

**Volume 6, Issue 11**

**May 2025**



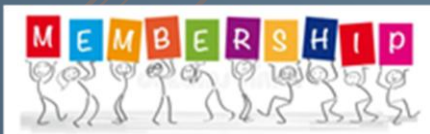
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Our Total For 2024-2025 – 841

Year-To-Date – 776

Percentage – 92.27 %

District 1 2024-2025 – 3444

Year-To-Date – 3066

Percentage – 89.02%



# ***THE DISPATCH***

***NEWS AND INFORMATION***



Memorial Day is more than a long weekend. It's more than backyard barbecues and the unofficial start of summer. On this day we pause. We remember. We reflect.

We remember the soldiers who never came home from the beaches of Normandy, the jungles of Vietnam, the deserts of Iraq, and the mountains of Afghanistan. We remember the sailors lost at sea, the airmen who never landed, and the marines who stood their ground no matter the cost.

Today, as we honor those who gave their lives in combat, we also pause to remember another group of heroes—those who served with honor and came home only to quietly fade away in the years that followed. They may not have fallen on the battlefield, but they carried the weight of war in their hearts and minds for the rest of their lives. They were our fathers and mothers, our uncles and aunts, our neighbors and friends. They lived with humility, rarely speaking of their service, but their sacrifice was no less real. On this Memorial Day, we remember them too—the veterans who marched on long after the guns fell silent, who built lives and families, who served their communities, and who eventually laid down their burdens in peace. Their courage, like that of their fallen brothers and sisters, must never be forgotten.

Each name etched on a memorial, each flag planted on a grave, each gold star presented to a grieving family—they remind us that freedom has a price. And that price was paid by heroes whose courage will never fade from our memory.

As veterans, as families, and as fellow Americans, we stand together on this Memorial Day—not only in sorrow but also in pride. Because those we lost believed in something greater than themselves. They believed in duty, in honor, and in the enduring promise of this great country.

Let us also not forget those still serving—around the world, far from home. And let us carry forward the legacy of our fallen by living lives worthy of their sacrifice. By teaching the next generation to value what it means to serve. And by supporting our fellow veterans and military families with action—not just words.

This Memorial Day, I invite you all to take a moment of silence, of reflection, of personal remembrance. Because while our heroes may be gone, they are never forgotten.



## **Commander Kevin Thurman Gives His Thoughts About The Post**

Can you believe how fast the year is cooking along! May is an important month with Armed Forces Day, end of WWII Celebration and Memorial Day. Each of these has HUGE significance to all Veterans and we will take a few moments each day to make sure these days are not forgotten.

May is also the month of VFW Service. Our project this year is to help "FILL THE PANTRY." We have a grocery basket in the front lobby for everyone to bring your dried and canned goods. We have already emptied it twice and we are now building boxes to deliver to the local food pantries to assist all families in need. We hope to be able to assist at least three of the local food pantries with hundreds of goods to assist in this important mission. Please continue to bring the items in for the whole month because these pantries need help all year long.

I want to thank everyone for coming out for our elections last month. We had one of our best showings for a meeting ever. I want to thank you all for giving me the honor to serve you all for one more year. Congratulations to James McMahon and Tim Pettigrew for stepping up to fill the Senior and Junior Vice positions. Steve and Ray have done an outstanding job over the years and are not going away but will continue to support the Post in many other different ways, as they have all along. I will have the whole list of appointed positions out in the next couple of weeks. Eddie Baker will also be retiring from the Post Service Officer position after 11 years of his dedication to helping Veterans. He has made a HUGE difference for hundreds of Veterans, and we all salute his OUTSTANDING job.

We are so close on our membership numbers. We need just 12 more to meet the goal of 102%. There are still 33 members that haven't renewed their annual memberships, so we ask you to please take care of that as soon as you can.

Lastly, I want to congratulate Betty Riker for being elected once again as the President of the Auxiliary. She has done an OUTSTANDING job over the past three years

and her continued service will make the Auxiliary shine. Their TEAM continues to make things happen and I couldn't be more proud of their great support.

Thanks to all of you for what you do in support of the Post and for Veterans. Our entire TEAM and membership make a difference in the local community, State, and nationally and I look forward to continuing these efforts for another year.



Fellow Cooties; you all continue to just blow the doors off of our support for Veterans. The State Grand called and wanted to congratulate and thank us for our great work. We need one new nit to hit our 100% goal and that would make us an ALL STAR Pup Tent. The hospital reports and aid to Veterans is just outstanding. Most of these reports come from things you all are doing on a regular basis. That is the true meaning of a Cootie.

We have some great events planned for the new year ahead and I can assure you that it will be a lousy time for all. I am quite sure that it will involve a lot of Cootie Milk. The incoming State Grand has asked us to once again host the Cootie School of Instruction which is always a fun time. More details to come. See you all at the next scratch! Hopefully we will have a new nit to initiate...which is always fun!

Remember we "keep 'em smilin  
in beds of white"!

Kevin Thurman  
Seam Squirrel

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Post has reached 100% membership for the Year!

We are at 848 members out of the 841 needed  
For 100%. That has us at 100.83%.

We need 10 more members to make 858. This  
Will give us 102.02 which we need for  
All-American/All-State.

### **Florida State Parks appreciate veterans year-round.**

To show our gratitude, the Florida Park Service offers both current and retired service members a 25% discount on annual entrance passes to Florida's state parks. Additionally, veterans who have service-related injuries receive a free lifetime military pass. Surviving spouses and parents of deceased veterans who fell in combat also receive a free lifetime military pass. This waives their entrance fees into Florida's state parks.

### **U.S. National Parks appreciate veterans year-round.**

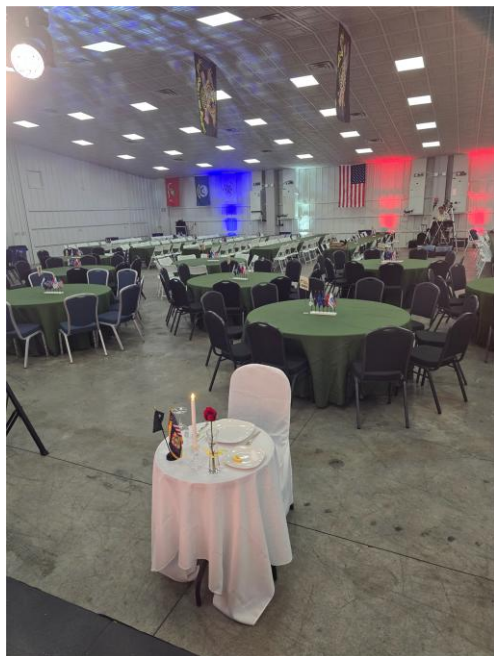
Current US military and dependents, Gold Star Families, and US military veterans are eligible to receive free annual, or lifetime passes that cover entrance or standard amenity (day-use) fees at national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other federal recreational lands.

# MAY 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 BINGO 5 -???? PM	2 MOC FISH FRY 5 – 7 PM BEACH BAR LOUIE 6:30 PM	3 POST INVENTORY 8:30 AM
4 BREAKFAST 8 – 11:30 AM	5	6 WINGS & THINGS 5 – 7 PM QUEEN OF HEARTS 6:00 PM	7	8 BINGO 5 -???? PM	9 COUNTRY FRIED STEAK 5 – 7 PM THE “WRECKING CREW” 6:30 PM	10 KATRINA 6:30 PM
11 BREAKFAST 8 – 11:30 AM MOTHER’S DAY	12 MOC SCRATCH 6:01 PM	13 WINGS & THINGS 5 – 7 PM QUEEN OF HEARTS 6:00 PM	14 HOUSE COMMITTEE 6:00 PM OLD-TIMERS 5 -???? PM	15 BINGO 5 -???? PM	16 STEAK NIGHT 5 – 7 PM DONNIE WEITZ 6:30 PM	17 ARMED FORCES DAY KATRINA 6:30 PM
18 BREAKFAST 8 – 11:30 AM	19 POST MEETING 6:30	20 QUEEN OF HEARTS 6:00 PM	21	22 BINGO 5 -???? PM	23 SPAGHETTI & MEATBALLS 5 – 7 PM KARAOKE WITH KATRAINA 6:30 PM	24
25 BREAKFAST 8 – 11:30 AM BAKE SALE	26 MEMORIAL DAY	27 QUEEN OF HEARTS 6:00 PM	28	29 BINGO 5 -???? PM	30 PORK CHOPS 5 – 7 PM BOBBY “D” 6:30 PM	31
SUNDAY POOL 2 PM		TUESDAY CRIBBAGE 6 PM	TUESDAY QUEEN OF HEARTS DRAWING 6 PM	THURSDAY MINDFUL YOGA 9:30 AM		CANTEEN HOURS M-F 12 -10 PM Sat: 10 AM – 10 PM Sun: 8 AM – 10 PM





## POW/MIA TABLE VIETNAM VETERANS HEROES' TRIBUTE BANQUET

VFW Post 7674 was honored to be asked by the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce to provide the POW/MIA table for their Welcome Home Tribute Banquet at the Okaloosa County Fair Grounds.

