



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS MASON DIXON POST 7234 DECEMBER 2025

COMMANDER'S CORNER

Comrades, Members and Guests;

I hope your Holiday preparations are progressing well. If you are traveling, please be safe on land, sea, and air. Our wish is for good health, happiness, and prosperity in the New Year.

Looking back on November, a few shoutouts that deserve particular recognition go to:



1. All Members who donated Pasta Casseroles, Turkeys, Non-perishable Food items, Coats & Sweats for Vets, and Toys for our annual Toys for Tots Drive
2. The Canteen Staff, Dana Mason and all Volunteers who contributed to the success of our Veterans Day and Quilts of Valor Presentation Ceremony
3. The Canteen Staff again, and all of the Volunteers who prepared, served, and cleaned up after the Thanksgiving Day Dinner for our Members and Guests
4. All Volunteers who made our Night at the Races such a successful fund raiser
5. The Staff and Children of Lighthouse Christian and Lord Baltimore Elementary Schools who saluted and remembered our Heroes for Veterans Day
6. Our incomparable Post Honor Guard for presiding at Ceremonies honoring our Fallen Comrades, and at other Veteran Remembrance Events
7. Past Commander Dean Levering for replacing U.S. Flags at local Cemeteries
8. Memorial Brick Placement Team (Gossart, Reilly (J & M), Weese and Loppatto)
9. The Staff and Volunteers at St. Paul's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church for feeding Homeless Veterans and giving them shelter from the harsh winter elements
10. Bethany Florist for donating Floral Arrangements for our Veterans Day Ceremonies and for the Memorial Services of our Fallen Comrades
11. The VFW Post 7234 Golf Association for their generous donations to Warriors Helping Warriors, Home of the Brave, and our own Post Relief Fund
12. The VFW Post 7234 Lobby Re-Design Committee for developing alternative solutions for beautifying the entrance way to our Post – more to follow on this

Looking ahead to December, a few things to keep in mind:

1. 1 Dec: Monthly General Membership Meeting
2. 2 Dec: Visit Home of the Brave
3. 3 Dec: Visit Delaware Veterans Home in Milford
4. 4 Dec: Annual Post Inspection by VFW Department of Delaware
5. 7 Dec: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (Flags to Half-Staff)
6. 11 Dec: VFW Post 7234 Staff Christmas Party (Upstairs Closed)
7. 13 Dec: Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying at Veterans Cemetery
8. 13 Dec: Army – Navy Football Game. Bragging Rights are on the Line! Doors open at noon. Pre-game appetizers. Game starts at 3 pm. AYCE Buffet and Dessert. Tickets are \$20 and are available at the bar.
9. 14 Dec: VFW Auxiliary Children's Christmas Breakfast Event
10. 19 Dec: VFW Post Members Christmas Party
11. 22 Dec: * Flip Five (moved to Monday Night this week) *
12. 24 Dec: * Post Closes at 4 PM for Christmas Eve *
13. 25 Dec: * Christmas Day – Post Closed *
14. 29 Dec: * Flip Five (moved to Monday Night this week) *
15. 31 Dec: New Year's Eve Dinner/ Dance

- **Note: Any Inclement Weather Post Closure Notifications will be made as early as possible and distributed on social media (Post Website, Post and Canteen Facebook Pages, and through mass email notification to Members).**

Our Canteen Manager, Kitchen Crews, Bartenders, and an outstanding array of Volunteers are committed to serving those who served our country. We could not keep our doors open without these dedicated Employees and Volunteers. Having said that, we are in constant need of Volunteers as Kitchen Helpers, Servers, Clean Up Crews, etc. We hope to see some new, fresh faces soon. We can work around your schedule. It only involves a few hours per week.

Your VFW Family wants to see you at the Post and continues to ask for your patience in dealing with Post employees, volunteers, and staff members. We all want you and your guests to have an enjoyable experience at the Post. Keep in mind that we are an organization operated primarily by a small paid staff and augmented by many Volunteers. Each one is devoted to doing their best. Feel free to respectfully complain when it is warranted, but better yet, fill out a Volunteer Application Form and pitch in to make our Post, your Post, the best that it can be.

In December, temperatures turn chilly, but Family Gatherings and Visits from Friends bring us warmth. Please check in on our fellow Comrades who may be spending the Holidays alone, or who may have recently lost a loved one. It can be a sad time for many. Let's lift their spirits with a phone call or a visit.

The Post Officers and Board Members wish you and yours a Happy Holiday Season and a Healthy and Prosperous 2026 when we will continue to Serve Our Veterans, Help Our Veterans and Honor Our Veterans – first, last, and always.

- Post Commander Chad Myers.



Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234 Golf Association 2025 Donation to Mindy Baccus of the "Warriors Helping Warriors" Organization of Middletown, DE.

AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

The Auxiliary completed a month of thanksgiving. Everywhere you looked, someone was cheerfully giving thanks and support to those in need. The holiday season is an absolutely wonderful time!



The Auxiliary participated in Operation We Care by painting ornaments Tournament by handing and writing Holiday greeting cards for our troops serving overseas.

The Auxiliary participated in the Tunnels to Towers Foundation Veterans Day Classic Golf out Poppys and application materials for joining the VFW and Auxiliary. It was a wonderful venue at Plantations Lakes where the VFW Post Honor Guard and the Post Commander performed the opening ceremony.

The Auxiliary attended the Lord Baltimore Elementary School Veteran's Day service. Wow! Watching Kindergarten through fifth

grade students singing patriotic songs was amazing. The service ended with the music teacher's father playing two songs on his bagpipe in full Scottish regalia!

The Lobby committee, a joint committee between the Post and Auxiliary, has kicked off a mission to make the Lobby more inviting. Ideas are being generated and will be submitted to the Post Board of Directors for review, approval and possible implementation.

The Veteran's Day ceremony at the Post was very moving. If you missed it, you really should plan on attending next year to honor all our Veterans. This year, five Quilts of Valor were presented. Thanks to everyone in the Quilts of Valor program for their continued service honoring our veterans. These are the veterans who received quilts:

Nick Bobruska	US Marine Corps
Edward Bozzella	US Army
Paul Kerstanski	US Navy & US Air Force
Jason Lee	US Marine Corps
Roseanne McConnell	US Navy & US Air National Guard

The Auxiliary hosted a holiday ceramic painting party. Kudos to Shirley Stong and her hospital committee for a fun filled afternoon painting the holiday ceramics. Over 30 attendees painted ceramic Christmas trees, Santa boots, Santa hats, tree-laden pick-up trucks, wreaths and Thanksgiving turkeys. December is calling!

HO, HO, HO! What do you mean you don't believe in Santa Clause?, Kris Kringle?, Old St Nick? or Father Christmas? And don't forget the Elves, making toys year-round to be delivered on Christmas Eve! If you look around the Post, the auxiliary is loaded with elves, bringing joy and happiness with all the miraculous things they accomplish every day to support the veterans and community. The magic of the season is what brings us all together to help each other and place smiles on everyone's faces.

December is a time for reflection, celebration, and remembering all the good things that happened during the year. It is also a time to start looking forward to new beginnings as we approach 2026. We wish everyone a joyful holiday season filled with warmth, happiness, and memorable moments.

Some notable events occurring in December:

National Wreaths Across America Day is December 13. The auxiliary has donated money for wreaths for both the Millsboro Veteran's cemetery and the Bear Veteran's cemetery. Hopefully you can attend the wreath placement on Saturday, December 13 at 10:30 a.m. You will be able to place wreaths on Veteran's graves, say their name and thank them for their service and sacrifice out loud. If you have never been, it is a moving ceremony attended by hundreds of personnel. Volunteers are also needed for removal of the wreaths on January 13, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. Please volunteer if able for either event or both! Both events are outdoors, so please dress appropriately.

December 13 **Army/Navy Game** at the Post. Tickets are \$20 for the event and include tailgate appetizers and AYCE Buffet. Doors open at Noon with pregame starting at 1:00 p.m. Kick-Off : 3:00 p.m.

December 14 will bring the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Clause to the Post for the annual **Children's Christmas Breakfast** and party from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Registration is required so we can ensure we have plenty of goodies in Santa's Bag.

I wish everyone a Happy holiday season. Be safe and enjoy the holidays!

Kevin Conlon
Auxiliary 7234 President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

I want to thank everybody for their well wishes and prayers while I was out sick. Thank you to all the Post Officers as they picked up my responsibilities. I'm back and taking things slowly. I have been attending as many meetings as I can.

We had a busy month reviewing financials with the Post Quartermaster, and going over Building and Grounds Maintenance Projects with John Reilly. I'm happy to say the Parking Lot has been seal coated. The Board has also voted to take down several trees as a precaution that borders close to our neighbor's property. At the Board's recommendation, the Post Quartermaster opened up 2 new Certificates of Deposit at our local bank where we conducted our business. This allows for much higher interest to accrue on the amount deposited. We may next look into the feasibility of opening a Line of Credit to help fund some Capital Expenditures that will be rather large. More to follow on that topic.

