

Joint VFW 4031 Post and Auxiliary

Newsletter

April 2025

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Welcome to the April 2025 Newsletter

This is the Second 2025 joint newsletter featuring news from both VFW Post 4031 and the VFW Post 4031 Auxiliary. This is a quarterly newsletter with publishing dates of about January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. It is the intent of this newsletter to enhance communications between all members of the Post and Auxiliary. If you have inputs for the next issue of the newsletter, those inputs will be due two weeks prior to the publishing date. If you have suggestions for the newsletter, let us know by contacting Jeff Punches at webmaster@vfw4031.org, adding a suggestion to our on-line suggestion box, or placing the suggestion in the Post's Suggestion Box in the Canteen.

The next Newsletter will be published approximately July 1st. The absolute deadline for submissions is June 15th.





Commanders Corner

I am immensely proud of our recent Post accomplishments. Our historic building has undergone substantial renovations in recent months, including the installation of a new roof and windows. The windows have significantly enhanced the interior and exterior aesthetics. Gordon McInnis is currently engaged in trimming out the windows and reinstalling the blinds.

We held a resoundingly successful Vietnam Veterans Dinner that instilled a profound sense of pride among all attendees. The dedicated volunteers who contributed to the Dinner's success were exceptional. Our Auxiliary demonstrated remarkable commitment by meticulously decorating the Main Hall. The Daughters of the American Revolution returned this year and executed an outstanding job in serving the delectable dinner. Jessica Fairchild honored us with a superb singing of our National Anthem.

I am honored to be re-elected as your Commander. I am committed to providing unwavering support to the Post in all its endeavors. The election was held during our April Post meeting, and the results are as follows.

The following members were elected for Post Officer positions:

1. Post Commander: David Latham
2. Post Senior Vice: Michael O'Mahoney
3. Post Junior Vice: Billy Kolz
4. Quartermaster: Jim Penton
5. 3-year Trustee: Fritz Shry
6. 3-year House Committee member: John Malarsie
7. 3-year House Committee member: Bart Collins
8. 1-year House Committee member: Meg Vanasse (replacing Chris Bartlett)

All our elected officers will support our members in every way possible. We take this responsibility seriously and will always do what is best for our Post.

David Latham



Adjutant's Corner

Welcome to Spring! It's been a wonderful first few months of the year, with a new roof on our building and new windows in the Main Hall, Canteen and Pool Room. I'm very proud of our Post, and pleased to have been asked to continue to serve as Adjutant. It's going to be a great year!

May brings Memorial Day ceremonies and remembrance. The new Post 9-11 Memorial Stone will be placed up at Greenmount Cemetery and the Blue Star Moms are working on a permanent display for the small flags that surround the Veterans Memorial. The VFW Warriors have taken on the mission to clean up the Memorial and also to guard the 500 flags at the Healing Fields at Santa Rita Park.

Wear a Buddy Poppy proudly, and if you are able to support the Buddy Poppy Drive, please sign up for a 4-hour shift on either Friday or Saturday of Memorial Day weekend (May 23rd or 24th). Sign-up sheets are in the Canteen.

There are so many things going on - check the website to stay informed! Have a wonderful Spring, stop by the Post if you haven't been in a while. Come by for Easter Brunch, the Memorial Day Open House, Father's Day brunch or any other time. You and your guests are always welcome.





Webmaster's and Newsletter Editor's Corner

Hey everyone! The Public Relations Committee has been hard at work updating and improving our website, VFW4031.org. We've gotten rid of some pages that weren't being used and added others that might be helpful to our members. The On-Line Store page is getting a major makeover to make it more responsive and easier to use. The On-Line Store will also make use of new PayPal and Zettle Point of Sale technologies to make your shopping experience even better. It'll be under construction for a bit, but you can still grab gear at the Canteen. Just a heads up, all the items with the VFW Logo were bought at the VFW Store. We can score some great discounts on VFW-branded stuff, and we pass those savings on to you.

Oh, and the Public Relations Committee is also the one who put together this newsletter. It's a bit of a time-consuming task each quarter, and we could really use your help. If you have any articles you'd like to share, please send them to us at least two weeks before the start of each quarter. The next deadline is the 15th of June. As always, we will add any article that a member feels will benefit our membership. If you are uncomfortable writing an article, just provide me with the points you would like to make, and I will write the article. Thanks a lot!!

