

ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

Meetings: 7:00 PM 1st Weds. Of Each Month – Wheeling AMVETS Post #66



Website – vfwpost981.org

FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

COMMANDER

We are well into our summer events but before we discuss those I would like to give you a recap of the ending year relative to VFW timetable.

Smokey (Mike Smogor) will provide more details in his message. But I want to extend to Smokey a congratulations for a job well done. We ended up over 96% actual numbers in terms of recruiting and retention. As a result of his efforts Smokey was awarded a certificate of accomplishment by National VFW Commander Herman.

Congratulations Smokey!

Henry Mueller our Poppy's Chairman guided us to over \$5,000 on Poppy Days. Excellent job Henry! Roger Santagato and Pat Hickey and Smokey, with some help from other comrades, continue to bring in more contributions for our veterans with Farmers Markets around the area. Well done Comrades! We have also had Taste of Arlington which was a very successful fundraiser for our veterans. The Color Guard has been very busy and I will touch on that in my Color Guard message.

We had five delegates attend the state convention. Bob Wisniewski, Smokey, Pat Hickey, Mike Kolbuk and myself. We were honored and privileged to contribute \$1,000 to the National Home for the many needs they have. We can only do this by doing events and contributions so thank you comrades for all your support. We were also very honored to have our very own Mike Kolbuk place second in the state for his outstanding newsletters he does for the post. The winner of Mike's category also won national so that will tell you just how good a job Mike does.

Congratulations Mike so very well deserved! History for VFW Illinois occurred in elected

offices at the state convention as well.. For the first time in Illinois VFW history we now have a veteran female in a State Department Officer position. In two years she will have an excellent opportunity to be our first female State Department Commander. She is also a Desert Storm Veteran. This is truly the beginning of the changing of the guard in our organization. As I mentioned before, females now the largest % of returning service personnel from the Persian Gulf War and the War on Global Terrorism. Please read the articles in the VFW magazines for the past few months to get more details about this if you wish to know more. You will notice at all our recruiting events we have woman veteran caps for all the branches. It is time to focus our efforts on these new veterans. Matt Voss our Service Officer will be taking a step towards that by working with the 4th district and the Director of Student Veterans Association to develop a networking event. We also presented \$1,500 to Fox Lake American Legion 703/Auxiliary for their continued efforts for veterans with the events they hold for veterans in the summer. If you have never that you make time to participate in this worthwhile event.

This is a message to all comrades of this outstanding post. We do a lot of very important activities for our veterans. It takes a lot of work and I truly appreciate the efforts of our comrades who have helped. That however is our biggest concern. We need more of you to step up and help when you can. I understand things come up and believe me family and always comes first. My concern is if we do not have more of us helping out, our comrades who work these events are the same guys over and over. They will burn out and then we have no one.

Smokey is continuously asking for more help. All I am asking is if you find can two hours out of your busy schedule to help when the call goes out, please try if you can and help out. It will be greatly appreciated and the events are very rewarding and beneficial to work. At the very least, I appreciate you considering to help where you can. This is just another reason why we need to put more effort into recruiting younger veterans. None of us are getting any younger and we need younger veterans to keep not only VFW Post 981 but VFW as a whole and other organizations like American Legion and AMVETS in existence. This is reality and not too many years away. Again thank you all for an outstanding year of serving our veterans.

Yours in service,

Steve MacInnes

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER

Comrades,

Since the VFW National is currently in its "hiatus" mode regarding membership stats (until October), there is nothing new to report on that front. The National VFW still lists us as 99.5%, which is EXCELLENT! These numbers will change when the VFW gets done updating the membership rolls in October. Currently, we have 192 Life Members and 27 Continuous Members, for a total of 219 members in good standing. Of our Continuous Members, all are current with their dues except four. I'm working on those four! Thankfully, at this writing, we have not lost any additional members. I'd like to take a moment to especially thank three of our members for their contributions to our Post. Mike Kolbuk, our Junior Vice Commander, for all his unsung efforts: planning and coordinating our social events. Also for his efficient planning and coordination of the meals after our Post meetings - that food doesn't appear by magic, Comrades. And last but not least, his production and distribution of our award winning newsletter, and his maintenance of our Post website. Thanks Mike!

