

VFW Post 7308
Pleasant Prairie Memorial Post
Commander's Log 2012 – 2013



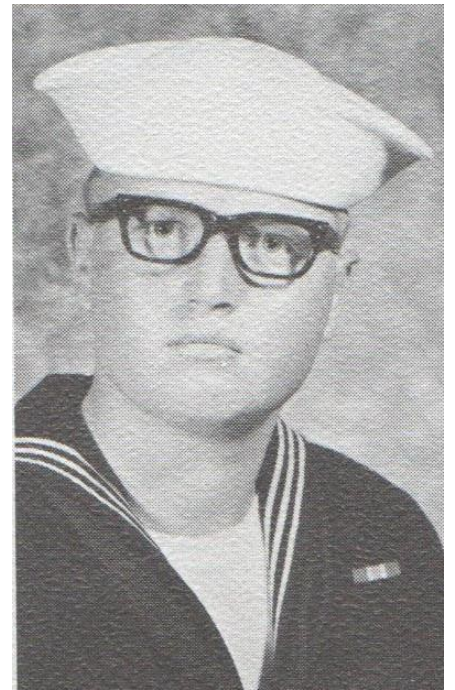
I, Randolph Wayne Strickland, Sr. continue to have the great honor of serving as Commander of VFW Post 7308 Pleasant Prairie Memorial Post for the year 2012 – 2013. As a retired United States Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, I am proud to continue serving in any and all capacities that prove to assist my fellow Veterans.

In all of my years in the US Navy, I tried to build teamwork, camaraderie and long term friendships with all those I served with. It is my intention to carry that over into my present relationships with all my Comrades in Post 7308, District 1, and the Department of WI VFW.

I started my Navy career when I enlisted under the US Navy Delayed Entry Program in December 1970 and reported for active duty in July 1971.

My career started rather rocky at first, serving with COMNAVFORV in South Vietnam and then follow on duty stations aboard USS El Paso (LKA-117); USS Nimitz (CVAN-68); USS Mitscher (DDG-35); USS Seattle (AOE-3); USS Savannah (AOR-4); USS Pharris (FF-1094); Multi-National Peacekeeping Forces – Beirut Lebanon; COMDESRON Ten Staff; and finally, as the Main Propulsion Assistant at the Peter Tomich 1200 PSI Steam Plant, Service School Command, Great Lakes, IL. Where, on 31 July 1991, I retired after more than 20 years of service.

Following my retirement, I went to work as an Engineering Technician and then Project Engineer for Abbott Laboratories in North Chicago, IL. After 17 years with Abbott, I retired and began a new stage in my life, which led me to becoming an Engineering Consultant and allows me to use my free time to continue to do what I love most, helping Veterans that are less fortunate than myself. The VFW has become my conduit towards completing that goal.



It is my hope and fervent wish that not only can I continue to serve in this capacity, but in so doing advance the cause of the Veterans of Foreign Wars!

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In June of 2012, I was honored to receive All State recognition. This recognition was the culmination of efforts made by my entire Post. The work done by my Comrades was recognized on this day, recognition that I proudly share with each and every member of VFW Post 7308. As a Post, we continue to strive to be the very best and are working diligently to again achieve this very important milestone in the life of our Post. It is truly an honor!

In July, VFW Post 7308 participated in Bristol Progress Days from 10 July to 13 July 2012. During this event, we took advantage of the venue and used this opportunity to not only make some much needed monies for our Post, but also used it to sell VFW Calendars, Buddy Poppies, and "Boots on the Ground Recruiting Effort".

Seen here is Robert G Yates reinstating into the VFW and becoming a member of VFW Post 7308. Comrade Yates is a very welcome addition to our growing and active Post. During this event, we garnered three new members and one reinstatement. Well worth our effort, not to mention the great public exposure. We are already looking forward to the event next year and planning to do even more.



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Village of Pleasant Prairie President John Steinbrink stopped by to visit and to praise the fine work and the way we represent the Village in the public eye.

We are honored to have the backing of the Village Board and their constituents. We often participate in the Village's civic events and are often requested to provide "Colors" at public events.

We were also visited by State Representative Samantha Kerkman. Samantha has become a regular fixture at our Post activities.

It is a very good thing to have the friendship of people like John Steinbrink and Samantha Kerkman and to know that they not only represent the people of Pleasant Prairie, but support our members of VFW Post 7308 – Pleasant Prairie Memorial Post.



On 13 August 2012, VFW Post 7308 joined forces with our fellow Comrades and Sisters of the American Legion David Leet Post # 552 in Somers, WI, to host a blood drive. The Ladies Auxiliary of the AL Post 552 did the bulk of the work, we supported them by assisting with spreading advertisement of the drive and in making appointments for blood donors. As a Post, we are willing to work with other Service Organizations to provide services to the surrounding communities. It is a great pleasure to work with these other Veteran groups and continue serving.

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On 01 September 2012, VFW Post 7308 and Culvers of Pleasant Prairie held another of our quarterly Buddy Poppy Drives. Unfortunately for us, the weather did not hold up and approximately 4 hours into the drive, the skies opened and rained us out.

However, we were still able to have a very successful fund raiser for our "Relief Fund" and was able to sell several VFW Calendars at the same time.

During this Buddy Poppy Drive, our Comrade Jerry Heidi, a disabled paralyzed Vietnam Veteran, who has been unable to attend meetings in the past, was able to come to the event.

As his health enabled him to make this visit, we took advantage of this moment and administered the "Oath of Obligation". Comrade Heidi is a Life Member of VFW Post 7308, but had not yet been sworn in. It was a very moving moment and attended by staff and customers of Culvers, as well as the Post.



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During the whole month of September, VFW Post 7308 hosted the Heroe's Café at Spiegelhoff's Supervalu in Kenosha, WI. Here, American Veterans from all walks of life and all wars are able to come together, share coffee & donuts, conversations and camaraderie.

It is a great pleasure to meet and spend time with all of these American Heroes. We are proud to take part in this wonderful

endeavor every Friday morning.

On 15 September 2012, VFW Post 7308 was invited back to Bristol, to take part in a fireworks and softball tournament "make-up" day, as the recent drought precluded the fireworks display in July.

During the event, USMC Corporal Joseph Bloomer was administered the "Oath of Allegiance", between softball games, while standing on Home Plate of the ball diamond.

The fans of the two teams, approximately 200 people, observed this event and then gave Corporal Bloomer, a multiple deployed Iraqi (OIF) Veteran a standing ovation. Corporal Bloomer and his wife are a very welcomed addition to our Post.



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Staff Officers and State Senior Vice Commander Renee Simpson at the VFW Dept. of WI District 1 meeting on 16 Sept 2012, hosted by the Silver Lake Post 8375. Seated from left to right, District 1 Chief of Staff Randy Holton, State Senior Vice Commander Renee Simpson, District 1 Senior Vice Commander Phil Allen, District 1 Junior Vice Commander Randy Strickland and District 1 Quartermaster Ib Nielsen. Standing behind the podium is District 1 Commander David Jacobson.

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Our membership continues to grow, as we are trying very hard to reach a goal of 100 members. Pictured here is one of our new members, J.D. Millar an Air Force Vietnam Veteran, now an ordained minister who is employed by the Kenosha Police Department as the Department Chaplain.

J.D. is a very welcome addition to our Post and has already proven to be a very active member.

Later, on 20 September 2012, we also administered the “Oath of Allegiance” to two additional new members. Both are US Army Veterans, Charles LaRoche (seated in hoveround) is a Vietnam Vet and Brian Pagliaroni (standing behind the chair) is an Iraqi/Afghanistan Veteran.

Brian is also a Firefighter for the Village of Pleasant Prairie, WI.



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On 21 September 2012, on POW/MIA Day....VFW Post 7308 was hosting the Hero's Café at Spiegelhoff's Supervalu in Kenosha, WI and we set up a special table to represent our POW/MIA Comrades.

Many of our visiting Veterans were moved by the table and we gave a small presentation and prayer in remembrance of all American POW/MIA. Even grocery store customers stopped by to help us remember.

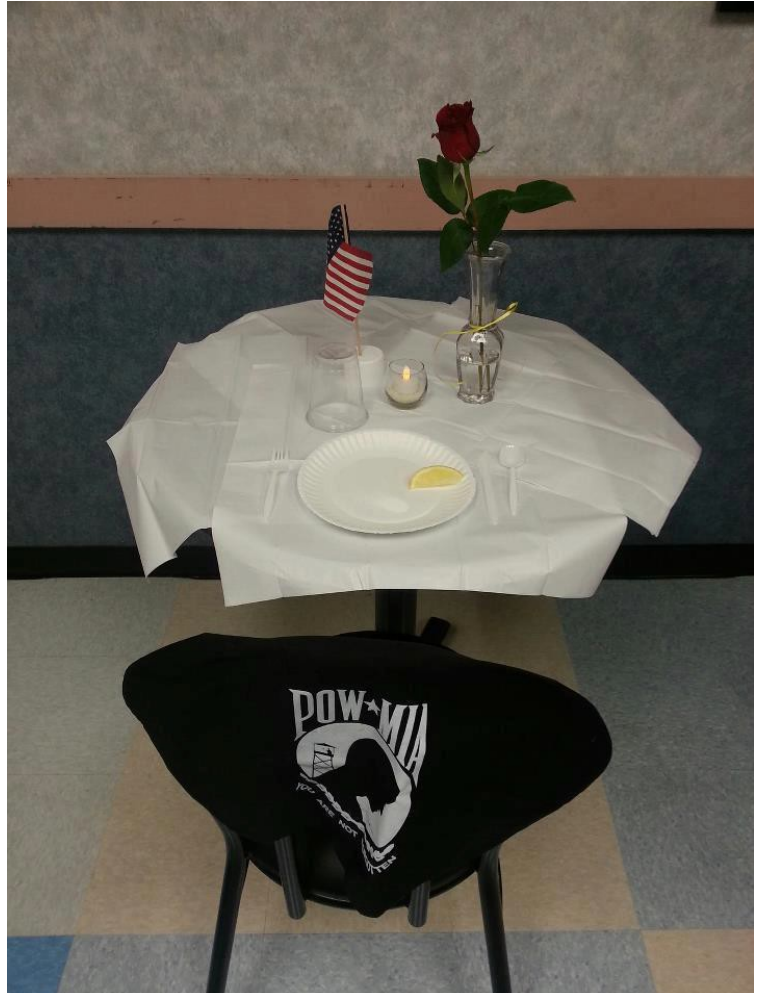
We explained the meaning of each of the items to the passersby.

The table is round -- to show our everlasting concern for our missing men and women. Remember. This table set for one is small... it symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his oppressors. Remember.

The table cloth is white... it symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. Remember. The single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who keep faith awaiting their return. Remember.

The red ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn on the lapel and breasts of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting for our missing. Remember. A slice of lemon is on the bread plate... to remind us of their bitter fate. Remember. There is salt upon the bread plate... symbolic of the family's tears as they wait. Remember.

The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God. Remember. The glass is inverted... they cannot toast with us tonight. Remember. The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope



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which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation. Remember.

The chair is empty... they are not here. Remember. Remember... all of you who served with them and called them comrades, who depended on their might and aid, and relied on them... for surely... they have not forsaken you.

May God forever watch over them and protect them and their families.



On 09 November 2012, as a part of our Veterans Day services, we were invited to give a program to the Kindergarten through 6th Graders at Wilson Elementary School in Kenosha, WI. Our program consisted of a “History of Veterans Day and Its True Meaning”, as well as a question and answer period with the students.

Pictured above (from left to right) is VFW Post 7308 Commander Strickland, Wilson Elementary School Special Needs Teacher, Mrs. Barbara Islas (a US Army Nurse Vietnam Veteran from 1974-75), and VFW Post 7308 Chaplain Paul Fredericksen.

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Pictured here to the left, is VFW Post 7308 Commander Strickland at Wilson Elementary School with a few of the students in the gymnasium, just before the start of the Veterans Day Program.

The students were very respectful and many were the sons, daughters, nephews or nieces and/or grandchildren of Military service members now serving.

On 10 November 2012, VFW Post 7308 was busy remembering all of our fellow Veterans! We had a contingent in the 49th Annual City of Milwaukee Veterans Day Parade.

Pictured to the right is VFW Post Commander Randy Strickland with VFW Dept of WI Junior Vice Commander and member of the VFW Dept of WI State Honor Guard, John Geise.



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On 11 November 2012, VFW Post 7308 held its annual Veterans Day Service at Old St. Mark's Cemetery in Kenosha, WI. Here, nine (9) veterans lie, forever to be remembered by those of us who live and cherish the liberties these American Heroes provided for us.

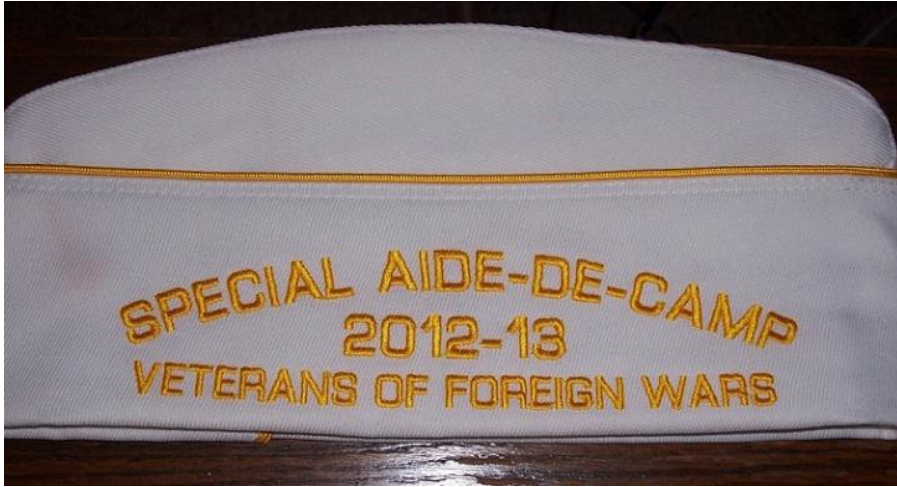
Pictured here to the left, is VFW Post 7308 Commander Randy Strickland, preparing for the service. The service was

attended by neighbors from the surrounding sub-division, Village of Pleasant Prairie President John Steinbrink, State Senator Bon Wirth, State Representative Samantha Kerkman, and County Veterans Service Officer Derrell Greene.

The nine (9) interred veterans at the Old St. Mark's Cemetery are James Taffee from the War of 1812; Patrick Kearney, A. Lowery, Edward McCullough, Hugh McIntyre, Thomas McKenna, James McLaughlin, Patrick Shield and Thomas Tafe all of the American Civil War 1861 to 1865.



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In November 2012, I was honored by our National VFW Commander-In-Chief by being recognized as Special Aide-De-Camp for 2012-2013.

This honor, I share with all the members of my Post, as without them I would not have had any success. We work very

well together as a team, Comrades each and everyone of us. We all try to insure the work of the VFW is accomplished and we make sure that all Veterans we meet are taken care of.

On 10 December 2012, VFW Post 7308 made its Annual Christmas Gift Giving visit to the Grand Prairie

Health and Rehab Center in Pleasant Prairie, WI.

It is one thing we do to give back to our fellow Veterans and the act of "giving" to them is truly a gift to all of us. We always leave there, feeling better about ourselves and happy to have



brought a little joy into their lives. We are simply astounded at the way our fellow Vets light up with this small gift and attention. Now, they know they have not been forgotten and will always be remembered.

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On 16 December 2013, VFW Post 7308 joined forces with our Comrades of Navy Club USA Ship 40 in Kenosha, to visit the Sam's Club and purchase nearly \$800.00 worth of food stuff to donate to the members of Cottage 16 – Homeless Veterans Place in Union Grove, Wisconsin.

Pictured here are from left to right: Dan Ouimette

(VFW Post 7308), John McCoy (VFW Post 7308), Steve Tindall (Navy Club Ship 40), Randy Strickland (VFW Post 7308), and Paul Fredericksen (VFW Post 7308).

Once the food was purchased, we delivered the goods to Cottage 16 – the Homeless Veterans Place in Union Grove, Wisconsin.

This is one of our key purposes as an organization, to help fellow Veterans less fortunate than ourselves.

Pictured here is VFW Post 7308 Commander Randy Strickland and two of the residents at Cottage 16.



Many of the residents were anxious to assist us in unloading the goods and placing them in their pantry for general distribution during their meal times.

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At the January 2013 VFW Dept. of Wisconsin District 1 Meeting, Paul Schulz received his Teacher of the Year Recognition certificate from District 1 Commander David Jacobson and TOY Chairman Phil Allen.

Paul Schulz, a teacher at Mahone Middle School, Kenosha...became a Life Member of VFW Post 7308

soon after receiving this exalted recognition.

On February 02, 2013 VFW Post 7308 held its first annual Valentines Luncheon at the Birchwood Grill @ 7515 125th Avenue, Kenosha, WI. The luncheon was attended by members and their spouses, as well as widows of passed Post 7308 members. A fine time was had by all and everyone is looking forward to next years event.



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Commander Randy Strickland and Quartermaster John McCoy received the Red Carpet Award at the Dept. of WI VFW Mid-Winter Conference 2013, for Post 7308. This is our 3rd consecutive Red Carpet Award and is quickly becoming a Post tradition. Pictured here with us is VFW Dept. of WI State

Commander DeWitt (Woody) Woodworth and VFW Asst. Adj. General and Executive Director of the Washington Office Robert E. Wallace.

We were very proud to enter as our Eagle Scout of the Year nominee, Chris Kammer, who is pictured here at his Eagle Scout Court of Honor, with VFW Post 7308 Youth Activities Chair and Chaplain Paul Fredericksen and Post 7308 Chief of Staff and District 1 Senior Vice Commander Phil Allen.



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On 21 March 2013, VFW Post 7308 held its Annual Awards Dinner at the Birchwood Grill @ 7515 125th Ave, Kenosha, WI., where we recognized our Voice of Democracy Winners and our Patriot Pen Winners, along with our two Teacher of the Year nominees.

Pictured here is VOD 1st Place Winner Antonio Montemurro, his mother and VFW Post 7308

Commander Randy Strickland.

Pictured to the right is our Patriot Pen 2012-2013 1st Place Winner Elizabeth Christoph and her parents and younger brother, as well as VFW Post 7308 Commander Randy Strickland.

Elizabeth is a student at Mahone Middle School and is one of the 433 entrants we received from the school. The vetting process was enormous, but Ms. Christoph is the best among many.



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Pictured to the left is our Teacher of the Year 2012 – 2013 1st Place Winner Paul Schulz and his daughter and co-workers from Mahone Middle School, with VFW Post 7308 Commander Randy Strickland.

Paul Schulz is recently retired from the USAF Guard and a OIF/OEF Veteran as well. He is an example of the excellent young new members we are recruiting for our Post.

Pictured to the right is new member and Disabled United States Marine Corps Veteran and Desert Storm Veteran, Theodore Luciere.

Ted joined the Post the night of our Awards Ceremony and has already proven to be an invaluable asset to the Post. His disability has not lessened his desire to volunteer to help others, who he feels are less fortunate than himself.



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On Easter Sunday (04/31/2013), VFW Post 7308 visited our Adopted Unit – the United States Coast Guard Station at Kenosha, WI.



Pictured here are VFW Post 7308 Quartermaster John McCoy, Junior Vice Commander Herb (Skip) Mann and Commander Randy Strickland, along with several of the Coast Guard Duty Section. They and their family members were able to enjoy a full and wonderful Easter Dinner provided by our Post 7308 members and staff.

Pictured here is our newest member, SN Paul Andre Delamerens stationed at the US Coast Guard Station in Kenosha, WI. SN Delamerens is a U.S. Navy Veteran and an OIF Veteran as well.

As a member of our Adopted Unit, we met him at the Easter Dinner provided by our Post and we immediately signed him up!

Paul Delamerens is looking to attend “A” School in the near future and get back to his love of flying in helicopters.



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On 20 April 2013, we held a fund raiser in support of Bristol Progress Days. We worked with the “Bristol” committee and served food to the vendors of the Bristol Craft Fair.

Pictured here (from left to right) is VFW Post 7308 Commander Randy Strickland, VFW Dept. of WI Jr Vice Commander John Giese, VFW Dept. of WI District 1 Jr Vice Commander

Phil Allen, Miss Bristol 2012 – 2013 (Kathryn Wade), and Post 7308 Service Officer David Suminski. While supporting Bristol Progress Days, we were able to hold a small Buddy Poppy Drive, gained three new possible members, and raised a little money for our “General Fund”. A very successful day!

VFW Post 7308 was extremely honored to be asked by VFW Post 6375 Elkhorn Commander John Giese to work with him and his planning committee to organize, coordinate and execute the Loyalty Day Parade. Our last committee meeting in Elkhorn was held on 22 April 2013. We are scheduled to hold the parade on 27 April 2013, culminating three months of extreme effort and exemplary teamwork amongst the members of the planning committee.



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On 27 April 2013, VFW Post 7308 participated in the Loyalty Day Parade, hosted by VFW Dept. of WI Jr. Vice Commander and VFW Post 6375 Memorial Post Commander John Giese.

The weather cooperated and we had a wonderful time displaying our colors and interacting with the spectators along the way.

Pictured here are VFW Post 7308 Pleasant Prairie Memorial Post's Chaplain Paul Fredericksen and Commander Randy Strickland, waiting for the parade to "Step Off"!