and getting ready to start the next. Many of you have been working towards All-State and All-American and I would like to congratulate those of you that have made it. This is a huge accomplishment, and I hope you can find pride in your achievements!

I recently attended a funeral for one of our own who we lost to suicide. Although this is a tough topic to discuss, it is a conversation that needs to happen. Unfortunately, veterans are a demographic that struggles with a high suicide rate. If you are having problems, please make sure you are talking to your fellow veterans and be sure to lend an ear when someone is talking to you. Always remember help is available!

If you have anything you need from me, please let me know and I will be glad to help you in any way I am able. I am looking forward to finishing out this year as the best the state has ever been!

Yours in Comradeship

Cory Mahan Department of Indiana









NOTES from your Service Officer:

Holding both a Post Service Officer position at the time of this posting and being the VFW Department Service Officer is always challenging. I can only imagine how it feels with my ADSO, Mark Carr who is not only the ADSO, but a District Service Officer. So, we are constantly asking ourselves "WHAT HAT AM I WEARING RIGHT NOW?"

Sometimes it is difficult to say, 'this is what we did at our perspective duty titles vs the other titles that we hold'. They just overlap so much.

From Big Picture:

As a Service Officer in general we get a ton of questions and comments over the PACT ACT (10 AUG 2022).

Yes, Hypertension (HTN) is on the Presumptive List for our Viet Nam Veterans.

Yes, it is highly likely that you will be service connected for HTN.

Setting realistic expectations, it is highly likely that it will be service connected at a 0% rating. There is specific requirements for it to be above that rating (10%). Trust me, I am at ZERO! Zero Percent DOES NOT MEAN "DENIED". It is service connected just not at a compensated level at this moment in time. If it gets worse, the hard part of 'service connection' has been done, we file an increase claim.

NO, medical conditions for Burn Pit Exposure is not on the Presumptive List for our Viet Nam Veterans. This only applies to Gulf War Veterans.

I am not saying our Viet Nam veterans did not burn stuff.....but they were not burning things like Lithium Batteries, Toner Cartridges, CARC Paint, ect. that are clearly marked 'do not throw in fire' as they release toxic vapors. We just did not have that technology in 1965-1975. There is just a lot of bad information out there on what the PACT ACT actually says and what it covers.

AND our Gulf War veterans have to have a diagnosis of the condition to apply for these conditions.

Moving on, the NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE (NVS) changed their software effective 24 April 2023. It is actually a very big change and has a steep learning curve. So, please be patient with our service officers as we self-teach ourselves a completely new system.

VA Claims and Appeals: Keep in mind that appeals take YEARS before you see a judge. The same information you need to win in an appeal is same information that would have gotten you service connection in the original claim or a supplemental claim. Claims are taking about 6 months. Supplemental Claims are taking 6-12 months. SO, if it is the same information, why not do it early as opposed to an appeal that takes years?

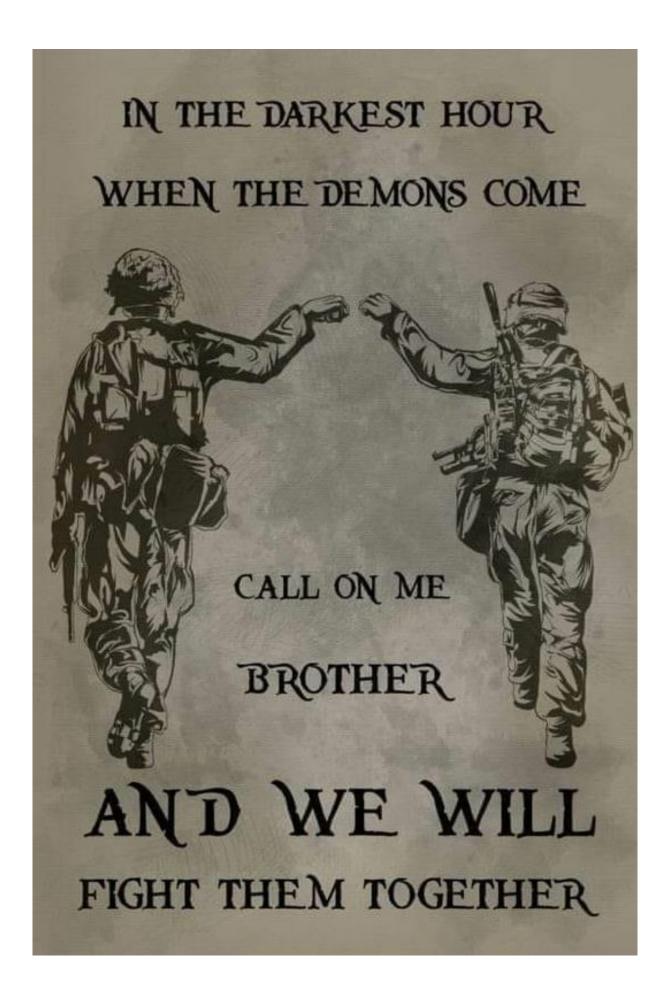
ON THE POST NOTE:

Yes we do 'outreaches'. I try to get to the veteran to meet me at a Post or Starbucks. I'm a caffeine addict.... In the last 3 months we conducted 11 outreaches to Posts, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Locations (and Starbucks). We are finishing up this month by going to an Assisted Living location in Hamilton County. We try to do this after duty hours (or weekends) when we can catch the people who work also.

Yours in Comradeship,

Shawn Ransford

Department of Indiana Service Officer



Indiana Delegation in De















2023 Spring Conference Cor A































2023 Spring Conference Cof A



































2023 Spring Conference C of A

































2023 Spring Conference C of A

















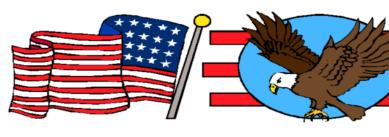






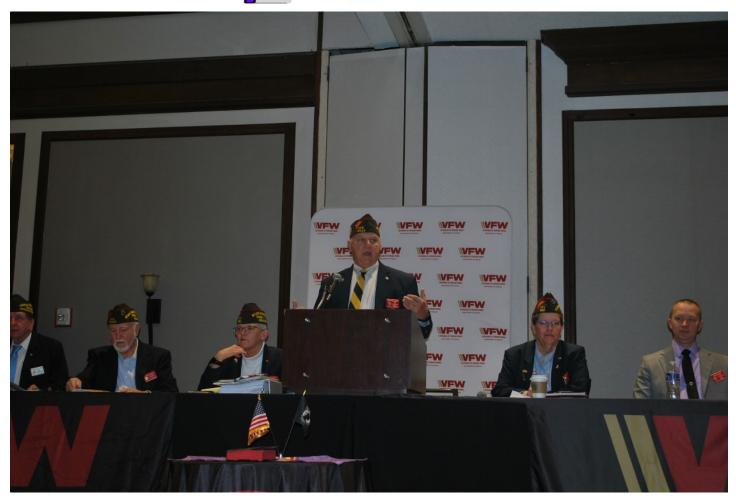


































Guest Speaker Representative Victoria Spartz





















































our Sponsor Tables

















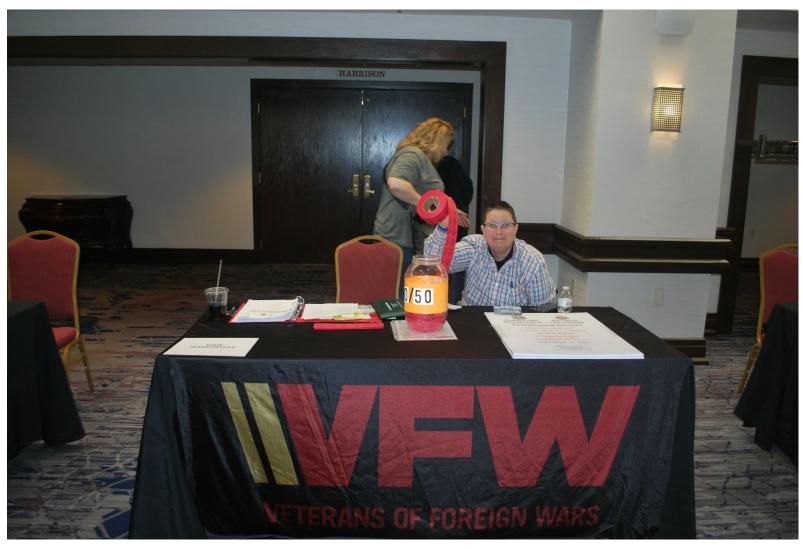




Our Sponsor Tables











































































2023 Spring Conference Banquet























































2023 Spring Conference Banquet

































Page 20

2023 Spring Conference Banquet

Patriots Pen Winners







Voice of Denocracy District Winners



















May 2023 Indiana Combat Veteran Page 21

2023 Spring Conference Banquet

TEACHER OF THE YEAR!