Roger Santagato (our Quartermaster) and Pat "The Hatman" Hickey (one of our Trustees). They are at every Post recruitment event, hauling equipment from storage, setting up the tables and hat displays, and, most importantly, staffing these events. On top of all that, Roger performs his unsung Quartermaster duties, keeping the books, writing the checks, creating and maintaining our Post budget. And Pat's efforts helping out the Fox Lake Legion Post with the Lovell Veteran's events go largely unmentioned, but always appreciated. Roger's work collecting and distributing toiletries twice a year for the veterans at Lovell goes above and beyond. I could go on and on. We couldn't do what we do without these two guys. Thank you Roger and Pat!

We are currently in our "busy season" again. Parades, Color Guard activities, and recruitment booths. Check out our Post Events Calendar for upcoming recruitment events. As always, we can use your help staffing these events. Remember that we **still** offer a **50% discount** on Life Memberships, and, due to a generous anonymous donor, we are **still** offering **FREE** annual memberships in 2018-2019 to the next six veterans we enlist. Again, if anyone needs Post 981 business cards to assist with recruiting, please let me know. Those who are *always* there.

Smokey

JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER

The annual Post **Holiday Party** will be held at the AMVETS lower level on Saturday, **December 15** beginning at 5:30 PM. Open bar throughout, appetizers until 6:30 PM, a gourmet meal including dessert, and fellowship always. All for the ridiculous low price of \$10 each per Post member and a guest. See what \$10 gets you at your favorite restaurant. Flyer is inside the newsletter. See you there.

Mike Kolbuk

UPCOMING POST EVENTS

- District 4 Meeting, AMVETS Post 66 – Sunday (10/7) 2:00 PM. We are hosting.
- VOD/PP Deadline – Thursday (11/1)
- Post Meeting – Wednesday (11/7)
- Buffalo Grove Veterans Day Observance – Saturday (11/10) BG High School,
- Veteran’s Day Observance and Lunch, AMVETS Post 66 – Sunday (11/11)
- Post Meeting – Wednesday (12/5)
- Post Holiday Party, AMVETS Post 66 – Saturday (12/15) 5:30 PM
- Post Meeting – Wednesday (1/02/2019)

TAPS



The members of Arlington Post 981, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, pay their last tribute of respect to our departed comrades.

The following comrades passed away, or we have been notified of their passing, since the last newsletter came out:

Melville Ingram

Richard Johnson

Joseph Kathrein

Brian Neilson

Special recognition is also awarded Senator John McCain.

As brave men and women they marched away with abiding faith in their God, their country, and their flag.

As soon as is possible we request that family members **notify the Post via telephone** (listed on our website) if a comrade has passed away. Too many times we must rely on seeing an obituary in the newspaper which leaves little or no time for members to pay their final respects. If a family in the Arlington Heights area wishes a 21-gun salute, they should contact American Legion Post 208 in Arlington Heights (847-253-6632).

Quilts of Valor Foundation

Contributed by Mike Smogor

“The mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.”

The Quilts of Valor Foundation began in 2003 with a dream, literally a dream. Founder Catherine Roberts’ son Nat was deployed in Iraq. She had a dream that a young soldier, full of despair, was comforted by a quilt.

The first Quilt of Valor was awarded in November 2003 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to a young soldier from Minnesota who had lost his leg in Iraq. Since then, over 188,000 quilts have been awarded. All quilts are handmade and no two quilts are alike.

Locally: There are ten Quilts of Valor sites in Illinois. I worked directly with the Land of Lincoln Quilts of Valor – Aurora, IL. Many thanks to Rita Pennington!

I was nominated for a Quilt of Valor by one of my daughters and received it in July, 2017. I was fortunate enough to have all three of my daughters

and my three grandchildren in town for the event. It was a total surprise.

Since I have a Quilt of Valor, I'm entitled to nominate and present Quilts of Valor.

On June 27 at our Staff meeting I honored one of our own with a Quilt of Valor.

Dale Berg

It is tradition that the recipient be wrapped in the quilt, and pictures were sent to Rita Pennington at the Land of Lincoln Quilts of Valor.

