

ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

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



Website – vfwpost981.org

POST IS ALL-STATE, ALL-AMERICAN 2026

Congratulations to past Commander Stewart Abbink and all those in the Post that worked with him to accomplish this honor. This marks the 3rd time in the last 6 years that our Post has attained this status – 2021, 2023 and 2026.

COMMANDER

I'm honored to be elected as Post Commander for 2026-2027.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Richard Dunne. My motto is: First to Serve Veterans; to Serve the Community; and to have Fun! I served in the Air Force for 30 years including Desert Storm. I have been a member of the VFW since 1991, at Elgin Post 1307. I was Commander and Quartermaster there. I am also a member of American Legion 208.

As a Post we successfully achieved All-American status last year. Hopefully we will attain that goal this year. We have retained most of our Staff from last year. Pat Hickey has become our new trustee as Larry Bielski has ended his three-year term. James Jones is our new Junior Vice-Commander.

Our membership numbers have been steady, but we need to constantly recruit to replace members who passed away, much less to increase our numbers, not to steal Tom's thunder, Membership is important to the post and the VFW is everyone's part to recruit a new member not the Senior-Vice and it is everyone's responsibility to help to retain members

During the two Poppy Day weekends we collected over \$4,000. Thank you to all the volunteers who gave us their time again this year. And special

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

thanks to Don Luken and Larry Bielski for putting it all together!

We are still in need of volunteers to fill the open positions. I will be asking some of you to help shoulder the load.

Rich

SENIOR VICE- COMMANDER

Membership is key and we need everyone's help in getting more members. We are hoping this major move will show our Post is active and looking for more members. Our Color Guard has been doing an outstanding job and is also looking for more members in it. Our Post must grow and will grow with your support.

Any event our Post has join in as the more involved you are the greater feeling of belonging to a great organization is felt. Wear you military affiliation caps always it will advertise and get people to talk to you and possibly ask how I join the VFW Post 981. The more we show our selves the better. We are the only ones who can show our military affiliation and YES we are proud of our service and have joined the VFW for the comradery of knowing what we have done and want to do to help other Veterans.

Please advertise all you can and YES talk it up as it is a great organization. Everyone is a recruiter and I'm hoping we all can find new members this year. We have to be aggressive in getting new members in a nice way but we have to keep trying always. Post 981 HAS TO GROW NOW.

Tom

JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER

Stay tuned for new outing ideas.

James

UPCOMING POST EVENTS

- **July 4th Parade** – 10:00 AM, Arlington Heights
- **August Post Meeting** - Wednesday (8/5)
- **September Post Meeting** – Wednesday (9/2)
- **October Post Meeting** – Wednesday (10/7)

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.

The following comrades passed away, or we have been notified of their passing, since the last newsletter came out:

Martin Bodor

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 telephone** (listed on our website) 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. Also, our Color Guard needs time to organize the final salute to our members, whether at the wake or afterwards at the cemetery.

POST ELECTIONS

Here is the elected Post leadership for this year:

- **Commander RICHARD DUNNE**
- **Senior Vice-Commander TOM RAKOWSKI**
- **Junior Vice-Commander JAMES JONES**
- **Quartermaster MIKE KOLBUK**
- **Three-Year Trustee PAT HICKEY**
- **Two-Year Trustee VINCE CIPOLLA**
- **One-Year Trustee DON LUKEN**

Appointed Post Officers:

- **Service Officer LARRY BIELSKI**
- **Adjutant PHIL NAGLE**
- **Officer of the Day VACANT**
- **Judge Advocate VINCE CIPOLLA**
- **Color Guard VACANT**

Committee Chairmen for this year:

- **Poppies DON LUKEN & LARRY BIELSKI**
- **Publicity/Newsletter MIKE KOLBUK**
- **Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen VACANT**
- **Club Chair DON LUKEN**
- **Scouts Chair – STEWART ABBINK**
- **Scholarships DON LUKEN & VINCE CIPOLLA**



BLUE STAR HIGHWAY DEDICATION

Color Guard members AJ Stransky and Commander Stewart Abbink represented our Post at a Blue Star Highway dedication.



