

# VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



DEPARTMENT OF OHIO

Richard Curry  
Quartermaster/Adjutant

Colleen Wiley  
State Commander

The Men and Women of the VFW  
We'd do anything for this country

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December 23, 2023

TO: All Members, VFW of Ohio

SUBJECT: Veterans Oral History Project

VFW Department of Ohio has entered into a contract with trusted partner, Publishing Concepts Inc.

(PCI) to contact our members via mail to provide an opportunity for VFW Ohio members to tell their unique stories of service.

This initiative is purely voluntary. Members will receive a postcard in the mail with details on how to participate. PCI will collect your oral stories by a telephone interview, and later compile these stories into a publication that will display the rich history of Ohio's veterans from every era, branch and theater.

If you are interested in sharing your story of service, please verify your primary contact information by responding to the postcard mailed to you from PCI. Your story is unique and adds to the overall landscape of what service means to the American people, as well as the spirit of the veteran community in Ohio.

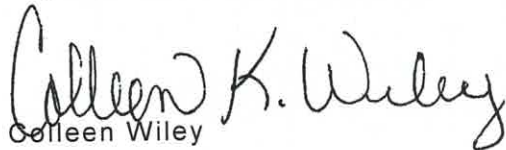
A few points that I would like to emphasize:

- Your participation in this program is purely **voluntary**.
- We engaged in this program out of our sincere desire to give you, our members, an opportunity to share your stories of military service with your family and friends but also with your fellow veterans, who hopefully will also share their stories.
- Your contact information **will not** be sold to any third party for any reason. It is restricted between PCI and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Your provided contact information will be used to verify and update our existing member database records.
- Yes, the Department of Ohio VFW will receive a royalty for every book sold under this program to assist us in supporting the many Programs we sponsor.

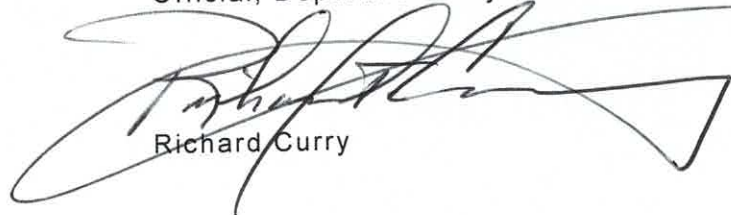
"By sharing your memory of experiences now, you will ensure that the rich diverse history of VFW members will be preserved to be treasured by future generations." - VFW Ohio Department Commander Colleen Wiley

Attached is an **example** of the post card you will receive in the mail and last year's publication featuring the VFW Department of Virginia:

Department of Ohio Commander

  
Colleen Wiley

Official; Department Adjutant

  
Richard Curry

35 E Chestnut Street, STE 506, Columbus, Ohio 43215 [www.vfwoh.org](http://www.vfwoh.org) 614-224-1838 email rick.ohvfwqm@gmail.com



VFW Department of Ohio  
35 E Chestnut Street Ste 506  
Columbus, Ohio 43215



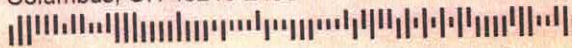
PRSRT FIRST CLASS  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
MAILED FROM  
ZIP CODE 75244  
PERMIT NO.  
2607

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**

**IMPORTANT: VERIFICATION OF MEMBER DATA NOW NEEDED**  
Please Call 1-866-611-8397 within 5 days.

**VERIFICATION  
REQUESTED  
IN NEXT  
5 DAYS**

Richard T. Curry  
35 E Chestnut St  
Ste 506  
Columbus, OH 43215-2480



02-397701.37701666

98877-T255 P3

Dear Richard,

As a member of VFW Department of Ohio, I need a quick verification from you. In celebration of our **125th Anniversary**, VFW Department of Ohio recently launched a comprehensive member data verification project.

We've assembled the information currently listed in our member files and need your help to confirm the accuracy of your record and fill in any information gaps.



**That's why it's so important to call 1-866-611-8397  
within the next 5 days.**

Verification is quick and easy. Many members also share stories of their service experience to help celebrate our history at the same time.

Your prompt assistance is greatly appreciated. Please call **1-866-611-8397** to verify your VFW Department of Ohio member data today.

Sincerely,

*Richard T. Curry*

Richard T. Curry  
VFW Department of Ohio  
Quartermaster/Adjutant

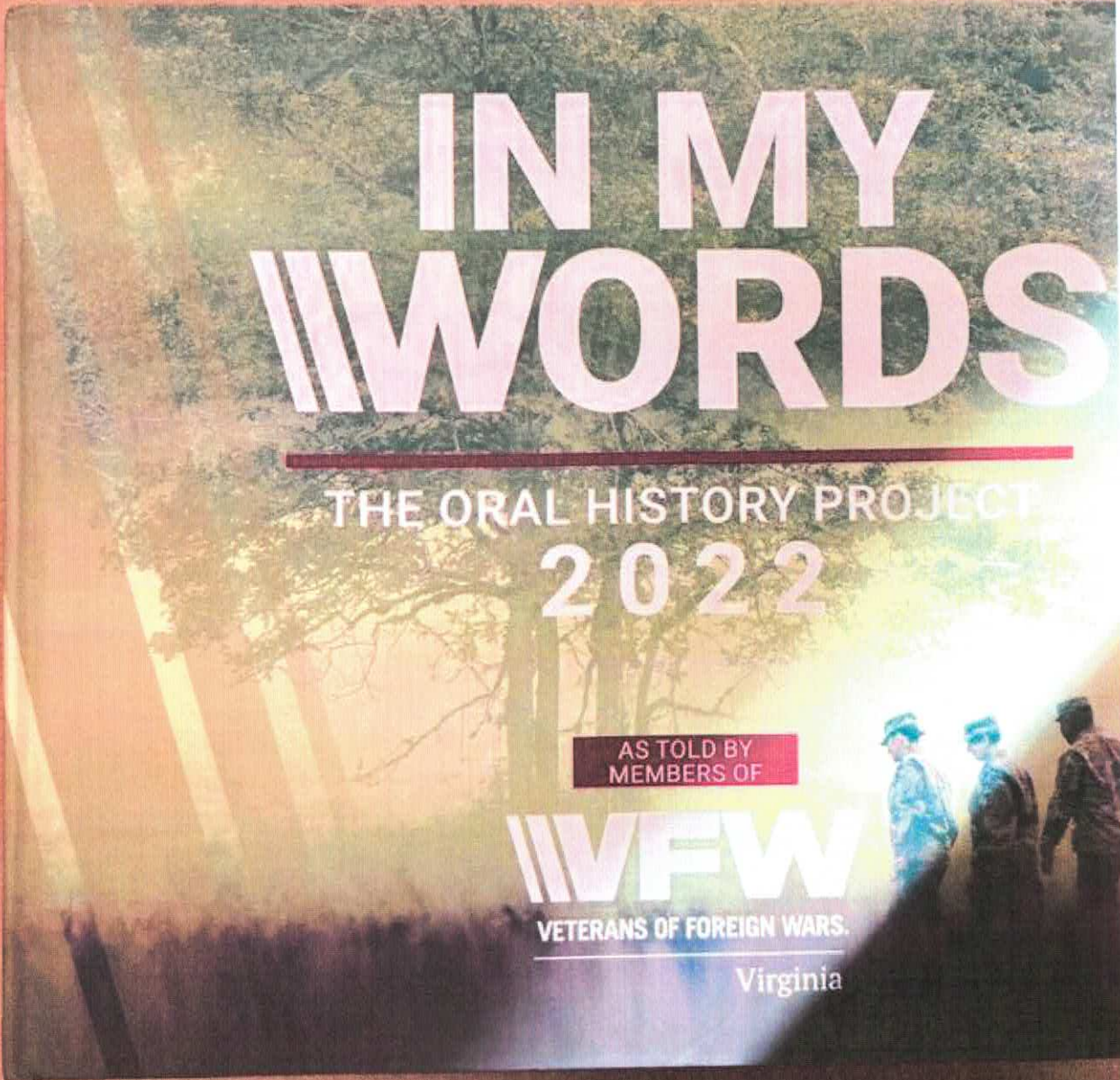
2023 © VFW Department of Ohio

Hours of Operation: M-F 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM (ET)

