

VFW OBJECTIVES:

- TO ENSURE THE NATIONAL SECURITY through maximum military strength
- TO ASSIST THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS and the dependents of disabled and needy veterans.
- TO SPEED THE REHABILITATION of the nation's disabled and needy veterans.
- TO PROMOTE AMERICANISM through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live.



Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month – 7:00 pm
 VFW Post 2894 Headquarters
 3329 Battlefield Boulevard South
 Chesapeake, Virginia 23322

Email: cdpost2894@vfwva.org

Web Site: <https://www.vfw2894.org>

Webpage: <https://vfw2894.org>

Visit us on FaceBook



POST OFFICERS

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Commander..... | Bob Gregory |
| Sr. Vice Commander..... | Susan Vitale |
| Jr. Vice Commander..... | Mike Kust |
| Adjutant..... | Dan Eaker |
| Quartermaster..... | John Peterson |
| Chaplain..... | Joseph McGourn |
| Surgeon..... | David Weber |
| Staff Judge Advocate..... | Matt Hamel |
| Service Officer..... | Jim Ireland |

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| President..... | Anne Thompson |
| Sr. Vice President..... | Sharon Peterson |
| Jr. Vice President..... | Rosie Gregory |
| Secretary..... | Sandy Dunbar |
| Treasurer..... | Donna Kust |
| Chaplain..... | Diane Hostetlar |
| Conductress..... | Amy Trahan |
| Guard..... | Grace Schweers |
| Patriotic Instructor..... | Jean Dozier |

NATIONAL

www.vfw.org

STATE

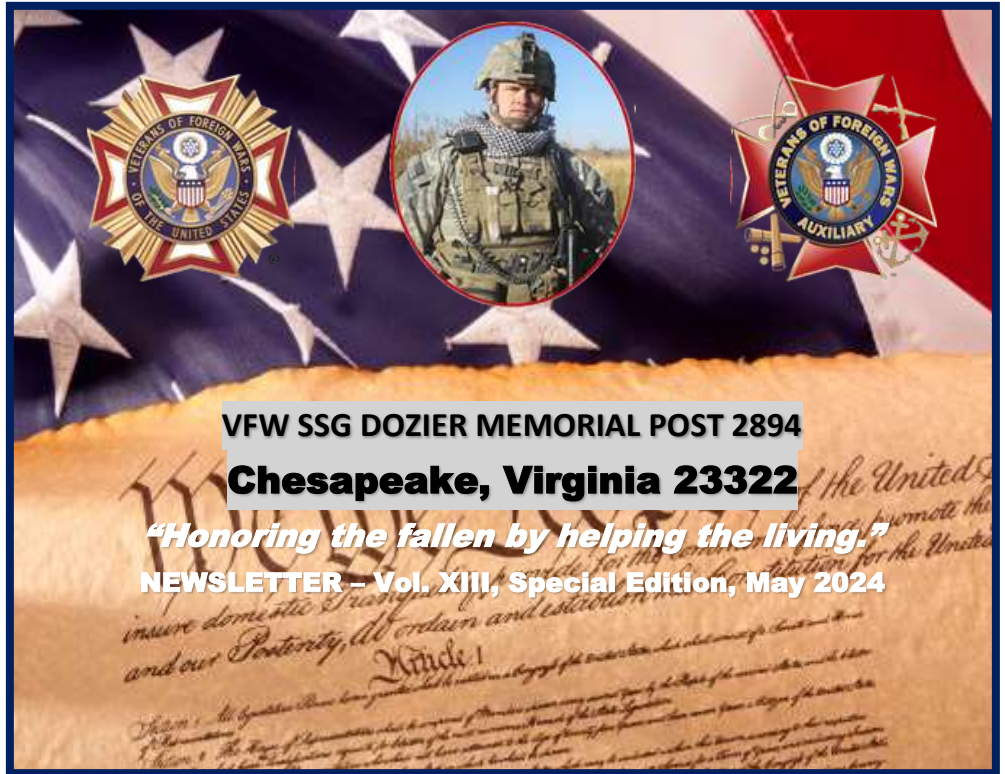
www.vfwva.org

VFW VA DISTRICT 2

www.vfwwebcom.org/va/dist2

VFW Post 2894 GoFundMe

<https://gofund.me/483584b0>



SPECIAL AWARDS EDITION
POST ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY
13 May 2024

VFW Post 2894 held its annual Awards Ceremony on Monday, 13 May 2024, in the Chesapeake City Council Chambers. Due to the number of awardees and associated pictures, it was decided that a special edition of the Post Newsletter would be developed just to honor all those individuals and organizations receiving awards that evening.



VFW Post 2894 recognizes Top Supporters of the past year's community service projects.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory welcomes guests to the annual Awards Ceremony on 13 May 2024.

First, we want to express our sincere gratitude to the City Council who graciously allowed us to host the ceremony in their chambers at City Hall. Additionally, we are extremely grateful to all those members of the Post who contributed their time and talent to ensure the tremendous success of this year's event! Kudos to Mark Rios who provided particularly entertaining narratives and Chuck Wolff who created the plaques that were a big hit at the ceremony.

**PATRIOT'S PEN
Blake Roberts**

Each year, nearly 68,800 students in sixth through eighth grades enter the VFW's Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Contest for a chance to win their share of more than \$1.4 million in state and national awards. The essay contest encourages young minds to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern American society, by drafting a 300- to 400-word essay, expressing their views based on a patriotic theme chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief.

The theme for 2023-24 was "How Are You Inspired by America?" The VFW Post 2894 winning entry was submitted by Blake Roberts, a sixth grader at Hickory Middle School. Blake is an avid scout with Troop 57, currently serving as a patrol leader and working on his First Class certification. He also plays soccer in the YMCA youth league program.

Congratulations Blake for being this year's Patriot's Pen awardee!



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Blake Roberts, 2023-24 Patriot's Pen Awardee, with a \$300 check.

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
Adam Linsky**

Established in 1947, the VFW Voice of Democracy audio-essay program provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves in regards to a democratic and



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Voice of Democracy Awardee Adam Linsky with a \$400 check.

patriotic-themed recorded essay. Each year, nearly 25,000 ninth through 12th grade students from across the country enter to win

their share of more than \$1.3 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program.

The theme for the 2023-24 year was "What Are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy?" This year's award goes to Mr. Adam Linsky, a graduating senior from Grassfield High School. He will be continuing his education at Hampton Sydney College, where he plans to double major in Economics and Business, and Government. Congratulations Adam and good luck with your educational endeavors!

**Teacher Of the Year
Kimberly Hammers**

The VFW launched the Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher Award in 1999 to recognize certified teachers for promoting citizenship education. Three teachers, one from each level (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) are nominated by local VFW posts and those selected continue to compete at the department and national levels. VFW Citizenship Education programs stimulate interest in America's history, traditions, Americanism, civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism. Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime candidates for this award.

This year's Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher Award is presented to Ms. Kimberly Hammers, a Social Studies teacher at Grassfield High School. Ms. Hammers graduated from Virginia Wesleyan University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Studies, continuing her education and earning a Master's Degree in Political Science in 2014. She has been teaching in the Chesapeake School System for over 18 years, originally at Hickory High School until transferring to the new Grassfield High School in 2007, where she currently teaches the Advanced Placement US Government and Politics curriculum. Over the past few years she has been instrumental in establishing the annual tribute to our veterans through the Field of Valor commemoration that coincides with Veteran's Day in November, where this past year saw over 2500 miniature U.S. flags placed around the school's memorial to those alumni who lost their lives while serving this country. She also is a co-sponsor for the Student-2-Student Club that supports military-connected students as they transition into the Grassfield High School community. Thank you, Ms. Hammers, for your support to our veterans and helping the next generations understand the importance of service to our country. Congratulations for being selected the Post's Teacher of the Year!

**SCOUT OF THE YEAR
Caitlin Watson**



The partnership between the VFW and the Boy Scouts of America dates to 1915 when a VFW Post in Everett, Washington, helped establish a local Scout Troop. The VFW Scout of the Year program provides members of the Boy and Girl Scouts to be recognized for their standout citizenship, patriotism, and love of country.

