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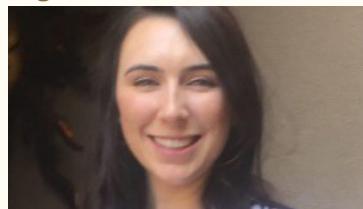


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'One on Every Highway'

Missouri Auxiliary Saves Lives with Billboard



VFW Auxiliary 5675 in Odessa, Mo., has sponsored a billboard for the past year that touts veteran suicide statistics and contact information for VA's Veterans Crisis Line. That billboard has saved one life already.

"It was just so overwhelming that this crazy idea I had actually worked," said Amy Jo Lett, past Auxiliary 5675 president and current District 6 Auxiliary president.

A man had called the Post asking for the person "in charge" of the sign.

"They told him it was me, and my number is all over Facebook and all over flyers regarding taco night," Lett said. "And he called me. I never even asked his name... I just cried, and he cried."

Lett said the Auxiliary members "need to know that there's someone that these veterans in crisis can call."

"If I don't have veterans to help, then I can't help them when they're gone," Lett said. "And there's a horrible, horrible need for help with our veterans of all ages."

Lett said she thinks "outside the box" and, as the Auxiliary's hospital chairman, asked about the Auxiliary sponsoring a sign to combat suicide.

"We have a member who lost her child to suicide," Lett said. "Within our small community and our membership, suicide is close to home for us, unfortunately, and we can't help them if they're not here."

The Odessa, Mo., community, located about 36 miles east of Kansas City, has been "very supportive" of the sign, according to Lett.

"We always let them know what we're fundraising for, and they've been very supportive of it," Lett said.

Lett said the sign, which costs about \$150 per month, is funded through the weekly taco nights at Post 5675. Other

"I just hope that it saves more lives. I think there should be one on every highway. I think that sign should be on the back of every bus seat."

—Amy Jo Lett,
Auxilliary 5675

Members of VFW Auxiliary 5675 in Odessa, Mo., display a sign along Interstate 70 that they sponsor to fight veteran suicide. The Post and Auxiliary spend about \$150 monthly for the billboard.

PHOTO BY AMANDA COOK, EDITOR, VFW AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

NEED HELP?

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255



Auxiliaries in the district also have donated.

Post 5675 also donated \$1,000. Post Commander Sean Brown said everyone at the Post knows someone who has attempted or committed suicide.

"All of us thought, even if [the billboard] just saves one life, it's worth it all," said Brown, who served in Iraq (April 2006-March 2007) with the 308th Trans. Co. out of Lincoln, Neb., and Afghanistan (April 2010 – Feb. 2011) with the 425th Trans. Co. out of Salina, Kan., as a motor

transport operator on both deployments.

Brown said he sees the importance of the sign from "two different sides" — having served himself and being involved with the Auxiliary's efforts.

"I also had a little depression run in back in 2011, so it basically puts the message out there to other vets, 'Hey, you're not going at this alone. There's people that are thinking about you,'" Brown said.

The Iraq and Afghanistan veteran said if veterans kill themselves, their children "aren't going to know the type of person they were."

"They may know what patriotism is, but they won't know it from that same standpoint," Brown said.

Lett said the Auxiliary hopes to keep the billboard up "as long as I can maintain it."

"I have had several other Auxiliaries call me, and they are going to use my artwork and put some more billboards up, which made my day," Lett said.

The other billboards, one in St. Louis and another in Knob Noster, Mo., were expected to be along highways within a couple months, Lett said in September.

"I just hope that it saves more lives," Lett said. "I think there should be one on every highway. I think that sign should be on the back of every bus seat."

Email: kwilliams@vfw.org

NOW MORE THAN EVER, IT'S TIME TO RECRUIT

As the end of 2017 nears, VFW finds itself down nearly 30,000 members. VFW Membership Director Rick Butler said he wants to remind members that the time to recruit is now.

"You have to leave the Post in order to recruit new members," Butler said. "Find local events and ask if you can have a booth. Farmers markets, gun shows, trade shows and fall festivals are all great places to recruit local veterans."

If you need recruiting materials from the Membership Department, call or email at 1-888-JOIN-VFW or membership@vfw.org.



NOVEMBER IS VETS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH

VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools throughout November to talk about their military and home-front experiences to students.

Check out the 2017-18 *VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairman's Manual* for more information. Visit www.vfw.org and log in (or create an account if you do not have one).

