**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS BLAZING STAR POST #1574**

**17 CANNON AVENUE**

**STATEN ISLAND, NY 10314**

**Website. http://blazingstarvfwpost1574.org/wp**

July 2021

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| --- |
| BLAZING STAR POST 1574 CONTACT NUMBERS  Al Porto, Commander - 718-578-1242, albert.porto38@gmail.com  Paul Dietrich, Quartermaster - 718-698-5269, paul@the-dietrichs.com  William Alcock, Adjutant - 718-698-1923 |

**Calendar Events**

**MEETING INFORMATION**

**Members, if you have not attended a meeting in a while, now you have three options to attend even if you live remotely from the post. Support your post, log in, call in or make an in-person reservation to attend:**

**If you have a computer with a camera, use the link to connect to the meeting from the safety of your home. If the link does not work for any reason, copy it and paste it into your search engine.**

**No computer or camera? Call in using the phone number provided. Be sure to identify yourself when you get in.**

**A limited number of members may attend in person. Call the Paul Dietrich at 718-698-5269 for a reservation. You will get a return phone call either yes or no as limited by COVID rules.**

**The meeting scheduled for July 10, 2021 has been cancelled**

**Schedule of Meetings and Events for 2021**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Event | Location | Time | Remarks |
| **10 July** | **Blazing Star Post Meeting** | **Gold Star Post** | **1000** | **CANCELLED** |
| 7 August | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 8 September | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Wednesday |
| 2 October | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 6 November | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |
| 4 December | Blazing Star Post Meeting | Gold Star Post | 1000 | Saturday |

**Membership**

REMINDER >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<REMINDER

IF ANY OF YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION (ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL ADDRESS) CHANGES, PLEASE NOTIFY US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS FOR MEETINGS AND IMPORTANCE ANNOUNCEMENTS.

REMINDER >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<REMINDER

2. Consider Life Membership. You save money over the long run and eliminate the need to renew yearly. Below are the membership rates for Life membership and Installment Plan Life Membership.

**Age on 31 Dec             Payment in Full             Installment Plan Option**  
**Total:                   Initial Fee:        11 payments of:**

Through Age 30               $425.00                $45.00                $38.64

31-40                                  $410.00                $45.00                $37.27

41-50                                  $375.00                $45.00                $34.09

51-60                                  $335.00                $45.00                $30.45

61-70                                  $290.00                $45.00                $26.36

71-80                                  $225.00                $45.00                $20.45

81 and over                        $170.00                $45.00                $15.45

3. Dues Renewal Reminder:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Matthew | Hayes | 3/31/2021 | EXPIRED |
| Jay | Lawrence | 9/30/2020 | EXPIRED |
| Peter | Leunes | 2/28/2021 | EXPIRED |
| Derek | Long | 4/30/2020 | EXPIRED |
| Ian | McCartney | 12/31/2020 | EXPIRED |
| Bruce | Rabold | 8/31/2020 | EXPIRED |
| James | Robinson | 5/31/2021 | EXPIRED |
| Raymond | Tolas | 2/28/2021 | EXPIRED |

**Service Officer**

1. Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA health care so they are on record should they ever need it.  No cost to apply.  Apply on line at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility/vfw](file:///C:\Users\Albert\Documents\VFW\Newsletters%202011\www.va.gov\healtheligibility\vfw) or call 1-877-222-8387.

2. DD Form 214 website. http://vetrecs.archives.gov. For assistance, contact post service officer, Doug Encarnacion.

3. Online Health Care Application. [www.vets.gov](https://www.vets.gov/).  or call 877-222-VETS (8387).

4. John Bartow, Assistant VSO, Veterans of Foreign Wars 518-626-5687.

5. A VBA Representative at the Staten Island Vet Center every Wednesday.  There are no walk-ins everyone must call (718)816-4499 to set up an appointment.   All services are free. Samuel B. Cottes, Jr., Veterans Outreach

Specialist, Staten Island Veterans Center, US Department of Veterans Affairs; Readjustment Counseling Services, 60 Bay Street, Staten Island, NY 10301 Tel: (718) 816-4499 x 7747 Cell: (929) 359-2449 Fax: (718) 816-6899

6. VA New York Harbor Healthcare System is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans and VA health care personnel. Eligible Veterans must schedule an appointment by calling 1-877-877-9267. At this time, VA New York Harbor is offering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to Veterans 65 years of age and older currently enrolled in VA Healthcare.

The vaccine is being administered at the following locations by appointment only:

 • Manhattan VA Medical Center

• Brooklyn VA Medical Center

• St. Albans Community Living Center

• Staten Island Community VA Clinic

Eligible Veterans must schedule an appointment by calling 1-877-877-9267

7. Any eligible Veteran who needs help signing up for the vaccine can contact the NYC Department of Veterans’ Services

1 Centre Street, Suite 2208, New York, NY 10007 at 212-416-5250. They can also call the NYC Vaccine hotline directly at 1-877-VAX-4NYC (1-877-829-4692).

**8. COVID-19 vaccines at VA**

**These groups are now also eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine at VA when their local VA health facilities are able to offer more vaccines:**

* All Veterans
* Spouses and surviving spouses of Veterans
* Caregivers of Veterans. For COVID-19 vaccine eligibility, we define a caregiver as a family member or friend who provides care to a Veteran. Caregivers may help a Veteran with personal needs like feeding, bathing, or dressing. They may also help a Veteran with tasks like shopping or transportation.
* Recipients of Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) benefits
* Which Veterans are eligible for a vaccine?

All Veterans are now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine at VA.

This includes anyone who served in the U.S. military, including the U.S. National Guard, Reserves, or Coast Guard.

This also includes anyone who served in any of these roles:

§  Commissioned officer of the Regular or Reserve Corp of the Public Health Service, **or**

§  Commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (or Coast and Geodetic Survey), **or**

§  Cadet at the U.S. Military, Air Force, or Coast Guard Academy, **or**

§  Midshipman at the United States Naval Academy

9. Veterans Affairs officials have acknowledged that the number of backlogged claims will likely not return to pre-pandemic levels until late 2022.  Disability claims that have been pending for four months or more are considered backlogged.  In early 2020, 70,000 cases were backlogged.  That number grew to 210,000 by spring 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic related shutdowns at the National Personnel Records Center. Veterans Affairs claims processors use military and personnel records from the agency to decide cases, but without staff in offices to pull the records, the new disability filings have lingered.  Earlier this year, VA officials helped vaccinate the National Archives and Records Administration workforce against coronavirus to help their offices return to normal operations. In addition, about 60 VA staffers have been temporarily assigned to the NPRC offices to help with records retrieval and digitizing.  However, VA Officials warn that if Congress passes pending legislation granting new disability benefits to tens of thousands of veterans exposed to burn pits while serving overseas, the number of backlogged cases could grow again.

**Employment and Education**

1. Looking for a job? Need quality employees? USE VETJOBS! [www.vetjobs.com](http://svarialce.vfwemail.org:81/CT00004002MzA1OTA1NDk=.HTML?D=2011-08-26)

**Bottom of Form**

General

**1. SI University Hospital's Military Appreciation Program has been re-activated.** This program entitles active-duty members and veterans free parking 12 times per year at the SIUH parking lot. Go to the Security Office with proof of military/veteran status. You will be given 12 parking stamps. Place them on parking ticket and no fee.

2. Free parking for veterans at Richmond County Medical Center. Veterans can park for free in the visitors parking lot where tokens are required. Stop at the main reception desk or security post, show proof you are a veteran (driver’s

3. The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains and return home of the following personnel:

**Army Pfc. Bill F. Hobbs, 20,**Hvy Mortar Co, 31st Inf Regt, 7th Inf Div, Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, Nov. 30, 1950.

**Navy Electrician’s Mate 3rd Class Leslie P. Delles, 21,**USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Seaman 1st Class Wilbur F. Ballance, 20,**USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Radioman 3rd Class Earl M. Ellis, 23,**USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Neal K. Todd, 22,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Army Sgt. Lloyd A. Alumbaugh, 21,** 7th Medical Bn, 7th Inf Div, Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, Nov. 28, 1950.

**Army Pfc. John J. Sitarz, 19,** Co L, 3rd Bn, 110th Inf Regt, 28th Infantry Div, Hürtgen Forest, Germany, Nov. 2, 1944.

**Army Staff Sgt. Raymond C. Blanton, 19,** Co C, 1st Bn, 60th Inf Regt, 9th Infantry Div, Hürtgen Forest, Oct. 14, 1944. **Army Cpl. Kenneth R. Foreman, 19,** Co A, 1st Bn, 32d Inf Regt, 7th Inf Div, Chosin Reservoir, No. Korea Dec. 2, 1950.  
**Army Sgt. Elwood M. Truslow, 20,** Co L, 3rd Bn, 31st Inf Regt, 7th Inf Div, Chosin Reservoir, No. Korea Dec. 12, 1950.  
**Army 1st Lt. Myles W. Esmay, 21,** Co B, 236th Engr Cbt Bn, Merrill’s Marauders, Myitkyina, Burma, June 7, 1944.

**Navy Seaman 2nd Class Walter R. Pentico, 17,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Wesley J. Brown, 25**, USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Seaman 2nd Class Raymond D. Boynton, 19,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Seaman 2nd Class Russell O. Ufford, 17,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Patternmaker 1st Class Stanislaw F. Drwall, 25,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Seaman 2nd Class Floyd D. Helton, 18,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Malcom J. Barber, 22, Navy Fireman 1st Class Leroy K. Barber, 21, and**

**Navy Fireman 2nd Class Randolph H. Barber, 19,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Seaman 1st Class Warren C. Gillette, 21,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Chief Water Tender Claude White, 40,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

**Navy Seaman 1st Class Russell C. Roach, 22,** USS Oklahoma, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

4. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is seeking the public’s help to find and encourage more MIA families to donate a DNA sample to help speed the identification process of recovered remains. Each military service and the State Department has a service casualty office that can explain how to donate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Army: 800-892-2490 | Navy: 800-443-9298 | State Department: 202-485-6106 |
| Marine Corps: 800-847-1597 | Air Force: 800-531-5501 |  |

5. Staten Island Community TV: Veterans TV Shows are available 24 hours a day via YouTube. To view, google "Youtube, Ed Salek, In Honor of" or go to Youtube.com and search for Ed Salek, In Honor of.

7. Your post sponsors two major scholarship contests annually. They are the Voice of Democracy for all high school students and Patriots Pen for students in the 6, 7th and 8th grades. Entrants are judged and eligible for cash prizes at the Post, County, District, State and National levels. This year’s topic for the Voice of Democracy is “America, where do we go from here.” The Voice of Democracy has a national prize of a $30,000 scholarship for eligible high school students. This year’s Patriots Pen topic for 6, 7 or 8th graders is “How can I be a good American.” Patriots Pen has a national prize of $5000 to eligible grade school students. If you have children or grandchildren in these grades, please consider entering them in these contests. All applications and essays must be completed and turned in to the Post for judging by 31 October 2021. See Quartermaster Paul Dietrich for applications and rules for both contests.

**Items of Interest**



VF-84, initially known as the *Vagabonds*, was established on July 1, 1955, at NAS Oceana flying the FJ-3 Fury. After deactivation of *VF-61* in 1959, VF-84's commanding officer, formerly with *VF-61*, requested to change his squadron's name and insignia to that of the Jolly Rogers. His request was approved on April 1, 1960. The squadron then was reassigned to Carrier Air Wing Seven and made a single deployment on the USS *Randolph* (CVA-15) in 1958/59. The squadron transitioned to the [F8U-2 Crusader](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-8_Crusader) in 1959. VF-84 deployed aboard [*Independence*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Independence_(CV-62)) during the [Cuban Missile Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis) and the [Bay of Pigs incident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Pigs_incident), the squadron made several Mediterranean cruises on board the Independence. The squadron flew the F-8C Crusaders for several years prior to being introduced to the F-4B during 1964. In 1964, VF-84 transitioned to the [F-4 Phantom II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-4_Phantom_II) and flew the F-4B, F-4J and the F-4N until they transitioned to the [F-14 Tomcat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-14_Tomcat) in early 1976. In 1965 the squadron deployed for 7 months on board [*Independence*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Independence_(CV-62)) in the [Gulf of Tonkin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Tonkin) and flew 1507 combat sorties, logging 2200 flight hours over both [North Vietnam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Vietnam) and [South Vietnam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Vietnam). From 1970 to 1975, VF-84 was assigned to [Carrier Air Wing Six](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrier_Air_Wing_Six) aboard the [USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVA-42)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Franklin_D._Roosevelt_(CVA-42)) for four deployments to the Mediterranean Sea. *Roosevelt'*s twenty-first Sixth Fleet deployment was marked by indirect participation in the October 1973 [Yom Kippur War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War), as she served as a transit "landing field" for aircraft being delivered to Israel. The *Roosevelt* battlegroup, Task Force 60.2, also stood by for possible evacuation contingencies. Planes of VF-84 (temporarily assigned to VF-41 for the 1973-74 cruise and operating with VF-41 markings) escorted US transport planes to within 150 miles of Israel during [Operation Nickel Grass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Nickel_Grass), the resupply of Israel. After its transition to the F-14 was completed, the squadron embarked on its first cruise on [*Nimitz*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Nimitz_(CVN-68)) in December 1977. In 1979 the unit was the first [TARPS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TARPS) capable squadron of the fleet.

In January 1980, *Nimitz* diverted from the [Mediterranean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean) to take up station in the [Arabian Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Sea) in response to the [Iranian hostage crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_hostage_crisis) and in April participated in [the failed hostage rescue attempt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Eagle_Claw). In November 1983, the squadron embarked on an extended deployment off the coast of [Beirut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beirut), [Lebanon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon), in support of a multinational peacekeeping force. During 1985, VF-84 spent 68 days off the coast of Lebanon in response to the hijacking of [TWA Flight 847](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TWA_Flight_847). The squadron's last cruise with *Nimitz* lasted from December 1986 until June 1987, when *Nimitz* was rebased to Bremerton, WA. In October 1988, CVW-8 (the carrier wing of which VF-84 was a part) was deployed with [*Theodore Roosevelt*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Theodore_Roosevelt_(CVN-71)), beginning in the [North Atlantic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Atlantic) for [Exercise Teamwork '88](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Exercise_Teamwork&action=edit&redlink=1) which involved operations with the [Royal Norwegian Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Norwegian_Air_Force). *Roosevelt'*s first Mediterranean deployment was in December. VF-84 also did Shakedown and initial carrier qualifications for the USS Lincoln in late 1989-1990. In December 1990, *Theodore Roosevelt* deployed as the last carrier to join the [Operation Desert Shield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Desert_Shield_(Gulf_War)) force. "TR" joined [*Ranger*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Ranger_(CV-61)) and [*Midway*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Midway_(CV-41)) in the [Persian Gulf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_Gulf) and was later joined by [*America*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_America_(CV_66)). Throughout the [Gulf War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War), VF-84 flew combat air patrols for the fleet, escorting the Air Wing Eight’s strike aircraft and performing TARPS missions to collect [bomb damage assessments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bomb_damage_assessment). In total, squadron members flew 468 combat sorties. After the war, VF-84 flew an additional 111 sorties in support of [Operation Provide Comfort](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Provide_Comfort) before *Roosevelt* was relieved by [*Forrestal*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Forrestal_(CV-59)) in June 1991. In March 1993, VF-84 deployed again on *Theodore Roosevelt*, the only F-14 squadron in a reconfigured airwing that included Marine F/A-18, CH-53 and UH-1 squadrons. VF-84 flew critical TARPS reconnaissance missions during Operation Deny Flight, providing information about [Bosnian Serb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian_Serb) positions around [Sarajevo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarajevo). The squadron also flew in support of [Operation Southern Watch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Southern_Watch), enforcing the no-fly zone over southern Iraq. VF-84 returned to NAS Oceana in September 1993. It was to be the squadron's last Mediterranean deployment. Due to the downsizing of the Navy after the [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War), the Navy disestablished several squadrons, and VF-84 was one of them. The squadron spent its last eighteen months of existence participating in several joint service operations, honing its skills in air-to-air combat, strike and TARPS. From its transition to the F-14 until its disestablishment, VF-84 had been a part of [CVW-8](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CVW-8).

**Notable member: Sebastian N. Ventura**