Bloomington AMVET’s artwork selected for Coast Guard Art Program

The Coast Guard Art Program (COGAP) uses fine art as an outreach tool for educating diverse audiences about the United States Coast Guard.

Illinois AMVETS member James Wall recently was selected as a Coast Guard artist for his submission entitled “Changing buoy moorings”. Wall is a member of Illinois AMVETS Post 270.

In the formal congratulations letter, the Coast Guard Art Program states “Your generous contributions of your time and artistic talent ensure that diverse audiences around the country will have the opportunity to learn about the Coast Guard missions through the unique perspective that fine arts provides.”

Coast Guard artists—most of whom are professional artists—volunteer their time and talents to help COGAP fulfill its missions. Today, the collection comprises nearly 2,000 works which are primarily paintings. These capture the daily missions the 40,400 men and women on active duty in the Coast Guard perform, including homeland security, search and rescue, marine environmental protection, drug interdiction, military readiness and natural resource management. Other works depict sea and air assets.

Through displays at museums, libraries and patriotic events, Coast Guard art tells the story of the service’s missions, heroes and history to the public. Art is also displayed in offices of members of Congress, senior officials of the executive branch of government and other military services and at Coast Guard locations throughout the country.

The program—celebrating its 35th anniversary this year—is a partnership between the Coast Guard and the Salmagundi Club, a New York City artistic and cultural center for over 140 years.

Shown is the painting Mr. Wall created, as well as a photo of Wall holding his artwork. Congratulations!

Learn more about COGAP by visiting: www.uscg.mil/Community/Art-Program/.
**Commander’s Corner**

AMVETS Family;

Well, it has been an adventure!! As I look back on this year; it started with a bang (parade) and is getting ready to end with a bang (banquet). It has been both busy and exciting to say the least!

The past 30 days have been overwhelming. During this reporting period, the First Lady and I have traversed from the southern portion of the state to the northern tip. I have gone to the Indiana border three times, two to Danville (“Because We Care Day” and JROTC awards presentation) and one to Olney for a JROTC awards ceremony. I have been south to Alton and O’Fallon (both for JROTC honors and awards events) and north to the District II meeting at the Norge Ski Jump Lodge (a real cool place). The Commander’s car is running fine, but the windshield has collected an assortment of bugs and lots of raindrops.

I want to thank our Illinois AMVETS Executive Director, Keith Wetherell, and Post 145 Commander / Marine Corps League Commander Mike Malmstrom for putting together the first Illinois Veterans Lobby Day. There were approximately 30 Veterans from various organizations that joined in this effort. It was an opportunity for Veterans to unite and talk with their State Representative to promote improving the lives of Veterans! Plans were discussed by the attendees about how to make it even better next year. I believe we made our point and raised some legislative eye brows. Now, we all need to keep talking to our legislators, until they do what they promised for Illinois Veterans!

I had the privilege of attending four (4) JROTC awards ceremonies. I can tell you this, if you want get a personal recharge of honor and respect, go to one of these ceremonies and observe a positive part of America’s future. These young men and women in their uniforms are truly Class A groups:

Banquet will see the Alton JROTC (Air Force, of course) in action, since they so graciously agreed to perform the Color Guard duties.

Kudos go to their sponsors and families. As a side note, you should go to the Illinois State Fair on Veterans Day and see them drill. Those who attend the Convention “Stars and Stripes”

Coming up is our State Convention, where we will recognize our Post AMVETS of the Year, some special contributors to our efforts, and some of those who go “above and beyond” for our organization. Next door, the Ladies Auxiliary and the Sons will be doing the same thing. Saturday night will be the “Stars and Stripes” Banquet, a time when we hand out many “special” awards and enjoy some great camaraderie. This year there will be some extraordinary additions to the ceremonies, lots of door prizes, and a speaker to whom, I believe, everyone can relate and find interesting. I hope everyone who could sign up did so, because this will be a convention and banquet that touches the heart of each and every person in attendance.

This is my final article as the Commander for the Department of Illinois. Thanks for letting me share my busy schedule and frequent trips as Commander, and I hope you have enjoyed reading about my travels and experiences that have involved nearly every one of you. “On the Road Again” has become my theme song. Though I will no longer be State Commander, that does not mean I won’t still be contributing by sending articles to the newspaper. I have a passion about telling and sharing with everyone what is happening in AMVETS, so I will keep all of you informed about what my home Post 14 is doing.

It has been both an honor and a privilege to serve you as your Department Commander. Though it has been a very busy year, it has also been a very rewarding one. It is not only with heart-felt thanks that I leave you, but also with my hopes and prayers that each one of you will become more involved with AMVETS. Ours is a great Veteran’s association, and as long as we continue to remember that our organization’s roots go deep into the Love of our Country and we remember to keep a Spirit of Service prevailing in our hearts, I believe, with God’s guidance, we will become the preeminent Veterans Organization in the nation! As always, I leave you with my prayers that God will continue to bless AMVETS and bless the United States of America!

Sincerely,

Darrel Tucker
Commander
2018-2019
Hello Amvets!

It was great to see all of you again at our June Convention! Membership is coming along well on all fronts. For those Posts that have new members incoming, please hold off on sending in their applications and payments until July to ensure that they will not need to pay again until the end of the 2020 fiscal year. I really appreciate all of the Posts that took the time to review their personalized membership report packets! It was a great help in ensuring that membership is as accurate as I can make it. I also want to say thank you to everyone that has been utilizing the forms and helping to ensure that our record here at Headquarters are as up-to-date as possible. For those that have not been utilizing the proper forms for membership correspondence, I implore you to start. If I have incomplete information, or a lack of proper paperwork for our records I have, and will continue to send back checks and forms with a note requesting the proper paperwork be submitted.

Currently, the Department of Illinois Amvets has 2964 Members at Large. Only 240 of those are behind on their annual dues having either their membership lapse at the end of 2018 or 2017. We also have 6359 members belonging to individual Posts throughout the state. 2041 of those belonging to Posts are annual members. 1038 of these annual members are not current according to National’s records. That means that almost 51% of our annual members that belong to a post have not renewed their membership either since 2018 or 2017.

Membership being what it is; I have a couple ideas. I would love to see more correspondence through email if at all possible. I would venture a guess that approximately 90% of our communication is done digitally. With that being said, I would suggest that at least one officer at the very least in each Post has an active email address, or that the Post create its own email address for all of the officers to have access to. This will make it much easier and faster to pass along information to those that need to hear about it, and will also save money so that Posts and the Headquarters will not have to send as much mail in volume. My next idea is that each Post has its own Communications/Social Media officer. It would be good to have a Facebook page set up for your Post. Its free advertising, you can upload pictures from each event that your Post participates in, and the page will help keep the community apprised of all of the good that each Post is doing.

Post Revalidation Season is among us! I need to have all Post revalidations submitted to the State Headquarters by July 1st!!! Please ensure that this is accomplished so that we will meet National’s deadlines. If any Post still needs a revalidation packet they can call or email any day and I will get it sent off with all haste.

You can also visit our website, www.ilamvets.org to download the forms. Simply go to “Resources” at the top of the page, and select “Resources and Forms.”

Yours in Service,

Erik Copley
Membership Director
AMVETS POST 140 Awards Scholarships

AMVETS Post 140 awarded their first annual scholarships to one senior in each of Bond County High Schools this past week.

To qualify for the scholarship the students had to be a 2019 graduate and plan to attend a vocational school, a two or four year accredited college or university. The student must currently have a parent serving in the military or grandparent or great grandparent who served honorably in the military. The student must have earned at least a G.P.A of 3.0 after their seventh semester of high school and have financial need.

On Friday, May 9th, members of the local AMVETS Post traveled to The Greenville High School to present the award to Miss Nia Ephron.

Nia was recognized for her achievements in academics, participation in sports and community involvement. Nia’s Grandfather, John Robert Williams was a twenty year veteran of the US Air Force and served in Thailand in 1969/70 during the Vietnam war.

On Friday, May 10th, AMVET members made the trip to Mulberry Grove High School to award the scholarship to Braeden Links. Braeden was recognized for his achievements in academics, participation in sports and class leadership. Braedens Father, Col. Gene Links, who retired after serving twenty five years in the US Army, served two tours in Afghanistan.

The Purpose of the AMVETS Post has always been to Honor, Remember and Respect the men and women who served in our nations military. Supporting and aiding the military families is one way to accomplish that purpose. The Scholarship program will assist offsprings of our veterans to achieve their educational goals.

Top photo, LtoR: AMVETS Post 140 1st Vice Tony Koonce, Braeden Links, Post Scholarship Program coordinator, Brent Whittaker.

Bottom photo, L to R: Post 1st Vice Tony Koonce, Post 2nd Vice Rob Jeffers, Member Bill Johnston, Nia Ephron, Scholarship program coordinator Brent Whittaker, Post Provost Marshall Lonnie Gibson, Post Commander Lynn Craig.

Post 103 speaks to community

Being a member of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce allows Clinton Post 14 a unique opportunity. On March 27th, some of the members and supporters of Post 14 were given the opportunity to educate the public about how AMVETS is an organization of “Veterans Helping Veterans”, as well as recruit new members. Giveaways consisted of “goodies” provided by the local service recruiters, and telling our story consisted of a Power Point of our activities prepared by Mitchi Tucker.

The Post also had for the first time, our new table cover, which informed everyone approaching who we were. In the backdrop, we displayed the service flags, the POW/ MIA flag, our Post 14 flag and, of course, the Stars and Stripes.

All-in-all, we greeted and offered our experiences to over 150 people. Many said “Thank you for Your Service,” and about 6 new recruits were given applications. One of the recruits actually took the opportunity to sign-up that night and become a life member. Great job to all seven (7) post members who showed up to help!!

Pictured is our set-up and right to left those who made the showing such a success; Jessie Owens, Ronnie Richards, Ed Beck, Mitchi Tucker, Darrel Tucker, and Post Commander Marc Rogers.

Post 103 thanks Wallace for his service

Post 103’s commander of two years, Troy Wallace, recently “retired” from the post because he is moving out of state. Post 103 says thank you for all your help, Troy, and welcome new Commander Bobby Miller.
On Saturday April 27, 2019 the Hines Adaptive Sports Team hosted its 39th annual Hines Veterans Games. The Hines Veterans Games is an adaptive sports day for our Hines Veterans. Our Veterans are able to experience a variety of adaptive sports: Shuffleboard, Bocce ball, Horseshoes, Blow darts, Biathlon, and many more.

This year we had approximately 75 inpatient and outpatient Veterans attend the event, which is amazing considering the Winter weather we experienced this year. (Snow may have been a first in all the years of the games). This event cannot take place without the amazing support from our Hospital staff.

A big thank you to everyone who took a Saturday to volunteer their time so that our Veterans could experience a day like this. Many therapists from PM&R, SCI staff, Doctors, media services and Hospital Director Dr Braverman took time to make this event a success.

There are many community organizations who volunteered to make this day possible. Thank you to the White Sox organization, US Bank, Proviso West NJROTC, Broadview Fire Department, Illinois Department of AMVETS, DAV VA reps, and many more. This day is a success because of you! Special thanks to Army Veteran Adrian Del Toro-Higgins for an outstanding rendition of the National Anthem to begin our games with.

Thank you to the Adaptive Sports Committee for your efforts to continue providing adaptive sports opportunities for our Veterans!

(Feel free to check out more photos on the Hines VA Hospital Facebook Page posted on May 1, 2019)

Submitted by Audrey Barber of Hines Recreational Therapy.

Post 77 participated in bingo for St. Jude’s on April 14th. Shown are: Dennis Berchtold, Andy Gusman, Commander Jeff Anderson, Dixie Malone, and Ray Childers. Dean Baize was also present. Dixie Malone’s husband Louie Malone started Post 77 in 1991. Thus the name Louis Malone Memorial Post 77 Chillicothe Illinois. We donated $100.00 for St. Jude.
Illinois AMVETS present medals, certificates for JROTC and ROTC

Illinois AMVETS continues to have an active JROTC/ROTC program. Every year, hundreds of medals and certificates are passed out, as well as many presentations made. Here are a few so far:

Top two photos: Commander Darrel Tucker presents to members of the Alton JROTC.

Center: Tucker presents at the awards ceremony for the O’Fallon JROTC.

Bottom left: PDC Richard VanNatta presents Sophomore Taylor Styrczula her medal at the WIU Macomb presentations.
Illinois AMVETS Veterans Service Officers can help YOU!

Our VSOs aren’t just employees; they’re veterans, too. Let us help you obtain the benefits you earned and deserve. Learn more at www.ilamvets.org.
Post 202 in Elgin has kept busy over the last year, helping out veterans and their community. From donating food to the Hebron THS, to purchasing chairs for the veteran’s study room at ECC, to throwing pizza parties for veterans in nursing homes, to setting up a table at job fairs, to judging scholarships and more! Post 202 is an excellent example of serving the community.
Learn more about why and how to plan your post’s programs and activities from AMVETS National!

Quality Programs equal membership retention and go far towards attracting new members. Quality Programs do not just happen, they take some effort! The key is to keep it simple and decide what you want to do and then do it. Failure to act is often the biggest failure of all. It is vitally important to Cooperate, Coordinate, and Communicate. The lack of a well-planned program, shared in advance with your members, is communicating that leadership is not serious about building a viable Post with quality programs.

Any good plan must answer five questions:

Where are we now?
Where do we want to go from here?
What things will we do to get there?
When will these things occur?
What will each person do each month?

Ideal Time to Plan
Our CBL states that each Post elects their new officers between 1 May and 30 June and that they must assume office no later than 15 July. I would like to propose that this is the ideal time for your Post to put the wheels in motion to “plan” your annual Post Calendar. The outgoing Commander or Second Vice could appoint a chairperson to begin the process that will culminate with the important action step of ratifying the plan at the first official meeting of the next cycle, that meeting being chaired by the new Commander.

Why Plan a Yearlong Calendar
There is any number of reasons – among them, to share commitments and responsibilities; ensure a varied program that meets your members’ needs and interests; allow for ample prep time; avoid calendar conflicts by permitting interested members to keep AMVETS dates open; provide for better communications; avoid confusion; encourage members to look forward to meetings; give members a chance to pick their program in advance and volunteer to assist; provide direction to your post; and establish the budget and know what you need from your treasury and how much you will need to raise.

Key Elements of the Process
Steps in building an annual programs calendar may vary, so flexibility is fine as long as you follow some basic principles.

1) Begin the process early.
2) Get all leaders and active members involved.
3) Know the needs of your local veteran community.
4) Review past programs and determine what worked and had the support of your membership.
5) Make the plan comprehensive; objectives, programs, chairpersons and dates.
6) Plot action steps on a separate schedule for each program and identify via that program’s chairperson, who will be responsible for each step.
7) Print the calendar and mail to all members and post it on your web site if available. Your goal is to have a 12-month, comprehensive calendar prepared by the end of July, but no later than 15 August. It should include meeting dates, key department and national dates, fund raisers, programs and dinners, military & veteran holidays and monthly community projects.

Plan your programs for a successful year

Post 107 swears in new officers

Post 107 in Manteno recently had their new officer’s elections and swearing in.

Top: John Lulewicz, John Ruhl, Richard Van Pelt, Richard Bergeron and Tom Page

Bottom: Back row - John Luewicz, John Ruhl, Richard Van Pelt, Richard Bergeron and Tom Page; Front row - PDC Cheryl Weglewski

Congratulations new officers!
A word from President Holmes

Hello Ladies,

It doesn’t seem like a year has past already. As I write my last article to you, I want to reflect on my year.

I have traveled a lot of places and met a lot of nice people. It is hard to find one place better to visit than the next. Thank you for all the hard work you have done this year. I am sure if you read one more time get the reports in you wanted to scream (on a fun note: ME TOO); however, I wanted each to get credit for your hard work and that’s what you do.

I attended a fish fry in Waltonville, Illinois. I never heard of the place. Even though I will not be the president, I am planning on visiting them again this fall for their parade and sample their chili, which I heard was great. I also was in a parade in East Moline. Now, I have heard of it, but had never been there really had no idea how to get there. Thank goodness for GPS, even if I got lost.

It has been my pleasure serving as your Department President. My great grandchildren thought I was more important than our President of the United States and, of course, I had to let them think that. I hope you keep up the great work you do for our Veterans and thank them every day because with out them, our world would sure be different.

I have enclosed a poem for all veterans;

Female and male – both are equally important in their endeavors for our country. I am sure when we think of Veterans, we don’t separate them from male to female. We thank them as Veterans!

Hope to see you in September at SEC. Let’s make our meetings crowded again. Thank a Veteran every day ladies.

Sincerely,
Shirlie Holmes
Ladies Auxiliary President

Money raised for Target Dottie

Amvets Auxiliary 4 made a presentation to Mike McKinley for Project Dottie. Mike and his son, Garret, accepted the monies from the IL State Amvets Project Dottie in the amount of $600.00 and from the Auxiliary 4 of Mt Vernon in the amount of $200.00. Shown at the presentation are left to right: Donna Bryant, Joyce Parkhill, Sandy Pinkston, Garret McKinley (in front), Mike McKinley, Elsie Flerlage and Lee Osborn. Absent from the picture was Alleigha McKinley, co-recipient of the monies funded.

Auxiliary 204 helps local hospital

Auxiliary 204
1st Vice Janet VanDeusen, Dept Chaplain Ann Phelps, and 204 Auxiliary 2nd Vice are shown delivering products for the geriatric ward at the Granite City Hospital. Dept Chaplain Ann Phelps helps Auxiliary 204 with their hospital project.

It is the VETERAN, not the preacher, who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the VETERAN, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the VETERAN, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the VETERAN, not the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is the VETERAN, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the VETERAN, not the politician, who has given us the right to vote.
So I walk down the battlefield with my family on my mind. I am always fearful of what it is I'll find. I take a look at the enemy and see they're just like me. It makes me sad to battle them, all we both want it to be free. None of them I'd want to kill, that'd be like killing me. But I know what I've got to do, I've got to be free.

And now at last I'm going home, with bloodstains on my shirt. I'm not proud of what I've done, not proud of who I hurt. But then I realize what it was for, my country great and strong. And when I remember America, it doesn't feel so wrong.

I remember my allies dead, and the enemy too. But war cannot be a happy thing, but we all fight for you. It can make me uncomfortable to talk about the past, the thoughts I tried to push away. But they keep coming back, and I'm am grateful to be home today. I still need some rest, a soldier's life is an unhappy one. But they fight with the best. Remember us.

Submitted by Chaplain Ann Phelps

Not yet a member of the Auxiliary?

Are you a wife, mother, widow, grandmother, daughter, step-daughter, sister or granddaughter of a veteran? Do you want to experience the family and fellowship that comes along with being a military relative? Are you ready to support veterans and their communities?

If so, join the Illinois AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary today!

To be eligible, you must be:
• Related to a member of AMVETS, or
• Related to a deceased veteran who could have been eligible for membership in AMVETS, or
• A female veteran

Definition of Americanism:
Is the unfailing love of Country. Loyalty to its institutions and ideals; Eagerness to defend it against all enemies; Undivided allegiance to the Flag; and, a Desire to secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and posterity. (Author Unknown)

PDP Mary Kerby and AMVET Carol Leonard participated in the Survivor’s Banquet in Pekin on May 7th.

Prayers from Chaplain Phelps

Bears for Survivor’s Banquet

Thank you for your service.
Illinois AMVETS Plaza Sites

If you would like to make a donation of household goods, donations can be dropped off at the following locations.

Bridgeview
9 AM - 4 PM Every Day
7325 W. 79th St.
(79th & Harlem Ave.)
In the K-Mart Parking Lot

Morris
9 AM - 4 PM Every Day
1227 Division St.
Rte. 47

Darien
9 AM - 4 PM Every Day
75th & Lyman Ave.
In front of the Wal-M art by Aldi’s

Tinley Park
9 AM - 4 PM Every Day
159th St. & Sayre Ave.
(East of Harlem Ave)
Burlington Coat Factory Parking lot

Des Plaines
9 AM - 4 PM Every Day
At Oakton & Lee
In the West Side of K-M art Parking lot

West Chicago
10 AM - 4 PM Every Day
27W 215W North Ave.
(Corner of North & County Farm Rd.)
By Yamaha & Honda Dealer

Minooka
10 AM - 4 PM Every Day
855 S. Ridge Rd.
(I-80 to Minooka South Exit)
Ace Hardware Parking Lot

Wheeling
NO ATTENDANT ON DUTY.
AMVETS Post 66
(700 M cHenry Rd)

Minooka
10 AM - 4 PM Every Day
855 S. Ridge Rd.
(I-80 to Minooka South Exit)
Ace Hardware Parking Lot

If your business or organization is interested in helping the Illinois AMVETS by hosting a collection site, please contact keith@ilamvets.org.

If your business or organization is interested in helping the Illinois AMVETS by hosting a collection site, please contact keith@ilamvets.org.