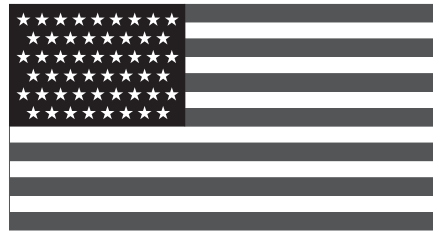
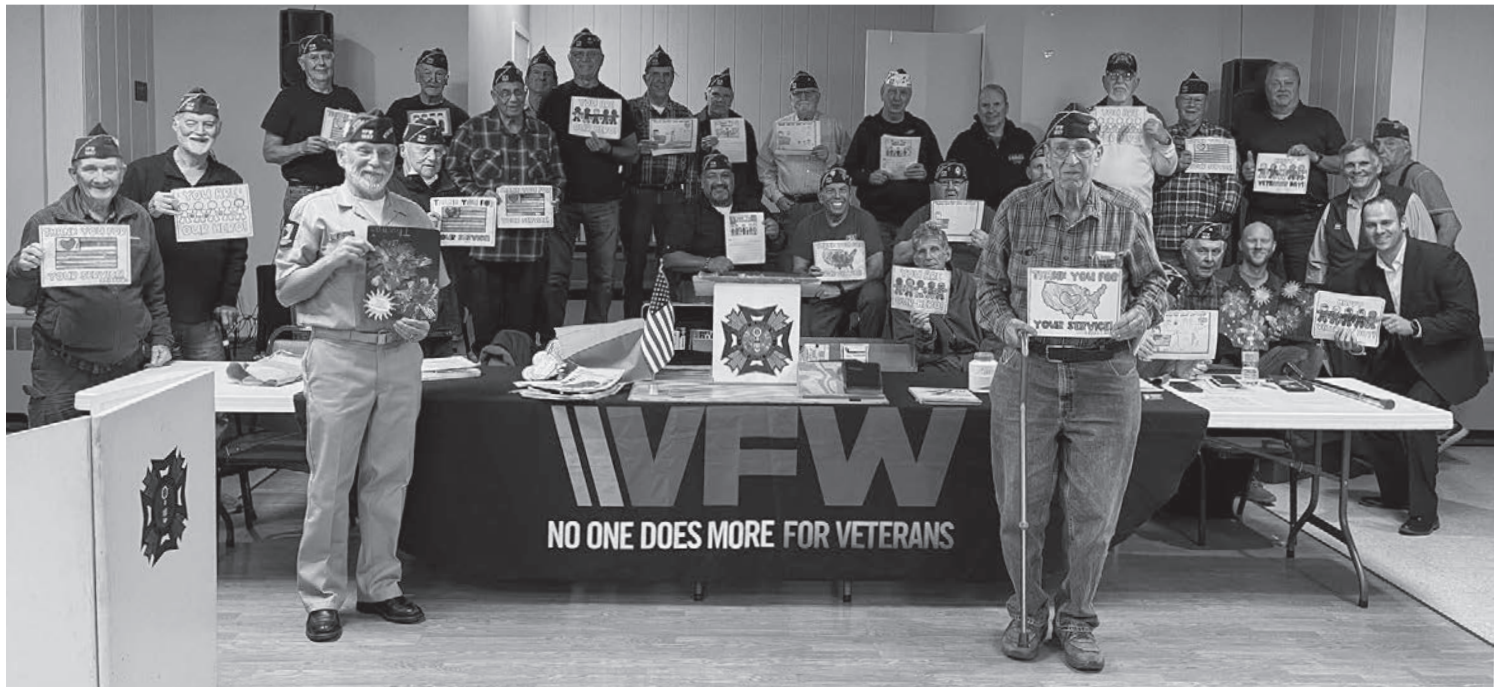


# Veterans of Mount Prospect Illinois



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*In Remembrance Editor Emeritus Bob Fey*



## Local Schools and Organizations Honor Mount Prospect Veterans by Jim Parker

The 11th Day of November each year has been designated as a day to salute the nation's veterans. Many local schools and civic organizations have a long history sponsoring events to honor our military heroes. Most of these celebrations were cancelled or severely curtailed two years ago with onset of Covid. This year most have returned with a flourish and new schools have been added. One day was simply not sufficient for all of them to participate. This year, in a week-long series of special programs, ten area schools, the Village of Mount Prospect and the Mt. Prospect Park District, enthusiastically welcomed the veterans of Mount Prospect Post 1337 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Mount Prospect American Legion Post 525 and thanked them for their service and sacrifices.

The celebrations began on November 3 at the Orchard Place Elementary School in Des Plaines. Several veterans spoke to the kindergarten classes then paired up for discussion groups with the other grades. The next day a group of veterans were welcomed to the Jane Addams Elementary School Palatine by Principal Amy Molinsky who also arranged for small teams of vets to speak to the older students about their individual military careers and experiences, followed by a Q & A session.

On November 9 our veterans started their day with an assembly at Saint Raymond School in Mount Prospect. It began with a welcome from Principal, Mary Eileen Ward, followed by the traditional Posting of the Colors, Pledge of

Allegiance and National Anthem. A medley was played that consisted of songs of each of the five branches of the US armed forces. Eighth grade students then revealed a Missing Man Memorial Table and took turns explaining the significance of each displayed item. After the assembly concluded with the playing of Taps, the vets were escorted into an adjoining room and served breakfast. Not done yet, the vets next deployed to the Anne Sullivan School in Prospect Heights. The students were separated into groups, each of which was addressed by a few veterans, who spoke about their time in the military and answered questions. This approach was quite popular as the men enjoyed connecting with the students.

November 10 began with another breakfast to honor local veterans at MacArthur Middle School in Prospect Heights. Up next was a large assembly that included the school's students, teachers and staff. After a warm welcome by District Superintendent, Dr. Cameron Nystrom, the school's incredibly talented orchestra, band and chorus entertained the crowd with many patriotic selections, included the songs of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. That evening featured two programs at Link Elementary School in Elk Grove Village. The later starting time allowed parents and families of the students to attend and join in. In two separate groups, our vets were entertained with songs by third graders followed by a short address and a sincere thank you by each veteran. *(cont. page3)*



# Konnichiwa from Japan

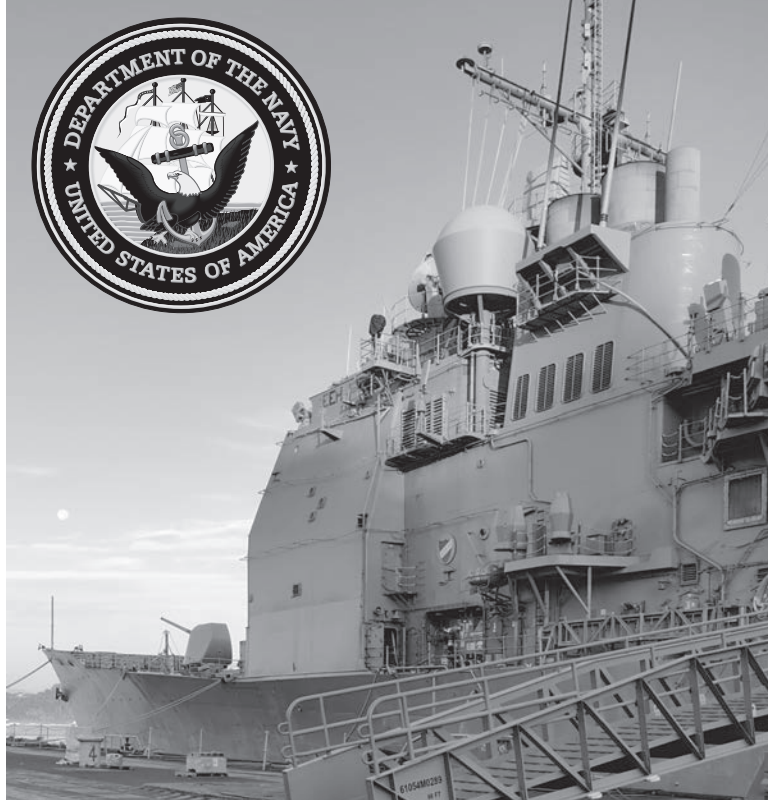
by Andrew Fonseca FCA3, USN

**So for everyone,**

Hey y'all Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone back home! I work all the time, we're currently in 3 section duty and even on my non-duty days us Spy techs work harder and stay longer, even when everyone has finished for the day. But the liberty makes up for it. Japan is incredible! The food, the atmosphere, the people. I'm having an amazing time out here. The foods inexpensive but high quality and delicious. The people are courteous and friendly. And I've already made friends with a couple of the locals lol. Thanks for all your support from back home and I hope everyone stays in good health



Left & Right USS Chancellorsville (CG-62) is a Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser her home port is Yokosuka Japan



Andrew was a main player at our Thanksgiving for recruits. Helping also set up the evening before. He had just joined Post 525 a couple weeks before



Zojo-ji temple

## End of an Era: The National Defense Service Medal



The awards system of the United States Armed Forces is complex with a plethora of awards. They range from awards given for acts of valor to those given for blanket participation in the service branches. A handful of veterans are distinguished by awards for high gallantry, valor, and bravery, e.g., the Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross. Other awards are more ubiquitous, e.g., the Army Service Ribbon, Air Force Training Ribbon, Honorable Discharge Button, etc. These are found throughout millions of military personnel records.

One medal has achieved a unique distinction amongst the routine awards. Established near the end of the Korean War, the National Defense Service Medal (NDSM) has graced the ribbon racks of millions of veterans.

The Department of Defense estimates that since 1953, the NDSM has been awarded at least four million times, not even counting those who apply for it retroactively. The NDSM is authorized at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense, who determines when a national emergency is present and allows the NDSM to be awarded. This means that the NDSM has gone through periods of inactivity.

On Tuesday, August 30, 2022, the first anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin signed orders ending issuance of the National Defense Service Medal for the War on Terror. After January 1, 2023, no active duty service members that enlist after that date will receive the medal. This marks the longest period that the NDSM was authorized; 21 years, 3 months, and 20 days.

What are this award's origins? How did this award become so procedural? The answer lies with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. During the Korean War, President Eisenhower became concerned with growing contentions in the Cold War. President Harry Truman had already created the Korean Service Medal for service in the Korean War. President Eisenhower conceived the idea of a "blanket campaign" medal that would be issued to any honorably discharged veteran with active service during a "national emergency." What stipulated a "national emergency" remained at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense. No matter where they served, the NDSM signified military service.

On April 22, 1953, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10448 "Establishing the National Defense Service Medal" outlining its basic qualifications:

There is hereby established the National Defense Service Medal, with suitable appurtenances, for award, under such regulations as the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and the Secretary of the Treasury may severally prescribe, and, subject to the provisions of this order, to members of the armed forces of the United States who shall have served during any period between June 27, 1950, and a terminal date to be fixed by the Secretary of Defense...

This order delegated authority to the Secretary of Defense to determine eligibility dates. The Department of Defense followed up on July 15, 1953, with a directive expanding personnel eligibility, issuance procedure, and ribbon layout.

Since 1953, the NDSM was revised by three executive orders, inactivated and reactivated four times, and expanded from active duty service to National Guard and Reservist service. The four active periods coincide with major wars: Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the War on Terror. In the 1960s and 1970s, as the Vietnam War intensified, active duty servicemembers performing stateside service along with reservists and Guardsmen qualified for the award. The same criteria applied to Desert Storm participants. By the War on Terror, the NDSM expanded qualifications to its greatest extent. Since 9/11, service members could receive the NDSM almost as a given if they completed 90 days of consecutive active duty, not including training periods.

Those who are on active duty for multiple approved time periods receive bronze star appurtenance on the NDSM and ribbon. Officer cadets that graduate from military academies can receive the NDSM along with those at Officer Candidate Schools upon their commission.

