

ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

Meetings: 7:00 PM 1st Weds. Of Each Month – Arlington Hts. Am. Legion Post 208



Website – vfwpost981.com

Fall 2025 Newsletter

RUNNING THE POST

We are short of individuals to take responsibility for important areas. The following leaders are needed:

1. Junior Vice Commander
2. Service Officer
3. VOD/PP Officer
4. Color Guard Commander

Those of you who have belonged to the Post for a while, who enjoy the benefits of the Post, and either never or not recently served the Post need to STEP UP AND HELP. None of these positions will require a large time commitment, just someone to take charge.

Commander Abbink is trying to hold it all together, still serving as Service Officer, contacting schools for VOD/PP, and organizing the Color Guard, but that is totally unfair to him since the responsibility of being Commander is job enough for anyone.

Newsletter Editor Mike Kolbuk

COMMANDER

As we move into the Fall season, I will start my remarks on a very sobering note, the lack of leaders for our Post. The jobs of Junior Vice Commander, Service Officer, VOD/PP Officer, and Color Guard Commander all need to be filled. Anyone taking on the responsibility has the resources of the previous leaders for questions and guidance. In addition, the former Junior Vice Commander Mike Kolbuk wrote up SOP's for everything that is required to be done for the Junior Vice position. If you have never been a staff member, or have not been one in a while, please see me and I'll get the ball rolling.

Currently about 25 of our VFW members are also Legion 208 members. In theory, it could be 100%! Both organizations exist for the same reasons.

We have recently donated \$750 from our Poppy Fund to the Lutheran Home in Arlington Heights in support of their November Breakfast for Veterans. American Legion 208 has pledged the same amount. If you haven't attended in past years, check it out - it's well worth it and FREE to Veterans.

Our Post has also been invited again this year to participate in Buffalo Grove's Veterans Day activities on November 11.

We have been diligently updating our Program Activity Reports (PAR - formerly called X-sheets). We are currently up to date.

Finally, a note about membership issues. Wear your military hats and shirts often. Engage fellow veterans at the local Jewel, Home Depot, etc.. It actually works. It would be nice if each of our Post members recruited at least one new member. I know I'm preaching to the choir. Thanks for listening.

Stewart

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER

Our Post has accomplished many things this summer but once again face Fall with new challenges. The biggest objective now is getting our membership up with your help. We are losing fellow Veterans at an alarming fast pace and must do our best as a post to gain NEW members to replace them.

Our VFW motto is "No One Does More For Veterans". Those are words of encouragement to continue to do more for those Veterans who need help. I am hoping all members will try to obtain qualified new members asap. Nothing is easy and changes in the VFW Illinois and District 4 will always be there but how we meet or exceed these changes is up to us. Nothing stays the same, we must adjust accordingly and continue to help VETERANS AND OUR COMMUNITY the best we can. I am hopeful we raise our membership and accomplish all our goals. We must grow each year and this year we have been hit hard with the loss of so many members due to age. Now we brush off the dust and go back at recruiting new members with a stronger drive than before. Your staff has adjusted to the many changes already but need your participation and attendance in all Post activities. We all help in any way we can and now need your family and friends to join us in helping those who cannot help themselves anymore, aka our fellow Veterans.

You are the best advertising we have so PLEASE talk it up and among your acquaintances about joining our Post. Be proud to be a Post 981 VFW Veteran. Always remember Flag etiquette at our meetings and wherever you see our country's flag displayed. Teach Patriotism by example.

If anyone has questions regarding membership or our 50% off VFW Life Membership by age, please contact me at vfwpost981@gmail.com.

Tom Rakowski Senior Vice Commander

JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER

VACANT

UPCOMING POST EVENTS

- Post Meeting – Wednesday (11/5)
- Post Meeting – Wednesday (12/3)
- Post-Holiday Party, Jameson's Charhouse – Sunday (12/07) 6:00 PM

• Post Meeting – Wednesday (01/07/2026)

BREAKFAST CLUB

Those interest in joining the breakfast club should send an email to Smokey at smokeymike@aol.com. He will respond in a reasonable amount of time.