Each Friday, during the month of November, I had my truck parked in my driveway with the tailgate down. Fellow residents from my development - Bishop's Landing could drop off food (canned goods, dry goods, non-perishables, and Turkeys) for the Helping Hands Food Pantry Drive that our Post supports. We have delivered this food, plus the food collected at the Post that our Members have so generously donated.

Once again, as in past years, we are collecting COATS AND SWEATS FOR VETS, men or women, please drop them off in the brown plastic container in the Lobby at the Post.

I wish all my Comrades and their Families a Happy Holiday Season.

Board Chairman,
Andrew Artemchuk

DECEASED MEMBERS



Thomas Jermesen

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the families who have lost loved ones. Eternal rest grant unto them O' Lord, may the perpetual light shine upon them, and may they rest in peace. Amen.

Please call Jeannette Twigg at 30-381-539-9981 for the VFW or Annie Berger at 302-539-9981 for the Auxiliary, if a member is sick or has passed away

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Greetings from Jeannette

Hoping all had a wonderful Thanksgiving, and now it's that time of the year to think about lights 😊

Member News

We offer our deepest condolences to members Frank Rickhards and Warren Eastburn and to the family of Thomas Jerman. May God comfort you in your loss.

Something to Ponder

The Christmas season is all about bringing people together and sparking a sense of hope, kindness, and warmth—even when it's cold and dark outside. Lights play a big role in this, not just by making our homes and streets look festive, but by reminding us of deeper meanings like hope, inner light, and community. They're a symbol of the victory of light over darkness, and for many, they reflect the story of Jesus as the "Light of the World." But even beyond religious traditions, these lights encourage us to let our own inner light shine and to connect with others.

Decorating with lights is a tradition that helps everyone feel a sense of togetherness. The roots of this custom go back to old German and English practices of lighting candles on trees and in windows to mark the start of the season. And it's not just Christmas—lights are important in other celebrations too, like Hanukkah, where the menorah candles represent a miracle, and in Diwali and Ramadan, where lights symbolize joy and spiritual illumination.

So, as we enjoy the glow of holiday lights, remember- they're more than just decorations. They're a gentle nudge to share joy, warmth, and a little bit of light with those around us. And if you need a reminder, look up at the brightest lights of all: the stars shining in the winter night sky.



*"Ye stars! Which are the poetry of
heaven." Lord Byron*

BENEFITS ADVISOR OUTREACH

Even though the Government has reopened, it's like a car running on 3 wheels. Many people have found other jobs and are not sure they want to come back. Others are waiting to see if they'll get back pay or any pay at all. Still others haven't heard one word, one way or the other. You would think that after so many Government shutdowns they would have figured out a convenient way to let people know their job status. The following articles are some of the latest research releases from the VA I could find.



VA Research Wrap Up: New findings on spinal disc replacement, Gulf War illness, and caregiver support.

November 14, 2025

VA Office of Research and Development

VA's Office of Research and Development recently published three [News Briefs](#) highlighting research advances on new spinal disc replacement advances, Gulf War illness and a caregiver support program.

New treatment for spinal disc degeneration tested.

Researchers from Philadelphia VA entered into a cooperative research and development agreement with DiscGenics, Inc., to develop a new bioengineered spinal disc replacement.

In the first instance of a human-sized intervertebral disc replacement being created from a human cell source, the researchers used stem cells derived from a non-living human donor to generate the basic structure of a spinal disc. The new technique created a more stable tissue structure than other approaches using animal or other types of human cells.

Spinal discs serve as a flexible buffer between bony spinal vertebrae and consist of a gel-like inner substance surrounded by a fibrous outer structure, which provides support and strength. Most patients suffering from end-stage disc degeneration and back pain are currently treated with either spinal fusion or artificial disc replacement.

Spinal fusion is effective in relieving pain but limits movement and may lead to future complications, while currently available artificial discs have issues with safety and durability. While the findings of this study were preliminary, they provide direction for future artificial disc replacement therapies that could lead to better treatments for Veterans with chronic back pain. [View the full study from "Tissue Engineering Part A."](#)

Gastrointestinal issues often found with Gulf War illness.

Gulf War illness (GWI) affects 30% of the 700,000 Veterans who served in the Persian Gulf from 1990 to 1991. GWI is associated with a wide range of symptoms including fatigue, musculoskeletal pain and mood/thought issues, but perhaps upper gastrointestinal illness (UGI) should be added to that list. A study by VA's [War Related Illness and Injury Study Center](#) found that of the 600 Veterans with GWI participating, 94% also had UGI symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, trouble swallowing, poor appetite, acid reflux or stomach pain. In fact, these Veterans each had three symptoms of UGI on average. While all of the UGI symptoms are treatable, they are not regularly screened for and can be overshadowed by other GWI symptoms. The researchers suggest clinicians routinely screen for UGI symptoms in Gulf War Veterans given the strong association between these symptoms and GWI. [View the full study from "BMJ Open Gastroenterology."](#)

VA's caregiver support program also reduces anxiety.

