



CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EST. 1935

Winter 2017



Keep Christ in
Christmas



THE NATIONAL COMMANDER'S AND PRESIDENT'S CORNER
FRANK AND BONNIE KOWALSKI
A JOINT STATEMENT

We would like to thank everyone again for electing us as National Commander and National President to lead this great organization. These first few months have been a good experience and our traveling has increased. As we stated in our convention speech, we are a team and a family. We would like to have our organization run this way. To come together for the good of the organization.

We have a few challenges ahead of us and things that we have to accomplish. First, our current National Headquarters building has to be sold. Leasing and lease to buy will give us income until we find a

buyer to purchase the building so we are exploring those options. This will take time, so we have moved our administrative duties to Bellerose, New York on a temporary basis. Second, we are the host organization for National Veterans Day 2019. We must raise funds to host this event. The current cost is between \$30,000.00 - \$50,000.00. And third, membership recruitment is always our number one priority. I know it's an old saying, but if every member got a new member, we would double our membership. So, just ask someone to join and let's see what happens! If we all work together as a family/team we can accomplish these challenges.

We're asking everyone to continue to pray for all the people affected by the recent hurricanes, fires and floods. Remember especially, our members in Texas and Florida who were impacted. You can still donate to them by giving to our Catholic Veterans Service Foundation, which is tax exempt.

We would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely yours in CWV,

Frank Kowalski, National Commander

Bonnie Kowalski, National President

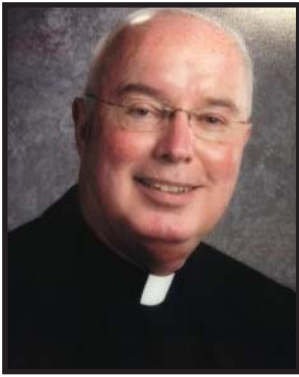


CWV Saints Days

St. Sebastian
January 20th

St. Agnes
January 21st





THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S CORNER
MONSIGNOR EDWARD J. COYLE

Advent is a busy time of year when our thoughts focus on the coming of Jesus Christ over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem and His promised return in glory at the end of the ages. Advent can be a time of many distractions to our spiritual life: shopping, decorating, cooking, just getting things prepared for Christmas. It's a busy time of the year!

Keeping Christ in Christmas is a wonderful way to keep the focus on the meaning of the season. However, keeping Christ as the center of our lives each day gives purpose and meaning to our lives. We are the Catholic War Veterans of America! This means that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior stands at the center of all our activities, functions and events. We are not just another veteran's organization, we are Catholic, and Jesus Christ makes the difference.

This Christmas keep Christ in Christmas---better yet, Keep Christ as the center of your life as a Catholic Veteran. Then make sure that your local Post is a living witness to all that Jesus Christ is alive in your community,

As we prepare for the coming of the birth of Christ, may He be born in you and in your local Post, and by the way we live as Catholic War Veterans, may all know Christ's love.

Rev. Msgr. Edward J. Coyle

***Chaplains in America's Darkest Hour* has a new home.**

Chaplains in America's Darkest Hour is a painting by artist Benjamin Charles Steele. It hung in the lobby of the headquarters building but was recently donated to the MacArthur Memorial Museum in Norfolk, VA. With the moving of headquarters to temporary quarters in New York, it was decided to find the painting a new home. The family of the artist was consulted, and they requested that it go to the Norfolk facility. Along with the final painting given by CWV, the Norfolk Museum also received all of Ben Steele's drawings and notebooks from his time on the Philippine Islands. All of these materials will be the subject of a new exhibit, to be opened during 2018. **Commander Kowalski and Joh Perka** handled the transfer of the painting.



ERRATA: In the spring issue of the magazine, Post #386 (NY) was misidentified as #382, which does not exist.

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As the **Commander of Post #1944 (FL)**, **Joe DiBlasi** received an award for leadership in August, from Ormond Strong's Commander, Debbie Forrester. Ormond Strong is a non-profit support group for the families of deployed service personnel. A number of CWV members attended the event, including Gene Swarbrick, shown here with Debbie Forrester. (Right)



Past Commander Crawford celebrated her military life through this quilt, which was displayed at the 2017 National Convention in St. Louis. The quilt was hand crafted by Germaine Strainic. (Above)



Major Lawrence M.G. Enomoto, USAF Retired
Post #4 (HQ)

presented a lei at the Joint Memorial Service, honoring Japanese-American veterans of World War II at the National Military Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl, Hawaii. Major Enomoto is a new member and is hoping to start a new Post in Hawaii. (Right)



Members of **Post #405 (NJ)** attended Mass at the Menlo Park Home for Vets with The Most Rev. James F. Checchio, Bishop of Metuchen. (Left)



Post #1944 (IL) celebrated its 20th anniversary last summer. The Post Commander Daniel Lenane, Post Adjutant James Ponsot, and Father John Kennedy are shown here at the celebratory dinner with some other Post members. (Right)





Ronald McDonald House Charities*
of the Coastal Empire

Post #1943 (GA) has taken The Ronald McDonald House in Savannah on as a mission project. Members donated everyday supplies to support and assist families that have a child admitted for care.

CWV Members in **Oregon** presented the Catholic War Veterans Achievement Medals for school year 2016 – 2017 to cadets at three high schools. Shown here receiving the Silver Medal at Oregon City High School is Cadet Jesus Ferreya. Cadet Hector Martinez,, the Bronze Medal recipient, is waiting his turn. The presentation is being made by Major Doug Thomas OCHS JROTC Instructor. (Right)



Post # 870 (NY) 3rd Vice Gary Jacobsen, Auxiliary 3rd Vice Cathy Fleming, and President Helen Olt are shown with Art Teacher, Sandy Ryan and St .Sebastian Academy 5th grade winners of the Veterans Day Patriotic Poster Contest Keira McGovern (3rd Place National winner), Natalia Cabrera, and Renee Jacobson. Also pictured are winners of the Easter Poster Contest Orla Eagan (2nd Place National winner), Chelsea Brito & Holly

Francesse. (Above left)



Post #1916 (IL) held its annual Mass of Remembrance in July. (Left and Right)



Post #405 (NJ) hosted an ice cream social for Veterans and their families at the St. Menlo VA Home. (Below)



Commander, Robert Schiela and Sgt. of the Honor Guard, Ray Lopez. (Above)

Post #386 (NY) repaired and reinstalled the flag pole at Sacred Heart School. Shown overseeing the proper folding of the flag by students in the 8th Grade Class is Post

St. Louis Convention Photos from National Historian Bill Misnick & others





National Commander Crawford awarded the **Gold Medal for Distinguished Service 2017 to James R. Formato**, (right) who is the Public Affairs Officer for Post #386 as well as the National Chairman of the CWV Public Affairs Committee, both positions held for the past five years. This is the highest national award a National Commander may present. Two years ago, also while serving as a National Officer under National Commander James C. Finkel, Formato received the 2nd highest national award a National Commander may present, the Silver Medal for Distinguished Service to the Catholic War Veterans and the National Commander. Normally, these awards are presented at the annual national convention, however, due to other obligations, Formato could not be present. The presentation ceremony was held at the Lourdes Grotto at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Newburgh, NY.



Don Plunkett, a member of **Post #386 (NY)**, proudly displays his various medals, won in the Wheelchair Games held each year in different parts of the USA. Shown are his 15 Gold, 13 Silver and 12 Bronze medals. Post #386 financially assists him as well as other wheelchair bound Veterans by providing a donation to help defray some of the costs to fly, stay and participate at these games. (Left)

Merry Christmas!

And greetings from Jordan! I was asked to write a short a short note to help fill in some space. I have three thoughts – the first is what I have been doing since coming to Amman. I am the Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, the English Language Church in Amman. It is a personal parish, established by the Patriarch in Jerusalem. That means I don't have a physical church, except for the chapel in the Jesuit Center, where we have Mass six days a week. I also am responsible for a Saturday evening Mass at Our Lady of Nazareth Church and a Sunday evening Mass at St. Jean Baptiste deLaSalle. I have the usual pastoral duties – First Communion Class, Confirmation, RCIA, trying to upgrade the music, confessions and counseling, a weekly newsletter, maintaining the website (www.jordanjesuits.org) and working with some of the refugee programs the Jesuit Center runs. Contributions always welcome. I have also started the difficult task of learning Arabic, and finding my way around this city of 7 hills. It's a great place to visit, and we do have guest rooms, and a good hotel right next door.



Second, since coming to Jordan, I have been struck by how important a group like CWV can be, since there is nothing like it over here. I worry that in the USA right now there is a serious need for the kind of leadership the CWV can, and should, provide. I continue to worry that while CWV is an organization with a good sense of what we used to be, I'm not as sure about having as clear a sense of what it could and should be. I worry that regional jealousies and narrow thinking clouds what ought to be a sure vision and a strong determination to act.

Finally – I'm a little startled that the newsletter needs to "fill space." While I am always delighted to talk or write (you know me!), I also know that many posts around the country are involved in a lot of different activities. The editor's problem should be deciding what to leave out, rather than scrambling to find something to put in. My guess is people aren't taking the time to write meaningful and interesting reports about what's going on, accompanied by pictures.

My prayers are with the CWV and all its members every day, and I remember you every time I celebrate Mass. Merry Christmas to all, and my best wishes for a wonderful and productive 2018!

Father John R. Sheehan, SJ
Past National Chaplain

P.S. The photo of me was taken at Mt. Nebo, the place where Moses allegedly looked into the Promised Land he was not allowed to enter, and where he is buried. (Since this was taken, I have lost 36 pounds.)



In July, **Post #386 (NY)** presented Anthony Sculley and Steve Sinnott, two members of the Newburgh Downing Park Planning Committee a \$500 check toward the Civil War Monument Restoration Fund. Pictured are Deacon Tony Ferraiuolo, Anthony Sculley, Post Commander Robert Schiela and Steve Sinnott. In October, members participated in a Rosary Rally.





ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

News Release



Free DVDs of the film *Called and Chosen – Father Vincent R. Capodanno* now available.

When you make a donation of at least \$20 to the Father Capodanno Guild, you will receive a FREE DVD of the 90-minute film, *Called and Chosen – Father Vincent R. Capodanno*. To make a donation and order your DVD, go to www.capodannoguild.org/donate. Donations to the 501(c)(3) organization are tax deductible.

In the scene (above) from the docudrama, Fr. Capodanno, played by actor James Hutson, hears the battlefield confession of a Marine, played by Michael Sedler.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: In the last issue we promised you “Harmonica Pete’s” story (CWV Member from New York), but due to the unforeseen crash of a hard-drive and the loss of all of its contents, we are unable to fulfill that promise...



Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs Announces Launch of Veterans Online Shopping Benefit

EXCHANGE
ARMY & AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE

More than 225,000 honorably discharged Veterans have been verified to shop through an earned lifelong online military exchange shopping benefit program, beginning with Veterans Day 2017.

This new program, the first military exchange benefits expansion in nearly 30 years, allows America’s 18.5 million Veterans to shop online at the military exchange websites: **ShopMyExchange.com**, **shopcgx.com**, **mymcx.com**, and **mynavyexchange.com**. Shopping the military exchanges online provides Veterans an opportunity to reconnect with their military community, allowing these Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard "members for life" to save money with tax-free shopping and military exclusive pricing while also supporting critical military Quality-of-Life programs.

“After four years of coordination with the Departments of Defense, Army and Air Force as well as several other federal agencies, the finish line is in sight,” said Exchange Director/CEO Tom Shull, who worked tirelessly to secure this new benefit. “We are excited to welcome these Veterans back home to their military family and ensure all who raised their right hands and served our Nation with honor receive this tangible benefit as a measure of thanks for their service and sacrifice.”

Exchange sales from this newly authorized customer base are expected to be approximately \$200 million annually with \$10 million in dividends annually for Quality-of-Life programs such as Army Child Development Centers, Youth Programs and Fitness Centers, Air Force Outdoor Recreation, affordable school lunches for Warfighters children overseas, combat uniforms below cost, and more.