While the National Defense Service Medal is one of the most-issued awards, it can sometimes be overlooked by clerks and records technicians when discharging a veteran with only a few weeks of service. Many veterans apply for a retroactive issuance of the NDSM if it doesn't appear on their discharge and they served during one of the four authorized time periods.

That will all change after December 31, 2022. The decision by the Department of Defense signals a more peacetime posture with the limitation of troop deployments and counterterrorism operations. The United States is still involved in Syria, but major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have all ceased. Many veterans can scarcely remember a time when the NDSM wasn't issued or couldn't be found on a ribbon rack. Its appearance and commonality gave it a distinctive nickname (the "pizza stain") for its red and yellow colors. Despite its formulaic criteria and issuance, the National Defense Service Medal for many represents their commitment at a time when the nation needed their service.

Source Thomas Richardson, an expert archives technician at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri.



### Local Schools and Organizations (cont.)

On Veterans Day, November 11, VFW Post 1337 and American Legion Post 525, the Village of Mount Prospect and the Mt. Prospect Park District, co-sponsored a Veterans Day ceremony at the Lions Recreation Center. About 250+ local veterans with families and friends attended. They were joined by about 450 students and teachers from Lions Park School plus many members of the Village and Park District staff. Included in the program was local soloist, Debbie Schreiner, who led the attendees in several patriotic songs, and the Lions Park School Chorus, led by music teacher Clare Koehlinger, who sang the inspiring, "United We Stand." The latter performance was so well received that MC, Post 525 Commander Bill Starr departed from his script and requested an encore. Keynote Speaker, former US Army Capt. Jack Vrett, a lawyer and former JAG Officer, effectively addressed his remarks to the students. He told them that in the course of their time as students, or as part of a group, they would encounter problems and obstacles, some of which might seem overwhelming. Vrett suggested that when trying to deal with such challenges, they consider three things. First is try to keep a positive attitude about finding and executing a solution. Second, always be a team player and not to just view things individually. A team victory is always sweeter than a personal one. Third, and perhaps most important, never give up. Stick with it and you will find a solution. He gave examples of how he used these three things in the course of his life. At the conclusion of his address, Mr. Vrett received an enthusiastic ovation from the crowd.

Later in the day our vets moved on to large assemblies at Terrace Elementary School in Elk Grove Village and Hunting Ridge Elementary School in Palatine. Each of these events featured outstanding musical performances, patriotic readings and very, very dedicated students. More than 25 members of Post 1337 and Post 525 attended one or more of these events and those described above. All of whom were deeply moved by the love and respect they were shown by all of the participants. After this Veterans Day they will have renewed energy toward completing the mission of the VFW and American Legion-- to provide aid and assistance, as needed, to fellow veterans and to not forget the POW and MIA soldiers, sailors and airmen who are still serving and sacrificing for America.



## Navy Recruits Hosted for Thanksgiving

This past Thanksgiving, 24 November 2022, Mount Prospect's VFW Post 1337 and American Legion Post 525 hosted 50 US Navy recruits from the Great Lakes Naval Training Facility, many of whom were away from home for the first time. They enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving Day meal, entertainment, the use of telephones and computers to contact their families and an opportunity to be honored by and interact with Mount Prospect veterans and residents. The Adopt-a Sailor program was introduced in the Northwest suburbs over 20 years ago by Korea veteran, Casey Bachara, who was then a member of the Arlington Heights American Legion. After a two-year hiatus due to Covid, Bachara, a Mount Prospect resident and now a member of both our Posts, has organized his fellow vets to bring Adopt-a-Sailor to our village. The event was held at the Moose Lodge building, 601 N. Main Street. Bachara said that, *"the program is a wonderful opportunity to salute and support our military and make this Thanksgiving a day to remember for some of them."* Much of the food and equipment was donated but our local Posts sincerely appreciated dessert donations by our Comrades of cookies, fudge and cupcakes.

Our community partners Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 660 and the Mount Prospect Lions Club were beyond gracious in their support.









## Veterans Day/s Photos

Finally....back to normal for our two posts visiting many schools, having our ceremony and other great things to celebrate our service to the nation. This Year Post 525 Adjutant Ron Vlcek took on the workload of organizing all these school events. The Community got to see how much we love our community and especially our young citizens.





## 1337 Presents Awards to Students & Teacher



At its December meeting Veterans of Foreign Wars Mount Prospect Post 1337 presented Certificates of Appreciation to two local students in recognition of their winning the Post's "Voice of Democracy" awards in the VFW's annual public speaking contest on a patriotic theme. At its November meeting another student was awarded the Post's prize in the "Patriot's Pen" essay contest. Later in the month an elementary school teacher from Jane Addams School in Palatine was named the Post's Teacher of the Year. All of these honorees will be submitted for possible additional recognition by VFW District 4 and Department of Illinois

The Voice of Democracy winners were Sabrina DaVita, who attends John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights, and Taylor Tallman, of William Fremd High School in Palatine were recognized with Certificates of Appreciation as Co-winners of the contest for Junior High School students and each received a \$50 check from Post 1337. This year's national theme was, "Why is the Veteran Important?" Post Commander, Les Durov, who presented the certificates, said

both entries were truly outstanding. Sabrina attended the ceremony with her parents and grandfather to whom her presentation was dedicated. Joining Taylor were her Mom and Dad.

The Post's Patriot's Pen awardee was Marin Hahn from Lincoln Middle School in Mount Prospect. Her essay was on this year's theme, "My Pledge to Our Veterans." Miss Hahn also received a certificate and \$50 check from Commander Durov. Also attending the presentation were her parents, brother, paternal grandmother and maternal grandparents.

On November 18th the Post also visited Jane Addams Elementary School to present its "Elementary School Teacher of the Year" award for excellence and Americanism to music teacher Rachel Manchur. She was presented with a Certificate of Achievement and a \$50 check to purchase class room supplies from Commander Durov. His comment that the award was well deserved was echoed by School Principal, Amy Molinsky who said that Ms. Manchur is an outstanding and well respected teacher.

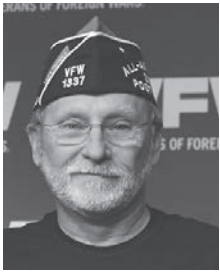


## Double Shinning Stars to be Honored

Last year the 2021 Shinning Stars Gala was canceled although we had a winner for the Star Spangled Banner Award Chuck Ohrn. We all were disappointed that we couldn't celebrate with Chuck Ohrn, our long time VFW Post 1337 Quartermaster. Well this year we do get to honor him and even a bigger bonus, Ron Willer our long time Chaplain, shall be the recipient of the 2022 award. At Press time the awards shall be presented Saturday 4 February. The specifics have been sent to our membership to join these two amazing unselfish Comrades. Two more reasons 1337 is an All American Post approaching 5 years.



## From the Commander of VFW Post 1337



The holidays are gone and we move into a new year. What a great year it is shaping up to be. Our Post has only one hurdle to go. Membership, we have made all of the requirements for All State as well as All American for the fifth year in a row. Except membership. I don't think this will be an obstacle for us. We will continue to be resourceful and accomplish this goal.

Looking back to what we have accomplished, we sent in Teacher of the year, first responders both Fire and Police. VOD, and Patriot Pen entries. Thanksgiving was spent with the 45 recruits from Great Lakes Training Center. With the outstanding help of Cassey Baccara, he made this event off the charts. We sent a bus to pick up 45 recruits to the base to pick them up and bring them back to the Moose Lodge for a treat they will remember for the rest of their lives. It all started with a greeting from the Mayor of Mount Prospect and the Post Commander. Then they devoured a sweet table before the entertainment and full turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Then back to the base, graduations was to be in a week.

As we make the march to a new year in June. We have a few events to finish. Patriots Pen VOD Dinner in January. Februarys District meeting along with the C of A Meeting in Springfield. The big finish will be Memorial Day. We are currently forming what we need to arrange for our Memorial Day Ceremony. Diane Carlson Evans will be our quest speaker. Diane is a national figure in the veteran's community. The theme of the event will be "Women Service Members Who Sacrificed". What an honor to have her as our quest. You will not want to miss this event, mark in on your calendar now.

We can't forget our Post, District and State elections for the approaching new year 2022 – 2023. Let's keep moving forward to accomplish the same goal. **VETERANS HELPING VETERANS.**

*Les Durov, All State-All American Commander*

## From the Commander of the American Legion



525 Legionnaires. 2022 was another great year for the post and we can be very proud but now it is time to look ahead. What would normally be a relatively quiet time of the year for the post, promises to be very busy indeed. Dutch is forming and heading up a committee made up of all village entities necessary to properly host our 2023 Memorial Day speaker Diane Carlson Evans. There are many moving parts to be attended to and this year's commemoration of Memorial Day promises to break all previous attendance records. Les Durov, Commander of the VFW, and I are on this committee. If you are unfamiliar with Diane Carlson Evans, simply google her name and you will, as I was, be very impressed with this wonderful woman and what she has accomplished. \* Membership – Only you know the name of a veteran who is not yet a member of the post. Please make that connection and invite him/her to a meeting. Chances are he/she will readily discover that there are benefits that he/she was not aware of. \* Nominations for new post officers will be on the agenda for the April meeting. Step up and contribute! *Bill Starr, Commander*

**Currently, Post 525 has approximately 40 members that have not renewed. If in doubt, check your membership card to see if it says 2022 or 2023. The dues for Post 525 are \$45 You may pay your dues at our meeting or you can mail a check for \$45 to the Post at:**

**American Legion Post 525 P.O. Box 173 Mount Prospect, IL. 60056**

## VFW Department Member of the Month



23 years ago, AL member Casey Bachara and a few buddies had an idea about US Navy boot campers stationed at the nearby Great Lakes Naval Training Base. They knew that these trainees would not be permitted leave time to join their families for the traditional Thanksgiving holiday, so they decided that he and fellow vets might be able to help some of them with invitations to spend the day at

their Post. After several successful years he took full charge of what had become known as the "Adopt-a-Sailor" program. In 2013 Casey joined the VFW in 2013 in Chicago and transferred to Prospect Post 1337. Covid limitations caused the cancellation of the event in 2020 and 2021 but Casey geared up our Post to reinvigorate the program this year. The event was covered by two Chicago TV stations with whom Casey had built relationships and stories appeared in several newscasts, all of which reflected favorably on the VFW. A front page article in an area wide newspaper did the same. This publicity also had a positive impact on our membership.

In addition to the 50 sailors who were transported to our Post, many of our comrades and our sister AL post volunteered to help with set up, food service, entertainment, transportation and the many other tasks involved in the Adopt-a-Sailor program. They enjoyed helping out and interacting with the sailors and fellow vets. The attendees were thrilled to have the opportunity have a traditional Thanksgiving meal with fellow servicemen and women. Casey also arranged to have phone and computer banks set up so the sailors could contact their families. He also recruited some Post members who are musicians to entertain their guests. They were able to join in with a singalong and play some guitars that also were provided. The final entertainment event was an inspiring rendition of the songs of each branch of the service joined in by the vets culminating with "Anchors Away" sung loudly and proudly by our Navy guests and vets.

Our Thanksgiving Day event was also publicized widely in our community. Casey had an article about printed in the Village newsletter and invited several Village officials to attend. The Mayor gave the welcoming address and joined in the day's events. The TV and newspaper coverage was enjoyed by many, many Village residents who let Casey know they had seen it. Additionally, our event became well known by families in cities and towns across the nation who received call and emails from their soldier sons, daughters, brothers and sisters at a VFW sponsored event. The foregoing are but a few of the many reasons that Post 1337 nominate Casey Bachara for the Department of Illinois Veteran of the Month which he has won. *right VFW Dept. IL Service Medal*



## From the Service Officer



Although still busy helping veterans with service connected claims, much of your Service Officer's time has been spent on State Legislative matters and working to make the Veterans Assistance Commissions statewide more vibrant. We are making progress because you and other members take the time to contact representatives when asked.