After logging in, you'll be redirected to the "My VFW" page where you will click on "VFW Training & Support" and then "Community Service, Youth Scholarships & Activities," where you'll have access to the "CHAIRMAN GUIDES."

If members of your Post makes classroom visits, *Checkpoint* wants to know. Be sure to get clear photos of members interacting with students. Email the photos to jdyhouse@vfw.org.

HONOR VFW WITH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

When it comes to your will and estate plans, your loved ones should come first. After your family has been taken care of, we ask you to evaluate VFW's place in your overall plans. If you're interested in supporting VFW and your fellow veterans with a gift in your will, please contact the VFW Planned Giving Office for more information at (816) 968-1119, email plannedgiving@vfw.org or visit www.vfw.org/plannedgiving.

FILL THE GAPS WITH TRICARE SUPPLEMENTAL COVERAGE

TRICARE is a medical care program available to uniformed service members—including active duty, National Guard and Reserve members, and retired service members — and their families.

TRICARE pays a substantial amount for medical care, but you might still need a supplemental insurance plan to help fill in the gaps. Through VFW, you have the opportunity to purchase a VFW Group TRICARE Supplement Insurance policy from Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company.

For additional information, visit our website, or call the VFW Member Benefits Department at 1-800-821-2606, and select option 1.

SHOP THE VFW STORE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The VFW Store stocks selected embroidered items that are ready to ship whenever you need them. We offer T-shirts, polos, Oxfords and more. To check out our inventory, go to www.vfwstore.org.

When you purchase from the VFW Store, you support VFW programs that help veterans, military service members and their families.

Brian Duffy, Adjutant General

We're Helping Hurricane Victims



This year's hurricane season has been particularly rough. Three major storms — *Harvey*, *Irma* and *Maria* — have devastated portions of Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico. As always, VFW is prepared to support our fellow citizens.

Almost as soon as *Harvey* hit Texas' Gulf Coast in late August, we began collecting donations for desperately needed supplies like food and water. A month later, when *Irma* struck Florida, we did the same for our friends in the Sunshine State. By the end of September, we had sent \$25,000 to the headquarters of VFW's Department of Florida.

In the Lone Star State, 18 Posts had identified themselves as drop-off locations for donations or support centers as of Sept. 28. Here are a few examples:

- Post 4815 in San Antonio, which is home to Department Commander Edward Torres, served as a collection point for donations and delivered several loads in the Orange/Port Arthur/Beaumont area.
- District 9's members in Amarillo were "instrumental," according to Commander Richard

Herman, in sending several truck loads from the state's panhandle area to the Corpus Christi and Houston areas.

- Post 12160 in Sinton collected supplies and distributed them in the region east of Corpus Christi.
- Post 7473 in Elsa collected supplies in the Rio Grande Valley.

At the national level, as of Sept. 26, the VFW's Programs department at National Headquarters had disbursed a total of nearly \$53,000 to 138 veterans and their families affected by the natural disasters. At that time, Programs was working on more than 300 additional cases of families needing storm-related financial assistance.

This will be an ongoing effort because the scope of the destruction is immense, especially in Puerto Rico where we have four VFW Posts. Our thoughts are with the victims of these storms, and — as we have so many times in our 118-year-history — we will support them for as long as needed.

Debra Anderson, Quartermaster General

Providing Aid to Natural Disaster Victims

In the aftermath of the destruction left by *Hurricane Harvey*, *Hurricane Irma* and fires in our northwest states, VFW was prepared to respond. We are

committed to helping our members, veterans and the active-duty military, National Guardsmen and reservists who were affected by these tragedies.

VFW Departments, Posts, Auxiliaries and members across the country have stepped up to meet the request of support that was issued by VFW Adjutant General Brian Duffy, on behalf of Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman. To date, the VFW National Headquarters has received more than \$300,000 in donations. That money is restricted for disaster-relief efforts and will be used to provide financial assistance to veterans and military personnel who need emergency help.

There also have been donations sent directly to VFW

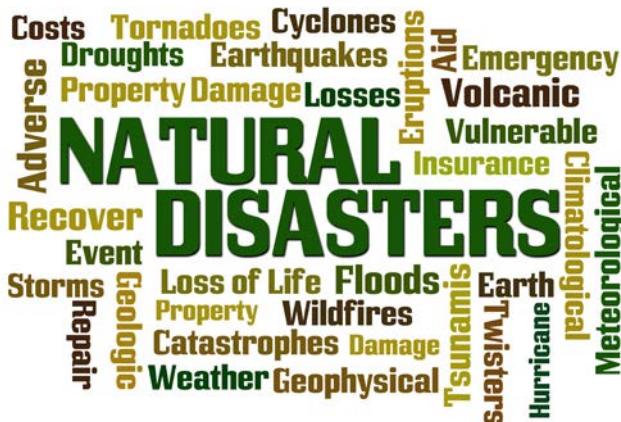
Departments that were impacted by these disasters. As the relief effort moves beyond the immediate emergency stage and into the rebuilding stage, VFW

will be there to help provide assistance.