2023 Spring Conference Banquet









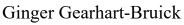














Patriots Pen State Winners











2023 Spring Conference Banquet

Voice of Democracy Awards























Ms Haley Bock Dist 11, sponsored by Post 98







SAGE FROM THE COOK

Greetings Cooties and Cuties!!

Please keep our hospitalized Veterans in your prayers. Our ability to visit our brothers and sisters in the VA Hospital is still hampered by the strict visitation limits placed on us by the VA. Our team checks weekly to see if our options have changed! We can still keep them "Smiling in beds of white" by donating items (or cash) to VA voluntary Services! I was able to present a few Honor Degree certificates while attending the Spring Conference! Our CCDB is Diane Pettit, and she has our 2023 membership cards in hand. This would be a great time to go life! No more hounding about annual dues! I will attach the life membership application & fee schedule to this newsletter. Our crummy elections will take place at our next Scratch. Our brother Pat Mann is still struggling with health issues but continues to have a good attitude. Our MOCA President suffered a fall and is currently in rehab. Please keep both in your prayers for a fast and full recovery.

We are still looking to get at least 2 more Pup Tents in our great State so we can once again get a Grand in Indiana! Keeping our promise to be fruitful and multiply our ranks and once again getting Indiana the recognition of our Supreme with our Grand established once again. Remember, the Military Order of the Cooties is not in competition with the VFW, but an important auxiliary to our great organization. Our membership in the MOC is one of pride in our parent organization and our members are active at the post, district and department levels!

Please notify the CCDB when you get new VFW members signed up! Signing up new VFW members is a primary goal of the MOC!

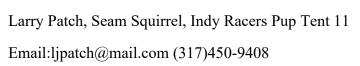
Please contact me if you would like to get a little fun in your area by starting your own Pup Tent! Either myself or one of my crummy officers would love to take a trip and help you get started!

Our motto "Closer than a brother, busier than a Bee" is so true! Our VFW family is a very special group who truly care for each other and our communities! Our next Scratch will be on May 13th at VFW post 261, 10550 Pendleton Pike. The Scratch follows the district meeting and usually starts around noon. Let's all keep pushing hard at recruiting new VFW members. Our state is really close to reaching 100% in membership this year. Last time I checked we were at 98.05%!! I know we can reach our goal!!!



















HERE'S A WAY TO NEVER PAY DUES AGAIN!

LIFE MEMEBRSHIP FEE SCHEDULE

ATTAINED AGE

Through Age 30	. \$340.00
31 Through 40	\$325.00
41 Through 50	\$305.00
51 Through 60	\$275.00
61 Through 70	\$245.00
71 Through 80	\$190.00
81 And over	\$150.00

Attained age is the age that you are on December 31st of the year that you apply. All applications for Life Membership MUST include the VFW Life Membership number of the applicant and be accompanied with the required fee. Life Membership is available to 3rd Degree Cooties only! Prospective atoms cannot become Life Members until they have been deloused! See section 120 of the Supreme By-Laws for more information.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP - THE DEAL OF A LIFETIME!



LIFE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE



Name:				
	Last	First	M.I.	
Address:			<u> </u>	
	Street	City/State & Zip Code	Telephone Number	
Date of Birth:	E-mail Address:		TOTAL FEE PAID \$	
VFW Life Members	hip Number:	Post #: Date on VFW	/ LM Card:	
Member of Pup Tent	Number: Pup To	ent Name:		
Grand of:		MOC Annual Card Number:		
	of the Supreme By-Laws	MILITARY ORDER OF THE CO and Agree to abide by the provi		
Date of Application:	S	Signature of Applicant: X		
I certify that the abo	ve-named Cootie is a mem	ber is good standing in this Pu	p Tent whose dues are	
paidfor the current	the current membership year(Date Dues are Paid Until, i.e. "12/31/21		aid Until, i.e. "12/31/21")	
Signature of Pup Tent C.C.D.B. X		Da	Date:	
Recorded at Grand I	leadquarters and transmit	ted on:(Date)		
Signature of Grand Quartermaster: X			Grand of:	

Last Updated: 19 AUG 21

MESSAGES FROM OUR AUXILIARY

Hello Indiana Combat Veterans:

This is my last letter to you in the "Combat Vet" newsletter as the VFW Auxiliary President for 2022/2023. I know that Commander Leirer and I have had a good year together and I have enjoyed our travels and sharing time with you!

Yes, the time has just flown by this year. I can't believe that my year is already coming to an end. It's been a humbling experience to say the least. I have met so many wonderful people and I know that I have made some good friends along the way.

I want to wish all of you a healthy year ahead and hope that your Posts will be expanding and having a prosperous year ahead. Good recruiting is totally necessary on the Veteran side and in the Auxiliary to keep our organizations in good working order. New members = fresh and new ideas!

Thank you all for your service to our Country and to me. You know that I will always be a part of the VFW Auxiliary and I will be "ON THE ROAD AGAIN FOR OUR VETERANS", every chance I get. Thank you for your membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and for "still serving" our Veterans, youth and Communities.

Harriet L. Figg, President VFW Auxiliary Department of Indiana "On the Road Again for Our Veterans"





commander & President Testimonia



























Commander & President Testimonia



















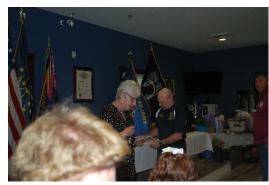












Commander & President Testimonia

























Commander & President Testimonian































Commander & President Testimonia





















Commander & President Testimonian



Sommander in Action

District 6 in Brownsburg







commander in Action

With Commander in Chief Timothy Borland









The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Indiana received a remarkable gift this past February. Mrs. Marilyn Shahbahrami of Bloomington, Indiana donated \$294,096.00 to the VFW of Indiana for the purpose of helping Veterans and youth who participate in our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen program.

It all started in early February when I received a message through www.vfwin.org website. The message was a little unclear, somebody by the name of Joe Hardin said he had a large sum of money he wanted to donate to the VFW. Well, the first thing I did was try to find out who Joe Hardin was. Well come to find out he was a past Commander from Bloomington Post 604 who I had met several times.

I called Joe and he explained that over the past several years his Post had built a very nice "Veterans Memorial" in Valhalla Memory Gardens, a local cemetery. The memorial was funded by Mrs. Marilyn Shahbahrami, a very generous patron of the Post. The Memorial needed some additional work on the approach walk. Joe worked with Mrs. Shahbahrami and architects to draw up the plans, estimated at \$300,000.00. They were prepared to start construction when the cemetery owners decided no more work was to be done on the Memorial. Mrs. Shahbahrami had already donated the funds and didn't want to take them back so she asked Joe what she should do with the funds. Joe, like a dedicated VFW member recommended donating it to the VFW Department of Indiana and she agreed. A few days later I met with Joe, Mrs. Shahbahrami and her attorney at her home to discuss her making the donation. She wanted to understand how the funds would be used. I explained that the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Indiana has a long history of helping Veterans. Founded in 1921 the VFW of Indiana has supported Veterans returning from World War 1, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Global War on Terror – Afghanistan/Iraq, Kosovo, and countless other hostile fire zones around the world. We discussed how she wanted to fund to be perpetual and that we should only use the interest generated by the donation. Then we discussed what the funds could be used for and decided on Veterans in need and our two essay programs.

A few days later we met with Joe Hardin and his Post officers to receive the check from Post 604 for \$296,096.00. The reason we received the check from the Post was Mrs. Shahbahrami had already donated money to the Post for the memorial, she had to give them permission to transfer the money to the Department. The money was immediately invested by our new Department Quartermaster.

The VFW Indiana now has a fund named the "Marilyn Marie Shahbahrami Veterans Assistance and Youth Development Fund". Properly invested and managed this fund should provide assistance to Veterans here in Indiana and support our essay programs for years to come. We can't think Mrs. Shahbahrami enough for her more than generous donation or Joe Hardin for his efforts in supporting the Veterans of Indiana.

