Commanders Call....

Catch the Spirit

Woody Hippel

Our Post is exploding with a plethora of new and creative initiatives and activities, as well as many that are ongoing. This is a sign of a vibrant, relevant and committed Post that continues to head in a long-term, positive direction. To transform the creative ideas of our members into action, we need the committed support of all our members to contribute their talents.

Some of our newer members are already taking the challenge and have stepped up to greater serve our Veterans through their work in our Post initiatives. I’d like to mention a few.

To implement our many creative ideas toward continued Post growth and success, my vision is to see the heavy lifting better shared by our Post members; some who have only a minimal amount of time to commit. Believe me, any extra time that you can devote will get us that much closer in doing more for our Veterans and families. Regardless of your talents, we can definitely use them and invite you to share them for a rewarding cause. Everyone has a gift they can use for the greater good of others.

It’s refreshing to see the recent strives made by our Post members in major project areas for the benefit of Veterans. There is no question that over the past years, we’ve developed a reputation for active community and Veteran support, but when the question comes up, “What have you done for me lately?” we can honestly say... plenty!

Our Post members, in one new initiative, ventured into exciting territory to volunteer their talents at Shamrock Reins, a non-profit corporation formed in 2014 to provide equine assisted activities and therapies for Veterans, Active Duty and

Post 3258 Officers

Commander: Elwood Hippel
Sr. Vice Commander: Noel Pelletier
Jr. Vice Commander: Robert Collier
Quartermaster: Jim Dunn
Chaplin: Larry Duchnowski
Judge Advocate: Tom Redstreake
Surgeon: Bob Page
Trustees: (1st yr. of 3) Verne Keats
         (2nd yr. of 3) Thomas White
         (3rd yr. of 3) John Peyton
Adjutant: Larry Polgar
Service Officers: William Malone
                Anthony Callum

Post 3258 would like to welcome the following men to our ranks:

Joseph Mendez, U. S. Army, 74th Signal Company
Roland Clayton, U.S. Army Engineers

Congratulations men, you won’t find a better Post.

Welcome on Board!

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During our July meeting, Jim McComb, District 8 Commander, paid Post 3258 a special visit specifically to announced that our little, incredibly active, marvelously wonderful, amazingly professional little Post, for the second year running, has been chosen as an All-State Post. He then awarded Quartermaster Jim Dunn with the VFW All-State white cap for 2015. Jim was also given the Post’s 2015 Poppy citation for the ratio of poppies ordered per Post membership during the past year. This is a tremendous accomplishment for any Post, however Post 3258 has consistently proven itself worthy of the award through its many community and Veterans based activities. We may not have a home, but we have one hell of a foundation! Our members, through the guidance of our officers, have without a doubt left their mark through the many worthwhile activities we accomplish each year.

In addition to the presentation of the All State cap to our commander and Quartermaster, Jim Ritchie, District 8’s Inspector and State Chief of Staff, complemented the Post for its achievements and reporting efficiency. When asked about his future plans in the coming year, Jim said he plans to run for Dept. of State Jr. Vice for 2016-2017. We wish him well and know he will represent our District well.

Thinking about filing a VA Claim?

The claims process in the VA is typically thought of as a daunting process. It is, and can be made even more difficult without a proper road map. Let’s face it, the VA isn’t the most efficient organization going. It’s a government run organization, which should say enough right there. Had it been a private business, it would be run a whole lot more efficient. Hell, with all the troubles the VA has had, only one person, yup, you saw that correct, one person, has been fired. The rest? Hmmm? Transferred? Promoted? Certainly not fired as they should have been. That being said, negotiating the bureaucratic red tape can be a daunting task. Below are several steps that should make this process a little more manageable.

First of all - one needs to know that the process of filing a claim is 100% free. There is, nor will there ever be, a charge for this service. If anyone is telling you there's a cost involved - run away as fast as you can!