As VFW's Quartermaster General, I assure you that all donations raised through our fundraising efforts for disaster relief will be used for that specific purpose. If we receive more funds than are needed, we will ensure that they are earmarked for future natural disasters.

In the wake of the tremendous damage done by these storms and fires, VFW and Auxiliary members have once again proven their commitment to fellow citizens as exemplified by their willingness to assist those who are most in need.

With the great generosity of VFW and Auxiliary members, we hope that we will be able to continue to provide the financial support our members need when facing such a tragedy.



CHECKPOINT

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Correspondence can be sent to the editor at VFW National Headquarters.

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NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

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VFW Posts Flood Texas, Florida with Relief Efforts

Hurricane Harvey caused the windows of VFW Post 3904 in Rockport, Texas, to blow in. Air pressure forced the roof off the building, and it landed in three neighboring yards. Part of the front wall also fell in.

But days later, Post members held a meeting in the parking lot, amid the destruction.

“It was a complete act of defiance and unity,” said Post Commander Jimmy McCombs. “It was our way of saying *Harvey* can kiss our – you know.”

Hurricane Harvey, which hit Aug. 25, was the first “major hurricane” to hit the Texas coast since *Celia* in 1970, according to the National Weather Service.

The most valuable items lost in the storm, according to McCombs, were the bingo equipment. The Post holds bingo nights every Thursday, and they are the “primary money maker,” said McCombs, who served three tours in the Persian Gulf and during *Operation Desert Storm* with the Navy.

As soon as “word got out” about the damage to Post 3904, McCombs said, he started receiving calls and messages with donations and offers of assistance from Boston, Mass., to Tacoma, Wash., along with various Posts in Texas.

As of September, the Post had received about \$4,500, according to McCombs.

Relief efforts in Texas

Floyd Stewart, Post 4709 commander in Conroe, Texas, said when *Harvey* hit that a call went out from Friends of Conroe, a nonprofit group. The county, according to Stewart, had “three major shelters running” that the Red Cross could not reach with their equipment.

“We became the supply chain to furnish them with supplies and food,” Stewart said. “We were preparing three meals a day and shipping it out to about 2,000 people a day.”

Mark Windsor, VFW Post 2493 commander in Mt. Wolf, Pa., led a donation effort with Post 556, of York, Pa., and made a delivery to Conroe, Texas.

“It’s a relief to know that you’ve got other VFWs that care enough to drive 25 hours straight through just to offer any assistance they can,” said Windsor, who served in Korea in 1989-90 with A Co., 102nd Military Intelligence Bn., as an electronic intelligence interceptor.

Florida relief efforts

Hurricane Irma made landfall Sept. 10 as a Category 4 hurricane, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and “later that day, the center of *Hurricane Irma* made landfall at Marco Island” as a Category 3 hurricane.

VFW’s southern-most Post, Post 3911 in Key West, Fla., “suffered extensive damage,” according to Post Commander Abe Conn.



Post 556 Commander Ronald Etheridge, Post 2493 Commander Mark Windsor and Gregg Bixler, who drove the truck from Pennsylvania, prepare to unload hurricane relief supplies in Conroe, Texas, to past Post 2493 Commander Matthew Maskette and Mike Glass, vice president of Post 4709 Auxiliary.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK WINDSOR

Conn, who served three tours in Afghanistan (2002-03, 2005-07 and 2012-13) with the 930th Army Liaison Team of the Florida National Guard, said the building’s roof “peeled back,” allowing water to get inside and damage the restaurant and bar. He estimated the Post suffered between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in damages.

Though Conn said there was “a lot of devastation” at the Post, the building itself was still standing.

“I had gone past places where there’s just columns,” Conn said. “A lot of our stuff sits up in the air because of the water... I was upset about [the Post], but I had seen worse.”

Jose Rosa, commander of VFW Post 3282 in Port Orange, Fla., said his Post “fared well,” though it did lose power for about six hours.

Rosa’s Post opened its doors to the public, and also took three convoy trucks to a distribution center to assist those affected in Puerto Rico by *Hurricane Maria*, which struck Sept. 20. Rosa said Post members also raised more than \$1,000 for Puerto Rico relief and \$400 for relief efforts in Texas.

At press time, at least 18 people had died as result of *Hurricane Maria*, and more than half of the population had no water, according to Weather Channel reports.

For more information on how to donate to relief efforts, visit <https://www.vfw.org/news-and-publications/press-room/archives/2017/9/help-veterans-impacted-by-string-of-natural-disasters>.

Email: kwilliams@vfw.org

Post Outreach

The following Posts, Districts and Departments are just a sampling of those that contributed in the aftermath of hurricanes *Harvey*, *Irma* and *Maria*.

Post 9934 (Dana Point, Calif.)
Post 3166 (Liberal, Kan.)
Post 7272 (Bellingham, Mass.)
Post 6692 (Rush City, Minn.)

Post 12124 (Meridian, Miss.)
Post 610 (Sidney, Neb.)
Post 2019 (Mount Airy, N.C.)
Post 4203 (Rockingham, N.C.)
Post 845 (Downingtown, Pa.)
Post 556 (York, Pa.)
Post 2493 (Mt. Wolf, Pa.)
Post 152 (North Kingstown, RI)
Post 1836 (Lufkin, Texas)
Post 7108 (San Antonio, Texas)
Post 4474 (Wharton, Texas)
Post 9192 (Killeen, Texas)
Post 4709 (Conroe, Texas)

Post 8790 (Houston, Texas)
Post 8787 (Austin, Texas)
Post 6008 (Hewitt, Texas)
Post 12058 (Kyle, Texas)
Post 12160 (Sinton, Texas)
Post 6386 (Ingleside, Texas)
Post 7473 (Elsa, Texas)
Post 4815 (San Antonio, Texas)
Post 430 (Canyon, Texas)
District 20 (San Antonio, Texas)
District 9 (Amarillo, Texas)
Department of Alaska
VFW of Ohio Charities



When *Hurricane Harvey* made its way through Rockport, Texas, winds blew in the front windows of VFW Post 3904, air pressure caused the roof to separate from the building and part of the front wall fell in, according to Post Commander Jimmy McCombs. Despite the destruction of the Post, its members met in the parking lot, surrounded by the debris, in their first meeting after the storms.

PHOTO BY STEVEN SMITH/ROCKPORT PILOT

Washington Post Elects First Female Officer

Female veterans continue to make great strides within the ranks of VFW. More than ever, seasoned leaders within the organization welcome women with the realization that they, too, are a part of VFW's future.

This is exactly what happened at Post 7511 in Monroe, Wash., where the members met Global War on Terrorism veteran Jaymie Weber in January.

Weber, who served nine years in the Air Force, saw a Facebook notice about a pancake breakfast at the Post — about 35 miles northeast of Seattle — and decided to check it out.

"I stepped out of my introverted shell a little bit," said Weber, a mom of two daughters, ages 3 and 5. "I showed up and about half of the people were Vietnam vets and the other half younger."

Weber signed up to be a member, and it wasn't long before she was viewed as a "doer." She got the home-improvement retailer Lowe's to donate 43 flags to the Post just by asking. Post leaders were so impressed, they asked her to become quartermaster. She was elected in mid-2017, becoming the Post's first female elected officer.

"Everyone has been open to my ideas," said Weber, who earned her VFW eligibility in 2002 in Oman. "I never feel out of place. I feel more like

where I need to be when I'm with these guys."

Communication is Key to Attracting Members

Weber joined the Air Force when she was 19. In part, she did so to see the world and earn money for her education. But her family's history of military service was the main reason for her service.

"My grandfather was in the Navy, and my dad was a Marine," she said. My sister was in the Army. So I decided on the Air Force."

While Weber never intended to stay in for nine years, she did so to support the efforts during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

"I wanted to do whatever I could to serve my country," said Weber, who left the Air Force in 2007 as a technical sergeant.

She went to work at Crane Aerospace, but the company soon went through several rounds of staff reductions, and being relatively new, Weber was laid off.

Looking for a new direction, Weber started her own business, Lashes by Jaymie, where she crafts fuller eyelashes and brows for her clients.

She said that after looking at people's closed eyes all day, it's nice to enjoy the camaraderie of her fellow VFW members.

While there are only three women in the Post, Weber is more concerned about attracting younger members in general. She wants to see Iraq and Afghanistan veterans get involved and support the Post.

"We still have this stigma that VFW is a bunch of old guys," Weber said. "I don't want people to think that."

Weber said communication needs to become more digitized. Using social media channels more at the local level is key, she added, noting that Facebook introduced her to VFW.

"There has to be a way to find these veterans so they don't have to come and find us," Weber said. "VFW is an organization with an amazing foundation, and we need fresh ideas." **Email:** jdyhouse@vfw.org

"We still have this stigma that VFW is a bunch of old guys. I don't want people to think that."

— Jaymie Weber, First Female Officer, Post 7511



Photographed in September in Monroe, Wash., Jaymie Weber is the first female officer at Post 7511. With only three women in the Post, Weber said all members have been receptive to her ideas and that she never feels "out of place" among her fellow veterans. PHOTO BY IAN TERRY, THE DAILY HERALD



Top: Post 7511 Quartermaster Jaymie Weber during her time in the Air Force. She served for nine years, leaving as a technical sergeant.

Bottom: Weber with her two daughters last summer during a VFW event in Monroe.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAYMIE WEBER

Unmet Needs Helps Veteran's Family Pay Bills

VFW has helped nearly 900 military and veteran families through its *Unmet Needs* program. Support from the program, which awarded more than \$2 million in financial assistance grants in 2016-17, helped Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran David E. White III and his family "not feel so alone."

White, a 32-year-old Army veteran from Dover, Del., incurred various injuries during his time serving in Iraq, including a traumatic brain injury (TBI), PTSD, narcolepsy, tinnitus and a back injury.

"No one wants to be in the place where they have to ask for help, and being prideful at times, I can assure you that I did not," said White, who had been in the hospital for almost three months, placing a great financial strain on his family.

He had recently entered a PTSD inpatient treatment program at the Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center, after he lost employment due to his narcolepsy and PTSD-related symptoms.

White's wife, Emily, said, "We had previously begun a re-rating process, as David hadn't received a VA rating for his TBI or PTSD. At a 40 percent rating, David wasn't eligible for the temporary 100 percent disability other veterans receive when they are in the hospital."

Fortunately, the couple heard about the *Unmet Needs* program from another veterans' service organization.

"The grant paid a month's rent and for new tires on our family car," said White, who served with Fox Co., 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Regt., 101st Abn. Div. "The support has meant my wife could continue getting to work and providing for the family while I was not capable of doing so. We were able to put less money on credit cards — this truly helped us stay afloat."

VFW helped White when he was at his "lowest because of the service and sacrifices" he made for the United States. White served nine years, eight months in the Army. He deployed three times to Iraq and on one special assignment to Afghanistan.

Unmet Needs is supported by donations from VFW members, supporters and corporate sponsors, such as Burger King. Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman said those who have served "have sacrificed enough."

"Panicking over whether to fix the car, replace the hot water heater or put food on the table, are stresses they don't need," Harman said. "I am proud the VFW has a program that gives them a place to turn to when they need it most."

For more information on *Unmet Needs*, visit <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>. Email: kwilliams@vfw.org

DO I QUALIFY FOR UNMET NEEDS?

To be eligible to receive financial assistance through VFW's *Unmet Needs* program, a recipient must:

- ✓ Be on active duty, whose financial hardship is a result of deployment, military pay error or medical discharge.
- ✓ Have been discharged on or after Sept. 11, 2001, whose financial hardship is a direct result of military-service connected injuries and/or illnesses that are causing an employment hardship.
- ✓ Have been discharged prior to Sept. 11, 2001, who is on a fixed income (VA compensation, SSI, SSDI) and/or whose financial hardship is an emergency situation.

The financial hardship can't be caused by:

- Civil, legal or domestic issues; misconduct; or any issues that result from spousal separation or divorce.
- Financial mismanagement by self or others, or due to bankruptcy.

Eligible expenses

- Household (mortgage, rent, repairs, insurance)
- Vehicle (payments, insurance, repairs)
- Utilities
- Food and clothing
- Children's clothing, diapers, formula, school or childcare expenses
- Medical bills, prescriptions eyeglasses

Ineligible expenses

- Credit cards, military charge cards or retail store cards
- Cable, internet or secondary phones
- Cosmetic or investigational medical procedures/expenses
- Taxes
- Furniture, electronic equipment or vehicle rentals
- Any other expenses not determined to be a basic life need



"Panicking over whether to fix the car, replace the hot water heater or put food on the table, are stresses they don't need."

