

The Founder

A

Monthly Newsletter for Post 1 Members

Issue # 2 April 2013

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Post 1 Officers

Commander
Izzy Abbass

Sr Vice Commander
Michael Mitchel

Jr. Vice Commander
Phill Eggers

Quartermaster
Isreal Bills

Chaplain
Ray Starkey

Surgeon
Malcom Walker

Service Officer
Mort Anderson

Judge Advocate
John Holland

Public Affairs Officer



*Welcome to the online edition of **The Founder**, a monthly newsletter to keep Post 1 members and Auxiliary informed and involved.*

Updates from last Post 1 Meeting

Summary of Important Meeting topics from March 14, 2013.

1. Membership Report- 879 members with 105% goal reached.
2. 3 new member applications received and approved.
3. Nomination of Post Officers:
 - o Commander- Michael Mitchel
 - o Sr Vice Commander- Cameron Cook
 - o Jr Vice Commander- John Keene and Norm Frickey
 - o Quartermaster- Mort Anderson
 - o Chaplain- Ray Starkey
 - o Judge Advocate - John Holland
 - o Surgeon- No nominations
4. Commander Report- Post 1 Presentation Overview
5. Next Post 1 Meetings on April 11, 2013
 - o **Special Meeting to discuss status of our building on 4300 Pecos - 6pm**

Brenda Smull

Committee Chairs

Women Veterans
Pam Chapman

Current Conflict
Patrick Browne
Suicide Mental Health
Kevin Moreno

Military Liason
Eryth Zecher

Homeless Veterans
Dana Niemela

Student Veterans
Cameron Cook

Buddy Poppy
Pete Arragon

Youth Activities
David Perez

Trustees

Larry Monson
Kristen Luevanos

George Caulkins



- Regular Business meeting with Officer Elections- 7pm

New Members

Porfirio Aragon
Matthew Jarrett
Kyle Mize
Daniel Tan
Jeremy Walsh
Wayne Kennedy, Jr.
Amy Vonbehren
Nathaniel Young

In Memoriam

To our recently deceased members:

Dean L. Mather

Post 1 Life Membership Program

Last month the membership agreed to pilot a program to help new members sign up for the Life Memberships. Currently the Life Membership can be expensive (\$335-\$425 depending on the age of the Veteran). The Post covers the cost of the metal Life Membership cards. Also, the Post receives a small annuity from National for each Life Member. Under the current Life Membership installment plan, the payment goes to National VFW and the Veteran isn't considered a Life Member until the last payment is made. The Veteran is not eligible for a Life Card nor does the Post receive the annuity.

As part of this pilot program, Post 1 will front the cost of the Life Membership for five members. The Post will pay in full the Life Membership and issue the metal Life Membership card. The member will reimburse the cost directly to the Post in monthly installments. This is an opportunity for members to show their commitment to the VFW and for the Post to demonstrate its commitment to life-long service to Veterans. If you are interested, please contact Mort Anderson for more details.

mortanderson@comcast.net

Post Member Profiles

Kyle Mize- USMC, Operation Iraqi Freedom

Meet Colorado native Kyle Mize. Kyle is a student at the University of Colorado Denver and he is serving as one of our two Veteran Service Officers for VFW Post 1 and he is working with student veterans on the Auraria Campus specializing in disability and healthcare and working with the State VFW Service Officer Terry Jacobsen. Kyle joined the USMC at the ripe age of 19 and served four years in 29 Palms as a 0313 LAV Crewman, he achieved the rank of E5/Sergeant. He served two six month deployments to Iraq in 2007-2008 and 2009. Kyle is currently a senior at CU Denver and is getting his degree in Electrical Engineering.

Because of his desire to help veterans, the UC Denver Student veterans office is now able to assist with Disability and health care claims and issues filed with the VA for any veteran - student or non-student. Services offered include:

- Support with current claims
- Information about VA health care

Filing new claims

Kyle.Mize@ucdenver.edu

Contact Kyle Mize at the UCD Office of Veterans Student Services in the Tivoli Student Union Suite 124.



Mize

Kyle

Joe Riggs- USAAF & USAF, WWII and Korean War

Joe hails from Des Moines, Iowa and he joined the US Army Air Force in 1943. During WW II he served in North Africa, Algeria, Italy and then the Philippines in preparation for the invasion of Japan.

While in Europe, Joe was with an engineer building runways and operating heavy equipment for the 345th 2nd Bomb Group supporting B-24 operations.

After the fall of Italy, Italian POWs once out of sight of the Germans, served as cooks for the GIs and Joe noted that the food much improved at that point. Some of the toughest fighting that he experienced was in the Po River Valley, the tide turned when the Germans ran out of fuel and ammo. While in Rome, Joe visited the Vatican and met the Pope.

After VE day, Joe was sent to the Philippines in preparation for the invasion of Japan. He transited via the Panama Canal and grabbed shore leave for a few hours and enjoyed ice cream and coconuts compliments of the Red Cross. On the other side of the canal, they were alerted to an enemy submarine and manning the deck guns, they shot and sunk it. Unfortunately, it wasn't a submarine, but a whale.

Joe was part of the Japanese occupation for a short while before returning to the civilian world. Then Joe was called up as part of the newly established US Air Force and after two weeks of training, he served as a flying medic ferrying wounded from Korea to Tokyo on C-54s.

Brothers Bill served in Japan and Ray died while serving in Vietnam.

Joe was a semi truck driver for 43 years. He was married to his 5th wife for 20 yrs before she passed away much like the first four wives. Joe had three children and currently lives in the same apartment building that his surviving daughter manages in downtown.

Joe was commander of Post 738 from 1999-2001 in Des Moines Iowa. Joe moved out to Denver in 2003 and that's when he joined Post 1.

Come our August meeting, please be sure to wish Joe a happy 89th birthday...



Joe Riggs, 1943 and Today

In the Community

UVC & Younger Veterans

Just like Reese's PB Cups: Two Things that Go Great Together

Some but not all of you are familiar with the United Veterans Committee of Colorado (UVC) or as I often lovingly refer to it as a meeting of the "Four Families of the Veterans Mafia". The UVC is a group that consists of just about every veteran organization in Colorado and is very strong politically as they have a legislative committee and even hire a part time lobbyist. Unfortunately, the group has honestly not kept with the times with meetings being held from 9-11 the second Tuesday of every month - not really convenient for those who are working or in school. Further, until we made a big push last year to get student vets a seat at the table, the focus had been on cemeteries and nursing homes. Not so big of a draw for our younger veterans. Actually, this was the same issue faced by the State Board of Veterans Affairs.

Well, after a degree of lobbying the first step towards addressing some of these concerns will be taken on April 17th. The UVC will hold it's meeting that Wednesday on the Auraria Campus at 6pm. The goal is to introduce the UVC to younger members and to show the core constituency of the UVC that there are many younger veteran voices to be heard. Honestly, that also includes everyone in Post 1 as all of you have been heavily involved in ensuring that younger vets participate. We need you to be there and to show our younger veterans that there are strengths to be tapped in the legacy veteran organizations like the VFW.

Further, I would like this meeting to send a message to the leadership within the UVC that younger veterans do care and will get involved if organizations will meet them part way - like having the meeting at a time convenient to those with jobs or school. Ideally, one UVC meeting per quarter would be a time convenient for our students and working professionals. So, please join us on April 17th at the Tivoli Student Union on Auraria Campus.

Veteran Hiring Success Story

Post 1 brought Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and the Colorado Dept of Labor/ Employment (CDLE) together with Level 3 for a Veteran Hiring event. With only two weeks notice, and on a snowy Monday, 25 Veterans arrived to interview for entry level positions that started at \$30k a year with full benefits and training. Word quickly spread on the caliber of the candidates and soon hiring managers from other departments came down to the interview site (in Level 3 Corporate Headquarters in Broomfield) and started hiring folks. Out of the 25, 9 were hired, many on the spot. Several were hired with first year salaries at \$50k. That represent over \$290K in first year salaries.

Thanks for ESGR and CDLE for getting the word out.

Level 3 was so impressed, that another Vet Hiring Event is scheduled for April 11th at 10am. Our goal is to have over 20 Veterans hired. **Pass the word!**

Buddy Poppy Success

The Post 1 Buddy Poppy Program is alive and moving. Heading up the program is BP Chairman, Pete Aragon, with Alan Norton as 2IC and rounding out the committee is the ever faithful Leroy Montoya. The program took off like a rocket last year with drives surrounding such holidays as Labor, Memorial, Independence, Veterans and Christmas Days. Phil Eggers also headed up a Student Veterans BP drive. The local King Soopers stores have been supportive of our efforts and have bent over backwards to accommodate us.

The program is self -supportive and requires no monetary support from Post. In 2012, we netted over \$1200.00 that was used to sponsor the Post Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pens programs and buy more poppies, while distributing over 2000 Poppies.

This year, we have seven drives planned with all of the sites locked in. Our goal is to receive between \$1500 and \$2000 in donations which will be used to assist Post sponsored programs such as the VOD, Patriots Pens, Operation Holiday Heroes, Founders Day Banquet and other patriotic and educational events as necessary.

Our next BP drive is Sunday, May 19th from 11-1400 hrs. at King Soopers at Hampden and University. We cordially invite the membership, family and friends

to join the Post in our commitment to our Veterans and community.



Alan Norton, Pete Aragon and John Holland

VFW Post 1 Jacket

Just in time for summer! (my fault for the delay in passing this out.. MM)
George Caulkins worked with Harrow on this design and a discount to Post 1 members.

Use promo code: vfw for 20% off. Logo has the Malta Cross and says John S. Stewart Post 1 on the top and "The First Post" on the bottom...

[The VFW Post 1 Jacket](#)



Project Sanctuary Organization Overview

Project Sanctuary has become one of our favorite partner organizations. In short, their founding principle is that the **whole family serves** and that the best

way to "support the troops" is by supporting the whole family.

PS does this by providing therapeutic, curative, supportive and recreational activities to Veterans, active Military personnel, their spouses and children in a leisure environment that allows them to reconnect and reintegrate into their communities starting off with a weeklong retreat and followed by two years of follow up. The numbers speak for themselves:

- Project Sanctuary has hosted 29 therapeutic retreats and is providing support and services for 228 military families.
- Of these families, 128 are active duty, and 100 are veterans.
- 80% of the participating service members are "wounded warriors" with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI), physical wounds and/or amputations.
- 90% of the families are still together.
- There have been ZERO suicides!



Ladies Auxiliary Update

SHINE- the biggest party of the year!

Gina Ciccone, Sr. Vice President of Auxiliary #1 attended this great event with her nephew and member Jill Canzona's son, Mark age 27.

Mark has been disabled since birth with a seizure disorder and has no communication skills.

Gina is co-guardian with Mark's mother Jill who cares for Mark 24/7 at home. Mark has a G-tube in his abdomen, 2 titanium rods in his spine; he uses an AFP

brace on his rightleg, and remains incontinent. Mark is very happy, loving and expresses his affection by blowing kisses, high five, knuckles, and bumpin' heads. Mark's smile is contagious and he had the time of his life at the SHINE event.

Three weeks prior to the event Flatirons sponsored a clothing closet filled with suits, prom dresses, shoes, ties and everything needed for the black tie event. Mark was fitted with a grey and black suit, tailored by several wonderful women that hemmed and made Mark look like a million dollars. Mark chose his own tie, one of the volunteers held up two ties and he chose the red. The suit and tailoring were all at no cost.

The event was more than I as a caregiver ever expected! The entire event consumed the enormous building of Flatirons Church; there was valet parking, youth cheerleaders to greet each and every participant. Caregivers and their guests were escorted in the building through a tent - the red carpet - given personal name tags, coats were checked, and host and hostesses were assigned for the entire evening. Our hostess was Mary Jean, she is a retired nurse that was simply marvelous with Mark and I and never left our side the entire evening. The evening was filled with male clowns on roller blades handing out cake pops, female trapeze artist on circles hanging from the ceiling. Each guest had sparkled hats for the males and tiara and corsages for the females. There was a full catered dinner from Chick Fil-A, food processors available for guests that needed it, and gift bag back packs with colorful water bottles, professional portraits, live music, and a game room for all to partake as desired.

The event was amazing, it was all at no cost for myself or Mark. Mark slept with his hat and his nametag that night and smiled the entire way home holding our professional picture.



Gina and Mark at the SHINE event

Sponsored by the Flatirons Church in Lafayette, CO

Commander's Comer

Elections - Moving Forward

As we all used to say in the military - I'm short. So short I could trip over a dime

or rappel with boot laces. Comrades, we're coming up on elections and after 5 years it's time to me to step aside and let new hands take over the reins. Actually, they are not new hands so much as they are different hands given the slate of candidates up for election. George Caulkins, Michael Mitchel and myself all became heavily involved with Post 1 ten-years ago this past January. The three of us have seen not only a transformation of the Post with a large influx of new members, but we have seen a sincere desire to also recognize and celebrate our past. The combination of these two items is what makes Post 1 truly unique and the First Post! Let's keep it going.

Mental Health/Suicide Prevention Working Group

I was asked to chair a working group to address the identification of resources available on mental health/suicide prevention for our veterans this past month by Senator Bennet. This follows a larger working group that was convened to address other issues including veterans employment and higher education needs. The one key thing that came out of this meeting was the need for a resource guide - online and at some point a call center - so folks had an easy connection to the vast array of support services that exist. Unfortunately, this has been tried on a number of occasions and the State Board of Veterans Affairs even pushed forward a resolution to make this happen. Sadly, there was no fiscal note attached to it and nothing has really happened. We are going to try again and while I make no promises, a great group of veterans has been assembled and all are adamant that something get done - not just talk about it. Three themes that came out of this meeting:

1. Need a way to coordinate resources - whether it uses an existing platform or building something easy to deploy.
2. Need to have personalized service to really be effective.
3. We need to get something launched sooner rather than wait until everything is perfect before launching.

The hope is that if we can get a framework going, we can then improve from there. This has been a long held desire by the veteran community in Colorado and I'll let you know what progress is made.

All American and All State Post

Hats off to everyone - Post 1 made All American and All State as a Post this year. This is the first time Post 1 has ever achieved this in recent memory - I suspect for several decades. Congratulations!. This honor is due to our activity in programs as well as our growing membership. What this means that now we are recognized by the National and State VFW for something we already knew - We have a truly Awesome Post!

Vires Montesque Vincimus!
Izzy Abbass
Commander

Senior Vice Commander

As some of you may recall, last month the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce notified us that Post 1 is a finalist for Small Non Profit of the Year. As part of the selection process, several members of the Post walked the selection committee through a presentation on what Post 1 does and how.

One member of that committee just couldn't get his arms around the fact that we are all volunteers.

Last week there was a reception for all the finalists for different categories (Small Non Profit, Large Non Profit, Emerging company of the year etc) in the lobby of the historic Colorado Business Bank. Throughout the evening, we kept getting approached getting congratulated, wanting more information on the Post, etc. Post representatives wore the VFW hats with pride and we easily stood out in the full lobby.



Izzy Abbass, Brenda Smull, Michael Mitchel and John Keene



On April 26th, we find out if we are Small Non Profit of the Year. Stay tuned...

Distinguished Warfare Medal status...

Sen. Tester (MT) introduced S 470 A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require that the Purple Heart occupy a position of precedence above the new Distinguished Warfare Medal (DWM).



What this means is that currently the DoD is proposing that the DWM (top row far right in chart above) would have precedence above the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star (see bottom row, left side). Sen. Tester's bill is to put it below the Purple Heart.

Rep Duncan Hunter (CA-50) introduced H.R. 833 for the same result. Please contact your Senator and Congressman urging support for these bills. I recently wrote a letter to Sen. Udall and Sen. Bennet for the same.

Our own Isreal Bills is running for District 1 Commander and Alan Norton for District Sr Vice Commander. We will be discussing this at the next meeting. Let's support our comrades at the May District 1 joint meeting/election.

Together as a whole, you are what makes Post 1 the best Post in the country. Thank you.

Michael Mitchel
Sr. Vice Commander
Michael@vfwpost1.org