Please join us in congratulating Dale on his Quilt of Valor!



Long-Time Member George Rezner

Our newsletter received a note from George Rezner and his wife Lois who reside in Cape Coral, Florida. George has been a member of our Post since 1945, and is a veteran of WWII.

George and Lois celebrated their 75th anniversary this year. They wrote that many of their earlier anniversaries were celebrated at our old VFW Hall in Arlington Heights. "What good memories from then," according to Lois.

George will be achieving another milestone in December as he will hit 100 years old. George is doing very well, with just the use of a walker to betray his advancing years.

As newsletter editor I am very happy that this publication continues to be appreciated by you, our Post members. I also encourage other long-time Post members who do not reside in the area to write or email us about your current circumstances and even include a picture.

Post Members Travel on August 2018 Honor Flight

Contributed by Mike Smogor

On August 23-26, Dale Berg and I had the privilege of going on the Veterans Network Committee (VNC) Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. with about 40 other Veterans, representing World War II through Afghanistan. This was truly a great experience. For four days and three nights, the Veterans were treated like royalty.

We visited 19 museums and monuments, including: Iwo Jima Marine Memorial, Navy Shipyard and Navy Museum, Navy Memorial, Air Force Memorial, World War II Memorial, The Vietnam Wall, the Korean War Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the USMC Museum at Quantico, VA, the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, the Women's Memorial Museum in Arlington, and the US Capitol. We had great accommodations at a Hilton hotel and ate very well!

We flew out Thursday morning from Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport, arriving at Baltimore/Washington Airport. Sunday morning we flew back out of Reagan National Airport to Milwaukee. From Milwaukee we had a motorcycle escort back to Moretti's in Bartlett, where we had a welcome back party. We were greeted by the Post 981 Honor Guard. Each Veteran was also presented a handmade Quilt of Valor from the Gazebo Quilters of Huntley, Illinois.

For any Veterans contemplating attending the Honor Flight, our recommendation is apply early and go! It's well worth it! All the information can be found at www.veteransnetworkcommitte.com. The folks that have been doing this for the past ten years, Randy and Patti Granath, can be contacted at VNChonorflight@aol.com. Post 981 currently donates money to help offset the cost of a caretaker, whether used by our members or someone else.



Voice of Democracy/ Patriot's Pen

The 2018-2019 VOD and PP season began in earnest on July 15 with the initial mailings. Seventeen local junior high schools and nineteen individual principals/educators were contacted for the Patriot's Pen competition.

Twelve local high schools and forty-six individual principals/educators/counselors/parents were contacted for the Voice of Democracy competition.

If you know of any junior high students (grades 6-8 - Patriot's Pen) or high school students (grades 9-12 - Voice of Democracy), please let them know about this program and/or have them contact Mike Smogor. This year's themes are **"Why My Vote Matters"** (VOD) and **"Why I Honor the American Flag"** (PP). The deadline for entries this year is October 31, 2018.

A Successful Outreach Summer

Since our last newsletter came out in July, Post 981 did 10 outreach days at various suburban fests (Taste of Arlington Heights and Buffalo Grove Days) and farmers markets in Arlington Heights, Palatine and Buffalo Grove.

Thanks to the hard work of various members who volunteered at the booths, especially Mike Smogor, Roger Santagato and Pat Hickey, the Post collected

donations, sold hats and made contact with dozens of potential recruits.

All the donation money will be added to our Poppy fund to help with the various veterans causes we support.

Sales of the hats benefit active duty veterans through Pat Hickey, who uses the profits from selling the hats to the Post to send packages to active duty soldiers. The Post's share of the profit will be saved to be used eventually for our 100th anniversary celebration in 2022.

Below is the booth at Buffalo Grove Farmers Market.

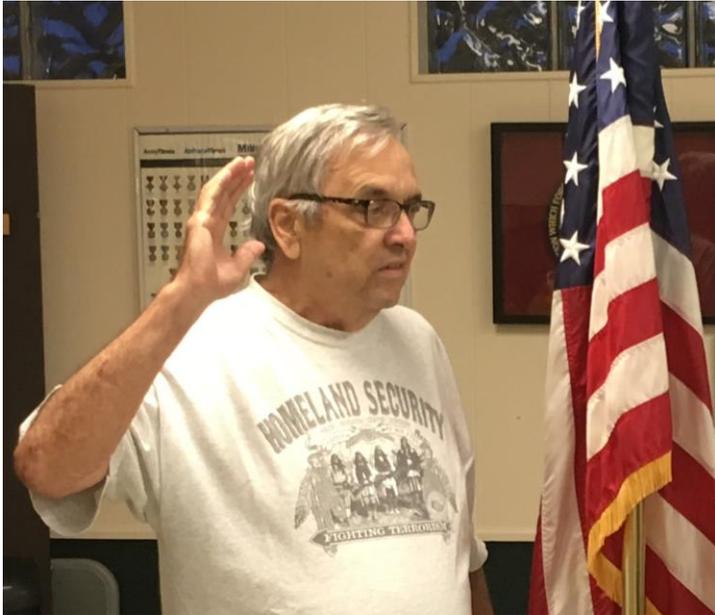


New Post Members

Larry Bielski joined our Post in July. He served in the Army during the Vietnam War, receiving a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He has been married 43 years and has 3 children and 3 grandchildren. He worked for United Airlines before retiring.



Bob Geho joined our Post in September. He was in the Army and served in Korea from 1968-1970. Bob is married, and his wife has 2 sons.



Everyone say hello to Larry and Bob as you encounter them at our meetings or outings.

Post Arlington Racetrack Outing September 2018

On Thursday, September 13 27 Post members and Guests gathered at Arlington International Race Track. The weather was a perfect 73 degrees, the sun was shining (though not on us as we were shaded in our box seats by the roof) and the track was dry.

Rather than having to go down for the Senior Citizen lunch to the lower level food court, we only had to walk into the enclosed section behind our seats for a lunch of chips, cookies, potato salad, soft drinks and a choice of one of assorted chicken dishes.

During the afternoon of racing the most successful bettors seemed to be those who took the safest show bets.



Post 981 Color Guard

The post color guard has very been busy this summer. We have marched in the Palatine Homefest Parade and The American Legion July 4th parade with Post 208 of Arlington Heights. At the July 4th parade were honored to have Governor Rauner take photos with us and thank us for our service. The last parade of the summer was Labor Day weekend at Buffalo Grove where we were joined by former Commander Mike McInerney.

In August the Color Guard had perhaps the most honored ceremony of the summer. We were part of the guard along with Navy Sea Cadets in welcoming home our veterans from the Honor Flight to Washington DC. Two members of our post Mike Smogor and Dale Berg were part of the Honor Flight. It was truly a great honor and privilege to welcome home these two comrades of our post as well as the 40 others who were on this journey.

We now have enough members of the guard to be able to give Final Salutes to our Comrades. The guard is also in the process of purchasing a bugle to be used at ceremonies and Final Salutes. If you would like to be a member of the Color Guard but are unable to march, we would love to have you and you can help us at special events and ceremonies. Please contact Steve MacInnes 815 687 6472 for more information.

Steve MacInnes

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 981

Invites you and your guests to join your comrades and their guests at a



Holiday Dinner Party

Saturday, December 15

1730 HOURS (5:30 P.M.) TO 2100 HOURS (9:00 P.M.)

WHEELING AMVETS POST 66

700 McHenry Rd, Wheeling, IL - **Lower Level Banquet Hall**

Cost is \$10 each per member and 1 guest. Additional guests - \$25 each

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM. Open bar and appetizers.

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM. Dinner (Beef or Chicken), Dessert, Coffee. Bar is open.

8:00 PM - 9:00 PM. Music and Open bar.

Send your reservations and checks (made out to **VFW Post 981**) to: Michael Kolbuk, 654 Briarwood Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090. Deadline for reservations - December 7.

Member _____ Guest _____

Amount enclosed (\$10/\$25 per person) \$ _____ # of Chicken _____ # of Beef _____



ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

C/O Mike Kolbuk

P.O. Box 825

Arlington Heights, IL 60006

TO: