



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

## **AUGUST 2026**

### **COMMANDER'S CORNER**

**Comrades, Auxiliary and Friends,**

**Welcome to midsummer and a very busy time for us here at Post 7234. The Chicken Shack is bringing their own flavor of welcome and outreach to our local community and summertime**



**guests. Many families plan their “beach week” around a stop at the Shack for a little bit of summer flavor, thanks to our volunteers, who are true ambassadors for our Post. Sunday breakfast has been knocking it out of the park with their hospitality and great food, making a relaxing end to the weekend for locals and visitors alike. Those who stay after breakfast to relax have been enjoying music on the deck and Burgers and Dogs on Sunday afternoons. Monday game nights, Tuesday cheesesteaks, Wednesday Flip Five, Thursday Texas Hold ‘Em and Mahjong keep us busy on our way to the next weekend. Our Volunteers are truly the heart and soul of our Post, and we are keeping this going because of you. Well, us . . .**

**I am also a volunteer, as are all the Officers and Board members, and we want you to know that we are working shoulder to shoulder with you. You can find an Officer, Past Officer or Board Member here many days. If someone is wearing a Post polo shirt with their name on it, they are representing this Post. We know we need to be here, so going forward, I will be working with my fellow Officers, BOD, and Past Officers to lend a presence on deck. Our Auxiliary President, Kevin Conlon, has the same policy of presence and responsiveness and I am privileged to work alongside him, his Vice President Sandra Magera and the entire Auxiliary; you know how much I admire and appreciate all you do!**

**Back to our regular crazy days of summer, we were able to take some time to celebrate the birthday of one of our newest Life Members, Ray Sproul, WWII Veteran who turned 101 years old on July 20<sup>th</sup>. We were so blessed to have him and his family here for lunch on his birthday for a bit of a surprise party. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure, Ray is an absolute joy who will keep you in stitches if you are lucky enough to be here when one of his neighbors and friends brings him in for lunch: a Rueben sandwich, and some great stories and jokes. We were**

joined by Irv Hudson, General Conaway, and a great group of our VFW family. Thanks to everyone who took the time to celebrate; I hope you were as moved by Ray's words as I was and enjoyed the amazing American Flag cupcake cake created so lovingly by the Hocker's Grocery Bakery.

We also had a great visit with our friends at Brandywine Assisted Living on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Our Auxiliary joined us with the added fun of providing temporary patriotic tattoos to commemorate National Tattoo Day. The residents, staff and visiting families all had a lovely time.

So, July 4 is in the books, but please don't forget that this entire year is a celebration of our nation's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Please, check in with your fellow Veterans, do what you can to keep the Flame of Freedom alive. As Ray Sproul asked on his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday "I don't know why the kids these days aren't patriotic like we were?" We can be part of the solution. Our Auxiliary is keeping that alive with their youth programs and outreach, we have the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen scholarship program coming up in the fall. Get involved, get your children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors to encourage their children to enter these competitions. We are stronger together.

What can you do to make this a stronger Post, Community and Country? What can you do to reach out to a Veteran in need? What can you do to make our Post more welcoming to someone who need a place to feel at home?

In Comradeship and Welcome,

Phyllis Scully  
Post Commander

## **AUXILIARY PRESIDENT**

August already! Where is the summer going? 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, back to school sales, Halloween decorations up at the stores, and the area is full to the brim with vacationers!



Where were you for the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of our Nation? Hopefully, you were you able to take some time to stand still and reflect on what a great nation this is and remember and be grateful for all those who served, especially those who gave their all, so we can continue to enjoy the benefits of our great democracy. Share some pictures with us at the post. I would think that both Lisa Synder and Barbara Peterson would love to have pictures to place in the Auxiliary 2026-2027 history book and on the Auxiliary bulletin board

Please continue to show your 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration patriotism by flying the American Flag every day. The 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration is all year, not just on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**Did you notice the new sign at the entrance? We are still the largest Post Auxiliary in Delaware. The Auxiliary currently has 2,766 Auxiliary paid members for the year 2026-2027, and we're still growing. If you recently joined, look around and inquire of current members on how to get involved by volunteering.**

**Sandra Magera and Barbara Peterson are working with Membership chair Chuck Bologna to develop a more robust new member packet. These will be sent out to new members when they are approved and receive their membership cards. They will be available within the next month to send out. New member packets will also be available at the general membership meetings. The packet will include, but is not limited to, how to join MALTA, a summary of benefits, and how to volunteer to support our veterans. If you did not receive a new member packet when you joined, see one of these three to obtain the packet. It is loaded with a lot of information**

**The Auxiliary is looking for volunteers to chair the following committees: Youth and Americanism.**

**The Youth Activities Chair coordinates the Auxiliary involvement with youth activities. Working with local youth groups and young local families to support Veteran activities and promote participation in patriotism are key components of the Auxiliary's mission.**

**Highlights of the year include the Christmas and Easter holiday gatherings where the children engage in seasonal crafts and receive a visit from Santa and the Easter Bunny.**

**The Americanism Chair promotes the Auxiliary involvement in patriotic holidays, flag education, promoting patriotism, educating and remembering POWs and MIAs and coordinates with the Poppy Chair distributing American Flags at Post and local events.**

**If interested in either position or to work on the committee, please contact Kevin Conlon at [kevinjconlon@comcast.net](mailto:kevinjconlon@comcast.net).**

**The Post hosted a Youth Illustrating America Art Contest Awards Ceremony on July 12. Attendees included the winners of the Patriotic Art Contest. Each winner received a monetary award and certificate. Thank you, Cindy Weese and the Youth Activity committee, for a wonderful ceremony.**

**The Auxiliary handed out American Flags and Poppys at two locations over the Fourth of July weekend. Unfortunately, the extreme heat prevented the Bethany Beach Fourth of July parade from occurring which meant we could not hand out American Flags and Poppys that day. We will be participating in the Labor Day parade promoting Patriotism and the VFW.**

**Several Auxiliary members joined with the Post Honor Guard at Brandywine Senior Assisted Living sharing cocktails and stories with resident veterans and spouses. Temporary tattoos were pasted on residents and visitors alike since it was National Tattoo Day.**

**Crab night –Enjoy the sunsets. Hope you are able to take time to enjoy the sunset while picking crabs. Enjoy the social fun with friends at the Post on Thursday nights. Crabs are \$55.00 per dozen, and you must pre-order by 2:00 pm on the Tuesday before.**

**Fall is a busy time at the Post for all members. The Auxiliary will be hosting a visit from the newly elected National President between September 20 to 22. The exact date and time have not been**

determined yet. The State Department President will make his official visit to Post 7234 at the October 5 general membership meeting.

Enjoy the month of August at the beach!

Kevin Conlon  
Auxiliary 7234 President

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOTES**

Greetings Comrades and Auxiliary,

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer!

Please find below several important updates regarding our Post:

### **Maintenance News**

John, Marty Rielly, and Jeff have been hard at work maintaining the landscaping around the Memorial Garden and the front of our building. They have also completed several painting projects on the exterior of the building.

### **Canteen and Equipment Updates**

The Commander has recommended, and the Board has approved, the purchase of a new POS system for the canteen. Additionally, based on Mike Tuckman's recommendation, we have approved the purchase of an AED for downstairs and the chicken shack at a cost of \$725.

To relieve some of the financial stress the canteen is currently experiencing, the Post is picking up the expense of cleaning the building, which is approximately \$40,000 per year.

### **Honor Guard**

John Gossart, Captain of the Honor Guard, requested that the Board set up a committee to research pricing for a newer van. The existing van lacks modern safety features and will soon require new tires.

### **Community Outreach**

We have received official notice from the State of Delaware that we were awarded a grant totaling \$20,000. This will be paid to the Post in four equal installments.

We also made our first delivery of 50 casseroles to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, which was very well received. Commander Skully, 4th District Commander Jensen, and Mike Tuckman were on hand to assist with the distribution.

### **Donations Needed**

We are still in need of food for our "Helping Hands" pantry. Specifically, we are looking for:

- Coffee and canned meats
- Hamburger Helper and potatoes
- Rice, pasta, and pasta sauce

Additionally, we are once again collecting "Coats and Sweats for Vets" (men's and women's). Please drop these items off in the plastic container located in the Post lobby.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Artemchuk  
Board Chairman

## DECEASED MEMBERS



*Louis F Beck*  
*Ronald G Porter*  
*Robert J Reese*  
*Alex G Fisher*

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*

For our members who lost loved ones in July, we offer our deepest condolences and prayers of comfort in the knowledge that their loved ones are safe and at peace.

### Something to Ponder

In the service, we all learned the vital importance of scheduled maintenance. A vehicle running on empty, low on oil, or overdue for routine checks will not last long when the road gets rough or the terrain turns steep. Yet in civilian life, it is easy to keep driving ourselves forward—meeting obligations, caring for family, serving others, and pushing through fatigue—until we realize our inner tank is empty.

Late summer often brings its own kind of wear to the spirit. Like a long trip near the end of a season, we may notice the miles we have carried: grief, responsibilities, health concerns, family transitions, or simply the steady weight of daily life. True strength is not measured by how long we can keep the engine running without stopping; it is measured by whether we know when to pull over, refuel, and check what is going on under the hood.

Consider what kind of spiritual maintenance your soul may need. It may be quiet morning prayer, a walk in nature, time in Scripture, worship, rest, or an honest conversation with a fellow brother or sister in arms. Whatever helps you refuel, receive it as part of God's care for you. You do not have to keep driving on fumes, and you do not have to carry the pack alone. For many of us, that renewal comes through faith, prayer, trusted fellowship, and the steady reminder that God's presence does not leave us when our energy runs low.

Late August also brings transition points along the road—children and grandchildren returning to school, seasonal routines changing, and autumn coming into view. Transitions can be like road signs that invite us to slow down, pay attention, and make needed adjustments before the next stretch begins. As we look forward to that next stretch in September, let us take a minute to reflect on others and pray for safety and steadiness over our military families preparing for deployments, moves, or other changes on the road ahead.



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*"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak" (Isaiah 40:29).*

## **FROM PAST COMMANDER CHAD MYERS**

**It has been six months since my Stage 4 Pancreatic Cancer Diagnosis. I have completed one series of Chemo treatments. A series consists of six rigorous, intense infusions of three separate chemo whole-body infusions over a three-day period (including a pump infusion at home for 2 days). As of mid-July, I have started my second series of six chemo treatments which should conclude around the end of September. My CT Scans and "Numbers" after the initial series were encouraging in that the cancer had retreated from some areas and were not as prevalent in others. 🙏 I am in awe of the countless thoughts and prayers being sent my way, and want to thank each and every Member for their inquiries and requests for status updates. If you have been exposed to loved ones battling cancer in the past, you know that there are good days and bad days. I am having about an equal number of each. I have reached the point where my pain is being properly managed and is tolerable. Thank you one and all for your continued interest. I hope to visit the Post on a more regular basis in the near future and renew our friendships. Sending huge Hugs and Kisses your way and with warm regards, yours in service,**

**- Chad Myers, Past Post Commander (2025 - 2026).**

## BENEFITS ADVISOR OUTREACH

I appreciate everyone sending me emails and flyers about companies and corporations that offer “Veterans Discounts” but we must be careful who we endorse. The Post and I can be held legally liable if someone gets ripped off by someone we endorse. If someone says they need your DD214 for verification, be skeptical. If you do provide it, block out your Social Security number and date of birth. Veterans and seniors are scammed billions of dollars a year with little chance of recovery.



### Post Card Scam

There is a new [scam](#) targeting Veterans. The latest tactic involves sending fraudulent postcards claiming you (or your spouse) are entitled to “extra VA benefits” or additional payments, including CHAMPVA, TRICARE, and dental coverage, regardless of a VA disability rating. Don’t fall for it.

These scammers claim to be affiliated with VA. They might instill a sense of urgency, pressuring you to contact them as soon as possible, or within five days. Their goal is to get you to call the number provided. Once you do, they will often use flattery and praise regarding your military service to gain trust. The scammer will attempt to obtain personal identifying information like your Social Security Number, bank account details or other sensitive information.

Never give this information over the phone or on the internet.

VA is monitoring the situation and urges you to remain vigilant against these fraudulent attempts to steal personal identifying information. You can help stop them:

- Refuse to engage.
- Do not call unverified numbers.
- Hang up immediately if you are contacted by unsolicited numbers.

## Common scam tactics

- Unsolicited postcards, emails, texts or social media messages: Scammers will send communication claiming you qualify for extra VA benefits

- Fake authority on calls or emails: Scammers may pretend to be VA officials and claim there's a problem with your benefits or account.
- Phishing attacks: Scammers may send emails or text messages that appear legitimate but are designed to steal personal information through malicious links or attachments.
- Payment requests: Scammers might demand payment using unconventional and untraceable payment methods, such as gift cards, wire transfers, bitcoin or prepaid debit cards.
- Social media interactions: Scammers may try to build trust through social media messages or friend requests, only to exploit that trust for their own financial gain.

## How to protect yourself

- Never share any personal or financial information with unverified contacts.
- Don't act on urgent requests from people you don't know. Legitimate VA communications will not pressure you to respond immediately or provide sensitive information.
- If you receive a suspicious postcard, email, text or call, do not call the number provided or click on any links.
- Always verify the sender's identity; when in doubt, call VA directly at 1-800-827-1000.
- Be cautious on social media. Ignore friend requests or messages from people you don't know or recognize.

### • If something seems wrong

- If you miss a VA benefits payment, notice a discrepancy, or suspect suspicious activity with your direct deposit, contact VA right away at 1-800-827-1000.

If you suspect you have experienced fraud, you can find out more and report to the appropriate agency at [VSAFE.gov](https://www.vsafe.gov) or by calling 1-833-38V-SAFE.

## Don't fall for these scams!

- Staying vigilant and recognizing the warning signs is the best way to keep your personal information safe. For more information on how to protect yourself, visit [VA News](#) and [VBA's fraud prevention](#) online.
- Your information and your benefits are valuable. Let's work together to outsmart scammers and keep your hard-earned benefits secure.

For more information about what to do if you feel scammed, check out this website from the Delaware Office of Veteran Services.

[Veterans Fraud Prevention Resources - Office of Veterans Services - State of Delaware](#)

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 July 11<sup>th</sup> the Honor Guard participated in the service for veteran Dorsey Dean (67) at St. George's Church Cemetery and rendered Volley and Taps for our deceased comrades.



On July 17<sup>th</sup> the Honor Guard, Post Officers, BOD officers and the Auxiliary visited Brandywine for Happy Hour. The Auxiliary gave each resident a temporary 250 Anniversary tattoo. There were over 40 people in attendance, and a good time was had by all. (see photos). We anticipate a visit again in September.

Our participation in the Bethany Beach Parade was cancelled due to the parade cancellation by Bethany Beach. We will participate in the Labor Day

Parade!

The Honor Guard has installed a new design closet in our office after the wall rack collapsed All is now secure!



### **FACTS YOU MAY NOT KNOW:**

**The VFW Post 7234 Honor Guard was established in the late 1950s shortly after the Mason-Dixon Post 7234 was established. It continues in service today with eighteen\* members. It serves as a dedicated unit performing solemn precise military funeral honors and ceremonial duties. Our current Honor Guard members represent the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and the Air Force. The Honor Guard is currently led by Honor Guard Captain John Gossart, a US Army Vietnam veteran.**

### **Our Post is an Honor Guard!**

**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. 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**

**We are grateful to our Post Honor Guard members for your dedication and service, and “salute” you for your sacrifice, service, and 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 August 2026**

**Paul Kerstanski Jeannette Twigg**



**100-year-old Veterans Club**



## CANTEEN CORNER

Summer is in full swing and the Post is buzzing with excitement. I would like to thank our bartenders, kitchen staff and volunteers whom all work very hard to provide our members and guests with the most enjoyable experience as possible. Your patience and understanding during these busy us greatly appreciated. A thank you and a word of encouragement to these hard working people goes a long way.

We have two major events this month. Nite at the Races will be held Friday August 14. Tickets can be purchased at the bar. It's a fun exciting event, dont miss out. Our other major event is having the Delaware Hall of Fame Band, "On the Edge" preforme on Saturday evening August 29th. Sure to be a great evening.

Thank you,  
John Frye  
Canteen Manager

## BOONIE RAT ANTHEM



Cleaning out books, years of research material for articles, and folders of miscellaneous interesting and funny at-the-time news, I came across a poem titled “Boonie Rats.” My notes indicate it was written by an unnamed infantryman in the 101<sup>st</sup> Air Assault Division in Vietnam around 1970. He’s recalling thoughts about his wartime experiences in the field, “the boonies.” Here’s an extensive excerpt. I didn’t want it lost and forgotten.

### Boonie Rats

*I landed in this country,  
One year of life to give.  
My only friend a weapon,  
My only prayer to live.*

*I walked away from freedom  
And the life that I had known.  
I passed the weary faces  
Of others going home.*

*Boonie Rats, Boonie Rats  
Scared but not alone.  
300 days more or less  
Then I’m going home.*

*The first few days were hectic  
As they psyched my mind for war.  
I often got the feeling  
They’re trying to tie the score.*

*Boonie Rats, Boonie Rats,  
Scared but not alone.  
200 days more or less  
Then I’m going home.*

*The air was hot and humid;  
The ground was hard and dry.  
Ten times I cursed my rucksack  
And wished that I could die.*

*I learned to look for danger  
In the trees and on the ground.  
I learned to shake the terror  
When I heard an AK round.*

*Boonie Rats, Boonie Rats  
Scared but not alone  
100 days more or less  
Then I'm going home.*

*But still, freedom is our mission.  
For this we do or die.*

*Boonie Rats a legend  
For now and times to come.  
Wherever there are soldiers  
They'll talk of what we've done.*

*Now I'm getting short.  
Fifty days more or less  
Then I'm going home.*

*They say there'll always be a war  
I hope they're very wrong.  
To the Boonie Rats of Vietnam  
I dedicate this song.*

*Boonie Rats, Boonie Rats,  
Scared but not alone.  
Today I see my Freedom Bird.  
Today, I'm going home.*

Fifty-six years have passed since that young soldier wrote the song, but the words will still be full of meaning for many. I have zero musical talent, except on St. Patrick's Day and some reunions, but hopefully, friends blessed with such talent, like Bernie Busby ("Hallelujah"), can come up with the right melody for special Boonie Rat occasions.

Hope you enjoy every day in August. Pray for peace and the safety of all those serving in our military. God bless and guide us all.

**Jerry Hardiman**

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

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

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Chairman       | Andy Artemchuk  |
| President      | Phyllis Scully  |
| Vice President | Jeff Ringel     |
| Treasurer      | Chuck Guido     |
| Secretary      | Jay MacDonald   |
| Board Member   | Sharon Ruest    |
| Board Member   | Steve Kern      |
| Board Member   | Laura Johnson   |
| Board Member   | Frank Mathers   |
| Board Member   | Tom StClair     |
| Board Member   | John Reddington |

## AUXILIARY TEAM

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| President     | Kevin Conlon     |
| Sr Vice Pres  | Sandra Magera    |
| Jr Vice Pres  | Mike McGill      |
| Secretary     | Eileen Healy     |
| Treasurer     | Roberta Walter   |
| Chaplain      | Annie Berger     |
| Guard         | Katherine Cole   |
| Conductress   | Barbara Peterson |
| Patriotic Ins | Peg Atkins       |
| 3yr Trustee   | Carol Weber      |
| 2yr Trustee   | Connie Weber     |
| 1yr 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)**