**Your Invitation ID#:  
02-377-016-66  
Reference #: 02**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**





# IN MY WORDS

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

2022

AS TOLD BY  
MEMBERS OF

**VFW**

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Virginia





**JOESPH "JOE"  
R. KIRKPATRICK**

**ALL OF MY FAMILY WERE** military members. It was a way to start out life. My brother got in trouble and was ordered to join the Navy. I felt just as guilty about the situation as he did, so I went ahead and joined with him. We entered together as brothers through the Delayed Entry Program. He was stationed on the USS Warden in Japan, and I was shipped out to the USS Midway in Japan. Serving messmates with my brother in 15 different ports, visiting different countries, and having drinks together in different bars was very cool. I did three Western Pacific deployments on my ship. We crossed the

equator and went to Australia, Africa, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and other countries in that area. My favorite place was San Diego because I met my wife there on my first job. The company I was working for was looking for volunteers to move to Virginia, so we moved to Virginia. I was a welder in the Navy, but I always wanted to be a carpenter. I ended up working on the Marriott Hotel building on Harbor Drive in San Diego. I got a job with a building systems company, and I worked for them for ten years. I now work for a lumber company that makes cabinets. The military was a really good

place to start. I got a lot of education found out how much talent I had with hands. I was a firefighter in the Navy. I joined the fire department in Yreka after I left the service. I met a girl at a VFW tent at a fair, and I found out I was a wartime veteran. President Reagan gave an award to those who were on the USS Midway for rescuing hostages during the Iranian crisis. When I found out I was eligible, I went ahead and signed up for life. I joined VFW to help out women. We are a very Christian-oriented place. We give them money and visit people who see if there is anything I can do for

**SCOTT C. BURSON**



**I DIDN'T HAVE THE GRADES TO GET** scholarships for college, and I wasn't financially set to be able to pay for college myself. I joined the military to get some money for my college, then get out. After doing my four years, I re-enlisted and made it a career. I got married, so I had to take care of my family, and I didn't find my job to be too difficult. I enjoyed being able to see different countries a lot, which is what led me to make a career in the military. I was stationed in Honolulu for three years and it was my favorite station. There were a few other places that we went to that were pretty cool, but Hawaii is a beautiful state. I'd recommend anyone to visit it. I always tried to be fair, but the senior people's input always made the best decision for what we needed to do. My wife and I were looking to do a couple of different things, and I had some friends in a particular VFW post, so we decided to go there. We got our lifetime membership once we went there, but we haven't visited the post much. We have neglected our duties recently, but we have done a couple of the things and some of the meetings they had.

**ROY W. EL**



and signed up.

**WILLIE C.**

**BACK IN 1947,** Truman was the president, and I was a 17-year-old kid getting into a lot of trouble. Truman said that Black men could come into the Navy without taking a physical or an IQ test, so I went into the Navy in 1947. I was on two historic ships; I was on the Battleship New Jersey during the Korean War, and



## DEBORAH "DEE" D. MEYERS

**WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I WAS AN** honor student. I started working when I was 12 or 13 years old, and I used to have a side hustle going somewhere. I got my first real paid job at 14, so I had already developed a work ethic. By the time I got ready to graduate, I knew we didn't have money for college, and I didn't want to get into debt. I wanted to go out and see the world. I wanted to learn some new things. I used to see the Army commercials and say, "You know what? I can do that. I didn't have to ask for permission. I went to the Army recruiter, had taken my ASVAB test. I went home after I signed up, and we were getting ready for dinner. My mom happened to ask, 'Was this your day?' I said, in a very nonchalant manner, 'Oh yeah, in the way, I joined the Army today. At first, she didn't get it, and she thought I was joking. She freaked out, and my grandparents freaked out. Everybody was freaked out. Once I joined, everything totally changed. I had full support throughout my time in the military. My favorite assignment was in Germany. I spent three years in Germany, and I loved it. That was my first time going overseas, and that was my first time ever on an airplane. My most challenging assignment was when I was stationed at Fort Huachuca in Arizona. New Jersey was one of my favorite assignments as well; I had a great time up there. During those two years, I met as a drill sergeant, I learned so much about people, how people are, and what it means to train. I gained respect for leading and mentoring people and helping to bring out the best in other people. I like that there's an organization that understands what we've been through and where we've been, and the organization has done a lot to help veterans. I can't go up to Capitol Hill and speak to Congress about veteran issues, but the VFW can do that means a lot.

## DONALD "DON" L. CALE

**I HAD SIX BROTHERS. EVERYONE** who had served in the military. What made me love the service was that Vietnam was ratcheting up. I did my part. I spent two years in the United States. I wanted to see combat, so I was granted a transfer to Vietnam. I had a brother who was married with two children at the time. I was hoping that they'd send him home from Vietnam when I got over there. They didn't want him home, but he completed his time. My wife and I were in the Army at Fort Eustis. I said, 'If it is to be, maybe they won't send anybody else from my family over here.' I stayed in Vietnam for almost two years. It was totally different from the United States. I was a door gunner on a helicopter gunship. Now for 16 or 17 months. I got to do exactly what I wanted to do. The military gave me confidence - if I could live over there, I could live anywhere. I went to public work for 15 years. I thought that the VFW was for the old guys, so I resisted joining. A postman from the Korean War kept talking to me, so I said I'd join it. There were a bunch of old guys there, but they were as American as you could get. They welcomed me to the post. I was elected the post commander two years later. I was the post commander for two years. I did go to meetings to hang around military veterans. They have good insight into world problems.

## DARELL F. SOL

**I WAS WORKING A** stagnant job that didn't offer any promotions. I remembered that my family comes from a line of military service, so I decided to follow tradition and join the Army. It was a long but fun road. I built great memories and great friendships. I learned a lot and it helped me grow as a person. I still keep those Army values. When I got out of basic training and AIT, I was one of five selected to go to Fort to Q my's and heir resp lead won pri dep age to l we

## CALVIN T. RO

**I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS** graduated from high school, so I joined during the Vietnam War. Three of my a War. Root camp was interesting commu been to the States before. I was very challenging. I was at Fort Jackson in wanted to change my job to pursuing b no. I went to a lot of different places - th Garcia, Chile, and Argentina. I enjoyed was a good learning experience.



## Frequently Asked Questions by Members

- 1. I received an email/postcard/phone call from a company asking for my personal information and a story about VFW Department of Ohio. Tell me more about the project.**

We have partnered with PCI (also known as Publishing Concepts) to produce an Oral History Publication for VFW Department of Ohio. PCI is a family owned business based in Dallas, TX that has published directories for educational institutions, fraternities, sororities, and military organizations across the nation for over 100 years. This project allows us to hear about your personal experiences from your time at VFW Department of Ohio and how the organization helped to shape your life since then. And, while we have you on the phone, we want to make sure your contact information is up to date.
- 2. Does VFW Department of Ohio benefit from this at all?**

Yes, in a few different ways:

  - Updated Information – allows us to effectively communicate with and engage members
  - Legacy – sharing and collecting stories preserves the history of our organization
  - Pride – wearing apparel shows support and love for our organization
- 3. How do I know my information will only be used for Oral History Project purposes?**

PCI is committed to protecting your information. The names, addresses and information provided to PCI for the publication of the Oral History Project will be held confidential by PCI, except to the extent that they are utilized in, or in the preparation of, the Oral History Project and except as required by court order or law.
- 4. I would like to verify or update my information and share a story. How may I do this?**
  - If you have received a postcard or an email with a telephone number, you may call the number to speak with a dedicated representative for the Oral History Project. The representative will verify the information we have on file for you, make any updates where needed, and then ask you to share your story about your time at VFW Department of Ohio. Your story will be recorded and the sound clip provided to VFW Department of Ohio at the conclusion of the project.
  - If you have received an email with an embedded link, you may go to the online site to review your information and submit a story.
  - If you are living internationally or are unable to call the update line, please email [customerservice@publishingconcepts.com](mailto:customerservice@publishingconcepts.com). PCI will send you a personalized link for you to share your written story and photo.
- 5. How can I participate if I am Deaf/Hard of Hearing?**

If you would like to participate and are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, please email [customerservice@publishingconcepts.com](mailto:customerservice@publishingconcepts.com). PCI will send you a personalized link for you to share your written story and photo.
- 6. Can I choose what information prints in the publication?**

The only information that is included in the publication is your name, highest rank, and branch of service, along with your story and photo. No contact information is printed. When you call to update your contact information, it will only be used to update your member record for the organization. You may revoke consent for your story and/or photo to appear any time before **<DATE>** by contacting PCI's customer service helpdesk at 1-800-982-1590 / [customerservice@publishingconcepts.com](mailto:customerservice@publishingconcepts.com).
- 7. I updated my information but need some more time to think about what experience to share.**

You can call back at any time before **<DATE>** to share your story.

**8. I shared a story and the representative said I could send a photo. How do I do this?**

You will receive an email with a link to upload one photo (black and white or color) plus a caption.

If you have also purchased a book but do not have an email address on file, you will be sent a photo mailer to send a physical photo in to be printed (note: the photo will be returned if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope).

**9. Can anyone purchase a book?**

The VFW Department of Ohio Oral History Publication is available for sale only to VFW Department of Ohio members.

**10. I ordered a book / package over the phone and would like to cancel my order. How do I do this?**

Contact PCI's customer service helpdesk at 1-800-982-1590 and they will take care of this for you.