



LOCAL VETS GO HUNGRY, HOMELESS TO SUPPORT HOMELESS VETS

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 23 of Lebanon PA will host the Ninth Annual Homeless Veterans Awareness Campaign in Lebanon beginning Friday, 12 November 2021 at 6:00 a.m. until 13 November 2021 at 2:00 p.m. Participants, including veterans from all branches of the armed forces, family members, friends, supporters of veteran's rights and local VFW members, will temporarily become homeless for 32 hours to raise awareness and financial support for homeless veterans and former service members in distress. Combat veterans who served in Vietnam, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom will be represented at the event.

Participants will have only the clothing on their back, a rucksack, a sleeping bag, a bottle of water and a small ration of food. They will rely on the kindness of strangers for meals, donations and support. Participants will be located at three encampments in Lebanon – Fisher's Veterans Park, 9th and Cumberland Street. COVID-19 social distancing and safety precautions will be observed.

Statistics from the 2017 U.S. Interagency Council indicates a dramatic reduction in the US homeless veteran's population. In 2010 homeless veterans were 74,087 and presently the amount has substantially fallen to 37,878. Additionally, the report indicate that PA veterans comprised 7% of the PA homeless population. Post-traumatic stress disorder, mental health, substance abuse and lack of support from family and community are the primary causes of homelessness among veterans. In addition, veterans struggle to translate skills obtained during their military career to civilian life and have difficulty obtaining employment. Initiatives to raise awareness about the plight of veterans have helped to reduce homelessness among veterans according to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans currently.

Campaign organizers hope this event will further raise awareness and monetary donations for veterans in need. Donations will support the VFW District 18 Homeless Veterans Program servicing veterans in Lebanon, Dauphin and Cumberland Counties and other local charities. The Fisher's Veterans Park donation point will be located on the west side of 9th Street (Route 72 North) and the east side of 10th Street (Route 72 South) closest to the rail trail crossing. The downtown Lebanon donation point will be located on the south side of Cumberland Street (Route 422 North) in front of the Farmer's Market sign. Donations for this campaign will be accepted at each location during daylight hours. Monetary check donations can also be sent to VFW Post 23 at 718 Chestnut Street, Lebanon, PA 17042 to the attention of Homeless Awareness Veterans Campaign (HVAC). Electronic donations can be made through PayPal.Me, Venmo or Cash App. **PayPal.Me** donations use <http://paypal.me/VFWPost23Homeless>, **Venmo** donations use [@HomelessVetAwareness](#) and **Cash App** donations use [\\$HomelessVetAwareness](#)

Follow us on Facebook at the Homeless Veterans' Awareness Campaign for campaign details and our donation records.

Each event encampment will also provide information to assist veterans in finding support services from the VFW, as well as the Veterans Administration. Social workers from the Lebanon Veterans Administration Medical Center will be present to provide assistance and information for veterans and their families at the 9th and Cumberland Street location.

If you would like more information please contact Bill Meiser, VFW Post 23 Campaign Chairman, at 717-443-0535 or by at email wmeiser@comcast.net.

Will you support VFW Post 23 in this worthwhile cause?