Secondly - one need not be a member of the VFW, or any service organization, such as the American Legion, Am Vets, Viet Nam Vets of America, MOPH etc in order to file a claim. Each organization has service officers connected to it whose sole duty is to assist Veterans in navigating these waters. We do it because we want to see our fellow Veterans get the care and compensation they earned. A claim is not an award. It is not a free entitlement from the government, such as some have come to depend upon. Veterans bought and paid for these services through their hard work, blood, sweat and tears. It has been earned. If you have a medical issue, you need to file for what is yours.
If you are considering filing a claim, one of the first things you should do is to contact your VFW Service Officer. Chalfont VFW Post 3258 has two: Anthony Callum and Bill Malone. Either of these men will be more than happy to assist you in navigating the VA paperwork.

If you'd like to get a head start and begin filling out the paperwork yourself (which you will need to do anyway). The following forms are required:

- [http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-22-ARE.pdf](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-22-ARE.pdf) This is the Power of Attorney form allowing the VFW to represent you for the claims submission. In order for the VFW, or any organization, to process your paperwork, you will need this form. It must be submitted with the initial claim if you are going through a service organization.
- [http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf) This is the actual claim form. You only need to fill in those areas pertaining to your claim. The instructions are pretty informative but in the case of doubt, your Service Officer can guide you.
- [http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf) This authorizes the VA to access your medical records from the doctors you listed in the above forms. **One copy of this form is required for every doctor or medical establishment listed in the above forms.**
- [http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0781-ARE.pdf](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0781-ARE.pdf) If you are requesting a PTSD diagnosis, this form must be submitted along with the above paperwork.
- In addition you will need a copy of your DD214 submitted with the claim.
- If you are married, a copy of the marriage certificate (this will increase the amount of the award and it’s always easier to have it supplied with the initial claim as it speeds everything up). By the same token, if you are divorced, then a copy of the divorce papers are needed as well.
- If you have children under the age of 18, supply birth certificates for each child. Again it’s the same as the marriage certificate and speeds things up.
- You will also need a blank check, with VOID written across the face of it so they can have your account number and routing information – for when they deposit the money.

The entire process can take upwards of 14 months currently, however the claim, if awarded, is retroactive to the date the initial paperwork was submitted to the VA. Consequently, it behooves one to get the initial forms in quickly and if there is any supporting information subsequently required, that can be done at a later date. In the past, a claim could be submitted on virtually any paperwork, which put the VA on notice, then an official form submitted subsequent to that time. Now, the VA requires the official forms right out of the gate. In my opinion, just another way to slow down the process, but there is no excuse since the forms are available either on line or from your service officers. Do it right the first time and the process is greatly speeded up.

Should you have any questions, please contact either of our Service Officers at our email listed on our home page, and we will be more than happy to assist you.
**We Remember Paul Krapf**

Paul, who passed away on July 24, 2015, was Chaplain and friend to all in our Post. On July 28th, Chalfont Post 3258 members provided our respects, tribute and a final salute to Paul as part of his Memorial Service. It was apparent to anyone who knew Paul, that his character and strong values were reflected in the way he lived his life. He had a deep love for his God, family and Country.

Paul served on active duty in the US Army between 1952 and 1954 as part of the Army of Occupation Force in Germany, and was also assigned to duty in France. Paul was part of an Engineering Supply Company and was responsible to route material to various destinations.

While on active duty, he also participated in all types of sports, to include Baseball, Football, Golf and Bowling, and played on several championship teams. Paul later shared with us that he had fun in the service because he was doing things he liked to do.

After transferring to the US Army Reserve to complete his final six year commitment, Paul was honorably discharged at the rank of Corporal in 1960. On August 2, 1958, Paul and the former Gloria Benner were married, after being introduced at the Warrington Skating Rink. Paul and Gloria, have lived in Chalfont since 1965 and were blessed with 4 children and now have 11 Grandchildren and 12 Great Grand Children.

Paul and Gloria are each known for their strong work ethic. Paul has worked a variety of jobs, ultimately retiring from the Carbonite Corporation after completing 39 years of service with them. Since 1980, Gloria was employed in the pharmacy department at Doylestown Hospital where she continues to work. Paul also enjoyed serving as the VP of Entertainment for the Golden Agers, at the Chalfont United Methodist Church.