POST AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

At the May Post meeting Ryan Antonucci received the \$3,000 Bob Henderson Scholarship Grant from Bob's daughter Lynn Munson.

Ryan is a resident of Arlington Heights and will graduate from Hersey High School this May. His grandfather was a Korean War veteran. He was varsity captain for the BGHW combined hockey team, played varsity lacrosse and was on the frosh/soph golf team for 2 years. He was Editor-In-Chief of the daily Hersey Dispatch digital newscast as well as a content contributor. Apart from school he volunteers at the Lutheran Nursing Home on a weekly basis. He was sponsored to go to Georgia to document a home building effort by A Soldier's Journey Home charity for a homeless veteran and his footage is now used for their fundraising. Ryan will be attending Syracuse University in the fall. At the same meeting Chelsea McGowan received the \$3,000 Wally Luetschwager Scholarship. Chelsea, a resident of Mount Prospect, will graduate from Prospect High School this May. Her grandfather was a Vietnam veteran. She played tennis for 4 years and soccer for two. She served as mentor for special needs classes. Outside of school

Chelsea raised funds and built Books on My Block little library boxes in local mobile home communities. She will be attending University of Colorado in August.



POPPY DAY COLLECTIONS

Our Poppy Chairmen, Don Luken and Larry Bielski, did a fantastic job organizing this valuable fund raiser.

On May 16 Post members were at 5 locations in Arlington Heights and at 3 locations in Buffalo Grove on May 23.

The final collection total was \$2,280 in Arlington Heights and \$1,730 in Buffalo Grove for a total of over \$4,000.

A list of worthwhile organizations will be submitted to the Post to receive our Poppy money. Ideas for spending the Poppy fund are always welcome.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY/ PATRIOTS PEN

The themes for 2026-2027 have been announced by VFW National: Voice of Democracy - "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Patriot's Pen – Same as Voice of Democracy

The deadline for entries is November 1, 2026.

We are currently in need of someone to spearhead this activity.

BOOMERS OUTING

A sold-out skybox hosted 25 Post members and their guests on a comfortable afternoon on June 7. Food was the Barbecue package with ribs, pulled

pork and chicken, mac n' cheese and green salad. All were available for all-you-could-eat. Unlimited soft drinks, some beer ordered by the Post, cookies and lots of popcorn completed the menu. The Boomers pitchers had a rough time of it but the Boomers hitters teed off on the Otters' pitchers for 4 home runs as they beat Evansville 11-7.. The day was filled with plenty of food, excitement and comradery.



NEW POST MEMBERS

None this last quarter.

NATIONAL VFW DAY OF SERVICE

On May 3 6 Post members – Stewart Abbink, Rich Dunne, Tom Rakowski, Vince Cipolla, Larry Bielski and Mike Kolbuk – were joined by members of our sponsored Cub & Boy Scout groups in a clean-up of Frontier Park in Arlington Heights. The clean-up was our Post's part of the VFW National Day of Service. After it was posted on our website and Facebook page we notified National and it was the last item needed to qualify for All-American status. Afterwards the Post paid for pizza for everyone.



POST PAYS FOR CLUBS

If you are interested in joining a club that is open to all members, or starting one yourself see Don Luken. Based on participation and cost the Post will reimburse expenses.

There are already 5 approved – Fishing, Pistol Range (Don Luken), Golf (Smokeymike), Beer Brewing (Mike Kolbuk) and Breakfast.

You must be an active member of the Post - participating in meetings, activities and such.

COLOR GUARD

The Color Guard Past events:

May 25 - Memorial Day Parade

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS®



ARLINGTON VFW POST 981

C/O Mike Kolbuk

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TO: