



## NILES MEMORIAL POST 3579

# SENTRY NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL NEWS PUBLICATION—Summer -2026

### Commander's Column

Greetings Comrades,

We have survived another Chicago winter and hopefully we will have a mild Spring. I would like to congratulate the Post on achieving our membership goal of 100.93 % as of March 9! Please continue to do your best to recruit new members. I would like to recognize the outstanding efforts of the Scholarship Committee. The members are **Harry and Pat Benjamin, Tom Fronczak, Nancy Heck, Bette Horstman, Larry Pike, Keith Renner, Joe Steinfels and Ed and Carol Tully**. Thank you for your commitment to this task. The Niles Memorial VFW Post Scholarship Program has a target date of Spring 2027 to make the first student awards to children of members of the Post.



This will be my last Commander's Column for the Sentry Newsletter. I would like to thank all the members of VFW Post 3579 for supporting me as your Commander for the past year. I am confident under the new upcoming leadership, the Post will continue to be pillar of the Niles community.

Fair winds and Following Seas,

God Bless You and God Bless America!!!

**John Tomzik,**  
Commander

Niles Memorial VFW Post 3579  
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**Does your family know where your DD214 (Discharge papers) are???**



### Scholarship Update

In the last edition of the **Sentry**, we announced the re-establishment of the Niles Memorial VFW Post 3579 Scholarship Program. The Scholarship Committee has made significant strides towards the Post's ability to award scholarships. The committee has been meeting monthly establishing standards and rules for the scholarship, creating an application, determining criteria for scholarship selection and exploring possible funding sources. Since our last report, we have received member donations of \$8,500. In order to begin awarding scholarships, the committee has established a

funding goal of \$50,000. There are varied sources to raise these funds. Our Veterans Club is in a position to help with an interest payment connected with establishing our current location on Caldwell Avenue in Niles. We are looking for corporate and business financial sponsorships, as well as support from our members. VFW Post 3579 has over 432 members; however, it is common knowledge that the average age of our members is above 70 years. The VFW itself suffers from the lack of new members and without question, our Post is not sustainable without new, younger members. We are not hiding the fact that we are looking for younger members by offering scholarship awards only to children of our members. The cost of higher education is greater than ever and we can help. We will make scholarship awards available of no less than \$1,000 to applicants accepted into a college, university, trade or technical school.

### St Patrick's Day Party



Was once again a huge success thanks to our Jr. Vice Commander **Mike Reilly** with 4 hours of entertainment and of course the Shannon Rovers.

### MAY IS **POPPY** MONTH

Niles Memorial VFW Post 3579 recognizes that some veterans and their families have fallen on troubled times. We, members of VFW 3579, will not let them be overlooked.

Our single greatest source of revenue to continue our support of veterans in need, veteran support programs, and veteran organizations is through our annual *Poppy Days*

### Event.

In May of 2026, Niles Memorial VFW Post 3579, your Post, is planning to hold our annual *Poppy Days Event*. We need your help. *Volunteers are needed.*

Arrangements have been made at five locations including four Jewel Foods Stores for our members to distribute poppies and accept donations. We ask that you volunteer three hours of your time. Locations are listed below. Please call Jim Henk at 312.813.1645 for more information and scheduling. *If there is no answer, leave a message.* You will receive a return call. Whatever time you can contribute will be greatly appreciated.

Sign-up sheets will be available at the next two Post Meetings on April 13<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup>. You can pick up your poppies, vests, and collection containers at the May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, otherwise contact *Jim Henk at 312.813.1645* to make other arrangements.

#### \*Jewel Foods: Milwaukee/Oakton

SATURDAY 16 MAY

THURSDAY 21 MAY & FRIDAY 22 MAY &  
SATURDAY 23 MAY

10 AM – 1 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM

#### \*Jewel Foods: Busse/Greenwood

THURSDAY 21 MAY & FRIDAY 22 MAY &  
SATURDAY 23 MAY

10 AM – 1 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM

#### \*Jewel Foods: Touhy/Central

Shopping Center

SATURDAY 16 MAY

THURSDAY 21 MAY & FRIDAY 22  
MAY

10 AM – 1 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM

#### \*Happy Foods: 6415 N. Central

FRIDAY 22 MAY & SATURDAY 23 MAY

10 AM – 1 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM

**\*Jewel Foods: FOSTER/HARLEM  
THURSDAY 21 MAY & FRIDAY 22 MAY  
10 AM – 1 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM**

In appreciation to our volunteers, you are invited to the Post Friday 22 May.

- \* Sandwiches at 1 PM
- \* A dinner for participating volunteers will be provided at 5 PM on Friday 22 May. If a volunteer collects donations twice, he/she may invite a guest for Friday’s dinner.



3579 Commander **John Tomzik** addressed the 4th District and Illinois VFW State Commander (*sitting on left*) at the 4th District monthly meeting hosted by Niles Memorial Post 3579.

**HIGH SCHOOL  
AMERICANISM QUIZ**

On Saturday 18 April 2026, Niles VFW Post 3579 will conduct it’s second “High School Americanism Quiz”. Six senior students from Notre Dame College Preparatory High School in Niles, Illinois are invited to participate in the event. The test will consist of 25 multiple choice questions covering the U. S. Military, American History, the U. S. Constitution, the U. S. Government, the State of Illinois Government, U. S. Geography and 21<sup>st</sup> century current

events. The students are competing for monetary prizes. Post and Auxiliary members and their family are invited to attend. The event will be held from 10AM to 12PM.

**Special Discount Special**

**Dues Information**

ANNUAL VFW MEMBERS: Please note that VFW Post 3579 is currently offering a discount for new and current members who wish to convert their Annual Membership to Life Membership. The discount provided by the Post is 25%. These are dues needed to be paid in order to take advantage of this offer depends on your age as of December 31<sup>th</sup> of the current calendar year. You may pay with a check, cash or credit card. This offer also extends to qualified veterans that wish to join VFW Post 3579. As a life member, you will not pay any increases and never pay dues again. To take advantage of this offer, please contact the Post Quartermaster at **847-825-4588**

**Life Member Dues**

<u>Attained Age</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Discount</u>	<u>Net Cost</u>
Through 30	\$425	\$106	\$319
31-40	\$410	\$103	\$307
41-50	\$375	\$94	\$281
51-60	\$335	\$84	\$251
61-70	\$290	\$73	\$217
71-80	\$225	\$56	\$169
81 plus	\$170	\$43	\$127

**Wear Red on Friday**

Each Friday, many Americans wear red as part of the **R.E.D. Friday** movement — a simple but meaningful tradition reminding us to **Remember Everyone Deployed**.



The movement began in the early 2000s during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as a grassroots effort to show visible support for service members serving far from home. Though not an official holiday like Veterans Day

or Memorial Day, Red Friday has grown through the dedication of veterans' organizations, military families, and patriotic citizens.

Groups such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion often encourage participation as a quiet but powerful way to show unity and appreciation for those currently serving overseas.

Wearing red requires no ceremony and makes no political statement. It is simply a visible reminder that while we go about our weekly routines, brave men and women remain deployed around the world — separated from family and home — in service to our nation.

As Auxiliary and VFW members, continuing this small act of solidarity reflects our ongoing commitment to those who serve and the families who support them. **Remember Everyone Deployed**

## Vietnam War Veterans Day

On 29 March 2026 members from the VFW, VVA and other Veterans held a Ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Chicago, Illinois VFW member Bill Sherry presented a wreath.

## 3579 AUXILIARY NEWS

**VFW Auxiliary – Spring Brings Change and Continued Service** Each spring brings some form of change into our lives, and for our Auxiliary, that change comes in the form of new leadership. Following the resignation of **Doris DeFranceschi** after 16 years of dedicated service as President of the Auxiliary, Senior Vice President **Mary Ann Miller** has stepped in as Acting President until official elections take place later this spring. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Doris for her many years of commitment, leadership, and compassion. Her contributions have left a lasting impact, and we are pleased that she will remain actively involved in the Auxiliary moving forward.

Our February meeting featured a special visit

from Illinois Department President **Diane Ahrens**. Diane spoke passionately about the importance of growing our membership by increasing our visibility within the community and sharing the meaningful work we do in support of veterans. She highlighted “Operation Sweet Life Inc.”, a program that assists formerly homeless veterans as they transition into housing by providing furniture and essential household items tailored to their needs. Following the meeting, members continued their conversation with Diane over coffee and treats. The discussion was so engaging that we completely lost track of time—and even forgot to take photos with our special guest!

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, our Auxiliary shared the love by hosting a pizza party for residents of the Chicago Veterans Home. This



event was made possible in part by a generous monetary donation from Auxiliary member **Shirley Wilds**. Representing the Auxiliary were **Mary Ann Miller, Doris DeFranceschi, Alice Grockenboch, Donna Dye, and Nancy Henk**. We were also grateful for the support of VFW members,



**Commander John Tomzik, Robin Miller, and Jim Henk**. Together, we enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship with the residents, who were



treated to pizza, soda, and cake. Adding to the festivities, our friend Roxanne Weinberg donated five handmade gift

baskets filled with goodies to be used as game prizes. The Auxiliary also contributed additional soda and treats. It was a heartwarming event where no one left hungry—and every resident was reminded, “Thank you for your service.”

Our March 4th meeting came in “like a lion” as we welcomed guest speaker **John Tomzik**, Post Commander. He provided an update on the Post’s future *Scholarship Program* and discussed how the Auxiliary can help support its development. A key goal of the program is to recruit younger, qualified veterans into the VFW, which sparked a broader discussion about the Auxiliary’s own need for new members. Commander Tomzik graciously invited Mary Ann Miller to address the Post membership at their next meeting. On March 9th, **Mary Ann**, joined by Auxiliary members **Donna Dye** and **Nancy Henk**, did just that—encouraging members to invite eligible family members and friends to join the Auxiliary and continue our mission of service.

To promote “*Remember Everyone Deployed*”, a simple yet powerful way to show support for our active-duty service members., we will be placing signage in the Post bar and in the lounge and offering **free red ribbons to wear**, to anyone who wishes to support our troops by wearing a bit of red on Fridays.

Finally, on March 20th, we were honored to recognize Auxiliary nominee and Army veteran **Patrick Gray** of Peoria, Illinois, who was awarded his Quilt of Valor—a touching tribute to his service and sacrifice.



As we move forward into the spring season, we embrace these changes with optimism and renewed dedication. Our mission remains the same: to support our Post, our veterans, serve our community, and strengthen our Auxiliary through fellowship and purpose.

**Our Auxiliary meets the First  
Wednesday of each month 1:00 pm at  
7255 N. Caldwell Ave., Niles, IL.  
60714**



**DAY OF  
SERVICE  
COLLECTION**

### **HELP OUR ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY**

We are collecting the needed items until **The Day of Service distribution on Saturday, May 2, 2026**. Please leave your donations with the bartender. Here is a list of items needed that you can drop off at your convenience:

#### **PERSONAL ITEMS**

- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste (travel size)
- Dental Floss
- Mouthwash (travel size)
- Disposable razors
- Shaving Cream (travel size)
- Hand Sanitizer (travel size)
- Hand Lotion (travel size)
- Deodorant (travel size)

#### **INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED**

##### **SNACK ITEMS**

- Rice Krispie Treats
- Slim Jims/Beef Sticks
- Apple Sauce (individual)
- Cookies
- Fruit Cups
- Candy
- Fruit Snacks
- Gum
- Trail Mix Bottled Water
- Small bags of chips
- Nuts in Small Bags
- Jerky
- Energy Drinks
- Ramen Noodle Packages
- Instant Coffee (NO K-Cups)
- Protein Bars
- Hot Chocolate Packages
- Protein Bars
- Hot Chocolate Packages
- Puzzles, Sudoku, etc.