Paul joined our Post in 2006 and served well as our devoted Chaplain and spiritual leader. He took this very seriously, which was borne out by the level of care and dedication he put into his Post Chaplaincy.

A comrade to all, Paul was loved and well respected by Post members, who counted on him for his prayers and spiritual guidance.

Paul was a patriot who deeply loved his family, was fiercely proud of our country, his service in the Army and his membership in Chalfont VFW Post 3258.

Paul will be deeply missed and always remembered by those in our Post and the community who knew him.

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The Warrington Youth Baseball League hosted the 2015 Cal Ripken Mid-Atlantic Regional Tournament, which consists of 10 teams from PA, NJ and Delaware. Mike Bukowski, Official of Warrington Youth Baseball Association, mentioned that our VFW color guard was a great way to remind the boys about the important sacrifices made by veterans and to teach them reverence for the American Flag during the playing of Star Spangled Banner. The Color Guard really looked professional, and received many accolades from the parents and program staff.

Post members Woody Hippel, Bob Collier., Larry Polgar, Noel Pelletier and Lou Vitola, representing our Post.
Ever wonder where the VFW Cross of Malta Award came from?

History shows that the Cross of Malta, or the Maltese Cross (in Italy also known as the Amalfi cross), is the cross symbol associated with the Knights Hospitaller (the Knights of Malta), also the emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, is over 1,000 years old.

To appreciate fully the original meaning of the Cross of Malta we must look back to the Crusaders serving in the Middle East. There we find the Knights of Saint John, the world’s first great brotherhood of warriors pledged to chivalry. The Knights of Saint John represented all walks of life. They were noblemen, priests, artisans, and laborers. Regardless of those differences, however, they were united by a solemn pledge of unwavering courage and compassion. Together they fought against oppression. The knights carried their crusades far from home across deserts and seas, into the Holy Land, Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. At the same time they administered to the sick, the needy and to the poor. The Crusaders adopted the Cross of Malta as their insignia because its eight points represented the eight Beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. Those, in effect, declared

(1) blessed are the poor in spirit;
(2) the meek;
(3) the pure;
(4) the merciful; and
(5) the peacemakers;
(6) blessed are they that mourn, and
(7) seek righteousness, and
(8) blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

The Cross of Malta had a religious origin but the Knights of St. John also made it their battle standard for the liberation of all men, women and children who suffered oppression. The ideals for which the original Crusaders fought parallel the principles of democracy today, freedom and justice.

So with its roots going back nearly ten centuries ago, the Maltese Cross was made the symbol of fighting men who were united by a solemn pledge of comradeship to fight for freedom and to aid the sick and the needy. This original monastic hospitaler order was founded following the First Crusade (The First Crusade (1096–1099) was the first of a number of crusades that attempted to capture the Holy Lands, called by Pope Urban II in 1095. It started as a widespread pilgrimage in western christendom and ended as a military expedition by Roman Catholic Europe to regain the Holy Lands taken in the Muslim conquests of the Levant (632–661), ultimately resulting in the recapture of Jerusalem in 1099. It was launched on 27 November 1095 by Pope Urban II with the primary goal of responding to an appeal from Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, who requested that western volunteers come to his aid and help to repel the invading Seljuk Turks from Anatolia. An additional goal soon became the principal objective—the Christian reconquest of the sacred city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the freeing of the Eastern Christians from Muslim rule.) by the Blessed Gerard, whose role as founder was confirmed by a Papal bull of Pope Paschal II in 1113. (Eventually, Pope Clement V dissolved the Hospitaller's rival order, the Knights Templar, in 1312 with a series of papal bulls, including the Ad providam bull, which turned over much of their property to the Hospitallers.)

Initially the group cared for pilgrims in Jerusalem, but the order soon extended to providing pilgrims with an armed escort, which soon grew into a substantial force. Thus the Order of St. John (the Order of Saint John (Der Johanniterorden), is the German Protestant branch of the Knights Hospitaller, the oldest surviving chivalric order, which generally is considered to have been founded in Jerusalem in the year AD 1099.) imperceptibly became military without losing its eleemosynary character. (Eleemosynary is an adjective that describes things that are related to charitable giving, especially when you're talking about assistance to the poor.) The Hospitallers and the Knights Templar
became the most formidable military orders in the Holy Land. Frederick Barbarossa, the Holy Roman Emperor, pledged his protection to the Knights in a charter of privileges granted in 1185.

The statutes of Roger de Moulins (1187) deal only with the service of the sick; the first mention of military service is in the statutes of the ninth grand master, Afonso of Portugal (about 1200). In the latter a marked distinction is made between secular knights, externs to the order, who served only for a time, and the professed knights, attached to the order by a perpetual vow, and who alone enjoyed the same spiritual privileges as the other religious. The order numbered three distinct classes of membership: the military brothers, the brothers infirmarians, and the brothers chaplains, to whom was entrusted the divine service.

Those ancient obligations are still symbolized by the Cross of Malta today for two million former servicemen who are the VFW.

The order came to distinguish itself in battle with the Muslims, its soldiers wearing a black surcoat with a white cross. In 1248 Pope Innocent IV (1243–54) approved a standard military dress for the Hospitallers to be worn in battle. Instead of a closed cape over their armour (which restricted their movements), they should wear a red surcoat with a white cross emblazoned on it.

The Cross of Malta is the symbol of their battles in time of war and of their campaign to defend the God-given rights of human beings in time of peace. The Cross of Malta symbolizes the compassion, or sympathy, of those men and women for the needy. It is the sign of services, which our contemporary veterans render to help make living better for everyone.

Upon joining the VFW, a person vows in the presence of Almighty God and the members of this order to maintain loyalty to the government, to the VFW and to his fellow comrades. When the Cross of Malta is bestowed upon a new VFW member, he or she is pledged to advance the principles of the organization. The VFW is also joined by our Ladies Auxiliary in our efforts.

Together, the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary foster true patriotism and strengthen the institutions of freedom by word and deed. They improve their cities, towns and neighborhoods through community service. They give aid to worthy comrades and to the widows and orphans. They extend helping hands to the needy and the sick.

The Cross of Malta symbolizes truly the character and objectives of the VFW of the United States. People qualified through military service to wear the VFW Cross of Malta do so with pride because that emblem represents the highest of ideals.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maltese_cross
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_Hospitaller
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Crusade

Joseph Mendez, our latest Post member (taking the VFW oath as shown on the left), is already making a splash within our Post. Joe has teamed up with Noel Pelletier on our Shamrock Reins project. Joe and Noel are designing the pens to be used at Shamrock Reins, the Equine Therapy Facility in Pipersville. The two of them are coming up with a working set of plans to be used in the construction. Additionally, they are also trying to secure donations of material to help mitigate the final cost. Their efforts will prove to be beneficial to countless Veterans and their families as they access the facilities and therapeutic programs on their journey to recovery.

Pilot: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.  Response: Almost replaced left inside main tire.
Pilot: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.  Response: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.
Pilot: Dead bugs on windshield.  Response: Live bugs on back-order.
Pilot: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.  Response: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.
LOCAL BOY DOES GOOD!

Brian Hippel will be PCS’g from JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Anchorage to Patrick AFB, Florida and setting up a cyber-capabilities squadron, part of the Mission Support Directorate, in AFTAC. Brian is really excited about his new assignment and will be getting on the road for the 4000 mile trek to Florida on the 14th of August.