This year's Scout of the Year is Ms. Caitlin Watson, from Chesapeake Girl Scout Troop 15. Her essay on pollination and the impacts of a decreasing bee population on our ecosystem was quite intriguing and brought up

issues that are current and need to be addressed. Caitlin is a sophomore at Great Bridge High School with a 4.073 GPA. She's a member of Scout Troop 15 where she has earned the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. She also enjoys participating in her high school Thespian/Drama Club.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Scout of the Year Awardee Caitlin Watson with a \$200 check as her family looks on.



Ms. Kimberly Hammers accepts the VFW Post 2894 Teacher of the Year Award from Post Commander Bob Gregory.

**CIVIL AIR PATROL
CADET OFFICER OF THE YEAR
Ryan Carbonel**



The VFW Civil Air Patrol Officer of the Year award recognizes cadet officers for their outstanding achievement and exceptional leadership ability. Cadets recommended for the award must be in good academic standing, are progressing satisfactorily in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program, have demonstrated outstanding achievement in community service and the Cadet Program, and have shown outstanding leadership, a high moral character, and a

tremendous level of professionalism in appearance and action. This year's Civil Air Patrol Officer of the Year medal is awarded to Cadet/Maj Ryan M. Carbonel.

Cadet/Maj Ryan M. Carbonel is an outstanding personal example as a Civil Air Patrol cadet officer for the junior cadets. He is dedicated to mentoring and improving the cadets in his squadron. He demonstrates remarkable growth while serving in various leadership roles at the squadron. He has used each of these opportunities to follow and lead our squadron's cadets with integrity and respect. He currently serves as the squadron's Cadet Commander. C/Maj Carbonel personifies all the qualities that the Civil Air Patrol cadet program seeks to inspire in its members. His personal example is an inspiration to all cadets that he interacts with and serves to improve the learning and the performance of all of the cadets he leads. The efforts of C/Maj Carbonel reflect credit upon himself and the Civil Air Patrol. Congratulations, Ryan!



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Cadet Major Ryan Carbonel, Civil Air Patrol Officer of the Year Medal and Certificate as his family and Captain Matt McCracken, Civil Air Patrol Hampton Roads Composite Squadron Commander, observe.

**CIVIL AIR PATROL
CADET NON-COMMISSIONED
OFFICER OF THE YEAR
Alana Adams**



The VFW Civil Air Patrol Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year award recognizes cadet non-commissioned officers for their outstanding achievement and exceptional leadership ability. Cadets recommended for the award must be in good academic standing, are progressing satisfactorily in the Civil Air

Patrol Cadet Program, have demonstrated outstanding achievement in community service and the Cadet Program, and have shown outstanding leadership, a high moral character, and a tremendous level of professionalism in appearance and action. This year's Civil Air Patrol Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year medal is awarded to Cadet/Chief Master Sergeant Alana Adams.

Over the past year, Cadet Chief Master Sergeant Adams has displayed proficiency in all the areas of Civil Air Patrol cadet life. Cadet Adams has been an amazing Flight Sergeant, a mentor to the junior cadets, and has excelled in learning how to overcome obstacles during weekly meetings. Over the past cadet staff term, Cadet Adams served as the squadron First Sergeant and now serves as Bravo Flight Commander. She exemplifies all the Civil Air Patrol core values, integrity, respect, excellence, and volunteer service.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents the Civil Air Patrol Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Medal and Certificate to Cadet Chief Master Sergeant Alana Adams as family and Captain Matt McCracken, Commander of the local Civil Air Patrol composite squadron, look on.

During her time as First Sergeant, Cadet Adams mentored the Flight Sergeants and provided a role model for both the senior NCOs and the junior cadets. She led drill, mentored cadets, and

was the liaison between the line staff and executive staff. Cadet Adams has helped improve Hampton Roads Composite Squadron in many ways. She is confident, smart, and not afraid to voice her concerns. Not only have concerns been brought to my attention, but she has always provided possible solutions, proving her ability to perform in high-stress environments.

Now serving as Bravo Flight Commander, Cadet Adams acts as a mentor to the Bravo Flight Sergeant, sharing her knowledge of Drill and Ceremonies and demonstrating how senior NCOs, and soon to be officers, should display themselves. Cadets come to her for advice and with questions. She can answer them with confidence and is not afraid to provide feedback to the cadets in her charge.

With all that said, Cadet Chief Master Sergeant Adams is an outstanding member of Hampton Roads Composite Squadron. I present Cadet Adams as the VFW NCO of the Year for her proficiency and dedication to the raising of our nation's future leaders

**FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR
Benjamin Merritt**



The Firefighter of the Year Award is an annual presentation to that firefighter who, in the eyes of their peers, has demonstrated outstanding service to the department and community through the execution of their duties as a firefighter. The firefighter performed these duties in a manner that reflects the mission of the fire department and represents the City of Chesapeake. This year, the VFW

Firefighter of the Year Award is presented to Firefighter Benjamin Merritt.

Firefighter Merritt graduated from Christopher Newport University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communications. Upon completion of his degree, he pursued his lifelong dream of becoming a firefighter and was hired by the Chesapeake Fire Department in 2018. Since beginning his career, he has been an instrumental part of the Chesapeake Fire Department.

This past year Firefighter Merritt has worn many hats in the fire department which demonstrates his commitment to the organization. He is an active member of the Peer Fitness Trainer program in which he has dedicated numerous hours assisting current firefighters as well as recruits reach their physical fitness goals. Firefighter Merritt is also an active member on the Mayday team. This is something that he takes very seriously as the May Day training program is designed to teach firefighters how to save themselves or other firefighters when unforeseen, catastrophic events occur on the fire scene. Firefighter Merritt is also a valuable role model when teaching at the academy. This past year, he assisted in teaching Forcible Entry and Ventilation,

Search and Rescue, Mayday, Firefighter Survival, and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus or SCBA.

Firefighter Merritt always shows up with a positive attitude and professional appearance. His attitude at work is contagious and he continually brings out the best in other members. He is also an acting officer and true leader. This past year, Firefighter Merritt was asked to help his battalion by taking on a temporary transfer to Station 14. The purpose of this transfer was to ease staffing shortages and assist with training some newer members of Station 14's crew. Firefighter Merritt accepted the task with open arms and has played a vital role in mentoring and developing the members of Station 14 A shift.



Firefighter Benjamin Merritt accepts the Firefighter of the Year Award from VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory as his wife and Deputy Fire Chief Sam Gulisano observe.

More recently, Firefighter Merritt has been accepted into the Georgia Smoke Divers Program. This past year, he has been training and preparing to represent himself as well as the Chesapeake Fire Department in this rigorous and highly selective course. His level of dedication towards physical fitness is unmatched.

Lastly, Firefighter Merritt spent numerous hours and shifts updating pre-plans for bulk storage facilities in Station 2's run area this past year. This allowed him to represent the Chesapeake Fire Department as a whole and develop working relationships with businesses in the city. His professionalism and dedication to tasks assigned are second to none.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE
PROVIDER OF THE YEAR
Bryan Soriano**



The Emergency Medical Service Provider of the Year Award is an annual presentation to that EMS provider who, in the eyes of their peers, has demonstrated outstanding service to the department and community through the execution of their duties as an EMS provider. The EMS Provider performed these duties in a manner that reflects the mission of the fire department and represents the City of Chesapeake.

The VFW EMS Provider of the Year Award is presented to Firefighter/Paramedic Lieutenant Bryan Soriano!

Lieutenant Soriano began working in the emergency medical services field prior to the start of his career with the Chesapeake Fire Department, receiving his Paramedic Certification in 1999. In May of 2001, he graduated from Old Dominion University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. The following October, he began his career with the Chesapeake Fire Department. Since his hiring, he has reported for duty with drive and desire to make a difference in the lives of the citizens and visitors of the city of Chesapeake.

Bryan's passion for everything EMS is unwavering. Starting his career as a Firefighter-Paramedic working in busy firehouses, he became an extremely well-respected Field Medical Officer, being promoted to Fire Lieutenant on May 1, 2015. Lt Soriano brings a level of calmness to the scene along with a tremendous amount of experience. This is readily seen during cardiac arrest responses resulting from traumas or overdoses where the level of stress is at its highest. Add a pediatric patient to those situations and there is no one better than Lt. Bryan Soriano.

Lt. Soriano is the Chesapeake Fire Department's very first Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator (PECC), tasked with ensuring that the Chesapeake Fire Department stays on the cutting edge of care for our pediatric population. He was selected for this position by the department because of his vast knowledge and passion in pediatric emergency care. He has recently worked with the Chesapeake Fire Department Training Division in developing and implementing training specific to pediatric emergencies which was delivered in the form of department wide in-service training in January of 2023. In addition, during March of 2023, Lt Bryan Soriano completed the Neonatal Resuscitation Program.

Lt. Soriano is a truly compassionate EMS provider. An example of this occurred on a recent evening. Crews from Battalion 3B worked a cardiac arrest involving a young mother whose 10-year-old daughter found her unresponsive. Crews were not successful in reviving this patient. Lt Soriano and his Battalion Chief had the difficult task of telling the patient's mother, the grandmother of the 10-year-old, that her daughter had expired. Unfortunately, the grandmother insisted on having the daughter with her when we gave her the bad news.

Obviously, the young girl struggled to process what was happening. Lt. Soriano, recognizing this, took to a knee, with a calm and loving voice, talked to this young girl in a way to help her understand that what was happening was not her fault and what she was feeling was justified. I believe in the worst moment of this little girl's life, facing a life without her mother, Lt Soriano showed her true compassion for her grief and hopefully helped her cope with this tremendous loss.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Lt. Bryan Soriano with the Emergency Medical Services Provider of the Year Award as his family and Deputy Fire Chief Sam Gulisano look on.

Lt. Soriano puts his heart and soul into members of the CFD to make them the best advanced life support providers that they can become. Lt Soriano will spend several hours each shift coaching these new ALS providers, running them through mock boards with different assessors within the battalion and getting them to the calls they need to build their knowledge, skills and abilities. It is not uncommon for Lt Soriano to leave Fire Station 10 with a new ALS provider in tow, pick up back-to-back calls all over the city and then return well after dark.

During 2023, Lt Soriano worked tirelessly with the other members of the 60th Anniversary Yearbook Committee to rotate the entire department through photos shoots, collecting pictures for the various sections of the yearbook and with the vendor to ensure that the department gets a quality book. Lastly, he has assisted with preparing meals for the retiree breakfasts most of his career.

**SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
DEPUTY OF THE YEAR
Scott Chambers**

The Chesapeake Sheriff's Office has selected Investigator Scott Chambers as their Deputy of the Year.

On January 11, 2024, members of the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force (CARFTF) aimed to arrest homicide suspect Lamont Lewis. Due to the suspect's actions, this incident resulted in his death and a critically injured task force officer.



Leading up to this deadly force encounter, Investigator Scott Chambers, a deputy with the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office Criminal Apprehension Unit and Special Deputy with the United States Marshals Service (USMS), along with other task force members conducted mobile surveillance of Lewis. The suspect was identified as the passenger of a vehicle

driven by a female companion. Soon after, a vehicle-based arrest was initiated at the intersection of Big Bethel Road at Todds Lane, in the city of Hampton. Upon initiation, task force members performed a vehicle containment whereby pinning the front, passenger side and back of the suspect vehicle. Investigator Chambers was responsible for the back pin.

Straightaway, a member of the arrest team requested the occupants to comply and follow all instructions given. Immediately, the driver complied, exiting the vehicle, and surrendering to deputies. With the passenger side door blocked, the suspect maneuvered over the center console and exited the driver's door. Watching Lewis exit the vehicle, Investigator Chambers observed a weapon in the suspect's right hand; however, unbeknownst to Chambers, in his left hand, Lewis was holding a second pistol. As Investigator Chambers initiated commands, the suspect presented the second pistol and fired striking Chambers in the left shoulder. A violent exchange of gunfire followed as Investigator Chambers and the suspect shot one another multiple times. In addition to being struck in the left shoulder, Investigator Chambers was also hit in the left pelvis/upper leg region and once in his ballistic plate.

Investigator Chambers and the suspect were transported separately to Riverside Regional Medical Center. Upon arrival the suspect was pronounced dead. Meanwhile, Investigator Chambers arrived in critical condition and underwent two extensive surgeries followed by a week in the hospital. During his stay, the honorable Ronal L. Davis, Director of the U.S. Marshals Service, visited Chambers, commending him for his bravery and professionalism.

Investigator Chambers continues to recover from these injuries and notes being sworn as a Special Deputy with the USMS and having the opportunity to work alongside likeminded and immensely talented law enforcement professionals remains the highlight of his career.

The following statements were made by Sheriff Jim O'Sullivan about his lifelong friend. "Scott Chambers is a true hero. I went through the police academy with Scott almost thirty years ago. He is a lifelong law enforcement officer and one of my best friends. I am so incredibly proud of him and the job he does every day. Scott is a member of our motorcycle unit and volunteers regularly for the Sheriff's Office community outreach with senior citizens and youth programs."

**CHESAPEAKE POLICE
DEPARTMENT
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF
THE YEAR
Nicolas Houlihan**



The VFW Chesapeake Law Enforcement Officer of the Year is awarded to Master Police Officer Nicolas T. Houlihan. Nic has made numerous contributions to the Chesapeake Police Department through his community policing outreach in the Deep Creek community. He led the 3rd Precinct's effort to identify, contact, and partner with all the active Faith-Based Organizations in the area. This created a network of over fifty organizations to call upon. In addition to the faith-based organizations, he contacted multiple area businesses, various City of Chesapeake Departments, and Non-Government Organizations to assist with events and families in need.

- The partnership with these organizations led to:
- The distribution of 1000 turkeys.
 - Identified and provided Thanksgiving dinner to a large family.
 - Provided Christmas presents and meals to families who would have gone without during the holidays.
 - Assisted several families at the "Her Shelter" during Christmas.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents the VFW Post 2894 Deputy of the Year Award to Chesapeake Sheriff's Department Investigator Scott Chambers as his wife and Under Sheriff David Rosado look on.

- o Additionally, they identified a family that was about to lose their home, and working together, they were able to assist the family in catching up on their rent and providing presents for the Christmas Holiday.

Nicolas has demonstrated exceptional dedication to his duties, balancing his community outreach with his responsibilities within the precinct. He consistently goes above and beyond, always ready to assist with calls for service, community service requests, abandoned vehicle complaints, tows, and other necessary tasks. His commitment to his work is a testament to his exceptional character and embodiment of our department's values.

Nicolas' community-oriented approach has profoundly impacted the Deep Creek community. His efforts have significantly improved the lives of those in need, demonstrating the effectiveness of our community policing initiatives.



VFW Post 2894 Police Officer of the Year Nicolas Houlihan displays the award plaque and check flanked by Post Commander Bob Gregory, his wife, and Deputy Chief Mark Solesky.

Special Agent Meekins was born in Suffolk, Virginia, and graduated from Deep Creek High School here in Chesapeake. He is married and has three children.

Agent Meekins joined the Virginia State Police in 2007 as a State Trooper and was assigned to patrol duties in the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area. He was promoted to Special Agent and assigned to the Chesapeake Field Office in 2017, initially working with the Arson and Bomb Unit of the General Investigation Section before transferring to the Auto Theft Unit in 2022.

Special Agent Meekins demonstrates a tireless and relentless spirit to combat auto theft. He eagerly assists local law enforcement agencies and community organizations with the Help Eliminate Auto Theft Program with events such as Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etchings, National Night Out, and senior support seminars to promote auto theft prevention. He has participated in numerous public outreach events with local law enforcement and community outreach programs in the Hampton Roads community to educate the public on auto theft prevention. Since being assigned to the Auto Theft Unit, Agent Meekins has recovered approximately 380 stolen automobiles with a valuation of over one million dollars. Brave, Agent Meekins, for a job well done and an award justly deserved!

TOP SUPPORTER
Alexandra Serrano
757 Real Estate

The Awards Ceremony continued with special recognition of organizations, businesses and individuals who have been supportive of the Post's service projects at various levels for the past year. The efforts of these organizations and individuals continue to have significant impacts on area veterans and their families.

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
PATROL OFFICER OF THE YEAR
Bryce Meekins



The Patrol Officer/Agent of the Year is an annual presentation to that individual in the Virginia State Police who has demonstrated outstanding service to the department and commonwealth through the execution of their duties as a State Police Officer/Special Agent.

This year, the VFW State Patrol Officer of the Year Award is presented to Special Agent Bryce D. Meekins.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents the Post Community Service Award to Ms. Alexandra Serrano, 757 Real Estate, as her son Luke observes.

The VFW Post Top Supporter Award was given to Ms. Alexandra Serrano, realtor and owner of 757 Real Estate, in appreciation for her extraordinary support and leadership in

assisting VFW Post 2894 with various community service projects in the local area. Through her persistence and personal involvement, she and our Post were able to prevent a Navy couple, who were experiencing some significant life challenges, from potentially losing their home due to a seller and realtor not repairing the property as stated in the contract. Her organized, professional approach had a tremendous impact on the overall completion of the required home renovation project. The total cost was over \$100,000, and the couple is now living in a safe and comfortable home. Alex played a significant role in VFW Post 2894 being awarded the Fred C. Hall Community Service Project Award among all VFW posts in the nation in 2023.

Alex is a firm believer that giving to those in need is returned twice over in many ways and makes for a better world to live in. As a single mom, Alex is proudly raising her two young children, Luke and Eva, who were with her during the ceremony and are following in their mother's footsteps. Alex is the embodiment of elegance, grace, and strength, like a Shakespearean heroine. A tremendous thank you to Alex for all her efforts that have benefited our veterans in the community.

TOP SUPPORTER
Chris Horne
WAVY News 10

VFW Post 2894 recognized Mr. Chris Horne, investigative reporter for WAVY TV News 10, with the Post's Top Supporter Award.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents the Post Outstanding Supporter Award to Mr. Chris Horne, WAVY TV 10 News.

Chris' social media and TV coverage of our Post's activities and charity projects helping veterans was a significant contributing factor in the Post's increased membership by over

seventy members in the last nine months--a 35 percent increase! He provided visibility to the community by covering our Post's acceptance of our new home, the former Fire Station #7 on South Battlefield Boulevard. He publicized various fundraising efforts, one being a popular local coffee brew that was specifically developed for the Post to aid in fundraising. With his television-powered support, \$5 per bag went to our Post, resulting in over \$1000 in total donations.

Chris' support to several community service projects, as well as the Post relocating to its new home, was instrumental in the Post receiving numerous awards for veteran service projects throughout the year. His reporting ensured citizens were well aware of the herculean efforts regularly undertaken by VFW Post 2894 and helped increase our total membership.

Thank you, Chris, for sharing our stories to the community and your unflinching support of the Post and our mission!

TOP SUPPORTER
Troy Hare
Hare's Heating, Air Conditioning and Electrical

Troy Hare, VFW Post 2894 member and owner of Hare's Heating, Air Conditioning and Electrical ensured his company's participation in providing support for a Korean War veteran's widow in Chesapeake. Through the Post's partnership with his organizations, along with others that contributed to the project, we were able to fund and repair the various issues at the residence of a Korean War veteran's widow who was in dire need of assistance.



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Post Outstanding Supporter Award to Troy Hare, owner of Hare's Heating, Air Conditioning and Electrical for his company's tremendous support to Post community service projects.

During the project, it was noticed that the woman was in her living room wrapped in a blanket and when asked about this situation, she stated her heat had just gone out and she was not able to repair it. Because the funds were not available to make the necessary repairs for this unplanned repair work, coordination was required to replace the heating and air conditioning system to ensure a healthy living environment for the widow. Jim Ireland, the VFW Post 2894 Service Officer, contacted Troy and asked for his assistance. Once Troy inspected the HVAC system, he determined that not only the main heating and air conditioning units needed replacement, but the supporting ductwork was wet and corroding and would need to be replaced also. He estimated that he could probably complete the necessary work for a discounted cost of around \$10,000, but this amount seemed beyond the reach of the project.

Fortunately, an anonymous donor wanted to help a local veteran widow and provided the funds necessary to repair the complete HVAC system. Total cost for this aspect of the project, including the supporting ductwork, came in under \$8,000. Thanks to the combined efforts of the organizations involved, and specifically to Hare's Heating, Air Conditioning and Electrical, the widow now lives in a much more comfortable home environment!

wooden ramp leading to her front porch, but no funds were available to support that repair. Fortunately, Habitat for Humanity received a call from a Chesapeake resident who had a ramp to donate to a needy veteran family and it met the immediate need for the widow in question.

During the ramp installation, it was noticed that the woman needed repairs to the heating and air conditioning system, but funds for this additional work were not available. Fortunately, an anonymous donor wanted to help a local veteran widow and provided the funds necessary to complete the entire HVAC system replacement. Our sincere appreciation to all of you for your contributions to this tremendous effort!

