



# **VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS MASON DIXON POST 7234**

## **JANUARY 2026**

### **COMMANDER'S CORNER**

**Comrades, Members and Guests;**

**I hope your Holidays were memorable. My wish is for your good health, happiness, and prosperity in 2026. Looking back on 2025, a few shoutouts that deserve recognition go to:**



- 1. All Members who donated frozen Pasta Casseroles, Non-perishable Food items, Coats & Sweats for Vets, and Toys for our annual Toys for Tots Drive. All donations were estimated to be the most in recent memory. Thank you all.**
- 2. The Canteen Staff, Decorating Committee and Volunteers who contribute to making the Post look festive and decked out for the Holidays and other events.**
- 3. The Canteen Staff again, and all Volunteers who prepared, served, and cleaned up after the various Post Events including the recent Christmas Parties, Army – Navy Game, Children's Christmas Breakfast and New Year's Eve events.**
- 4. All Volunteers who donate countless hours of their own time to make our Cheesesteak, Flip 5, and other days such a success week in and week out.**
- 5. Our incomparable Post Honor Guard for presiding at Ceremonies honoring our Fallen Comrades, and at other events honoring and remembering our Veterans.**
- 6. Past Commander Dean Levering for replacing U.S. Flags at local Cemeteries.**
- 7. Memorial Brick Placement Team (John Gossart, Reilly Brothers (John & Marty), Dale Weese and Fulton Loppatto) for reverence in their thoughtful layout.**
- 8. The Staff and Volunteers at St. Paul's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church for feeding Homeless Veterans and giving them shelter during harsh climate conditions.**
- 9. Bethany Florist for donating Floral Arrangements for our Ceremonies Honoring Veterans, and for donating to the Memorial Services for our Fallen Comrades.**

10. The VFW Post 7234 Golf Association for their generous donations to Veteran's causes and for representing our Post with honor and distinction.
11. And speaking of fund raising, the Post Clothing Sales Crew (Debbie Jensen and Bonnie Helm) broke all previous sales records in 2025. Well done!
12. Past Post Commander Jim Jensen for his leadership and efforts to have our Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234 recognized nationally as an All-American Post.
13. Post Auxiliary for breaking Membership records and all else they do for Veterans.

Looking ahead to 2026, a few things to keep in mind:

1. Our non-negotiable edict continues to be to **Serve Veterans, Help Veterans and Honor Veterans**. I see this every day at the Post as our north star.
2. Monthly General Membership Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 PM. Put them on your calendar. Have a say in how your Post operates. Enjoy comradeship with other Member Veterans, along with a free meal and beverage.
3. Planning is already underway for Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration the last weekend in April 2026. Your ideas and input are welcomed.
4. The Help-A-Vet Committee is putting together a tremendous Veterans Outreach Town Hall with dignitaries and expert Benefit speakers for Friday, April 10, 2026.
5. Our new heating and air conditioning system units should be more efficient and cost effective going forward. Thank you, Members, for funding approval.
6. The Post maintains a fairly extensive inventory of medical assistance equipment (including ramps) to loan out for those in need. Contact Tom St. Clair for access.
7. Memorial Bricks to honor your loved ones are still available for purchase and placement in our Memorial Park out front. See Fulton Loppatto to order them.
8. Our incomparable Post Honor Guard continues to seek new Volunteer Members to fill their ranks. They preside at Ceremonies honoring our Fallen Comrades, and at other events honoring Veterans. Contact Honor Guard CPT John Gossart.
9. Your Post is operated 7 days a week by a dedicated core of Volunteers. Without them, our Post would be unrecognizable. Contact John Frye to offer your help.
10. We visit our shut-in Veterans on a regular basis. Join us – the visits are worth it. Continue to check on Members you have not seen for a while. Every one of us is going through something. Let us offer our support, our time and our caring.

- **Note: 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 blast notifications to our members).**

Your VFW Family wants to see you at the Post. We continue 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 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.

Please check in on our fellow Comrades who may be spending the cold winter months alone, or who may have recently lost a loved one. It can be a sad time for many. Let us lift their spirits with a phone call or an in-person visit.

The Post Officers and Board Members wish you and yours a Happy, 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.



Commander Myers & Sr Vice Artemchuk presenting a Certificate of Appreciation and a Letter to Sport Clips in Rehoboth recognizing their support for Veterans Scholarships and our Post Donation to the Scholarship Fund at VFW National HQ.



**Commander Myers & Se Vice Artemchuk donating toys to the Home of the Brave Children.**



**Thanks to VFW Post 7234 Members Sharon, Dick, Dale and Cindy for partnering with Addy Sea and Toys for Tots to make Christmas brighter for local children. – Commander Chad**



## AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!

Welcome 2026! The USA celebrates its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday! Mason-Dixon VFWA Post 7234 turns 80 this year!



Hopefully everyone has had and is still enjoying a wonderful holiday season!

December has been a busy month.

Toys for Tots was a huge success – shout out to Veteran Sharon Ruest, Chair, and her husband Ron Ruest (auxiliary member), for all of their tireless efforts to make many children's wishes come true this holiday season. There are quite a few Post and Auxiliary members who volunteer for Toys for Tots. Thanks to all!

Wreaths Across America recognized veterans all around America. The auxiliary participated in providing wreaths for both the Bear and Millsboro Veteran Cemeteries. Several Auxiliary members were in attendance on a sunny but cold morning to lay wreaths at the Millsboro cemetery.

Santa visited the Post on Sunday morning, December 14, with his HO, HO, HOs and his bag of gifts. All the families enjoyed eggs, pancakes and sausage. Thanks to the youth committee, Santa and Mrs. Claus's sleigh held a present for each of the 33 children attending. Everyone went away with a toy, a balloon snowman made by Lori Showalter, and a big smile! Thanks to the elves in the kitchen who helped with the set-up, tear-down and all-around fun provided to all!

Ring in the New Year

As the New Year begins, let's reflect on some resolutions that we could make.

Here are some suggestions for resolutions to consider.

**Attend monthly general membership meeting**, 7:00 pm on the first Monday of the Month.

**Volunteer to be on a committee, be a chair, assistant or member:** Community Outreach, Youth, Americanism, Legislative, Hospital, Scholarship, Veterans & Family Affairs, Buddy Poppy, Membership, or Historian

**Volunteer to be an auxiliary officer:** (Nominations for 2026-2027 officers is coming).

**Volunteer to work on our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary:** Events are in April, but preparations are occurring now!

**Plan to attend some State Department COAs and/or State Convention:** Council of Administration provides good information concerning the Auxiliary. The State Convention will be held in Wilmington on a weekend in June

**Become a member of the Investigative committee:** Learn all about eligibility for Auxiliary membership.

**Find other areas on which to focus your volunteer energy for the benefits of the Post and the Veterans**

2026 will see one of our own become the Department President in Delaware! Dale Weese will be sworn in as Department of Delaware President at the June Convention. As we become aware of the convention dates, they will be announced to all members so reservations can be made.

As winter takes full effect, there are activities for those who are NOT snowbirds. Besides shoveling snow, staying warm, and staying bundled up, there will be plenty of activities to keep you busy.

**The Fire and Ice Festival will be January 31. VFW Post 7234 Chicken Shack Smoke Eaters will be selling their famous barbecue chicken platters with all proceeds going to the Post. Get some Chicken Shack style barbecue in January!**

**Saturday/Sunday Football culminating in the College Playoff Championship and Super Bowl Sunday!**

**Award winners for Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen and Teacher of the Year will be announced at the start of the January 5, General Membership Meeting**

**Do you have skills that can be useful at the Post? Carpentry, organization, sewing, planning, electronics, drawing, or anything else? Please let the auxiliary know so your talents can be utilized. Let's make this coming year a memorable one as the Post celebrates 80 years and our Country's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

**Kevin Conlon  
Auxiliary 7234 President**



**4 auxiliary members went to The Moorings to deliver Christmas gift to the residents.**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Hi Comrade's,

I hope everybody had a wonderful holiday with their families.

We had a busy month reviewing financials with the Post Quartermaster, and going over Building and Grounds Maintenance Projects with John and Marty Reilly.

Financials are stable, up a little/ down a little which is normal.

Maintenance projects;

The trees mentioned in my last report had been taken down and removed from the property.

The two air conditioning/heating units have been replaced and are operating fully.

The music/audio system has been replaced and we've had some issues with the system. We have not paid the bill and will not pay the bill until everything is working properly.

Our maintenance team recommended that we remove the steps leading from the parking lot down to the beach behind the Post (unsafe) the board agreed and they removed them.

The first dusting of snow was minimal. Our provider for snow removal was on site salting the parking lot and the walkways. No plowing was required.

I have applied for a grant from the state of Delaware, we won't know until May/June 2026 whether we qualify for it.

Still working on VFW national grants. Should be completed by end of January.

Our food donations have slowed down since Thanksgiving. We need food for our food bank that we support so please help out.

Casseroles are doing wonderful and we're still handing them out to our churches that we SUPPORT.

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

Board chairman,  
Andrew Artemchuk

## **DECEASED MEMBERS**



*Ronald J. Walter*  
*Lester W. "Bill" Helm*

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 302-381-539-9981 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 holiday, and now a brand-new year is approaching.

### Member News

We offer our deepest condolences to the family of Bill Helm, may he rest in peace. Our prayers of healing go out to Willie Ventro, who is still recovering at Ocean Grove Post Acute in Millsboro.

### Something to Ponder

As the calendar turns from December to January, we enter a sacred threshold, a time not just for resolutions but for soulful reflection. Before we rush to set goals—whether it's to walk more, eat less, learn new things, or reconnect with loved ones, let us pause in the stillness of this moment.

Let us breathe deeply and invite the presence of the Divine into our hearts. With gentle compassion, look back upon the year that has passed. Offer gratitude for the blessings received and for the strength that carried us through trials. Extend grace to yourself, to those around you, and to our nation, trusting that God's love encompasses all.

As we stand on the edge of a new year, may we release the burdens of the past with forgiveness and hope. Let us step forward with faith, embracing new beginnings, and trusting that each day is a gift from God. With hearts full of gratitude and spirits open to grace, let us bid farewell to 2025 and welcome the promise of 2026.





## BENEFITS ADVISOR OUTREACH

### Medical Foster Homes for Veterans

December 14, 2025

#### Trained caregivers provide care and services.

For Martha Leon, opening her home to Veterans is not just a calling. It's a way of giving back to those who have sacrificed for their country. Driven by compassion and a sense of community, Leon transitioned from volunteering in assisted living to VA Southern Arizona Health Care System's Medical Foster Home program.



"My journey began as an assisted living volunteer," Leon shared. "One day, a woman I assisted called me and introduced me to VA [Medical Foster Home](#) program. With her encouragement and realizing I had a natural gift for caregiving, I decided to apply.

Three months later, Leon became an official VA Medical Foster Home provider. Her home, meticulously prepared to meet the unique needs of each resident, has since provided a nurturing environment for many Veterans.

"I've been doing this since June of 2014, and every day I grow more passionate about it," she said. "These Veterans become like family; some even call me mom."

VA Medical Foster Home program is a comprehensive initiative that integrates Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) for Veterans who are unable to live independently. Veterans receive personalized support that includes regular home visits from their HBPC primary care team (doctors, nurses, dietitians, occupational therapists, social workers, pharmacists and psychologists). In addition, the team provides essential services in the home that can eliminate the need for hospital trips.

"The support is incredible," Leon emphasized. "Everything the Veterans need is provided right here in their Medical Foster Home."

Running a VA Medical Foster Home requires a multifaceted approach, from assisting with everyday activities like feeding and toileting to managing medical needs such as feeding tubes and catheters. Martha's home acts as a sanctuary where Veterans receive three nutritious meals a day, laundry services and even personalized care for specific dietary requirements.

"For instance, if a Veteran has diabetes, we prepare special meals for them," she noted.

Leon finds the most rewarding aspect of her work to be the transformation that she witnesses in the Veterans that come to her home.

“They go from being patients to family members,” she said. “One Veteran has been with me for six years; such bonds mean the world to me.”

## Finding their purpose

Looking forward, Leon is committed to continuing her work.

“I want to do this until I can no longer physically manage it,” she said. “This program is demanding but immensely rewarding. I hope others step up to provide these vital services to our Veterans.”

Leon’s home exudes warmth and care, from meticulously laundered clothes to a well-stocked medicine closet, ensuring a safe, hygienic environment for all. The outdoor space is equally inviting, offering a serene setting for picnics and relaxation.

“I hope that one day, if I ever need care, someone will treat me with the same love and respect I give to my Veterans,” she added, reflecting on the spirit of her work.

[Learn more](#) about your eligibility for a VA Medical Foster Home or how to volunteer.

This article was originally published on the [VA Southern Arizona Health care System site](#) and has been edited for style and clarity.

## VA to improve health care choice and quality for Veterans with new community care contracts.

**12/15/2025 1:13 a.m. ET**

**WASHINGTON** —The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today released a request for proposals (RFP) for new community care contracts that will improve health care choice and quality for Veterans over the next decade.

VA’s community care program enables Veterans to access health care from non-VA medical providers at the department’s expense. Community care has been an integral part of caring for Veterans since the World War II era. In 2018, President Trump enshrined this right for Veterans by signing the bipartisan [MISSION Act](#). Today, about 40% of all VA care is provided through community care.

In 2018, VA signed contracts with health plans to serve as third-party administrators and manage VA’s community care program. Many of these contracts are set to expire in 2026, and a new round of contracts is needed to ensure Veterans have continued access to the community care program.

The RFP VA announced today will lead to new community care contracts that will improve health care choice and quality for Veterans over the next decade in the following ways:

- More Choices for Veterans – The new indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract structure will provide more choices by allowing multiple national and regional health plans to compete to serve Veterans. Selected health plans will provide care and benefits uniquely adapted to Veterans and their communities.
- Improved Quality of Care for Veterans – The contracts will require health plans to adhere to broad industry standards of care used by all other major health care systems. This will ensure Veterans get care that has been shown to directly address their medical conditions and maximize their health and wellness.
- Improved VA Oversight of Community Care – The contracts will provide VA with the data, technology and systems to manage Veterans' care in real-time, drive innovation, and collaborate with the selected health plans to ensure that Veterans receive the highest quality health care.
- Contract Flexibility – The new IDIQ contract structure allows VA to issue multiple, competitive task orders over the life of the contract in order to adjust health plans, regions, contract requirements, and deliverables and ensure that health plans are empowered and accountable. Contractors that do not meet VA requirements can be off-ramped and replaced by other IDIQ health plans to ensure continuity of services and no disruption of care to Veterans or VA operations.

“VA has learned a lot about community care over the years, and we are putting that knowledge to use to help Veterans with the next generation of community care contracts,” said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. “This RFP will result in contracts that dramatically improve our ability to provide quality health care while ensuring Veterans can choose the care that’s best for them.”

In Comradeship,

H “Rich” Fales-Post Benefits Advisor

Cell# 301-325-3813

Email: [richfales@gmail.com](mailto:richfales@gmail.com) (NEW!)



## **HONOR GUARD NEWS**

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, members of the Post Honor Guard, Post Officers, Board members and Auxiliary Officers, visited Brandywine Assisted Living for a Christmas and holiday salute. We had a great time visiting veterans and widows.



Sadly, our Post lost two familiar members this month. Comrade Bill Helm, a fixture at the post passed away after his long fight with cancer. Bill was a Vietnam veteran and served in the Marine Corps.

**REST IN PEACE COMRADE Bill!**

Ron Walter, Auxiliary, was a member of the Post Golf Association and their Sunday breakfast crew. He was a regular at our Post dances.

**REST IN PEACE, Ron!**

### **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 Honor Guard member Hugh Spafford.

When asked why he joined our Post Honor Guard, this is what Hugh said.

“I have been an Auxiliary member of VFW Post 7234 since 2019. My father John D. Spafford served in the US Navy Reserves from November 22, 1943, to May 5, 1946. He served as a Motor Machinist Mate, Third Class and served in the Pacific Theater during WWII. He was awarded the American Theater Medal as well as the Asian Pacific Medal, 2 Stars Victory Medal. My Dad was an honorable man and very proud of his service in the Navy. To memorialize his time in the Navy, my Dad got a tattoo of an anchor with the wording US Navy on his right forearm. As a kid, I recall the many stories my father would tell about his time in the Navy.

I learned about the Honor Guard from my neighbor and Captain of the Honor Guard, John Gossart. After meeting John at a social event in our neighborhood, I quickly figured out that we



had a lot in common, mainly that we worked many years in the building, yet doing completely different work. John asked me to consider joining the Honor Guard which I did in June 2021. Serving as a member of VFW Post 7234 Honor Guard is a significant and meaningful experience for me. It gives me the opportunity to pay tribute to the brave men and women who served in the military by recognizing their sacrifices and contributions to our nation. I also find personal satisfaction and a sense of pride and camaraderie serving as an Honor Guard member. It offers me the chance to build friendships and give back to the veteran community. Overall, serving as an Honor Guard member is an exceptional way to honor the past while actively participating in the present, ensuring that the sacrifices of the veterans are never forgotten.”

Mason Dixon VFW Post 7234 thanks and salutes Honor Guard member Hugh Spafford.



We are grateful to all of our Post Honor Guard members for your 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](mailto:Judge800@yahoo.com)

Or:

**Mike Schiffer**  
**Assistant Captain of the Honor Guard**  
**302-448-1877**  
[Rschiffer0@gmail.com](mailto: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.”**

### **POST FLAG DUTY FOR JANUARY 2026**

**Mike Tuckman**

**Ken Weber**





**Brandywine Visit with Veterans and Family Members**

## **CANTEEN CORNER**

I hope everyone had a Happy and safe holiday season. As we head into a new year, we encourage our members to come out and enjoy the many activities, entertainment and delicious food our post has to offer.

Our Monday nite games will continue with Mingo and an exciting addition on Jan. 19, "Friendly Feud". It consists of 4 - 6 person teams and is based on the television version of Family Feud. It promises to be a blast. Stay tuned for upcoming information. Thursday afternoons we have Mahjong and Texas Hold-em from 12 - 3 along with darts from 6 - 8 pm. Line dancing will be held on Friday Jan. 2 & 16th from 1 - 3 pm.

Delicious dinner options are available throughout the month. Thursdays we have our four-piece fried chicken with two sides as well as a grilled fish option. Fridays we have pizza and wings. Friday Jan. 16 we will have a specialty burger along with fries for \$10. Back by popular demand will be chicken pot pie on Friday Jan. 23.

Entertainment for the month is exciting. DJ Denny and Karaoke will be on Friday 16th. Our Saturday nite lineup is exciting. DJ Bump will kick it off on Jan. 3. He played in December and had the dance floor packed all nite long. Come on out you won't be disappointed. Jan. 10 we are excited to have the band 302. Come out and join us for great music, drinks and dancing. Two other great bands playing this month is Short Term Memory and Rocky Park. We are pleased to announce that "On the Edge" will perform on Jan. 31. They were recently inducted to the Delaware Music Hall of Fame. It promises to be a special nite.

**John Frye**  
Canteen Manager

## **THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS CONTINUES**

As we move into the new year (Did 2025 go by fast for you?) I was going to report on a few military developments I thought you'd find interesting, like good news in recruiting and the status of legislation needed to change the name of the Department of Defense back to the pre-1947 Department of War name. (A Presidential Executive Order is not enough.) Then I came across a story in the Washington Post about the North American Aerospace Command (NORAD) tracking Santa's trip around the world on Christmas Eve for children and thought: This is our mission too—and has been—caring about children.



According to the article, the story began in 1955, when Air Force Colonel Harry Shoup, commander of the air defense tracking headquarters in Colorado Springs, CO (then known as the Continental Air Defense Command) received a call on the emergency-use only “red phone.” A small voice asked, “Is this Santa Claus?” Colonel Shoup first reprimanded the caller, thinking it was someone playing a joke. Then, realizing it was a little boy, he pretended to be Santa and talked to the boy for a while, and then to the boy's mother. From the mother he learned that she got the phone number from a Sears Roebuck ad that because of a typo, was indeed the CONAD red phone number. While the mistake was being corrected with AT&T, Col. Shoup had his staff answer every other call as Santa's helpers.

Wanting to carry the fun for children further, on Christmas Eve that year, the Colonel informed a local radio station that CONAD had picked up a sighting of an unidentified sleigh-shaped object travelling fast from the North Pole. The station loved the news, the networks got involved and a fun annual tradition was born.

Now, 70 years later, NORAD does a more elaborate job providing tracking info on Santa's global trip on Christmas Eve, with input from satellites, radar and aircraft feeding map data to websites and social media. That includes location info in eight languages and a live call-in center in Colorado for kids, staffed all day on December 24 fielding tens of thousands of calls (126,000 in 2017). A Canadian officer assigned to NORAD said: “This is our most feel-good mission. We know it brings joy to kids around the world.” God bless all who served. Their lives made more of an impact than they imagined.

We've come a long way from the days of Harry Shoup, that no-nonsense fighter pilot commander, who loved the kids and became known as “Santa Colonel.” (Now that's a great “call sign.”) It exemplifies our military at home and around the world.

With that Merry Christmas season story, Rosemary and I wish everyone a happy and wonder-filled New Year.

**Jerry Hardiman**



## **80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Post**

This will be a 3-day weekend long Anniversary celebration event (April 24 - 26, 2026) for the VFW and Auxiliary.

One of the Anniversary centerpieces will be the Saturday Night Dinner & Dance featuring the DE Hall of Fame Band - " On The Edge ". As of now, this event will be open to Members plus one (1) Guest.

Other activities:

- Commemorative VFW Post 7234 Shirts
- Commemorative VFW Post 7234 80th Anniversary Coins
- Commemorative VFW Post 7234 80th Anniversary Hats
- Commemorative VFW Post 7234 80th Anniversary Lapel Pin
- VFW Post 7234 Essay Contest
- " History of Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234 " Pamphlet
- Time Capsule
  
- Friday: Opening Ceremony held at 11 am at Memorial Park with luncheon to follow.
- Friday: Time Capsule buried and marked - Memorial Park area
- Friday Night: Dinner and " Sock Hop " Dance
- Saturday: Oak Tree Planting
- Saturday: Cold Cuts set up for lunch with possible tables to pass out Veterans Benefits and Health issue information and sell 80th Anniversary Memorabilia.
- Saturday Evening: Dinner and Dance to the live music of the Hall of Fame Band: " On The Edge "
- Sunday Morning: Memorial Service in the Memorial Park with Volley and Taps by our Post Honor Guard followed by a Breakfast in the Dining Room

This schedule and events are still fluid and adjustable.

Thank you.

Commander Chad Myers.

## **80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ESSAY CONTEST**

Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234 of Ocean View, Delaware proudly celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in April 2026. It honors decades of dedicated service to Veterans and our southern Delaware community neighbors. We are looking forward to a vibrant future and to our continuing mission of serving, helping and honoring Veterans while strengthening our community ties for decades to come. Every VFW Member has a story uniquely their own. We want to know yours, and we are offering a prize to hear it. The Themes:

- What has your Membership in VFW Post 7234 meant to you?
- How has the Post impacted your life?

## **SHARE YOUR STORY!**

Entries can be a specific story, or your overall assessment of Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234's impact on your life. It can be a few lines, or multiple pages.

### **HOW TO ENTER**

- OPEN TO ALL VFW POST 7234 MEMBERS (VFW, AUXILIARY, MASON-DIXON)
- SUBMIT ALL ENTRIES TO [vfwpost7234@gmail.com](mailto:vfwpost7234@gmail.com) BY APRIL 10, 2026
- WINNING ENTRY WILL BE REVEALED DURING OUR 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND CELEBRATION (APRIL 24 – 26, 2026)

### **WHAT DOES THE WINNER(S) GET?**

- \$250 CASH PRIZE
- YOUR SUBMISSION FEATURED IN OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
- YOUR ENTRY SUBMITTED TO THE COASTAL POINT NEWSPAPER FOR PUBLISHING

**\* NOTE: BY SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY, YOU GIVE THE MASON-DIXON VFW POST 7234 OFFICERS AND BOARD PERMISSION TO USE ALL, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, FOR ANY PROFESSIONAL AND FUTURE MARKETING MATERIALS DEEMED APPROPRIATE.**

## **SPRING 2026 TEE SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST**

**Members of Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234;**

**Show off your Creativity, Win a Cash (\$) Prize, Have Your Own Spring 2026 Apparel Design Sold at the Post!**

### **COMPETITION GUIDELINES**

1. Create a captivating design that reflects Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234's relationship with the Community and our Veterans. Your design may incorporate the Post's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary recognition, but it is not required.
2. Designs can be in PNG, JPG, HEIC, PDF, or vector format.
3. A max of six (6) design colors allowed.
4. Deadline to submit one (or more) design(s) is February 4, 2026.
5. Top designs to be showcased at a monthly Membership Meeting with the Winning Design chosen by our Veteran Members.
6. Submit entries to: [djensen1007@gmail.com](mailto:djensen1007@gmail.com) with the Subject Line: " Spring 2026 Tee Shirt Design Contest Entry ".
7. Software Applications such as Canva, Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, etc. are welcome and encouraged.

8. By submitting your Tee Shirt design, you give Mason-Dixon VFW Post 7234 express permission to use your design for professional and commercial purposes.
9. Questions? Contact the Tee Shirt Committee Chairs, Debbie Jensen or Bonnie Helm.

**GOOD LUCK !!**

## **SPRING 2026 TEE SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST**

## **FIRE AND ICE FESTIVAL**

Our VFW Post will be participating this year. We will have an ice sculpture at John West Park. We will also be selling tickets for a “Chicken Shack” Dinner hosted by our Post. All events on January 31. Come out and support Our Community and Our Post. Chicken Dinner tickets can be purchased in advance at the Festival website. More information and tickets

<https://business.bethany-fenwick.org/events/details/fire-ice-festival-vfw-post-7234-chicken-dinner-tickets-41038>

## **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FOR LOAN**

Our Post maintains a large inventory of Medical items for loan. Items such as canes, walkers, wheel chairs, toilet seats, etc. Please contact Tom StClair for availability. Tomst48@aol.com.

## **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 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month at 1:30PM; to make an appointment you can contact him at [david.hilliard@va.gov](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:richfales@gmail.com)**

**To signup for our email List**

**For the Latest Updates and News**

**Please send your email to  
[vfwpost7234@gmail.com](mailto:vfwpost7234@gmail.com)**