TAPS



The members of Arlington Post 981, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, pay their last tribute of respect to our departed comrades.

As brave men and women they marched away with abiding faith in their God, their country, and their flag.

As soon as is possible we request that family members **notify the Post via email** if a comrade has passed away. Too many times we must rely on seeing an obituary in the newspaper which leaves little or no time for members to pay their final respects. The Post Color Guard is ready to pay final respects at the wake and render a 21-gun salute and the playing of taps at the cemetery.

HELP USA TROOPS CLOSING

This organization was started by Dawn Hedrick 14 years ago to honor her son-in-law James Stack who was killed in 2010 while on duty in Afghanistan. Our Post was an annual contributor of money and our members help to pack boxes that were shipped to active duty troops. Dawn has donated her remaining funds to the Arlington Heights Memorial Day Parade. Here is Dawn and former Commander Mike McNerney in 2017.



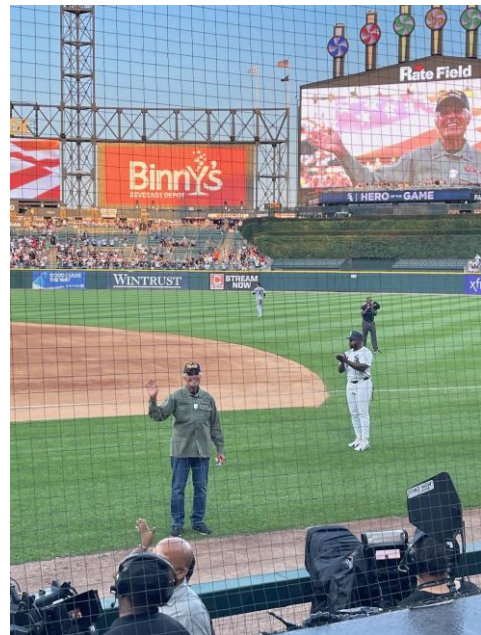
HERO OF THE GAME

On August 9 I had the privilege of being recognized as the Hero of the Game at the White Sox – Cleveland Guardian game. They provided VIP parking (50 feet from Rate Field) and 4 box seat tickets. In addition I received a special White Sox cap, an autographed ball, and a certificate signed by manager Will Venable. They asked if I could be in uniform, and luckily I had discovered my last fatigue shirt in the bottom of a box which I wore with my dog tags on the outside and my award bar (not exactly uniform but no one knew).

In the middle of the 2nd inning they got me and, after watching the top of the 3rd from the Cleveland dugout they led me to the field, pointed out the camera, and said to wave when they waved. It was pretty amazing to be on the Jumbo Tron and have 20,000 people stand and applaud me. Afterwards the Sox 1st base coach Jason Bourgeois gave me a game ball and shook my hand.

The application can be found on the Sox website under “Community” tab. It is 1 page where you list your service years, rank, awards, etc. and accomplishment bullet points. They listed 2 of my bullet points and my awards on the Jumbo Tron. You can choose what month you would like it to happen. Email it in with a copy of your DD214 and they will email you back. I sent my stuff in on a Wednesday and got scheduled 2 days later. No reason why all of you can’t join me and former Commander Steve MacInnes in this honor.

Mike Kolbuk



RIP TONY ALTIERI

On August 30 our Color Guard presented a 21-gun salute at a Celebration of Life for Tony Altieri, former Commander of AMVETS Post 66 in Wheeling and state Commander for the AMVETS in 2003-2004. Tony was always a real friend of our Post when we met at the AMVETS. We were never

charged for using their room for our meetings or parties. He allowed us to add our VFW sign to their sign post. Any disputes were easily solved. A good guy.

POST POPPY DONATIONS

As of the end of September the following donations have been made for this year beginning July 1:

1. \$750 to Luther Village for their upcoming Veterans Day breakfast Saturday Nov. 8
2. \$575 purchasing under clothes for veterans at Lovell.