Brian mentioned, in a nutshell, that the AFTAC provides national authorities quality technical measurements to monitor nuclear treaty compliance and develops advanced proliferation monitoring technologies to preserve our nation’s security. It is the sole organization in the federal government whose mission is to detect and report technical data from foreign nuclear explosions. Consisting of more than 3,600 sensors worldwide, AFTAC operates and maintains a global network of nuclear event detection equipment called the U.S. Atomic Energy Detection Systems (USAEDS), the largest sensor network in the U.S. Air Force. Once a disturbance is detected underground, underwater, in the atmosphere or in space, the event is analyzed for nuclear identification, and the findings are reported to national command authorities. AFTAC is a surveillance organization subordinate to 25th Air Force, an Air Combat Command Numbered Air Force located at Lackland AFB, Texas.

24 Years Later, Persian Gulf War Veterans Are Not Forgotten

This past April 11th marked the anniversary of the official cease fire of the Persian Gulf War. The public’s memory fades as years pass, and our speedy victory in Kuwait is often forgotten or shadowed by other conflicts. However, the VFW remembers, honors and salutes the Gulf War veterans who fought and selflessly sacrificed to liberate a nation occupied by Saddam Hussein’s evil tyrannical forces.

Our Gulf War veterans are remembered for not only liberating a country, but for reigniting the American spirit. For the first time, live broadcasts from war were cast into America’s homes and the American people were able to witness our nation’s heroes doing what they do best.

An excellent example of U.S. military prowess, the Gulf War was a model operation. Though it lasted only a short time, each of its veterans helped achieve something meaningful. With nearly 700,000 servicemen and women serving in the Kuwait theater leading up to and during the Gulf War, our victory did not come without great cost. The war left 467 wounded and 374 service men and women paid the ultimate price.

The VFW remains dedicated to honoring all Gulf War veterans. They accomplished their objectives without fail and barring no setbacks, shaping a truly historic event in American history. Today, and every day, we thank them for their service.

Myth: Common belief is that most Vietnam veterans were drafted.
Fact: 2/3 of the men who served in Vietnam were volunteers. 2/3 of the men who served in World War II were drafted. Approximately 70% of those killed in Vietnam were volunteers

Myth: Common belief is that the war was fought largely by the poor and uneducated.
Fact: Servicemen who went to Vietnam from well-to-do areas had a slightly elevated risk of dying because they were more likely to be pilots or infantry officers. Vietnam Veterans were the best educated forces our nation had ever sent into combat. 79% had a high school education or better.
Reserve/guard personnel, First Responders, their families and families of Fallen Heroes. This 23-acre farm in Pipersville, Bucks County, has 18 horse stalls, riding arenas and much more. This facility requires a great deal of maintenance and without volunteers, the cost would be prohibitive. Shamrock has a great need for a variety of volunteers ranging in areas from administration, property maintenance, facility upgrade and horse grooming to mention a few. That’s where our new Post member, Joe Mendez, with his background in architecture hit the ground running. Joe teamed up with his former colleague, Noel Pelletier, who has a career’s worth of experience in trades and contacts with skilled contractors. They are working closely with Shamrock officials offering their years of expertise in the planning, construction coordination and potential upgrade of some needed improvements to the Shamrock facility. Through their donated talents, Noel and Joe are providing needed services free of charge that otherwise would have been cost prohibitive and require Shamrock to reduce services to Veterans and their families. Shamrock Officials are truly grateful for any and all help toward meeting their mission to serve Veterans. They would greatly appreciate additional volunteers. For more information about volunteering at Shamrock Reins, see Noel, Joe, Bill M., or any of our Post Officers.

The Chalfont Post Fund Raising Committee, comprised of Bill Malone, Noel Pelletier and Tom Redstreake, undertook another new and creative initiative recently. After conceptualizing and developing this program, our fund raising team canvassed and partnered with local businesses to place VFW Post donation boxes at various locations. The Committee’s efforts, since April, has proven to be an outstanding new source of revenue to serve Veterans and helps us get even more well known in, and supported by, the community. Even given the initial success, it’s clear we’ve just scratched the surface. But like most things, this program requires manpower and time. Practically, the placement of boxes, regular collection and accounting of proceeds is a necessary part of the committee’s work. This helps them determine which box locations generate the most revenue and should be kept and when donation boxes are not productive and need to be removed to a new location. The placement of collection boxes in our area and the work involved with its success is an ambitious effort that allows our Post greater flexibility to support and fund Veterans causes. For more information about the committee’s program, and how you can help, be sure to talk Bill, Noel or Tom.

