

'Deployments Can be Stressful'

VFW supports Army Reserve unit at sendoff picnic

Jun 19, 2025

Members of VFW Post 2811 in Gainesville, Florida, provided and grilled hamburgers and hot dogs for an Army Reserve unit on June 14 at Cynthia Chestnut Park.

Three Post members participated in a sendoff picnic for more than 50 soldiers and family members of the 257th Transportation Battalion, 399th Movement Control Team.

The veterans provided refreshments and camaraderie to the unit that is on orders for deployment to the Middle East.

“Deployments can be stressful,” said VFW Post 2811 Quartermaster Avery Owen, a retired master sergeant with the 3rd Bn., 20th Special Forces Group of the Florida Army National Guard. “Local reserve units tend to be made from communities and often families that you know. This gives our VFW Post a chance to show its grassroots support for those who are sacrificing for our freedoms. Anything we can do to make things easier for the soldiers and families involved, we’re happy to do.”

Owen, who manned the grill and transported the Post’s tables, chairs and refreshments to the event, said that this is the type of function that the VFW promotes. He added that grant funds available through the VFW’s Military Appreciation Program (MAP) can help offset his Post’s costs.

“The prime mission of the VFW is to honor veterans by directly helping them and their families,” said Owen. “When our Post took the position of helping sponsor the 257th Transportation Battalion, it did so knowing we have the full backing of every VFW member in the organization.”

Specifically designed by the VFW to help Posts build relationships with their local military community, the MAP grant program can help VFW Posts cover expenses up to \$5,000 annually, if funds are available for events such as the sendoff picnic. The money is specifically earmarked for basic food items and nonalcoholic beverages for service members and their family members.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

“The program is a great fit for active Posts like ours who want to spend more time helping and less time fundraising,” said Owen. “That way, we can spend more time at the grill and less time worrying about the bill.”

Article written by Michael P. Maurer, a Life member of VFW Post 2811. Maurer is the recent recipient of the Silver Award for top feature article in the VFW National Publications Contest.

This article is featured in the 2025 June issue of Checkpoint. If you're a VFW member and don't currently receive the VFW Checkpoint, please contact VFW magazine at magazine@vfw.org.