

The Founder

The Monthly Newsletter For VFW Post 1 Members

JOHN S. STEWART POST 1



"THE FIRST POST"



June 2014

Issue No. 12

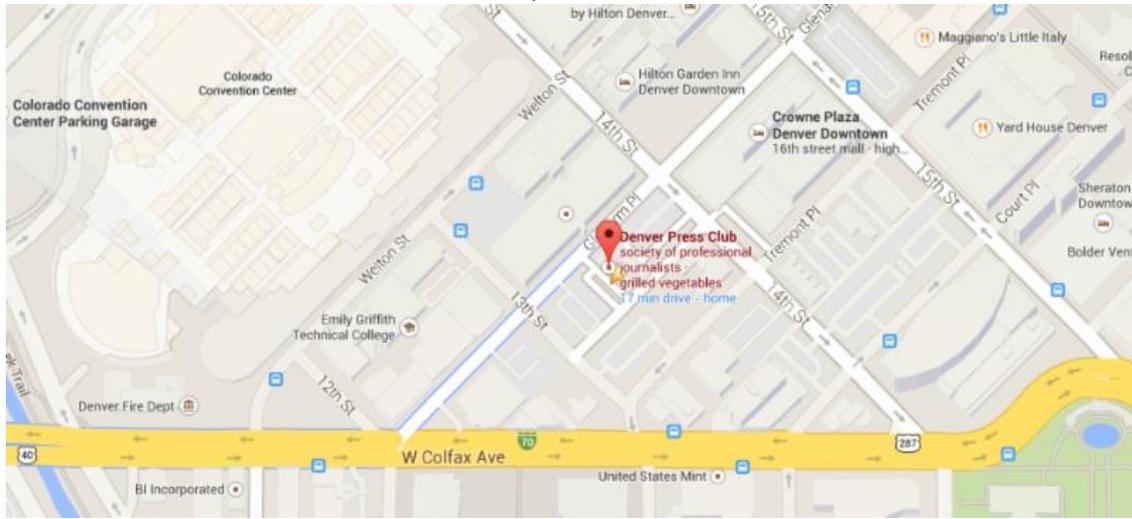
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Meeting Update

Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 7:00 pm

**Denver Press Club
1330 Glenarm Place
Denver, CO 80204**



In Memoriam

Our thoughts and prayers go to the family of the recently deceased member of Post 1.

Kevin Burns

New Members

Robert Gomez, Brent Hamilton, Robert Jennings, John Kelly, Greg Kuo, Bryan Leonard, Mark Mills, Donald Oatley, George Seals, Alex Sutherland, Daniel Tijerino, Alex Wilschke

Inside Post 1 - News and Events

Commander's Corner

By Michael Mitchel

The theme for this month's column is *Bravo Zulu*.

So many recent events have shown why the members of Post 1 deserve a *Well Done*.

In May, the Denver Chamber of Commerce named Post 1 as the **Small Non-Profit of the Year**. It was a festive lunch for members of Post 1 and we were all honored by the award.

After our name was announced, the room erupted in applause and as members of the Post walked to the stage, the room greeted us with a standing ovation. The other two finalists were helmed by Veterans, including Angels of America's Fallen, piloted by our own Post 1 Member Joe Lewis.

Post 1 was recognized for not the actions of one individual, event or support of one program. Rather, it was the collective actions and support of many programs by all Post members working in the community that we serve, illustrating the dedication and service that a 100% volunteer organization can do. Bravo Zulu.

At the District Convention, Isreal Bills was elected as Junior Vice Commander. Congratulations Isreal!

Cinco de Mayo was the first time that we have done a table at Civic Park and it was a success. We received several hundred dollars in donations, and several new members joined the Post.

Our Memorial Day Ceremony and Picnic was the biggest ever. Over 140 people attended the Ceremony, and close to 200 attended to Picnic. Senator Mark Udall attended to medal a Veteran; Governor Hickenlooper was there and signed four Veteran bills into Law. State VFW Officers, State elected officials, and the local media was also present.



Photo by MaraPhoto.com

Events that have occurred in the last few days: AVER and Post 1 are jointly staffing a beer garden at the Denver People's Fair; our Color Guard raised the Flag at the Mollie Brown House Museum on D Day for the opening of a new exhibit; Kevin Dennehy was at Normandy for the 70 year observance; and Trevor Crandell recently met with the Denver Film Society (DFS). DFS has approached Post 1 to kick off a joint partnership to screen Veteran films. Watch for upcoming announcements regarding these films.

Our newest Partner, Vetbikes, is off to a strong start. Member Alex Sutherland is already collecting donations and sponsors. If you are interested in participating in VetBikes, please email Alex at alexsutherland00@gmail.com.

Care Packages

We are collecting donations for the care package shipment to Afghanistan for Lacey and Mike's unit. Please bring wet wipes, books, DVDs, nuts, jerky, microwave popcorn, etc. to the next meeting. Imagine what you would want to receive if you were deployed. I would like to thank ASC (South Pole Research), RMCAD, and See's Candy who have donated items to this shipment. It's good to see the local community involved, and proof positive that our troops are not forgotten.

Building update

We are currently under contract for 841 Santa Fe Drive in the heart of the Arts District. Over the last month, we have been meeting with General Contractors, Architects, and city officials to determine the feasibility of the building for our needs. As of this writing, the mailing to call for a special meeting has been ordered. We want the membership to tour the building and then vote to purchase the property. The special

meeting will be on **Friday June 13th at 5:30pm**. Due to the VFW By Laws, we couldn't move the regular Post 1 meeting from Thursday to Friday, or the Special meeting to Thursday. So we will be holding two Post meetings in one week.

The building is over 10,000 square feet with a basement and a second floor. The main floor has over 7,000 square feet with a large open gallery space in the front. The building has unlimited possibilities for Post 1. Further, the location will be a great spot to showcase what Post 1 does, and provide opportunities to interact with the community and break down the typical stereotype ideas of the VFW and Veterans.

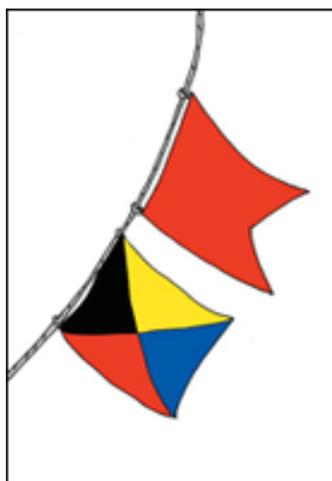
We are meeting again this month at the Denver Press Club (we held our May meeting there) and hopefully, in July, it will be the first of many membership meetings in our new permanent home.

Our own Dana Niemela was on Fox 31's *Colorado Politics* recently with Congressman Coffman discussing the current Veteran Affairs issues. Dana as ever, proudly represented Post 1. Bravo Zulu Dana.

Upcoming Events

- We are working on a couple of events out at Buckley, so watch your email and our Facebook page for more information as they get locked down.
- On June 21st, Post 1 will be marching in Pridefest, supporting our fellow Veterans at AVER.
- I see a couple of Working Parties & GI Parties later this summer as we move into our new home. I'm excited about seeing everyone in our new home soon!
- Don't forget... July 13th and 27th, Post 1 Color Guard will be at the Rockies Games

Bravo Zulu Post 1!



Post 1 Deployment Guidon

We are proud to start a new tradition at Post 1. When a member of Post 1 deploys to a hostile theater, this guidon will accompany them. Upon its return, a deployment ribbon will be added to it and hung from the Post wall with pride. Its first deployment will be with Lacey and Mike in Afghanistan.



Team Red White & Blue and Post 1

I'm proud to announce our partnership with Team RWB. We will be coordinating with them for outdoor events for Post members - marathons, trail runs, hikes and more. Please visit [Team RWB Denver](#) to learn more about them and real time event scheduling.

A Message From the Junior Vice Commander

By Brittany Barges

Painting a Picture

The words *Soldier*, *Sailor*, *Airman*, and *Marine* evoke timeless images of strength and bravery. As uniforms change and we pass from one conflict to the next, the service member - a striking young man standing tall and ready to defend - stays constant. The image of the American Veteran is similarly set as the mature, time and battle tested, masculine patriot.

What is far less defined and somewhat volatile is the image of the female service member and veteran. Where do warrior women fit into the epic of military service? As a front runner in recruiting strong women leaders, Post 1 can offer a glimpse into this

ever-evolving figure.

During post meetings, the women of Post 1 display confidence and leadership. With the strength and poise one would expect from a veteran, they advocate on behalf of vets in need, they report for their committees, they challenge inefficiency, and they take on new responsibility. In many ways the traditional warrior imagery can be applied to women, but it is not the whole story.

Post 1 recently held a women's social event, during which we bonded over drinks and painting. Each woman took instructions on how to reproduce a work of art and added her own brilliantly creative style to produce a unique piece. As glasses were emptied and lines of paint became recognizable scenes, my understanding of my sisters in arms took on a more complete and identifiable shape. They were funny, creative, and unique. I have come to see these attributes in general meetings as well.

I have seen the woman warrior. She has a strong and confident presence. She changes the world around her in brilliantly creative ways. Her ability to communicate with her team and make decision is an asset to her community. She is my role model. In her I do not only see the woman warrior, I also see my place in the VFW.

Proud to Serve; Humbled by Sacrifice

Memorial Day 2014 was pleasantly warm and dry. Groups of veterans, families and concerned community members assembled around the graves of VFW Founders for our annual Memorial Day ceremony.

As the new Junior Vice Commander, I had the honor of participating in the ceremony, my first ceremony. Luckily Reverend John J. Holland prepared me for the ritual and gave me a few on the spot corrections as we went along. With respect and gratitude, post officers offered flowers and a flag to all service men and women who have passed.



Photo by MarlaPhoto.com

Then the small procession marched from stone to stone, reading names and saluting each veteran around the memorial site. As I made my way through history of Post 1 members, I was humbled by the endurance of this group. Over a century of history, of bravery, and of leadership was at my feet, and its presence could be felt in the air.

Marching through the decades, stones became a brighter white, names more recently carved. And here we were, the current members of Post 1 carrying a legacy into the future while honoring the past.

Post 1 Member Attends National Memorial Day Observance; Heads to Normandy

VFW Post 1 member Kevin Dennehy attended the 146th Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery, and watched as President Barack Obama placed a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"It was an honor to be here. Politics were put to the side as the president placed the wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier," Dennehy said. "It's a solemn ceremony, with full military honors, that makes you proud to wear the VFW garrison hat and to be an American. Like our great ceremony in Denver, it was a special time to remember our fallen, and that Memorial Day isn't about barbeque."

Also in attendance at the ceremony were Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The U.S. Navy Band played patriotic songs.

Dennehy also visited the grave sites of fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines in Arlington's Section 60, where the men and women of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars are buried.

"There are presidents, admirals, generals, Supreme Court members and even actors buried here. But to me, the honored are the unknown and the low-ranking military members who sacrificed all," he said.

Dennehy is traveling to Normandy this month to participate in activities with the 29th Division Association, which landed in the first wave, along with the 1st Infantry Division, on Omaha Beach. He is also updating a guidebook book he wrote this year with Professor Steve Powers, a retired University of Northern Colorado history professor, titled *The D-Day Assault*.



Memorial Day Ceremony Marked by Remembrance, New Veterans' Legislation

By Michael Mitchel

The ceremony at the Post 1 section at Fairmont started at 10:30 am with about 140 people in attendance. Officers of the Post presented wreaths honoring all those who have served and died. We then read each name from each headstone. It was our largest attendance in over 10 years.

The picnic that followed also saw large attendance. The officers were sworn in for their 2014 - 2015 terms. There was a mini car show: Lou's Model T, Patrick's Challenger, and my VW Bus.

Five new members joined Post 1 that day!



Photo by MarlaPhoto.com

Senator Mark Udall was present to medal a Desert Storm Veteran who then turned around and joined the Post. Governor Hickenlooper then addressed the crowd and signed four Veteran Bills into Law.

State VFW officers, State elected officials and local media was in attendance.

I would like to thank Bank of America for sponsoring the picnic, and the 15 Bank of America volunteers that fed everyone. It helped make the day so special.

After the picnic, I had stopped by the Post statue for a last photo, and met Don Whipple. Don is a USMC Iwo Jima (2nd Wave) Purple Heart Veteran. We chatted and then several other Post members joined us. It was special moment to see younger Veterans talking with Don and learning what his generation went through. We welcome Don as one of our newest Post 1 members!

Legislation signed by Gov. Hickenlooper:

SB14-030 "Distinguished Flying Cross License Plate Waive Fee" by Sen. Crowder / Rep. Wilson

SB14-075 "Deployed Military Motor Vehicle Fee & Taxes" by Sen. Baumgardner / Rep. Sonnenberg

HB14-1205 "Veterans Assistance Grant Program" by Rep. Ryden / Sen. Crowder

HB14-1373 "Senior & Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption" by Reps. Lebsack & Scott / Sens. Crowder & Zenzinger

Welcome to Our New PAO!

Holli Keyser of the Post 1 Ladies Auxiliary is our new Public Affairs Officer. Her duties include speaking to the press and representing the Post at public or media events.

Holli's family has a long history service; previous generations in her family served, and her brother is currently a staff sergeant in the USMC. He serves in Okinawa, working on Harriers. Her brother-in-law is also a Marine, with service in aviation.



Shop at King Soopers; Support the Post

Post 1 has partnered with King Soopers to help us raise more money for special projects and events. When you use a Post 1 King Soopers card, 5% of your total purchase goes to Post 1. It costs you nothing -- and you'll be helping out your post!

Please see our post leadership at the next meeting for further details.

Member Profile

Rebecca Nordin, Air Force Vet, Family Advocate

By Jonathan Raab

Rebecca Nordin is one such member. She's originally from Arvada, but now lives in Cleveland, Ohio, where she works as a civilian employee for the Coast Guard.

Rebecca joined Post 1 after attending an event for veteran students at the Auraria

Campus and getting to know some of the Post's biggest member-supporters. Immediately she realized that Post 1 was different from other veterans organizations.

"I was extremely impressed on how focused Post 1 was giving back to the veteran community," Rebecca said.

How she ended up a Post 1 member-and living in Ohio-is a bit of a long story. It's one that starts with her father's cancer diagnosis.

The news caused Rebecca to re-evaluate what she was doing post-high school.

"That night I did some soul-searching and I decided it was time to grow up," Rebecca said. "I shouldn't expect them [her parents] to pay my way through school, because they had their own things to focus on."

She headed down to the local recruiting station, and joined the Air Force-but admitted that she knew very little about the differences between the branches at the time. Still, she has never once questioned her decision to enlist.

"It was the best choice I ever made," she said.

After basic, she was assigned as an administration specialist. She spent two and a half years shuffling papers for the Air Force, before volunteering to head back to basic training-this time, as a Military Training Instructor.

She attended the MTI Academy, and earned her place amongst the training cadre responsible for taking raw recruits and turning them into Airmen.

"It's the best job in the Air Force," she said. "It's the best job in the military."

Rebecca was particularly proud to see the transition of young recruits, as they went from "rainbows" to trained Airmen. They shed their lack of confidence and grew into their positions as members of American's military.

"Most of the kids are not challenged much, and shielded from failing a lot of times. Basic training is the first time they are faced with making it or failing on their own."

There were several rites of passage Rebecca especially enjoyed facilitating for the young recruits-from their first military buzzcut, to the end of training when they donned their dress blues.

"The pride that they had in being able to wear the uniform is something you can't explain to someone," she said. The pride the recruits gained was plain on their faces, and in how they behaved and saw themselves. "There's no better job than to watch people gain that."

After her time as a T.I., she became an intelligence analyst. As an E-6, she was sent to the prestigious Joint Military Intelligence College. She spent one year of undergraduate studies in strategic intelligence.

Her first operational experience occurred in the towards the end of Desert Storm.

When the Kurds went up into the mountains, she provided the intelligence support to the multinational air crew flying the missions over Northern Iraq.

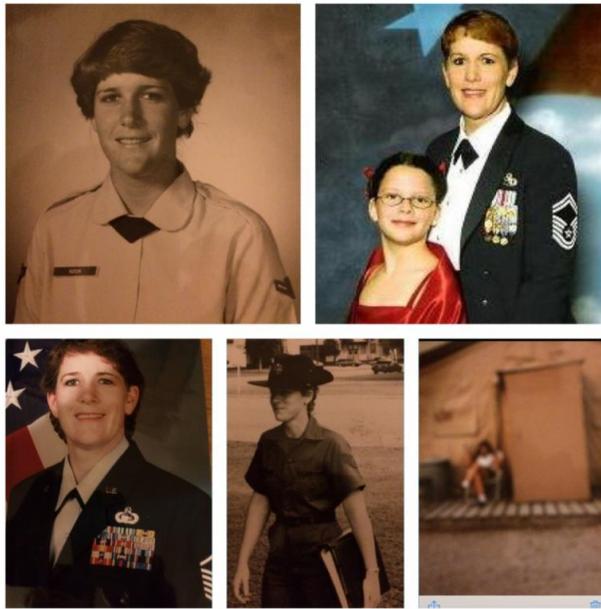
She then redeployed to Turkey with an F-15E squadron; once again providing intelligence support to facilitate operations in Iraq. She was primarily concerned with identifying potential surface to air threats to the F-15Es.

During operations in Bosnia, she provided similar support to aircraft units in the field.

Rebecca remained an analyst until she was assigned to AFB Buckley. There were no billets for her rank as an analyst there, so the command assigned her as a first sergeant. Much like her time as a MTI T.I., she found great reward in helping the younger Airmen navigate the early years of their careers.

"There was nothing better than being able to help, especially the younger enlisted, and guide them with their careers in the Air Force, because I really believe it was worth 20 or more years."

After retirement, she remained in Colorado, where she attended graduate school at the University of Northern Colorado, earning a master's in clinical and school counseling . She took a job with the Jefferson Center for Mental Health. There, Rebecca developed, created, and managed a mental health and case management program dedicated to veterans and their families.



Because her daughter attended college in Ohio, Rebecca began to look at jobs in that region. She took a position as a civilian working for the Coast Guard's 9th district, where she still works. She is responsible for family advocacy for all Coast Guard personnel and their families throughout the entire Great Lakes region.

Still, her thoughts are never far from home.

"My hopes are that at some point I will return to Colorado. That's where I'm from, and where a lot of my roots are. But you do what is best for your family."

Rebecca kept her membership, and looks forward to returning to Post 1.

As a veteran, she is extremely proud of her service with the Air Force. But now that she works with the Coast Guard, the inter-service rivalry hasn't gone away. Her co-workers routinely tease her about her branch affiliation.

While she laughingly admits that the Air Force has its luxuries and softer aspects, she's quick to point out: "The Coast Guard is a close second!"

In the Community

Vet Summit on CSU Campus

By Izzy Abbass

August 1 is rapidly approaching, and this marks the date for the 4th Annual Colorado Veterans in Higher Education Summit. This is an event we at Post 1 have been very active with since its inception - in fact our members came up with the idea and have been putting these together since the beginning. The goal of the Summit is to connect university administrators and student Veteran leaders to create a dialog with both groups for building Veteran-supportive networks on campuses across the State. So far Summits have been held at CSU, Pikes Peak Community College, and Colorado Mountain College.

This year's event will be jointly hosted by the University of Colorado Denver, Metro State University at Denver, and the Community College of Denver on the Auraria Campus. Given this year's location in Denver, we're planning on the largest turnout ever. In addition, on the 31st there will be a meeting just for administrators of Veteran programs and that evening there will be a Veteran Artist Showcase. Veteran Artists are invited to display art (and sell it if they like).

In an effort to increase collaboration between artists and service organizations, artists can purchase a table for \$50, or they can work with service organizations (VFW Post 1, American Legion Post, etc.) and both the artist and the service org will each get a table.

If you are an artist and want to show your work or if you would like to attend the Summit, contact Izzy Abbass with the Post (izzy@vfwpost1.org).



Legislative Update

By Izzy Abbass

Post 1 members and myself have gotten involved with legislative efforts - specifically bills that have an impact on the Veteran community. The fact the Governor chose our Memorial Day Tribute and BBQ to sign four bills that were passed in this year's legislative session is a testament to some of the effort we have put into this area. The

four bills the Governor signed into legislation at our event are:

- HB 1205 - the Veterans Assistance Grant
- HB 1373 - property tax extension to the surviving spouse of a 100% surviving veteran
- HB 1075 - waive the registration fees for deployed military
- SB 030 - Distinguished Flying Cross waive fee

Of these, the one of biggest interest to the Post was the Veterans Assistance Grant. Two years ago, an effort was made to get the Lottery to create a scratch ticket that would provide money to Veterans through a grant process.

Unfortunately, the lobbyists for the current recipients of lottery funds lined up against us, but it did lead to the legislature creating a Veterans Assistance Grant Fund for one year. Post 1 actually received funding from this grant for Veterans services. Now, with this legislation there is a permanent fund set aside in the State Budget for a Veterans Assistance grant.

This is a great example of the type of effort we should and will get behind through our legislative activities. Prior to this bill passing, Colorado ranked 46th out of all states in terms of direct funding for Veterans in this manner. If you would like to get more involved in Post 1's legislative activities, contact Izzy at izzy@vfwpost1.org.

Ladies Auxiliary Update

To My Auxiliary Sisters:

I feel somewhat like Alice in Wonderland at the moment, no time to check emails, do laundry, etc. So at last this evening I sat down, put my head back and fell into the rabbit hole!

When I think back over the past year, my, what fun we had and what great deeds we completed. I will take a little of your time to sit back and reflect on the 2013 - 2014 year. My thoughts go to a fantastic Veterans Day parade and evening events, Veterans Day at Horizon Middle School, Operation Holiday Heroes, Founders Day (VFW Commander in Chief and a Medal of Honor recipient - WOW), the Poppy Queen contest, Voice of Democracy state winner, 3rd place District 1 Patriot's Pen winner, collecting items and packing boxes for our deployed members, poppy drives (Cinco de Mayo was great), District 1 Potato Bake (a good and only fundraiser for us), recognition of Dyanna Aragon at the Salute to Service Banquet, Memorial Day at Fairmount, and last but not least celebrating our 100th Year.

It has been an honor to display a small collection of 100 year items that we were able to locate in storage. This display will be at State Convention and also at the Ladies Western Conference meeting in October which the Department of Colorado will be hosting in Colorado Springs. Our VFW Post most often displays the tagline of "the first

post"; well ladies, we also can say we were the "first auxiliary". How exciting it was to find that document dated 1913 - Sherry Wing kept telling us it was there somewhere!

Our new slate of officers for 2014 - 2015 have been elected and installed. If you were around last year, no changes, thanks ladies, we are a great team! We head to Montrose next week for Department convention - I really wish I could tuck all of you in my suitcase - we do have fun at these events. You will all be in my thoughts, my most heartfelt thanks to all who made this year a success. To our Post Commander Michael Mitchel, congratulations on a successful year, it has been a pleasure to work with you and your officers!

Loyally,

Marsha A. Harrison, President

Visit our website [here](#), or:

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Post 1 Officers

Commander - Michael Mitchel Sr. Vice Commander - John Keene
Jr. Vice Commander & PAO - Brenda Smull
Quartermaster - Mort Anderson Chaplain - Ray Starkey Surgeon - Norm Frickey
Service Officer - Mort Anderson Judge Advocate - John Holland Adjutant - Philipp Theune

Committee Chairs

Women Veterans - Kathryn Wirkus Current Conflict - Patrick Browne
Suicide Prevention - Rebecca Nordin Military Liaison - Eryth Zecher
Homeless Veterans - Dana Niemela Camaraderie Committee- Justin Cook, Brittany Bartges
Buddy Poppy and Deployed Members Committee - Pete Aragon
Youth Activities - David Perez Volunteer Coordinator - Ashley Metcalf Managing Editor - Jonathan Raab

Trustees

Izzy Abbass (1 year),
Kristen Luevanos (2 year), George Caulkins (3 year)