POST PICNIC

Due to lack of interest this year's picnic did not take place.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY/PATRIOTS PEN

The theme for 2025-2026 have been announced by VFW National. Both Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen - "How are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?".

The deadline for entries is November 1, 2025. If you are aware of anyone in grades 6-8 (Patriot's Pen) or 9-12 (Voice of Democracy) please send them my way.

Stewart Abbink

NEW POST MEMBERS

Alan Van Bladel transferred to our Post in August. He was in the Navy serving on a cruiser off Viet Nam. He transferred from a post in Arizona after moving back to Arlington Heights



Everyone say hello to Alan as you encounter him at our meetings or outings.

POST COLOR GUARD

The Post of Color Guard Commander remains vacant. Please contact Commander Abbink.

The Color Guard Past events:

July 4 - Arlington Heights July 4th Parade

August 30 – Tony Altieri Celebration of Life

Up Coming events:

Nov 11 - Buffalo Grove Park District – Veterans Day Celebration

Even if you cannot march you can participate in wakes and funerals. In addition, there are many other activities that we are involved in that you could participate in. Those interested in joining the Color Guard please email the Post.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 981

Invites you and your guest to join your comrades and their guest at a



Holiday Dinner

Sunday, December 7

APPETIZERS 6:00 P.M., DINNER 6:45 PM

JAMESON'S CHARHOUSE

1331 W. Dundee Arlington Heights, IL

Cost is \$20 each per Post member and a guest

Dinner will consist of Soup, Salad, Main Course, Starch, Vegetable and Dessert. Main course is your choice of Chicken Milanese or 16 oz. Ribeye Steak or Greek Style Halibut.

Unlimited coffee, tea and soft drinks. Everyone gets two tickets for alcoholic drinks.

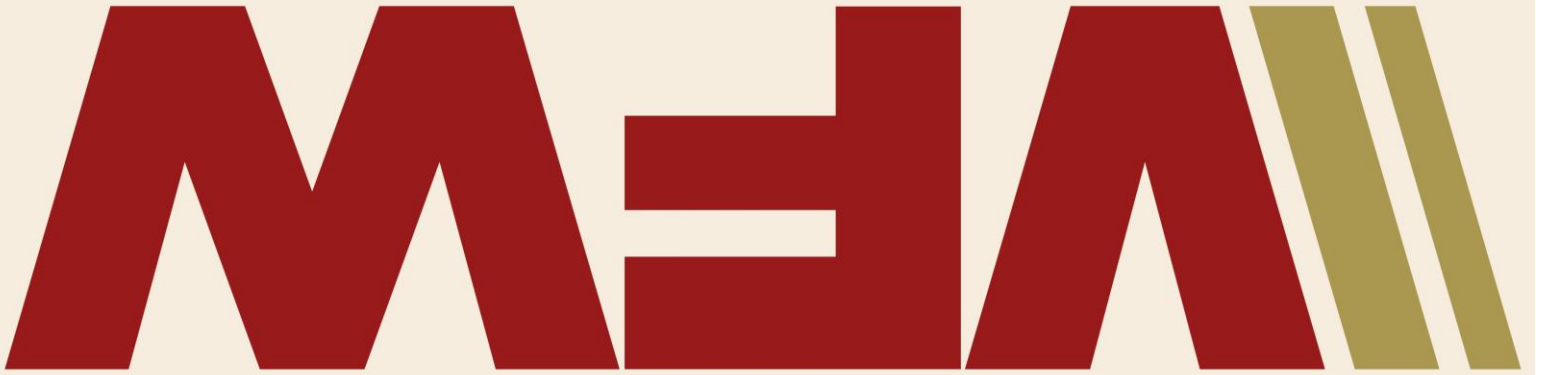
Send your reservations and checks (made out to **VFW Post 981**) to: Michael Kolbuk, 654 Briarwood Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090. **Deadline for reservations** - Post Meeting December 03

Member Name _____

Name of Guest _____

Amount enclosed (\$20 each for you and guest) \$ _____

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS®



ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

C/O Mike Kolbuk

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TO: