

CHECKPOINT



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'My Sons are Thriving'

Help a Hero Recipient Credits VFW for His Law School Success

Before Ed Tjaden joined the Army in 2007, he knew he wanted to be a lawyer. The member of Post 1592 in St. Peters, Mo., said school wasn't motivating him so he began seven years in the military.

Today, the father of three is preparing to graduate with a law degree from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., a feat, he said, that wouldn't have happened without VFW.

In 2008, Tjaden deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Bde., 1st Armd. Div., for 15 months. As a close air support coordinator, Tjaden spent time at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Camp Liberty and Camp Stryker.

While deployed, Tjaden said he had trouble with his ankles, constantly rolling them. He would wrap his ankles and move on. It wasn't until he returned stateside that he learned he should have had doctors examine and properly care for his ankles long before.

He had surgeries on both ankles at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. During the process, nerves in his legs were damaged, and he could no longer walk. When he was medically retired in 2014, he was told a wheelchair would be his

new way of life.

Undeterred, he contacted his alma mater, Eastern Illinois University (EIU) in Charleston, Ill., to enroll and start his life anew.

While in college, he spent a lot of time in therapy. He worked his way from the wheelchair to using a cane to walk. These days, he rarely uses the cane.

After graduating from EIU in 2015, Tjaden applied for law school at Washington University in St. Louis. With three boys to raise, Tjaden and his wife, Ginny, knew it would be a struggle. They lived in an area where they didn't feel comfortable raising their boys, but it was affordable.

Then Tjaden heard about VFW's Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship. He applied and was granted assistance.

"That scholarship changed the trajectory of my law school experience," he said. "We were able to move to St. Peters (Mo.). The schools are better, and my sons are thriving."

Tjaden has been a Help a Hero recipient for four semesters. At school, he is in the top 10 percent of his class.

"If it weren't for you guys, we wouldn't be where we are," he said. "I just can't say enough good things. VFW transformed my law school experience."

Incidentally, Tjaden was one of nine VFW-Student Veterans of America fellows selected to attend VFW's annual legislative conference this month (see page 2 for more details on the fellowship).

Email: jdyhouse@vfw.org

More than \$4.1 Million Awarded

VFW's Sport Clips Help a Hero scholarship is now in its fifth year. More than \$4.1 million has been awarded to 943 military and student veterans.

The scholarship provides service members and veterans up to \$5,000 in post-secondary scholarships.

"Through the generosity of Sport Clips and its founder, VFW life member Gordon Logan, we were able to create the Help a Hero Scholarship program in 2014 to help a new generation of patriots attain their educational goals," VFW Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman said.

Scholarship applications are being accepted for the 2018 fall semester. Apply at www.vfw.org/scholarship.



VFW's Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship recipient Ed Tjaden with his wife, Ginny, and their three sons, Domic, Maxwell and Benjamin. PHOTO COURTESY OF ED TJADEN



EXTRA! EXTRA!

REGISTER NOW FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION

It's time to register for the 119th VFW National Convention, July 21-25, 2018, Kansas City, Mo. VFW National Headquarters mailed convention housing and registration forms to all Posts in February with Post election mailings. VFW's bylaws state that each Post must register at least one delegate for the convention.

To make housing reservations, call 1-877-464-6840, fax 816-691-3880; international call (980) 337-3372 from 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m. E.T., Monday through Friday, mail information to

VISIT KC
1321 Baltimore Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64105
or email housing@ihs-housingteam.com.

The housing cut-off is Monday, June 18. However, do not wait until the last minute to make reservations, as there is no guarantee rooms will be available by that time.

Additional information can be found at www.vfw.org. The website also has general convention information, including the registration form, links to other convention-related material and a tentative schedule.

All advance registrations should be mailed to VFW National Headquarters
ATTN: Convention Registration
406 W. 34th St.
Kansas City, MO 64111
or you can register online at www.vfw.org.

PUBLICATIONS CONTEST DEADLINE IS APRIL 2

The deadline to enter the 2018 VFW National Publications Contest is April 2. Carefully read the information emailed to you in January. If you require further information, call (816) 756-3390 ext. 113, or email kwilliams@vfw.org.

REMEMBER VFW IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

With your support, the VFW has been making a difference in the lives of veterans, service members and their families for more than 118 years. Learn how you can amplify your impact with a gift through your estate plan. To learn more, contact the VFW Planned Giving Office by calling (816) 968-1119, emailing plannedgiving@vfw.org or visiting www.vfw.org/plannedgiving.

HUMANA OFFERS MEDICARE EXPERTISE

Are you approaching your 65th birthday? VFW has aligned with Humana to give you access to their flexible Medicare plans that work specifically for military veterans. Humana also encourages healthier lifestyles, veteran entrepreneurship and careers through the Humana Veterans Initiative.

Learning how Medicare plans work is critical. Whether you're looking for Medicare Supplement, Medicare Advantage or even a Part D Plan, Humana can help find a plan that meets your needs.

For additional information, visit www.vfwinsurance.com/medicare or call 1-877-713-6177.



Successful Membership Recruiting

National VFW Membership Assistant Director Offers Proven Recruiting Tips

When VFW Membership Assistant Director Rick McKenna presents at membership recruiting workshops, he reminds VFW recruiters to always be on the lookout for indicators of whether or not someone is a veteran.

Look for bumper stickers or license plates in a parking lot, he said. Apparel is another way to determine if someone might be a veteran.

McKenna said he has signed up new members just by noticing a cap indicating military service.

"It's not always going to go that smooth," McKenna said. "But if you don't put yourself out there, you'll never know. You have to quit being afraid of being told 'no.'"

McKenna said one of the most important things for a recruiter to remember is to be respectful of the potential recruit's time. Keeping the introductory conversation to three to five minutes is key. If the veteran says "no" when you ask for a time to follow up with him or her, leave a business card with your contact information should he or she have a change of heart.

"There's really nothing worse than a recruiter being pushy," McKenna added. "That's when you will lose a potential member."

Likewise, McKenna said to make sure to actually follow up in a timely manner. In other words, if you say you are going to call or visit in a few days, be sure to do it.

Here are some tips McKenna said every recruiter should be aware of:

- Use everyday words when speaking.
- Don't use profanity.
- Be sure to maintain a neat, professional appearance.

- Always say, "Thank you."
- Address potential members as "sir" or "ma'am."
- Put away all vices, such as cell phones or tobacco products.
- Shake hands.
- Acknowledge and talk to other individuals who might be with the veteran.

"Whether you are working a membership booth at the county fair or approaching someone in the grocery store parking lot, there are four basic steps in recruiting," McKenna said.

They are:

Opening introduction – Introduce yourself and make it clear you are with the Veterans of Foreign Wars because not everyone will know what VFW stands for.

Qualifying questions – Use specific questions to determine if the veteran is eligible.

Show VFW facts – Offer brochures and present facts about the VFW to illustrate what the organization does and why it is important for them to join.

Ask to join – If you never ask them to join, they never will.

"The longevity of our great organization is reliant on good recruiting practices," McKenna said. "Being courteous and respectful will go a long way in recruiting. And remember, don't get discouraged and never give up."

Email: jdyhouse@vfw.org



Department of Nevada Membership Chairman Tony Marshall and Sr. Vice Commander Jerry Peterson speak with an American Legion member about the benefits becoming a VFW member as well at the 2017 American Legion National Convention.
VFW MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

CHECKPOINT

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 VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
 NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

**STUDENT VETERANS
 of AMERICA**



VFW-SVA LEGISLATIVE FELLOWSHIP

Empowering Future Leaders

Student Vets Head to Capitol Hill to Help VFW Lobby for Veterans

This month, nine VFW members, who also happen to be student veterans, will converge on Capitol Hill for the VFW and Student Veterans of America (SVA) Legislative Fellowship program.

Now in its fourth year, the fellowship is a semester-long academic experience that involves research, action, reporting and advocating for veterans' policies.

"Through our fellowship program, the VFW and SVA seek to work with exemplary student veterans to hone their unique skills as advocates on campus, in the community and on the national stage," VFW Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman said. "The VFW sees this fellowship as yet another way of supporting our shared mission with SVA to empower future leaders."

During their visit to Washington, each fellow will be paired with a VFW mentor and accompany their VFW state delegation to Capitol Hill for in-person meetings with members of Congress.

The fellows also will receive briefings from federal officials on ongoing policy initiatives, as well as

learn techniques to work with the media when advocating on behalf of veterans' issues.

When the fellows return home, each is responsible for executing a community action plan, to include delivering their individual research papers directly to their respective congressional delegations.

"SVA has partnered with the VFW for the past four years to host the annual VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow program," said SVA's president and CEO Jared Lyon, who also is a member of VFW Post 3308 in Tallahassee, Fla. "We are fortunate to have a strong partner, the VFW, to offer this program and are grateful for their support empowering tomorrow's leaders."

For more information on the fellowship program, visit www.vfw.org/studentfellowship.

Email: jdyhouse@vfw.org

"The VFW sees this fellowship as yet another way of supporting our shared mission with SVA to empower future leaders."

— Keith Harman
 VFW Commander-in-Chief

2018 VFW-SVA Fellows

Brad Ward, Army veteran,
 University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond.

Gabriel Snashall, Navy veteran,
 Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn.

Edward Tjaden, Army veteran,
 Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

Brian Walker, Navy veteran,
 Northeastern University in Boston.

Ryan Rehberg, Army veteran,
 University of North Dakota in Grand Forks.

Joseph Sacco, Navy veteran,
 Idaho State University in Pocatello.

Hannah Joyce, Air Force veteran,
 Simmons College in Boston.

Francheska Salazar, Navy veteran,
 Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Md.

Jennifer Hosley, Army veteran,
 University of Arkansas in Ft. Smith.



VFW's National Legislative Service Associate Director Ken Wiseman last September discusses what it was like to be in the first VFW-SVA Fellowship class in 2015 in Washington, D.C. That led to his position with VFW. Wiseman is a member of Post 1503 in Dale City, Va., and the VFW Department of Virginia senior vice commander.

PHOTO BY LAUREN GOLDMAN/VFW

Testimonials

"The fellowship allowed me to effectuate meaningful and long-lasting change within our VA through the legislative process."

Karthik Venkatraj, 2017 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow

"Female Fellows need to see that not only are we included in fellowship programs, but that our opinions, experience and expertise matter in the paid professional sector of veteran advocacy as well."

Rebecca Lloyd, 2017 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow

"I had the opportunity to experience our nation at work. I saw the value of every veteran's sacrifice toward advocacy of benefits for all."

Rogaciano Villalobos, 2015 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow

Female Post Commanders Seek to be Leaders in their Communities

Last year, two VFW Posts ushered in a new era. One elected its first female commander and the other elected its first black female commander. Both women hope to increase their Post's involvement in their communities.

VFW Post 9931 Commander Kimberly Napoleon said she initially didn't understand "what the impact would be" or how she would be received by her fellow Post members. However, she added that she was honored to be elected commander of the Bridgeport, Mich., Post last July.

"Our Post is predominantly all men, and to have them have enough confidence in me to take us to another level, that meant a lot," said Napoleon, who served in the Persian Gulf in 1990 as a local purchase agent with the 364th Supply and Service Company.

A "community servant by nature," Napoleon said her goal as commander is to bring more awareness of VFW to the community.

"I believe in patriotism," Napoleon said. "I also believe in giving recognition to those to whom it's due, such as our veterans."

Specifically, her passion lies with the Vietnam War-era veterans.

"I know times have changed since they came home, [but I'm] working hard at making sure they get the recognition they do deserve," Napoleon said.

She also holds "informationals" for veterans, their families and surviving spouses to make them aware of potential benefits.

As a veteran who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress, she said she understands the challenges veterans face and the stigmas attached to the diagnosis.

"I want to really be able to change that and help to be the face and use this [position as commander] to show that there's life after war, there's life after trauma and that we can live normal, full lives," Napoleon said.

Going forward, she hopes to garner more publicity for her Post by being more active in the community, such as going into schools to promote patriotism.

"It's not about me," Napoleon said. "I'd rather work in the background, but I want [the Post] to be more visible."

'Not Just a Title'

Stacie Higgins became the first female Post commander elected to Boonville, N.Y., Post 5538 last year.

"I don't look at it any different than the first man," said Higgins, who earned her VFW eligibility serving in Bosnia in 2001 and Korea in the early 1980s as a cable systems installer.

But the recognition gave her a "sense of pride" because the members put their trust in her.

"It's not just a title, being commander of a VFW has a lot of different facets to it," Higgins said.

Her responsibilities include such duties as accounting work, attending community events, visiting veterans in nursing homes and attending military funerals.

Higgins said she wants her Post to be a "front leader" for community service and veteran outreach, specifically helping veterans transitioning from service.

"I thought [joining the military] was way easier than [getting] out because [I had] that mission-oriented sense," Higgins said. "[But when I work] in the community, most people don't even know what that means. And that plays a big role."

She also hopes to make at least one of her Post's bathroom ADA-compliant.

"We're trying to build [the facility] up and make it more of an event place for families, not just a canteen," Higgins said. "And we're making good progress. We've redone the entire hall."

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Kimberly Napoleon (top, bottom left) is the first black female commander of VFW Post 9931 in Bridgeport, Mich., while Stacie Higgins (top, bottom right) is the first female commander of VFW Post 5538 in Boonville, N.Y. Napoleon served in the Persian Gulf in 1990 as a local purchase agent with the 364th Supply and Service Company. Higgins earned her VFW eligibility serving in Bosnia in 2001 and Korea in the early 1980s as a cable systems installer.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KIMBERLY NAPOLEON AND STACIE HIGGINS

"It's not about me. I'd rather work in the background, but I want [the Post] to be more visible."

— Kimberly Napoleon, VFW Post 9931 Commander



"It's not just a title, being commander of a VFW has a lot of different facets to it."

— Stacie Higgins, VFW Post 5538 Commander

Boy Scouts Help a Connecticut Post Start an Adopt-a-Vet Program

Members of VFW Post 1926 in Simsbury, Conn., hope a new program will allow them to be more involved in the lives of veterans who need help.

The Post's long-standing veterans' relief fund program wasn't getting the job done, said Post 1926 Senior Vice Commander John Fox. That's why the Post started the Adopt-a-Vet program last year.

It not only helps veterans financially, but also helps them find jobs, transportation and housing. It also gives veterans additional help as time goes on, and veterans are given goals to meet in order to receive help from the program.

"It's about accountability," Fox said. "It's not only accountability for the veterans, but for us, too. We want to make sure we are providing the help that the veterans need and to be a safety net for them if we need to be in the future."

The new program is led by co-chairs Fox, a Vietnam War veteran who was an electrician's mate in the Navy from 1968-72, and Afghanistan and Iraq war veteran Jason Lill, a retired Army National Guard chief warrant officer 5 who was a helicopter and fixed-wing pilot.

"Our goal is to give a hand up — not a hand out," Fox said. "We don't want to just give veterans a grant to pay their bills. We want to give those veterans help and guidance to get them back on their own two feet and not let them fall into

traps that made them dependent to begin with."

Fox said the program ensures that veterans have goals and that the proper help is given in order for them to succeed.

"We sit down with the veteran and have a conversation about what their needs are, and lay out a plan for them," Fox said. "We help them through every step."

The first veteran to receive help through the program was a homeless veteran named Matt. He was a Marine stationed at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Fox said Matt suffers from depression and was discharged from the Marine Corps because of his condition. The Adopt-a-Vet program helped Matt secure a job, find a place to live and provided him with a car that was donated from a local resident.

In December, the Simsbury Cub Scout Den 11 of Boy Scout Pack 276 donated \$486 to Post 1926's Adopt-a-Vet program.

"It was great receiving that donation from Cub Scouts," Fox said. "For them to be so young and take the initiative to raise that money for veterans is a story in itself."

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Members of Cub Scout Den 11, of Boy Scout Pack 276 in Simsbury, Conn., show their certificates of appreciation from Simsbury's VFW Post 1926 during a VFW dinner in December. The Cub Scouts were recognized for donating \$486 to the Post's Adopt-a-Vet program. The four Cub Scouts, in the front row, responsible for the donation are: (from left to right) Brett Osborne, Dylan Soto, Aidan Drake and Phelps Merriman. Caleb Deems, who is missing from the photo, also participated. Those in the back row are: (from left to right) Post Commander John Romano; Den Leader Suzanne Osborne; her son, Josh; Post Quartermaster John Lamb; and Senior-Vice Commander John Fox.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN FOX

VFW Posts Rally Around Homeless Population

VFW Post 3282 Commander Jose Rosa took it upon himself to help the homeless in Port Orange, Fla., when temperatures plummeted to 20 degrees in early 2018.

Ponce Inlet Realty, also in Port Orange, donated hats, about 40 mats and five boxes of premium potato chips to the Post, along with \$5,000, which the Post is putting toward a new generator.

Rosa said his two sons-in-law and two grandchildren helped him distribute those items to the homeless who were waiting for a shuttle to a local church.

"I happened to go to that area where there were about 70 homeless waiting in the cold to be picked up," Rosa said. "So they ran up to us, to the two cars that I brought over there, and they were so happy to get these blankets and to get the chips and the hats."

Rosa also gave money out of his own pocket.

"I didn't bother the Post for it because there wasn't time," Rosa said.

"These people were hungry and they were cold."

It is "extremely important," according to Rosa, to help those in need.

"I want the community to see that somebody's trying to help these homeless and not to forget that these people are out there," Rosa said.

Meanwhile, in Savannah, Ga., VFW Post 660 has been hosting its "Vets Helping Vets" event for four years.

Auxiliary President Leigh Ann Koons-VanHorn said the program, which

began with past-Auxiliary President Dawn Kaping, includes an awareness camp out that was held Jan. 12-14 with more than 30 participants.

Post 660 partners with Post 8760, of Beaufort, S.C., and two veterans motorcycle clubs.

"They get awareness out to other people in the community," Koons-VanHorn said, "and we invite people

to come out and camp with us for a weekend to make them aware of what it's like to be a homeless veteran."

Post members conduct a donation drive during the camp out to collect money and goods for the homeless. Some campers, according to Koons-VanHorn, purchase tents for the camping portion and donate them at the end of the weekend.

Collections also are accepted all year, and the Post seeks "basic" items such as water, clothes, sleeping bags and non-perishable canned goods.

Koons-VanHorn said the Post distributes items to homeless camps in various locations on a weekly basis. They also find out what the veterans need, such as rides to doctor appointments, obtaining a driver's license or a copy of a DD-214, among other requests.

Koons-VanHorn said the significance of "Vets Helping Vets" is that they are "looking after our veterans who wrote a blank check for us."

"I think that just completely stands on the premise of what our organization is," Koons-VanHorn said.

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Ending Homelessness is a VFW Priority

VFW passed a resolution at the 118th National Convention noting the importance of taking care of homeless veterans. *Res. No. 620* states that while veteran homelessness has decreased due to efforts of multiple agencies, "VA acknowledges its obligation to maintain comprehensive assistance to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or [are] at risk of homelessness to the best of its capabilities."