Richard Leirer, Commander

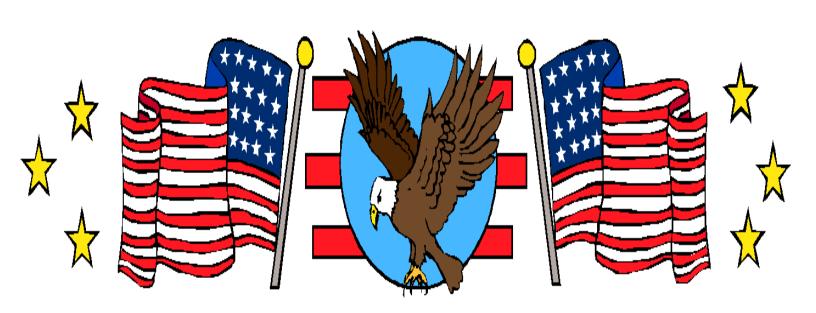






'Thank you for your service' | Iraq Veteran Judy King in Shelbyville gives handmade quilt to 105-year-old WWII Veteran









VFW Post 7205 presented a check for \$1000 to Ginger Gearhart-Bruick for her essay in the 2022/2023 VFW Patriot Pen Essay contest. The money will go into a scholarship fund in Gingers name to be used when she goes to college.



This year's essay theme "My Pledge to our Veterans". was kind, thoughtful and well written by Ginger, which is why it was picked as #1 out of the entire state of Indiana, her essay has gone through 3 tiers of judging and will now move on to the VFW National competition, where she has a chance to win \$5000."



















































Haley Bock, first place in District 11 Voice of Democracy contest and first place in State! Sponsored by VFW Post 98 and Auxiliary.





Auxiliary

Photographs









Auxiliary Photographs















Senator Braun & Representative Carson invite you to:

academy Day 2023

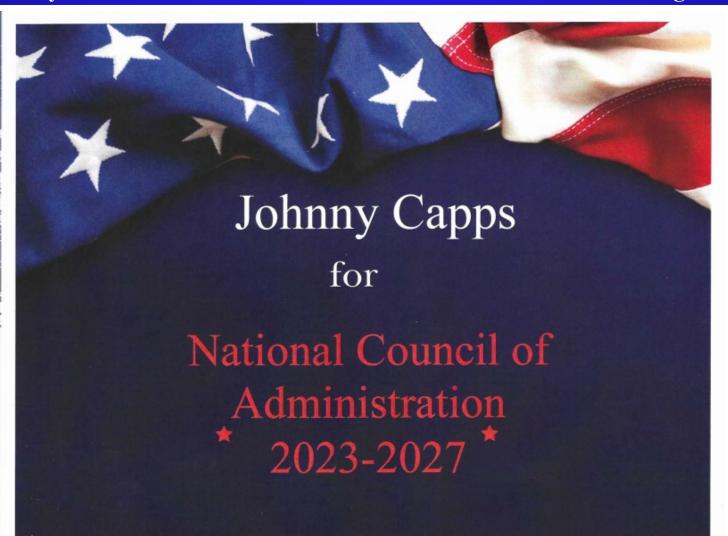
Wednesday, May 3rd 5:00 PM EST

Indiana War Memorial 55 E. Michigan St. Indianapolis, IN 46204

Open to: West Point, Naval Academy, Air Force, Merchant Marines, and the Coast Guard

"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave"





National Council Member 2019-2023

National Commttee: Resolutions 2019-2020

Budget and Finance 2020-2023



State Commander 2017-2018

All State Post and District Commander

Gold Legacy Life Member I think most of you know me already, but for those who don't My name is Jerry Blake and I am from post 1114 in the 8th District. I am attaching my Bio with more information.

I am running for National Council Member for Indiana against Johnny Capps. Johnny has been the National Council Member for the past four years and has done a great job. I am asking for your support and your vote to allow me to serve you and this great State as the next National Council Member. I also want to let everyone know that win or lose I will not be running for State Chaplain in June, so if your interested in this position please get your information out to the Posts and Districts so they know you want to run for the Chaplains position in June.



AGAIN PLEASE SUPPORT ME IN JUNE AS THE NEXT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER FOR INDIANA

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

JERRY BLAKE

PAST STATE COMMANDER



Jerry O. Blake
Command Sergeant Major Retired

CANDIDATE FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER

Jerry retired in 1974 after ten years of active military service in the United States Navy with two tours in Viet Nam. He returned to Evansville Indiana and joined the Army Reserves. He spent the next 30 years serving his country in the United States Army Reserves, serving in Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-1991.

