

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>

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POST OFFICERS

Commander.....	John Peterson
Sr. Vice Commander.....	Susan Vitale
Jr. Vice Commander.....	Mike Kust
Adjutant.....	Keith Nielson
Quartermaster.....	Jim Peters
Chaplain.....	Joseph McGourn
Surgeon.....	David Weber
Staff Judge Advocate.....	Matt Hamel
Service Officer.....	Jim Ireland

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

President.....	Sharon Peterson
Sr. Vice President.....	Anne Thompson
Jr. Vice President.....	Neila Macasaet
Secretary.....	Sandy Dunbar
Treasurer.....	Donna Kust
Chaplain.....	Diane Hostetlar
Conductress.....	Grace Schweers
Guard.....	Kirsten McGinn

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>



VFW POST 2894 MEMBERS REMEMBER POST NAMESAKE'S BIRTHDAY AT BIER GARTEN RESTAURANT

On Wednesday, 30 September, several members of VFW Post 2894 and its Auxiliary gathered at the Bier Garden Restaurant in Portsmouth to commemorate what would have been Jonathan Kilian Dozier's 49th birthday. Jonathan was a Chesapeake native who joined the Army in 1997 and became a Post member shortly afterward, having...(continued on page 3)



VFW Post 2894 and Auxiliary members gather at the Bier Garden Restaurant in Portsmouth to remember Post namesake Jonathan Dozier's birthday.

COMMANDER'S CORNER



The last two months have been busy for VFW Post 2894 members. We presented awards to two Chesapeake Police Officers who were shot while investigating a domestic disturbance, attended USS Bataan Flag Raising Ceremony where a Filipino flag from a family in Texas was presented to the Commanding Officer and attended a "Tunnels to Towers" house presentation right here in our neighborhood on Ballahack Rd. Commander John Peterson, Senior Vice Commander Susan Vitale and Auxiliary President Sharon Peterson worked the Post Booth at the annual Deep Creek Ruritan "Beef Fest".

Bob Gregory, Joe Hammers and Jim Ireland manned a VFW Post 2894 table at the Chesapeake Annual New School year teachers conference on 1 September to spread the word to educators about our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen scholarship applications. Applications are due to us by 15 October and our nominees are due to District by 31 October along with our Teacher of the Year nomination! If you have someone to nominate, contact Comrade Joe Hammers for more information. Alethia West, our nominee last year, won First Place at State and several thousand dollars at the VFW National convention!

We will be hosting the District 2 Quarterly meeting on Saturday, 14 November. We will need some member help directing car parking. We can be proud of the building improvements we have made each year - they recognize our efforts each time other District 2 Post members come back to our Post.

On 7-8 November we will be at the Edinburgh and Battlefield Walmarks for our Veterans Day Poppy Drive. We have 6,000 Poppies ordered to handout. Junior Vice Commander Mike Kust has sent out the signup sheet via email and will have it at the October meeting. **We need your help so members do not have to do double shifts!**

Wednesday, November 11 will be a big day for the Post! Veterans Day commemoration at City Hall, 11:00 followed by our monthly Post meeting that night. This meeting will include our annual Marine Corps birthday celebration, and we get to see Bob Gregory with a clean shaven face! However, I wish I looked that good in my old uniform!

See you at our monthly meetings on 14 Oct and 11 November! And don't forget to vote on ELECTION DAY 3 November!

John Peterson
Post Commander

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings from the 2894 Auxiliary!

October has arrived, and with it comes cooler weather and beautiful fall colors. Pumpkins, Halloween decorations, and mums are everywhere. It's also time to start thinking about food pantry requests. Shopping early for non-perishable items avoids missing out closer to the holidays as well as extending the food budget expense over time.

August and September were busy months for our membership. We attended the Police Awards ceremony at City Hall, and the Tunnel to Towers presented for a home in Chesapeake to a disabled vet. The 9/11 Ceremony held in Jubilee City Park was amazing, but the fun we had while working the VFW Post 2894 information table at the Deep Creek Ruritan Club Beef Festival was unforgettable. We'll be sure to repeat that event next year! Our members also quietly volunteered at their church food pantries, at the local VA medical center, purchasing school supplies for donation boxes, sending cards to service members and their families, etc.

Two important events in November are Election Day, and Veteran's Day weekend when we attend remembrance ceremonies and hold our fall Buddy Poppy drive. Election Day: I mention it often in these newsletters, but it's important that every American citizen eligible to vote does so. It doesn't seem like it makes a difference, but it's your one chance to let your opinion be known. The other is Veteran's Day and distributing Buddy Poppys. Not just a day of sales or a day off from work, but a time to honor and remember those who made sacrifices so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have as Americans.

Sharon Peterson
President
Post 2894 Auxiliary

NOTE FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

If you are interested in submitting articles, photos, updates on events, for inclusion in the newsletter, please send them to me at: 3329 Battlefield Blvd S., Chesapeake, VA 23322, 757-572-3946 or adjpost2894@vfwva.org. Comments are always welcome.

If you know of a business or anyone who would like to help sponsor Post 2894, please let them know that their help will be recognized in the newsletter.

The newsletter is disseminated to the membership and friends of the Post via e-mail as well as being available on the Post website: Newsletters (vfw2894.org)

VFW POST 2894 MEMBERS REMEMBER

NAMESAKE'S BIRTHDAY (Continued from page 1)...served in the Republic of Korea.

In August 2007 Jon was deployed to Iraq and in early 2008 he was promoted to Staff Sergeant. A week later he was leading a group of soldiers as they searched a house in Sinsil, Diyala Province, just north of Baghdad. The structure had been cleared of hazards two weeks earlier, but unfortunately insurgents apparently had returned and rigged it with explosives. Once Jon and his team entered the building, a massive explosive device detonated and killed all the soldiers in the team, including Jon.

In 2009, the members of VFW Post 2894 agreed to name the Post in Jon's honor, becoming the Staff Sergeant Jonathan Kilian Dozier Memorial Post to honor one of Chesapeake's own who made the ultimate sacrifice. Jon is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

OTHER POST NEWS

• **VFW Post 2894 Member Presented with Girl Scout Famous Formers Award.** "A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed...Knowing how to do a job well is just as important as being willing to serve...". No truer words could be spoken about VFW Post 2894 member Susan Vitale, who has served her country, her city, her company, her community, her family, and her friends loyally and with distinction. Susan was honored recently with the Girl Scout Famous Formers Award, presented to her by the Girl Scout Council of the Colonial Coast. She joins the ranks of other high profile Famous Formers such as Sally Ride, Sandra Day O'Connor, Venus and Serena Williams, Taylor Swift and Hillary Clinton. Susan is also serving as the Senior Vice Commander for the Post. This award from the Girl Scout Council was so very well deserved. Congratulations, Susan!



VFW Post 2894 Senior Vice Commander Susan Vitale receives the Girl Scout Famous Formers Award from the Girl Scout Council of the Colonial Coast.

• **VFW Post 2894 Recruits Members at Annual Deep Creek Ruritan Beef-fest.** On Saturday afternoon, 19 September, members of VFW Post 2894 got out and set up a VFW recruiting tent at the 50th Annual Deep Creek Ruritan Beef-fest 2026. While local citizens enjoyed the barbeque, baked beans and coleslaw, our volunteers were able to interact with veterans and other interested parties and inform them about VFW Posts and activities throughout the Hampton Roads area. Thanks to all who volunteered to participate in this worthwhile community event.



VFW Post 2894 Recruiting Chairperson Susan Vitale (right) mans the VFW Recruiting Table with Post members Matt Hamel and DJ Hansen during the Deep Creek Annual Ruritan Beef-fest.



VFW Post 2894 Commander John Peterson (left) and Auxiliary President Sharon Peterson (center) talk with Congresswoman Jennifer Kiggans at the Ruritan Beef-fest.

- **VFW Post 2894 Members Participate in Tunnel to Towers Presentation.** The Tunnel to Towers Foundation gifted a mortgage-free, specially adapted smart home in Chesapeake, Virginia, to U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Mario McKenna and his family on August 25, 2026. In 2022, CPO McKenna suffered a C5 spinal cord injury during a beach diving accident with his family, leaving him a wheelchair-bound tetraplegic.



U.S. Navy CPO Mario McKenna with his family during the Tunnel to Towers presentation.



VFW Post 2894 Commander John Peterson (right) and Service Officer Jim Ireland (left) with New York Fire Captain Joe Rhea at the Tunnel to Towers presentation.

- **VFW Post 2894 Remembers POW-MIA Remembrance Day.** On Friday, 19 September, members of VFW Post 2894 participated in the posting of the American flag at half-mast to commemorate POW-MIA Remembrance Day. Thanks to all those who volunteered to come out early and provide the honors for this somber occasion.



Members of VFW Post 2894 salute the colors as it is posted during POW-MIA Remembrance Day.

Post Commander John Peterson, Service Officer Jim Ireland, and Auxiliary members attended the event along with community members and local officials including Mayor Rick West, Sheriff Wallace Chadwick, Fire Chief Sam, Chief of Police Mark Solesky, Fire Chief Sam Gulisano, and numerous other supporters gathered to celebrate the dedication of the new home.

The home's features were designed to replace the accessibility barriers of his previous multi-story residence. The single-level smart home includes:

- Wider doorways, hallways, and oversized accessible bathrooms.
- Kitchen modifications featuring pull-down cabinets, lower counters, and a height-adjustable lowering stove.
- Custom maneuverability layouts that allow McKenna to navigate, shower, and cook independently.

McKenna is looking forward to navigating work life once he retires from the Navy. Receiving support from Tunnel to Towers helped the McKenna family by giving them a positive outlook on life in a *smart home* where he can get around independently, shower comfortably, and cook for his family again. He would like others to remember to remain resilient through bad times.

- **VFW Post 2894 Members Remember Gold Star Families.**

On Sunday, 27 September, the Chesapeake community remembered area Gold Star families at the Gold Star Memorial in Chesapeake City Park. VFW Post 2894 and the Auxiliary were represented by our Gold Star couple, Carl and Jean Dozier. It was a beautiful day to gather and remember the sacrifices of our service members and show a tribute to those families affected by their loss.



Jean and Carl Dozier stand by the Gold Star Family Monument in Chesapeake City Park.

- **VFW Post 2894 Members Participate in Teachers Conference.**

On Tuesday, 1 September, three members from Post 2894 participated in the annual Chesapeake Teachers New School Year Conference hosted at Grassfield High School. This conference brings together Government and Civics teachers from both the middle and high schools in the Chesapeake area to discuss



VFW Post 2894 members Bob Gregory, Joe Hammers (standing) and Jim Ireland participated in the annual Government and Civics Teachers workday hosted at Grassfield High School.

upcoming academic issues prior to the commencement of the school year. VFW Post 2894 members Bob Gregory, Joe Hammers and Jim Ireland took this opportunity to hand out information brochures for Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy Scholarships and provide additional details on the application process. Some educators reported they would make the essays a class assignment. Interactions with these instructors are instrumental in ensuring the success of both VFW scholarship programs as well as Teacher of the Year participation.

- **Voice of Democracy Nominations Due 31 October.** If you know of an eligible high schooler, please share this scholarship opportunity with him/her!



Established in 1947, our Voice of Democracy[®] audio-essay program provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves in regards to a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay. Each year, nearly 28,000 ninth through 12th grade students from across the country enter to win their share of more than \$1.6 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program.

The national first place winner receives a \$35,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. The complete list of other national scholarships range up to \$21,000, with the first place winner from each VFW Department (state) winning a scholarship of at least \$1,000.

VFW Department (state) first place winners also receive a trip to participate in Founding Forward's Spirit of America Youth Leadership experience at Valley Forge which is an inspiring four-day program where students experience mock congressional debates, participate in a free enterprise challenge, visit historical sites and engage in interactive educational activities. This immersive experience allows students to develop their critical thinking and leadership skills while understanding their responsibilities as citizens. The trip, awarded to every VFW Department (state) winner, is made possible through the generous support of Twisted X.

This year's theme is: **"What a Veteran Taught Me About America."** Students interested in participating must submit their audio essay prepared on this year's theme, with a completed 2026-2027 entry form, to their local participating VFW Post. The deadline for submitting an entry to a VFW Post is October 31st, 2026.

Entry forms can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/4dzrmpS>. Further details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

- **Patriots Pen Scholarship Nominations Due 31 October.** If you know of an eligible middle schooler, please share this scholarship opportunity with him/her!



Each year, more than 800,600 students in sixth through eighth grades enter the VFW's **Patriot's Pen**® annual youth essay contest for a chance to win their share of more than \$1 million in local and national awards. Each first place VFW Department (state) winner receives a minimum of \$500 at the national level, and the national first place winner wins \$5,000!

This year's theme is: **"What a Veteran Taught Me About America."**

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 deadline for submitting an entry for the Patriot's Pen contest to a VFW Post is October 31st, 2026. Entry forms can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/3AgSnjA>. Further details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

- **Teachers of the Year Nominations Due 31 October.** Without our nation's veterans, America wouldn't be the great nation it is today. Our youth deserve to learn about our rich history, traditions and the role of our veterans in creating and shaping America.

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects elementary, middle and high school teachers to participate in the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher program. Post 2894 has been fortunate enough to have a National Teacher of the Year (Craig Blackman, Indian River HS, 2015), a National 3rd Runner-Up (Kimberly Hammers, Grassfield HS, 2016), a Department Winner (Kathy Doren, Greenbrier MS, 2017), a District Winner (Kris Iaquinto, Great Bridge MS, 2019), and another Department Winner (Christine Kapko, Great Bridge HS, 2023)

For the Post to qualify as an All-State Post this year, we need to submit a nominee for one nomination for a teacher, K-12. If you know of someone who promotes a sense of pride in students through the teaching of civic responsibilities, flag etiquette, and patriotism, please nominate them for this prestigious National VFW Award! The deadline is October 31st, 2026! Nominations must include the nomination form, nominees should provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for

example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available.