In the coming weeks, the Public Relations Committee will be getting ready for Memorial Day activities by doing an advertising campaign to ensure that Durango Veterans and Community Members are aware of the dates and times of all the events the VFW put on during Memorial Day. The Day is always a lot of fun and offers something for everyone. As with most of our activities, we need volunteers to make Memorial Day a success. If you are interested in volunteering for one of our many events, please let us know. There will be a Memorial Day volunteer sign-up list in the Canteen and/or you can email the PRC by sending a message to webmaster@vfw4031.org.





Post News

National Vietnam Veterans Day and Our Vietnam Veterans Dinner

By Jeff Punches

On March 29th, we celebrated National Vietnam Veterans Day with a special Vietnam Veterans Dinner at VFW Post 4031. It was a free event open to all veterans and community members who wanted to come together and honor our fallen comrades. The Dinner is always one of the most important events of the year.

Et Voila Catering and Chef Amy brought us a Cajun-inspired feast, featuring blackened chicken, gumbo, salad, cornbread, and two delicious desserts. Over 100 people attended, and it was a resounding success! The Daughters of the American Revolution also helped out by serving food and the VFW Post 4031 Auxiliary helped by setting up the tables and chairs prior to the dinner.

Jeff Punches was our emcee again, and we had a great time listening to a short talk about the Vietnam Women's Memorial Statue near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall). Jeff also gave tribute to the eight women who died serving in Vietnam and whose names are memorialized on the Wall. Their names and a short history of the Women's Memorial are contained later in this newsletter. We also had the honor of having General Ronald Fogelman, the former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, as our keynote speaker. General Fogelman gave an incredible history of the Vietnam War and the valuable lessons our Armed Forces learned from it. His address was certainly the high point of the evening.

The dinner was made possible by the hard work of the VFW Post 4031 Auxiliary, Bronwyn Covert, Kent Ewing, and Jessica Fairchild. Bronwyn took care of everything from hospitality to floor management, Kent, our esteemed DJ provided the music, and Jessica sang the National Anthem. We couldn't have done it without them!

Welcome Home to Our Vietnam Vets!



Post News

National Vietnam Veterans Day and Our Vietnam Veterans Dinner By Jeff Punches



Welcome Home to Our Vietnam Vets!



Post News

Women on the Wall

By Jeff Punches

Eight women, all nurses, are among the more than 58,000 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Most were killed in airplane or helicopter crashes. Only one was killed by enemy fire. First Lieutenant Sharon Ann Lane, an Army nurse listed on Panel 23 West, Line 112, was killed during a rocket attack on June 8, 1969, less than 10 weeks after she arrived in Vietnam. Assigned to the 312th Evacuation Hospital, Lane was working in the Vietnamese ward of the hospital when the rocket exploded, killing her and her patients. She was from Canton, Ohio.

Overall, more than 265,000 women served in some capacity during the Vietnam War – and approximately 10,000 military women served in-country during the conflict.

It is a common misconception that all women serving in Vietnam were nurses. Barred from combat, military women served in health care, communications, intelligence, and administrative positions.

All had to be volunteers, and like their male counterparts, they volunteered for a variety of reasons: duty to one's country, a desire to help those serving overseas, or an interest in advancing one's military career, to name a few.

Civilian women also volunteered and served as foreign news correspondents, worked for organizations such as the American Red Cross, Army Special Services, United Service Organizations (USO), Peace Corps, and various religious groups such as Catholic Relief Services, or served in other government agencies.

Jeff Punches provided a brief description of each of the military nurses who are on the Wall. Here are brief descriptions of those women for those who missed the Dinner.



Eleanor Grace Alexander

Captain Eleanor Grace Alexander, U.S. Army had been working in a hospital in Pleiku to help out during mass casualties from Dak To when her plane crashed on the return trip to Qui Nhon on November 30, 1967. She was with the 85th Evacuation Hospital. She was from New Jersey and is remembered on Panel 31E Line 8. Dorothy Donovan



Post News



Pamela Dorothy Donovan

Lieutenant Pamela Dorothy Donovan, U.S. Army died of pneumonia on July 8, 1968. Born in Ireland, she was assigned to the 85th Evacuation Hospital in Qui Nhon. 2LT Donovan is remembered on Panel 53W, Line 43.



Carol Ann Elizabeth Drazba

2nd Lieutenant Carol Ann Elizabeth Drazba, U.S. Army was killed in a helicopter crash near Saigon on February 18, 1966. Born and raised in Pennsylvania, she is remembered on Panel 5E, Line 46.