The resolution also states that VFW will fight for:

- An increase in the availability of affordable housing.
- Expansion of educational, employment, training and gender-specific services.

"I want the community to see that somebody's trying to help these homeless and not to forget that these people are out there."

— Jose Rosa, commander, VFW Post 3282, Port Orange, Fla.

"We invite people to come out and camp with us for a weekend to make them aware of what it's like to be a homeless veteran."

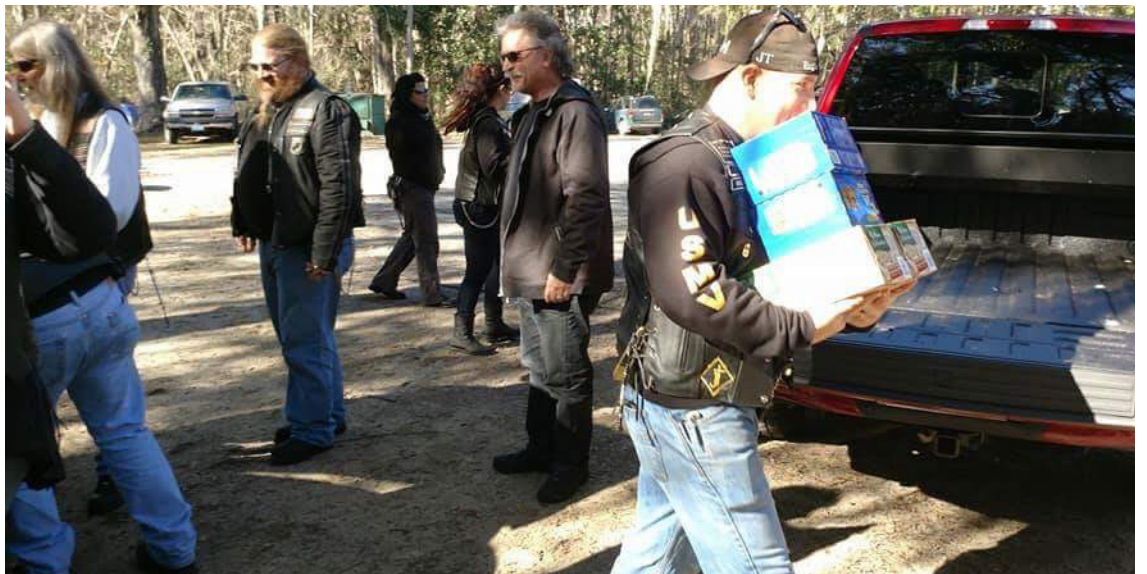
— Leigh Ann Koons-VanHorn, VFW Post 660 (Savannah, Ga.) Auxiliary president



Above: Ponce Inlet Realty donates \$2,500 to VFW Post 3282, in Port Orange, Fla., which is putting the funds toward the purchase of a new generator. The realty company also donated mats, hats and potato chips to the Post in early 2018. Post Commander Jose Rosa distributed those items to the area's homeless in early 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSE ROSA



Above right: VFW Post 3282 Commander Jose Rosa distributes items to the homeless in Port Orange, Fla. in early 2018. Rosa also gave money out of his own pocket. "I didn't bother the Post for it because there wasn't time," Rosa said. "These people were hungry and they were cold." PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSE ROSA



Right: Volunteers collect donations in January during VFW Post 660's "Vets Helping Vets" event, which coincides with a Camp out to raise awareness of veteran homelessness. Post 660, of Savannah, Ga., partners with Post 8760, of Beaufort, S.C., and two veterans motorcycle clubs for the event. PHOTO COURTESY OF LEIGH ANN KOONS-VANHORN

'It Meant the World to my Family'

VFW Unmet Needs Helps Army Veteran and his Family

An Iraq and Afghanistan war Army veteran was awarded more than \$1,000 to help with living expenses, thanks to VFW's Unmet Needs program, while he was unable to work.

Nicholas Koonce, 33, served from February 2006 to November 2012 as a vehicle mechanic and recovery specialist. He was part of the 937th Clearance Co., 8th Engineer Bn., 36th Engineer Bde., during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Koonce, of Elkhart, Ill., said that he has chronic PTSD and lower lumbar strain, which results in partial paralysis in both of his legs. He said that jumping in and out of the trucks and wearing all the necessary gear for combat put strain on his spine, which caused his problems.

After being honorably discharged, Koonce secured a job as a lawn and garden equipment salesman. But because of his service-connected disabilities, he was let go from the job.

"I was unable to make my rent payment and got pretty far behind on my electric and gas bills," Koonce said. "Meanwhile, my wife was suffering through an injury as well."

Since he and his wife, Erica, couldn't work, they applied for an *Unmet Needs* grant and received \$1,725.10. Koonce said he found out about VFW's program through Wounded Warrior Project.

"The grant helped tremendously," Koonce said. "It took a lot of stress off of my wife and me."

The *Unmet Needs* grant helped Koonce catch up on bills. A few weeks after receiving the grant, Koonce said VA finally changed his disability to a 100 percent rating.

Koonce said: "It meant the world to my family and me that we were chosen to receive help from the program."

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DO I QUALIFY FOR UNMET NEEDS?

To be eligible to receive financial assistance through VFW's *Unmet Needs* program, a recipient must:

- ✓ Be on active duty, whose financial hardship is a result of deployment, military pay error or medical discharge.
- ✓ Have been discharged on or after Sept. 11, 2001, whose financial hardship is a direct result of military-service connected injuries and/or illnesses that are causing an employment hardship.
- ✓ Have been discharged prior to Sept. 11, 2001, who is on a fixed income (VA compensation, SSI, SSDI) and/or whose financial hardship is an emergency situation.

The financial hardship can't be caused by:

- Civil, legal or domestic issues; misconduct; or any issues that result from spousal separation or divorce.
- Financial mismanagement by self or others, or due to bankruptcy.

Eligible expenses

- Household (mortgage, rent, repairs, insurance)
- Vehicle (payments, insurance, repairs)
- Utilities
- Food and clothing
- Children's clothing, diapers, formula, school or childcare expenses
- Medical bills, prescriptions eyeglasses

Ineligible expenses

- Credit cards, military charge cards or retail store cards
- Cable, internet or secondary phones
- Cosmetic or investigational medical procedures/expenses
- Taxes
- Furniture, electronic equipment or vehicle rentals
- Any other expenses not determined to be a basic life need



Unmet Needs has Disbursed \$9.7 million,

VFW's *Unmet Needs* program helps America's military families who have experienced unexpected financial difficulties.

The program, supported by Burger King franchisees, provides financial aid to assist those with basic life needs in the form of a grant — not a loan.

Since 2004, *Unmet Needs* has given \$9.7 million to more than 8,300 military and veteran families. This includes 389 families in Puerto Rico, who each received a \$300 grant after hurricanes devastated the island in 2017.

Learn more about the *Unmet Needs* program at: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>.



Army veteran Nicholas Koonce with his wife, Erica, and children, Macy and Maddie. The Koonce's received assistance from VFW's *Unmet Needs* program.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NICHOLAS KOONCE

Service Officer Assists More than 3,000 Vets

VFW Post 3875 past Quartermaster Alan Hiraoka (left) and Post Commander Rankin Gossert (right) recognize service officer Robert Montague (center) for his years of helping veterans last September at the Post home in Hilo, Hawaii.

According to Post Quartermaster Renita Harvey, Montague was service officer at the Post for nearly 20 years. And while the 89-year-old Korean War veteran has turned over the reins to another member, he still is active in helping veterans who most need it.

“He took the charge of assisting veterans to a whole new level,” Harvey said.

Harvey said the retired Army lieutenant colonel, who also served three tours in Vietnam, helped nearly 3,500 veterans or their family members during his time as service officer. She added that more than 15 percent (approximately 267) of the cases Montague initiated involved disability compensation and those vets were later awarded 100 percent disability ratings.

“He’s really made a difference here,” said Harvey, adding that Montague helped her with her own VA claim years ago. “People come out of the woodwork to have him help. He does not give up, nor will he ever stop helping veterans.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF RENITA HARVEY

MARCH | APRIL 2018

CHECKPOINT

VFW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS • PUBLICATIONS
406 WEST 34TH STREET, KANSAS CITY, MO 64111

Posts with the Most

VFW POSTS OF 1,000 MEMBERS OR MORE AS OF FEB. 16, 2018

| Rank | Post No. | Location | Members | Rank No. | Location | Members | Rank No. | Location | Members |
|------|----------|---------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------------------------|---------|----------|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | 1503 | Dale City, VA..... | 2,861 | 11 | 76 San Antonio, TX..... | 1,588 | 28 | 9399 Apache Junction, AZ..... | 1,176 |
| 2 | 27 | Wiesbaden, Germany | 2,621 | 12 | 7968 Apache Junction, AZ..... | 1,560 | 29 | 56 Leavenworth, KS | 1,159 |
| 3 | 1114 | Evansville, IN..... | 2,175 | 13 | 10047 North Las Vegas, NV | 1,445 | 29 | 2111 Chula Vista, CA | 1,159 |
| 4 | 9972 | Sierra Vista, AZ..... | 2,162 | 14 | 6506 Rosedale, MD..... | 1,444 | 31 | 549 Tucson, AZ..... | 1,152 |
| 5 | 392 | Virginia Beach, VA..... | 1,996 | 15 | 4647 North Highlands, CA..... | 1,416 | 32 | 1512 Lemon Grove, CA..... | 1,120 |
| 6 | 8862 | Vicenza, Italy | 1,907 | 16 | 63 Boise, ID..... | 1,368 | 33 | 3282 Port Orange, FL | 1,105 |
| 7 | 10692 | Grafenwoehr, Germany | 1,829 | 17 | 4809 Norfolk, VA | 1,366 | 34 | 2503 Omaha, NE | 1,098 |
| 8 | 4709 | Conroe, TX | 1,807 | 18 | 9342 Ansbach, Germany | 1,357 | 35 | 972 Terre Haute, IN | 1,093 |
| 9 | 9785 | Eagle River, AK | 1,742 | 19 | 628 Sioux Falls, SD..... | 1,343 | 36 | 7686 Alamogordo, NM | 1,089 |
| 10 | 2485 | Angeles City, Philippines | 1,672 | 20 | 2391 Saint Augustine, FL..... | 1,335 | 37 | 10281 Radcliff, KY | 1,075 |
| | | | | 21 | 7234 Ocean View, DE..... | 1,328 | 37 | 1170 Middletown, KY | 1,075 |
| | | | | 22 | 6873 Abilene, TX | 1,261 | 39 | 7564 West Fargo, ND | 1,063 |
| | | | | 23 | 4372 Odessa, TX..... | 1,245 | 40 | 969 Tacoma, WA | 1,035 |
| | | | | 24 | 10097 Fort Myers Beach, FL..... | 1,244 | 41 | 2866 Saint Charles, MO..... | 1,029 |
| | | | | 25 | 10216 Songtan-Si, Korea..... | 1,218 | 42 | 1273 Rapid City, SD..... | 1,027 |
| | | | | 26 | 1146 St Clair Shores, MI | 1,209 | 43 | 1326 Bismarck, ND..... | 1,025 |
| | | | | 27 | 8951 West York, PA | 1,194 | 44 | 10436 Kitzingen, Germany..... | 1,003 |



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