

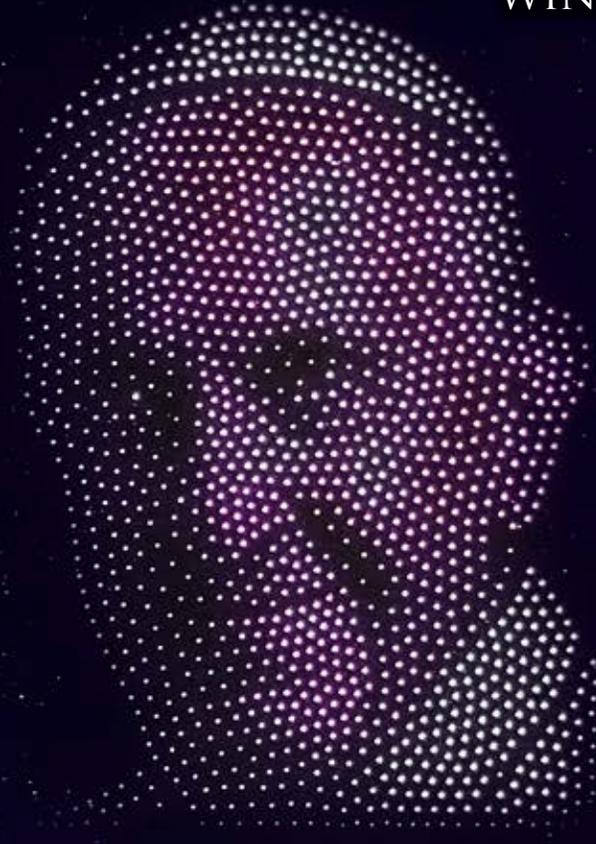


CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WINTER 2026

DRONES
HAVE A
ROLE IN
WAR BUT
ALSO IN
PEACE!



Over 3,000 drones illuminated the night sky above St Peter's at the Vatican

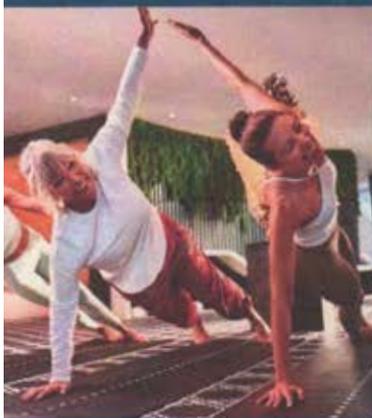


Celebrity **X** Cruises

Explore the World
CELEBRITY STYLE!



Don't miss your chance to win a Celebrity Cruise in the Catholic War Veterans Spring Raffle! Experience breathtaking destinations, modern amenities, and exceptional service on a cruise designed for exploration. Tickets are just **\$25 each**, and prizes will be drawn on **May 30th, 2025**. The grand prize winner will receive a Celebrity Cruise valued up to \$7,000 and will book their cruise directly with Maria Tilton, Cruise Planners.



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Terms and Conditions: Cruise must be booked and sailed by 6/1/2026. Prize is non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash. Cruise Planners is merely an advisor distribution channel for the suppliers and makes no warranty expressed or implied. We are not responsible for errors and omissions. Copyrighted, all rights protected. FL ST# 39068, CST# 2034468-50, HST# TAR-7058, WA ST# 603-399-504.

Remembering Past National Commander James C. Finkel

A native of New York City, Jimmy Finkel was a Veteran of the U.S. Army, who served three years in Germany. In 1961, he would marry Lorraine Walker and they were blessed with five children.

He spent a career with the New York City Transit Authority, rising through the ranks from porter to motorman, motorman trainer, tower man, yard supervisor and into management positions before retiring in 1996. He also served as a union official with TWU Local 100 for 12 years.

His 50 years of Catholic War Veterans activities began when he joined St. Sebastian Post 870 and served as Americanism Chairman and Judge Advocate. He was then elected to officer positions in Queens County, becoming Chapter Commander in 1992. He moved on to positions with the Department of New York as 2nd and 1st Vice Commander, and finally Commander in 2000.

At the national level, he was elected as Director in 2003 and chaired the National Constitution and By-Laws Committee. He was elected National Commander in 2013. In 2014, he had the honor of placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Memorial Day.

He demonstrated his strong Catholic faith in his interface with clergy of the Military Archdiocese, CWV National Chaplains, and participating in local and national commemorations and Masses. He was a lector at his parish, despite significant vision problems. Jim Finkel was named Grand Marshal of the New York City Veterans Day Parade. The Long Island Assembly of the 4th Degree, Knights of Columbus, presented him with its Pro Deo Et Pro Patria (For God and Country) Award at its Independence Day Parade in 2018.



James C. Finkel, PNC (2013-2015)



HAPPY BIRTHDAY BOB ZONNEVILLE!

Born on a farm in Williamson, NY, Robert Zonneville of John Paul II Post 1959 in Lake County, Ohio had a strong desire to serve his country when WWII began. After registering, he was drafted in 1943. He spent 13 weeks of basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama. As part of the 121st Regiment, Company H, Bob's outfit crossed the Atlantic and, after a short period of training in Ireland, landed on Utah Beach in Normandy, France. They immediately entered combat, fighting through thick hedgerows and engaging the Germans in bitter firefights. He recalls the many casualties they sustained in Normandy. *"You're 18 years old and you don't want to die. But we all knew that some of us wouldn't come home."*

While fighting near the city of St. Lo, Bob was slightly wounded in action and received a Purple Heart. The 8th Division crossed the Ay River, pushed through Rennes and fought to take Brest. It was there Bob was wounded a second time, this time quite seriously. He spent several weeks in the hospital recovering and was awarded an oak leaf cluster (2nd award) to the Purple Heart.

Bob and his unit turned eastward toward the German border and participated in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest. *"The horrible conditions of the battle and constant snow were worse than the combat itself."* His unit would liberate 5,000 prisoners in the Neuengamme concentration camp.

When the war ended, he was a Staff Sergeant, had seen more than 260 days of combat, and received the Bronze Star among other decorations. Bob celebrated his 100th Birthday this year and was honored by the AUSA with the "Carter F. Hamm Distinguished Community Leadership Award." While the members of his Post see him as a hero, Bob says simply: *"I am not a hero, the heroes are those who didn't come home."* HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Louisiana Post Commander Describes CWV Members As “Passionate!”

Clarion Herald Story by Kim Roberts

For the past 90 years, Catholic War Veterans (CWV) organizations across the country have been committed to serving God, country and home while embodying the spirit of Catholic action and defending the standards of democracy. With 8,000 members nationwide, the 30-member group out of River Ridge Post 1969 is small but passionate.

“Our mission as Catholic War Veterans is to continue to serve those who have served, to honor the legacy of those who came before us and to support our communities in ways that reflect our shared values of faith, loyalty and patriotism, said Charlton Meginley, Post 1969 Commander and Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veteran Affairs. “The Archdiocese of New Orleans has one Catholic War veteran post, and it is in River Ridge; it is an older post that we are trying to revitalize.”

He noted that most CWV posts are located in the Northeast with posts also in Texas and Ohio. The River Ridge post does not have a permanent meeting space, holding meetings at various locations around River Ridge in addition to meeting at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Reserve. The group is also considering hosting virtual meetings in the future to accommodate membership. “We originally started the Catholic War Veterans post in 2014 to help other veterans with their paperwork,” said Larry Jones, past post commander. “We also raised money to pay for the cremation of veterans, who were going to be buried in a pauper’s grave, and arranged for their burial in the VA Cemetery. It’s important to help our veterans any way we can.”

Secretary Meginley added: “The CWV organization stands as a testament to the intersection of faith and service, embodying the principles of Catholicism in their commitment to veterans and their families. Founded on the cornerstone of faith, the organization’s ethos is deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition, fostering a sense of camaraderie, compassion and duty. Through

their actions and initiatives, they exemplify the teachings of their faith by providing support, advocacy and resources to those who have served their country, reflecting the belief in service to others as a core tenet of Catholicism.”

He noted there are approximately 250,000 veterans in the state and most don’t belong to a veteran’s group.

“Being a member of a veterans group is important because it gives service men and women a space to share their experiences with others who have been through the same wartime experience—it fosters brotherhood and sisterhood. As Catholic War Veterans, it is our duty to serve those who have served, to honor the legacy of those who came before us, and to support our communities in ways that reflect our shared values of faith, loyalty and patriotism.” There are some 45 government chartered veteran service organizations in the country. CWV is one of them, but it stands out from the others because of its faith-based mission.

“Being a member of the CWV is not simply a title; it is a commitment to uphold the highest ideals of service to both God and country. As veterans, we carry with us the lessons learned in the military—the importance of unity, strength in adversity, and the dedication to a cause greater than ourselves,” Meginley said. “These values are as vital now as they were during our time of service. Through our organization, we continue to exemplify these virtues, supporting one another in times of need and working to improve the lives of veterans, their families and our communities.”

That’s what makes this organization a little different, it’s the Catholic experience in war that we were able to take those lessons in faith to the battlefield,” he added, “I know from my experience, the Rosary was in my hand on the way to the Middle East. I love this organization and it’s important we continue to foster its mission.”



Charlton J. Meginley, Post 1969 Commander and LA Secretary of Veteran Affairs



Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear!

From the Catholic Northwest Progress

Official Newspaper for the
Archdiocese of Seattle, March 5, 1965
By Fred Cerdova

CWV Eyes Passage of Senate Bill!

The passage of United States Senate Bill 899, calling for the granting of a federal charter to the Catholic War Veterans of the USA looks favorable, said CWV National Commander Charles F. Shelley. The bill has been reintroduced by Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois, Republican Minority Leader and Chairman of the Senate Charter Sub-committee.

A similar bill from the Senator is SB900, calling for a federal charter to the Jewish War Veterans. "Both the CWV and JWV are the only major veterans'

organizations without federal charters," said Shelley. "If passed," he said, Catholic War Veterans would be eligible to participate in indigent funds, according the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act." CWV members can expect assistance from the Relief or Service Officers' Fund, administered by county commissioners from their veterans' funds.

Shelley, 46, was elected CWV national head in August 1964. The father of six served in the 79th Infantry during World War II and was wounded in St. Lo in France. Losing his right hand below the elbow, Shelley was decorated with the Silver Star and Purple Heart. The charter was not received until 17 August 1974.

Thanks to Marilyn Meares, PNC Shelley's Daughter, for this nostalgia!

A CWV Magazine Follow-Up Story!

SEAGLIDER TECHNOLOGY

to be Adapted for Defense Use!

REGENT Craft, developer of the innovative Seaglider vessels, and maritime fabrication company Fairlead have announced a strategic partnership to advance Seaglider technology for defense and logistics applications. The collaboration combines Regent's maritime platforms with Fairlead's expertise in engineering, integration and shipbuilding to accelerate delivery timelines and strengthen U.S. industrial capability. The aim is to provide the Navy, Marine Corps and other military branches with versatile options for contested logistics and naval resupply operations.

The vessels will be designed to operate across various sea states, enabling high-speed, long-range, low signature capability that enhances existing naval platforms. "This partnership is about speed, scale and resilience as we embark on the future of American shipbuilding, accelerating delivery to the fleet and strengthening U.S. leadership in maritime logistics," said the CEO of REGENT. The 12-passenger Seaglider can float on its hull, rise onto hydrofoils, or fly in ground effect within one wingspan from the water's surface. At full capability, it can fly up to 180 mph with a range of 180 miles on a single charge. REGENT's new manufacturing facility in Rhode Island will begin operations in 2026.