— Keith Harman,
VFW
Commander-in-Chief



David E. White III, sits with his wife, Emily, and their two children, Bailey, 7, and Logan, 3. The White family, of Dover, Del., is one of nearly 900 military and veteran families who received financial assistance through VFW's *Unmet Needs* program. White served in the Army for nearly 10 years and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EMILY WHITE

Army Veteran Has the Grit to Pursue Her Goals

Samantha Bedore knew the opportunity to attend graduate school would help her pursue a better life for her and her family. But the 26-year-old Army veteran was worried that she would be forced to take out huge student loans.

Fortunately, Bedore, of Phoenix, Ariz., found VFW's *VFW's Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship* online. The scholarship is helping her complete her doctorate in physical therapy at Midwestern University, in Downers Grove, Ill.

"This scholarship is so meaningful for me because it shows that my hard work is finally paying off," Bedore said. "Knowing there are people out there rooting for me makes me want to work even harder — not just for myself, but as a way of saying 'thank you' for believing in me."

Bedore said her husband, Jason, gave her the inspiration to become a physical therapist.

"He's experienced many challenges ever since his vehicle was hit by an explosive device during his tour in Iraq," she said. "We know that although movement seems simple, it's often taken for granted."

As a physical therapist, Bedore hopes to work with more veterans who have been injured on active duty.

"I can relate to them as a veteran myself," she said. "And, I can relate to their family members who are providing emotional support for their loved ones."

Bedore served four years active duty as a unit supply specialist in the Army and deployed to Iraq from 2009-10 as part of D Forward Support Co., a subordinate unit of the 4th Bde. Combat Team, 1st Armd. Div.

"My motivation for joining the military stemmed from

wanting to obtain a higher level of education," she said. "I wanted to be the best version of myself, and the military definitely helped me become that person."

Bedore plans to graduate from Midwestern University in 2019.

After graduation, she hopes to work with patients with neurological challenges. She credits "an incredibly influential instructor,"

Dr. Suzanne O'Neal, with solidifying her passion for the field. Bedore encourages veterans wanting to attend graduate school to not give up on their dreams.

"If you had the grit and fortitude to serve your country, you can have a huge impact on peoples' lives," Bedore said. "Most things in life can be taken away from you, but your education will stay with you forever. That's something you can be proud of, no matter what."

Sponsored by Sport Clips, the Help a Hero Scholarship is now in its fourth year. As of September, \$3.6 million in scholarships has been awarded to 826 veterans and service members since January 2014.

Email: dspiva@vfw.org

"I wanted to be the best version of myself, and the military definitely helped me become that person."

— Samantha Bedore



Army veteran Samantha Bedore, 26, of Phoenix, Ariz., is a recipient of *VFW's Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship*. She is pursuing a doctorate degree in physical therapy at Midwestern University, in Downers Grove, Ill.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMANTHA BEDORE

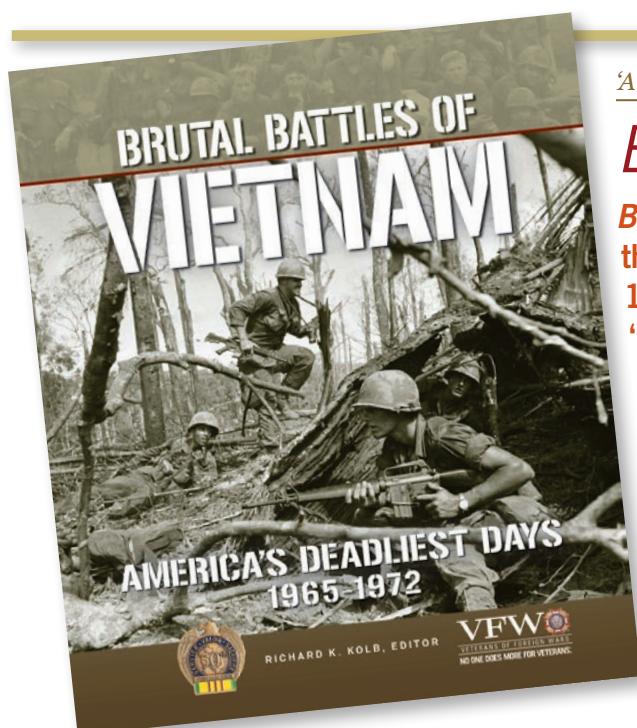
VFW's Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship

Did You Know?

- ✓ VFW's *Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship* has awarded \$3.6 million in scholarships since 2014.
- ✓ More than 800 veterans and service members have received scholarships.
- ✓ In 2017, some \$1.1 million was awarded.
- ✓ Scholarships of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to qualified applicants.
- ✓ Scholarships are restricted for tuition and fees only and will be paid directly to accredited schools.

