

The latest news, views, and announcements. Contact the Post Commander, Vice CDR, or Junior Vice CDR for more info or find it on www.vfw9365.org

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VFW National Convention

- By: Ryan Moe

VFW National Convention was held in Phoenix, AZ on July 22-27, 2023.

Eagle River Commander and Delta Junction Commander received their All-American caps on stage at the joint opening.

During the 2023 National Convention hosted in Phoenix Arizona the VFW voted in to office, Duane Sarmiento (from Post 5579 New Jersey) as the new Commander-in-Chief, Alfred "Al" Lipphardt (from Post 12002 Georgia) as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and Carol Whitmore (from Post 9127 Iowa) as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Our new Commander-in-Chief, Duane Sarmiento, has given us a new guideline to make All-American this year: obtaining 102% membership.

The VFW hosted a magnitude of classes and helpful seminars that were attended by Post 9365's Commander and Senior Vice Commander. Any details about those classes, please feel free to contact them directly.



Upcoming Community Events

- By: Kim Barenburg

Upcoming/Ongoing Community Events:

Farmers Market @ Wonderland Park, Wasilla every Wednesday in June to September from **10 AM to 5 PM**.

Friday Fling @ Downtown Palmer Pavilion (next to Train Depot) every Friday in May to August from **11 AM to 6 PM**. This event will have all types of vendors, fresh produce, and food trucks.

Alyeska Blueberry Festival @ Alyeska Resort in Gridwood, from Aug. 11-12 from 11 AM to 8 PM. There will also be a pie eating contest at 3:45 pm.

Alaska State Fair @ Palmer Fairgrounds from Aug. 18 – Sep. 4. Discounted tickets are available for purchase for Veterans & AD military on Base at **Information, Tickets & Travel** (Bldg. 9497 20th St, JBER, AK)

Veterans Resource Fair:

Mat-Su Health Center will be sponsoring the Veterans Resource Fair on **December 2, 2023** from **10 AM to 3 PM** at the *Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center*.

Post 9365 Updates

- By: Department of Alaska VFW HQ

• **National POW/Recognition Day: September 15, 2023**

• **No Post monthly meeting in September**

• **Patriot's Day: September 11, 2023.**

There will be a Flag Retirement Ceremony and a Burger Burn on September 11, 2023. The Burger Burn will start at 5 PM and the Flag Ceremony will start at 6 PM. More info will be in the next newsletter.

• **Pearl Harbor Day: December 7, 2023**

• **Veterans Town Hall** with Alaska VA Healthcare System Director **August 22, 2023** from **6-7 pm** at Post 9365.

Toxic Screenings will also be available.

• **Steak Night** is coming back first Friday of the Month starting again in October 2023. There will be a *sign-up sheet* if you're interested in volunteering.

• **Patriot's Pen, Teacher of the Year, and Voice of Democracy programs:**

Deadline for submissions to the **Post: October 31, 2023**. [Check the Post Webpage for the Themes.](#)



Burger Burn

- By: Kim Barenburg

Post 9365 will be having a burger burn on August 15, 2023.

For those of you who don't know what a burger burn is, I'll tell you. Our post's Burger Burn is done to use extra hamburgers that was left over from previous events. All the burgers have been stored in the freezer and are still safe for consumption.

This Burger Burn on August 15, 2023 is free, however there will be a donation bin available. The recommended donation amount is \$7, however, the event IS FREE.



The PACT Act will Bring these Changes

- By: Department of Veteran Affairs

Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras.

Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures

Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation

Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care

Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you're a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

When can I expect VA to make a decision on my PACT Act claim?

We encourage all Veterans and survivors to file for benefits now. We started to process PACT Act-related benefits in January 2023.

If you **apply for benefits before August 10, 2023**, and we grant your application, we'll likely backdate your benefits to the date of the bill signing. This means we'll pay you the amount you would have received from August 10, 2022, to the date we grant your application.