U.S. Coast Guard Approves Seaglider Testing

This article appeared in the Winter/Spring 2025 issue of the CWV Magazine.

Rhode Island-based Regent Craft has received Coast Guard approval to conduct Navigational Risk Assessment on its all-electric seaglider prototype in Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound. This development marks a significant step in bringing the seaglider project closer to testing with humans on board.

Seagliders, classified as maritime vessels under U.S. law, are all-electric hydrofoiling wing-in-ground craft that operate within one wingspan of the water's surface. Regent's Viceroy seaglider is a 12-passenger vehicle capable of traveling at 180 mph for up to 180 miles on a single charge.

Maritime classification society Bureau Veritas issued an Approval In Principle for the Viceroy in August 2022, marking an important milestone in the commercialization of seagliders. The company plans to begin manned testing later this year. It has already secured over 600 seaglider orders valued at more than \$9 billion from various airline and ferry operators worldwide.

Standing the Watch!

WHAT IS A RELIC?

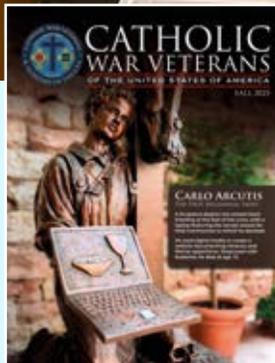
(from Latin relictum = remains) are remnants of the bodies of saints or objects that the saints used during their lifetimes.

IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO VENERATE RELICS?

The veneration of relics is a natural human need, a way of showing respect and reverence to the persons who are venerated. Relics of saints are properly venerated when the faithful praise God's work through these people who have devoted themselves completely to God.

VENERATION vs. ADORATION.

When we venerate relics, we show them respect, we do not worship them. To venerate, the Directory on Popular Piety suggests kissing, touching or standing, or kneeling nearby to offer a prayer of intercession to the saint. We do not genuflect to relics, that is reserved for the Eucharist alone.



Members (from left) Bob Meech, Ken Kirchner and Tony Butler of John Paul II Post 1959 in Willoughby, Ohio had the honor of being GUARDIANS of a 1st Class relic of St. Carlo Arcutis at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church during a recent display. The first Millennial Saint was featured on the cover of the Fall 2025 issue of the CWV Magazine.

CHANGE OF COMMAND!

Story and photos by
Jim Formato and Jack D'Angelo

Joseph R. Farina Memorial Post 386 in New Windsor, New York, recently elected a new Post Commander and 1st Vice Commander. Robert Schiella, Post Commander for the past two years (and on and off for the past eight years), was relieved by Kevin Strommer. 1st Vice Commander James Formato relinquished his position to Ray Weeks. A plaque was presented to Bob Schiella for his guidance, leadership and drive that has seen an increase in new and younger members.



Ray Weeks is the new 1st Vice Commander.



The retiring Commander reads his plaque.



Major changes in store for the Farina Post as it welcomes new leadership. Members, led by new Commander Kevin Strommer (left), salute outgoing Commander Robert Schiella. Post Chaplain Ferraiulo (right) applauds.

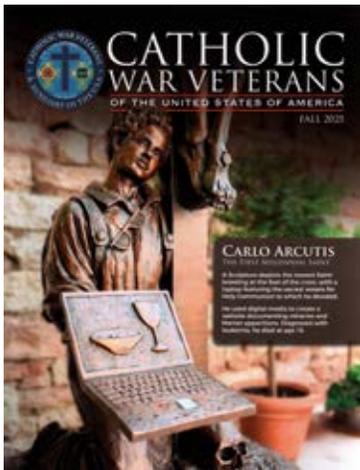
Thanks for Asking

The Assistant National Executive Director, MIKE KASINSKAS



HAPPY NEW YEAR everyone! It's 2026 and our country is celebrating its 250th year of Independence. As you know, our 2026 Cash Calendar features flags of the 13 original colonies which supported the Declaration of Independence; flags and other information about the 37 additional states added to the union; the 50th, 100th, 150th, 200th, and 250th anniversaries; the Revolutionary War and the first and current U.S. Capitol. Our Cash Calendar Committee appreciates all of the members in our Post and Auxiliary Units who solicited calendars and a special THANK YOU to all who purchased one. Keep "The Spirit of '76" alive during the year and good luck to all who have a calendar! Individuals have already looked for the winning 2026 stub numbers on TheCWV.org web site and asked: **WHEN WILL THE WINNING 2026 STUB NUMBERS BE SHOWN ON THE WEB SITE?**

The back page of the calendar states that winning numbers are posted on a monthly basis, hence you will not see them right away. Because many calendars are gifted during the Christmas and New Year holidays, National HQ will not post the January winning numbers until mid-February 2026. This delay allows time for all stubs and monies from sales throughout the country to be received and accounted for at National HQ. From that point on, National HQ will post winning numbers on or before the end of each month.



Previous issues can be found at:
<https://thecwv.org/cwv-magazine>

CWV MAGAZINE

A very favorable review of the Fall 2025 issue of the Catholic War Veterans magazine was expressed by a member from Connecticut. Jay H. said the cover page was incredibly attractive, and the inside story of Fr. Emil Kapaun's relative being in the same hotel as the National Convention was an interesting read. Jay asked: "WHY THERE IS NO STORY INSIDE THE MAGAZINE RELATED TO WHAT IS PICTURED ON THE MAGAZINE COVER?"

Thank you for the accolades and question. Our magazine strives to have an attractive cover related to current events, and your suggestion has been passed on to the editorial staff to ponder future issues. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Because the magazine is a quarterly publication, the subject of the cover has probably been well covered already in the news media. As a result, the cover concepts may change several times while the issue is being compiled. The aim is to highlight a subject that is both current and reflects a theme of military and/or religious interface. It's the cover that usually

attracts casual interest!) As a side note, our magazine is available to view ON-LINE at the time it is published—well before it arrives at your mailbox. Previous editions are online too.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS ABOUT THE CWV POST ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE:

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE FIELD "HOLD MAIL" ON A MEMBER'S RECORD?

It means HQ has had mail returned marked undeliverable and we could not secure a new address. The post echelon may turn on the Hold Mail field when their correspondence to a member is returned undeliverable. Some members request their mail be held if they are going on extended vacation travel.

HOW CAN I UPDATE AN ELIGIBLE MEMBER TO A "WAIVERED" MEMBERSHIP?

Only the Headquarters staff can update a membership type to WAIVER. The post can make a request in an email to HQ (admin@cwv.org). It is the responsibility of the post to provide evidence of a valid birth date and ensure the birth date is populated in the database. Members without a birth date will not be updated to WAIVERED. Reminder: The request must also include the member's written request that his/her membership type be changed to "Life at 85," and the post must verify that the person has been a member for 5 consecutive years.

As always, if you have a question for the National Assistant Executive Director, please forward it to admin@cwv.org.

2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT

It is time to gather for the 91st Catholic War Veterans National Convention on
August 1st - August 6th 2026.

Location is the **Holiday Inn - Cleveland South, 6001 Rockside Rd., Independence, OH 44131**

**Finalize your plans now by using this form to
reserve your rooms and the Convention Banquet**



PROGRAM JOURNAL & ADVERTISEMENT INFORMATION

Submission Deadline is June 30th 2026

Booklet size is 8.5" X 5.5" (landscape 8.5" x 11" paper folded in half). Please provide high quality images and please make sure images are not reduced when sending. If you are having trouble sending large files, we recommend sending via wetransfer.com; you can send up to 2GB through this free service.

Size	Color
Outside Back Cover*	\$300
Inside Back Cover*	\$250
Inside Front Cover*	\$250
Full Page	\$150
Half Page	\$100
Quarter Page	\$75
Business Card	\$50
Sponsor(Max. 75 Characters)	\$50

*Equivalent Full-Page ad will be substituted if cover position is not available

Please CIRCLE the type and price of the ad you are placing. Art work and symbols can be sent electronically to: admin@cwv.org

Advertiser's Name _____

Seller's Name _____

Post# _____ Phone# _____

Sponsor / Supporter / Booster message: _____

CONVENTION INFORMATION

Submission Deadline is June 30th 2026

Qty	Saturday - August 1st - 10am - 1pm	Total
	Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Tour x \$45 per person includes transportation	
Qty	Saturday Evening - August 1st	Total
	Ice Breaker x \$20 per person	\$
Qty	Sunday - August 2nd	Total
	Communion Breakfast x \$5 per person	\$
Qty	Monday - August 3rd	Total
	Commander/President Luncheon x \$40 per person	\$
Qty	Wednesday - August 5th	Total
	Banquet Dinner x \$70 per person	\$

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Reservation Deadline is June 30th 2026

Post #	
Check In Date	
Check Out Date	
Total Room Nights	
Total # of Guests	

List Guests Below

**\$180 Per Night (Including Taxes), Cash or Check made payable to the
CWV Convention Corp
<https://cwvstore.org/91st-national-convention-hotel-reservations-August-1st-6th-2026-see-description-below-for-more-info/>**

PAYMENT AND SUBMISSION OPTIONS

All Deadlines are as stated on this flyer. Mail this form and a check or money order to:

**CWV Convention Corporation
237-20 92nd Rd., Bellerose, NY 11426**

Or if paying by credit card thru the CWV Store, mail this form to the above address AND Go to: cwvstore.org
An additional 2% will be added to the total order for processing costs.

Additional Convention Information

Saturday Evening – Ice Breaker

- Chicken fingers, mini beef meatballs, salsa bar, cheese and fruit
- Entertainment: The Zolkas (Band)
- Cost: \$20 per person (coffee & iced tea included) / Cash bar available

Sunday Morning – Communion Breakfast (After Mass)

- Scrambled eggs, French toast, pastries, bread & muffins, breakfast potatoes, bacon and sausage
- Cost: \$5 per person (gratuity only) / Sponsored by Posts 1222 and 1292, Youngstown, Ohio

Monday – August 3 – Commander/President Luncheon (Everyone Invited)

- Salad, bourbon-glazed London broil (GF); baked white fish with Parmesan lemon crust, Herb risotto, vegetables, rolls & butter, dessert
- Cost: \$40 per person
- Guest speaker: Dr. Chrisanne Gordon, MD – Founder, Resurrecting Lives Foundation
 - Focuses on traumatic brain injury over the past decade plus she has dedicated her life to military veterans with a movie, Operation Resurrection, and a book, Turn on the Lights

Tuesday – MEATO Dinner provided by Convention Corp.

- Provided at no cost
- MEATO games to follow, \$5 per card, minimum 5 games, proceeds to benefit the Auxiliary

Wednesday Evening – Banquet (Prime Rib Buffet)

- Caesar and tossed salad with bacon bits, shredded cheese, croutons, tomatoes with two dressings
- Entrées: Chef-carved prime rib (GF), Tuscan chicken, bourbon-glazed salmon (GF)
- Sides: Penne pasta primavera, garlic mashed potatoes, fresh green beans
- Dessert display, coffee & tea included
- Cost: \$70 per person / cash bar available

Hospitality & Daily Amenities

- Room 545: Open daily with light snacks and beverages (no cost)
- Broadview / Hospitality Room: Dinner and drinks nightly (no cost, no dinner on banquet night)

Monday Evenings - Free Bus Shuttle

- Service to Cleveland entertainment areas, Casino, flats entertainment area, 4th ave

Tourism & Local Attractions

- Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (veterans discount; timed entry)
- A Christmas Story House
- The Lion King at Playhouse Square
- Cleveland Guardians games and River and Lake Erie cruises
- Short drive to Pro Football Hall of Fame and Cedar Point Amusement Park

Latest check out date is Thursday, August 6th by 11 am.

There is a ONETIME Registration fee of \$25.00 per person for those attending the convention without staying at the Convention Hotel.



U.S. ARMY NURSE RECEIVES LONG OVERDUE SILVER STAR MEDAL FROM WORLD WAR I

By Edward E. Saunders, LTC, USA (Ret.)



Elizabeth Sandelius was born in 1893 to Swedish immigrants in the mining town of Cokedale, Montana, which offered women few professional opportunities. One was nursing and Elizabeth entered St. Joseph Hospital's School of Nursing in the state capital of Helena. She graduated in 1914 as Montana's 265th registered nurse. Distant war drums sounded in 1917. America's war effort needed more nurses. Montana had more registered nurses (500) than the entire US Army Nurse Corps (400). Elizabeth volunteered, and her fiancé volunteered for Army Signal Corps pilot training. Not knowing if they would ever see each other again, they quietly married in Montana. It had to be kept quiet, as the Army Nurse Corps at that time would not accept married nurses. She never told the Army she was married. In all her official military papers and dog tags she was listed as Elizabeth Sandelius.



Field Hospital 112 in Cohan, France, 1918, a WWI M*A*S*H

Division, attached to the French army, sustained over 14,000 casualties. Elizabeth went forward to the front battle lines to support the 28th Division. Her Field Hospital 112 would receive over 5,000 wounded soldiers and perform over 200 surgeries. As German shelling and bombardment increased, the nurses were ordered to withdraw to safety. Elizabeth refused to leave. She endured artillery and aerial bombardment in dire conditions. Two German aircraft bombs landed within 15 feet of the hospital tents but failed to explode. The Commanding General cited Elizabeth for courage and gallantry, qualifying her for the Citation star, but apparently she never received it. She may also have received the French Croix de Guerre, but this is also not certain. In 1919, she sailed home and was discharged without recognition or fanfare. She returned to Montana and reunited with her husband, who also survived the war.

In a ceremony at Bob Hope Memorial Chapel, Los Angeles National Cemetery, on September 24th, 2025, on behalf of the US Army and a grateful nation, Author and Researcher Edward E. Saunders, LTC, USA (Ret.) presented the Silver Star Medal to the descendants of U.S. Army Lieutenant (Nurse) Elizabeth Dorothy Sandelius. In the dusty archives of the Montana State Library, LTC Saunders pieced together the "remarkable, unheralded and compelling story of a courageous young woman, a uniformed WWI Angel of Mercy and a sister-in-arms" and arranged for her family to receive the medal she earned in war, but was never awarded.



U.S. Army Nurses in WWI. Elizabeth is at left.

CWV SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



AUTUMN KALLUS

Dear National Scholarship Committee of the Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary of the United States:

Thank you for generously awarding me the Thomas J. Cuite Scholarship and Immaculate Conception Burse Scholarship Program to further my education at Texas A&M University. I am pursuing an

Engineering degree and plan to graduate in 2029. I have not decided which area of engineering I will specialize in, but I have been researching various types to see would fit me best. I have considered Chemical, Electrical and Mechanical. I have thought about obtaining my Master's degree as well.

My goals and ambitions include growing in knowledge both in and out of the classroom. I want to be happy with what I do day in and day out! I plan to attend the Aggie football games and Silver taps and meet new friends at the Rec Center, study with my classmates, and participate in Bible Studies at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

This scholarship will positively impact my life because it lessens the financial burden on my family. I can focus on my studies and educational goals. Both of my parents are Aggie graduates and my dad was on the football team.

Thank you again for choosing me as a recipient of your scholarship. With your financial help I feel blessed and incredibly grateful to be a part of the Aggie family!

Gig 'Em! Sincerely, Autumn Mary-Katherine Kallus



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
CLASS OF 2029

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING



EDUARDO BLANCO JR.

Dear Members of the Catholic War Veterans:

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the generous scholarship I have received from your organization. This financial support has significantly alleviated the burden on my parents and me, and I am deeply appreciative of your kindness.

I am currently enrolled at the University of South Florida in Tampa, pursuing a degree in the College of Public Health with a concentration in Pharmacy. I have had the privilege of working at Publix Supermarkets for nearly two years, and I recently transferred to the Pharmacy Department, which has further enriched my professional experience.

I believe that God has guided me along this path, opening doors I never thought possible. My Catholic faith and upbringing provide constant direction in my life, and I strive to embody these values in all I do.

Once again, I am profoundly thankful for the opportunity your scholarship has provided. It will have a lasting impact on my educational journey.

Sincerely, EDUARDO BLANCO, JR.

CWV Scholarship recipient 2024



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
CLASS OF 2028

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH



From the Desk of Our CWV Veterans Service Officer Rick Gales

WOMEN VETERANS CAN NOW SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS DIRECTLY WITH GYNECOLOGY SPECIALISTS WITHOUT A REFERRAL FROM A VA PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that women Veterans can now schedule appointments directly with VA gynecology providers without a referral from a primary care provider. The new, streamlined process takes effect in December, 2025 and eliminates the previous requirement for a Primary Care Provider referral to access VA Gynecology Care. Instead, enrolled women Veterans can schedule an appointment directly with a VA Gynecology Specialist if they choose. The change will benefit more than 1 million women Veterans enrolled in VA health care. “This is what it looks like when VA is focused on putting Veterans first,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins.

VETERAN SPOUSES, DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS GET FASTER ACCESS TO CHAMPVA

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs announced it has completely eliminated the backlog of claims for Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) applications, a major VA program that provides health care coverage to over 900,000 qualifying Veteran spouses, dependents, survivors, and caregivers. There had been a backlog of more than 70,000 CHAMPVA applications that had applicants waiting in some cases for over 150 days for VA to take action.

As of October, the application backlog has been reduced to zero, with new applications now being processed in a handful of days. VA currently receives about 4,000 new applications per week and can process more than it receives. The VA has also substantially reduced the number of appeals waiting for processing. There was a backlog of more than 20,000 CHAMPVA appeals. This has been reduced to 1,000 and continues to rapidly decrease by the day.

The backlogs have been cut thanks to VA Secretary Doug Collins’ immediate, two-pronged approach: provide CHAMPVA application processors with overtime pay to get the job done and implement process engineering and automation to sustain the gains going forward

Long-term, automation will lead to faster processing times. In December, VA will complete its move to a more automated application processing system that increases the efficiency of processing CHAMPVA applications. In addition, more than 90% of medical services and pharmacy claims are now electronically processed within days of receipt for more timely payment.

BACKLOG OF VETERANS WAITING FOR VA BENEFITS REDUCED BY 37%

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it has processed more disability benefits compensation & pension ratings claims in a single year than ever before. In fiscal year 2024, VA processed a total of 2,517,519 ratings claims, and this year the department reached an all-time high of over 3 Million ratings claims by the end of September 30, 2025. The milestone is the latest in a string of noteworthy VA claims processing achievements. In July, VA completed more than 300,000 ratings claims in a single month for the first time ever.

VA TO SPEND ADDITIONAL \$800M ON INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs announced it will realign an additional \$800 million this fiscal year as part of the Veterans Health Administration's Non-Recurring Maintenance program, which makes infrastructure improvements to health care facilities to ensure safe and effective patient care. The extra funding means more resources to repair and update aging VA facilities and technology. The extra money will be spent on a variety of improvement projects at various VA health care facilities, including:

- Boiler and chiller systems
- Electric infrastructure improvements
- Elevators
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioner systems
- Sprinklers and fire alarms
- Renovation of clinical/support spaces
- Utility system upgrades
- Medical equipment sites
- Electronic Health Record Modernization Infrastructure



The additional funds will come from savings gleaned from various VA reform efforts. This will bring total program spending for fiscal year 2025 to \$2.8 billion — a nearly \$500 million increase from fiscal year 2024.



GI BILL EDUCATION BENEFITS RESTORED TO VETS DISCHARGED FOR REFUSING COVID VACCINE

Executive Order 14184 directed military departments to facilitate discharge upgrades for service members involuntarily separated solely for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine and whose service was characterized as less than fully honorable. This affected more than 8,000 service members, which made them ineligible for GI Bill education benefits.

The Veterans Administration sent letters to Veterans who have already received upgraded discharges to inform them of their potential eligibility for GI Education benefits. The VA encourages the potentially thousands of Veterans who were discharged for refusing the COVID vaccine to seek an upgraded status and apply for GI Bill benefits.



DONATED CAP PROVOKES A BIT OF HISTORY!

Thanks and our appreciation to Mary Ann Suddarth



A chance phone call to the national headquarters sparked some interesting history. Mary Ann Suddath, daughter of deceased member Walter V. Budny (1913-2010), inquired if the CWV would accept a donation of her father's garrison cap. Upon receipt of the cap, it was from the now defunct St. Ignatius Loyola Post 1769 in upstate Kingston, New York.



1st LT Budny in uniform.

The accompanying note revealed that Mr. Budny was a 1st LT in the Army Air Corps from 1941 to 1946, during World War II. The Milwaukee native was the son of a Polish immigrant. He would fly over the Himalayas (the Hump) to China twice at the end of the war. After the war, he married Helen Egan and they had two daughters, Eileen and Mary Ann. He was a founding member of the Kingston, NY Post. He suggested the name of St. Ignatius Loyola since he had graduated from the Jesuit school of Marquette University. He was a CWV member from the 1950's through 1975 and advanced to Vice Commander.



Unit patch of China
Burma India forces.

CHINA BURMA INDIA THEATER (CBI) was the military designation during World War II for the Southeast Asian theaters. Operational command of Allied forces was officially the responsibility of the Supreme Commander for Southeast Asia and China. In practice, they were overseen by General "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell. The Term CBI was significant in logistical, materiel and personnel matters. U.S. and Chinese fighting forces in the CBI included the Chinese Expeditionary Force, the "Flying Tigers." Transport and bomber units flying "the Hump" included the Tenth Air Force, the 1st Air Commando Group, and the engineers who built the "Ledo Road," popularly known as Merrill's Marauders.

OPHA MAY JOHNSON WAS THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE U.S. MARINE CORPS

On August 13, 1918, the United States Marine Corps opened its ranks to women for the first time in its history. The country was in the final months of World War I, and the demand for personnel was higher than ever. By allowing women to serve in non-combat roles, the Marine Corps could free more men to fight overseas. The first woman to take that step was Opha May Johnson.

At 40 years old, she became the very first woman to officially enlist in the Corps in a civilian capacity as a clerk, so she was familiar with the military environment. When the opportunity came to serve in uniform, she was quick to sign up. Women who enlisted at the time served mainly in clerical and administrative positions. They handled paperwork, kept records, and performed vital tasks that kept the Corps running efficiently. This change was significant because the Marine Corps had been the last of the U.S. military branches to allow women to enlist, following similar moves by the Navy and the Army.