VA Memphis researchers demonstrated the Resources for Enhancing all Caregivers' Health (REACH) Hope telehealth program successfully reduced caregivers' feelings of burden and anxiety. REACH Hope provides education, support, skills-building, and personalized digital resources to caregivers of Veterans with both traumatic brain injury and dementia. Researchers randomly assigned 110 caregivers to either the REACH Hope group or a waitlist group and surveyed participants both directly after the initial three-month intervention and at a one-year follow-up. Those caregivers with the highest level of burden and anxiety seemed to receive the most significant benefits from the program. The positive findings provide a basis for implementing REACH Hope as an evidence-based support to help Veterans' caregivers. [View the full study from "Rehabilitation Psychology."](#)

For more Office of Research and Development updates, visit [ORD online](#) or go to https://www.research.va.gov/news_briefs/.

In Comradeship,

H "Rich" Fales-Post Benefits Advisor
Cell# 301-325-3813
Email: richfales@gmail.com (NEW!)



HONOR GUARD NEWS

The month of November was extremely busy for the Post Honor Guard. We participated in 3 funerals rendering final tribute to our comrades with Volley and Taps.



On Saturday, November 8th, eight members of the Honor Guard rendered Volley and Taps at the Celebration of Life at the Post for Comrade Harlan Holcomb, US Navy, Vietnam, and Life Member of VFW Post 7234.

On Friday, November 14th, at the Gates of Heaven Cemetery the Honor Guard, with our Drum Corps and eight members, rendered Volley and Taps for Frank Slahetka, US Marines, Vietnam, Life Member VFW Post 7234. Frank was a member of the Post Golf Association and kitchen volunteer.

On Thursday November 20th at the Veterans Cemetery, ten members of the Honor Guard and Drum Corps rendered Volley and Taps for VFW Post 7234 Life Member Thomas Jermesen, US Air Force, Vietnam.

REST IN PEACE COMRADES!!

In addition, the Honor Guard and Drum Corps participated in a number of ceremonies and service as follows:

Posted colors and led Pledge of Allegiance at the Cheers Center in Ocean View honoring Vietnam Veterans.

Posted colors and played taps at the Plantation Lakes Golf Course for their Veterans Day Golf Tournament to raise \$\$\$ for veteran causes.

Participated in the Veterans Day Service and Ceremony at VFW Post 7234 posting colors and rendering Volley and Taps.

Attended the Veterans Day program at Lord Baltimore School.



Posted colors and performed a Table of Remembrance ceremony at Christian Lighthouse School Veterans Day program.



Many thanks to our Honor Guard this month!

FACTS YOU MAY NOT KNOW:

There is a distinct difference between an Honor Guard and a Color Guard. Every Honor Guard is also a Color Guard. Color Guards are NOT Honor Guards as their duties and responsibilities are limited. Generally, a Color Guard will carry the colors, post the colors and march in parades.

Our Post is an Honor Guard!

Honor Guards are known for their precision and attention to detail. They perform a variety of ceremonial duties, including:

- *Presenting and guarding the colors (national, state and organizational flags)**
- *Rendering honors, such as presenting arms, saluting, volley and taps at funerals or memorial services**
- *Providing escort services for dignitaries or fallen comrades**
- *Participating in parades, change of command ceremonies, and other official events**
- *Posting and retiring colors**

Each month our Post recognizes a member of our Honor Guard for his dedicated service to VFW Post 7234 and for his commitment to honor our deceased comrades. This month we recognize and honor our Drum Corps members Marty and John Reilly! (The Reilly Brothers)



When asked why each joined our Post Honor Guard, this is what they said.

Marty: I joined the VFW Post 7234 in 2012 as an Auxiliary member. My father served in the US Navy during WWII and my older brother served in the US Air Force with a tour in Vietnam. I am proud of both for their time served defending our great country.

I joined the Honor Guard in 2024 starting as a drum escort during the dedication of the great memorial on the grounds of the Post. Having a uniform issued by Captain John Gossart, I realized I must be a new member of the Honor Guard along with my brother John. I consider it to be a GREAT HONOR to be among the members that served our country and to give all an honorable thank you when they are laid to rest.

I am proud to be a member of the Honor Guard and VFW Post 7234 and the men and women who share our love of this great Nation and our veterans who gave so much for us all. GOD BLESS AMERICA!