The top prize winner receives \$1,000 plus another \$1,000 to the school, plaques for both teacher and school, and an all-paid expense trip to the 2027 VFW National Convention which will be in Baltimore, MD.

Entry forms can be downloaded at: <https://vfworg-cdn.azureedge.net/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Community/Youth-and-Education/TeacheroftheYearEntryFormandBrochure.pdf?v=1&d=20240523T171419Z&la=en>. The nomination form and further details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

- **VFW Post 2894 Recognizes Boy Scout Achievement.** On Tuesday, 22 September, Troop 828 held an awards ceremony at Centerville Baptist Church to recognize scouts who have achieved various honors throughout the year. Blake Roberts, VFW Post 2894 Patriot Pen Award winner and son of Post member Ted Roberts, was presented with his Eagle Scout designation, having completed all the requirements for this prestigious level of achievement in the Scouting program. Blake also received the Silver and Bronze Palms for additional merit badges he completed beyond the Eagle Scout requirement. Blake's Eagle Scout project was designing and constructing the fire pit adjacent to the Post Headquarters.

Blake is currently a freshman at Grassfield High School and a cadet in the Air Force JROTC Program. He wants to be a pilot and hopes to get his aviator's license by the time he is seventeen, prior to high school graduation. Congratulations to Blake for attaining Eagle Scout status and beyond - good luck to you as you continue taking on your future challenges!



Blake Roberts, son of VFW Post 2894 member Ted Roberts, receives his Eagle Scout designation from Scoutmaster Al Weiditz.

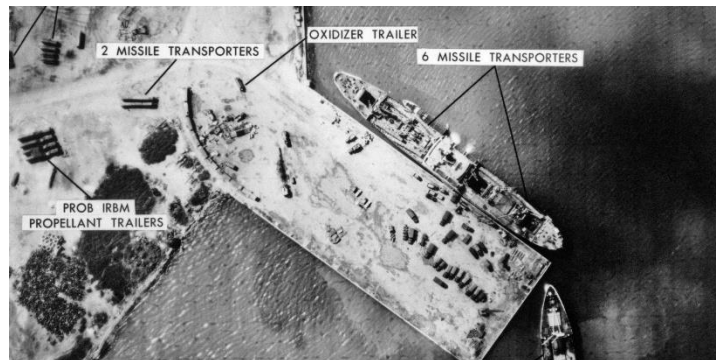
OCTOBER 1962

Cuban Missile Crisis*

During the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a tense, 13-day political and military standoff over the installation of nuclear-armed Soviet missiles in Cuba. President John F. Kennedy notified Americans about the presence of the missiles and made it clear his administration was prepared to use military force to neutralize this perceived threat to national security. Following this dramatic news, many people feared the world was on the brink of nuclear war.

After seizing power over Cuba in 1959, leftist revolutionary leader Fidel Castro aligned himself with the Soviet Union. Under Castro, Cuba grew dependent on the Soviets for military and economic aid. During this time, the United States and the Soviets (and their respective allies) were engaged in the Cold War, an ongoing series of largely political and economic clashes.

The two superpowers plunged into one of their biggest Cold War confrontations after the pilot of an American U-2 spy plane piloted by Major Richard Heyser made a high-altitude pass over Cuba on October 14, 1962, and photographed a Soviet SS-4 medium-range ballistic missile being assembled for installation.



Aerial photo of missiles being offloaded in Cuba in October, 1962.

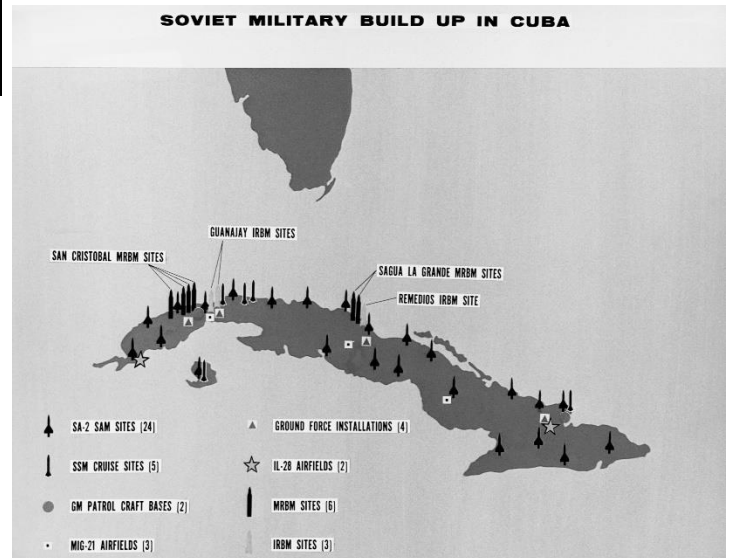
President Kennedy was briefed about the situation on October 16, and he immediately called together a group of advisors and officials known as the executive committee, or ExComm. For the next two weeks, the president and his team wrestled with a diplomatic crisis of epic proportions, as did their counterparts in the Soviet Union.

For American officials, the urgency of the situation stemmed from the fact that the nuclear-armed Cuban missiles were being installed so close to the U.S. mainland—just 90 miles south of Florida. From that launch point, they were capable of quickly reaching targets in the eastern United States.

If allowed to become operational, the missiles would fundamentally alter the ongoing nuclear rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, a rivalry which up to that point had been dominated by the Americans.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had gambled on sending the missiles to Cuba with the specific goal of increasing his nation's nuclear strike capability. The Soviets had long felt uneasy about the number of nuclear weapons that were targeted at them from sites in

Western Europe and Turkey, and they saw the deployment of missiles in Cuba as a way to level the playing field.



Soviet missile deployment in Cuban during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

Another key factor in the Soviet missile scheme was the hostile relationship between the United States and Cuba. The Kennedy administration had already launched one attack on the island—the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961—and both Castro and Khrushchev saw the missiles as a means of deterring further U.S. aggression.

From the outset of the crisis, Kennedy and ExComm determined that the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba was unacceptable. The challenge facing them was to orchestrate their removal without initiating a wider conflict—and possibly an all-out, cataclysmic nuclear war.

In deliberations that stretched on for nearly a week, they came up with a variety of options, including a bombing attack on the missile sites and a full-scale invasion of Cuba. But Kennedy ultimately decided on a more measured approach.

First, he would employ the U.S. Navy to establish a blockade, or quarantine, of the island to prevent the Soviets from delivering additional missiles and military equipment. Second, he would deliver an ultimatum that the existing missiles be removed.



American newspapers report the naval blockade of Cuban during the missile crisis.

In a dramatic televised broadcast on October 22, 1962, the president notified Americans about the presence of the missiles, explained his decision to enact the blockade and made it clear that the United States was prepared to use military force if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security.

Following this public declaration, people around the globe nervously waited for the Soviet response. Some Americans, fearing their country was on the brink of nuclear war, began hoarding food, water and gasoline.

A crucial moment in the unfolding Cuban Missile Crisis arrived on October 24, when Soviet ships bound for Cuba neared the line of U.S. vessels enforcing the blockade. An attempt by the Soviets to breach the blockade would likely have sparked a military confrontation that could have quickly escalated to a nuclear exchange. But the Soviet ships stopped short of the blockade.

Although the events at sea offered a positive sign that war could be averted, they did nothing to address the problem of the missiles already in Cuba. The tense standoff between the superpowers continued through the week, and on October 27, an American reconnaissance plane was shot down over Cuba, and a U.S. invasion force was readied in Florida. (The 35-year-old pilot of the downed plane, Major Rudolf Anderson, is considered the sole U.S. combat casualty of the Cuban Missile Crisis.)

"I thought it was the last Saturday I would ever see," recalled U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, as quoted by author Martin Walker in "The Cold War." A similar sense of doom was felt by other key players on both sides.

Despite the enormous tension worldwide, Soviet and American leaders found a way out of the impasse. During the crisis, the two sides exchanged letters and other communications, and on October 26, Khrushchev sent a message to Kennedy in which he offered to remove the Cuban missiles in exchange for a promise by U.S. leaders not to invade Cuba.

The following day, Khrushchev sent another letter proposing that the Soviets would dismantle its missiles in Cuba if the Americans removed their missile installations in Turkey.

Officially, the Kennedy administration decided to accept the terms of the first message and ignore the second one entirely. Privately, however, American officials also agreed to withdraw their nation's missiles from Turkey. Attorney General Robert Kennedy personally delivered the message to the Soviet ambassador in Washington, D.C., and on October 28, as the Cuban Missile Crisis drew to a close, the world breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Both the Americans and Soviets were sobered by the Cuban Missile Crisis. The following year, a direct "hot line" communication link was installed between Washington and Moscow to help defuse similar situations, and the superpowers signed two treaties related to nuclear weapons.

The Cold War was and the nuclear arms race was far from over, though. In fact, another legacy of the crisis was that it convinced the Soviets to increase their investment in an arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States from Soviet territory. The Cuban Missile Crisis also helped to fuel the antiwar movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

*Ref: <https://www.history.com/articles/cuban-missile-crisis>

NOVEMBER 2001

Battle of Mazar-i-Sharif*

The fall of Mazar-i-Sharif (or Mazar-i-Sharif) in November 2001 resulted from the first major offensive of the Afghanistan War after American intervention. A push into the city of Mazar-i-Sharif in Balkh Province by the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (Northern Alliance), combined with U.S. Army Special Forces aerial bombardment, resulted in the withdrawal of Taliban forces who had held the city since 1998. After the fall of outlying villages, and an intensive bombardment, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces withdrew from the city. Approximately 300 Taliban fighters were killed and 250 were captured, and around 1,000 reportedly defected. The capture of Mazar-i-Sharif was the first major defeat for the Taliban.



The city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

The campaign to capture Mazar-i-Sharif began on October 17, 2001, when the CIA's eight-member Team Alpha landed in the Dari-a-Suf Valley, about 80 miles south of the city, to link up with General Abdul Rashid Dostum. They were joined three days later by Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 595 of the 5th Special Forces Group (United States) of the United States Army. One of the CIA officers involved was Johnny Micheal Spann.

In the days leading up to the battle, Northern Alliance troops advanced on population centers near the city, such as Shol Ghar, which is 25 kilometers from Mazar-i-Sharif. Phonelines into the city were severed, and American officials began reporting accounts of anti-Taliban forces charging Afghan tanks on horseback. On November 2, 2001, Green Berets from ODA 543 and three members of the CIA's Team Bravo inserted into the Dari-a-Balkh Valley, after being delayed by weather for several nights. Their role was to support General Mohammed Atta Nur and his militia. Together they fought through the Dari-e-Souf Valley and had linked up with Dostum and his force and ODA 595 and the CIA Team Alpha, who had also battled through the valley.

On November 7 and 8, as the Taliban were moving 4,000 fighters across the countryside towards Mazar-i-Sharif in preparation for battle, American B-52 bombers bombed Taliban defenders concentrated in the Cheshmeh-ye Shafa gorge that marked the southern entrance to the city, as well as the Haji Gak

pass, which was the only Taliban-controlled entrance to the city. This was one of the heaviest campaigns up to that point.



U.S. Special Operations teams work with Northern Alliance forces at the beginning of the Afghanistan campaign in 2001.

On November 9, 2001, members of the two ODAs and the CIA teams positioned themselves in mountainside hides and began calling in airstrikes against the Taliban at Tangi Pass - the gateway from the Balkh Valley to the city where the US and Northern Alliance agreed to attack. The Taliban responded with indirect fire from BM-21 Grad rockets, which were quickly suppressed by orbiting air support. The airstrikes took their toll on the Taliban and at a signal Atta and Dostum Northern Alliance forces began their assault by foot, horseback, pickup trucks and some captured BMP armored personnel carriers.

Initial rumors claimed that the fighters holding the city were unimpressed by the American bombardment and believed that their opponents refused to advance on the city. At 2 p.m. Northern Alliance forces, under the command of Dostum and Ustad Atta Mohammed Noor, swept across the Pul-i-Imam Bukhri bridge and seized the city's main military base and the Mazar-e Sharif International Airport. The "ragtag" non-uniformed Northern Alliance forces entered the city from the Balk Valley on "begged, borrowed and confiscated transportation", and met only light resistance.

After outlying villages fell to precision air strikes on key command and control centers, approximately 5,000-12,000 Taliban combatants as well as members of al-Qaeda and other foreign fighters began to withdraw towards Kunduz to regroup, travelling in pickup trucks, SUVs and flatbed trucks fitted with ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft guns modified for ground combat. By sunset, the Taliban forces had retreated to the north and east. Some feared that they were massing for a counter-offensive. It was later estimated that 400-600 people died in the battle, although it was not possible to separate civilian and combatant deaths. Approximately 1,500 Taliban were captured or defected.

The fall of the city proved to be a "major shock", since the United States Central Command had originally believed that the city would remain in Taliban hands well into the following year and that any battle would be "a very slow advance". Mazar-i-Sharif was strategically important. Its capture opened supply routes and

provided an airstrip inside the country for American aircraft. The battle was the Taliban's first major defeat and precipitated a rapid transfer of territory in northern Afghanistan. Following rumors that Mullah Dadullah might be headed to recapture the city with as many as 8,000 Taliban fighters, a thousand U.S. Army Rangers were airlifted into the city, which provided the first solid foothold from which Kabul and Kandahar could be reached.

US Army Civil Affairs Teams from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and Tactical Psychological Operations Teams from the 4th Psychological Operations Group assigned to both the Green Berets and Task Force Dagger were immediately deployed to Mazar-e-Sharif to assist in winning the hearts and minds of the inhabitants.

The fall of the city generated reports of jubilant excitement among locals, followed by reports of summary executions and the kidnapping of civilians by the Northern Alliance. The Pakistani prisoners who were captured fleeing the school were held as "slaves" and often sexually abused by their Northern Alliance captors, who demanded a ransom from their families for their return. The American-backed forces now controlling the city immediately began broadcasting from Radio Mazar-i-Sharif, the former Taliban Voice of Sharia channel, on 1584 kHz, including an address from former President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Foreign media outlets were denied access to American troops or to battle sites at this time.



U.S. forces offload from an Army CH-47 "Chinook" helicopter at Mazar-i-Sharif Airport.

The airfield, the city's main prize for the Americans, had been badly damaged by their bombardment and had been boobytrapped with explosives planted by the Taliban in and around the property as they left. This created a rift between the United Kingdom and the United States. The former charged that the aerial bombardment had been ill-advised, that the United States had failed to pay sufficient attention to humanitarian concerns and had refused to consult with its allies. The destroyed runways were patched by Afghans. The first cargo plane landed ten days after the battle. The airbase was not declared operational until December 11. While prior military flights had had to be launched from Uzbekistan or aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea, the Americans now could fly more frequent sorties against the Taliban frontlines, carrying heavier payloads that replace the fuel necessary for the longer flights.

After the battle, the Northern Alliance advanced towards the city of Kunduz, which was the last remaining Taliban stronghold in northern Afghanistan. The siege lasted two weeks with the city being captured on November 25. Around 8,000 Taliban fighters were captured. They were taken to Mazar-i-Sharif and then to Sheberghan Prison in Jowzjan Province. Between 400 and 3,000 prisoners were reportedly massacred by the Northern Alliance during the journey and buried in mass graves in the Dasht-e Leili desert west of Sheberghan.

*Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Mazar-i-Sharif

✚ SAFETY CORNER ✚ OCTOBER IS FIRE PREVENTION MONTH



October is Fire Prevention Month. While Smokey the Bear says "Only you can prevent Forest Fires!", your Surgeon says "Only You Can Prevent Home Fires".

Fire prevention in your home requires action and monitoring to reduce the chance of a fire. Actions you can take include:

- Test smoke and CO detectors monthly. Refresh batteries as needed.
- Review your home evacuation plans and ensure all family members know of evacuation routes.
- Check any and all fire extinguishers for pressure levels and "green" condition.
- Check for heating hazards before cold weather sets in.
 - Keep heaters at least 3 feet from flammable materials.
 - Check your chimney for free flow of smoke and gases.
 - Check for blocked heating vents.
 - Check for excess use of extension cords.

Proper preventive techniques can save the lives of you and your loved ones. Stay safe!



✚ SAFETY CORNER ✚ NOVEMBER IS SAFE TRAVEL MONTH



November is Safe Travel Month. With holidays approaching, many of us plan on traveling to stay and celebrate with family and friends. But to really enjoy the Holidays, we must **ARRIVE ALIVE**.

Some simple and practical things to remember ...and live by... are:

- Avoid travel during early and late hours of darkness. Our biological clocks can send "sleep" messages as opposed to "watch out".
- Avoid the use of medicines that can cause drowsiness and the use of alcohol when you are scheduled to drive.
- Take rest periods every two hours to not only refresh yourself, but also to reduce the risk of blood clots in your legs.
- Take extra care when driving in snowy and icy conditions.
- Avoid eating, drinking, or cell phone use while driving.
- Avoid speeding, obey all traffic laws, and use the 3-4 second rule following any vehicle in front of you.

Travel safe, arrive safe, and live to see us at our next meeting.



POST COMMITTEES – YOU CAN HELP!

If you are looking to get involved and help the Post improve its work for and with veterans, think about joining one of the recently established committees. Contact one of the members of the committees you are interested in and let them know you would like to help:

- **Bataan Death March Committee:** Chuck Wolff, Ted Roberts, John Peterson, Matt Schweers, Grace Schweers, Ann Jones, Becky Waters, Brad Waters, Matt Hostetlar, Diane Hostetlar, Jose Vazquez, and Bob Gregory
- **Budget Committee:** John Peterson, Bob Gregory, Susan Vitale, Mark Rios, Brad Waters, Mike Kust, Keith Neilson, and Dan Eaker
- **By-Laws Committee:** Bob Gregory, Matt Hostetlar, Frank Sgromolo and Jose Vazquez

- **Community Service Committee:** Jim Ireland, Susan Vitale, John Guill, David Weber, Frank Sgromolo, Kimball Thompson, Ron Mayfield, and John Peterson
- **Awards/Scholarship Committee:** Dan Eaker, Mark Rios, Mike Kust, David Weber, Joe Hammers, Kimball Thompson, and Chuck Wolff
- **Membership/Recruiting Committee:** Bob Gregory, Susan Vitale, and José Vazquez
- **Visiting Committee:** Chaplain Joe McGourn and Dan Eaker
- **Health/Safety Committee:** Surgeon David Weber, Frank Sgromolo
- **Activities Committee:** Dan Eaker, Susan Vitale

QUARTERMASTER DESK



Post 2894 Annual Dues are \$35 IF you go through our Post – if you go through National make sure you indicate Post 2894!

Annual dues can be paid via mail (see our new address on the front of the newsletter) or to the Quartermaster at one of our meetings.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

You can become a VFW Life Member by paying a one-time fee as listed in the table below or making an initial \$35 payment and then paying the remainder over an 11-month installment plan. You will be issued an annual membership card and can elect, upon receipt of the first monthly invoice, to pay via check, credit card, or ACH Debit. The applicable Life Membership fee is determined from the schedule using the applicant's age on Dec. 31 of the installment plan year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual date of birth. A permanent Life Membership card will be issued upon completion of this agreement.

Annual Members!

Renewals are due now and must be paid by 31 June.

VFW Post 2894 will purchase your LIFE member hat when you convert to Life. \$50 value!

Join the 150 Life Members in the Post.

See Senior Vice Cmdr Susan Vitale or the Quartermaster, John Peterson

Life Member Options

AGE as of DECEMBER 31 st	One-Time Payment	\$45 + 11 Payments of
18-30 Years Old	\$425.00	\$38.64
31-40 Years Old	\$410.00	\$37.27
41-50 Years Old	\$375.00	\$34.09
51-60 Years Old	\$335.00	\$30.45
61-70 Years Old	\$290.00	\$26.36
71-80 Years Old	\$225.00	\$20.45
81 Years & Over	\$170.00	\$15.45

Installment plan requires member approval from National and must be validated before purchase of hat.

Life and Annual Dues can be paid on line at our web page
<https://vfw2894.org/join-the-vfw>

Points of contact for Annual dues and Life Conversion: susan.vitale@verizon.com and jpeter310@gmail.com.

OCTOBER MILITARY HISTORY

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 1880 John Philip Sousa becomes director of Marine Corps Band</p> <p>1942 Maiden flight of Bell P-59 Airacomet, first US jet fighter</p> <p>1943 Allied forces liberate Naples</p> <p>1945 US Army discharges MSGT Joe Louis</p> <p>1955 Commissioning of USS 'Forrestal' (CVA-59) first supercarrier</p> <p>1957 B-52 bombers begin full-time flying alert in case of USSR attack, which continues until early 1990s</p> <p>2 1799 Washington Navy Yard established</p> <p>1835 Battle of Gonzales: Texans rout Mexicans, touching off Texas Revolution</p> <p>3 1895 Publication of Stephen Crane's "Red Badge of Courage"</p> <p>1921 Unknown Soldier sails from France aboard USS 'Olympia'</p> <p>1990 East and West Germany united as the Republic of Germany</p> <p>4 1821 First USN squadron sails for anti-slavery patrol off Africa</p> <p>5 1943 US aircraft & ships raid Japanese positions on Wake Is, leading to execution of American civilians held prisoner.</p> <p>1986 Former US Marine Eugene Hasenfus captured by Nicaraguan Sandinistas after his plane carrying arms for the rebels is shot down, initiating what became known as the "Iran-Contra" controversy.</p> <p>6 1781 Americans & French begin siege of Cornwallis at Yorktown</p> <p>7 1777 Second Battle of Saratoga (Bemis Heights): Americans win</p> <p>2001 US & Allies initiate war in Afghanistan after Taliban refuses to surrender Osama bin Laden.</p> <p>2004 Allies commence Operation Phantom Fury, the Second Battle of Fallujah in Iraq, the bloodiest battle of the conflict for American forces</p> <p>8 1918 Sgt Alvin York captures "whole damned German Army"</p> <p>9 1942 Guadalcanal: Marines encircle Japanese 4th Inf Regt</p> <p>1945 Broadway ticker tape parade for Admiral Chester W. Nimitz</p> <p>10 1944 17 US carriers raid Ryukyu</p> <p>11 1861 Battle of Dumfries/Quantico Creek, VA</p> <p>1944 Japan announces it will "fight to last man, woman, child, weapon, and piece of equipment."</p> <p>12 2000 Islamist suicide boat attack on USS 'Cole' (DDG-67) at Aden, 17 die, about 40 wounded</p> <p>13 1775 Congress establishes Continental Navy</p> <p>1864 John Mosby raids Harpers Ferry</p> <p>14 1942 Guadalcanal: Japanese ships land reinforcements, shell Marines</p> <p>1942 New Guinea: Heavy fighting, Templeton's Crossing, Kokod Trail.</p> <p>15 1944 Peleliu secured: Japanese KIA abt 12,000, US over 1,200.</p> <p>16 1859 John Brown's "Raid" on Harper's Ferry</p> <p>1863 U.S. Grant named commander of Union forces in West</p> <p>1940 WW II draft begins; #158 drawn first</p> <p>1962 Missile Crisis: JFK learns of Soviet missiles in Cuba</p> <p>17 1777 British General John Burgoyne surrenders at Saratoga</p> <p>1781 British General Lord Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown</p> <p>1916 Battleship 'Arizona' (BB-39) commissioned at Brooklyn Navy Yard</p> | <p>1922 1st US carrier take-off: Virgil C. Griffin in VE-7SF off 'Langley' (CV 1)</p> <p>1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf, largest naval battle in history, begins.</p> <p>18 1767 Completion of survey of Mason-Dixon Line, defining mutual borders of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware</p> <p>1859 US Marines under Robert E. Lee capture John Brown & his party at Harper's ferry</p> <p>1945 Nuremberg War Crimes Trial begins in Munich, Germany</p> <p>19 1879 William Tecumseh Sherman says, "War is hell."</p> <p>1915 USN establishes submarine base at New London, Ct.</p> <p>1950 UN forces enter Pyongyang, capital of North Korea</p> <p>1987 US warships destroy Iranian oil platforms in Persian Gulf</p> <p>2001 Airborne invasion of Afghanistan; Qandahar Airfield seized</p> <p>20 1944 MacArthur returns to Philippines at Leyte, w/200,000 troops</p> <p>1944 US First Army secures Aachen, first large German city captured by the Allies.</p> <p>1978 U.S. Women's Army Corps disestablished and women integrated into the regular Army forces</p> <p>21 1797 USS 'Constitution' - 'Old Ironsides' - launched at Boston.</p> <p>2011 President Obama announces withdrawal of remaining troops from Iraq, thus concluding American involvement there.</p> <p>22 1836 Sam Houston inaugurated as first elected President of Republic of Texas (1836-1838)</p> <p>1954 West Germany joins NATO</p> <p>1962 Missile Crisis: JFK imposes naval blockade on Cuba</p> <p>23 1775 Congress bars blacks from army, but is generally ignored</p> <p>1942 Guadalcanal: Battle of Edson's Ridge - Japanese assault broken</p> <p>1983 Beirut: Suicide truck bomb kills 243 US personnel</p> <p>24 1942 FDR directs all available ammo, aircraft, & equipment be provided to forces engaged on Guadalcanal or bound for North Africa, even if it means stripping units elsewhere</p> <p>25 1943 Battle of Cape St. George: five US destroyers sink 3 of 6 Japanese destroyers</p> <p>1958 US Marines leave Lebanon (there since July)</p> <p>1983 US and West Indian forces occupy Grenada</p> <p>26 1861 Last ride of Pony Express</p> <p>1944 Leyte Gulf ends: losses, Japan 34 major warships, US 6</p> <p>27 1775 Congress formally establishes US Navy</p> <p>1810 U.S. annexes West Florida from Spain</p> <p>1942 Battle of Santa Cruz Island: USS 'Hornet' (CV-8) sunk</p> <p>1954 Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. becomes first black general in USAF</p> <p>28 1942 "Tokyo Express" lands troops on Guadalcanal.</p> <p>1962 Khrushchev orders missiles out of Cuba, ending Missile Crisis</p> <p>29 1929 "Black Friday": Crash of '29</p> <p>1944 Near Aachen, 1st Inf Div Rabbi Sidney Lefkowitz & cantor PFC Max Fuchs conduct first Jewish service for American troops on German soil, broadcast worldwide, with accompanying artillery fire</p> |
|---|--|

- 30** 1954 Defense Department announces elimination of all segregated units
- 1952 First thermonuclear bomb detonated, Marshall Islands
- 1968 President Johnson halts all bombing of North Vietnam
- 31** 1803 US Frigate 'Philadelphia' grounds off Tripoli & taken by Barbary pirates
- 1941 'U-552' sinks USS 'Reuben James' (DD-245), 115 die; first US ship lost in WW II

NOVEMBER MILITARY HISTORY

- 1** 1765 Stamp Act goes into effect in British colonies
- 1835 Texans begin siege of San Antonio (it falls Dec 4)
- 1943 Bougainville: 3rd Marine Div lands at Cape Torokina, Empress Augusta Bay
- 1951 First atomic explosion with troops present, NM
- 1952 First hydrogen device exploded, Eniwetok Atoll
- 1967 North Vietnamese 1st Division attacks allied outposts at Dak To in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam.
- 2** 1783 Washington's "Farewell Address to Army," at Rocky Hill, near Princeton
- 1917 First US troops KIA in France
- 1944 US & Filipino troops clear Japanese from central valley on Leyte.
- 3** 1783 Continental Army mustered out of service, Rocky Hill, NJ
- 1979 Teheran: Iranians storm US embassy to take 63 hostages
- 4** 1862 Richard J. Gatling receives patent for clever device
- 1950 US troops retreat from Pyongyang, North Korea
- 5** 1917 Maj. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr, leads first American patrol into "No Man's Land"
- 6** 1945 First jet carrier landing: Ryan FR "Fireball" on USS 'Wake Island' (CVE-65)
- 7** 1865 CSS 'Shenandoah' surrenders to British authorities at Liverpool, seven months after Appomattox
- 1973 The War Powers Act becomes law.
- 2004 The Second Battle of Fallujah commences in Anbar Province, Iraq
- 8** 1942 Operation Torch: US/British forces land northwestern Africa
- 1950 Lt. Russell J. Brown's F-86 scores North Korean MiG-15 in history's first jet-on-jet combat
- 9** 1921 The Unknown Soldier arrives at Washington aboard USS 'Olympia'
- 1984 "Three Servicemen" Statue added to Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- 1989 The Berlin Wall comes down.
- 2001 Battle of Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan
- 10** 1775 Congress establishes Marine Corps
- 1782 Chillicothe, Ohio, George Rodgers Clark defeats Indians and Tories; final battle of Revolutionary War.
- 1945 US liberates Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald
- 1954 USMC ["Iwo Jima"] Memorial dedicated in Arlington
- 11** 1839 Virginia Military Institute opens
- 1864 Sherman's March: Burning of Rome, Georgia
- 1909 USN begins construction of base at Pearl Harbor
- 1918 World War I armistice
- 1921 Escorted by 30 holders of Medal of Honor, "Unknown Soldier" laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery
- 12** 1942 Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, Day 1: Japanese aircraft raid Henderson field, both fleets converge on Iron Bottom Sound
- 13** 1775 Americans under Maj Gen Richard Montgomery capture Montreal
- 1776 John Paul Jones captures British transport 'Mellish'
- 1882 Vietnam War Memorial dedicated
- 14** 1910 First airplane takeoff from ship: Eugene Ely in Curtiss Flyer, off USS 'Birmingham' (CL-2)
- 1965 Battle of Ia Drang commences in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam.
- 15** 1864 Sherman burns what Confederates have not of Atlanta
- 16** 1982 Maiden voyage of Space Shuttle 'Columbia'
- 17** 1869 Suez Canal opens
- 1913 Panama Canal opens
- 1917 First US ASW Victory: Destroyers 'Fanning' (DD-37) & 'Nicholson' (DD-52) sink 'U-58', in Irish Sea
- 18** 1961 JFK sends 18,000 military advisors to South Vietnam
- 1965 Battle of Ia Drang ends with 234 American deaths and 250 wounded.
- 19** 1492 Columbus lands in Puerto Rico
- 1863 Abraham Lincoln gives Gettysburg speech
- 1944 New Guinea: U.S. troops land
- 1950 Eisenhower becomes supreme commander of NATO
- 1999 USCG Capt Earl R. Fox, Public Health Service, retires; last WW II veteran on active service
- 20** 1866 First national convention of Grand Army of Republic [GAR]
- 1945 General of Army George C. Marshall steps down, after 2272 days as Chief-of-Staff
- 21** 1943 Operation Galvanic: Marines in heavy fighting on Tarawa, National Guardsmen advance on Makin, while Marines land on Abemama, 75 mi SE of Tarawa.
- 22** 1943 FDR, Churchill, & Chiang meet to discuss defeat of Japan.
- 23** 1942 USCG Women Reserve (SPAR's) established.
- 1943 Operation Galvanic: US forces secure Tarawa & Makin
- 1944 Gen Patch's Seventh Army captures Strasbourg.
- 1967 North Vietnamese forces are forced to withdraw from Dak To, ending the costliest engagement between allied and Communist forces.
- 1983 Grenada Campaign Ends
- 24** 1941 CNO warns fleet "surprise aggressive movement" by Japan imminent
- 1944 First B-29 raid from Saipan; 111 bombers hit Tokyo.
- 25** 1783 Evacuation Day: British leave New York City, their last base in US, and that evening Governor George Clinton of New York honors George Washington with banquet at Frances' Tavern, where thirteen toasts were offered, beginning with "The United States of America"
- 1961 USS 'Enterprise' (CVN-65), first nuclear-powered carrier, is commissioned
- 26** 1862 Lincoln meets ". . . little lady who started this big war," Harriet Beecher Stowe
- 27** 1789 President George Washington proclaims last Thursday in November a day of prayer and thanksgiving
- 1943 Teheran Conference: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin talk strategy
- 28** 1795 US pays \$800,000 & frigate for "protection" from Algerian & Tunisian pirates
- 29** 1760 Rogers' Rangers capture Detroit from French

1951 First underground atomic explosion, Frenchman's Flat, NV
30 1782 Preliminary Treaty of Paris: American and British sign preliminary articles to end Revolutionary War

1943 Teheran Conference: FDR, Churchill, & Stalin agree to launch Operation Overlord in May of 1944

POST 2894 CALENDAR

<u>OCTOBER '26</u>	
12	Columbus Day Post Staff Meeting, Post HQ
13	U.S. Navy Birthday
14	Post Meeting, Post HQ
23	Bombing of Marine Barracks Beirut (1983)
27	Navy Day
31	Halloween

<u>NOVEMBER '26</u>	
1	Daylight Saving Time Ends
3	Election Day
7-8	Fall Buddy Poppy Fundraiser
9	Post Staff Meeting, Post HQ
10	Marine Corps Birthday
11	Veterans Day Post Meeting, Post HQ
14	District 2 Quarterly Meeting, Post 2894
26	Thanksgiving



VFW Post 2894 Chesapeake, VA Fall Rifle Raffle

Beretta 12GA Semi-Automatic Shotgun A300 Ultima Patrol!



This NEW weapon features:

- Enhanced Loading port for faster loading
- Oversized Controls
- Black synthetic stock with aggressive textured grips
- Custom Barrel Clamp for 7+1 shell capacity
- 19.1 " Barrel
- 7 Slot Picatinny Rail
- Oversized reversible safety button

Raffle Tickets are \$10

Drawing to be conducted at the Chesapeake City Hall, Veterans Day, 11 November 2026

Contact VFW Post 2894 Members for Raffle Tickets.

Coordinator Mike Kust
email: vfw2894mkust@gmail.com
Mob: 757-633-7157

Tickets are subject to eligibility of purchaser.

**Weapon donated by Freedom
Shooting Sports**



VOICE ★ OF DEMOCRACY

AUDIO-ESSAY COMPETITION

VOD WINNER 2025



\$35,000

**NATIONAL FIRST-PLACE
COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP**

Over **\$2 MILLION** in educational scholarships
and incentives awarded every year!



2026-2027
THEME

"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"



ELIGIBILITY

Open to students
in grades 9-12
enrolled in a public,
private, parochial
school, or home-
study program in
the U.S. and its
territories.



FORMAT

Create a 3-to-5-minute
(+/- 5 seconds) audio
essay on this year's
theme. Your entry
includes:

- ✓ Recorded audio essay
- ✓ Typed essay
- ✓ Entry form

Submit digitally through
your local VFW Post
(often via Scholar's App).



PRIZES

Scholarships and
incentives are awarded
at the local, district,
state and national levels.

Prizes range from
\$1,000 at the state
level to the
\$35,000 national
grand prize!



DEADLINE

All entries must be
submitted to your
local VFW Post by

**OCTOBER 31,
2026**



**YOUR VOICE.
YOUR STORY.
OUR FUTURE.**



SCAN TO ENTER

YOUR LOCAL POST

POST 2894

ENTRY FORM & DETAILS: <https://bit.ly/4dzrmpS>



PATRIOT'S PEN

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

WRITTEN ESSAY COMPETITION



\$5,000

NATIONAL FIRST-PLACE GRAND PRIZE

Over **\$55,000** awarded in national prizes and scholarships every year!

PP WINNER 2025



2026-2027
THEME

"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"



ELIGIBILITY

Open to students in grades 6-8 enrolled in a public, private, parochial school, or home-study program in the U.S. and its territories.



FORMAT

Write a 300-to-400 word essay (+/- 5 words) in English on this year's theme.

- ✓ No color or graphics
- ✓ No personal identifiers in the essay
- ✓ Entry form is the cover sheet

Submit to your local VFW Post.



PRIZES

Awarded at the Post, District, State and national levels. State winners share in \$55,000 of national awards. National winners receive at least \$500, with a \$5,000 first-place national award.



DEADLINE

All entries must be submitted to your local VFW Post by

OCTOBER 31, 2026



SCAN TO ENTER

YOUR LOCAL POST

POST 2894

ENTRY FORM & DETAILS: <https://bit.ly/3AgSnjA>

2026-2027 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award



Entry Deadline: October 31, 2026

What is the Teacher Award Program?

Founded in 1899, the VFW highly supports the education of America's youth. VFW and its Auxiliary have developed a slate of programs dedicated to helping America's educators. VFW Citizenship Education programs stimulate interest in America's history, traditions, Americanism, civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism.

Teachers care deeply about America and its children. They're concerned about the perpetuation of America's noblest traditions and highest ideals. Wouldn't you like to see them get the honor they deserve? Now you can.

Why Should I Enter?

VFW wants to identify and recognize America's best educators who instill a sense of national pride in students. The national awards include \$1,000 Smart/Maher award for each of the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses, \$1,000 award for each winning teacher's school, commemorative plaques and all-expense-paid trip to the VFW National Convention.

Who is Eligible?

All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national VFW winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

How are teachers nominated?

Fill out the official entry form contained on the next page, and provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo if available.

Please submit your completed entry form signed, along with the required documentation to your local VFW Post. Visit vfw.org/FindaPost for Post locations or call VFW Programs Department at 816.756.3390 ext. 6287 to find the Post nearest you.

What Is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31, 2026. It is the responsibility of the nominator to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

What Are the Judging Criteria?

Citizenship (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, to what extent does the teacher encourage and/or model good citizenship and community involvement?

Innovation (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, how much innovation (new ideas, new tools, new resources, and new approaches) does this teacher utilize in the classroom? Does this teacher's effort reflect an ongoing desire to stimulate the students with new things?

Resources (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, to what degree has this teacher demonstrated an ability to identify and utilize new and exceptional resources to fund, facilitate and provide materials for his or her classroom? Does this teacher tap into outside agencies, organizations and individuals to acquire materials and expertise in the classroom? As an example - bringing speakers, finding in-kind and monetary donations, or utilizing local opportunities like museums, field trips and local events.

Passion (1-25 points): On a scale of 1-25, to what degree does this teacher appear to be passionate about the profession of teaching? Are they regularly seeking to upgrade their skills? Do they try and find ways to encourage their students? Do they take a personal interest in their student's individual success?

*If you have any questions, please call
Mary Spencer, 816.756.3390, ext 6287 or
mspencer@vfw.org.*

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: Name, Title

Phone

Best time to call

Alternative Contact: Name, Title

Phone

Best time to call

2026-2027 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award



Entry Deadline: October 31, 2026

2026-2027 Official Entry Form Teacher Award Competition

Please tell us who you are nominating—below in box.

Name: First, M.I., Last	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
()	
Phone	Email
Grade Level (K-5, 6-8, or 9-12)	
School Name	
School Address	
()	
School Phone	School Email

Person Nominating Teacher

Name:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Email:	

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this teacher has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Teacher Award Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairperson's Signature	Post #
VFW Auxiliary President's/Chairperson's Signature (If Applicable)	
Post Address	
City, State, Zip	
VFW Post Email	
No. of teachers participating	
No. of winners advanced to District	
Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarship awards \$	
Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses \$ (banquet, pins, etc.)	

To Be Completed by the VFW District (If Applicable)

I certify that the teacher named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Teacher Award District Competition and is our entry into the Department judging.

District Chairperson's Signature	Dist #
Address	
City, State, Zip	
()	
Phone	Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the teacher named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Teacher Award Department Competition, is our entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson's Signature	
()	
Daytime Phone	Email

The winner ☐ has been ☐ will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on _____.

Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries will begin at the local VFW Post level. Individual nominees may submit their entry directly to the Post. This VFW Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One Post winner can be submitted for each level, and to District by Nov. 15. If your Department does not have a District judging, then submit to your Department Headquarters by Jan. 1. Otherwise, one District winner, at each level, may advance to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions: First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to find your local VFW Post. Be sure this Post is within the state you reside in. If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit vfw.org/ContactUs and look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email. If you still need assistance, please email us at VFW National Headquarters at mspencer@vfw.org.