By the end of World War I, more than 300 women had enlisted in the Marine Corps. Most returned to civilian life after the war, but their service set an important precedent. Opha May Johnson and her fellow Marines proved that women could contribute directly to the mission of the corps, paving the way for greater opportunities in the decades ahead. From that first enlistment in 1918, the role of women in the Marine Corps steadily grew. Today, their service is an integral part of Marine history, and it all began with Johnson's decision to step forward!

With appreciation to : By _dailyhistorian and the Doughboy Foundation



CWVA Celebrates Veterans Day 2025



Michael Collins, 2nd Vice President of the Auxiliary representing CWVA, meets Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins at the White House prior to wreath laying ceremonies at Arlington Cemetery.



At the cemetery, Mike Collins is assisted by former State Department Diplomat James Patterson in presenting the CWV wreath.



President Donald Trump and Vice President J. D. Vance listen to remarks by Veterans Administration Secretary Doug Collins



Newly chartered Post 1836 Auxiliary in Little Rock, Arkansas made up over 100 gift bags for Veterans at local VA hospitals. Shoe boxes are next!



NY State Commander Robert Gluszak (center, in blue jacket), leads the CWV contingent at the 3rd annual wreath presentation at New York Cardinal Dolan's weekly Mass at St. Parick's Cathedral.



THOMAS J. CUIITE & IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BURSE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION RULES

(Eligibility - High School Seniors who are Catholic)

PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDATION

Our Scholarship Foundation has been established to perpetuate the aims and ideals of the Catholic War Veterans by rendering financial assistance and by encouraging the Catholic youth of our nation to seek greater achievement through higher education. Many ambitious and deserving boys and girls have benefited from our programs. Whatever your dreams of the future may be, whatever career you may decide to follow, we hope we can start you on your journey.

ELIGIBILITY

Any high school senior who is a Catholic is eligible to apply for a scholarship if his/ her relative (Parent, Grandparent, Aunt, Uncle or Sibling) is an active or deceased member of the Catholic War Veterans or Auxiliary in good standing.

SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

Five recipients will receive a \$1,000 scholarship grant in the applicant's name paid directly to the applicant's accredited college or university upon receipt of proof of acceptance from that school.

HOW TO APPLY

- Applications may be obtained by requesting one directly from C.W.V. National Headquarters or downloaded from the website: <https://wp2.cwv.org/our-national-programs/youth-activities>. The application must be completely filled out and signed by both the applicant and his/her parent or guardian. Poorly completed applications may jeopardize competitiveness.
- Prepared portfolio must contain the following items and returned to National Headquarters by **June 1**:
 - Application completed in full.
 - Applicant's High School Transcript in a sealed envelope.
 - Two Letters of recommendation (at least one of which must attest to the applicant's Catholic identity).
 - Applicant's self-described written response (see page 2 for details).
 - Sacramental records.

SELECTION OF WINNERS

- The National Scholarship committee shall give careful consideration in selecting the best qualified candidates based on:
 - High academic records indicating a strong potential for success on the college level.
 - Service to your high school, church, or community demonstrated by initiative, leadership, and participation in other activities.
 - Evidence of the applicant's Catholic identity as stated in letter(s) of recommendation.
- The National Board of Officers will ratify the decision of the judges.
 - National Headquarters will notify the winners.
 - The decision of the National Board of Officers shall be final.

PLEASE DIRECT ALL QUESTIONS TO:

CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS OF THE U.S.A. NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (703) 549-3622

THOMAS J. CUIE & IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BURSE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Applicant's Email Address: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____

High School: _____

Location: _____

Years Attended: _____ From: _____ To: _____ Graduation Date: _____

Principal's Name: _____

Career Objectives and / or Major: _____

Name of Applicant's relative who is an active or deceased member in good standing in a Catholic War Veterans Post or Auxiliary unit:

Name: _____

Post # or Auxiliary unit #: _____

PLEASE INCLUDE THIS FORM AND THE FOLLOWING WITH YOUR APPLICATION

- Your High School transcript must be included in a sealed envelope with the portfolio.
- A brief description about how your Catholic identity has influenced your life experience and how you think it will influence your future. (Maximum one page typed, double spaced)
- Applicant's Sacramental Record.
 - Copy of Baptismal Certificate: Church: _____ Date: _____
 - Copy of Confirmation Certificate (*If Confirmed*): Church: _____ Date: _____
- Two Letters of recommendation (at least one of which must attest to the applicant's Catholic identity).

✓ I certify that to the best of my present knowledge, all information given is true and correct.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Please check to ensure your application is completed properly and all required items are included in your portfolio package.

Your portfolio package must be received at National Headquarters prior to the deadline date: **June 1.**

Mail your portfolio package to:

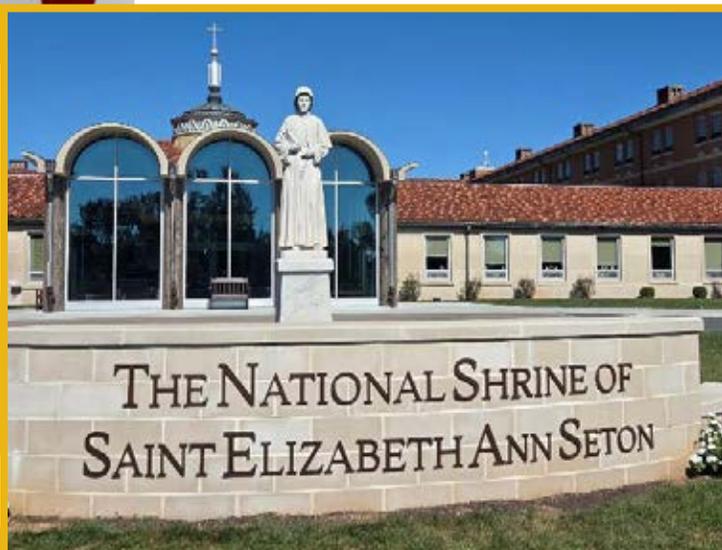
**NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS OF THE U.S.A. INC.
237-20 92ND ROAD
BELLEROSE, NY 11426-1110**

Maryland Posts Honor Sea Services and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Sainthood

Text and photos courtesy of Clara Pakula

Members of the Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary from the Department of Maryland embarked on a pilgrimage to Emmitsburg, Maryland. The city is home to the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. The group traveled to attend a Sea Services Pilgrimage Mass, which honors those who man ships for the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Merchant Marine. Representatives of the various services and other organizations such as the Knights of Columbus attended the Mass. It was celebrated by Bishop Gregg M. Caggianelli, Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

The Mass also celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton's Sainthood (1975-2025). She is the first American-born saint. Members of the CWV Auxiliary, and both CWV St. Casimir Post 766 and Post 1674 in Baltimore, and Post 2016 in Westminster, Maryland took part in this meaningful experience. Several members were honored to present the gifts at the altar during the Mass.



Mother Seton's National Shrine in Emmitsburg, Maryland.



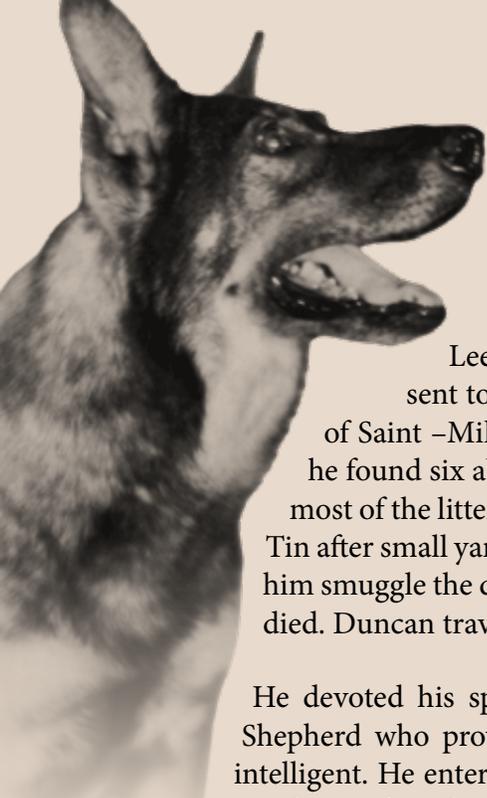
The Mass honored those who man our nation's Sea Services.



Bishop Caggianelli posed with CWV Auxiliary members.



The Maryland CWV brought a strong contingent to the Mass.



FROM A WORLD WAR I BATTLEFIELD A STAR IS BORN!

By Allen Frazier via the Military.com Website

Lee Duncan joined the Army Air Service when the U.S. entered World War I and was sent to France, where he took part in numerous engagements. Following the bloody battle of Saint -Mihiel, he was sent to survey a small French village as a staging area for planes. There he found six abandoned dogs. He knew he couldn't leave them behind. He rescued all six. He gave most of the litter to his fellow soldiers. He kept two for himself. He named them Nanette and Rin Tin Tin after small yarn dolls that French children handmade. At war's end, his commanding officer helped him smuggle the dogs aboard a ship returning to the United States. Nanette contracted pneumonia and died. Duncan traveled with Rin Tin Tin by train to his native southern California.

He devoted his spare time to training the German Shepherd who proved to be remarkably athletic and intelligent. He entered the dog in local shows. During one show, a friend tested out a new slow-motion camera on the dog's jumps. He encouraged Duncan to get Rin Tin Tin into the movie business. He began walking the dog up Hollywood's Poverty Row, begging fledgling studios to give the war orphan a chance. They encountered a Warner Brothers film crew struggling while filming a uncooperative wolf. The crew relented and allowed Rin Tin Tin to shoot the scene, which he did in one take. Duncan wrote his own screenplay for his dog, called "Where the North Begins." Warner Bros. signed Duncan and the dog to a contract and produced the film. The studio was facing financial ruin at the time. The film was a huge success and rescued the studio from bankruptcy, according to the Hollywood Reporter.



1927 Movie Poster for one of Rin Tin Tin's 27 Movies!



A Warner Bros. fan photograph, paw print and message: "Most Faithfully, Rin Tin Tin."

Rin Tin Tin became Warner Bros biggest star. Under contract, he was paid more than many human actors earned. The studio maintained 18 trained stand-in dogs to reduce stress on their star. A private chef prepared his daily meal of tenderloin steak. The studio received thousands of fan letters each week addressed to the dog. He appeared in 27 Hollywood films. He even starred in "A Dog of the Regiment, where he acted out some of his own WWI experiences. The dog's success also launched the career of Darryl F. Zanuck, who was assigned to create stories for Rin Tin Tin. His work on these films helped him rise to a top executive at Twentieth Century Fox. When "talking pictures" arrived, the dog's career began to fade as audiences wanted dialogue from human actors, not barking from dogs. At the time of his death, at age 14, the Master and dog had been inseparable since they returned from the battlefields of France. Regular programming was interrupted by a news bulletin announcing Rin Tin Tin's death.



1960—A Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame!



CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

237-20 92ND ROAD
BELLEROSE, NY 11426

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WWW.THECWV.ORG



U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy has announced the return of the newly restored “Christ on the Water” painting to its place of prominence at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The historic artwork had been relocated to the basement of the Academy’s chapel in 2023. Duffy said: “Burying this painting wasn’t just a mistake—it was an insult to the faith and legacy of service that built this Academy and our nation. The Christian faith is something to be proud of, not something to be censored.” The painting, also known as “Jesus and the Lifeboat” was created in 1944. It depicts merchant seamen in a lifeboat after being torpedoed, with Jesus guiding them through stormy seas.