Eligible Applicants Must:

- Be a citizen of the United States.
- Be retired, honorably discharged, active duty or a member of the National Guard or Reserve.
- Have completed Basic Training and follow-on training (Advanced Individual Training, technical school, etc.).
- Separated with or currently hold a military rank of E-5 or below.
- Demonstrate a need for financial assistance.
- Participate in, be accepted to or currently enrolled in a VA-approved program or school at an accredited post-secondary institution.



'A Great Gift for Every Veteran and Their Families'

Brutal Battles of Vietnam available at VFW Store

Brutal Battles of Vietnam is a unique, one-of-a-kind chronicle of the Vietnam War. It focuses on the war's deadliest battles. The book features some 100 military actions of the war, from the 1965 terrorist attack against GIs in Qui Nhon to Operation Linebacker II, also known as the "11-Day War," in 1972.

"This is a very moving book commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War that conveys personal stories about the bravery, selflessness and sacrifices of the U.S. military who fought and died for our country," said VFW Store Manager Sonja Cutright. "It makes for a great gift for every veteran and their families."

This 480-page battle history focuses on the fighting man's perspective. Virtually all of the deadliest engagements are covered in this book. Even the lesser-known firefights get their long overdue recognition.

Brutal Battles of Vietnam was edited by Richard Kolb, former editor-in-chief of *VFW* magazine, and designed by Robert Widener, former art director of *VFW* magazine.

The VFW Store is selling the book for \$29.95 plus shipping and handling. Go to vfwstore.org or call (800) 821-2606 for more information. *Brutal Battles of Vietnam: American's Deadliest Days 1965-1972* is Item #4767.

Kentucky Post Builds Carport for VFW National Home for Children

Members of VFW Post 3769 in Pikeville, Ky., drove more than 450 miles to help build a carport for the VFW National Home for Children.

Located in Eaton Rapids, Mich., the National Home needed the structure to help extend the life of its vehicles during the summer and winter months, according to Nathan SESCO, commander of Post 3769.

"It's saving them money, because it's helping prevent wear and tear on the vehicles," SESCO said.

In 2015, Post members volunteered to build a deck for the National Home's Scout Cabin. After the job was done, SESCO asked National Home Facility Director Todd Marriott how else the Post could help the home. SESCO said Marriott told him the National Home needed a carport.

"This has been a much needed and greatly appre-

ciated gift from these fine people," Marriott said.

The seven-stall carport serves as a shelter for the National Home's vehicles. VFW Department of Kentucky Commander Hames Curry and Kentucky's District 14 helped raise funds for the project. VFW's then-Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy and the Auxiliary's then-national President Colette Bishop also donated funds to the project.

SESCO is an Army veteran who served in Bosnia and with the 448th Engineer Battalion of the Puerto Rico National Guard in the Iraq War in 2004. He said he and his Post wanted to help the National Home because it has a "big impact" on VFW members.

"Residents that need to borrow one of the Home's vehicles, do not have to deal with the elements of the weather," Marriott said. "Being able to provide the families that we serve with a vehicle can play a very important piece to their overall goal achievement... [T]he ability to have safe vehicles for them to use in their time of need may be the difference between them getting to work or school."

SESCO said the majority of Post 3769 is Post-9/11 veterans, and that the Post is representative of what VFW will be in the future.

"We strictly work on community service projects," he said. "We want to take care of veterans and their families that are living." **Email:** dspiva@vfw.org



VFW Post 3769 members, Post Commander Nathan SESCO's family and a contractor pose in front of the completed carport at the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Mich. The seven-vehicle carport was built after several donations from businesses and VFW units at all levels of the organization.



Members of VFW Post 3769 in Pikeville, Ky., and contractors build the roof of the VFW National Home for Children's new carport in June. The carport will help extend the life of the National Home's fleet vehicles during the summer and winter months in Michigan. PHOTOS COURTESY OF VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN



VFW
NATIONAL HOME
FOR CHILDREN

Established in 1925, the VFW National Home for Children's mission is to provide children and families of active-duty military, war veterans and descendants of the VFW and its Auxiliary, opportunities for growth and development in a nurturing community. By doing so, the home serves as a living memorial to all veterans.

When the home first began, it was a place where the families left behind by war could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman didn't come home.

Today's families face different challenges — reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment and rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, among others — and the National Home has evolved over its decades-long history to meet those changing needs.