JOHN: I am a Auxiliary member since June 2017 under my father's military service in the US Navy during WWII. He served on the USS Portsmouth as a Seaman 1st Class earning the American Theater Ribbon and the WWII Victory Ribbon.

I learned about the Honor Guard from then Commander John Gossart. My brother and I joined to start a Drum Corps which escorts the Honor Guard in funerals and ceremonial occasions like posting colors. I joined because it is important to give families that final respect their loved ones deserve for serving our great country. It has truly been an honor to serve this Post with Honor Guard duties.

Mason Dixon VFW Post 7234 thanks and salutes Honor Guard members Marty and John Reilly. (see photos)

We are grateful to our Post Honor Guard for their dedication and service, and "salute" you for your representation of Mason Dixon VFW Post 7234.

**REMEMBER NOT EVERY COLOR GUARD IS AN HONOR GUARD
BUT EVERY HONOR GUARD IS A COLOR GUARD!**

To learn more about Mason Dixon VFW Post 7234 Honor Guard and our duties and responsibilities, please contact me.

John F. Gossart, Jr.

Captain of the Honor Guard

240-304-8183

Judge800@yahoo.com

Or:

Mike Schiffer

Assistant Captain of the Honor Guard

302-448-1877

Rschiffer0@gmail.com

***The purpose of the Honor Guard is to provide funeral honors for our fallen comrades and guard national monuments. An Honor Guard may also serve as the 'guardians of the colors' ""by displacing and escorting the national flag on ceremonial occasions at official functions."**

MASON DIXON VFW POST 7234 FLAG DUTY PROTOCOL

The following information, protocol and duties are provided for those who have Post Flag duties. Pursuant to the Post Commander, the following individuals who are physically able will be assigned Post Flag duties.

- ...all Post officers elected and appointed
- ...all Board of Director members elected and appointed.
- ...Post Honor Guard.

Flag duties include:

monitoring, service, and maintenance of all Flags located in the Post Memorial Park. This includes the US Flag, DE Flag, POW Flag and all Service Branch Flags; and

monitoring, service, and maintenance of the US Flag and POW Flag on the Point.

Specific duties include:*

- ... inspection of ALL Flags twice a week (at a minimum).
- ...replacement of any Flags tattered or torn.
- ...replacement of Flag clips as required.
- ...lowering US Flag to half-staff and raising to full staff as may be directed by POTUS or DE G.
- ...weekly inspection of Memorial Park for cleanliness

*During heavy storms and winds please use your judgement in temporally removing the Memorial Park Flags and Point Flags. The absence of displayed Flags should be kept to a minimum. If uncertain, contact the Post Commander or the Honor Guard Captain for guidance.

Additional information.

Memorial Park Flags size.

US Flag shall be 4x6

DE Flag, POW Flag, all branch service Flags shall be 3x5

Point Flags size.

US Flag shall be 5x8

POW Flag shall be 3x5

All Flags and clips can be secured through the Post Quartermaster who maintains inventory and order responsibilities.

For training contact the Captain of the Honor Guard.

FOR THE COMMANDER

John F. Gossart, Jr.

Captain of the Honor Guard

judge800@yahoo.com

240-304-818

MASON DIXON VFW POST 7234 FLAG DUTY ROSTER 2025-2026

JUNE:	Chad Myers - Dale Weese
JULY:	Jay MacDonald - Richard Wagner
AUGUST	Phyllis Scully – Rob Gill
SEPTEMBER	Honor Guard – John Gossart
OCTOBER	Andrew Artemchuk – Jeanette Twigg
NOVEMBER	Fulton Loppatto – Jeff Ringel
DECEMBER	Paul Kerstanski – Chuck Guido
JANUARY	Mike Tuckman – Ken Weber
FEBRUARY	Thomas St Clare – Steve Kern
MARCH	Sharon Ruest - Kevin Conlon
APRIL	Chad Myers – Greg Albertson
MAY	John Gossart – Honor Guard

- **Service Officer Rich Fales is exempt.**
- **If this schedule does not fit your schedule, you may find and trade with another Post Officer, Trustee, or Board Member. Please advise the Commander and the Honor Guard Captain of any trade.**

See Post Flag Duties and Responsibilities above

CANTEEN CORNER

I would like to begin by thanking all the volunteers and staff for helping make our Thanksgiving Day dinner another huge success. It was nice to see everyone relaxing and enjoying themselves.

We close out the year with many exciting events during the month of December. Thursday Dec. 4 from 3 - 6pm NYE Tickets will go on sale. Each member may purchase one ticket and up to three guest tickets. Doors open at 6pm. Tickets are \$60 and include appetizers, buffet dinner, music by "Thin Ice" and a midnight champagne toast.

Doors open 6pm
Social Hour 6 - 7pm
Dinner 7 - 8:30 pm
Music 8:30 - 12pm Thin Ice

Hor D' Oeuvres
Maryland Crab Soup
Steamed Shrimp
Cocktail Meatballs
Chesse & Cracker Tray
Vegetable Tray

Dinner
Prime Rib \$ Gravey
Chicken Marsala
Lobster Tail
Shrimp Mac & Cheese
Mixed Vegetables
Caesar Salad
Rolls & Buttet

On Saturday night Dec. 6 we are excited to welcome DJ Bump to the Post. If you have not heard "Bump"

you are in for a special treat. He really knows how to rock the house. Dec. 11 will be our staff Christmas Party. Upstairs will be close and the downstairs bar will be open from 12 - 5pm.

December 13 be our third annual Army Navy tailgate party. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the bar. Ticket includes a nacho bar from 1 - 3pm and a tailgate buffet from 3 - 6pm.

Friday nite December 19 will be our Post Ugly Sweater Christmas Party from 6 - 10 pm. A free holiday buffet will be provided from 5 - 7 pm. Donations will be accepted but not expected. So come out and have a fun holiday evening at the Post.

Dec. 24 the Post will be open from 12 - 4pm and closed Dec.26

Important Notice

During the week of Christmas and NYE the following dates will be as follows:

Monday Dec. 22 - Flip 5

Monday Dec. 29 - Flip 5

Wishing everyone a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

John Frye
Canteen Manager



MEMORIAL BRICKS

The Memorial Brick Team (Gossart, Weese, Reilly Brothers) installed another set of bricks. Memorial Bricks honor those who served our Country and our Post. We are always accepting orders for additional bricks; pick up an order form at the Post.



TOYS FOR TOTS

THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS OF VFW POST 7234 and AUXILIARY for your donations to the local Ocean View DE Toys for Tots campaign. We are into crunch time, and if you are considering donating a toy, please do so as soon as possible.

LAST DAY for donating is December 14, 2025. The collection box will be picked up on December 15th as we will finish packaging toys and complete distribution by December 20.

We are still in need of toys for boys and girls ages 8-13. Some suggested toys are legos, arts and craft kits, science kits, balls (soccer/football/basketball/volleyball), baseball/softball gloves/balls, fishing poles, board games, skateboards with helmets...

Need more ideas- email us at ocean.view.de@toysfortots.org

THANKS TO SANTA'S HELPERS

Turning the calendar to December means Christmas is fast approaching. (Is it just me or is the time train moving faster every year?). Christmas is a day we try to make as merry and bright for as many kids as we can. That's a tradition in all our military services, at home and overseas. You've probably seen this and been a part of it. It seemed like everyone would get involved, gathering toys and other gifts. Maybe clothes and food, even military rations, depending on the situation. And getting some lucky "volunteer" to play Santa. The Charlie Brown Christmas trees. Then you'd wonder who had more fun, the kids or Santa's helpers.



Volunteers at the Post have continued this holiday tradition for years for children in our area, with the Auxiliary's "Breakfast With Santa" program and the help of all those who purchase and wrap gifts, prepare and serve the breakfast and help with all the other arrangements for the program. Appreciation is in the enjoyment of the children.

To reach more kids there's the Marine Corps "Toys for Tots" campaign and WBOC's "Bless our Children" campaign, both totally focused on trying to make sure no child is forgotten at Christmas time. There's a lot of need out there.

There's more to the season of giving. An article I came across recently about Christmas in Vietnam in 1965, titled "When Santa Wore a Flight Suit," reminded me that it's also a good time to bring cheer and support to those serving in the military, especially those overseas.

In November 1965, there was a large backlog of gift boxes from thousands of individuals in the U.S. addressed to "any soldier, Marine, airman or sailor" awaiting shipment to Vietnam. With donations of soft drinks, food and other gifts from companies, it totaled about 700 tons. However, DOD's understandable priority was military cargo and the Christmas gifts weren't scheduled for shipment. The Air National Guard offered to take on the mission and DOD agreed to the arrangement if the air crews volunteered. The ANG units would not be nationalized but the crews would be fully covered with pay and benefits. And the turn-around layover in Vietnam for each flight had to be limited to four hours. Air crews in several states, including Delaware, volunteered.

For the next few weeks, Santa's ANG helpers, in "Operation Christmas Star," got the presents to Vietnam before Christmas. Flying C-97 cargo aircraft from the East Coast, it was a 22,000-mile round trip to Danang Air Base in Vietnam. It took eleven days with the necessary five refueling and rest stops each way. It was an amazing logistics accomplishment that brought some Christmas cheer, love and support to a lot of our service members that year. (Coincidentally, December 13 is the anniversary of the National Guard. See note below.)

For us today, there are a number of non-profit organizations that will distribute Christmas cards and care packages (with toiletries, packaged snacks, etc.) to active duty military personnel, as well as cards to patients in military and VA hospitals.

Here are two possibilities:

- America's Adopt A Soldier (and Challenge America for packages).
- United Soldiers and Sailors of America (USASOA)

Check their websites for details. It's getting late for the Christmas card mailings but worth checking (for other organizations too), because it's such a good cause.

Looking forward to December, here are some dates to keep in mind, in addition to all the dates on the Post calendar.

- Dec. 7.** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Dec. 13.** Anniversary of the National Guard that traces its origin back to the formation of the first militia regiments in America in Massachusetts in 1636.
- Dec. 14.** Hanukkah begins at sundown. Happy holidays.
- Dec. 20.** Happy Birthday to the U.S. Space Force (established in 2019).
- Dec. 21.** Winter begins.
- Dec. 25.** Merry Christmas and in the words of Tiny Tim (credit to Charles Dickens): "God bless us, everyone."
- Dec. 26.** Kwanza begins.
- Dec. 31.** New Year's Eve.

Hope you enjoy every day in December.

Jerry Hardiman

Change to Auxiliary Membership Applications

All Auxiliary applications will need to be submitted on the new forms (Revision January 2026 in bottom right hand corner). A copy of the form is attached. This revised copy is available on line on the VFW website.

National has made some changes to the form to make it easier to fill in. The biggest change is how applicants can pay by credit card.

Effective immediately, Auxiliary 7234 will not receive any credit card data on the application for membership.

The applicant can still check the box for credit card and then must follow the instructions on the application once it is processed.

We will accept and forward the application to the Investigating Committee for eligibility. If found eligible, the application advances to general membership approval. When approved, the Treasure shall forward the approved applications where any credit card payments will be processed.

"If paying by credit card, after the application is processed, an email and/or text message will be sent to the contact information provided above for payment. Instructions in the communication for payment must be completed within 30 days or otherwise the application will be voided. If someone other than the applicant above is paying by credit card for the membership, please list your phone number and email address below to receive payment instructions once the membership application has been processed."

The treasure shall receive notification of credit card payment.

Any applicant paying by credit card will not be notified of acceptance to the Auxiliary until National notifies the Auxiliary treasurer.

2025 MASON DIXON MEMBER RENEWALS

It is that time of year when Mason Dixon members whose membership expires on December 31, 2025 will begin the process of renewing their memberships. **Beginning November 15, 2025**, the Post will begin accepting renewal dues for Mason Dixon members whose cards show an expiration date of 12/31/2025. All dues for 2025 expiring Mason Dixon memberships must be received by December 31, 2025. **Please check your card and make payment, if necessary. You will not receive any further notice of your need to renew.**

Effective January 1, 2023, membership renewals and new memberships were changed to a two-year term. So, please remit \$150.00 before December 31, 2025 and your new card will expire on December 31, 2027. New membership cards will be available the beginning of December. Dues payments may be mailed, placed in the Mason Dixon box at the membership station, or dropped off at the bar. If you wish to receive your card by mail, you will need to submit a self-addressed stamped envelope with your renewal payment. Otherwise, new cards will be available for pick up at the bar once your payment has been received.

Thank you for being a member of Mason Dixon Post No. 7234 VFW of the U.S., and we especially thank you if you volunteer!

Canteen Board of Directors

NOTICE TO ALL MASON DIXON MEMBERS

(THIS NOTICE IS FOR MASON DIXON MEMBERS ONLY,
(DOES NOT APPLY TO VFW OR AUXILIARY MEMBERS))

REMINDERS AND CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL PRACTICES

REMINDERS

AS YOU MAY RECALL IN AUGUST 2022 THE POLICY WAS CHANGED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT NO ADVANCED PERSONAL NOTICES TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WOULD BE SENT OUT.

THE POLICY CHANGES ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE MEMBER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THEIR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT AND IN GOOD STANDING, NOT THE POST.

THE POLICY ALSO STATES THAT MASON DIXON MEMBERSHIP CARDS WILL NOT BE MAILED. MEMBERSHIP CARDS ARE TO BE PICKED UP AT THE POST (AT THE BAR).

NEW CHANGE EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2025

THE MASON DIXON MEMBERSHIP POLICY STATES:

“ALL RENEWALS FOR EXPIRING MEMBERSHIP MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE POST NO LATER THAN 60 DAYS FOLLOWING THE END OF THE MEMBERSHIP TERM. NO RENEWAL WILL BE

PROCESSED AFTER MARCH 1, FOLLOWING THE PREVIOUS MEMBERSHIP YEAR. RENEWALS RECEIVED AFTER SUCH DATE WILL BE RETURNED WITHOUT ACTION AND MEMBERSHIP WILL BE TERMINATED.” THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR! DO NOT LET YOUR MASON DIXON MEMBERSHIP LAPSE!!

SINCE THE EFFECTIVE DATE (08/01/2022) OF THE POLICY CHANGES, TOTAL POST MEMBERSHIP HAS GROWN TO OVER 4,600 MEMBERS. THIS IS A 1,100 MEMBER INCREASE IN LESS THAN THREE YEARS! DESPITE THE PROVISION ABOVE REGARDING RENEWALS, THE BOARD HAS ALLOWED VETERAN MASON DIXON MEMBERS TO RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIPS EVEN IF SUBMITTED LATE. VETERAN MEMBERS WERE PERMITTED TO RE-APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP. THIS PRACTICE WILL CEASE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025.

THE BOARD RECENTLY UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO CHANGE THIS PRACTICE.

BEGINNING AUGUST 1, 2025, VETERAN MASON DIXON MEMBERS WILL BE PERMITTED TO RENEW ONLY ONCE AFTER THEIR FIRST LATE RENEWAL. VETERAN MASON DIXON MEMBERS WHO HAVE ALREADY RE-APPLIED PRIOR TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE WILL BE GIVEN ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY. THIS IS BEING ALLOWED ONLY BECAUSE THE BOARD VOTE JUST OCCURRED AND THE CHANGE HAD NOT BEEN COMMUNICATED UNTIL NOW.

IN ADDITION, THE LATE VETERAN (ONLY) RE-APPLICATION MUST BE ACCOMPANIED NOT ONLY BY THE \$150 DUES, BUT ALSO A \$25 PENALTY FEE (FOR BEING LATE). THEREAFTER, IF THE VETERAN MASON DIXON MEMBER DOES NOT TIMELY PAY THEIR DUES AGAIN, THE VETERAN MASON DIXON MEMBER’S MEMBERSHIP WILL BE PERMANENTLY TERMINATED.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Commander	Chad Myers
Sr. Vice Cmdr	Andy Artemchuk
Jr. Vice Cmdr	Phyllis Scully
Quartermaster	Chuck Guido
Adjutant	Fulton Loppatto
Chaplain	Jeannette Twigg
Judge Advocate	John Gossart Jr.
Surgeon	Richard Wagner
Officer of the Day	Jeff Ringel
Guard	Jay MacDonald
Benefits Advisor	Rich Fales
Honor Guard Capt	John Gossart Jr.
Trustee	Greg Albertson
Trustee	Rob Gill
Trustee	Paul Kerstanski

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman	Andy Artemchuk
President	Chad Myers
Vice President	Phyllis Scully
Treasurer	Chuck Guido
Secretary	Ken Weber
Board Member	Sharon Ruest
Board Member	Steve Kern
Board Member	Mike Tuckman
Board Member	Jeff Ringel
Board Member	Tom StClair
Board Member	Jay MacDonald

AUXILIARY TEAM

President	Kevin Conlon
Sr Vice Pres	Dale Weese
Jr Vice Pres	Sandra Magera
Secretary	Theo Loppatto
Treasurer	Roberta Walter
Chaplain	Annie Berger
Guard	Katherine Cole
Conductress	Connie Weber
Patriotic Ins	Peg Atkins
Trustee	Connie Weber
Trustee	Carol Weber
Trustee	Chuck Bologna

Veteran Claims Assistance

Our state Veterans Benefits Officer comes to our Post the 2nd Thursday of every month at 1:30PM; to make an appointment you can contact him at david.hilliard@va.gov or 302-994-2511 ext 37586

FOOD BANK

Please continue to drop off food items at the entry way. We continue to support our local families in need. Thank you for your donations.

**VFW POST 7234 HONOR GUARD
TO BECOME A MEMBER, PLEASE
CONTACT JOHN GOSSART
240-304-8183**

HELP A VET PROGRAM

**Veterans - Need Assistance, a friendly call, a visit, etc.
Contact our Post:
VFWpost7234@gmail.com**

Member Sick or Deceased

Please call:

For VFW – Jeannette Twigg 302-539-9981

For Aux – Annie Berger 302-539-9981

Assistance with VA Questions & Issues

Please call:

Rich Fales (301)325-3813 or email me

richfales@gmail.com

To signup for our email List

For the Latest Updates and News

Please send your email to

vfwpost7234@gmail.com