Look for any additional updates from the Department of Veteran Affairs.

PACT Act and Your Benefits

- By: Department of Veteran Affairs

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.

The PACT Act adds to the list of health conditions that we assume (or "presume") are caused by exposure to these substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

You can also call us at 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now.

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure? To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition. But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or "presume") that your service caused your condition. We call these "presumptive conditions." We consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation. If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

For eligibility, please visit <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits> or call your local VSO <https://veterans.alaska.gov/veterans-service-organizations> to apply for benefits and disability claims.



Alaska State Veteran Benefits

- By: Alaska Office of Veteran Affairs

Check out the Alaska State Veteran Benefits that are available for you and your family members. <https://veterans.alaska.gov/home/>

[State Tuition Assistance for the Alaska Air & Army National Guard](#): may be eligible to receive 100% tuition assistance at any University of Alaska system school.

[Alaska Veterans' Dependent Tuition Waiver Program](#): Spouses and dependents of armed service members who were Alaska residents and died in the line of duty, or are listed by the DoD as POW or were KIA.

[Statewide Apprenticeships](#): If eligible, an apprentice may use veterans' educational benefits while registered in an apprenticeship program.

[Alaska Veterans & Pioneer Home](#): Strives to assist older Alaskans to have the highest quality of life by providing assisted living in a safe home setting that promotes independence, positive relationships, meaningful activities, as well as physical and spiritual growth.

[Alaska Housing and Residential Loans](#): offers financing for qualified veterans as a lower interest rate, to apply for this program reach out to an AHFC approved lender. AHFC includes a Veterans Interest Rate Preference.

[Alaska Property Tax Exemption](#): real property, owned and occupied as the primary residence and permanent place of abode by a qualified, service-connected, disabled veteran whose disability has been rated at 50% or more is exempt from taxation on the first \$150,000 of assessed valuation.

[Veteran Land Discount/Purchase Preference](#): allows certain veterans with 20% discount on the purchase of state residential/recreational land.

There are tons of more VA assistance and benefits available on [VA.gov](https://veterans.alaska.gov/home/). You can also find more VA benefits on <https://veterans.alaska.gov/home/>

Alaska State Veteran Benefits

- By: Alaska Office of Veteran Affairs

[Commissary, Exchange, and Welfare & Recreation Facilities](#): DoD has expanded access to all disabled veterans along with former POW and Purple Heart recipients. Need to have applied for VA Healthcare and a Veterans Health Id Card (VHIC).

[State Camping Pass](#): Disabled veterans can receive a free camping pass, which is valid in all developed Alaska State Park campgrounds and is good for 2 years.

[Federal Recreation Pass](#): the American the Beautiful Parks Pass Series is a free lifetime Military Pass for Gold Star Families and Veterans and a Free annual pass available to AD, Reserves, NG members and their dependents.

[Alaska Railroad Discount](#): offers 20% discount to US military and veterans and a Half-Fare Program for Seniors (65+).

[Division of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#): provides AK Driver License with the Veterans designation and a Veterans Recognition License Plates. Need to provide proof of military service (DD214) and other info the DMV requests.

[Alaska Job Centers](#): provide Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veteran Employment Representatives assist veterans in applying for federal, state, local government, and private sector employment.

[Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development](#): offers priority service and benefits to veterans and eligible spouses/caregivers who are seeking employment, apprenticeship opportunities, and on-the-job-training programs.

[VA/Alaska Highly Rural Travel Grant](#): Valley Mover provides free transportation to veterans residing in 5 rural areas who need to access health care services including the Mat-Su Borough.



Veterans Town Hall
with
Alaska VA Healthcare System Director
Tom Steinbrunner, FACHE

August 22, 2023
from 6-7pm

at the
VFW
301 E Lake view Ave
Wasilla, AK 99654

Toxic Screenings will also be available

POC: One Stop Shop at 907-257-5463 or alaskaquery@va.gov