TOP SUPPORTER
Virginia Foundation Solutions

In August 2023 the VFW Post 2894 Service Officer was contacted by a Gold Star mother who we had helped with home repairs in the past. She was concerned about soft spots in her kitchen floor. Upon inspection, it was determined that the foundation of the house under the kitchen needed repair or replacement.

The Post Service Officer contacted Carolyn Farris, General Manager of the Virginia Foundation Solutions Company and explained the magnitude of the proposed project. Upon hearing the project was in support of a Gold Star mother who had lost her son in the first Gulf War, there was no hesitation – she agreed to provide whatever was required to repair the deteriorating foundation.

TOP SUPPORTER
Habitat for Humanity
South Hampton Roads

VFW POST 2894 recognized Habitat for Humanity of South Hampton Roads for their participation in providing support for a Korean War veteran's widow in Chesapeake. Through the Post's partnership with this organization, we were able to fund and repair the various issues at a residence for this deceased



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents Outstanding Supporter Award to CEO Frank Hruska and Regional Operations Officer Marshall Verman of Habitat for Humanity, South Hampton Roads, for their superb support to recent Post community service projects.

veteran's widow.

Initial inspection of the home revealed a badly needed roof replacement. Through his contacts with Habitat for Humanity of South Hampton Roads, Jim Ireland, the Post Service Officer, was able to coordinate a complete roof replacement at no cost to the widow. They also wanted to replace an old



VFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory presents the Post Outstanding Supporter Award to Mr. Luis Quintero Buitrago, accepting for Virginia Foundation Solutions.

After three weeks and over \$25,000 of donated labor and materials, the kitchen foundations were ready for the flooring, which was supplied by Habitat for Humanity of South Hampton Roads. Thank you, Virginia Foundation Solutions, for rising to the occasion and providing the necessary repairs to this Gold Star mother's home!

TOP SUPPORTER
Window World of Chesapeake

In mid-October 2023 the Jim Ireland, the VFW Post 2894 Service Officer, agreed to assist a veteran family in Virginia Beach due to the local post's unavailability. The veteran in question, James Lee, had recently suffered a heart attack, was unable to work, and had several other medical issues that together created a dire situation for the family. It seemed that all the windows in the house were in terrible shape, with wind



IVFW Post 2894 Commander Bob Gregory and Service Officer Jim Ireland present the Outstanding Supporter Award to Window World of Chesapeake, as Mr. and Mrs. James Lee look on.

constantly blowing through, and James' wife was concerned that with the onset of the winter season, her husband would be susceptible to the elements, worsening his condition. Their current income was not enough to cover the expense of replacing all the windows and the family was desperately in need of assistance. The Post Service Officer immediately reached out to

Window World of Chesapeake, an award-winning veteran-friendly business who has supported Post projects in the past. After hearing the veteran's story, Josh Reed, President of the company, assessed the damage at the home and agreed to replace all fifteen windows at no cost to the family.

Understanding the medical urgency of the situation, Window World immediately started the project and had it completed in less than three weeks, well before the cold weather set in. Estimated cost for the overall project was over \$18,000.00 – all pro bono to the family in need. Thanks to Window World and their life-saving generosity and sense of urgency, the family can feel safe and protected from the elements during the upcoming cold weather.

POST Awards VFW Medals



At an Air Force Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (AFJROTC) Awards Ceremony hosted at Grassfield High School on May 10, the Post awarded VFW medals to AFJROTC members in six of Chesapeake's high schools. The awards recognize the achievements of the cadets and fosters their morale and esprit de corps. The awards went to two outstanding cadets, one male and one female, at the respective schools. Here are the awardees:

- Deep Creek - Bella Dome & Amar Ruiz
- Grassfield - Catherine Schwind & Vincent Torres
- Great Bridge - Elaney Helton & Logan Lawhorn
- Indian River - Kaitlyn Grimm & Aden Velazquez
- Oscar Smith - Donalyn Woodard & Tristan Davis
- Western Branch - Dymond Dallas-Townsel & Brenden Escobar



Twelve Air Force Junior ROTC cadets receive VFW medals/certificates at the Grassfield High School Awards Ceremony, 7 May 2024.