The event had approximately 960 attendees. [Rocky Bleier](#), a four-time Super Bowl Champion with the Pittsburgh Steelers and a decorated Vietnam Veteran, was one of the guest speakers, along with, [Dale Dye](#), renowned actor, author, and military film consultant.

The featured speaker for the evening was [Col. Ed Hubbard](#). Col. Hubbard began flying combat missions as an EB-66C Navigator with the 41st Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron flying out of Takhli Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, in June 1966, and he was forced to eject over North Vietnam on his 26th combat mission on July 20, 1966, and was immediately captured and taken as a Prisoner of War. After spending 2,420 days in captivity, Capt. Hubbard was released during Operation Homecoming on March 4, 1973.



The 14th Annual Relay for Life Poker Tournament, help at Our Post, was a resounding success, bringing together the Community members for a night of fun and fundraising in support of cancer research.

Held in a spirited and supportive atmosphere, the event raised approximately \$6,500, all of which will go toward advancing the fight against cancer. Participants showed incredible generosity, with local players, sponsors, and volunteers contributing to the cause.

This long-standing tradition continues to honor survivors, remember loved ones lost, and fund life-saving research through the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life initiative.



## VFW AUXILIARY

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

### 2025-2026 OFFICERS

President Betty Riker  
Sr Vice Lois Garrett  
Jr Vice June Scroggin  
Treasurer Steve Gouthro  
Chaplain Debbie Chapman  
Conductress Heather Hicks  
Guard Cynthia Whitley  
3 yr Trustee Ella Moon  
2 yr Trustee Lois Garrett  
1 yr Trustee Lisa Jonson

# POST SERVICE OFFICERS ARE LOCAL ADVOCATES WHO ASSIST VETERANS

## VFW Post 7674's Post Service Officer "Eddie Baker" is stepping down.

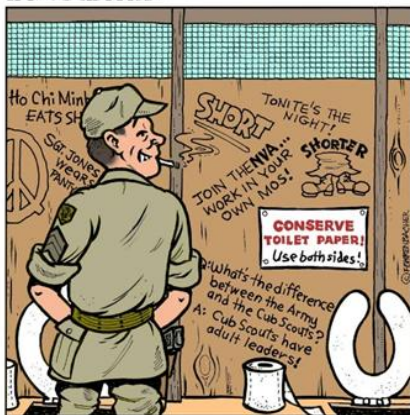
"Thank you to Eddie Baker for your many years of dedicated service as the Post 7674 Service Officer. Your commitment and support to our veterans and community have made a lasting impact. We appreciate all you've done."

"VFW Post 7674 is currently seeking a dedicated volunteer to serve as our next Service Officer. This vital role involves assisting fellow veterans with accessing benefits and support. If you have a passion for helping others and want to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our comrades, please consider stepping forward. For more information or to express interest, contact Commander Thurman."

### Key duties of VFW Service Officers include:

- **Research and Advice:** Offering guidance and research to veterans on their VA benefits.
- **Claim Assistance:** Helping veterans file initial claims for compensation and pension, including completing necessary forms.
- **Reopening Claims:** Assisting veterans in reopening claims for service-connected disabilities.
- **Follow-up and Appeal:** Monitoring claim status, filing notices of disagreement with the VA, and preparing appeals for denial of claims.
- **VA Form Completion:** Completing various VA forms, other than original claims, for veterans.
- **Inquiry Assistance:** Answering and researching inquiries regarding medical, death/burial, and other miscellaneous benefits.
- **Advocacy and Representation:** Serving as advocates for veterans and, in some cases, representing them in hearings before the VA and the Board of Veterans Appeals, if needed

### IN-COUNTRY



THE (NOT SO GREAT) WALL OF INDOCHINA.

Phil enlisted in the Army in 1965 where you served for years in Vietnam. He became a graphic designer and has worked for the state of Oregon for 26 years. He retired in 2003 and started the Cartoon "In-Country". The cartoons reflect his experiences during his tour of duty in South Vietnam.



This month, talk around the Post and questions presented are the basis for this article. The hope is that this article is helpful, informative and provides some balance to all the information you receive on any given day.

Question: Am I too old to get a colonoscopy?

Answer: The decision for a colonoscopy should always be made between you and your attending medical provider. A recent Kaiser Permanente study found that colonoscopies only find about 40 percent of adenomas. Colonoscopies after age 75 have to be viewed with an understanding of the balance between potential benefits and known risks. Risks include bleeding, perforation, infection and even heart attacks. However, the American Cancer Society estimates that 106,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colon cancer yearly and it is the third leading cause of cancer-related death in men and women. The colonoscopy is a tool. Work with your provider and your health issues so as to make the best decisions.

Question: I have been told to improve my breathing. Is this a real concern?

Answer: Breathing is often taken for granted. Good breathing habits usually result in a healthier life style. If your health care provider is concerned about your breathing, it may mean you are a mouth breather versus a nose breather. Nasal breathing advantages are better health, better sleep and better oxygen intake. Stuart Sandeman, a breathing expert, provides seven reasons to breathe using your nose: (1) The nose shields against illness – first line of defense from bacteria and viruses; (2) Enhances oxygen absorption – better regulation of intake; (3) Doesn't dry out your mouth – helps prevent tooth decay and gum disease; (4) Improves sleep; (5) Calms your nervous system – stress reduction, anxiety reduction and depression reduction; (6) Protects your brain – your nose is critical to maintaining proper levels of carbon dioxide in your blood; and (7) Improves appearance – mouth breathing in children can affect facial structure.

Question: Are microplastics really a problem?

Answer: Microplastics, have been in the news lately because of where they are being discovered. For the first time, researchers have found microplastics in the human brain – specifically the olfactory bulb area, which is the region that affect our sense of smell. While the consequences are still unknown, when coupled with animal studies they suggest a potential for neurotoxicity.

Question: Can probiotics help with kidney stones? (con't)



### **MASH (con't)**

**Answer:** This is actually a great question. Probiotics have been discussed mainly as a gut and skin health support. However, research exists for: digestive health, immune system stimulation, cardiovascular health – minor lowering of blood pressure, mental health – improves mood and now help with kidney stones. Researchers at Mahidol University found that certain bacterial within the urobiome play a key role in kidney stone formation. Probiotics apparently help prevent the formation of calcium crystals by alterations in the bacterial community.

As always, thank you for the questions, and if you have any further questions on these particular topics, please check with your own medical provider.

Today's quote: "All disease begins in the gut."  
(Hippocrates)

See you at the Post. Think health!  
Doc G

# 2025 – 2026 POST OFFICERS

**Commander – Kevin Thurman**  
**Senior-Vice Commander – James McMahon**  
**Junior-Vice Commander – Timothy Pettigrew**  
**Quartermaster – Jame Lowery**  
**Chaplain – Clinton Akins**  
**1-Year Trustee – Steven Keith**  
**2-Year Trustee – Zachary Litgen**  
**3-Year Trustee – David Goehringer**  
**Adjutant – Stephen Blackwell**  
**Service Officer – IN NEED OF ONE**  
**Judge Advocate – Anthony Beasley**  
**Surgeon – Frank Goldstein**

VFW Post 7674 proudly stands behind our newly elected 2025–2026 officers. We are confident in their leadership, dedication, and commitment to serving our veterans and our community. Let's work together to support their efforts and make this year a great success for our Post.



### **SENIOR-VICE COMMANDER PRESENTS VFW POST 7674 FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

VFW Post 7674 proudly presents the Firefighter of the Year Award to the Ocean City-Wright Fire Control District's Engineer Cameron Cupples in recognition of their outstanding service, bravery, and dedication to protecting our community. We thank you for your unwavering commitment and heroic efforts.



### **COFFEE AND DONUTS AT THE EGLIN VA CLINIC!**

We finally got approval for our Post to hand out coffee and donuts every Monday the Clinic is open. The time will be 7:00 am to 9:00 am. I am looking for volunteers from the Post, Auxiliary, and Cooties to make this happen. Someone to take charge of it, after everything is up and running, would be great. We can work out a schedule of volunteers so no one person needs to be there every Monday (UNLESS YOU WANT TO BE).

The start date is the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, due to all the paperwork I have to do with National VA.

This is a great outreach and hopefully, we can set the example for other Veterans organizations to pick the other days in the week. Contact Sr-Vice Steve Blackwell if interested.