For more information on the VFW National Home for Children, call 1-866-483-9642; email info@vfwnationalhome.org or write 3573 S. Waverly Rd., Eaton Rapids, MI 48827.





VFW Buddy Poppy Sparks Conversation

Neil Moore, commander of Post 430 speaks about the VFW Buddy Poppy in May to a group of children at United Store in Amarillo, Texas. Moore said he was at the grocery store with Post 430 Quartermaster Verlene Dickson distributing poppies, when a group formed around him.

He told the history of the poppy as it pertains to VFW and how VFW's poppy program helps veterans. He said his wife, who is British, had an uncle who was in Belgium's Flanders Field of poppies during WWI. So he infused a bit of his own personal story into his impromptu speech.

Moore added that he and others from the Post, which is located in Canyon, endeavor to make sure every school in town gets poppies. He also speaks at area schools.

"I can't take credit for what we do," he said. "I have a great group of people. We don't sell alcohol at our Post, so we are a family-oriented Post."

PHOTO BY VERLENE DICKSON

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2017

CHECKPOINT

VFW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS • PUBLICATIONS
406 WEST 34TH STREET, KANSAS CITY, MO 64111

Posts with the Most

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS OR MORE AS OF OCT. 20, 2017

Rank	Post No.	Location	Members	Rank No.	Location	Members	Rank No.	Location	Members
1	1503	Dale City, VA.....	2,861	11	76 San Antonio, TX.....	1,588	28	9399 Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,176
2	27	Wiesbaden, Germany.....	2,621	12	7968 Apache Junction, AZ.....	1,560	29	56 Leavenworth, KS.....	1,159
3	1114	Evansville, IN.....	2,175	13	10047 North Las Vegas, NV.....	1,445	29	2111 Chula Vista, CA.....	1,159
4	9972	Sierra Vista, AZ.....	2,162	14	6506 Rosedale, MD.....	1,444	31	549 Tucson, AZ.....	1,152
5	392	Virginia Beach, VA.....	1,996	15	4647 North Highlands, CA.....	1,416	32	1512 Lemon Grove, CA.....	1,120
6	8862	Vicenza, Italy.....	1,907	16	63 Boise, ID.....	1,368	33	3282 Port Orange, FL.....	1,105
7	10692	Grafenwoehr, Germany.....	1,829	17	4809 Norfolk, VA.....	1,366	34	2503 Omaha, NE.....	1,098
8	4709	Conroe, TX.....	1,807	18	9342 Ansbach, Germany.....	1,357	35	972 Terre Haute, IN.....	1,093
9	9785	Eagle River, AK.....	1,742	19	628 Sioux Falls, SD.....	1,343	36	7686 Alamogordo, NM.....	1,089
10	2485	Angeles City, Philippines.....	1,672	20	2391 Saint Augustine, FL.....	1,335	37	10281 Radcliff, KY.....	1,075
				21	7234 Ocean View, DE.....	1,328	37	1170 Middletown, KY.....	1,075
				22	6873 Abilene, TX.....	1,261	39	7564 West Fargo, ND.....	1,063
				23	4372 Odessa, TX.....	1,245	40	969 Tacoma, WA.....	1,035
				24	10097 Fort Myers Beach, FL.....	1,244	41	2866 Saint Charles, MO.....	1,029
				25	10216 Songtan-Si, Korea.....	1,218	42	1273 Rapid City, SD.....	1,027
				26	1146 St Clair Shores, MI.....	1,209	43	1326 Bismarck, ND.....	1,025
				27	8951 West York, PA.....	1,194	44	10436 Kitzingen, Germany.....	1,003

Philippines Post Donates to Orphans

Members of Post 2485 in Angeles City, Philippines, present Sister Alessandria Casas and orphans at Duyan Ni Maria Children's Home with \$5,000 last December.

The orphanage has taken in children since 1988. When Post members visited the home last year, they found it to be in need of maintenance. The donation is being put toward construction of a new home located on land donated by a priest in Mabalacat City near Clark Air Base, according to Post Senior Vice Commander John Gilbert.

Some \$85,000 has been raised for the orphanage, which will house up to 60 children. The 86-year-old Casas herself became an orphan when her mom died from tetanus and her father was killed after giving food to prisoners of war during WWII.

An American volunteer at the orphanage, Sherist Rodriguez, said most children at the orphanage have no contact with their families. She added that parents leave children at Duyan Ni Maria (Cradle of Maria) because they feel their children will be better off.

PHOTO COURTESY OF POST 2485

