

The Founder

A

Monthly Newsletter for Post 1 Members

Issue # 3

May 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
Brenda Smull



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- 912 members (as of 4 May)
 - o 15 new Life Members to date
 - o Retention is 94.19%
2. Election of Post Officers:
 - o Commander- **Michael Mitchel**
 - o Sr Vice Commander- **Cameron Cook**
 - o Jr Vice Commander- **John Keene**
 - o Quartermaster- **Mort Anderson**
 - o Chaplain- **Ray Starkey**
 - o Judge Advocate - **John Holland**

Committee Chairs

Women Veterans
Pam Chapman

Current Conflict
Patrick Browne
Suicide Mental Health
Kevin Moreno

Military Liason
Eryth Zecher

Homeless Veterans
Dana Niemela

Comaraderie Officer
Charity Zalasar

Student Veterans
Cameron Cook

Buddy Poppy
Pete Arragon

Youth Activities
David Perez

Trustees

Larry Monson
Kristen Luevanos

George Caulkins

- Surgeon- **Norm Frickey**

A Special Meeting was held to discuss status of our building on 4300 Pecos in Denver. Meeting Minutes with details were sent in separate distribution to Post members.

New Members

- Milford Mitchel
- Anton Slobodnik
- Michael Wertz
- Brittany Bartges
- Demetria Martinez-Andrews
- Michael Maloney
- George Peck
- Tom Shetter
- Jason Lobins
- Gianni Tanza
- Bo Bergstrom
- Michael Stack

It's Official : Post 1 is All American!

District 1 Nominations

Post 1 has a strong showing for the District 1 upcoming election on May 18. Isreal Bills (current Quartermaster) has been nominated for District Commander while Alan Norton and John Holland have been nominated for Senior Vice Commander and Chaplain respectively. The District election will be held at Post 5061 starting at 11am. The address is 5220 W Warren Ave, Denver, CO, 80227. Please come and show your support for our fellow Post members.



Post Member Profiles

Ray Starkey

A Navy Veteran of the Pacific, Ray served on various ships including a minesweeper and an LST during the battle of Okinawa. After the war ended, he took POWs from Seoul back to Tokyo. Ray worked for the Government for both the Army and Air Force Finance Centers. Ray joined Post 1 in 1951, serving in all levels for the Post; Junior and Senior Vice Commander, Commander ('79-'80) and Chaplain from '57-'58 and '88 to present. Ray knew a couple of the founders of the VFW and in 1957, one of the founders William Watson swore Ray in as the Post Chaplain.

Post 1 had on Fridays, dance classes as part of the Post dance club. In 1960, Ray met Mona (she served in Burma and was a Post 1 member) at one of the classes. Four years later he finally proposed and they started a wonderful 45 year marriage. In 2010, Mona passed away and is buried at Fairmont at the Post 1 site.

Ray is Post 1 longest serving member and we are eternally thankful for his service, dedication and contribution to the Post. Thank you Ray.

Denver, Colorado

May, 1957



The above elective officers were installed at the April 4th meeting. Left to right: C. W. Gifford, Quartermaster; Ben E. Stone, Jr., Sr. Vice-Commander; James R. Walker, Commander; Robert Kreuzer, Jr. Vice-Commander; Ray Starkey, Chaplain.

Ray Starkey (right) as Post Chaplain in 1957



Ray at Memorial Day Ceremony, 2012

Dana Niemela

A naval officer, served overseas on various ships prior to being the Officer in Charge, Chairman's Dining Room for the Joint Chief of Staff.

Dana is active with Women's Veterans of Colorado, United Veterans of Colorado, Veterans Advisory Committee for Congressman Perlmutter all while pursuing her Masters in Social Work and serving as the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Coordinator for the City and County of Denver.

Dana's tireless efforts have helped countless Veterans who face severe social problems ranging from drug dependency, chronic homelessness, joblessness and mental health issues. Dana helps Veterans who have been falling by getting them back on their feet all while able to share a

laugh.

Last year, she spearheaded Operation Holiday Heroes by bringing together various resources in the community and sponsors. This allowed 30 children to enjoy Christmas who otherwise would not have been able.



Dana Niemela with Robert DeNiro, 2003.



Dana at Operation Holiday Heroes, 2012.

Inside Post 1 News & Events

Charity Zalasar- Post 1 Camaraderie Officer

You asked for it and you got it.

Members have been approaching me before and after meetings saying

they'd like social gatherings. I couldn't agree more and now we have a great way of putting that together and getting the word out.

Charity will be taking point on setting up Post 1 meet ups outside the normal monthly meetings.

Great fun and great company. See you there...
Thanks Charity!

Post 1 at The Pepsi Center

Members of the Post were given free tickets from Kroenke Sports as part of Military Appreciation Day at both a Nuggets and Avs game.

Post 1 member MOH George Sakato received a signed team basketball on the court and several members received a shout out on NBC during the hockey. NBC recognized each conflict by naming specific veterans such as John Holland, Michael Mitchel, Brenda Smull, George Sakato and Ray Starkey to name a few...



Post 1 had a table at both events and Pete did a fantastic job at moving Poppies and creating Post 1 awareness. At the Avs game, Charity introduced Michael Wertz to Post 1 and Pete walked him through the application... Great team work!



Pete Aragon mans the Post 1 table at the Pepsi Center.

Leadership Aurora Program

We ask a lot from our members to keep the Post running, and it's important that the Post is there for the membership for their professional development to be successful in the community.

Post 1 will sponsor and support a member to attend the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program. This is a 10 month program that covers a wide variety of issues, provides a basic understanding of how people and groups function and with opportunities to provide knowledge and skills to the class.

The class participant will be expected to contribute \$200 towards the \$950 tuition. The balance will be paid by Post 1.

Leadership Aurora deadline is July 15th. Post 1 application deadline is June 20th.

Post 1 application process consists of emailing a resume and answering a few short essay questions, followed by an informal discussion with one to three officers/member of the Post. Successful applicant will then complete the Chamber's online application with the full support of Post 1.

From the Leadership Aurora's website <http://www.aurorachamber.org/leadership-aurora> :

The purpose of Leadership Aurora is reflected in its goals:

- To enhance leadership abilities , To create a network of informed, concerned leaders, To encourage greater involvement in the community

Leadership Aurora is a ten-month community leadership development program that begins with a mandatory two-night retreat in late September each year and culminates with a graduation program in early June. From October through May, the program consists of eight full-day sessions held the third Thursday of each month.

Topics include:

- Community/Quality of Life, Education, Media Training,

Police/Criminal & Civil Justice, Economic & Infrastructure, Military/Government, Healthcare, Fire Protection Services and Leadership Training.

Members that are interested should email Michael Mitchel at Michael@vfwpost1.org for additional information.

Post 1 at Denver Chamber's Business Awards

Small Non Profit of the Year Finalist

The Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce selected Post 1 as one of three finalists for the coveted Small Non-Profit of the Year award. We made an extremely positive impression with the judges who were amazed that we did so much, all with volunteers and no paid staff. While we were only a runner up, we did get a lot of awareness within the community and watch for a video produced for the Post featuring our very own Brenda Smull.



Commander's Corner

As I reflect back on 5 years as the Post 1 Commander, I have some very fond memories of my time in this role and I would like to extend my thanks to you all for your support over the years. It has truly been an honor to carry your confidence and trust. As I look back at some of the things we as a post have accomplished these past 5 years, there were a lot of things Post 1 can be proud of. A few include:

- We hosted the Congressional Medal of Honor Society at a breakfast for the recipients and their families. For many of them, this was the highlight of their Denver convention as it was out of

the media spotlight and focused on them, members of Post 1 and a small contingent of Boy Scouts.

- We started the Colorado Military History Museum in partnership with the Colorado National Guard.
- While it was sad to see her pass, we saw the internment in the Post 1 Memorial at Fairmount Cemetery of the first woman to join Post 1 as a full member - WWII Veteran Mona Starkey.
- We have been the fiduciary agent for 10% of the funds set aside for Veterans by the State.
- We were one of three finalists for the small non-profit of the year as selected by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.

Truly memorable events but of all the things we have done together over the past 5 years, I have to say that my favorite milestone of all has to be the increase in active membership and our success in reaching out to the latest generation of veterans. 30% of those who now come to our monthly meetings are currently going to school on the GI Bill. Further, we have the largest number of women veterans of any VFW Post in Colorado. Both of these facts reflect that we have positioned ourselves to be an attractive organization for all veterans which we have done by focusing on one thing - providing meaningful programs for our fellow vets. While we enjoy the social and fun aspects of gathering together, it is this focus that sets us apart.

Finally, being the Post 1 Commander has been one of my favorite things that I've ever undertaken. I've loved it and I'll be honest that I like going to lots of places and introducing myself as the Post 1 Commander. I'm sure it will take me some time to stop introducing myself this way- something that has been a large part of my identity for some time. However, I do not want the identity of the Post to be just associated with me - it really is all of us. And I feel confident that those who follow me will continue to lead Post 1 into a bright future and together we will set an example for all others to emulate.

Vires Montesque Vincimus!
Izzy Abbass
Commander

Senior Vice Commander

Update on Distinguished Warfare Medal

I was contacted by Sen. Udall's staff and informed that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel is scrapping the DWM. It will be replaced with a "designation device" that can be attached to existing awards. Production of the medal was stopped. Mr. Hagel is still considering a new medal for the unique contributions for cyberwarfare and drone operators, but it will be demoted in the military order of precedence.

Thanks Izzy...

I look forward to seeing everyone on the 9th for Izzy's blowout party! Izzy has accomplished a lot in the past five years; partnering with community

organizations, increasing Post 1 awareness with current conflict/student veterans, increase membership, grant administration for veteran centric programs... the list goes on.

Who ever is the next Commander is has big shoes to fill....

Michael Mitchel
Commander-Elect
michael@vfwpost1.org

Ladies Auxiliary Update

Jean Jaffe Receives Salute to Service Award

An excerpt from the Nomination letter written by Marsha Harrison, Ladies Auxiliary #1 President :



"Jean Jaffe joined our VFW family in February 2011. I first met Jean at a Saturday bingo session at the VA hospital. Jean and Alan (a member of VFW Post1) were there to help. It was not long after that Saturday bingo game that Jean became a Life Member of Auxiliary #1. Jean quickly embraced the mission of the Auxiliary; Memorial/Veterans Day services, promoting poppies on the weekends, Poppy Queen contest, VA hospital visits, bingo, Chair of the Scholarship programs, and more.

Jean's work at the Cherry Creek School District was a perfect fit, serving as point on The Patriot's pen and Teacher of the Year information to Horizon Middle School. The Patriot's Pen contest became a class project. Meanwhile, Jean was working with the Horizon Principal for submission of a Teacher of the Year nomination. The winners advanced to the District level for 2nd and 3rd place District winners for Patriot's Pen and the 1st Place winner for the Teacher of the Year. All thanks to Jean's leadership.

Jean is always there to help. You will see her at the Memorial/Veterans Day services, promoting poppies on the weekend, serving the patients at the VA Hospital chapel service, helping those who are unable to make their bingo cards at the VA hospital. The list goes on and on.

Jean is the mother of one daughter and two sons (both Eagle Scouts). When Jean is not doing VFW Auxiliary duties, spending countless hours volunteering for the Destination Imagination Program. We look forward to more participants in the Patriot's Pen program in the years to come. "



Ginny Burriss, Jean Jaffe and Kirk Rosa Jr.

In the Community

Veterans History Project



The VFW Post 1 has accepted the challenge from the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project to "collect, preserve, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war."

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000, authorizing legislation ([Public Law 106-380](#)), sponsored by Representatives Ron Kind, Amo Houghton, and Steny Hoyer in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senators Max Cleland and Chuck Hagel in the U.S. Senate, received unanimous support and was signed into law by President William Jefferson Clinton on October 27, 2000.

The Project collects first-hand accounts of U.S. Veterans from the following wars:

- World War I (1914-1920)
- World War II (1939-1946)
- Korean War (1950-1955)
- Vietnam War (1961-1975)
- Persian Gulf War (1990-1995)
- Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present)

To visit the Library of Congress website and see the entire project, go to:
<http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-home.html>

Members of VFW Post 1 will be interviewed and will also participate in conducting the interviews with our post members. We will be soliciting for volunteers to assist with this project and need your support. This is a project in which we can all participate in some way, so stay tuned for additional information!

Kathryn Wirkus, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)
VFW Post 1

In the Community: Hiring Veterans

Fast Growing Local Information Technology Company Wants to Hire and Train Veterans for SAP skills.

NIMBL, a five year old SAP consulting company has a program to hire and train Veterans that are interested in a rewarding career in Information Technology. This company is rapidly growing. They are in the process of moving to a larger space in downtown Denver.

The company provides SAP consulting and analytical services to clients (mid-size to Fortune 500) around the country.

NIMBL will train the successful candidate with a starting salary of \$40,000 a year with full benefits. No previous software experience required. A degree in Computer Science or related degree is required.

Required traits for the successful candidate is a strong interest in software consulting, working in a fast paced team environment, able to learn quickly, be self-reliant and have a desire to grow with an organization.

SAP analyst skills are highly marketable and sought after in the IT community. SAP Analysts can be earning \$60,000-\$70,000 within three years to five years. This is a high demand area of SAP skills.

Interested Veterans should email their resume to Michael Mitchel, michael@vfwpost1.org . A phone call to discuss all the details and information on the company will follow.

This is a unique opportunity for Veterans to launch a successful and high earning career.

What is SAP?

There are two main enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems used in today's larger businesses: SAP, and Oracle. ERP's are specifically designed to help with the accounting function and the control over various other aspects of the companies business such as sales, delivery, production, human resources, and inventory management.

Invitation to ESGR Annual Event

Post 1 members are invited to attend the annual ESGR Awards Banquet to be held on Friday June 7, 2013 at the Hyatt Regency Tech Center, Englewood, CO at 6pm. For information please contact Dick Young at dickyoung123@gmail.com.

Veteran Organization Spotlight

Habitat For Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver is dedicated to building decent and affordable homes in partnership with low-income families. As a community-based nonprofit organization, Habitat Metro Denver relies on donations of time and money to further the Habitat vision: a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat Metro Denver is one of the largest Habitat for Humanity affiliates in the country, and there are a number of ways to become involved with the organization.

Volunteer: Habitat Metro Denver offers a range of volunteer opportunities for both individuals and groups, including participating in new home construction, helping out at one of the ReStore Home Improvement Outlets, or joining a committee. For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit habitatmetrodenver.org and click on the Volunteer link.

Become a Homeowner: Habitat Metro Denver sells high-quality homes to families who qualify for the homeownership program. Partner families are required to pay closing costs, contribute 200 hours of sweat equity labor, and be able to make a monthly mortgage payment. Habitat homes are affordable because they are built by volunteers and are sold with a no-interest loan. Individuals who currently live in housing that is substandard or unaffordable are invited to apply for the homeownership program. For more information about the qualifications and how to apply to become a Habitat homeowner, visit habitatmetrodenver.org and click on the Homeowner Program link.

