



Photo by Steve Smull

November 2013

Issue No. 9

### ***In this issue:***

Meeting Update  
Inside Post 1  
Member Profiles  
In the Community  
Ladies Auxiliary Update

### ***Meeting Update***

Next meeting is December 12th 7pm.

#### **New Members**

Sara Alder, Gregory Anderson, Trevor Crandall, Clayton Farrell, John Harry, Murphy Phanhdone, Keith Schmelzer, William Sheehan, Frank Small

### ***Inside Post 1 - News and Events***

#### **Commander's Corner**

By Michael Mitchel

We are doing something right.

October month's meeting was standing room only, with 50+ members. November's meeting saw 45+ members in attendance. It was great seeing so many new faces and several long-time members who haven't been by in a while, such as Joe Anello, a Korean War, ex-POW and Silver Star recipient; Harry Kula, a World War II veteran who earned a Bronze Star; and so many more.

We couldn't have asked for better weather for the Veterans Day Parade. It was a great turnout for Post members to march, and a stronger turnout for spectators. Three new members joined the Post that day.

Looks like a Distinguished Flying Cross recipient is joining Post 1. He was visiting family from Arkansas and I chatted with him along the parade route.

Rooster Moon treated us to a pre-parade breakfast. Thanks to them!

We capped with a Post 1 fireworks show on Auraria Campus. Several Veterans received lost medals, and Reville 3 sang.

Senator Bennet presented outgoing Senior Vice Commander Cameron Cook with a Flag from the US Capitol as a thank you for his years of service to area Veterans. Cameron moved to Houston this week for a great opportunity supporting Veterans within a large community college system.

On Monday, Veterans Day, several Post 1 members fanned throughout the Metro area speaking at companies, schools and colleges. Brenda's Speakers Bureau is off to a strong start.

And speaking of Brenda, Please join me in congratulating her for being elected as Junior Vice Commander. John Keene has moved up to fill Cameron's Senior Vice Commander's seat.

The Camaraderie Committee continues to come up with great events. On Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, Post 1 had a meet up for Roller Derby. The Rollergirls team took great care of us. They gave us sponsored tickets, a group photo with the teams, and VIP rinkside seats.

We met a Veteran with his family including his son who was on leave (maybe a future Post 1 member after a deployment) and pulled him from the bleachers to join us. His dad joined the Post right there.

Because of the holiday and Founders Dinner, there will not be a social meet up in December.

### **Operation Holiday Heroes**

Dana is leading another great Operation Holiday Heroes this December 19<sup>th</sup>. Watch for Facebook and Emails promoting the event. In the meantime, you can help make it a success by donating \$5 via [Operation Holiday Heroes](#). This event brings Christmas to families who otherwise would not have it.

### **Founders Banquet**

If you haven't done so already, please get your tickets for the 114<sup>th</sup> Founders Banquet, Dec 1<sup>st</sup> at the Brown Palace. Tickets are \$55 each. Cocktails start at 5:30 pm, dinner is served at 7 pm.

Our keynote speaker is Medal of Honor Recipient SSG Ty Carter, with National VFW CinC Bill Thein, CDR Darlene Iskra (the first woman to command a US Navy ship) and Capt Linda Bray (the first woman to lead US troops into combat).

Team Rubicon is the Veteran Organization of the Year, and Christian Anschutz is the Citizen of the Year.

Post 1 Member of the Year will be announced at the Dinner.

Purchase your tickets here: [The Founders Banquet](#)

Post 2461 has been a wonderful host for us, and is having a Thanksgiving Dinner at the 28<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. They'll be serving turkey and ham, and feel free to bring a side dish.

Next week Post 1 will be at Buckley AFB for a Military Working Dog retirement ceremony, and Buddy the dog will be awarded an Honorary Post 1 membership certificate. Buddy was deployed several times to Iraq.

We've had several big events happen over the last two months, and as ever, Post 1 members stepped up and offered to help. It's a great testament to what the Post does and how proud our members are to be part of it. Well done.

Have a great Thanksgiving everyone!

See you at the Founders Banquet.

Michael

[michael@vfwpost1.org](mailto:michael@vfwpost1.org)



Post 1 and Denver's Rollerderby team photo by Steve Smull

## **Wounded Warrior, Post 1 Member and Family Receive Key to New Home**

Post 1 member Anton Slobodnik and his wife Diana received the symbolic key for their free home thanks to the Wounded Warriors Project.

Anton, Diana and their three children will be moving into their new house in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia this month.

Anton served with an Army Stryker Brigade and was severely injured while deployed to Iraq.



Anton and Diana receive the key to their new home

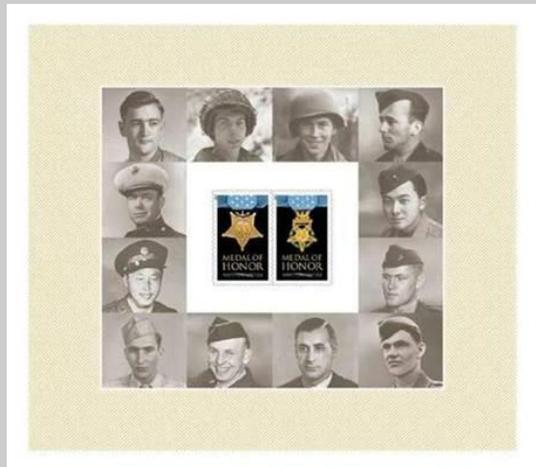
## **Medal of Honor Recipient, Post 1 Member Featured on Stamp**

George Sakato, a Post 1 member and World War II veteran, has joined several other Medal of Honor recipients on a new United States Postal Service stamp.

George served in World War II, enlisting in the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all-Japanese-American combat unit noted for its heroics during the Second World War.

Private Sakato, fighting in France in 1944, personally led a counter attack to destroy German Army positions that had his platoon pinned down. He personally killed 12 enemy soldiers, wounded two more, and enabled his platoon to take 34 prisoners.

Originally awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, after a review of Asian-American service records from World War II in the 1990s, his award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor.



## **2nd Annual Poppy Queen Contest To Be Held**

**Post 2461  
Saturday, January 25th, 2014  
1:00 pm**

**Further details to follow!**

---

### ***Member Profiles***

**Silver Star Recipient, Korean War Veteran Joe Anello**

By Jonathan Raab

Joe Anello grew up in Boston, during a period of great patriotism and appreciation for the U.S. military. He was born during the Great Depression, and was a teenager during World War II. He was fascinated by all things military, and dreamed of joining up as soon as he could.

At age 16, Joe enlisted in the National Guard. Once they discovered his age, however, they kicked him out (albeit with a general discharge under honorable conditions). When he was 18, he went with his best friend to enlist in the Navy.

His friend couldn't pass the Navy physical, so they went to the Army recruiter. They became soldiers together in 1950.

Joe was assigned to How Company, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts.

When the Korean War began, most of the soldiers in his unit went overseas to join the 7th Infantry Division and 1<sup>st</sup>

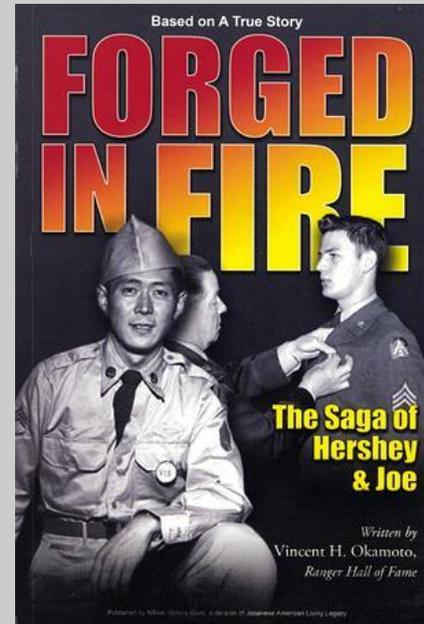
Cavalry Division as replacements. Because he was new, Joe went over later. He worked to pack up the unit's equipment, then went to Japan by way of Ft. Benning. His company filled their ranks with Koreans - many of whom didn't speak English.

"Most of our troops were Koreans," Joe said. "We couldn't speak Korean, they couldn't speak English. We assigned numbers that they put on their helmets." The Korean soldiers had difficulty adapting to the American food, so his unit incorporated Korean dishes into their mess plans.

After the unit reached full strength, they boarded LCTs and LCUs and landed in Korea in late October of 1950. They moved up to the Chosin Reservoir, where they fought alongside a Marine unit.

"We were on the southwest flank of the Marines, and we fought the Chinese unit that was trying to cut off the Marines' retreat," Joe said. His unit followed the retreat south, fighting the whole way. His was one of the last units to leave the beachhead, and they fled to Pusan on Christmas Eve, 1950.

After a brief re-fit of men and equipment, his unit headed north, fighting north past



Seoul to the Kansas Line.

By April of 1951, Joe's unit was deployed with a heavy weapons company in a defensive position. An intelligence officer showed up to draw riflemen to go assist with the Marine defense of a nearby sector.

"There were no reports of enemy activity to our front," Joe said. "Nobody told the Chinese that. They hit us with about six Chinese divisions. That was about 8 o'clock in the evening. We held them off til about 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning."

Joe was wounded as he made his way to the CP to call for flares. He sustained a gunshot wound across his legs, and suffered damage from a grenade. He passed out, and woke up to a Chinese soldier poking him with a bayonet.

One of Joe's best friends in the outfight was Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura, a Japanese-American soldier who would go on to earn the Medal of Honor for his actions in Korea. Hershey had also survived the battle. Chinese soldiers rounded up the captured Americans and an enemy officer spoke to them in broken English.

The officer promised them that they would be fed, their wounds cared for, and their personal possessions would remain their own.

"About three minutes after the speech, they took all of our personal possessions," Joe said.

The Chinese forced the Americans-many of whom suffered wounds-to march north. Hershey helped carry the wounded Joe for ten miles, until the Chinese forced him to leave Joe behind.

Joe hung back, and, thinking he was about to be executed, smoked a cigarette as he watched his friends march off to captivity. But the Chinese soldiers simply left him alone.

"The Chinese were always short of ammunition," Joe said. "They figured, 'why waste the round? This guy's not gonna make it anyways.'"

For two days Joe lay along the road, until a retreating Chinese unit came by. Chinese soldiers loaded him onto a cart and wheeled him north.

They reached the location of the present-day DMZ. He joined four other Americans and one Turk, all captured by the Chinese. One of the Americans was a pilot who the Chinese had shot down.

Their captures provided no food, medicine, or care for their prisoners-one soldier

died because the Chinese would not allow the soldiers to remove his gangrenous foot.

"We decided one of us is gonna have to escape," Joe said.

Being a strong swimmer, Joe decided he would swim downstream in a nearby river. The pilot insisted he was in better condition, and made the trip himself. They agreed that if he hadn't made it back in three days, Joe would attempt the swim himself.

Joe and the other POWs made a simple sign out of rice straw: "POW", with an arrow pointing to their shack. The letters could be seen from the air.

The pilot swam for two days and nights, finally making contact with the 1<sup>st</sup>

Cavalry Division. They dispatched a task force of five tanks-with air cover from Marine Corsairs-who engaged the Chinese and rescued the captured soldiers.

Joe ended up in a MASH hospital in Korea, then another hospital in Japan. The war wasn't over for him, however, as he would return to serve additional tours in Korea, Japan, and, years later, on fact-finding missions to Vietnam. He retired from the military as a Sergeant Major, continuing to serve in and around the Asian-Pacific region.

Since retiring, Joe has been active in helping to locate lost American remains in Korea. In 2006, he ventured back to the site of his imprisonment. A local elder-a boy whose father had been killed for accepting a jacket from the pilot-pointed them to the site of the camp.

Joe, a Silver Star recipient, continues to keep in contact with his friend Hershey Miyamura. They often attend conferences and veteran events together. The Japanese-American Living Legacy organization chronicled their service together in the book *Forged In Fire: The Saga of Hershey and Joe*, which is available through their website.

Joe currently lives in Castle Rock, Colorado. He's been a member of Post 1 since the 1980s.

**Patrick Brown, CU Denver Veteran Services**

By Jonathan Raab

Patrick Browne grew up in Montrose Colorado, a small town on the western slope.

"College wasn't really that interesting to me," he said. "The military seemed like a fun idea."

He was in JROTC for four years, sure he was going to join the military. He enlisted in the Army out of high school, and attended Basic Training in July, 2001, in Fort Benning, Georgia.



Patrick in Iraq

A day before graduation, his company commander gave them the news: terrorists had just landed airplanes into the World Trade Center, killing thousands of Americans.

After graduating, he attended Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Gordon, where he earned his MOS as a Multichannel Radio Systems Operator-Maintainer.

"It's not really a great MOS unless you're deployed," he said.

His first duty assignment was in South Korea, where he served for a year. Upon returning to the States, he was immediately tasked for a deployment to Iraq in September of 2003. There, he alternated between Fallujah and Ramadi, setting up communications lines for an artillery battalion.

His responsibilities included installing and maintaining DSN phone lines, communication networks, and secure and non-secure internet networks.

He returned to the United States in October of 2004, and left the military in July 2005. He had expected a great job after his service - but found himself with a low-wage job working in Denver. He decided to get his Associate's Degree at a local community college, and transferred over to CU Denver to complete his Bachelor's in business management and human resource management.

The Veterans Service Office at the time was composed of one individual. Seeing an opportunity, Patrick began a work-study program to help out returning veterans at the office.

In 2010 he graduated and began to work at a number of government and corporate

organizations: the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and an HR position for a corporation.

In 2012, the director of veteran services at CU Denver called him and invited him to become the program manager at the Auraria campus. Since then, Patrick has been a presence on the downtown campus, helping veterans receive their earned benefits through the G.I. Bill.

Patrick joined Post 1 because of its positive presence on campus.

"It's a good organization," Patrick said. "I think it's still moving towards a change that it will appeal to our generation of vets, but I think they are ahead of most Posts in the organization, and they understand that there hasn't been wars for a considerable amount of time, especially because a lot of Vietnam vets were shunned aside."

He recognizes that if the VFW is going to survive, it will need to recruit veterans from this era of conflicts.

When Patrick first came home, he felt he received a warm welcome. That said, it's still hard for a veteran to get a good job without a good education.

"I have the tools of the Post 9/11 bill - I can go up to veterans and ask, 'What are you doing? You want a part-time job? Let me tell you how to get one.' I know there's many different factors of veterans causes - and I'm just thankful I'm pretty good at my one cause, educating veterans."

---

## ***In the Community***

### ***After Flood, Team Rubicon Deploys to Colorado***



by Elizabeth O'Herrin

Team Rubicon, a disaster response organization comprised of more than 12,000 veteran and first responder volunteers nationwide, spent several weeks providing flood relief to the communities of Manitou Springs, Longmont, and Lyons, Colorado during this year's tragic flooding events.

En route to the home of a 91-year-old veteran in need of assistance outside Lyons, CO, volunteers made the hour-long trek on foot after three bridges were washed away by flood waters.

More than 180 volunteers, mostly Iraq and Afghanistan veteran volunteers from Colorado, logged more than 9,100 volunteer hours and conducted more than 700 damage assessments cataloging work that needed to be accomplished on personal property.

Work orders generated from the damage assessments included crawl space, basement and first floor muck outs, debris removal, drywall and insulation removal, and mold remediation treatments.

Requested by the Town of Lyons to officially assess the damage, Team Rubicon catalogued the damage assessments and then shared with other NGO organizations working within the community in order to maximize response efforts.

TR members also led teams of volunteers from church groups, the Home Depot, and community groups on work sites. Team Rubicon completed work on more than 100 homes - primarily those without flood insurance - saving the communities of Longmont and Lyons an estimated \$403,750.

Throughout the course of flood relief operations in Colorado, Team Rubicon volunteers were constantly amazed by the strength and resilience of families who lost every worldly possession but were grateful to be alive after the flood ravaged their homes.

The response from the affected communities was overwhelmingly positive. Peter Haushulz, a USMC veteran who served in Iraq and lives in Boulder, summarized the experience of the Team Rubicon volunteers when he said the following:

"I received the welcome that I didn't know I still needed. It was the welcome that so many of us never got, and the one that some of us can no longer get. It's only my first day here in Longmont, and I already feel like these citizens have given me more than I could ever give them, even if I were to single-handedly rebuild every basement in that neighborhood."

*Editor's Note: Elizabeth, a Post 1 member, helped organize and lead the Team Rubicon Region VIII efforts in Colorado. Her efforts to help her neighbors - alongside her fellow veterans - exemplify the best of the Post 1 spirit.*



*Team Rubicon chief of operations and Navy veteran Ken Harbaugh receives a grateful hug from a homeowner in Lyons, Colorado.*

## **Operation Holiday Heroes**

by Izzy Abbass

All,

The \$3,000 Operation Holiday Heroes challenge is now live and we need to do a huge push. Two things are key:

First, we need to post it on our Facebook pages and get our friends to share it.

Second, we need to get it out via e-mail with personal appeals from all of us. If everyone we know would pitch in \$5 - even everyone in Post 1 - we would hit our goal tomorrow.



Here's a link to the challenge site:

<https://beanstalkfoundation.org/challenge/operation-holiday-heroes-2013>

We have our first donation: \$25. Let's get the rest and see if we can do it before Thanksgiving.

---

## Ladies Auxiliary Update

Hello ladies - gosh, where to begin! Thanks to those who have paid their 2013 - 2014 dues. Last count had us at 84.94%. We are still hoping for 100% by the end of November. Our Treasurer will be sending reminders out soon.

We have several projects that we are currently working on. We were asked to join forces with our Post members in the collection of items for deployed Post #1 members. The last meeting reaped several bags full of requested items.

We will be packing boxes after our meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The Auxiliary has participated in the last two Poppy drives with another chance to make some cash at the Broncos game on October 27<sup>th</sup>  
- details soon!

These are fun events with the funds raised being used to support many programs. The Patriot's Pen information was again distributed at Horizon Middle School by Jean Jaffe. Entries will be collected before the end of October.

As you may have heard, the Poppy Queen contest has been re-scheduled for January so there is still time to get the entries to Brenda Smull.

The annual Founders banquet will be held at the Brown Palace Hotel with many special guests. Again, more information will be forthcoming on all of these events and more.

The Auxiliary is collecting unused 2014 calendars - you know the ones that show up in your mailbox every year. We will collect now and take them to the patients at the Veterans Hospital in January when our scheduled visits begin.

My final comments this month are directed to a special day in September that goes unobserved by many. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday is POW/MIA Recognition Day. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and Department of Colorado has an outstanding POW/MIA team that upon request will perform a moving and memorable remembrance ceremony.

Our Post is now honored to have two members that serve on that team: John Holland and the newest volunteer member Alan Jaffe.

On September 20th the ceremony was performed at the request of VFW Post #9644. If for some reason you wonder why this date is important, take a look at the YouTube video titled "VN POWs - 40 Years Later," it says it all.

Also worth viewing is a follow-up titled "panel discussion". Our thanks go out to our Post members that proudly give their time so we will never forget. The picture is a keepsake for Alan - his first event!

We have completed the judging and submission of the Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year programs. A big THANKS again to Jean Jaffe and Pete Aragon for working these programs for us. The District judging will take place on November 22 so watch your e-mail for results.

The Veterans Day weekend events were fantastic - starting with the downtown parade attended by Dyanna Aragon, Jean Jaffe, Brenda Smull and myself. We were blessed with bright blue Colorado skies and many parade watchers on the sidewalks. The evening events were well attended with the fireworks being the perfect end to the day.

Our Post Commander Michael Mitchel has secured some very powerful speakers for the 114<sup>th</sup> Founder's Day event. We will be honored to have the Commander in Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and his wife attending the banquet. The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ladies Auxiliary will also be a part of the program. The date to save for this is Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Auxiliary packed 10 boxes of goodies for a deployed Post member after the

October 26th meeting. Thanks to Dyanna Aragon - she collected and delivered mountains of donated items for us to pack. I think there are leftovers for another round; we will have pocket flags for the next one.

The Poppy drives are going well, with the next one scheduled for December 7<sup>th</sup> at King Soopers at Colorado Blvd. & Yale, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. The funds collected are so important to our relief fund, so think about donating an hour.

The Denver VA Christmas Party will be December 21, 2013 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Again this year we will share duty with Auxiliary 501 in 5 North. More information to follow.

As we step into a very busy season remember our veterans and remember our troops. Thanks to all of you, Auxiliary #1 is alive and well!!

Loyally,

Marsha Harrison, President



59th Annual Founders Dinner, 1958

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

Follow us on [twitter](#)

Like us on [Facebook](#) 

### 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

Student Veterans - Cameron Cook    Buddy Poppy - Pete Arragon

Youth Activities - David Perez    Managing Editor - Jonathan Raab

## Trustees

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

