



**February 2024**

**Next Regular Business Meeting: 15 February @ 1900 hrs**

***Important Dates to Remember:***

- 2 February – Groundhog Day
- 3 February – Four Chaplains Day
- 8 February – Boy Scouts of America Founded (1910)
- 12 February – President Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday
- 14 February – Valentine’s Day/Ash Wednesday
- 15 February – Regular Business Meeting at Munster Town Hall @ 1900 hrs.**
- 19 February – President’s Day
- 22 February – President George Washington’s Birthday

**VFW Membership**

Looking outside of our post, VFW numbers are dropping to alarming levels. Every year the VFW of Indiana is losing 2000 members. Currently there are only 24,500 members. Do the math, if one more veteran doesn’t join, then in 12 years there won’t be a VFW in the Hoosier State. Our goal this year is to hit 102% membership. Congratulations to John Sarnecki and Frank Darrington for getting on the recruiter board! Frank is owed a red shirt now....

**February General Orders**

Highlights from the February General Orders are listed below. If you want any further information on anything below, please don’t hesitate to ask and something can be sent out to you specifically.

- ***Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen Winners*** – Unfortunately no one from the 1<sup>st</sup> District took home state prizes.
- ***Teacher of the Year Winners*** – This one is different, I’m proud to announce that our elementary school teacher, Laura Potchen was selected as the state teacher of the year! High School went to 2<sup>nd</sup> District, Middle school went to 6<sup>th</sup> district.
- ***Membership Updates*** – The state is currently at 90.1% membership as of 31 January. For District 1 – Griffith is the highest at 101.19% membership.
- ***Cocktails with the Commander*** – State Commander Corcoran will be holding a monthly meeting via zoom that will last 60 minutes. All VFW Department of Indiana members in

good standing will be allowed to join. Next meeting will be at 7pm (6pm central time) on 14 February.

- **Spring Conference** – The spring conference and Patriot’s Pen/Voice of Democracy banquet is on 22-24 March at Indianapolis Marriott East. If you’re interested in going, please let me know.

## Veterans in the Classroom

Commander Joe and Sr. Vice Commander Jesse will be going back to school. We’ll be spending Friday, 9 February at Bishop Noll for our first ever Veteran’s in the Classroom event at Noll. In an attempt to bring more attention to the VFW and our scholarship programs, we’ll be interacting with students throughout the day. It’s very similar to what we’ve been doing at Munster High School for years. We’re both looking forward to it. We’ll be able to report out about it at our February business meeting.

## Poppy Day Fundraisers

Calling All Hands! We’ve secured fundraising dates on the following days.

Munster Strack and Van Til’s – Friday and Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

Munster Jewel’s – Friday and Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

The times for both stores will be the same, 8-11, 11-2, 2-5. We will have a sign-up sheet available at our business meetings in February, March and April. We need members to sign-up and work a door. The spring and fall fundraisers are our two major fundraisers of the year.

## 2024-2025 VFW Department of Indiana State Shirts

If you would like to purchase a VFW State of Indiana shirt, Commander Joe will have the order form available at the February Business Meeting. Depending on sizes, cost is up to \$32 each and will be available for delivery in May or June.

## Community Service Hours for District 1

Best viewed in Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Safari.

Location		Community Service			
		Qtr 1 (7/1 - 9/30)	Qtr 2 (10/1 - 12/31)	Qtr 3 (1/1 - 3/31)	Qtr 4 (4/1 - 6/30)
District 1					
717	St. John Memorial Post	59	48	0	0
802	Edward H. Larsen Post	1	0	0	0
1109	Leonard Sporman Memorial Post	19	31	0	0
1563	Post 1563 Merrillville Memorial Post	0	0	0	0
2151	New Gary Post	1	0	0	0
2697	Munster Post	9	0	0	0
2724	Walter Kleiber Post	1	0	0	0
5365	Kostbade-Fowble Post	11	25	0	0
6448	Dyer Memorial Post	1	0	0	0
6841	Lowell Memorial Post	1	1	0	0
7881	Hessville Memorial Post	4	6	0	0
9323	Lake Station Post	4	14	0	0
9982	Griffith Memorial Post	4	0	0	0
District 2					



# DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



[DontFeedTheSharks.org](http://DontFeedTheSharks.org)

## What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

## Some of their predatory practices are:

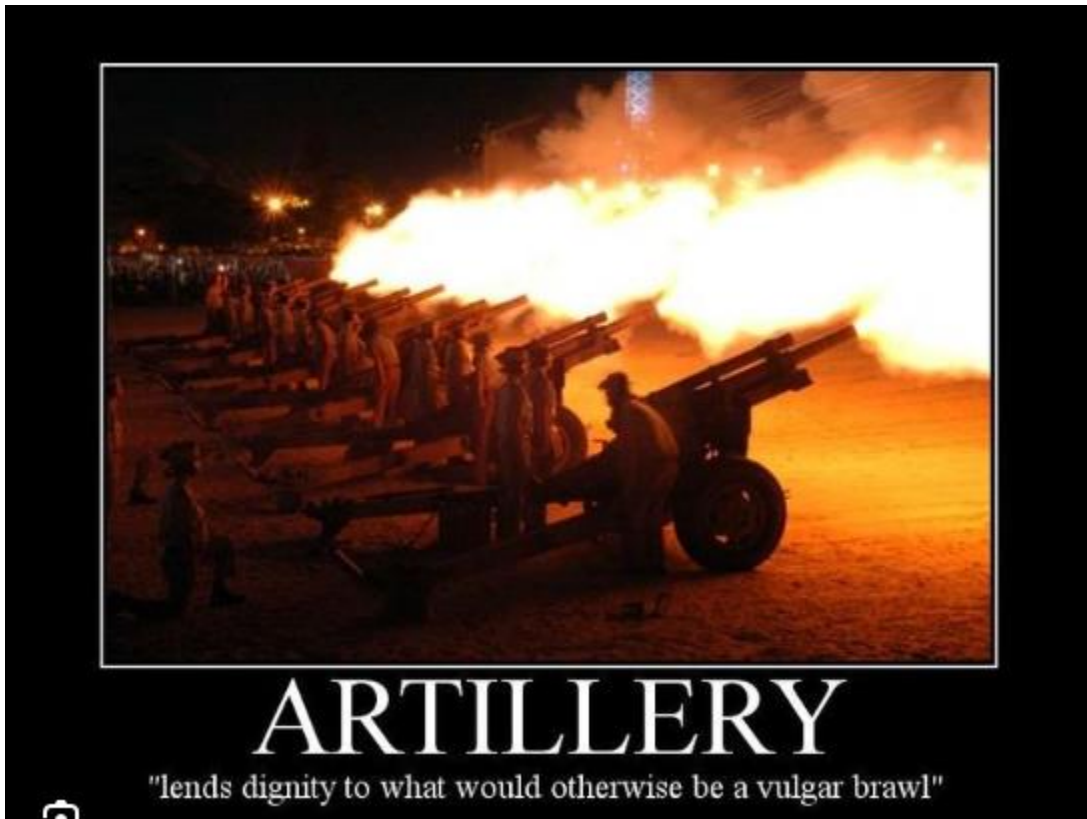
- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

## Who are the Claim Sharks?

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Trajector Medical  | • Patriot Angels        |
| • Vet Benefits Guide | • Veteran Care Services |
| • Veterans Guardian  | • VetComm               |
| • VA Claims Insider  | • VA Claims Academy     |
| • Telemedica         | • Vet Assist            |

## Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.



*"Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons."*

*Douglas MacArthur*



**Carry On!**

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