Annie Ruth Graham

Lieutenant Colonel Annie Ruth Graham, U.S. Army suffered a stroke on August 14, 1968. She was from North Carolina and was the Chief Nurse with the 91st Evacuation Hospital in Tuy Hoa. Her name can be found on Panel 48W, Line 12.



Elizabeth Ann Jones

2nd Lieutenant Elizabeth Ann Jones, U.S. Army was flying with 2LT Drazba and was killed in the same helicopter crash near Saigon. She was assigned to the 3rd Field Hospital. 2LT Jones was from South Carolina and is remembered on Panel 5E Line 47.



Mary Therese Klinker

Captain Mary Therese Klinker, U.S. Air Force was part of an on-board medical team during Operation Babylift. Her flight was carrying 243 infants and children when it developed pressure problems and crashed while attempting to return to the airport. Captain Klinker was killed on April 4, 1975, just three weeks before the Fall of Saigon. A native of Indiana, she is remembered on Panel 1W, Line 122.

Post News



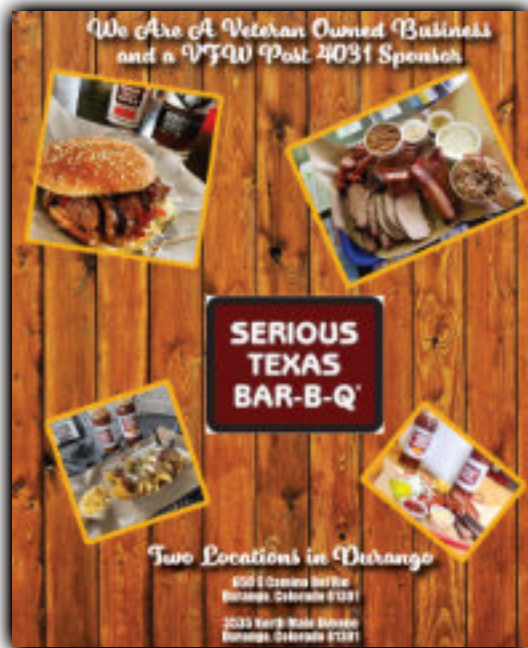
Sharon Ann Lane

1st Lieutenant Sharon Ann Lane, U.S. Army was killed by a rocket explosion on June 8, 1969, less than 10 weeks after she arrived in Vietnam. Assigned to the 312th Evacuation Hospital, 1LT Lane was working in the Vietnamese ward of the hospital when the rocket exploded, killing her and her patients. She was from Ohio and her name can be found on Panel 23W, Line 112.



Hedwig Diane Orlowski

1st Lieutenant Hedwig Diane Orlowski, U.S. Army was onboard with Capt. Alexander when their plane crashed on its return trip to Qui Nhon. She was assigned to the 67th Evacuation Hospital, 1LT Orlowski was from Michigan. She is remembered on Panel 31E, Line 15..



Renew Your Membership



Post News

The Vietnam Women's Memorial

By Jeff Punches

The Vietnam Women's Memorial was added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Site and dedicated on November 11, 1993.



In late 1983, Diane Carlson Evans, a nurse who served in the Army in Vietnam, conceived of the idea to add a statue to the Memorial site to honor the women who served. She incorporated the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project (VWMP) in 1984. In 2002, the group changed its name to the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation (VWMF).

The memorial was established not only to honor those women who served, but also for the families who lost loved ones in the war, so they would know about the women who provided comfort, care, and a human touch for those who were suffering and dying.

Sculpted by Glenna Goodacre, the 2,000 pound, 6-foot 8-inch sculpture portrays three women, one of whom is caring for a wounded male soldier. In the surrounding site, eight yellowwood trees were planted to symbolize the eight women whose names are on The Wall.

Diane Carlson Evans recounts the effort to build the Vietnam Women's Memorial in her book *Healing Wounds, A Vietnam War combat nurse's 10-year fight to win women a place of honor in Washington, D.C.*





Post News

The Post Roof and Windows

By Jeff Punches

We are delighted to inform you that the new roof and windows have been installed successfully, and they are making our old Post look great.. We express our deepest gratitude to the Michael and Elaine Moravan Foundation for their generous donation, which enabled the realization of these two projects. Both the roof and windows have been installed with utmost care and attention to detail, resulting in a visually appealing and functional appearance.