During this time, He worked full time, served as a citizen soldier and graduated from college at Oakland City University with his Organizational Management degree. His civilian career included 30 years as a Human Resources Manager at Indiana Tube Corporation and Flair Molded Plastics. In this role, he was able to help many Reserve and National Guard soldiers through their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and adjustments back to their civilian careers. Jerry has been recognized with the following awards for his service to his country and to veterans

- 1 Veteran of the year Award in 2008 for his work with area veterans
- 2 All American Post Commander for VFW Post 1114 in 2010 and 2012
- 3 VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Award 2012
- 4 State Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars 2016-2017
- 5 Chairman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Big 10 Conference 2017-2018
- 6 Inducted into Indiana Military Hall of Fame November 2017
- 7 Governor Holcomb's Sagamores of the Wabash award May 2017

He also served on several National Committees, such as

POW/MIA committee - By-Laws committee Veterans Service committee - National Security committee









I am seeking your support for the High Office of Indiana Department Chaplain 2023-2024. I am a Gold Legacy Life member from Frank T Strayer VFW Post 1587. I earned my eligibility for the VFW serving as a USAF Security Policeman at Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN from 9/1967 – 9/1968. I retired from the USAF in 1986. I joined the VFW in 1986 and became a life member in 1987. I retired from the Department of Veterans Affairs with 21 years of service in 2007.

Below is a consolidated list of the offices and appointments I have held in our great organization: Prior to transferring my membership to Indiana in 2013, I held the following positions in Alaska: VFW Post 2509: Charter Commander (3 years), Quartermaster (2 years), Service Officer, Trustee, Department Surgeon, Judge Advocate, Jr Vice Commander and Commander (1987-1993) I earned All American AK State Commander (92-93). I was appointed as Department Inspector 94-95. I had multiple appointments to committees at National conventions & Washington conferences. I received an appointment as Vice Chairman for the National VFW Safety committee 93-94. Military Order of the Cooties Pup Tent 2, Arctic Fox-1992-95.

Since I have been in Indiana, I have held the following offices at VFW Post 1587:

Commander, Service Officer (4 years), Chaplain (5 years), Trustee (3 years), Canteen Manager (4 years) Post Community Activities Chairman (8 years); National VFW Outstanding Community Service Post (2) I held the following positions in District 11:

District Chaplain 2015-2019; District Community Activities Chairman (5 years); District POW/MIA Chairman (3 years); District VOD/Patriots Pen Chairman

VFW Military Order of the Cooties Pup Tent 11, Indy Racers-Seam Squirrel 2020-2023 Indiana Combat Veteran newsletter editor

I have received 2 appointments as National Aide de Camp.

I have attended all of the VFW National Conventions as a delegate of my post since 2015. I have also attended all Indiana VFW Conferences and Conventions except 1 since 2015.

I have attended 6 Chaplain Workshops at National Conventions. Past National Chaplain Peter Hook put together an outstanding Chaplains Guide which I refer to frequently. I am now an ordained minister. Over the past 5 years I have been called on to perform several funeral services and many Celebrations of Life/Memorial Services. Additionally I have done many grief counseling's. I have the support of my family and my Post in seeking this position. If you have any questions please call or Email me. I am very proud of our organization, and have been active at the Post, District, State and National level. I believe I could be an asset to our organization in the role as your next Department Chaplain.

Yours in LOTCS, Larry J. Patch (317) 450-9408 (ljpatch@mail.com)

Deadline for May 2023 Combat Veteran is April 21st. 2023

Let's share our special events to everyone! I will need all articles, pictures and special event fliers to me by August 21, 2023 for our September 2023 Combat Veteran newsletter! As far as format goes, articles can be in Microsoft word, Email text or Adobe PDF file. Pictures should be in JPEG but I have a pretty large selection of photography programs so I should be able to accommodate most formats. Fliers can be in Word, PDF or any Photo format. Please submit the items for the Newsletter to me at: (ljpatch@mail.com) or send to me at 9034 Eiderdown Way, Indianapolis, IN 46234. If you have any questions please Email me or call me

(317)450-9408.

Yours in LOTCS,

Larry J Patch

Larry J Patch

MILITARY HUMOR







