



DISPATCHES FROM THE VFW

by Tom Zurhellen

‘When the going gets tough, the tough get going’

‘Already tough’ veterans pitch in to help by preparing meals for kids

Editor’s note: Dispatches from the VFW appears bi-weekly in the Northern & Southern Dutchess News and Beacon Free Press.

Thanks to my parents, who grew up in a 1950s America that was still recovering from World War II, I still repeat a lot of old sayings I learned from them, particularly when something goes wrong, or a new challenge awaits.

Heck, I used to whisper “Where there’s a will, there’s a way” 10 times a day when I walked across the country last summer. But now, the saying I find myself repeating these days with our sudden health crisis is definitely one we all know:

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

When I think of the toughest people I’ve met in my life, I realize most of them are probably veterans. Of course, veterans have an advantage over most of us when it comes to toughness or resilience; they already have a lifetime’s worth of training when it comes to courage, hard work, sacrifice and just all-around chutzpah. Admittedly, that toughness also tends to make veterans some of the most stubborn people on the planet, but hey, that’s a whole a topic for another future Dispatch.

I have been reminded of this innate toughness in our veterans this week at the Poughkeepsie VFW, as we are faced with the coronavirus pandemic and all the challenges and anxiety it brings to the Hudson Valley and beyond. Many of our VFW members are in the crosshairs of this virus because of their advanced age or health complications, so you would assume they would shrink away or retreat until this health crisis passes.

But remember, these are veterans – so that’s not going to happen.

When we discovered that many local kids won’t get a full meal now that our schools have closed, these veterans and

their families sprung into action. We made 50 lunches this Saturday, we made 50 more on Sunday, and yes, we’re making 50 more this afternoon – there’s no complaining, there’s no bellyaching, there’s no talk about “kids these days.” There’s just a group of older folks working hard as a team to make sure kids in our community don’t go hungry while the health crisis continues.

And you can bet your bottom dollar these veterans will make 50 more meals tomorrow.

Sometimes I think we forget the true definition of toughness.

No, it’s not being mean or cruel, and it’s not being careless or forgetting our own safety. To me, toughness is doing what you think is right, regardless of the sacrifice. Toughness is putting others above ourselves because we know that’s the right thing to do for our community, and for our nation.

To our younger folks, the sudden challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic can seem almost overwhelming as they disrupt our daily lives. But to our older folks, particularly our older veterans who served overseas in combat, it does not seem nearly as catastrophic. They say wisdom only comes with experience, and one of the things our older vets have in abundance is experiences. Those experiences count for a lot, and they also give our veterans a toughness, a readiness that most folks simply don’t have.

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

Yes, it’s an old saying but it still rings true, doesn’t it? And when I walk in the VFW each day this week, I already know I’m going to see some very tough people doing the work to help others in their community. After all, that’s what veterans do.

Thanks for listening! Stay safe, and we will see you next time!

Tom Zurhellen is the commander at



At the Poughkeepsie VFW, service officer Jimmy Metrando gets ready to help prepare 50 lunches for local school children.

-Courtesy photo

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 170 in Poughkeepsie. A Navy veteran, he served aboard the cruisers USS Truxtun and USS California during the Persian

Gulf War. He currently serves as Associate Professor of English at Marist College, where he has taught Creative Writing courses for the last 15 years.

Poughkeepsie VFW taking food donations to replace school lunches during health crisis

VFW Post 170 in Poughkeepsie is accepting lunch food items, as well as donations to purchase lunch food items during the coronavirus pandemic, to supply lunches to our local kids who rely on school lunches as their primary source of nutrition.

The VFW has partnered with other local non-profits like Hudson River Housing and Hope On A Mission (HOAM) to make sure no local child goes hungry during this crisis.

Lunch food items must be new and sealed. The items requested are: jars of peanut butter and jelly, loaves of white bread; individually wrapped chips, cookies, crackers and snacks; juice boxes; paper lunch bags; plastic sandwich bags.

Lunch food items and donations to purchase lunch food items can be delivered to VFW Post 170 at 1 Violet Avenue in Poughkeepsie. We are open 12-8pm every day. Our phone number is (845) 452-5407.

Misconceptions about COVID-19 spread through email, online

By Kate Goldsmith

When dealing with a disease like COVID-19, accurate and timely information is essential to minimizing risk of transmission and avoiding panic. Caused by a novel coronavirus - “novel,” in this case, meaning we haven’t seen it before – humans currently have no immunity to COVID-19. Countermeasures such as vaccines and treatments are being developed but are not immediately available, according to health officials.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic last week, and officials on every level of government are seeking to quell public fear and provide up-to-date information that is vital to the community’s well being. At the same time, misinformation is spreading more quickly than the disease, via email and social media.

The fact-checking website Snopes.com

has debunked a number of claims about the novel coronavirus, such as:

-You can perform a “simple self-check” for the coronavirus by holding your breath for 10 seconds without experiencing discomfort (supposedly to rule out pulmonary fibrosis, which is not a symptom of COVID-19).

-Drinking water will flush the virus cells from your throat into the stomach, where they’ll be destroyed by acid.

These and other claims allegedly come from experts at prestigious institutions, according to the emails and online posts.

An article at ConsumerReports.org noted the daunting task faced by social media outlets:

“Big tech companies are being confronted with the swift spread of online misinformation about the coronavirus—from dangerous health advice to racist conspiracies to scammy products—and

the industry has launched what looks like all-out war to fight it.”

For starters, Google has ensured that top results when searching for “coronavirus” are for links to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

On March 3, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg wrote a post outlining his company’s plan to promote factual information about the disease:

“Given the developing situation, we’re working with national ministries of health and organizations like the WHO, CDC and UNICEF to help them get out timely, accurate information on the coronavirus,” Zuckerberg wrote. “We’re giving the WHO as many free ads as they need for their coronavirus response along with other in-kind support. We’ll also give support and millions more in ad credits to other organizations too and we’ll be working closely with global

health experts to provide additional help if needed.”

Despite the efforts of Google, Facebook and other tech giants, misinformation is still getting through.

The best way to receive factual, up-to-date guidance on COVID-19 is through agencies such as the CDC, WHO and state and local health departments.

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/>
- NYS Department of Health <https://www.health.ny.gov/>
- Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health (845) 486-3400 or <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/DBCH/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.htm>.

Nuvance Health announces COVID-19 Temporary Visitation Policy

To continuously ensure a healthy and safe environment for patients and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, no visitors are allowed at any Nuvance Health hospital or facility until further notice. Exceptions apply for:

- Active Labor and Delivery: Patient can have one (single) support person during labor and delivery
- Pediatric, NICU, and Nursery: Two parents/guardians per one patient per day
- Extenuating Circumstances: Patient’s care team will discuss special circum-

stances with the patient and their family/appropriate person(s). Extenuating circumstances may include: end-of-life care, life-threatening admission to the hospital, patient’s inability to thrive without support person, legal guardian required, interpreter required, or support person required for transportation.

Additional information for visitors:

- COVID-19 Suspected or Confirmed Patient: Patients who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 will not be allowed any visitors.

- Screenings: All visitors will be subject to an active screening for risk factors of COVID-19. Temperatures may be checked. Visitors should be prepared to answer questions about their recent travel history. Visitors showing signs of respiratory illness, such as cough, fever, or difficulty breathing/shortness of breath will be asked to go home.

- Visiting Hours: Visiting hours may change as this situation develops. Please call the hospital to confirm visiting hours before you come to the hospital.

Nuvance Health officials apologize for any inconvenience this visitation policy may cause you and your family. This is a very important way to limit the risk of possible exposure to COVID-19 to you, your loved ones, and the community. We know that visitors and loved ones play an essential role as partners in healing and wellness. That’s why this visitation policy will be reevaluated daily and removed as soon as conditions allow.

Visit [nuvancehealth.org/coronavirus](https://www.nuvancehealth.org/coronavirus) for the latest information.