All honorably discharged Veterans can go to **ShopMyExchange.com** to verify eligibility to shop their military exchanges.

VA Hotline Operational 24/7

The VA announced that the White House VA Hotline (855-948-2311) is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The two-month pilot phase demonstrated that veterans calling the hotline respond best when their calls are answered by fellow veterans and others with first-hand experience on their issues. As a result, VA hired highly qualified veterans to staff the hotline.

Forever GI Bill

Some of the legislation that immediately went into effect with the President's signature.

The 15-year time limitation for using Post-9/11 GI Bill - The 15-year limitation to use benefits is removed for Veterans who left active duty on or after January 1, 2013, children who became eligible for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship) on or after January 1, 2013, and all Fry Scholarship eligible spouses.

Restoration of Benefits due to School Closure - We are now authorized to restore benefits and provide relief to Veterans affected by school closures or disapprovals.

Independent study programs at career and technical education schools covered by GI Bill - This allows anyone eligible for GI Bill to use their benefits at an accredited independent study program at an area career and technical school, or a postsecondary vocational school providing postsecondary level education.

Reservists who had eligibility under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) and lost it due to sunset of the program will have that service credited toward the Post-9/11 GI Bill program

VA Launches Program Aimed at Providing Veterans More Options in Claims Disagreements

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program, or "RAMP," with the goal of providing Veterans with the earliest possible resolution of their disagreement with VA's decision on their benefit claims.

"At its core, VA's mission is to provide Veterans with the highest quality of service," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "The new process under the RAMP initiative reflects major steps in not only VA's effort of continuous improvement, but also in providing greater choice for Veterans and their families." The VA began its 18-month implementation of the new process immediately after the bill became law.

By February 2019, all requests for review of VA decisions will be processed under the new, multi-lane process. The new law streamlines the process and includes safeguards ensuring claimants receive the earliest effective date possible for their claims. Participation in RAMP is voluntary; however, Veterans can expect to receive a review of VA's initial decision on their claim faster in RAMP than in the legacy appeals process.

Creative Forces joins with VA to bring healing arts to Veterans

The National Endowment of the Arts has partnered with the Department of Defense, VA and state arts agencies to bring the restorative power of art to active duty patients and Veterans diagnosed with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorders, as well as their families and caregivers.



Flu Season is here! Veterans protect yourselves and get a NO COST flu shot! The Department of Veterans Affairs has once again teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system to be able to receive a vaccine at no cost. Vaccinations will be available through March 31, 2018. Veterans wishing to receive the no cost vaccination simply need to present a Veterans Identification Card and a photo ID, at any participating Walgreens. The Group ID is: VAFLU.



THE NATIONAL VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

The National Veterans Day Ceremony at Arlington is coordinated and planned each year by the members of the National Veterans Day Committee and the Veterans Administration, under the leadership of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. CWV has a seat at the table as a full, voting member. This entitles us to many privileges, including helping plan the event, choosing the annual poster, having a seat on the platform with the President of the United States, having a representative attend the White House Breakfast, laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, having a reserved box of 14 seats in the amphitheater, and serving as the host organization.

Our turn to serve as the host organization comes up in 2019! To help finance this, every Post has been asked to contribute \$2 per member per year, beginning in 2013. This comes to a total of \$10 per member over the course of five years. The cost for the host organization is between \$35,000 and \$50,000 depending on the specifics of the reception. **Please send your contribution in as soon as possible.** Make checks payable to Catholic Veterans Service Foundation (CVSF) and mail to PO Box 260109, Bellerose, NY 11426.

CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS RAFFLE

National 50/50 Raffle Drawing Tickets
Donation: Six (6) tickets for \$5.00
Drawing will be held at the 2018 National Convention in August

Name _____ Address _____ Phone: _____	Name _____ Address _____ Phone: _____	Name _____ Address _____ Phone: _____
Name _____ Address _____ Phone: _____	Name _____ Address _____ Phone: _____	Name _____ Address _____ Phone: _____



CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
P. O. Box 5356
Astoria, NY 11105
703--549-3622
<http://cwv.org>

*We wish you many blessings
in the New Year!*