The windows, in particular, have proven to be a remarkable feature. They not only enhance the aesthetics of the building but also offer a unique functionality, allowing for easy opening and closing. Windows that open What a concept!!

The installation of the roof was carried out by Diversified Roofing, while Renewal by Anderson handled the installation of the windows. Both contractors demonstrated exceptional collaboration with us, ensuring that they met the requirements set by the City and our own needs. Although there were occasional challenges, the overall outcome has been highly beneficial for us.

Gordon McInnis is trimming out the windows in the Canteen and the Pool Room and it looks great. He will also be installing the blinds in all the windows. His contribution to the effort has made a great deal of difference to the look in the the three rooms. Thank you Gordon!!!



RENEWAL
by ANDERSEN
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT



VFW Post 4031 Auxiliary Officer's Corner



The Post Auxiliary has been extremely busy lately. We helped with the Vietnam Veterans Dinner by setting up and taking down the tables and chairs. The Main Hall looked fantastic in preparation for the dinner and was due to the efforts of our volunteers. We have been assisting the Veterans Benefit Breakfast by volunteering to take money and help out where we can. We are preparing to support the Memorial Day Open House by doing the food preparation and cooking.

I am extremely proud of the Auxiliary for recruiting members and helping us achieve more than 100% membership again this year. We look forward to another successful year helping our Post's Combat Veterans in every way we can.

Josie Latham



VFW AUXILIARY

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®





Veterans Relief Committee News

Veterans Benefit Breakfast

The Veterans Relief Committee will prepare and serve an Easter Brunch on April 20th for all comers. The Brunch is being sponsored by Brennan Oil. The Brunch is served from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The cost is \$17.00 for Adult Non-Veterans, Free for all Veterans, and \$12.00 for children 12 years old and younger.

The Brunch promises to be a great event. See the flyer to the right for more details.



Veterans Benefit Committee Car Giveaway

The Veterans Relief Committee is conducting a Car Giveaway on June 1st, 2025 at 9:00AM at the Veterans Benefit Breakfast. The Car Giveaway is being sponsored by Durango Automotive Repair and O'Reilly Auto Parts. Applications are available at VFW Post 4031 and on-line. You can access the On-line car Giveaway Application by scanning the QR Code on the flyer and in the QR City at the end of this newsletter. See the flyer to the left for more information.



Veterans Relief Committee Thanks Our Sponsors!



Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Scholarships



VFW Post 4031 Youth Scholarships

The annual youth scholarship programs began on April 1st. These two programs enable us to award scholarship support to our local High and Middle School Students. Tracy Padilla heads up our efforts to get the word out to our local students. The two scholarship programs are the Voice of Democracy which is directed to High School Students, and the Patriot's Pen which is directed to our Junior High School students. The following describes these two scholarship programs in more detail.

Voice of Democracy

Established in 1947, the Voice of Democracy is a audio-essay program that offers high school students a unique opportunity to express themselves through a recorded essay on a democratic and patriotic theme. Each year, over 26,400 ninth through twelfth-grade students from across the nation participate in the program, vying for their share of more than \$1.4 million in educational scholarships and incentives.

The national first-place winner receives a \$35,000 scholarship, which is directly deposited into the recipient's American university, college, or vocational/technical school. A comprehensive list of other national scholarships ranges from \$1,000 to \$21,000. Additionally, the first-place winner from each VFW Department (state) is awarded at least a scholarship of \$1,000. Students interested in participating must submit their audio essay prepared for this year's theme, along with a completed 2025-2026 entry form, to VFW Post 4031.

The 2025-26 theme is:
"How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"

Patriot's Pen

Each year, over 60,600 students in sixth through eighth grades participate in the VFW's Patriot's Pen® annual youth essay contest, seeking a chance to win their share of nearly \$1 million in state and national awards. Each first-place state winner receives a minimum of \$500 at the national level, while the national first-place winner is awarded \$5,000.

The essay contest invites young minds to explore America's history and their own experiences in contemporary American society by composing a 300- to 400-word essay. The essay should express the author's views based on a patriotic theme selected by the VFW Commander-in-Chief. Interested students must submit their essay, prepared on this year's theme, along with a completed 2025-2026 entry form, to VFW Post 4031.

The theme for the 2025-26 essay contest is: "How Are You Demonstrating Patriotism and Providing Support for Our Country?"

If you know a student tell them about these scholarships.



Events

VFW Post 4031 is a very active Post and sponsors many events for veterans and the Durango Community itself. These events don't just happen by themselves and depend upon the many volunteers to make these events special. Thank you volunteers!

Second Quarter 2025 Major Events

- April 6th - Veterans Benefit Breakfast 9:00AM
- April 9th - Post Meeting 6:00 PM
- April 20th - Easter Brunch 9:00AM
- April 20th - Post Auxiliary Meeting 2:00PM
- May 4th - Veterans Benefit Breakfast 9:00PM
- May 14th - Post Meeting 6:00 PM
- May 18th - Veterans Benefit Breakfast, 9:00AM
- May 18th - Post Auxiliary Meeting, 1:00 PM
- May 26th - Memorial Day Open House 12:00PM
- June 1st - Veterans Benefit Breakfast, 9:00AM
- June 11th - Post Meeting, 6:00 PM
- June 15th - Fathers Day Brunch 9:00. AM
- June 15th - Post Auxiliary Meeting, 2:00 PM
- June 22nd - Animas River Float

Recurring Events

- Karaoke in the Canteen - Every Friday Night
- Fencing - Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday
- Square Dancing - Thursday
- Art Classes - Saturdays through May 17th, the Art Show will be at the May 18th breakfast and Memorial Day Open House.

Memorial Day 2025

May 23rd and 24th
VFW Buddy Poppy Drive at various locations in Durango.

May 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th
Healing Fields at Santa Rita Park.

May 23rd 8:30 PM Opening Ceremony
May 25th 9:00 PM Lighting Ceremony
May 26th 4:00 PM Closing Ceremony.

May 24th
8:00 Iron Horse Classic Veterans Train Ride to Silverton
10:00 Flags Placed on Veterans Graves at Greenmount Cemetery.

May 26th
10:00 Vietnam Memorial Ceremony at Iris Park
11:00 Veterans Memorial Ceremony at Greenmount Cemetery
11:45 Those Lost At Sea Ceremony at the Bridge Behind Rotary Park.
12:00 - 3:00 PM VFW Post 4031 Open House. All Welcome.

If you have questions go to VFW4031.org or call
(970) 247-0384



VFW Post 4031
1550 Main Avenue
Durango, CO 81301







This Page is designed for VFW Post 4031 and the Auxiliary members to share good news that might be of interest to all our members.

Good News



Home Care Support for Veterans

By Erin Youngblood

Many veterans may not be aware that they can receive in-home care services at no cost through VA benefits. These services are designed to support veterans in maintaining their independence and quality of life at home. Care may include assistance with medication management, daily living activities, light housekeeping, meal preparation, and companionship.

For veterans like Jim, a Vietnam War veteran, these services have been life-changing. After struggling with mobility issues, Jim found it difficult to keep up with household tasks and daily routines. Through a VA home care referral, he was connected with a caregiver who now helps him with meal prep, personal care, light cleaning, and staying active. "Having someone here makes all the difference," Jim shares. "It allows me to stay in my home and live comfortably."

Accessing these benefits starts with a conversation with a provider at the VA clinic. Veterans can request a home care referral, which allows them to receive personalized support based on their needs.

For more information or any questions, call Comfort Keepers at 970-515-7055. Or check out our website at CKDurango.com.

We are grateful to you, and proud to serve those who have served our country!



Photo Gallery

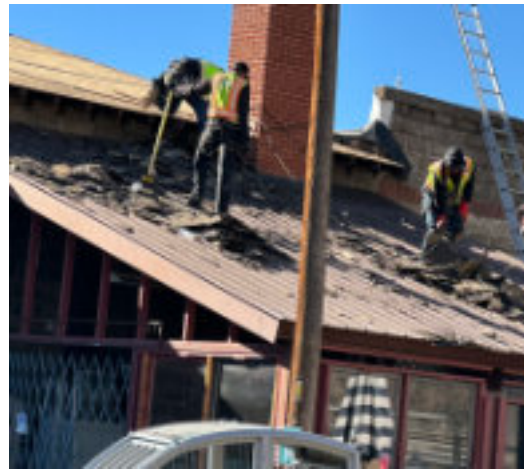


Photo Gallery



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Car Giveaway Application



Veterans Resources



Sponsor a VFW Post Event



Renew Your Membership



Help Us Buy a Point of Sale
System for the Canteen



Donate to VFW Post 4031