

February 2022
Post Newsletter
WesternSpringsVFW.org

Commander's Stuff

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Jan 2022 – New Year, New Goals, New Challenges

Comrades, welcome officially to 2022! The Post is ramping-up for the Memorial Day event. It's still unclear if a parade will be possible this year, but the Parade Committee is making all preparations for one. In the event that a parade is not possible, we will move on with a Memorial Observance the same as last year.

May is a few months away but we need to think about the Buddy Poppies sales. Are there any new ideas for the annual fundraiser? I know our Post works hard on this event. Let us strive for another successful year.

Tax season is upon us. Some resources are available to veterans when reporting their annual taxes. One important resource is the IRS. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the IRS and the VA which grants veterans free tax preparation services if the individual qualifies. More information is available at www.irs.gov/individuals/information-for-veterans.

Save the Dates

Feb. 8th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting**

Feb. 11th – deadline for March newsletter

March 8th – 7:30 p.m. **Post Regular meeting**

Other sources for free tax services are AARP and H&R Block. Please check with the companies before engaging on the services. Be aware of fraudulent practices under alternative solutions.

VA News

The Office of Personnel Management will now pay all federal workers a minimum of \$15 per hour.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' National Chaplain Service teams up with the Civil Air Patrol Chaplain Corps to expand veterans' families access to qualified faith leaders during committal and memorial services held at VA cemeteries.

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced its updated plan to move forward with its system-wide Electronic Health Record Modernization program.

Due to supply chain and staffing shortages, the vendor contracted by the

Government Publishing Office to provide printing services for the Department of Veterans Affairs is experiencing delays in printing and mailing notification letters to veterans and claimants. The disruption may impact the ability of some claimants to meet required deadlines via written correspondence with VA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Indian Health Service renewed a partnership on Oct. 1 to help the country's nearly 145,000 American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans overcome health care access barriers.

That's all for now. Happy New Year!

Stay Safe!
Ad Maiora

Quartermaster Report

By Mike Winner

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Statement of funds as of 1/11/22

Post General Fund	\$5,617.25
Post Relief Fund	2,082.57
TOTAL:	\$7,699.82

Semper Fidelis!

News You Can Use

By Chuck Bosko

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Fellow VFW folks and all-American veterans, several days ago, I was rummaging through folders which I save articles of interest to me.

One of those articles was published close to Veterans Day a few years ago and featured thoughts by a few prominent American veterans. I have

included one which, to me, truly articulates a meaning of serving in the military. The article can be found toward the end of this month's newsletter edition.

Chuck Bosko

USA- retired

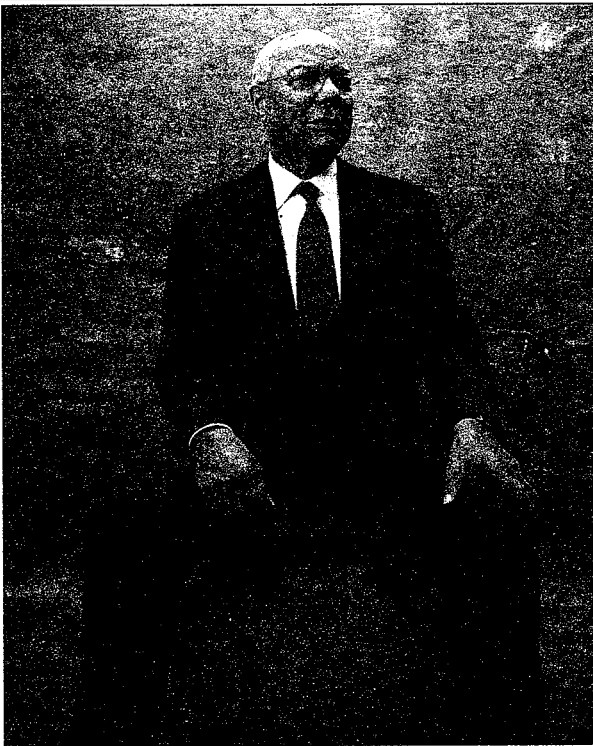
Forever Airborne and Allons!

Valentine's Day Fun Facts

- At the end of the 5th century, Pope Gelasius declared Feb. 14 St. Valentine's Day. Since then, Feb. 14 has been a day of celebration—though it was generally more religious or romantic.
- Valentine's Day got lumped into a mid-February holiday on the ancient Roman calendar called Lupercalia—which some historians believe is what led to Valentine's Day being all about love.
- Saint Valentine's Day was a feast day in the Catholic religion, added to the liturgical calendar around 500 AD. The day was commemorated for martyred saints named Valentine.
- By the end of the 15th century, the word "valentine" was used to describe a lover in poems and songs of the day. By the mid-19th century, mass-produced paper Valentine's cards were being created.
- In Chicago on Feb. 14, 1929, seven men were killed by a gang organized by Al Capone. The Valentine's Day Massacre became a flashpoint in Prohibition history.
Source: Real Simple

Why We Serve

By Gen. Colin L. Powell



Retired U.S. Army Gen. **Colin L. Powell**, former secretary of state, is helping lead efforts to build an education center near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, one that will tell the stories behind some of the Wall's names to future generations.

I became an army lieutenant when I was 21, and more than five decades later, the people I knew in my early days—from college ROTC and my first assignment—I still know. I think of them as family. In every assignment since, I've found a new family, but each time it's also felt like an old family. And even though I've been retired from the military for 18 years, I've never left that family.

Over the years, Americans have chosen to serve for many reasons—during the Revolutionary War, to create a nation; in World War II, to save humanity from destruction; at various times, to help pay for college. Still, no matter the motivation, once our men and women joined up, they've given their all for our country.

But GIs are driven by another allegiance that is just as fierce: to their buddies. During training, they learn to rely on each other for food, for security, for support. They know that they will live, and possibly die, together as a squad of five or nine. It's a form of bond-

ing you can't find anywhere else.

This bond goes beyond the troops. I heard about a young boy, an army brat. His family moved to a new community, and when he showed up at his new school, the teacher introduced him by saying, "It must be hard finding a new home every couple of years." He answered, "No, ma'am. We always have a home; we're just looking for a house to put it in."

I look forward to meeting young GIs on my visits to the Walter Reed hospital. Some of them are horribly wounded—but you know what? Many want to heal as quickly as possible just so they can go back and serve with their unit.

My closest friend during college was Tony Mavroudis. We lived two miles apart in Queens,

and he was like a younger brother to me. We were street kids, and we ran around together—we even destroyed each other's father's car when we were at City College! We were both in ROTC. I first went to Vietnam in 1962, and Tony followed a year or so later. When I returned to the States, I was moved to Fort Benning in Georgia, and Tony ended up there, too.

One day he suddenly volunteered to go back. I told him, "Tony, you don't have to do that. You'll be sent back soon enough." He said, "Yeah, but that's where I'm supposed to be."

So he left. On one of his jungle patrols, he was filmed by a TV crew for a special report on race and the army. He was asked, "What's the relationship between your soldiers, black and white?" And Tony answered like the New York street kid he was: "Hey man, same mud, same blood." He was talking about that sense of family.

A few days later, he was killed by a booby trap.

Tony's name is one of the 58,272 engraved on the Wall, the beautiful granite Vietnam War memorial in Washington, which I've visited countless times. There is magic in that wall. At no other battle monument are people so moved, stenciling names and leaving gifts like combat boots, uniforms, sonograms, even a motorcycle.

Establishing memorials is one way that Americans can repay the debt owed to the people who have died serving this country. But we also bear a similar obligation to the survivors of our nation's conflicts, our veterans.

What can you do? This week on Veterans Day, put out your flags, cheer the marchers at parades, and go to tributes. But when you wake up the next day, Nov. 12, remember that it's still

Veterans Day for our veterans—and it will be every day of their lives. So thank them. Talk to them. Invite them to schools so they can share their experiences and teach our children that we all must take care of each other, on the battlefield and in life.

You can also support one of the many organizations that assist former service members. Three months ago, in Little Rock, Ark., I visited St. Francis House, a shelter for veterans trying to reestablish their lives. Forty-six men are

currently staying there while they work and save up for their own apartments. To find programs in your area, contact your local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, or the Disabled American Veterans.

Many people refer to the World War II generation as the greatest one, but we've had greatness in every single generation of Americans who have served. I know of none greater than the generation of GIs now fighting for our country in Iraq and Afghanistan and serving around the world. Someday soon, they'll need us to fight for them. **E**



A Life in Uniform
Powell in 1963 on his first tour (of two) in Vietnam.

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War and Remembrance ★ Our six veterans share their homecoming stories and pay tribute to the friends they lost. Watch their videos at Parade.com/veterans and share them with a vet you know.