Our Post Membership Committee consisting of Bob Collier, Lou Vitola, Jeff Dubrow and Larry Scott, has been recently formed and trained. Our Membership Committee team is available and eager to receive your contact information and leads referring qualified Veterans interested in joining our Post. The Membership Committee team will confirm new recruit eligibility and sign off on their applications for Post membership. They will also be a focal point for generating and recruiting new members. We are all ambassadors to our Post, but the Membership Committee is responsible for the assuring interested recruit applicants are eligible and all needed documentation has been obtained.

We, as Post members, also need to be actively engaged in telling others about the good things we do for our fellow Veterans. Use every opportunity to talk with your Veteran neighbors, friends, acquaintances or those you may meet to determine if they’re eligible and interested in joining our Post. It’s been my experience that many Veterans who wear hats, clothing, jackets, etc., showing military identification are proud of their service and receptive to hearing about the VFW. Strike up a conversation with them and if their interested and eligible obtain their contact information and get it over to our membership committee for follow through. Let’s continue to bring in and retain our Veterans.

Every Veteran needs to be a member of a military service organization. If you need more information about our Post or eligibility, one good source is our Post website, which received the VFW Department HQ First Place Communications Award for 2015, thanks to our website creator and maintainer, Mike St. John. While (Continued on Page 9)
In the military, the prevailing wisdom is “Never Volunteer for anything”. I guess I never learned because I volunteer for everything! For the Army, for Airborne, for SF, for Nam, for classified projects. Whenever a volunteer was needed, I stepped up. Know what I learned? I learned that by volunteering, I made a difference. I got to work with some pretty incredible people who were also volunteers themselves. I came to know true satisfaction from doing a job which not many people wanted, and completing it to perfection. I came to realize I gained so much more by volunteering that I ever could by just sitting back and watching the world go by.

So why am I telling you this? Because we, Post 3258, need volunteers. We have several committees open where we could use some additional help. For instance:

- **Field Trips** – we need people to work with Bob C. on selecting, planning, coordinating field trips for the Post members and their families
- **Historians / Member interviewers** – this is a new committee we’d like to form, whereby a few members would interview other members using a set format of questions, then put those answers into a small article that we could publish either in the newsletter or on the web
- **Fund Raising** – one or two more in addition to the three core people
- **Membership** – one or two more in addition to our four core people
- **Website** – we need a couple of people to assist Mike in keeping the content up to date.

There are several more committees we’d also like to form, so if you think you could spare an hour or so each month, let us know and we’ll be more than happy to place you in a position where you can do the most good.

**Factoid** – Infantrymen in World War II averaged 10 days of combat in one year. Infantrymen in Viet Nam averaged 240 days of combat in one year.
Can anybody guess the mystery exterminator?

Our Color Guard at the Mid Atlantic Regional baseball tournament

4th of July Parade Marshal Fred Michel rides in his corvette.

Lou Vitola and Fred Michel enjoying our 5th of July party at Woody and Tammy's home.

Woody and his BFF display; Woody's autographed picture of he and Obama sharing some good times at the Post meeting.

The next time you see someone wearing camouflage, walk in to them to let them know it works! “Oops sorry, I didn’t see you....”
Joe Mendez joins our Post

After presenting Mike St. John with the State Award for Best Website, Woody shows off his Master Key to all the Philadelphia men’s rooms.

Larry Duchnowski presents Woody Hippel with the Master Key to all the men’s rooms in Philadelphia.

Roland Clayton, WWII Vet and Purple Heart recipient, being sworn in at New Seasons

The Spatolas awarded a certificate for their donations of pizza for Post meetings.

Jean Aloan, with Mayor Becker and Commander Hippel, presents Albert F. Wick’s WWII medals to the Post.

Pretzel Factory receives an award for their donations of pretzels for Post meetings.