

2026-2027 **COMMANDER'S GUIDE**



COMMANDER'S GUIDE

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August 2026

Dear Post Commander,

Congratulations on your election as Commander! This is an important position, one that requires hard work, dedication, and trustworthiness. Your Post is counting on you to fulfill your duties to the benefit of the organization, members and communities. We want to help you be successful.

Whether you are new to the job or have done it before, there is always something you can learn. This guide was created to assist you – no matter what your current level of knowledge and experience may be. This guide is a training tool to educate and assist you in your role.

The enclosed manual is periodically updated. You can find the latest version, as well as other valuable resources, at www.vfw.org by logging in as a member (Login – top bar, right side), and going to “Member/Post Resources – Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates.”

Other important resources include the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual. In particular, the Manual of Procedure, Sec 218 (a) (1) outlines the responsibilities of the Post Commander. Learn these well. Each Post is required to maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual; current copies are available for purchase from the VFW Store at www.vfwstore.org.

We are here to support you. If you have questions and are unable to find answers with your District or Department, call us at 833.VFW.VETS. Explain to the operator what you need, and they will transfer you to the correct person to answer your questions.

Thank you for taking on this responsibility. It may be challenging at times, but it can also be very rewarding. We wish you well!

Dan West
Adjutant General

Marc L. Garduno
Quartermaster General

P.S. Have a suggestion to how we can improve the Commander’s Guide? We want to hear from you! Send an email to info@vfw.org, subject line “Feedback on Commander’s Guide,” with your comments. We are always looking to improve on what we do.

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VFV
MEMBER

VFV
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COMMANDER
2026-
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CORY L. GEISLER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

2026-2027

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



OFFICER ROSTER VISITOR REGISTRY



Officer Information

List name, address and phone number:

COMMANDER _____

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER _____

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER _____

QUARTERMASTER _____

ADJUTANT _____

CHAPLAIN _____

JUDGE ADVOCATE _____

SURGEON _____

1 YEAR TRUSTEE _____

2 YEAR TRUSTEE _____

3 YEAR TRUSTEE _____

OFFICER OF THE DAY _____

GUARD _____

SERVICE OFFICER _____

Committee Chairs



Welcome

We Are Proud To Have You Visit

During the course of the year, you may have the opportunity to visit with VFW Officers from all levels of our organization, as well as prominent citizens from your community. Enhance your year by utilizing this visitor's registry.

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PROGRAMS



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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to help educate all elected and appointed officers of the organization about programs in the organization, from youth programs & scholarships, community service, volunteer recognition, “Buddy” ® Poppy, to all programs under the Veterans & Military Support umbrella. Additionally, it will have information concerning U.S. Flag issues and a variety of special projects. Our sole priority is helping your Post, District and Department serve your community and veterans in a meaningful way. For that reason, the VFW National Organization is committed to doing everything possible to serve you and make every opportunity count for you and for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The purpose of this section is twofold. First, we want to familiarize you as leaders of your Post, District or Department, with the fundamentals of our VFW programs and activities. As we do that, it is our goal then to encourage you and your existing leaders to participate in building that much-needed relationship with your local community. We are convinced that good programs, properly executed, will do more for your Post than anything else you do.

Your programs are often the first impression that the public has of the VFW. Therefore, it’s extremely important to be prepared and more importantly appoint the right persons as the program chair. Your VFW programs are defined under two categories: ***Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities and Veterans & Military Support.*** Within the ***Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities*** category, we often refer to several program elements as our core programs. These are programs that are executed by the largest number of Posts and have the greatest impact on our organization, our communities, and our veterans.

Typically, these core programs are mandated for every Post as part of your Department All State Program and are heavily encouraged and supported by the VFW National organization. These core programs within the ***Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities*** include our scholarship programs, Voice of Democracy ® and Patriot’s Pen, the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year program, Scouting and “Buddy” ® Poppy.

The second group of programs under the ***Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities*** umbrella, is called Special Projects and Activities, which cover Americanism, volunteering recognition, community service, awards and recognition and other miscellaneous youth activities. These programs are highly encouraged for all Posts and Departments and will be supported by the VFW National organization upon request.

Before you can effectively execute our VFW programs, you first must know the programs. I recommend to all Post, District, or Department officers and chairs, to carefully read the program chair’s guides to familiarize yourself with the programs that best fit your Post and your available resources. As a VFW leader, you should be able to speak intelligently and authoritatively about all aspects of our great organization.

The best available resource that we have available is our VFW website at vfw.org. I would strongly encourage you as officers and program chairs to establish a login. Doing so will provide

you with access to all the information and materials concerning VFW Programs but will also allow you to access additional information needed to help you execute your duties and responsibilities as an officer of the organization. Here you will gain access to important items such as National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure & Ritual amendments and National Resolutions to be presented at the National Convention, our monthly National Headquarters Bulletin and General Orders, and several online fillable forms.

However, the most important benefit of having a login is being able to access **MY VFW**, where you'll have access to all materials and information within our **VFW Training & Support** section. This section contains videos, promotional materials, chair manuals and resources, and much more in all available areas of the organization.

VFW Programs Overview

Community Service, Youth Scholarships and Activities

Patriot's Pen

Originally created as the Youth Essay Contest, Patriot's Pen asks junior high and middle school students to write a 300 to 400-word essay on a new patriotic theme each year. Winners receive scholarships and begin by competing at the Post level. Winners proceed to the District, to the Department, and finally to the National level where they compete for the \$5,000 first place scholarship. The themes and additional information concerning program execution can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the **VFW Training & Support** hub, under **Community Service and Youth Programs**.

Voice of Democracy ®

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy Audition Essay Contest, like Patriot's Pen, asks high school students to write and record a 3 to 5-minute essay, again on a patriotic theme selected by the VFW each year. Students may record an electronic audio recording of their essay (submitted via email, CD, or flash/USB drive), 3–5 minutes in length (± 5 seconds) in MP3 format. Like Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy winners receive scholarships and other incentives at the Post, District, and Department and finally to the National level where they will compete for the \$35,000 first place scholarship. The Voice of Democracy theme and additional information concerning the execution of the program can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the **VFW Training & Support** hub, under **Community Service and Youth Programs**.

These two great youth scholarship programs provide almost \$3 million in scholarships and incentives every year.

Scholar's App

As technology continues to evolve and move forward, the VFW is moving forward with it. The VFW now offers students the opportunity to apply for both Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen using an online system called Scholar's App. This system simplifies and coordinates much

of the work for the Chairperson at all levels. Before a post can use Scholar's App, they must first be entered into the system by the Department Chair or the Programs Dept.

Once this is set up, a post can generate and print out flyers specifically for their post. Students can use the link or the QR code on the flyer to apply online. Applications go into a folder reserved specifically for that post. Judges can then be assigned and the judging process completed remotely. Once judged, the chair can advance the student to the next level. Hard copy applications and recordings can be uploaded by the chair on the student's behalf.

Today's students and teachers expect an online submission process. Providing one shows that your Post is responsive, professional, and aligned with how schools operate today. Most importantly, adopting the online system allows your Post to focus on what truly matters—supporting young voices and encouraging patriotism in the next generation.

Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award

While you're visiting a school, don't miss the opportunity to mention the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award. The VFW wants to identify and recognize America's best educators in three (3) categories, (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), who instill a sense of national pride in students. Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime candidates. It offers commemorative citations for those worthy teachers and their schools. Posts are encouraged to submit a candidate, in each category, and forward these awards to their District by November 15. If your Department does not have District judging, then forward it on to your Department Headquarters and/or Department Chair by January 1. The Department may then select a single candidate, in each category, for the award and submit their entries to National Headquarters by February 1. That honor can establish a great relationship that opens the door for all VFW and Auxiliary programs. Additional information concerning the execution of the program can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the ***VFW Training & Support*** hub, under ***Community Service***.

VFW Scouting

The VFW has a long relationship with Scouting. VFW Posts need to consider providing leaders, sponsoring units, offering their facility for meetings and encouraging their involvement in service projects. Posts can benefit from Scouting by having a unit do a flag retirement ceremony, help distribute Buddy Poppies or help with clean up after events.

Department Scout of the Year winner citations can be found on the Dashboard under entries, citations, Scout of the Year. Complete the form, save and submit, and download for print. There is only one entry permitted for each Department.

These are just a few that would provide a benefit and generally can serve your Post. Additional information concerning the execution of the program can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the ***VFW Training and Support*** hub, under ***Community Service***.

VFW “Buddy” ® Poppy Program

Our oldest and perhaps most historically significant program is the VFW “Buddy” ® Poppy program. It is important that you realize that although Memorial and Veterans Days are particularly important Buddy Poppy events, you should have poppies at every event that involves your Post and the public. Poppies can and should be distributed year-round.

I’m sure you know that we never “sell” poppies. We give them away and receive donations. If someone cannot donate, don’t deny them a poppy. Seeing the red poppy on a lapel or dress brings honor to those we have lost and recognition to the VFW.

Additionally, Section 219 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure mandates that the net proceeds from the distribution of Buddy Poppies must be credited to the Post Relief Fund. Also listed in Section 219 are the purposes for which funds can be disbursed from the Post Relief Fund. I would encourage officers at all levels of the organization to familiarize themselves with this section. Additional information concerning the execution of the program can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the ***VFW Training and Support*** hub, under ***Community Service***.

VFW Recognition Programs

The purpose of the VFW Recognition Program is twofold. First and foremost, as an organization of wartime veterans and their spouses, the VFW and its Auxiliary understand the need to recognize and honor those individuals who have performed above and beyond their peers. Of particular significance are those who, like our members and veterans, have placed the safety and welfare of others above and beyond their own. Secondly, the VFW and its Auxiliary realize the value of these awards to the Post, District, Department and National organization.

It’s important that VFW and its Auxiliary leaders, at every level, take advantage of every opportunity to honor worthy individuals and sometimes organizations.

With that in mind, the VFW has established several awards. The following are suggested awards:

Chairperson Thank You

These citations are available to recognize Posts or individual Post chairpersons who have demonstrated an exceptionally high level of service to their community. The Department Chairperson is given sole responsibility for identifying those Posts and individuals.

Public Servant National Awards (Law Enforcement, Firefighter, Emergency Medical Technicians/Service, 911 Dispatchers, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technicians)

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, 911 dispatchers, and explosive ordnance disposal technicians to receive the

VFW's Public Servant Awards. Posts are encouraged to submit a candidate for these awards to their Department Headquarters by January 1. The Department may then select a single candidate for each of the four awards and submit those to the VFW National Headquarters by February 1.

Life Saving Awards

The Safety Chairperson at Posts, Districts and Departments are encouraged to regularly identify and honor individuals throughout the year in their geographic area who have saved a life. The VFW Programs department provides the three different Life Saving citations (Regular, Line of Duty and Valor) and appropriate medal (if available), free of charge, for local presentations.

Refer to the Judging Manual for guidance on criteria for all awards and programs.

VFW Special Projects & Youth Activities

Our next level of programs is our special projects. These include Americanism, volunteer recognition, community service, awards and recognition and other youth activities.

Equally important among our special projects is community service. Any activity done by a Post or Auxiliary that benefits the community falls under this broad banner and is supported by the VFW National Organization and encouraged for all Posts, Districts and Departments.

Recognizing these exceptional efforts is provided in two ways – our Volunteer Recognition Programs, and the National Community Service Post Award.

VFW National Community Service Post Award

Every department will have an NCSP Winner based on total impact. Each year on July 1, the National Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each Department, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact). Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community.

VFW's Veterans in the Classroom

Another special project is the VFW's Veterans in the Classroom. In recent years, many teachers have contacted VFW Posts seeking veterans to come into the classroom and share their military experiences. VFW members may also choose to contact local youth groups and schools and express their willingness to share their experiences. VFW National Headquarters has materials available to support this activity. Many veterans have found this to be enjoyable and therapeutic.

Few youth programs provide a greater benefit to a Post than involvement with Scouting, Civil Air Patrol, Naval Sea Cadet or JROTC units. These programs annually produce individuals with an appreciation of patriotism, civic responsibility and the likelihood of future military service.

VFW Posts need to consider providing leaders, sponsoring units, offering their facility for meetings and encouraging their involvement in service projects. Posts can benefit from Scouting by having a unit do a flag retirement ceremony, helping distribute Buddy Poppies or helping with clean up after events. In the case of JROTC, the same applies. Your place may serve as a location for the JROTC Drill team to practice and, just like Scouting, they are an excellent resource for volunteers for Post-sponsored activities.

Posts are encouraged to seek out ways in which they can benefit their community. The VFW encourages any activity that benefits the community, brings recognition to the Post and honors America's veterans and those in uniform. Every program, done by your Post, results in relationships that produce goodwill. This goodwill increases public interest in your events, often enhances your fundraising efforts and can produce new members. A Post that has been identified as a community asset through its programs will seldom have a shortage of members or lack of community support. Use your VFW Programs to establish your Post as a respected community asset. The VFW will then become the organization of choice for all veterans and will reap the rewards of public favor that cannot be purchased.

Helpful Hints for Program Execution

Each time you visit a school, conduct a patriotic event, honor a local hero, serve your community's youth or perform any kind of community service, you are creating an impression of the VFW. Hopefully, that impression is the beginning of a relationship that benefits the community and your Post. The goal of any Post should be to become known as a valuable community resource and not the local "watering hole" in the community.

Posts that achieve this status rarely have problems with recruiting or fundraising.

Getting young people involved is one way to achieve that goal. To start, our scholarship programs, just like the "Buddy" ® Poppy program, should be integrated into everything you do in the community. Make sure Buddy Poppies and scholarship entry forms are available at every public event, so there are consistent opportunities for youth and their families to engage and participate.

We will discuss schools first, but later we will explore a variety of other opportunities to present our scholarship programs. Contact schools, home school associations and other youth organizations early, preferably in April. This is the time of year when they begin planning for the coming fall. When you visit a school, don't go unannounced, call first to find out with whom you should meet and make an appointment.

Schools are busy places and often have a secure environment. Showing up without an appointment almost ensures failure. Call, make an appointment and be on time. Conduct yourself professionally and you will be treated professionally.

Make sure you have the necessary materials to leave with the teacher, counselor, principal or administrator on everything you will discuss. Show them copies of the various brochures and

identify the entry form included. If the opportunity is available, go into the classroom and present the students with the programs that directly impact them. One of the primary purposes of your visit is to leave the impression that your Post is a resource, not only for scholarships, but for veteran's history, patriotic information, and U.S. Flag etiquette.

Your chances for success are increased when you work closely with your Auxiliary counterpart. Make sure that they understand and have materials for all the VFW programs.

The most successful Posts are always the ones that work together with their Auxiliary. Like our scholarship programs, the Teacher Awards begin at the Post level. Information and entry forms are on the VFW website at vfw.org.

A key factor in the success of your scholarship and teacher programs is your judging process. The judging sheets are included on the training website. When selecting your judges, make every attempt to find judges from outside the VFW and its Auxiliary. Local military recruiters, educators, media personalities, police officers, firefighters, church pastors and local civic leaders are excellent choices. If possible, make your life easier by using the same judges for all your scholarships and teacher's awards. Cultivate a good relationship with your judges by expressing your gratitude and inviting them when you honor your winners.

As mentioned earlier, when seeking students to participate, don't hesitate to look beyond your schools. These same programs should be presented to the leaders and sponsors of any group that deals with young people. Look around your neighborhood for community centers, athletic teams and leagues, Scout units, churches with large youth groups, home school associations, YMCA's and YWCA's - anywhere there are large groups of young people who may wish to participate.

In recent years, home school programs have produced several winning participants. Home school parents and their associations are generally patriotic, have broader latitude for selecting curricula and are always looking for projects that have value beyond the immediate lesson.

Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Programs

To continue to detail the core programs, as mentioned earlier, Veterans & Military Support is part of the VFW's never-ending obligation to assist members of the active-duty military, National Guard and Reserves and veterans, as well as their families. These programs were established to keep the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the forefront of patriotism as the organization and its members find innovative ways to show support for America and her armed forces.

The programs under the Veterans & Military Support umbrella consists of the VFW Combat Tested Gaming (CTG), Military Appreciation Program (MAP)/Adopt-A-Unit Program (AAU), VFW #StillServing Grant, Post Assistance Grant, Uniting for Veterans Grant, the VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members, and the VFW's "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" program. Through these programs, the Veterans of Foreign Wars provides guidance and assistance to our subordinate units in their efforts to support our military and their families.

From hosting morale boosting events, providing financial assistance, to providing scholarships to veterans returning to school.

VFW Combat Tested Gaming (CTG)

The VFW's Inaugural Gaming League Exclusively for Veterans was established in 2023. CTG has quickly succeeded in reaching its early objectives. Now, as we look to the future, we set our sights on becoming THE leader in the veteran gaming space by continuing to promote the program and through partnering with a veteran-owned company which specializes in building the gaming infrastructure needed to support our growth and long-term success.

In just half a year, CTG has become the fastest growing veterans gaming community in America. We are over 3,000 veteran gamers on our Discord server and streaming gameplay on our Combat Tested Gaming Twitch channel. Join our Discord community to connect with other veterans and active-duty service members who play your game of choice. Subscribe to our Twitch and YouTube channels to watch our gameplay and experience the thrill and camaraderie of our gamers.

There is a dedicated VFW Service Officer available to answer VA benefits questions daily. Four VFW Posts have leveraged CTG to start gaming nights and one VFW Post has already built a gaming room to support student veterans. Five Veterans' lives have been saved during these crises by using connections made through CTG.

VFW Military Appreciation Program (MAP)/Adopt-A-Unit (AAU) Program

The Military Appreciation Program is designed to encourage the link between the VFW and their local military community.

This program promotes VFW member interaction with the local military and opens avenues for National Sponsorships and local level involvement with all branches of service. Within this program there are two unique services to help foster the relationship between the Post and the local military community, the Military Appreciation Program Grant process and the Adopt-A-Unit program.

The Military Appreciation Grant process is intended as financial assistance for Posts, Districts, and Departments to sponsor events for active-duty military units, National Guard, and Reserves. These events are most successful when local Posts interact directly with the military unit, involving the National Certified Recruiters, Veterans Service Officers, and your local and Department chain of command.

A Military Appreciation Grant is on a first come first serve basis and is open to VFW Posts who have adopted the unit and are in Good Standing. The application, which is located on the VFW National Dashboard, must be filled out completely, including a breakdown of the event budget and the VFW involvement with the event. Additional information concerning the execution of the program and the grant application can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the ***VFW Training and Support*** hub, under ***Veterans & Military Support***.

Another opportunity for Posts to interact with their local military community available within the Military Appreciation program is the Adopt-A-Unit program. This program was developed to pledge support of the Post to the service members and families of a unit from the local military community. When a Post “adopts” a unit, you make a commitment to the service members and their families to provide moral and emotional support before, during and after deployment.

Sponsoring a military unit is a great opportunity to get other community activity projects started, such as coordinating with teachers or schools to co-sponsor the unit. Additional information concerning the execution of the Adopt-A-Unit program and the application can be found at vfw.org, behind the login within the *VFW Training and Support* hub, under *Veterans & Military Support*.

Please remember that the objective of all Military Appreciation Program initiatives is to increase the awareness of the VFW, and it does not end when the troops re-deploy home. They and their families continue to need our support and assistance.

VFW #StillServing Grant

The #StillServing Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts, Districts and their Auxiliaries to offset expenses incurred while doing community service projects. Projects require direct involvement by the applying organization’s members with members of their community to qualify.

Both a VFW Post and its Auxiliary, and a District and its Auxiliary, can receive funding of up to \$1,500, but each applicant organization must have its own unique project. Applicants are limited to receiving a total of \$1,500 during the cycle.

Applications for the VFW #StillServing Grant will be accepted from October through June 1st of the following year, or until all grant funding is exhausted.

VFW Post Assistance Grant

The Post Assistance Grant is offered exclusively to VFW Posts to offset expenses incurred for building repairs and equipment that enhances or restores the applicant organization’s ability to serve veterans and their community. Auxiliaries, Districts, Departments and other VFW subordinate organizations, etc., may not apply. VFW Posts may receive up to \$2,500 in reimbursement for qualifying projects. Applicants are limited to receiving this grant once every three years.

Applications for the VFW Foundation Post Assistance Grant will be accepted from October through June 1st of the following year, or until all grant funding is exhausted.

Uniting for Veterans (UFV)

The UFV Grant is open for VFW Posts and Auxiliaries to apply for a matching donation of up to \$1,500 for monetary and food donations to local food bank and homelessness relief organizations in their communities. The VFW will provide a \$1 match for every pound of food or dollar donated to food insecurity or homelessness relief organizations. A Post or its Auxiliary may apply for this grant. Funds are sent directly to the Organization the Post or Auxiliary donated to. No funds are provided to the Post or Auxiliary.

The UFV Grant opens in October through June 1st of the following year, or until all grant funding is exhausted.

VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

This program administers financial grants to active-duty service members (to include activated Guard and Reservists) and their families to help cover daily necessities like mortgage/rent, auto payments, home repairs/vehicle repairs, and utilities. An important note about this program is the financial grant application is only available on-line at vfw.org and must also be submitted online using the form on our website. Applications submitted by U.S. mail, email, and fax will not be accepted. For the application and more information, visit: vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" Program

The last program under the Veterans & Military Support umbrella is the VFW's "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" program. The VFW's "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" helps service members get the education and training needed to begin the next chapter of their life. Each scholarship will provide recipients with up to \$5,000 for tuition and fees to apply toward their education at an accredited post-secondary institution, including universities, colleges, trade schools and apprenticeships, and certification programs. An important note about this program is the scholarship application is only available on-line at vfw.org and must also be submitted online using the form on our website. Applications submitted by U.S. mail, email, and fax will not be accepted. For the application and more information, visit: vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support.

VFW Student Veteran Initiatives



- ☐ Scholarships of up to \$5000
- ☐ Separated with or currently hold a military rank of E-5 or below
- ☐ Demonstrate a need for financial assistance
- ☐ Must be accepted or enrolled in a VA-approved program or school at an accredited postsecondary institution
- ☐ Limited to one per family per semester
- ☐ Applications for the fall semester will be accepted Jan.1 through Apr. 30
- ☐ Applications for the spring semester will be accepted Aug. 1 through Nov. 15
- ☐ Fall semester scholarships will be awarded in August, and spring semester scholarships will be awarded in January
- ☐ Scholarships must be used by the end of the school semester for which the veteran is applying, or they will become null and void
- ☐ Be a citizen of the United States

The VFW and one of its major supporters, Sport Clips Haircuts, have again partnered to help our veterans and their families. The VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" will provide service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. It's just another way to say "Thank you" to those who deserve it the most. vfw.org/Scholarship/

OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES - ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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Introduction

When the Veterans of Foreign Wars was first organized, it was primarily an association of individual groups all working toward common goals of veterans legislation, veterans benefits, veterans rehabilitation and patriotism. Administration was comparatively simple since the only problems were those of getting information to the members and getting them to agree as to what was to be done.

These **still** are our major goals but the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have broadened and activities on the local Post level have grown far beyond the original purpose.

Youth activities, civic betterment, humanitarian projects, and community service all take a tremendous amount of individual volunteer effort and a lot of money. In the raising of that money and in providing recreation and social activities for our own members our Posts have branched into activities which have multiplied the organization's administrative challenges far beyond what our founders could possibly have dreamed.

These challenges are compounded by the fact that a VFW Post is almost a pure democracy and nearly all of its programs depend upon volunteers. Decisions are made by vote of people who are informed on the subject and are carried out by volunteers. As a result, if there is not a set of hard and fast rules to follow and a clear understanding of fields of responsibility and limits of authority there are going to be misunderstandings and irritations which create dissension and detract from the purpose of the organization.

This problem has been recognized and very sincere efforts have been made (and continue to be made) by the National and Department Organizations to provide rules and guidance for Post Officers and Committee Chairmen in carrying out the duties of their particular field of responsibility.

The **master set of rules** for the guidance of all Post activities is the VFW National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. The Bylaws are the basic rules and the Manual of Procedure goes into further detail. These govern all activities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and are inflexible. They are worded very clearly, and they mean just what they say. The Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, along with the VFW Ritual are combined into one document referred to as the Podium Editions which is available to download for free behind the login at vfw.org or a hard copy can be purchased from the VFW Store (Item #4108) at vfwstore.org or 833.VFW.VETS (833.839.8387)

Because of the fact that state laws differ and there is a wide variance between Departments in their organizational make-up, most Departments have adopted **Department Bylaws** which apply only to Posts within that Department's jurisdiction. These must not conflict with the National Bylaws nor can they permit anything which is prohibited by the National Bylaws.

In most cases, Department Bylaws deal with policies to be followed at the Department or District level and do not attempt to go into detail in the operation of the Post. They can impose **more** restrictions on Posts but never **less** than are provided in the National Bylaws.

Naturally, a basic set of rules cannot contain much detail nor can it specifically provide for every possible contingency in every Post -- from the little 25 member Post which holds a meeting once a month and lives off its dues -- to the thousand member Post which owns its own home and conducts dozens of activities in as many different fields.

For that reason, **specialized** rules must be formulated and adopted to cover specific activities. The more complicated the activity, the more specific the rules must be.

These rules seek to prevent Posts from falling into the common pitfalls of poor planning, deficit financing, loss of control, and illegal operations.

Since the Bylaws are designed to cover a wide range of operations, they cannot and do not attempt to specifically detail every move of the Post. They are something like a building code. They establish certain minimum requirements but they permit you to build a lot of different kinds of houses.

As a Post grows in size and activity, there are certain steps it either should take or must take to protect itself and its officers and avoid future arguments and misunderstandings which can create problems and dissension.

Incorporation

The first steps that any Post must take before it branches into any type of community project, social activity or financial undertaking is incorporation. Most Posts are already incorporated -- the rest should be.

There are two general sets of rules which cover incorporation of a VFW Post: the laws of the individual state, and the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (Section 708). To be recognized, your corporation must comply with both and must be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for review.

In just about every Department, incorporation of a Post is a comparatively simple matter since forms which meet the requirements of state law and the National VFW are available upon request from Department Headquarters. If they are not available, this Headquarters would strongly urge that such forms be prepared, approved by the appropriate state official and the National VFW and reproduced for use by the Posts.

Incorporation is necessary for several purposes. To begin with, in many States, the Post must be incorporated before it can hold property in its own name and before any type of liquor license may be issued to it.

Secondly -- and perhaps just as important to the officers of the Post -- the act of incorporation takes individual responsibility away from the Post Officers and places it upon the Post itself. The individual officers of an incorporated Post cannot be sued for financial obligations of the Post.

It is the general policy of this Headquarters that approval will not be given to separate Holding Corporations or Club Corporations. Some of these have been approved in the past and conceivably will be permitted to exist under that approval, but there will be no more in the future. (Unless changes in laws or regulations make a change in policy necessary.)

There is no particular advantage in the pyramiding of corporations. The Post incorporation is sufficient to protect all its operations -- **if those operations are kept under control of the Post**. The general purpose of a separate Club Corporation or Holding Corporation is to take control **away** from the members of the Post. Usually it has not been done for any dishonest purpose but in the belief that more efficient operation will result from tighter control by a smaller group of people. It is the contention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that sufficient control may be exercised -- without sacrifice of democratic processes -- by the adoption of Post Bylaws and rules.

An exception to the “no separate corporation” rule may be made in the case of sponsorship of large-scale “one- shot” activities such as an air show, a community celebration, a Department Convention, etc. It is sometimes better in these cases to incorporate the individual activity for ease in obtaining insurance, settling financial obligations, etc. These corporations have a limited existence and are dissolved after their purpose is served.

A standard Articles of Incorporation template is available through the Adjutant General’s Office or can be printed or downloaded from the training and support section of the National Headquarters website.

Post Bylaws

Every Post operating any type of activity -- particularly a Club or Post Home -- should adopt Post Bylaws. Section 202 of the National Manual of Procedure requires that such Bylaws be submitted to the Department Commander and Commander-in-Chief for review and approval.

The **Post Bylaws** can cover the gaps left in the National Bylaws and Department Bylaws and Rules. Where the former are the **building code**, the Post Bylaws are the **house plan**. They show just what you are trying to accomplish.

The National or the Department Organizations can furnish you with a Post Bylaw template. However, they are the responsibility of the Post and may be set up in the way best suited to the type of operation contemplated by the Post. They **cannot** permit anything prohibited by National or Department rules, nor can they take away any of the responsibilities or authority of Post Officers. They **can** set up general procedures and policies within the Post.

Post Bylaws may provide for the establishment of certain standing committees within the Post, state how they are to be selected and the limits of their powers and duties; they may give authority for the sponsorship of recurring activities; limit the expenditures of funds; establish the procedure for carrying out certain objectives; and provide for their own amendment.

Generally speaking, they set up the **policies** of the Post and provide for carrying them out. They protect the member against ill-conceived or hasty actions since they generally provide for prior notice and a 2/3 vote for amendment, and they promote a clearer understanding of operating procedures.

Matters of **policy** are covered in the Bylaws; **details of management** of a Post Home or Club are left to the Post Club or Home regulations.

A standard Bylaws template is available through the Adjutant General's Office or can be printed or downloaded from the training and support section of the National Headquarters website.

Officer Responsibility & Limits of Authority

If every Post Officer were familiar with their duties and responsibilities and their limitations -- and carried out their duties to the best of their ability -- there would be very few squabbles within a Post and none which would require outside intervention. The National Manual of Procedure specifically lists certain duties for each officer and, in the normal course of events, this would be sufficient. However, the complex nature of the operation of many Posts makes it necessary that we look beyond a mere listing of duties and fully understand the reasons for the division of authority. In this way we can apply them to the unusual situations which are bound to crop up from time to time.

The **Post meeting** is the center of all Post activities. Every member has a right to attend all meetings and has a voice in their proceedings. It is at the Post meeting that the Post adopts its Bylaws, its Club Regulations, decides its policies, and distributes responsibilities. Within practical limitations, the Post meeting is supreme to the Post Officers, committees and employees. The membership present may overrule decisions of the Post Commander or House Committee; they may approve expenditures, set policies, and delegate authority. The Post meeting cannot take any action contrary to the National or Department Bylaws or rules or in conflict with its own Bylaws.

It is important to understand that there **are** limitations on the authority of the Post. A member has the right to appeal any Post action to the Department Commander (Section 109 of the Manual of Procedure), who will determine whether that action was proper. In extreme cases, a member can go to the courts if he/she feels that their rights have been abused by an action of the Post. The Post cannot take **unreasonable** actions at a meeting. For instance, it could not refuse payment of a legitimate bill for an item authorized for purchase at a previous meeting. It cannot direct an officer or member to do anything contrary to VFW regulations or public law. It **cannot** take away any of the authority given to individual officers through the National Bylaws.

Ideally, the Post meeting makes the rules and sets the policy for the Post; other levels of authority carry them out.

The **Post Commander** is the key officer of the Post. They, alone, represent the **judicial** branch of the organization and also have some of the responsibilities of the **executive** branch. They preside at all meetings, enforce the rules, appoint committees not otherwise provided for, and make certain that the other officers and committeemen perform their duties.

Their authority extends to the Post Home or Club to the extent of enforcing the rules of the Post and the National and Department VFW and public laws. They represent the authority of the Post between meetings, and their voice is that of the Post membership. They see that the Post Trustees conduct their audits, that the Post Quartermaster is bonded, and that the House Committee properly supervises the activities of the Post Home.

Their authority also is limited according to the rules of the organization and the bounds of common sense. They are in no sense a dictator. They cannot order nor permit the breaking of laws nor can they supersede the recognized authority of other officers or committees. They cannot, for instance, order the Club Manager to keep the clubrooms open after hours, nor can they direct the Post Quartermaster to pay an unauthorized bill.

The Commander should be familiar with all activities of the Post. They should sit in with the Trustees at their audits or, at least, have a sufficient knowledge of their procedure to know whether they are doing their job. They should attend the meetings of the House Committee, calling to their attention any discrepancies he/she may have observed or complaints they may have received. They must know that when they sign a check, it is in payment of a legitimate expenditure.

The Commander is the arbitrator of arguments and the judge in disputes. As a general rule, their decisions are considered correct until over-ruled by the Post meeting, the District, Department Commander or Commander-in-Chief.

The **Post Quartermaster** has certain definite responsibilities and duties. They are the responsible officer for all Post funds and property and his/her signature validates all checks. They keep the fiscal records for the Post and have the duty of overseeing all financial transactions. They must be bonded to the Post for all funds under their control.

In the case of a large-scale Club operation, it often becomes impractical or impossible for the Post Quartermaster to physically handle all the funds or to personally keep the detailed records of operation. It is not uncommon in these cases to require that the Club Manager or a hired bookkeeper keep a separate set of club books, subject to the control of the Quartermaster and reported to the Quartermaster at regular intervals.

The Quartermaster is the **responsible** Post Officer in financial matters -- not necessarily the Post bookkeeper. In a large corporation the treasurer does not physically handle the bookkeeping obligations but he/she is responsible that they are done properly, efficiently and accurately. This may also be true of the Post Quartermaster, depending upon the Post Bylaws and Club regulations. In any case, they must be familiar with all books of record and are responsible for all required Federal and State reports and payments.

Remember that the Post cannot take away any of the authority of the Post Quartermaster although they may be relieved of some of the **work**.

The Quartermaster only pays bills which are authorized by Post action or under Post rules. They cannot refuse to pay a legitimate and properly authorized bill except for a lack of funds. Neither can they be forced to pay one which is not properly authorized.

Quite often a controversy arises between the Quartermaster and Club Manager as to responsibility for Club funds. Sometimes a fine point arises which must be arbitrated. As a rule of thumb, the Quartermaster keeps their nose out of the cash register except for checking purposes, and the Manager hides no transactions from the Quartermaster. The Quartermaster does have the right, and the duty, to determine that all reports are correct and that all funds are handled properly. They do not have the right to assume managerial responsibilities.

The **Post Trustees** duties are probably the most misunderstood of any of the Post Officers. They are primarily the **watchdogs** of the Post funds. They make certain that no one has their fingers in the till. They audit the Post funds regularly -- at least once each quarter.

While the National Bylaws are silent on this point, it would seem logical that the Trustees also have authority and responsibility concerning the proper handling of funds. It is only reasonable that their authority should not be limited to catching a dishonest person. Equally important should be the prevention of dishonesty. Where funds are guarded carelessly or records are kept inefficiently, the Trustees should call attention to this and make every effort to correct it.

The Trustees duties extend to **every** operation of the Post. Their audits must cover all activities, including the clubrooms, the bar, bingo, or any other source of income or financial transactions. Again, it is not always entirely necessary that the Trustees do their own investigating and conduct their own audits. In most cases, the Trustees are not qualified accountants, particularly where large amounts of cash are involved and the operations are especially complex. Many Posts employ a private firm of accountants for the purpose of an audit. This is to be encouraged rather than discouraged. In these cases, the auditors report to the Trustees and the Trustees make certain that the audit is conducted correctly.

A quarterly audit of all funds and accounts is an absolute necessity. If the Trustees do not function in a proper manner, the Commander may deem it an emergency situation and appoint an auditing committee on his/her own initiative.

Regardless of the size of the Post, a quarterly audit is mandatory. Failure to conduct one may result in the cancellation of the Post Quartermaster bond and will take away all voting privileges at District and Department Conventions.

The Trustees do not have any authority over the management of the Post Home, nor is property held in their name in an incorporated Post. They cannot serve on any committee having to do with the handling of Post funds, and cannot therefore serve as members of the House Committee, Bingo Committee, etc. There is nothing to keep a Trustee from serving as a volunteer worker or in an appointive capacity where Post funds are not handled.

The **House Committee** functions only in a Post which operates a Post Home or Club. This committee may be selected in anyway the Post determines but it is generally considered advisable that it be elected by the Post membership, with the members serving staggered terms, on the order of Post Trustees. This lessens the possibility of one certain group gaining and retaining control of the Club.

The duties of the House Committee should be laid out in the Post Bylaws and/or Club regulations so there is no misunderstanding of their powers and responsibilities. The purpose of the committee is to act on behalf of the Post in making certain that the club is run in an efficient, reputable and legal manner and that the rules of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are adhered to.

It is the general procedure for the House Committee to hire all employees, set their salaries, and issue necessary instructions and orders to the Club Manager. The committee usually meets at least once a month for the purpose of discussing facility problems, taking inventory, studying financial reports, and in general, acting as an advisory, supervisory and disciplinary board. No member of the House Committee should ever be permitted to act as Club Manager or as a paid employee of the Club due to the obvious conflict of interest.

The House Committee is generally given authority to suspend the Club privileges of any member and to establish and enforce, through the Club Manager, rules of decorum and behavior. They usually, also, have the authority to suspend or discharge the Club Manager or any employee for good and sufficient cause. In any disciplinary action, discharge or suspension, there should be provision for an appeal to the Post meeting.

The committee cannot make or enforce any rules contrary to the rules of the Department, public law, or the lawful instructions of the Post. If it is elected from the Post floor, the committee is directly responsible to the Post floor and makes its reports to the Post at meetings. Refusal to comply with the rules and instructions of the Post is grounds for removal of any or all members of the House Committee.

The **Club Manager** is directly responsible to the House Committee for the management of the Post Clubrooms. They have the direct responsibility for supervising employees, enforcing rules, and accounting for receipts and expenditures. They must have enough authority to permit him/her to do so with a reasonable degree of freedom from interference. They must keep the accounts in such a manner as to justify all expenditures and verify all receipts. The Club Manager must make reports to the Post Quartermaster and to the House Committee. They enforce the rules but they do not make them.

The Club Manager keeps all payroll records, recording amount of pay to each individual and withholding the proper amount of Federal and State Income Taxes and FICA Taxes. Either the Club Manager or the Post Quartermaster must make the necessary Federal and State reports and payments for withholding taxes, Social Security and Unemployment Compensation.

The Club Manager has the right to appeal any decision of the House Committee to the Post floor for arbitration. Post members should, however, be cautious in overruling the actions of its own representatives on the House Committee, particularly in the case of frequent appeals. A dishonest Club Manager generally has no problem in bringing in enough friendly votes at a meeting to uphold his appeal.

In summary, it must be remembered that the Veterans of Foreign Wars itself is supreme in any dispute. The Department rules and the Post Bylaws and rules outline the way the Post and the Club must be run. The Post, in **all** cases, is above the Club. The Club is merely an activity of the Post and must be treated as such. **In no case is it a separate entity.**

When a Post is chartered it is granted a license or franchise for the use of the name of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the carrying out of programs which are assumed to be of value to the entire organization. At any time that a Club or other activity is managed in such a manner as to harm the good name and reputation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the right to use the name can be revoked.

As a general rule, the operations of VFW Posts and their Clubrooms in the Departments are a credit to the organization and a source of pride to its membership. Through proper adherence to the rules of the VFW and the duties and responsibilities of our officers, we can avoid the many misunderstandings and bitter arguments which can break the finest Post.

Club Regulations

These, again, are left to the Post for adoption although they must not conflict with the National Bylaws, Department Post Home Rules or Post Bylaws. Suggested forms are available although they are not designed for adoption in their entirety. The variance between Posts makes it impossible to adopt a standard form for all Posts. Some operate entire buildings with activities scheduled every day of the week; others may own or rent very modest quarters and only be open occasionally. Some have a full-time paid staff of employees while others may operate entirely on volunteer help.

The Club regulations cover the details of operation. They outline the responsibilities and limits of authority of the Post membership, the House Committee, the Club Manager, and the guests. They cover opening and closing hours, decorum, enforcement of rules, hiring of paid help, financial authority and keeping of records.

For any Post operating a Club or Post Home, local regulations are a **must**. They will save many hours of argument, and remove most causes for misunderstanding and dissension.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Operation, Management & Control of Clubs and/or Canteens

The purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are stated within our Congressional Charter. The operation, management and control of clubs and/or canteens were not envisioned in the purposes of our organization. The operation, management and control of clubs and/or canteens are not provided for in our National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

The first and foremost consideration of Posts shall be to the objects of the VFW which are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational. We must maintain our focus to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies. VFW clubs and/or canteens shall be of secondary interest and concern and compatible with this stated purpose.

Rules and Regulations and Management Guides for the operation of Post sponsored clubs and/or canteens have been adopted by some Departments in compliance with state and local regulations and the applicable mandates of Section 708 and 709 of our National Bylaws which address incorporation and control of units. Also, many Posts have incorporated the above in their Bylaws or adopted Rules and Regulations for the operation, management and control of their canteens and/or clubs in accordance with the above.

Although differing laws at the local and state levels preclude the promulgation of universally acceptable rules and regulations, certain principles are essential for good management and proper control of Post sponsored clubs and/or canteens and certain policies are mandatory to insure total compliance with the National Bylaws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars both as to incorporation and control of units and to be in keeping with the objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In adopting rules and regulations for the operation, management and control of clubs and/or canteens, the following provisions of the National Bylaws must be adhered to:

Any Post owning and/or operating, directly or by reason of a holding company or other entity substantially controlled by the Post or its members, a canteen, clubroom or other facility available to members or guests must maintain general liability insurance, including, if necessary or appropriate, liquor liability insurance. Such insurance must be of a type and amount sufficient to protect the Post and must name, as additional insureds, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department in which such Post is located.

All money, property or assets of any kind or nature, as well as all books and records owned, held or used by any activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in behalf of a Post, shall be the property of the Post and must be placed in the care and custody of the Post Quartermaster.

No Post and no activity, clubroom or holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any Post may own any property jointly or in common with any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation or other business or charitable entity, except that property may be held jointly or in common a post or unit of a congressionally chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for the prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and is not contrary to any provision of law or the National Bylaws.

No Post or activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in its behalf, may participate in any arrangement whereby its funds are expended on property held by another entity for the joint use of such Post and other individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations or other business or charitable entities, including veterans organizations, except that such arrangement may be made with a post or unit of a congressional chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for the prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States nor is contrary to any provision of law or the National Bylaws.

Rulings & Appeals

Section 518 of the National Bylaws places, on the Department (State) Commander, the responsibility for deciding all questions of law and usage within their Department, subject to an appeal to the Commander-in-Chief. Where such questions are submitted directly to National Headquarters, it is our policy to refer them back to the Department.

Generally speaking, an appeal cannot be made nor will a ruling be given until after an action has actually taken place. For instance, a member cannot appeal a proposal that has not as yet been acted upon. The decision of a Post Commander can be appealed to the Department Commander. If the Department Commander upholds the Post/District action, an appeal may then be made, through channels, to the Commander-in-Chief. The right of appeal is covered in section 109 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

A Department Commander or Department Adjutant may request information or guidance from the National Headquarters prior to entering into a contemplated action. Such requests will be honored and information provided to the best of our ability.

The Post Judge Advocate, Department Judge Advocate, or Judge Advocate General do not rule - they offer advice when asked to do so by the appropriate Commander. However, if an opinion written by the Judge Advocate in his/her advisory capacity is adopted and promulgated by the Commander, it then becomes the decision of the Commander.

Membership Eligibility

Where copies of separation documents are submitted, they are checked and information given as to whether eligibility is indicated. Where general information is asked, it is provided. We will give any and all assistance to a Post, or to the Department, in determining whether it should accept an applicant as a member.

National Headquarters has no facility for determining the eligibility of an applicant except by a check of the separation documents. We have no access to military records nor do we maintain any type of list of persons who are eligible for membership. Neither can we certify that an applicant is eligible merely because they were previously a member of another Post. All we can provide is general or routine information.

Once the applicant has been accepted as a member, however, the questions no longer are routine.

The procedure in removing ineligibles is covered very specifically in Section 108 of the National Manual of Procedure. There is no short-cut to the procedure.

Members-at-Large

Section 101 of the National Bylaws makes provision for members-at-large for any eligible person by reason of location, current active military service or personal preference who does not wish to affiliate with a local Post. The eligible person may become a Department member-at-large as a matter of personal choice.

Continuity of Membership

National Headquarters cannot provide a Post with a list of its members showing the years in which their dues were recorded. Neither can we check the continuity of membership of an individual. Records are not maintained in a manner which makes it feasible to provide such information.

Complimentary lapel pins recognizing 25 or more years of continuous membership were discontinued several years ago. Where Posts wish to continue to recognize such members, the appropriate pins must be purchased online at vfwstore.org or 833.VFW.VETS (833.839.8387). These pins may be ordered by the Post Quartermaster in the same manner as other merchandise. It is not necessary to provide a list of the recipients or a sworn statement that they have earned the pin if the order is submitted by the Quartermaster or other responsible Post Officer.

National Headquarters Mailing Lists Officer List vs. Member List

National Headquarters maintains an officer mailing list of certain Department Officers and Committee Chairmen, District Officers and Committee Chairmen, and Post Officers and Committee Chairmen.

Every effort is made to keep this list current and correct. Changes and corrections are made daily as information is received. Some Department Adjutants routinely forward such changes. This service is appreciated and encouraged.

A mailing list of all members is also maintained and is constantly being updated. This computerized list is entirely separate from the officer mailing list.

A major source of confusion results from a change of address being submitted without identification of any office the member may hold. In such cases, the address may be changed on the computerized membership list but not on the officer list.

A typical letter may state "I've sent my change of address to you twice and I get my magazine correctly addressed but you keep sending my Post Commander mail to my old address." This will ALWAYS happen if the member does not indicate any office held so that it will be corrected also.

Post Officer mailing list addresses can easily be changed by the Quartermaster using the Online Membership System (OMS) Election Report feature.

Post Election Report

With the increased need for early, accurate information on new Post Officers and the amount of Post dues, a "Post Election Report" form is now being distributed to Post Quartermasters prior to Post elections. These forms are to be completed on-line through the Online Membership System (OMS) immediately following the Post election or a copy can be mailed prior to June 1st to National Headquarters, a copy to the Department, and a copy to the District or County Council. The installing officer is still required to ensure the submission of the Election Report and eligibility of each member, elected or appointed.

Of most importance to National Headquarters are the names and addresses of Post Commanders and Quartermasters and the amount of Post dues. Information regarding Post information such as location, meeting day and time, contact information, and services offered are tracked and used as part of the "Find a Post" feature on the National headquarters website.

Change of Post Name or Location

A Post cannot change its name or location without carrying out the provisions of Sections 205 or 208 of the National Manual of Procedure. We will NOT make such changes on the strength of a phone call, a letter or an email. Bitter experience has taught us that an enterprising or obstinate Post Officer may take it upon himself to make changes which have not been approved by the Post. We must have the properly signed documents on file before the change is recognized. This is true even where the name was incorrectly spelled on the muster report or the location has changed because of annexation or other legal action.

Posts ordering banners with the wrong name, location, or muster date will not receive them until the proper procedure has been followed.

Forms for Change of Name, Correction of Name, Change of Location, and Correction of Location are available without charge from the Adjutant General. Sample copies of the forms can be downloaded or printed in the training and support section of the National Headquarters website.

Change of Meeting Place

The change of a Post meeting place is covered in Section 205 of the National Manual of Procedure. Such a change requires the approval of the Department Commander but not the Commander-in-Chief.

A Post changes its location when it moves into a different political sub-division (from one city to another, from a city into a township, etc.). It changes its meeting place when it moves to another building in the same city-even if that city is as large as Chicago.

A Post could conceivably meet temporarily outside the limits of its chartered location without changing its official location, but the location should be changed when moving to a permanent home elsewhere.

Visitations—National Officers

Invitations to National Officers must be forwarded through channels to the Adjutant General with approval of the Department Commander. This applies to all National Officers, and unless the above is complied with, invitations will not be given consideration

Formation, Chartering & Instituting of VFW Posts

Pertinent points to organizing new VFW Posts (Section 201):

1. Only the Commander-in-Chief can authorize a charter for a new Post.
2. Charter application must contain the names of 25 eligible veterans; 10 must be new members.
3. A member may transfer from one Post to another provided the following conditions are met: 1) completion of the application as prescribed in Section 102 of the Manual of Procedure, 2) signing a Member Declaration, and 3) acceptance by the Post.
4. No new Post shall bear the name of a living person, other than a living Medal of Honor recipient, only after written consent from the recipient has been received, nor adopt a name already adopted by another Post in good standing in the department.
5. A Post shall not be instituted unless 10 or more qualified members of the new Post are present for the institution.
6. Posts shall be instituted within 60 days of the date the charter is authorized.
7. The charter of a new Post shall remain open for up to 90 days from the date of institution of a Post.
8. The official date of charter for a Post is the date it is instituted.

Procedure in Issuance of New Post Charters

1. A letter is addressed to the Post Quartermaster about two weeks prior to the expiration of the 90-day charter period, informing that the charter period is due to close and instructs them to make up and submit a dues report covering all previously unreported members just as soon as the charter period expires.
2. About one week following the close of the 90-day charter period, an alphabetical print-out of names of members, including transfers, is mailed to the Post Commander and Post Adjutant. A cover letter requests each to certify the list, making such corrections and/or additions as necessary, and return via mail or email.
3. When certification is received, and corrections and/or additions verified, the charter is engrossed and mailed to the Post Commander. If additional names are included, a reasonable time is allowed for reports to clear so that verification can be made. If questions still remain, further correspondence is required.
4. The charter is not engrossed until the certified list is returned and verified from National Headquarters records.

The Department Adjutant receives a copy of all correspondence and is kept informed as to the problems encountered. They are also informed as to any changes in official information and are notified when the charter is mailed.

Some of the problems we have encountered in the issuance of the charters include:

1. **No dues payment reports received until long after the date of institution.** The Post Quartermaster should be assisted in making up the report. This should be ready for submission at the time of institution or immediately thereafter.
2. **Delay in submitting subsequent reports.** For obvious reasons, the Post Quartermaster must be instructed to submit a report at least once a month. Members names cannot be included on the charter if they have not been reported. This includes paid-up members transferring from another Post and transferred life members.

Charter Replacement

A Post having lost, damaged, or destroyed its charter may obtain a replacement from the Adjutant General's Office. This replacement charter will bear the same names as the original although it may be slightly different in appearance.

The replacement charter fees are as follows:

\$50.00 – Posts with a Date of Institution from 2003 to the present
\$75.00 – Posts with a Date of Institution from 1980 through 2002
\$100.00 – Posts with a Date of Institution prior to 1980

Anniversary Award Certificates

The National VFW issues Anniversary Citations to Posts which have completed 50, 75 or 100 years of continuous existence. These are prepared from records at National Headquarters and are mailed to the Department Headquarters at least two weeks in advance of the anniversary with the request that arrangements be made for presentation.

These certificates are prepared automatically and do not have to be requested.

We have had requests for similar citations for 25th anniversaries, which are available upon request.

Suspension of Post Charter

The Department Commander may suspend the charter of a Post for a period of up to 90 days (and extend an additional 90 days, not to exceed a total of 180 days) for failure to comply with lawful orders and/or for violation of the laws and usages of the organization. The Department Commander must notify the Commander-in-Chief of such action within 48 hours.

Cancellation of Post Charter

Charters of VFW Posts may be cancelled under the provisions outlined in Sections 211 and 212 of the Congressional Charter and Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

Before cancelling the charter of a Post, under Section 211, Congressional Charter and Bylaws, the Commander-in-Chief will suspend the charter, giving the Post an opportunity to appeal the suspension and possible revocation of charter.

The Commander-in-Chief may declare a Post defunct and its charter forfeited for failing to pay Department and National dues on a minimum of ten members by February 1, under the provision of Section 212 of the National Bylaws.

Voluntary Surrender of Charter

A Post may surrender its charter providing all members in good standing of the Post at the time are notified at least 20 days in advance of the proposed action and the proposition is voted on and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a designated meeting where such action is considered.

Section 210 of the Congressional Charter and Bylaws and Manual of Procedure covers the requirements for such action.

Post & Member Correspondence

Letters and emails from Post officers or individual members are answered promptly and courteously. If the response requires that a decision be rendered, the letter will be forwarded to the Department Adjutant for the consideration and decision of the Department Commander. Correspondence of a general nature and questions of a routine nature will be answered directly to the individual. Posts should, however, be encouraged to carry on such correspondence with the Department rather than National Headquarters.

Where to Write for Information

In writing to National Headquarters concerning any matter, much time and effort will be saved if each letter covers **only one subject**. When a letter covers several subjects, such as VFW Store orders, Community Activities, Membership Awards, etc., a reply is unnecessarily delayed while the letter passes through the various Departments at National Headquarters for individual answers.

Letters concerning National Security, Legislation or Veterans Service Issues should be addressed to the appropriate Director, VFW Memorial Building, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Letters covering other programs and activities of the National Organization should be addressed to the Adjutant General, Quartermaster General or the appropriate Director, VFW Building, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111.

Remember, your first source of information should be your Department Commander or Department Adjutant. These Officers are equipped to give you necessary information on most routine issues and common challenges.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE



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To Presiding Officers

The presiding officer is the servant of the organization.

All his/her acts at meetings and conventions must have the body's approval, unless a bylaw makes them independent.

Presiding officers who are ignorant of parliamentary law or who defy the body's will or deny to the members the proper exercise of their rights are a sad spectacle before intelligent assemblies and frequently cause discontent and disunity.

Capable presiding officers make good meetings.

Incompetent, abusive or obnoxious presiding officers can be censured; and their tenure of office can be shortened or abolished altogether by a 2/3 vote, and thus they may be legislated out of office at any meeting with prior notice.

You are not expected to know all the law, but you are expected to be able to at least match the members' combined basic knowledge of it.

Introduction

The object of all parliamentary procedure is to get things accomplished in an orderly manner, to take things up one at a time, and dispose of them in the shortest time possible, at the same time in a democratic fashion.

When only the Presiding Officer or Chairman knows Parliamentary Procedure, he/she can use it to their advantage, but when most of the body also understands the rules, the “Floor” actually controls the meeting, and the “Chair” simply directs it.

If you get in the habit of using the right terms, everybody will understand matters more readily. Note the expressions which appear in boldface type throughout this text.

When a meeting is called to order by the **CHAIR, AN AGENDA, OR ORDER OF BUSINESS**, is offered for approval, or should be offered. Once the agenda is approved, the meeting is technically limited to the points included. We usually take care of other matters and “beefs” under the **“GOOD OF THE VFW”**. If no agenda is offered, ask for it. If certain points you are interested in do not appear to be included, rise and either inquire about them or **MOVE** to add them to the agenda.

The business of a meeting is carried forward by **MOTIONS**. The object of all motions is to get things done in an orderly manner, and democratically. A motion is **MADE** from the **DEBATE ON THE QUESTION**.

In actual practice, there is usually some debate before the motion. Debate without a motion often becomes aimless, and should be limited.

In debating, or **SPEAKING ON A MOTION**, no member should be allowed to speak twice before others have had it once. Speaking on a motion is also called **TAKING THE FLOOR**.

Motions must be made on the subject involved, or the **POINT ON THE AGENDA**, which is being taken up. If a motion is made on some other subject, the chair is obliged to rule the maker of the motion **OUT OF ORDER** and **REFER THE QUESTION** to the proper place on the agenda.

Motions must be seconded to be entitled to debate. If the motion is not seconded, the chair is obliged to point out that there has been no second, and proceed with the meeting.

The chair is not supposed to “milk” the membership for a second because he/she wants one, but it is proper to allow enough time for a second, when required.

Debate before a motion has been made can always be stopped by someone **MAKING A MOTION**. Once a motion has been made and seconded, it must be **DISPOSED OF**, either by

being **DEFEATED, PASSED, TABLED, REFERRED, or PLACED IN COMMITTEE**. All of these are covered further in the text.

Except for certain **PRIVILEGED MOTIONS**, which will be explained later also, a motion cannot be placed while there is a **PREVIOUS MOTION** on the floor.

Recognition

In making a motion, or **MOVING**, the member should rise, face the chair, and signal or call for attention in a manner which will not disrupt the meeting. Once **RECOGNIZED** by the chair, the **SPEAKER** should first state his or her name and department, so such information can be **RECORDED IN THE MINUTES**.

In other democratic bodies, it is proper to say “Mr. Chairman,” “Madame Chairman,” etc., but in the VFW, it is more proper to say “My Comrade(s)” or “Comrade Commander”

Once a motion has been **MADE**, it is the duty of the chair to repeat it in order that everyone hears it, and also to **CLARIFY** it, if it was made in confused language.

Before we proceed further with motions, let us remove some of the misunderstanding concerning **WITHDRAWING A MOTION**.

Withdrawing

Before a motion has been **STATED BY THE CHAIR**, its maker has the right to **WITHDRAW** it, or modify the language. But, after it has been stated by the chair, the maker cannot withdraw or modify his/her motion without the **CONSENT OF THE ASSEMBLY**. After a motion has been stated by the chair, it belongs to the assembly.

It is also out of order to ask for the consent of the **SECONDER** to the withdrawal of a motion the seconder can only withdraw their second if the motion has been changed informally after they have seconded it.

It is **IN ORDER** for anyone to ask the maker of a motion to withdraw it, through the chair. But the maker does not have to comply. In brief, once a motion is made, seconded and stated by the chair, it cannot be withdrawn without the chair getting the consent of the assembly (usually by asking if there are any objections to the withdrawal). When a motion has gone that far, it must be disposed of by being tabled, referred, defeated, passed, etc., by vote.

When a motion has been withdrawn, it is treated as though it had never been made, and is not recorded in the minutes. Further, anyone can make the same motion again. The object of withdrawing a motion is to prevent it from being voted on and appearing in the minutes.

Once a motion has been duly made, seconded and is on the floor, it is subject to **AMENDMENT**. (Note: certain motions are not amendable and will be covered later on.)

The object of an amendment is to change or modify the original motion, without destroying the sense of it. For instance, if there was a motion on the floor to hold a picnic, it could be amended to add a date or a place, but it could not be amended to change the affair from a picnic to a bowling match.

Amendments should take the form of: inserting or adding words to the motion; striking out words; substituting words or sentences. The chair is obliged to rule out of order any proposed amendment which would do more than the above, and change the sense of the motion entirely.

In some cases, where a poorly worded motion is made, even the amendment does not make it a complete motion in some of the members' eyes. In such cases, an amendment can be made to the first amendment. This **SECOND DEGREE AMENDMENT** method is sometimes confusing, but it is legitimate, and it is up to the chair to clarify the motion and its amendments.

If it is too complicated for this, the chair can call for or recommend a **SUBSTITUTE MOTION**, with the consent of the assembly, which will tie the loose ends together so that an intelligent vote may be taken. A substitute motion is itself a form of amendment.

Amendments to motions are **DEBATABLE** (that is, can be discussed). Like motions, amendments also require seconding. Discussion on an amendment must be confined to the amendment itself.

In **TAKING THE VOTE**, after debate, the amendment is first voted upon, and then the motion itself is voted upon. Sometimes, the nature of the amendment is such that passing or defeating the amendment **CARRIES** or **DEFEATS** the motion also. In that event, it is not necessary to take a vote on the motion.

Before proceeding into further study on motions, it might be well to give some attention to the **MINUTES**.

The **MINUTES OF A MEETING** are simply a record of the proceedings of that particular meeting. As such, they can only be **ACCEPTED BY THE BODY**. In short, the general membership can only **ACCEPT** minutes of the membership meetings, the executive board can only accept its own minutes, etc. Upon reading of the minutes of a given meeting, they are subject to a motion to accept. Sometimes, **CORRECTIONS** are raised, and then the minutes are **ACCEPTED AS CORRECTED**.

Being simply the record of proceedings, minutes may be corrected at any time, including subsequent meetings.

Minutes shall record all main motions which were not withdrawn, all points of order, all appeals and whether lost or sustained. The makers of motions should be recorded, but not necessarily the seconds.

The date, time, and place of the meeting, as well as the time of adjournment should be in the minutes. Also the results of any **ROLL CALL** votes, and full report of **TELLERS**. (Tellers are members elected or appointed to tally ballot.)

Minutes cannot be **REJECTED**, but they can be **RETURNED FOR CORRECTION**. When the minutes of an executive board meeting are read at a member- ship meeting, it is only for general information, not acceptance or correction.

However, having been thus advised, the member- ship can take action at the meeting to censure or approve their board.

This, of course, is done through motions at the proper time on the agenda. The membership should be alerted to do this, and be certain not to allow any top body to exercise undemocratic control.

In connection with minutes, it is important to know that **ACCEPTING A REPORT** is the same as adopting it. **RECEIVING A REPORT** merely allows it to be read to the assembly. Receiving does not mean approving or adopting. Accepting does! In making motions on reports, the assembly should understand the distinction in the above two words.

Deferring

Once a matter has been duly placed on the floor through motion and seconded, it may become necessary to defer or postpone action. This can be done democratically by the assembly in several ways, in addition to withdrawing the motion, which we have already covered.

TABLING: A motion to **TABLE** is a motion to lay aside business in such a manner that it can be **RENEWED** at a later time—either at the same meeting or a later one. A motion to table requires a second. Once seconded, the motion to table cannot be either debated or amended, but **MUST BE PUT TO IMMEDIATE VOTE WITHOUT DISCUSSION**.

When it is desired to resume the matter which was tabled, the correct motion is to “**TAKE FROM THE TABLE.**” This motion must be seconded, and is also not subject to debate or amendment. When a matter is taken from the table, it is taken with all previous actions, amendments, etc., and resumed just as it was when tabled. Tabling a motion or matter does not carry a time limit. That kind of postponement is handled as follows:

- **POSTPONE TO A SET TIME:** When the object is to set a future time at which a matter or motion must be considered, do not move to table. Instead, move to **POSTPONE** to a set time, date, or meeting. A motion to so **POSTPONE CONSIDERATION** requires a second. It **CAN BE DEBATED** before being voted on, and can be amended as to the time.
- **PLACE IN COMMITTEE:** When it is desired to let a few handle a given matter, instead of tying up the whole meeting needlessly, this is done by **COMMITTING** or **PLACING IN COMMITTEE** through a properly worded motion.

- **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY:** A motion to **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY** is really a motion to **KILL** the subject. It must be seconded, can be debated, but cannot be amended.

These motions are dangerous, and must be watched with care when they come up. They can not only help to carry the meeting along—they can also wreck consideration of important subjects.

Appeals to Overrule Chair

The Chairman of a meeting or the “Chair” has certain rights, but they do not include engineering the meeting, or “railroading” certain matters through. A decision of the chair can always be subjected to change through **APPEAL**.

When a member rises to appeal a decision of the chair, their motion can be either to **APPEAL THE DECISION**, or to **OVERRIDE THE CHAIR**—they both have the same meaning.

Under such circumstances, the member should state carefully and in understandable language why he/she is making the motion. The motion requires a second.

Technically, the motion to appeal the decision of the chair is debatable when the question involved is the **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**, and not debatable otherwise. It is simplest, and perfectly fair, to always handle an appeal without a debate. The decision of the chair stands, until reversed by a majority vote. A tie vote **SUSTAINS THE CHAIR**.

Members should not rise to criticize the chair. If they have an objection to a **RULING**, it should always be handled through an appeal.

A sensible chairman should not take an appeal personally, but should welcome it, since it relieves them of the responsibility and places it upon the assemblage. Sustained, they are that much more confident in their chairmanship.

The chair is supposed to be the “servant of the assembly,” and as such should refrain from discussing questions before the assembly, thus maintaining an impartial attitude.

The chair cannot authorize anyone to act in their place if they are absent from the meeting. If the Bylaws do not cover that contingency, the assembly has the duty to elect an acting chairman.

The Question of Privilege

The **QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE** is often interpreted to mean “I am a privileged person, and have the right to the floor again.” The only privilege involved is the privilege of getting the attention of the chair at once to **ASK A QUESTION, MAKE A POINT OF ORDER**, or draw attention to the pressing business which cannot wait. When rising on a question of privilege, you do not wait for recognition from the chair; you **INTERRUPT** by stating “I rise to a point of inquiry (or order, or procedure).” The chair is **OBLIGED** to recognize you, answering: “state your question.”

- Rising to a “point of procedure” means that you question the procedure the chair is following—you feel they are off the track, acting contrary to **REGULAR PROCEDURE**.
- Rising to a “point of order” usually means that you feel some member of the assembly, rather than the chair is off the track, and you want the chair to take action.
- Rising on other “questions of privilege” usually involves drawing attention to conduct or misconduct of members, comfort of members, conduct of press or guests, etc. All such interruptions are loosely included in the term “question of privilege.”

If the chair sees the point you are making, they state, “the point is well taken,” and follows it. If the chair does not, they state his/her reason, and the way is open or an appeal to be taken, if necessary.

AND THIS IS IMPORTANT! Even though the chair is obliged to recognize the above questions of privilege, the assembly is not. As the book states it, “privilege of assembly outranks personal privilege.” A chronic interrupter can thus be silenced by a proper motion.

While a question of privilege requires no second, gets no debate, and is not amendable, the action desired may be deferred until the speaker is finished, and may also be tabled or postponed indefinitely. In the latter case, the question interrupted is not carried with a tabling or postponement motion.

Renewal & Reconsideration

Much confusion exists as to bringing up a point again, or trying to get a matter reconsidered. There are simple rules covering these things.

Renew a Motion

The object of this action would be to bring up a motion again after it has been defeated. The rule is:

A rejected motion cannot be renewed at the same session. It can be renewed by the same maker at a future session. Further, no motion can be introduced that is so nearly like a rejected motion that it would **PLACE THE SAME QUESTION BEFORE THE HOUSE** a second time. Also, no motion can be introduced which interferes with a motion which has been tabled, postponed, or placed in committee.

Reconsider a Motion

The object of this action would be to bring back a question for more discussion, and obtain a new vote. Such a motion can only be made by a member **WHO VOTED WITH THE PREVAILING SIDE** on the previous vote! Such a motion must receive a second, and can be debated, but not amended.

If reconsideration carries, the result is just as though the original vote had not been taken. Should such motions be brought up, and you feel the reason is a bad one, don't forget to use the "question of privilege."

It is a good thing for the most sincere members of the VFW to know the rules, and thus be prepared to keep the meeting on a true course.

Voting

Voting is normally by voice. If the result is not clear, the chair should ask for a standing vote.

Other methods of voting are: **DIVISION OF THE HOUSE, SECRET BALLOT, or ROLL CALL** of the assembly.

This short course was specifically designed to acquaint members with only the rudiments of parliamentary procedure, and is therefore, brief in coverage.

How To Manipulate Motions For Passage Or Defeat

(Read across the page. Read 1 with 1, 2 with 2, etc.)

To help defeat a motion:

1. Do not second it. Remain silent.
2. Speak against it while it is before the body.
3. Vote against it.
4. Move to postpone it indefinitely to “kill” it.
5. Amend it adversely to encumber it or complicate it.
6. Move to refer it to a committee to delay it.
7. Move to postpone it to the next meeting to delay it.
8. Move to the previous question to shut off debate on its good points.
9. Move to table it.
10. Move to recess to go after more votes.
11. If their motion wins, move to reconsider it.
12. If their successful motion remains unexecuted by a later meeting, then move to rescind it.
13. Move to adjourn, so as to prevent action on their motion at this meeting.
14. Only votes win. Get your voters to the meeting. Urge them to stay to the end and vote as you or another key leader will vote.

To help pass a motion:

1. Second it immediately. Say: “I second it.”
2. Speak in favor of it while it is still before the body.
3. Vote for it.
4. Vote against postponing it to rescue it.
5. Amend it sensibly to perfect it or improve it.
6. Vote against referring it, to achieve action now.
7. Vote down all postponements that delay it.
8. Defeat the previous question so you can continue to debate its meritorious points.
9. Vote against tabling it.
10. Defeat recess so they may not go seeking more votes.
11. Vote against their motion to reconsider your motion.
12. Execute motions promptly, so that they may not be subject to the motion to rescind at any later meeting.
13. Vote down all motions to adjourn, so as to achieve adoption of your motion now.
14. It is votes that win elections and other proceedings at meetings and conventions. Have your supporters there to help you with their votes.

Handy Phrases for Members

- Comrade Commander, or, Mr. President, or, Madam Chairman, etc.
- I doubt the quorum.
- I doubt the vote.
- I move that we ...
- I rise to a point of order.
- I move that we adopt this resolution: Resolved, That ...
- A parliamentary inquiry.
- I move to amend the motion.
- Comrade Commander, will the member yield the floor to me?
- I do not yield, or, I yield to a question only, or, I yield.

Handy Phrases for Presiding Officers

- The meeting will be in order.
- The secretary will read the ...
- The first [or, the next] business in order is...
- The Chair requests order.
- The Chair requests quiet.
- The Chair can recognize only one member at a time; all other members will be seated.
- The Chair now recognizes ...
- For what purpose does the member [delegate] rise?
- State your name, city, etc.
- The motion is [or, is not] in order.
- Do you yield the floor?
- The member will refrain from...
- The Chair wishes to state ...
- Please repeat your motion.
- It is moved and seconded that we ...
- It is moved and seconded to amend the motion by ...
- The ayes have it; the amendment is carried, now, the vote is on the motion as amended.
- Those in favor will say aye. Those opposed will say no. The ayes [or, noes] have it.
- If there is no objection, the Chair will ...

Parliamentary Procedure... at a glance, based in Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR).
Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

TO DO THIS:	YOU SAY THIS:	DO YOU NEED A SECOND?	IS IT DEBATABLE?	CAN IT BE AMENDED?	WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?	CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn"	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for ..."	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion"	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO (1)
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question"	YES	NO	NO	2/3	YES
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee"	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES (2)
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by ..."	YES	YES (3)	YES	MAJORITY	YES
INTRODUCE BUSINESS (MAIN MOTIONS)	"I move that ..."	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	"I rise to a point of order"	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE (4)	NO
VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR	"I appeal from the chair's decision"	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY (5)	YES

Footnotes: (1) Unless vote on question is not yet taken. (2) Unless the committee has already taken up the subject. (3) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable. (4) Except in doubtful cases. (5) A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair.

SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY	“I move to suspend rules so that ...”	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	“I object to consideration of this motion”	NO	NO	NO	2/3 (6)	NO (7)
VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND	“I call for a division” or “Division!”	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
REQUEST INFORMATION	“Point of information”	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TAKE UP MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	“I move to take from the table ...”	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	“I move to reconsider the vote on ...”	YES	(8)	NO	MAJORITY	NO
ACCEPT REPORTS OF COMMITTEES	“I move to accept the report of committee as read.”	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
CLOSE NOMINATIONS OR THE POLLS	“I move that nominations close.”	YES	NO	YES	2/3	NO
POSTPONE INDEFINITELY (TO KILL)	“I move that we postpone the motion to ... indefinitely.”	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	YES
REOPEN NOMINATION OR THE POLLS	“I move that nominations be reopened.”	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	YES
RESCIND	“I move that we rescind the motion.”	YES	YES	YES	2/3	YES
WITHDRAW A MOTION OR SECOND	“I withdraw my motion.”	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO

Footnotes: (6) A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion. (7) Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered. (8) Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable

MEMBERSHIP





VFW National Membership Program

2026-2027

Cory Geisler

Commander-in-Chief

“One Team, One Mission, Veterans First”

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Commander's Introduction:

Cory Geisler was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. on July 29, 2026, at the 127th VFW National Convention in Reno, NV. Cory served in the U.S. Army from 2005 to 2012, earning his VFW eligibility by serving in Korea and Iraq. In recognition of his service, he received the Army Commendation Medal (three), Army Achievement Medal(seven), Good Conduct Medal, among many others. He joined the VFW in 2008 as a member at large and then transferred to VFW Post #721 in Waukesha WI, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership.

Cory has served at various levels in the post to include his election to Post Commander in 2012. Cory has served as the Post Commander for 12 of his 18 years and is a two-time All-State Post Commander and was an All-American Post Commander in 2019. At the district level Cory was the head of various committees and was the Chief of Staff for 3 different district commanders. Cory was elected the District 2 Commander for 2017 – 2019. During the 2018 – 2019 year District 2 was recognized as an All-State and All-American district. At the department level, Cory was the Department Safety Chairman for 5 years and the Youth Activities Chairman for 3 years. Cory was elected the Department of Wisconsin State Commander for the 2021 – 2022 year. In 2023 he was elected to the National Council of Administration and in 2025 he was elected as the Senior Vice-Commander in Chief.

Commander's Statement:

“Throughout my time in the United States Army, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and at my civilian positions, I have had the honor to serve under some great leadership. I have strived to take the best of these leaders and incorporate that into my leadership style. What I have learned over those years is that leadership is like running an ultra-marathon. It’s not about a burst of brilliance, but it’s about sustained effort, strategic pacing, and emotional resilience. Leadership is ultimately a long-distance commitment. It’s about showing up day after day, leading with humility, adapting when things get tough, and never losing sight of the end goal. Even when the path is unclear.

*“We are united by a common purpose: to serve those who have served. As One Team, we bring our unique skills, perspectives, and dedication together to meet the needs of our nation’s heroes. With One Mission, we remain focused, ensuring veterans receive the care, respect, and opportunities they’ve earned. Every action, every decision, every effort is guided by one core principle: Veterans First. This is not just a motto; it’s a commitment to honor their sacrifices by delivering excellence in every interaction. Together, we stand stronger, driven by purpose, bound by respect, and devoted to those who served. **ONE TEAM, ONE MISSION, VETERANS FIRST.**”*

Membership Mission:

To strengthen the VFW by driving membership growth through comprehensive support for recruiting, retention, recruiter development, ensuring consistent dues processing, and member fulfillment. To empower our Post and Department leaders through specialized training programs that prioritize membership sustainability. To provide necessary insight and guide informed decision-making through data-driven reporting and analysis. To deliver exceptional customer support to our comrades and prospective members, fostering a culture of service and camaraderie that sustains the VFW legacy for future generations.

All-American Program:

The All-American program exists to recognize exceptional leadership and teamwork, authentic accomplishment in membership growth, and participation in VFW core programs.

All-American Post Criteria

All Posts who have met the following criteria as of June 30, 2027 will be named as All-American Posts:

- Must meet the Divisional Membership Quota as shown on the table on page 5.
- At least 80% retention of prior year Annual members. Definition of retention can be found on page 12.
- Must have a Post election report submitted and be in good standing.
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2027:
 - o Voice of Democracy – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Posts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Patriot's Pen – minimum of one entry advanced to District judging (Overseas Posts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o National Citizenship Education Teachers Award –Post must advance a teacher to District; if no District judging applies then advance to Department for judging (Overseas Post donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Entries **must be submitted via the Programs Dashboard by January 31, 2027 in order to be recognized.**
- National Veterans Service Programs – must donate \$125 via the Programs Dashboard NVS Donation link. Donations will be designated to support the VFW National Veteran Service operations.
- Must make a restricted donation via the Programs Dashboard, minimum of \$75, to National in support of DPAA (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency).
- Must meet the following Community Service Requirements:
 - o Participation in the VFW Day of Service event held during the month of May and registered at vfwdayofservice.org no later than June 1. This event may be counted for a Post's quarterly community service activity.
 - o A Post must submit a community service report quarterly to their department for submission to the All-American Dashboard. The quarters are July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-March, and April-June. Please see page 12 for further details.
 - o A Post must show an increase in total Community Service of at least 5% from the previous year.
- Must purchase at least 5 Buddy Poppies per member, with a minimum of 500.
- Must have been chartered for at least a full calendar year as of July 1, 2026. Posts that were chartered between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, will not be eligible for All-American awards, but may be recognized under the New Post Growth Grant.

All-American Post Award

All Posts that meet the listed criteria will receive: An All-American Post Streamer, a Post Home Citation, and will be recognized in the VFW Magazine.

In addition, the top 20 Posts in each membership division will receive:

- All-American Post Commander's Citation
- All-American Post Commander's Cap
- All-American Post Commander's Badge
- All-American Post Commander's lapel pin

These awards for the top 20 Posts will be presented on stage at the 128th National Convention. All All-American Post Awards will be distributed at the 128th National Convention. Department Quartermasters will be directed to collect and distribute awards for All-American Posts not in attendance.

The Top five Post Commanders in each division will receive a \$1,000 award to recognize their leadership. Commanders must attend the 128th National Convention in order to receive this award.

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership	Membership Quota
1	501	---	103%
2	351	500	104%
3	246	350	105%
4	190	245	106%
5	150	189	107%
6	125	149	108%
7	105	124	109%
8	90	104	110%
9	70	89	111%
10	50	69	112%
11	10	49	113%

All-American District Criteria

All Districts that have met the following criteria as of June 30, 2027, will be named as All-American Districts:

- Must exceed prior year's membership, based on June 30, 2026, totals. (100%+1)
- Must finish in the top 20 Districts in their division, based on membership percentage as of June 30, 2027.
- Must make a restricted donation, minimum of \$100, to National in support of DPAA (Defense Personnel POW/MIA Accounting Agency). **Donations must be processed through the Programs Dashboard.**
- Must have a District election report submitted and be in good standing.
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2027:
 - o Voice of Democracy – minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas Districts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Patriot's Pen – minimum of one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas Districts may donate \$125 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o National Citizenship Education Teachers Award – one entry advanced to Department judging (Overseas District donate \$100 to National in lieu of entry)
 - o Entries **must be submitted via the Programs Dashboard by January 31, 2027, in order to be recognized.**

All-American District Awards

All Districts that meet the listed criteria will receive an All-American District Streamer, an All-American District Commander's Citation, and recognition in the VFW Magazine.

In addition, the top 10 Districts in each membership division will receive:

- All-American District Commander's Cap
- All-American District Commander's Badge
- All-American District Commander's lapel pin

These awards for the top 10 District Commanders will be presented on stage at the 128th National Convention. All All-American District Awards will be distributed at the 128th National Convention. Department Quartermasters will be directed to collect and distribute awards for All-American Districts not in attendance.

The top two District Commanders in each division will receive a \$1,000 award to recognize their leadership. Commanders must attend the 128th National Convention in order to receive this award.

All-American Department Criteria

All Departments that have met the following criteria as of June 30, 2027, will be named as All-American Departments:

- Must exceed prior year's membership, based on June 30, 2026, totals. (100%+1)
- Department must submit Department legislative chairman reports monthly through the Program dashboard tool.
- Must make a restricted donation, minimum of \$200, to National in support of DPAA (Defense Personnel POW/MIA Accounting Agency). **Donations must be processed through the Programs Dashboard.**
- Must meet the following Program Participation Criteria by January 31, 2027:
 - o Voice of Democracy – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Patriot's Pen – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Teacher of the Year – an entry advanced to National judging
 - o Entries **must be submitted via the Programs Dashboard by January 31, 2027, in order to be recognized.**
- National Veterans Service fundraiser – must complete State/Department fundraiser with proceeds donated to the National Veterans Service fund via the Programs Dashboard.

All-American Department Awards

All Departments that meet the listed criteria will receive the following:

- All-American Department streamer
- All-American Department Commander's Citation
- All-American Department Commander's Cap
- All-American Department Commander's Badge
- All-American Department Commander's lapel pin
- \$1,000 award to recognize leadership

These awards will be presented on stage at the 128th National Convention.

Triple Crown:

The Triple Crown is one of the most prestigious membership awards that an individual can achieve. It requires being named as an All-American Commander at Post, District, and Department level. Leaders who attain this level of excellence will be recognized at the 128th National Convention with a special Triple Crown pin.

For Departments without Districts, any individual who achieves All-American Commander status twice as a Post Commander and once as Department Commander, or once as a Post Commander and twice as Department Commander will receive this honor as well.

Membership Programs and Awards

Individual Recruiting Awards:

5/10/15 members recruited: corresponding recruiter pin

25 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief's Coin

50 members recruited: 40oz Insulated Tumbler w/CIC Logo

75 members recruited: Commander-in-Chief's Medallion Set

100 members recruited: Century Cap and Citation. Recruiters may opt to receive a \$50 credit to the VFW Store in lieu of a Century Cap.

Individual Recruiting Awards will be sent out regularly during the membership year to the Post, to be given out at a Post meeting to recognize those members who have helped achieve the membership mission.

Early Bird Award:

The top two Posts in each division as of January 1, 2027, will receive reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for a representative of the Post to attend the 2027 VFW Washington Conference.

Legacy Life Membership Acquisition:

Each Post that achieves the cumulative benchmarks of 25, 50 and 75 Legacy Life Members will be awarded a Legacy Society Post Proclamation. Proclamations will be sent out to the Post along with recruiting awards throughout the year.

For each Post that achieves the distinctive benchmark of 100, 250, or 500 Legacy Life members by June 30, 2027, their commander or Post representative will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for travel / lodging for the National Convention, reserved seating at the 128th VFW National Convention joint opening session and a Legacy Society Post Proclamation presented at the National Convention.

100+% Membership Streamer:

All Posts, Districts, and Departments that exceed their prior year membership total on or before June 30, 2027, will receive a distinctive streamer.

New Post Growth Grant:

Any Post chartered in the previous membership year (between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026) that exceeds their prior year membership total (100%+1) and has over 50 members as of June 30, 2027, will receive a grant of up \$50 per new member (up to \$1,000) between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027.

Recruiting and Retention Challenge:

The top two Posts in each membership division based on new and reinstated members as well as retention according to the table below will receive a \$1,000 membership grant deposited into the Post's account. Retention calculations are defined on page 12.

Division	Size	New Member Quota	Retention Percentage
1	501+	At least 125 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
2	351-500	At least 100 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
3	246-350	At least 75 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
4	190-245	At least 60 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
5	150-189	At least 50 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
6	125-149	At least 40 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
7	105-124	At least 30 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
8	90-104	At least 20 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
9	70-89	At least 15 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
10	50-69	At least 12 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention
11	Under 50	At least 10 new/reinstated members	At least 80% retention

Department Above & Beyond Award:

Any Department that exceeds their prior year membership total and has at least 75% of the Posts in the Department also exceed their prior year membership total will receive a membership grant as follows:

Small Departments (10,000 and below): \$2,500

Medium Departments (10,001-20,000): \$5,000

Large Departments (20,000 and up): \$7,500

Elite Recruiter:

Any VFW member who signs up 250 or more new and/or reinstated members as of June 30, 2027, will receive a \$1,000 award for their achievement, as well as a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge. Awards will be presented at the 128th National Convention.

Recruiter of the Year:

The VFW member who signs up the greatest number of new and/or reinstated members greater than 250 as of June 30, 2027, will receive a \$1,000 award for their achievement as well as a distinctive cap, citation, and name badge and the Recruiter Of The Year trophy. Awards will be presented at the 128th National Convention.

Life Member Recruiter Award:

Any VFW member who recruits at least 50 new and/or reinstated Life members by June 30, 2027, or before will receive a special citation from the Commander-in-Chief and a CIC logo travel bag.

New Post Startup Grant:

New Posts chartered between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027, will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post. This credit will come in the form of a gift certificate sent out to the Post once a charter has been issued. The Commanders of all Posts chartered during the membership year will also receive an invitation to the 128th VFW National Convention.

Commander-in-Chief's Challenge:

To emphasize the importance of Life Membership as the backbone of our membership strength, the Commander-in-Chief is issuing the following challenge to all VFW Posts. Each quarter (July-September, October-December, January-March, April-June), Posts will accumulate points as follows:

New Annual Member: 1 point

Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life Member: 5 points

New Life Member: 10 points

Each quarter, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the challenges will be recognized at the 128th National Convention for their achievements.

Post Division Breakdown

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	501	---
2	351	500
3	246	350
4	190	245
5	150	189
6	125	149
7	105	124
8	90	104
9	70	89
10	50	69
11	10	49

District Division Breakdown:

Division	Minimum Membership	Maximum Membership
1	2400	---
2	1680	2399
3	1290	1679
4	880	1289
5	600	879
6	10	599

MEMBERSHIP NOTES AND RESOURCES:

- Awards given to a Post may be transferred to any member of that Post.
- Must participate in the VFW Day of Service event held during the month of May and registered at todaysvfw.org/day-of-service/ no later than May 15th. Participation may count as community service for All-American quarterly requirements. The event must meet certain criteria aimed at making a meaningful difference in the community. The criteria and more information can be found here: <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service-faq/>
- Community Service quarterly reports must be submitted via the All-American Dashboard or via the state's Community Service Reporting Portal and must be approved by the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster. Reports must detail individual events, roll-up or summary reports will not be accepted. Posts must be able to provide verifiable documentation of their community service activities. Reports must meet the IRS 990 standards for organizations operating under 501(c)(19) status.
- **RETENTION DEFINITION: (Prior Year Annual Members In Good Standing – Expired Members) / (Prior Year Annual Members In Good Standing)**
- Posts, Districts, and Departments must show growth in membership to qualify for any award. This does not apply to the Early Bird Award.
- Awards, stipends, and reimbursements paid by the VFW will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service on Form 1099 if the total of payments made to you during any calendar year equals \$2000.00 or more. The reimbursement you receive from the VFW will be deemed by the IRS to be taxable income. Since the circumstances of each individual are different, it is recommended that you consult your tax advisor to determine the effect these payments may have on your personal tax situation. It is your responsibility to keep receipts and other records as you and your accountant and/or tax advisor deem necessary in order to document your expenditures.
- Employees and officers of the VFW National Headquarters are excluded from receiving stipends or awards in this program unless otherwise authorized by the Adjutant General and/or Quartermaster General.

All-American Notes

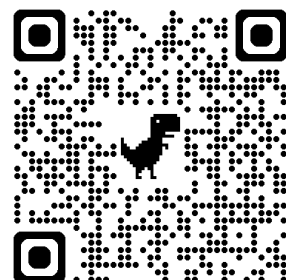
- Any member of a Post that is named as an All-American Post may purchase a All-American Post Member cap from the VFW Store after the 128th National Convention. Post, District, and Department Quartermasters and Adjutants may purchase an All-American Post Member cap bearing their title. Quartermasters may also purchase an All-American Quartermaster pin from the VFW Store.
- Donations made to replace Program Participation by eligible overseas Posts, Districts, or Departments as well as fundraising donations must be made through the Programs Dashboard, not through any other means.

For information on how to use the Programs Dashboard, scan the QR code below:

Membership Contacts:

David Prohaska, Director – 816-968-1114, dprohaska@vfw.org

Matt Nute, Associate Director – 816-961-1122, mnute@vfw.org





NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

RECRUITING JUST GOT EASIER

The VFW Membership Department has everything you need to make your membership efforts successful at little or no cost.

Phone: 1.888.JOIN.VFW (564-6839)

Email: membership@vfw.org

Order online by logging into www.vfw.org



rev. June 2025

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EASY ONLINE ORDERING!

Instead of waiting for your order to be mailed or faxed in, make sure your Post gets the materials you need quickly and efficiently by ordering your materials online!

Just follow these steps!



1) Go to www.vfw.org and click the “LOGIN” link in the upper right corner. Sign in when prompted.

If you have not yet created an account on the website, follow the “Sign Up With TroopID” link to do so!

2) Under “Membership Quick Links”, select the Online Membership System (OMS) option.

3) On the left side of the page, you will see an option for Membership Order Form - click that link.

You’ll see that it automatically enters your mailing information! If you need your materials shipped elsewhere, go ahead and enter the new address. (This won’t affect your address on file in our records)

4) Use the dropdown list to indicate which items you need. It will automatically calculate the cost of items and shipping. When you’re finished, click SUBMIT and it will take you to a billing page if there are any charges.

Once done, you’ll receive an email confirmation and your order will be processed and sent out!

IT’S THAT EASY!

RECRUITING AND TRAINING TOOLS

Two VFW Membership Applications forms, one for a new member and one for a transfer member. The forms include sections for personal information, service history, and a sponsor's information.

Membership Applications

This two-part carbonless form is necessary for recruiting and reporting new members.



Women Veterans Brochure

This brochure highlights the benefits that come along with being a VFW member along with personal stories from our female members. Let them know that they served - they belong!



Door Hanger Self-Mailers

These are an exciting way to spread the word about VFW and garner new leads. Includes veterans benefit information, a reply card, and die-cut slots for a Post business card.



VFW Eligibility Fold-Up Poster

This 33" x 22" world map is the perfect addition to membership recruiting booths. Qualifying medals and badges are pictured along with space for your Post contact information.



Membership Recruitment Brochure

With a new and distinctive full-color design and updated information, this brochure is an essential part of any recruiting campaign, with info on the VFW as well as an application.



Priority Goals Brochure

Learn about what the VFW is doing and has accomplished in Washington, to include a list of the many veteran-related bills our influence on Capitol Hill has helped to pass.



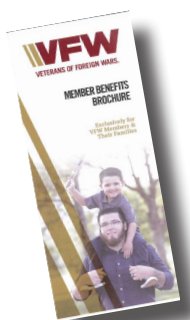
Take Pride Flyers

Learn about all the medals which qualify veterans to join the VFW! The flyers include full-color images and the history of all qualifying campaign medals from WWII to the present day.



VFW Table Cover

Bring attention to your recruiting booth with this cloth table drape, available in 6' and 8' sizes. Multiple colors available through the VFW Store at 833.VFW.ETS (833.839.8387) or online at www.vfwstore.org.



Member Benefits Brochure

Show prospective and current members all the amazing benefits that come with their membership. These brochures include info about insurance and other programs for our members.



Legacy Life Brochure

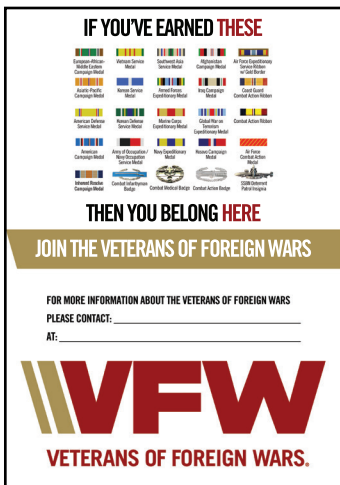
Leave a lasting legacy by upgrading your life membership to a bronze, silver or gold Legacy Life Membership.

Order online by logging in to www.vfw.org, going to the **Online Membership System (OMS)** link, and selecting the **Membership Order Form!**



“VFW Post Forming Soon” Poster

A glossy, full-color, 33” x 23” poster announcing the formation of a new Post in your area. An up-to-date look and eligibility listing will make your next Post development effort a breeze. It includes space for contact information along with meeting times and locations.



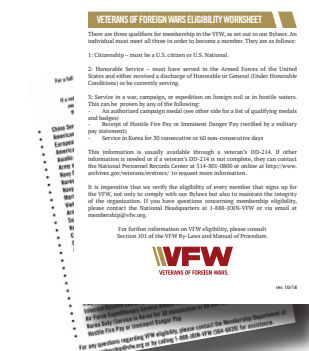
“Join Now” Poster

Like our “VFW Post Forming Soon” Poster, this exciting tool is up-to-date and will make your next recruiting campaign easier than you thought. The poster includes space to add your contact information along with meeting times and locations. Glossy, full-color and 33” x 23”.

Membership Eligibility Sheet

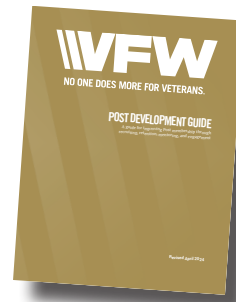
A complete and convenient reference tool. Stay up-to-date in your understanding of eligible qualifying campaign medals.

Be sure to order enough for your entire recruiting team.



Recruiter Pocket Success Guide

Learn the best methods for recruiting new members! This guide covers topics such as membership eligibility, benefits, veterans service, and VFW programs. It has an easy-to-use back cover flap to hold membership applications, along with pages of useful recruiting tips.



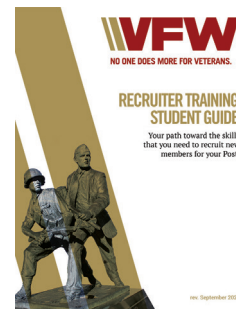
Post Development Guide

A guide for improving Post membership through recruiting, retention, mentoring, and engagement. This primer is an invaluable tool for Posts seeking to increase both their membership numbers and ability to serve our veterans, their families, and our communities.



“Membership Campaigning on the Post Level” Booklet

Twenty-four pages, chock-full of information and strategies used in planning and conducting a successful membership campaign. This booklet covers the basics of planning, contact techniques (with scripts) and follow up.



Recruiter Training Student Guide

This educational guide comprises informational material that parallels the instructors guide, along with additional forms relevant to hands-on recruiting. It includes an attractive folder to make a useful “take-away” package for your next recruiter training session.

Ensure that your Post grows by using every available method and product available through the VFW because...

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS®



Recruiter Eligibility Pens

When you’re out recruiting, you can have the criteria and guidelines for membership eligibility literally at your fingertips! These ball-point pens all contain a pull-out guide to VFW eligibility, including a list of all currently qualifying medals!

AVAILABLE IN THE VFW STORE



VFW RECRUITING KIT

This kit contains everything needed to set up an effective recruiting booth or table to target veterans and/or active-duty service members. Included are a set of the Take Pride flyers (suitable for framing) covering all the campaign medals which qualify veterans for membership. Also included are large posters, door hanger self-mailers, VFW decals, applications, brochures, flyers, copies of the VFW magazine, and a link to download helpful materials and videos, along with a heavy-duty nylon briefcase for transporting these items.

POST CHARTER KIT

All the tools necessary for a new Post (or perhaps an existing Post that needs a fresh start) to get up and running quickly and easily. This complete kit contains everything necessary to conduct meetings, obligate members, account for members and funds, submit reports, conduct programs and more. Included are the following: an altar cloth, altar flag set (including a POW-MIA flag), Bible, gavel, eight copies of the VFW Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, a service office guide, Post minute book*, a pad of misc. receipt forms, receipts and disbursements pad, trustees report of audit pad, two VFW Store catalogs, a membership binder, 10 eligibility sheets, 50 VFW Cross of Malta lapel pins, 100 membership application forms, 50 VFW benefits flyers, 50 membership recruitment brochures, a "Membership Campaigning on the Post Level" booklet, 50 "Planning A Successful Buddy Poppy Campaign" brochures, 50 "History of the Buddy Poppy" brochures, one "New Post Development and Post Revitalization" manual, a Post Commander's Guide, a Post Quartermaster's Guide, a Trustees' Guide, and two copies of the "Report of Institution" form. Everything you'll need to ensure the success of a new Post in one convenient package.



**You can order materials online! Just go to www.vfw.org and log in!
Under "Membership Quick Links" you'll find the link to the**

Membership Recruiting Brochures Order Form

Select the items you need and the quantity, and hit SUBMIT.

It's that easy!

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM (OMS)



Do More with the Post Commander Online Membership System

Post Quartermasters are not only the officers in your Post granted special privileges in the Online Membership System (OMS). Post Adjutants and Commanders have also been granted the online tools necessary to assist them with their responsibilities, particularly with Post reporting and new member prospect review. All OMS services are available to access at the official website of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters: www.vfw.org.

Please note that all new users must have an account ID.me before OMS sign-in and access.

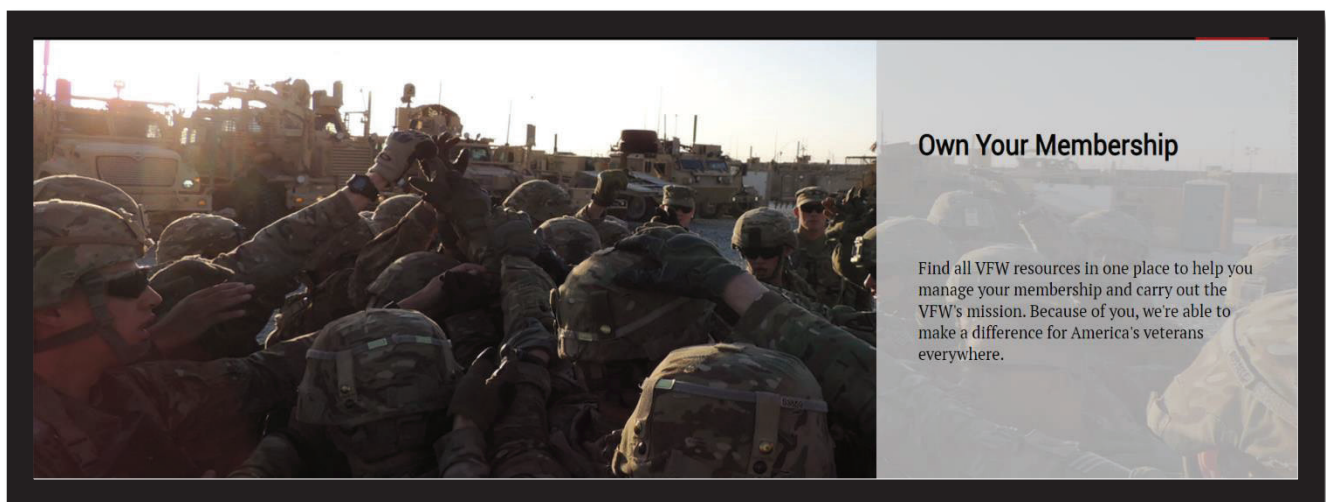
Instructions regarding setup and sign-in can be accessed by following the steps below.

- 1.) Go to www.vfw.org.
- 2.) Click on Login.
- 3.) Select the **Video Tutorials for ID.me** link at the bottom of the VFW **Member Login** screen.
- 4.) After you have watched the setup videos, return to www.vfw.org, and click on Login to produce the Member Login screen again. Please note that setup will begin by selecting the **ID.me** link found below "Are you a new user?" Once your account is set up, and your identity is verified, the green button on the screen titled **Sign in with ID.me** will be your default sign-in for all OMS activity.

IMPORTANT: Please note that the original VFW Member Login screen (which asks for an email address and password) will not be compatible with your ID.me sign-in. This sign-in was originally introduced before the ID.me network and is unable to recognize ID.me user accounts.

Navigating the Online Membership System.

When you sign in, click on the "My VFW" tab at the top of the home page. The Own Your Membership Screen will appear.



Next, scroll down the screen until you find a section titled **Membership Quick Links**. The first link titled **Online Membership System (OMS)** will take you to the VFW Welcome page. The VFW Welcome screen will appear. Personal information will appear at the center of your screen. The left side will provide you with a series of drop-down menus related to your membership, documentation, and other services. This guide, however, will focus on two services related to your Post Commander election: **Reporting and Tools, Products, and Merch.**

Online Reporting.

All Post-related reporting services will be accessed through the Reporting drop-down menu on your left. Click on this menu to expand and view the selection of online reports provided. Once this menu is open, the following reports will appear.

Legacy Life members

All Post Legacy Life members for the current membership year will appear in this report. First name, last name, and Legacy level will be provided, but further details are available through the blue **Download Results** link on the right side of this screen.

Post Query (Post Member Report)

Access the Post Member Report (Post Roster) with ease by selecting a “Totals” count from one of the main categories provided: **Memstats, Paid, or Unpaid.**

Post Member Report

Click one of the blue highlighted numbers below to generate your report

Post 5789

Post Report Terminology

Memstats Counts (paid for 2022)							
Life 486	New 9	Reinstate 3	Cont. 72	Total 570	Prior Year 598	Percent 95.31%	
Post Counts (members in good standing)							
Life 469	New 6	Reinstate 3	Cont. 68	Expiring 10	Cont. Trans. 1	Non-Pay Trans. 0	Installment 4
Unpaid							
Unpaid 1 Year 42	Unpaid 2 Years 0	Total Unpaid 42	Complete Roster 603			Deceased 35	

Currently viewing:

These counts will appear as highlighted, blue numbers within each of the subcategories provided in each row.

Post Counts (members in good standing)			
Life 555	New 18	Reinstate 1	Cont. 75

Double-click on the highlighted, blue, totals count of your choice to view a selected membership count. This action may produce a member privacy notice. If this agreement appears, accept the terms to

continue. A Post member report will appear below the three original rows (Memstats, Post Counts, and Unpaid), providing you with membership card numbers, names, contact information, etc. Click on the **Download** or **Print** selection to produce an Excel or Print Friendly copy of the report in a new window.

Find Unpaid Members

Locate unpaid members by years expired (Unpaid (up to)) and age. The Find Unpaid Member Report offers you the ability to locate unpaid members for the past decade. In contrast to Post Query, the Find Unpaid Members tool allows you to search for potential reinstate members that have fallen off the main reports. (Post Query only reflects Post membership for the past two membership years.)

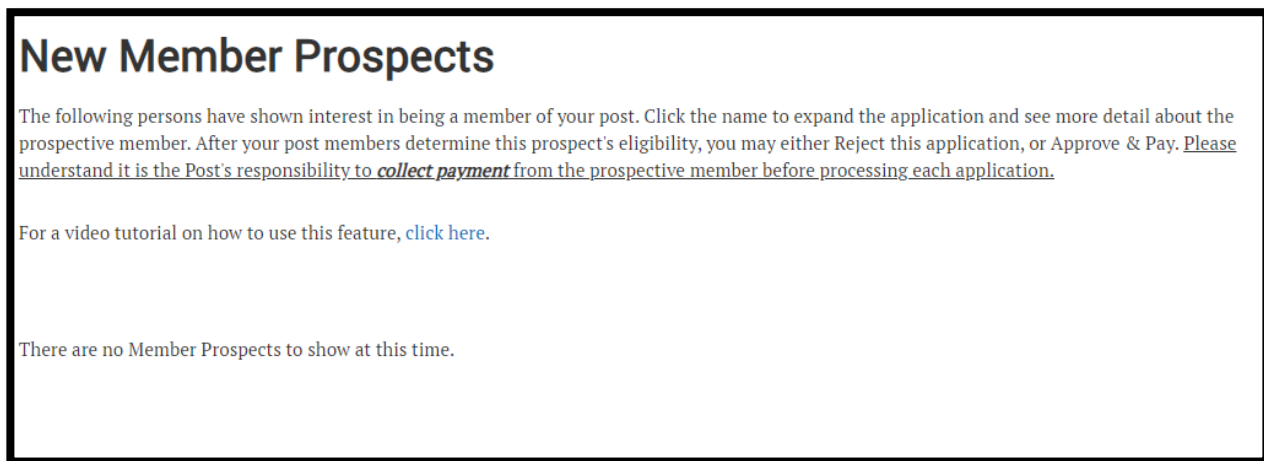
To begin your search, select a year (1, 2,3, etc.) and sort out an age range to query your search (example: Age: 35 to 75.) Next click on the red Search button to continue. An expired report based on your search filters will appear. If your report suits your request, click on the blue Download or Print option to produce an Excel or print-friendly copy of your report.

MemStats (Membership Statistics)

The Memstats report represents the numeric count of all payments processed and credited to your Post, District, or Department for the current dues year. A member transfer will be counted with the previous post if they have been a member for less than a year.

Post Cmdr (Commander) Services: New Member Prospects

Click on the **Post Cmdr Services** drop-down menu to expand and click on the New member Prospects selection. The New Member Prospects screen will appear.



Veterans who have shown interest in being a member of your Post will appear in this menu service for application review and approval. Online applications for these potential members (otherwise known as prospects) are collected through the VFW “mobile app” by Post recruiters in the field and sent over to the Post QM or Commander for review.

Application details are viewed by clicking on the name of each prospective member. Depending on the eligibility of the recruit, click on the red Approve or Reject button to discard or finalize an applicant’s membership request.

If no applications are available for review, a **There are no Member Prospects to show at this time** message will be displayed. For a video demonstration on how to use this feature, click on the blue **click here** button to watch.

Tools, Products & Merch

Use this drop-down menu for quick access to all VFW products and merchandise, including new membership applications, and legacy citation certificates.

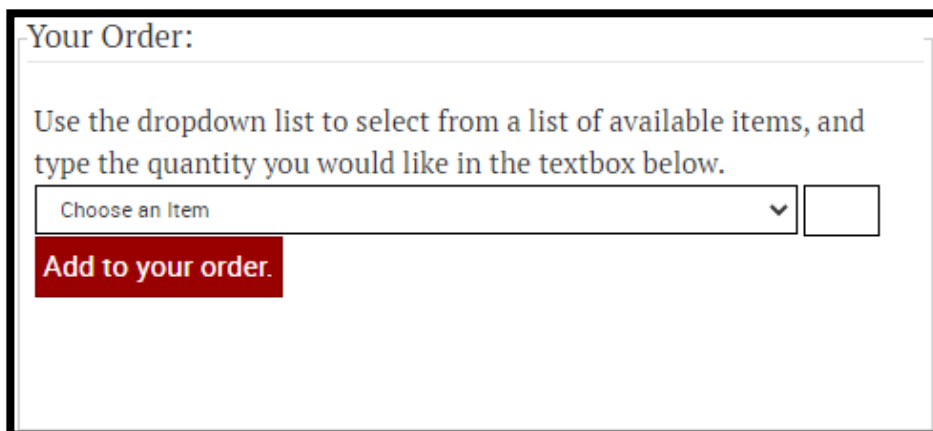
Membership Order Form

Online bulk orders for all Post related literature (including new membership applications and brochures) can easily be submitted through the online Membership Order form. Before submitting your order, review the shipping address information in the “Ship To:” column on your left.

Your personal mailing information will already be populated, but the order can be shipped to anyone.

Any adjustments to the order’s shipping address, Department, District, Post, and contact email address are permitted. Select **Member** or **VFW Post Commander** from the Check One section below.

Select your item from the Choose an Item drop-down menu in the Your Order: column on your right for your next step. The product type and quantity amount of the order (example: Membership Application (25 per pkg)) will be provided for each item listing.



Your Order:

Use the dropdown list to select from a list of available items, and type the quantity you would like in the textbox below.

Choose an Item

Add to your order.

After your item is selected, click in the small box to your right, and type in a quantity number that represents the number of packages received per item. Click on the red **Add to your order** button to produce a summary of the order. You can also use this button to add multiple products to your order before submission.

If you approve of your order, click the red “Submit Order” button to submit. If the order does not meet your preferences, click on the red “Remove” button instead. Also, please note that Shipping Information detailing Shipping Cost and Sub-Total is provided below your order to inform your decision to purchase. Quotes for orders over \$75.00 are not provided and can only be determined by calling our Membership Department at VFW National Headquarters. Toll-Free Number: 1-833-VFW-VETS (1-833-839-8387)

Legacy Citation of Merit

Memorialize a fallen service member who was killed in Action with a tribute from your post with a commemorative Legacy Citation of Merit. Submit the fallen service member's name, branch of service, and shipping address before order submission. Once your order is submitted, please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

VFW Store

Click this link for quick access to www.vfwstore.org. Please note that your OMS sign-in for vfw.org will be the same (email address and password) used to access your store account (ID.me or non-ID.me login.)

PUBLIC RELATIONS



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Public Relations Introduction

Public Relations may be the most important task you and your Post will undertake. It occurs every minute of every day. It goes beyond preparing and distributing news releases. It is the underlying element that brings success or failure to your Post. All contact between your Post and the community has a public relations aspect. **Ensuring the community views your Post positively is paramount.**

The community service your Post performs will enhance the Post's reputation as a responsible, caring and energetic community service organization — one that leads by example.

Your PR Strategy

What do you want to accomplish with your PR strategy? Define your objectives. This is the critical first step.

- **Determine your audience.** This includes members, potential members and non-members. Different Post activities appeal to different segments of the community.
- **Define your message.** Sticking to one message is essential. However, your message may be presented in several ways through various outlets. Determine the best outlet for the best results.
- **Develop a strategy.** How can you best accomplish your goals? Look at the dynamics of your community. Build a relationship with the media in your area. Keep an up-to-date list of contacts for each outlet. Become the subject matter experts in your community on patriotic and veterans' issues. Make your Post visible and active on social media. Develop relationships with other local community service organizations.

When evaluating your strategy, you should listen carefully to the feedback from Post members and officers, members of the community and the media. Take this information and fine tune your strategy, if necessary. A good communicator talks and listens.

Suggestions from all sources should be considered. After all, those people see your messages from a different angle, and what might be very clear to you may not be to them. A new point of view may help get the word out more efficiently and effectively.

Development of good public relations takes time and commitment.

Building Media Contacts

As a Post officer, you will have to speak to the media and general public. Therefore, you need to be able to speak clearly and concisely on veterans' issues and VFW programs. Your ability to communicate in both the written and spoken word will benefit the Post and the community.

You should build a good working relationship with members of the media, as well as the leaders of the various VFW programs. The assistance of officers and members is invaluable when gathering information to present to the media. When your information is accurate and of interest to the community, the media will welcome your submissions.

Some basic equipment needed to accomplish this task are a computer, email address, letterhead and a style guide, such as the Associated Press Stylebook.

A camera or smart phone is a great tool when used properly. After all, “a picture is worth a thousand words,” but only when that picture is of good quality and supports your newsworthy story. Avoid taking “grip-and-grin” photos. Additionally, always look for the action shots. Remember, get close, get faces, and get a signed [photo release](#).

Your goals are to develop a public relations strategy and make it work, establish media contacts and increase the community’s awareness and respect for the VFW.

Building VFW Awareness by Rewarding Your Community

Know the VFW programs and how they serve the community. Our programs are the heart of our organization, beginning with community service. Tell the community about the Post service officer and the free assistance available to any veteran and his or her dependents to gain entitlements.

Our programs can reach people in the community who might not otherwise know veterans or the continuing service they offer to their communities. Through our youth and citizenship education programs we offer valuable and needed information to various groups in the community.

Establish an awards program that relates to VFW programs. Everyone loves praise. Recognition focuses the community spotlight on the individual or group being acknowledged as well as on the VFW. Award your local police, firefighters and EMTs with a certificate of appreciation during a public ceremony. Coordinate this event with a community anniversary or a national observance.

Other organizations or groups that have assisted the VFW in a community service project deserve thanks as well. Host a special event to recognize individuals or groups who further the VFW’s priorities and ideals. Include teachers, public officials, local young people and members who have demonstrated support of the VFW’s values.

Deal With Bad Publicity, Don’t Avoid It

Unfavorable publicity needs to be handled promptly and with as accurate information as possible. Here are some tips for dealing with negative publicity:

- **Don’t avoid the media.** Help them get all the facts so the story will be fair and balanced.

- **Do not provide conjecture or speak before you have all the facts.** Stating "We're aware of the situation, and are investigating," can help.
- **Do not place blame.**
- **Do not discuss fault or liability.**
- **Deal with the situation and move on.** Even a bad situation can have positive aspects.

Think of this as a welcome opportunity to present the VFW's programs and projects that help the community. If you have been helpful, the media contacts you make can prove valuable in the future.

Targeting the Media with a Specific Message

Get to know the media in your area. This includes newspapers, both daily and weekly; radio, television and cable television stations; local or regional trade publications; and local and regional magazines.

Your contact list should include: name, title, address, affiliation, phone number, email address, social media handles and publication deadline dates.

Remember: your membership is diverse. Contacting various outlets ensures that your message reaches a wide audience.

Not every message will need to be sent to every contact. A news release announcing teachers and students receiving awards from the VFW would be best sent to the local media outlets as well as the school and any professional publication for teachers. A blood drive held at the Post would have a different list of media contacts. Choose carefully. A constant barrage of unrelated news releases can numb the media to your message.

A 'Thank You' Reaps Rewards

Nothing is more important than saying "thank you." A well-written thank you note to a guest speaker is imperative.

Presentation of a certificate of appreciation to an individual or a group that has assisted with a program goes a long way toward building community relationships. A brief note of thanks to a member of the media for event coverage can help keep the lines of communication open. You also may want to consider writing congratulatory letters to individual Post members when they have accomplished something noteworthy outside of the organization.

Many members belong to various community service organizations. Sending congratulatory letters to elected leaders of other service organizations is a good way to establish a spirit of camaraderie between organizations. After all, we are all trying to better our communities through voluntary public service.

In addition, you can host an annual appreciation event for local law enforcement agencies, community-safety representatives, educators and youths who deserve recognition.

Make Your Community Proud of Your Post

Make your community proud it has a VFW Post. Be the focal point in your community for all patriotic programs. Whether it's parades, school programs or voter registration, make sure the VFW has a visible presence.

Keep the Post home in good shape. Make it attractive and welcoming. Let it be an example of an organization that is proud of its history and working to make the community a better place in which to live. When the Post has a good image, it is easier to get the media involved and excited about VFW-sponsored events.

Finally, remember that you represent the VFW to every person you meet. The impression you make is one the public will associate with the VFW. Make sure it is a positive one.

Keep a Calendar

A calendar of upcoming VFW events can help simplify your job. On your calendar include important national events, anniversaries and observances. To commemorate these dates, you may want to have a letter to the editor ready for possible publication.

Also you might consider hosting an event in observance of these special days. When planning an event, it is important to consult with the local community calendar. Scheduling conflicts can be avoided with some simple checking.

Important Dates to Remember

Third Monday in Jan. - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 27 - Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)

Jan. 31 - Panama Campaign Ended (1990)

Third Monday of Feb. - Presidents' Day

March 29 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March 31 - Somalia Campaign Ended (1995)

April 9 - National Former POW/MIA Recognition Day

April 11 - Persian Gulf War Official Cease-Fire (1991)

May 1 - Loyalty Day

First Saturday in May - Annual VFW Day of Service Kicks Off

May 8 - WWII Ends in Europe (V-E Day) (1945)

May 15 - Peace Officers Memorial Day; Women's Army Corps Founded (1942)

Third Saturday in May - Armed Forces Day

Last Monday of May - Memorial Day

June 14 - Flag Day; U.S. Army Founded (1775)

June 27 - National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Day

July 2 - U.S. Army Air Corps Established (1926)

July 4 - Independence Day

July 27 - Korean War Armistice Day (1953)

Aug. 4 - U.S. Coast Guard Established (1790)

Aug. 14 - Japan Surrendered, Ending WWII (1945); National Navajo Code Talkers Day

Aug. 30 - Afghanistan War Ended (2010)

Sept. 2 - V-J Day: Japan Signed Formal Surrender (1945)

Sept. 11 - Patriots Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance
Sept. 14 - VFW Auxiliary Founded (1914)
Sept. 17 - Constitution and Citizenship Day
Sept. 18 - U.S. Air Force Established (1947)
Third Friday in Sept. - POW/MIA Recognition Day
Sept. 29 - VFW Founded (1899)
Oct. 13 - U.S. Navy Established (1775)
First Tuesday of Nov. – Election Day
Nov. 10 - U.S. Marine Corps Established (1775)
Nov. 11 - Veterans Day; Signing of WWI Armistice (1918)
Nov. 21 - Grenada Campaign Ended (1983)
Dec. 7 - National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
Dec. 13 - National Guard Established (1636)
Dec. 15 - Iraq War Ended (2011)
Dec. 20 - U.S. Space Force Established (2019)
Dec. 31 - Official End of WWII (1946); Kosovo Campaign Ended (2013)

News Releases and Promotion

A News Release Must Be Newsworthy

The most fundamental way, although not the only way, to get your message out to the media is through a news release.

An effective news release relates information that is newsworthy. **It should be clear, concise, error-free and answer the "Five Ws" in the first paragraph: who, what, where, when and why.**

Try to keep the news release to one page, two at the most. If more information is needed to better explain your news release (fact sheets, biographies or program information), it can be attached. Be sure the contact person's name, phone number and the date of the release are clearly indicated.

Include quotes from the head of the organization, the Post Commander or the officer responsible for the program. It is best to use quotes that sound natural and express an opinion or position.

Press releases can be written on events, programs, awards, election of VFW officers or national issues. Be sure to highlight the local aspect no matter what the subject. Localization makes for easier placement.

Avoid buzzwords and organizational acronyms. Assume that readers know nothing about the organization — chances are they don't.

As you are writing, think about simplicity. Be brief. Forget flowery adjectives — they will most likely be cut anyway. And don't be insulted if your release is changed or cut, as long as it gets the main points across. The editor's job is to do just that — edit.

Know the media deadlines. Allow enough time for editors to call with questions, but not too much time for the interest to lag.

Make the reporter's job easier by emailing the news release to them. Follow-up with a phone call.

When you have completed your news release, go back over it again. Check that you have answered the "Five Ws" in the first paragraph. Did you give the release a point of local interest? Are the sentences short and clear? Is the release written in a consistent manner? Is it typed and error-free? Nothing is more irritating to an editor than having to rewrite a release.

If a photo is included with the release, be sure to provide the names of everyone in the photo and a brief explanation of the event. Make sure the photo is of good quality and suitable for publication.

Control Interviews with Facts and Research

If reporters call, determine why they are calling and the subject to be discussed. Ask if the reporter is on deadline, and assure the reporter you will call back before the deadline. Remember, you have little control over the interview, but if the reporter asks an off-topic question, bring them back to the agreed topic. Here are tips designed to help as you prepare for the actual interview:

- Jot down likely questions and appropriate answers.
- Know what you want to communicate. Plan to make your points accordingly.
- Do your research. Provide background or expanded information.
- Never lie or mislead a reporter.
- Offer your conclusion first, briefly and directly. Back it with facts.
- Avoid organizational jargon and acronyms.
- Short answers are better than long. Use complete sentences.
- Don't accept a reporter's facts or figures as true; don't respond to a hypothetical situation; and do respond to negative-leading questions with positive statements.
- Keep cool. Don't allow yourself to be provoked.
- Remember when talking to a reporter there is no such thing as "off the record."
- If there are any skeletons in the closet, be prepared for them to come up in the interview.
- Be prepared to state all your positive points completely in response to the first questions asked.
- State clearly when you can release information and why.
- If you don't know the answers, say so, and offer to find out.

The interview will be brief. A reporter has only a few minutes to get your full story. Don't ask to approve the story before it is published or broadcast.

Notifying the Media When the Chief Visits

The VFW National Commander's visit to your area is an important event for several reasons. First, they are the chief spokesman for our organization. They are widely traveled, aware of the concerns of veterans and their families across the nation, and have the responsibility to meet with the president and key congressional members to express the interests and needs of the nation's veterans.

For these reasons, the local media will be interested in their views on veterans' issues, national security and foreign affairs. It benefits the VFW and veterans in general if the Chief's visit is well-covered by the media.

- **Media Alert.** If your Department has already announced the Chief's visit, ask for a copy. Then, forward it to the news editors in your community. If the Department has not distributed a media alert, write one yourself.
- **Interviews.** Contact your local TV and radio stations in your community and ask if they would like to have the VFW's National Commander as a guest. Of course, be sure the Chief will be in your area long enough to take part in this type of interview. Most Post visits are scheduled for 30 minutes. Such interviews work best at the beginning of a visit or at the end. In any case, coordinate with your Department headquarters to determine what time works best for the Chief's already-established schedule.
- **Interviewees.** The media is there to interview the Chief. Conduct the interview in such a manner so others cannot interrupt. The Chief, the Post/District Commander and the Department Commander are the only VFW members who should attend the interview. Post, District and Department Commanders are there only to provide information on veterans' issues on a local or state level. Do not put the Chief into an interview by themselves where the media are going to concentrate on local veterans' issues. The Chief talks only on relevant national and international issues.
- **News Conference.** Since the amount of time the Chief can spend at a Post is limited, it is usually a good idea to invite the media for a specific time. Then, turn the Chief over to them for a news conference-type interview.
- **Place.** Where you conduct the interview is very important. Do not conduct interviews in the Post canteen. Use your meeting room or an area that is clean and quiet.
- **Time.** The best time to conduct an interview at the Post is as soon as the Chief arrives. Reporters have deadlines to meet and they do not have time to stand around while the Chief visits with members. Get the interview started when they arrive. The Chief can visit with members later. The only exception to this rule is when the Chief will be at the Post for a luncheon or dinner. For these visits, ask the media if they would like to eat with members, listen to the Chief's remarks afterward, and then conduct the interview. Quite often, the Chief's remarks to the group after the meal give the media ideas for questions.

- **Follow-up.** If there are questions that can't be answered during the interview, be sure to get the name and phone number of the reporter, and provide an answer as soon as possible.

Good PR Helps Retain Members

Post officers have an additional responsibility to members of the VFW to ensure that Post activities are enjoyable, interesting and diverse. This promotes membership retention. Members who show pride in the organization and the community service they perform attract potential members.

Remind members to wear VFW-branded apparel. Make sure new members feel welcome and offer them the opportunity to get involved in a VFW program or project that captures their interest. Getting a new member off to a good start, or involving an existing member in a new program, is in everyone's best interest. A happy member is the best PR the VFW can have.

Supporting VFW activities through meaningful PR is the key to supporting members in their efforts to help the community. Members will recognize your contribution to the success of the VFW and its many projects and programs. There is no substitute for teamwork.

Advertising

There are significant differences between public relations and advertising.

With advertising you control the timing and content but not the cost. **In public relations you have no control on the timing or content but pay nothing.** Resources will determine which method you use most frequently.

Talk to local radio and TV stations about advertising or donated public service announcement (PSA) time. The cost of placing a 30-second spot can be minimal depending on your location. Explore these mediums for effectiveness of messaging (how many of your target audience you reach) and cost comparison.

VFW National Headquarters has produced 30 and 60-second videos and radio spots. They publicize the VFW's mission and promote our free assistance programs. Some solicit membership so they cannot be used as PSAs, which are free.

Additionally, if you advertise to solicit members, be mindful of the environment at the Post. Make sure the prospective member feels welcome and respected.

Be Creative with Publicity Options

We have talked about the printed word in the form of a news release and the possibilities available through radio and video, but there are other options to investigate as well.

AI-Generated Images

Never use AI to generate images of veterans, service members or any real people.

Approved Uses Only

- Backgrounds and scenery
- Image extension (expanding canvas)
- Upscaling low-resolution images
- Adjusting images to fit aspect ratios
- Environmental or landscape imagery

Never Use AI For:

- VFW brand elements, logo, Cross of Malta or VFW cap
- Generating veterans or service members
- Creating images of real people
- Depicting faces or identifiable individuals
- Fabricating events or ceremonies
- Any content that could mislead viewers

AI generates brand elements inaccurately, hurting brand consistency.

Remember: Authentic photography of real veterans and events is always preferred. AI should only be used to enhance existing images or create non-human elements like backgrounds and scenery.



VFW GUIDE FOR GETTING STARTED AND STAYING ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



GETTING STARTED

Creating a social media presence, whether it's a Facebook page, an X (formerly Twitter) handle, a TikTok or Instagram account, allows your Post, District or Department to increase VFW brand awareness and engage with your members, supporters and fellow veterans through an online community where people gather to receive information and access resources.

Social media is useful to share the important work of the VFW, information on meetings and events, creates membership opportunities and works to enhance your Post, District or Department's visibility. It is also a place to share success stories and to ask for support if needed.

Creating a social media presence is not enough however, you must be active! Fully completing your account profile, posting content regularly, engaging with users and responding to direct messages in a timely manner are all vitally important. **Make certain you are assigning a site administrator that you can trust, and best practices .**

Each social media site is unique in the content it supports and its user base. We encourage you to do some research into the various sites to find the one that suits your Post, District or Department needs. Remember, social media success is contingent upon ENGAGEMENT!

A few questions to consider before choosing which channel is right for you:

- What is this platform's functionality?
- Can we actively and efficiently engage users on this platform?
- How can using this platform help us achieve our goals?

Please note: VFW Facebook and X profile images are available in the "Getting Started Online" section of the Communications and Public Affairs hub in Training and Support at [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org). Brand usage guidelines and instructions on how to access your specific Post, District or Department VFW logo [can be accessed here](#).

Get to know the channels:

Facebook:

You have the option to control the look of your page by adding a profile picture and a cover photo. Other suggestions include using photos of your Post, District or Department building or photos from recent events.

There are many ways to add content to your Facebook page, but the most common include [status updates](#), creating [events](#) and sharing [photos](#). Please refer to the [Facebook Help Center](#) for more information about each of these.

An official Facebook page may be created with the appropriate permission from your Post, District or Department.

A Facebook page must be created from the profile of an existing Facebook user. If you do not have an existing account, please make one. It is best to create the profile under the name of a real person, then create a Facebook page associated with that profile.

The difference between a profile and a Facebook page is that people must send “Friend Requests” to the profile in order to connect with you. When your Post, District, or Department has a Facebook page, anyone can view the page and connect with and join your audience by following the page and giving the page a “like.”

Ready to get started on Facebook?

Begin creating your official Post, District or Department Facebook page by [following these steps](#). Be sure to create an appropriate name based on your official Post, District or Department name/number. *Note: [Watch what to do](#) if a Facebook page for your entity, for which you do not have access, already exists.*

It is important to add more than one person within your Post, District or Department as administrators of the Facebook page. Be sure they are trusted, and active on their personal Facebook page. This ensures that if the primary administrator leaves, the account will remain accessible, and that Facebook will not deactivate your account by purging the inactive personal account of one of your administrators. Learn how to add an administrator to your page [here](#). Be sure everyone who has access to your page is aware of the guidelines your Post, District or Department has set for their social media activity.

Publicly, we recommend placing a User Code of Conduct in the “About” section of your Facebook page. You are at liberty to copy the VFW National Headquarters’ Facebook User Code of Conduct below:

VFW Facebook User Code of Conduct

We strive to provide an inviting space where users can freely and respectfully discuss the content posted to our page. We have instituted user guidelines to help us accomplish this across VFW’s social media channels. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in hidden or deleted comments. In severe cases, users will be banned from future engagement with the VFW page.

Comments, posts and direct messages which contain one or more of the qualities listed below will be unacknowledged, hidden or deleted. Users may be banned if they are excessive or repeat offenders.

- * Hate speech.
- * Discrimination.
- * Bullying or harassment.
- * Excessive profanity.

- * Sexual content.
- * Content unsuitable for minors (Please remember we have underage fans on our page.)
- * No promotions or spam: Links, images, referral codes, self-promotion, or excessive references to third parties' products or services will be deleted.
- * Identifying VFW members, staff and other users in defamatory, abusive, or in such a manner which endangers their privacy and security.
- * Deliberately provocative or antagonistic language.
- * Engagement which has no relevance to the original post or content.
- * Misinformation.

Please note: Direct messages are not an official means of reporting to the national organization. If you would like to report a grievance, please do so utilizing the proper channels or you may fill out the VFW's form: <https://www.vfw.org/ContactUs>.

X:

Twitter formerly rebranded in 2023, changing its name to X. According to the Associated Press' update to its stylebook on the name change, it's suggested that "on first reference, refer to the platform as *X*, formerly known as *Twitter*. The term *tweet* remains acceptable as a noun and a verb. Also acceptable is phrasing such as *posted on the X platform, formerly known as Twitter*. On later references to the platform: *the X platform* or *X*." While the rebrand changed the appearance of the platform, users will find that much of the verbiage surrounding the platform is unchanged.

Each tweet is limited to 280 characters for unsubscribed X users, so you must be brief in your messaging. However, those who opt to pay for a X subscription service ([X Premium](#), formerly known as Twitter Blue or [Verified Organizations](#)) now have up to a 25,000-limit character count.

Hashtags are words or phrases preceded by a hash sign (#) used on social media websites and apps especially X, to identify a specific topic. For example, if you tweet, "We're hosting bingo Friday night to benefit #veterans at 7 p.m., everyone is welcome!" using the hashtag #veterans will categorize your tweet with every other tweet using the hashtag #veterans. To see this, enter #veterans in the search bar at the top of the page and you will see a list of all the recent tweets using that hashtag.

While X may have character limitations for unsubscribed X users, with a little creativity you can still share most of the same information with your X followers that you would share on Facebook.

Ready to get started on X?

[Go to the X "Sign Up" page and follow the prompts.](#) We recommend signing up with a shared email address for your Post, District or Department so that in the event the primary administrator leaves, the credentials are recoverable.

Be sure to create an appropriate name based on your official Post, District or Department name/number, input a proper description of the VFW and note that you're interested in veterans. Once you've successfully signed up, complete your Post, District or Department profile by inputting a photo/VFW logo, completing your physical address, phone number, etc.

Issues signing up? Visit the [X Help Center](#) for a step-by-step guide on how to sign up for your new X account.

Instagram:

Instagram is the perfect combination of Facebook and X, where images and videos are at the forefront, with hashtags often utilized to discover similar content within the captions and comments. Links are not easily added which pushes users to create content that lives specifically on Instagram.

Ready to get started on Instagram?

Grab your mobile device and download the Instagram app from your app store or head to Instagram.com to create an account. If you have an existing Facebook or Instagram account, you can use your existing account to create a new Instagram account.

Create an account by choosing an appropriate name based on your official Post, District or Department name/number. Confirm your account by using an email address associated with your Post, District or Department that the administrator and others have access to.

Input an appropriate photo/VFW logo as your profile picture and complete the remainder of the profile with your Post, District or Department information.

If you've hit a roadblock, visit the [Instagram Help Center](#) for more information on account basics and how to set up an account.

TikTok:

TikTok is a social media platform where users can create, edit and share videos. TikTok has grown beyond just short video sharing and today, it's a hub for entertainment, creativity, marketing and so much more. The platform is often used to mix self-promotion with quick tips and advice but is frequently also used to market and sell products. It is important to remember that this platform is heavily reliant on producing engaging video content, understanding the [TikTok algorithm](#), being consistent, posting content that will resonate and keeping content short, simple and relatable.

Ready to get started on TikTok?

Grab your mobile device and download the TikTok app from your app store or [download on your browser](#) to create an account.

[Set up your profile](#) by adding a relevant and appropriate profile picture, username and contact information based on your official Post, District or Department. Ensure your email and phone number are valid as they're needed for login and password recovery. Once you've downloaded TikTok, it's installed and opened, find the Profile icon in the bottom menu bar and click "Sign up" to register. Users then have the option to [set up a free TikTok Business Account](#) by clicking on the three lines at the top right of the your Profile page. Head to Settings and privacy, then select Switch to Business Account. This allows users to create ads and unlock performance insights among other features.

Hit a bump on your TikTok journey? Visit the [TikTok Help Center](#) for helpful information on everything from getting started and setting up your account to using TikTok effectively!

STAYING ACTIVE

Maintaining a positive, active social media presence requires that your accounts meet the community standards set forth by each channel and the administrators take a proactive approach in cultivating your presence and a following.

- Basic Do's
 - Create an official handle with completed profile.
 - This conveys professionalism and accessibility.
 - Provide access to at least two trusted representatives.
 - You do NOT want to get locked out of your account.
 - Always be aware of presentation.
 - Double-check spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - Post images.
 - Images almost always garner more engagement.
 - Post content regularly.
 - Consistently put the good VFW name out there.
 - Be a good steward.
 - Remember, you're operating under the VFW name.
 - Remain inclusive.
 - Each post should align with the VFW mission, vision and values.
 - Reply in a timely manner.
 - Being responsive conveys professionalism and helps build relationships.
 - Remember it's forever.
 - Post with the assumption that each post is viewed and captured.
- Basic Don'ts
 - Use to share your beliefs and opinions.
 - Remember, this is not a personal account.
 - Gloss over appearance.
 - Take a hard look at each photo and video to ensure it's appropriate.

- Let the profile grow stale.
 - An outdated presence is worse than none.
- Get personal.
 - Again, remember, you're operating under the VFW name.
- Ignore or overly engage.
 - Address any negative comments in a professional manner – consider moving the conversation from a public forum to direct messages as necessary.
- Forget that it's forever.
 - Again, post with the assumption that each post is viewed and captured.

[Learn more about best practices for Facebook.](#)

[Learn more about best practices for X.](#)

[Learn more about best practices for Instagram.](#)

[Learn more about best practices for TikTok.](#)

Please note: VFW National Headquarters does not have a professional relationship with any social media companies. It cannot retrieve login credentials, influence the community standards of each site or submit appeals on behalf of Posts, Districts or Departments whose accounts have been suspended for violations.

Please refer to the respective social media site for assistance with the aforementioned.

Common Hashtags to Use in Your Content Postings:

The VFW utilizes several different hashtags, and we encourage you to use them as appropriate and utilize your own hashtags in your social media content.

- **#VFWPostPride**
 - Used to highlight the successes, events and stories of local Posts and VFW members.
- **#StillServing**
 - The VFW's latest, far-reaching campaign to highlight veterans' continued service.
- **#IAmtheVFW**
 - Highlighting stories of members' ongoing service to community and country.
- **#VFWTestimony and #AdvocacyInAction**
 - Incorporated into legislative testimony tweets.
- **#VFWSalute**
 - Used when remembering someone who has passed away.
- **#ShopVFW**
 - Anything VFW Store related.
- **#VFWConvention**
 - Used for all VFW National Convention information.
- **#VFWDC [insert 4-digit calendar year] i.e. #VFWDC2025**
 - Used for all VFW Legislative Conference information.
- **#FORVETERANS**

- Because “No One Does More For Veterans” than the VFW.
- **#PACTActInfo**
 - Utilized to promote the VFW’s PACTActInfo.org website.
- **#VFWStrong**
 - Emphasizing our strength in numbers and our positive reach in the community.
- **#VFWDayofService**
 - Annual community service initiative that kicks off the first Saturday in May with service projects and events ongoing throughout the month.
- **#DontFeedTheSharks**
 - Used to emphasize posts promoting VFW Accredited Service Officers.
- **#LeadAdvanceServe**
 - Used to emphasize the Still Serving campaign and VFW members who are still leading, still advancing and still Serving.
- **#VFWGaming**
 - Used to highlight VFW’s gaming initiative.
- **#VFWPodcast**
 - Used to highlight VFW’s podcast.
- **#StrongerTogether**
 - Used to emphasize unity – used with VFW’s friends when working together (ex: Irreverent Warriors or GSF comments / posts.
- **#VFWAdvocacy**
 - Used to highlight VFW’s advocacy efforts – especially on The Hill .

Determining Which Accounts to Follow/Like

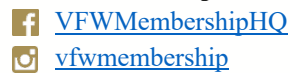
There is much to consider when deciding which accounts to follow/like on social media: Is the information shared reliable, interesting and do our professional interests align ... does it make sense to follow/like them?

To help you get started, we've put together a list of recommended accounts to follow/like. Additionally, we encourage you to follow/like the accounts of your Posts, Districts, Departments, Auxiliaries and those of your local news and resource partners.

VFW National



VFW Membership



VFW Magazine



VFW Podcast Host (Rob Couture)



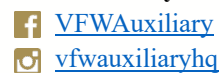
VFW DC Office



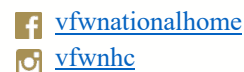
VFW Foundation



VFW Auxiliary National



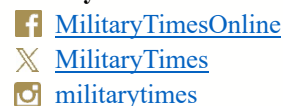
VFW National Home



Department of Veterans Affairs



Military Times



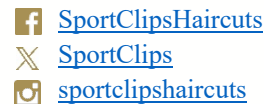
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency



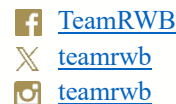
USAA



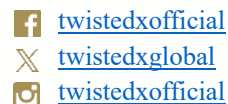
Sport Clips Haircuts



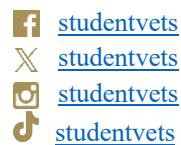
Team Red, White & Blue



Twisted X



Student Veterans of America



Stars and Stripes



Grunt Style

 [gruntstyle](https://www.facebook.com/gruntstyle)
 [gruntstyle](https://twitter.com/gruntstyle)
 [gruntstyle](https://www.instagram.com/gruntstyle)
 [gruntstyle](https://www.tiktok.com/@gruntstyle)

Grunt Style Foundation

 [gruntstylefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/gruntstylefoundation)
 [gruntstylefdn](https://twitter.com/gruntstylefdn)
 [gruntstylefoundation](https://www.instagram.com/gruntstylefoundation)
 [gruntstyle_foundation](https://www.tiktok.com/@gruntstyle_foundation)

Irreverent Warriors

 [irreverentwarriors](https://www.facebook.com/irreverentwarriors)
 [iwnational](https://twitter.com/iwnational)
 [irreverentwarriors](https://www.instagram.com/irreverentwarriors)
 [gruntstyle_foundation](https://www.tiktok.com/@gruntstyle_foundation)



WEBSITE SOLUTION PROGRAM

V2.0

by PIXELBIT | DrivePath



The easy-to-use online solution to helping you grow VFW membership.

CONTACT US FOR
MORE DETAILS:

248.232.1293

WEBMASTER@VFWNATIONAL.ORG

VALUE

- Our control panel allows you to easily manage the content of your site 24/7. This helps you keep News, Events and resource information current.
- Makes it easier for potential new members to get the info they are looking for regarding membership.

FEATURES

- Sync your Calendar & News with VFW District, Department & National websites.
- Edit all of the content on the site including managing officers / staff via our dedicated control panel.
- Social media integration.
- Editable Photo Gallery, Newsletter Email Engine and more...

NEW FEATURES

- Mobile Friendly Responsive Design.
- Create Pages on the Fly and Control where those pages appear in the dropdown navigation.
- Turn On/Off Modules on every page & rearrange Modules to appear in a specific order.
- Full Screen Calendar - Recurring Events.
- Sliders - You Control!
- Search Engine Optimization built in.
- New Pages - TAPS, HONOR GUARD, M.O.C & More...

1st Year FREE

with program grant Ask for details.

COST

ONLY **\$420⁰⁰** per year*

* Cost Includes one domain and hosting. Additional domains are \$35 each.

* Cost is FREE w/ Site Sponsor Program - Ask for details.



As the nation's oldest major war veterans' organization, the VFW has an impeccable and longstanding record of service and stewardship. More than 4.4 million patriotic Americans, both members and non-members, entrust the VFW with financial contributions and dedicate millions of volunteer hours.

THE VFW'S VITAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Educate separating service members about their well-earned VA benefits through private benefits counseling sessions with a VFW Accredited Service Officer.

Advocate for America's veterans and their families on Capitol Hill, ensuring *promises made* to veterans are *promises kept*.

Deliver morale-boosting "welcome home" celebrations for service members who have returned from combat.



2,278

Number of VFW Accredited Service Officers across America and abroad, helping veterans fight for the VA benefits they have earned.

52,801

Number of service members and their family members hosted at VFW Military Appreciation Program (MAP) events.

\$16.2 billion

The total annual amount the VFW helped veterans recoup in VA disability compensation and pension benefits in fiscal year 2025.

\$1.48 million

Amount of academic scholarships awarded to 317 veterans and service members.

23

Number of testimonies provided to Congress in fiscal year 2025. The VFW has been instrumental in virtually every major legislative victory for veterans in the 20th and 21st centuries.

\$3.14 million+

Amount of scholarships, monetary awards and other incentives the VFW distributed to middle and high school students through two major patriotic essay competitions.

\$29,106

Value of financial assistance awarded to military families to help cover basic needs in times of crisis. 89% of the funds covered basic housing needs in fiscal year 2025.



JOIN THE VFW

Connect With Us



About the VFW

We trace our roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many arrived home wounded or sick. There was no medical care or veterans' pension for them, and they were left to care for themselves. In their misery, some of these veterans banded together and formed organizations that would eventually band together and become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Our Mission: *To foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts. To serve our veterans, the military and our communities. To advocate on behalf of all veterans.*

Our Vision: *Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.*



The VFW by the numbers

1.3 million+

Number of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members.

5,556

Number of VFW Posts worldwide.



1899

Year the VFW started to fight for veterans, service members and their families.



Inspiring patriotism in young people

27,053

Number of high school students who competed in the 2024-25 VFW Voice of Democracy competition.

61,926

Number of students who competed in the 2024-25 VFW Patriot's Pen competition.



Helping struggling military families

13

Number of grants provided to military families facing financial hardship through **VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members**.

\$25,890

Amount of grants provided through **VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members** covering housing for struggling military families.

12

Number of military families who received assistance with housing needs.



Cutting red tape

164,000

Approximate number of veterans the VFW assisted in submitting new VA claims in fiscal year 2025.

14,500+

Number of VA claims filed by the VFW's Pre-Discharge offices in fiscal year 2025 resulting in more than \$187 million in disability compensation.

20+

Number of VFW Pre-Discharge offices across the nation, including the military district of Washington, D.C., area.



Improving life in America

5.4 million

Number of volunteer hours contributed by VFW members annually.

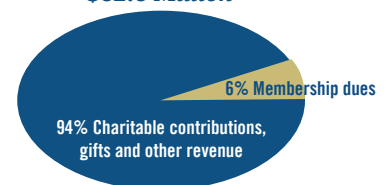
\$43.5 million

Amount donated annually to local community service projects by VFW members.

The VFW Relies on Donations

The VFW is a 501(c), and programs are made possible through membership dues and tax-deductible donations from good-hearted Americans.

**Cost of VFW Program Services:
\$62.6 Million**



Source: VFW 2025 Annual Report



SUPPORT THE VFW

Learn more about the VFW at vfw.org.



VFW at a Glance

The VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. The VFW and its Auxiliary are dedicated to veterans service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs.

Origins

In 1899, the American Veterans of Foreign Service (Columbus, Ohio) and the National Society of the Army of the Philippines (Denver, Colorado) were organized to secure rights and benefits for veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippines War (1899-1902). These two organizations merged in 1914, creating the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The VFW was chartered by Congress in 1936.

Membership Eligibility

Citizens or nationals of the United States serving honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces in a foreign war or overseas operation recognized by a campaign medal, in Korea after June 30, 1949, and recipients of hostile-fire or imminent danger pay. Veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and other smaller expeditionary campaigns, as well as occupation duty, qualify.

Partner Organization

A national volunteer service organization, the Auxiliary of the VFW was founded in 1914 and is the backbone of many local VFW volunteer efforts.

Membership Size

More than 1.3 million VFW and Auxiliary members in all 50 states, and many foreign territories.

Organizational Structure

Thousands convene each year at the VFW's national convention to elect officers, adopt resolutions and discuss business affairs. Leading the organization are the elected commander-in-chief, senior vice commander-in-chief and junior vice commander-in-chief. The National Council of Administration serves as the VFW's board of directors.

Nearly 6,000 Posts worldwide comprise 52 Departments in the 50 states, the Asia/Pacific Areas and Europe. Posts form the basic local chapter.

Priority Issues

- **Budget:** Fully fund programs for veterans, service members and their families.
- **Health Care:** Provide service members and veterans timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares.

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Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

- ***Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs:*** Ensure veterans and their dependents have timely access to earned benefits.
- ***Education, Employment and Transition Assistance:*** Provide veterans the opportunity to succeed after leaving military service.
- ***Military Readiness:*** Maintain a quality, comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force.
- ***National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA:*** Fully support service members and their mission to fight the war on terrorism and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world.

VFW Community Achievements

The VFW takes great pride in its history of service to its communities both stateside and abroad.

Annually, VFW and Auxiliary members donate nearly nine million hours to community service projects, relief efforts and local VA facilities each year.

- 1915 VFW Post 2100 helped sponsor a Boy Scout troop in Everett, Washington
- 1916 First national VFW essay contest held
- 1922 "Buddy"® Poppy program began
- 1923 Entered the war on drugs by printing a resolution calling for an international conference
- 1927 Provided \$10,000 to Mississippi Valley flood victims
- 1930 First VFW scholarship award (\$300) goes to a Boy Scout
- 1936 Boy Scout-VFW plan of cooperation was signed
- 1938 Supported the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis
- 1940 VFW Junior Rifle Clubs are formed with National Rifle Association
- 1942 VFW Aviator Cadet Program began
- 1950 Cooperative disaster-relief plan developed with the Red Cross
- 1952 The Dunn family (Kansas flood victims) won a \$75,000 farm in Washington courtesy of the VFW
- 1953 VFW National Teen-er Baseball: First tournament was held in Hershey Park, Pennsylvania
- 1956 150,000 kids took part in the national VFW marble competition
- 1958 Became full partner with Voice of Democracy (VOD)
- 1959 Minnesota VFW/Auxiliary raised \$325,000 for dedication of the VFW Cancer Research Center at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis)
- 1961 Assumed primary sponsorship of VOD — within four years 262,000 students participated
- 1962 Lite-a-Bike program: A \$300,000 project with 3-M Co. of St. Paul, Minnesota, provided "Scotchlite" reflector tape — 50,000 VFW members from 4,500 Posts participated
- 1964 VFW/Auxiliary provided nearly \$100,000 to earthquake victims in Anchorage, Alaska
- 1970 Drive-to-Survive program began
- 1973 Drug Awareness program began
- 1979 VFW Political Action Committee formed
- 1980 Minnesota VFW Posts sponsored the U.S. hockey team in the Winter Olympics
- 1983 Agreed to permit the Red Cross to use VFW facilities as shelters and relief centers during national disasters and emergencies
- 1986 Donated \$122,000 to the Statue of Liberty Restoration Fund
- 1990 Provided \$49,000 to California earthquake victims
- 1992 Provided \$197,000 to relieve victims of Hurricane Andrew and other disasters
- 1993 Relief funds totaled \$500,000
- 1995 Youth Essay Contest (7th-8th grades) began
- 1997 "Buddy"® Poppy celebrated 75th anniversary
- 1998 VFW Posts raised \$100,000 for the March of Dimes

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www.vfw.org

- 1999 VOD gave \$2.5 million in scholarship monies to high school students
VFW donated \$50,000 and 25,000 reprints of its war chronology to Vietnam Veterans Memorial's Young American Vietnam War Era Studies Project
- 2000 Distributed 60,000 audio books to armed forces worldwide through *Operation Yarnspinner*
- 2002 Donated \$110,000 to diabetes research
Equally distributed \$120,000 among families of active-duty personnel killed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon
- 2003 Partnered with USA Freedom Corps homefront initiative
- 2004 Established relationships with the National Council for Social Studies (NCCS) and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- 2005 Provided \$560,000 to Gulf Coast veterans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
Distributed 5,000 copies of CD entitled, "Vietnam: A Nation Remembers"
Established VFW Military Scholarship program
Expanded Patriot's Pen Essay Competition
- 2007 Radiothon raised nearly \$100,000 for Unmet Needs
- 2010 Donated over \$648,000 toward construction of the Vietnam Veterans Education Center
Increased Voice of Democracy National Scholarships to \$150,000
Provided over \$20,000 to assist service members with family in Haiti following the January earthquake
- 2011 Pledged \$500,000 toward the construction of the Veterans Hall in the National Museum of the United States Army
Provided over \$145,000 in emergency financial relief to military families living in tornado-stricken areas
- 2012 Provided over \$120,000 for Hurricane Sandy victims on the East Coast
- 2013 Provided \$30,000 for the Moore, Oklahoma, tornado victims and over \$30,000 for the flood victims in Colorado
- 2015 Provided \$10,000 to the Pacific Areas for typhoon relief
- 2016 Provided \$25,000 for flood relief in Louisiana
- 2017 Provided \$621,300 in aid for victims of Hurricanes Matthew, Irma, Harvey and Maria, and \$19,000 for victims of the California wildfires
- 2018 Provided \$139,000 in aid for victims of Hurricanes Michael, Irma and Florence, and \$35,000 for wildfires in California and Colorado
Provided \$55,000 for Pacific area victims of Tropical Cyclone Gita, and victims of the Mount Kilauea volcanic eruptions, and \$20,000 for disaster relief efforts in Saipan
- 2019 Provided \$32,182 in aid for victims of Hurricane Florence in North Carolina, and \$15,000 for flood victims in Nebraska
Provided \$20,000 for Pacific area victims of Typhoon Yuta
- 2020 Provided \$30,000 in aid for victims of floods from hurricanes in Louisiana
The VFW and VFW Foundation provided \$400,000 to Posts and Auxiliaries for Community Service Grants
- 2021 The VFW and VFW Foundation provided \$1 million in grants to boost Post and Auxiliary operations through the COVID pandemic
The VFW provided \$50,000 in aid to support relief efforts from a severe winter storm in Texas
- 2022 Provided \$50,000 to the Department of Louisiana in aid for victims of Hurricane Ida
The VFW and VFW Foundation provided more than \$677,000 to Posts and Auxiliaries for Community Service Grants
- 2023 Provided \$270,000 to support Hawaii after the fires in Maui
Provided more than \$553,000 to Posts and Auxiliaries to support community service Projects for victims of hurricanes

- 2024 Provided \$30,000 for victims of floods in Iowa
Provided \$10,000 in aid for victims of Hurricane Helene in Tennessee
Provided \$100,000 in aid for victims of Hurricane Helene in North Carolina
Provided \$20,000 in aid for victims of Hurricane Helene in Georgia
Provided \$673,000 to Posts and Auxiliaries for Community Service Grants
- 2025 Provided \$62,816 to Texas for disaster relief
Provided \$10,000 to Alaska for disaster relief
Provided \$10,000 to Montana for disaster relief
Provided \$564,000 to Posts and Auxiliaries for Community Service Grants

VFW Diverse Endeavors

The VFW honors veterans through memorial fundraising efforts, sponsorship of special events for disabled vets, and by recognizing volunteer service. Donations also help victims of natural disasters and less-fortunate children.

Special Events

- ***“Run for the Wall”***

Supports the annual “Run for the Wall,” a cross country motorcycle ride to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. The VFW sponsors refueling for all participating riders during a scheduled stop near the VFW National Headquarters.

- ***“Uniting for Veterans”***

A collaborative campaign established in 2018 with Humana. Created to combat food insecurity, while also working to raise awareness of the issue that may affect 1 in 8 people in America, and as many as 1 in 4 Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans. To date, the campaign has provided more than 6.4 million meals to those facing hunger and food insecurity. Additionally, we have recently added a veteran homelessness component to our outreach.

Memorials

In fulfilling its pledge to remember the nation’s war dead, the VFW promotes national memorials for veterans of all wars. Additionally, thousands of memorials have been constructed across the nation through local VFW Posts.

- ***National WWI Memorial***

Gave the memorial a \$350,000 grant to help expand the Liberty Memorial Museum, which houses the nation's most comprehensive collection of World War I historical materials. In 2017, the VFW was proud to sponsor the World War I Centennial Commemorative Ceremony at the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. The VFW donated \$100,000 to preserving the history of the Great War.

- ***WWI Memorial***

Donated \$300,000 to the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission for the creation of the World War I Memorial, in Washington, D.C.

- ***National WWII Memorial***

Reached its five-year fundraising goal of \$6 million for the memorial’s construction in only two years. The donation ranks as the largest from any veterans group, and second overall.

- ***Korean War Memorial***

Members donated \$600,000 toward the construction of the Korean War Memorial. The donation ranked among the highest.

- ***Vietnam Veterans Memorial***

Donated over \$300,000 toward building “The Wall” — all 58,000 Americans who died as a result of the Vietnam War are listed. The VFW was the first major organization to contribute.

- ***Women in Military Service to America Memorial***

Donated \$70,000 toward construction costs.

- ***Disabled Veterans for Life Memorial***

Donated \$100,000 toward construction costs.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WASHINGTON OFFICE

- ***Vietnam Veterans Education Center***

Donated over \$648,000 toward the construction of the Education Center.

- ***National Museum of the United States Army***

Donated \$500,000 toward the construction of the Veterans Hall in the museum.

- ***National Desert Storm Memorial***

Donated \$500,000 toward the construction of the National Desert Storm Memorial.

Awards

- Outstanding law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, 911 dispatchers, and explosive ordnance disposal technicians are recognized annually by the VFW for their work in the community.

- Donated \$70,000 in support of Park University's Valor Medals Review project, a research initiative to appropriately recognize those who may have been denied military service medals based on racial bias.

National Home for Children

Children, youth and family of VFW and Auxiliary members who have nowhere to turn find a safe haven on this 629-acre VFW campus in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The privately funded facility is a living memorial to VFW and to all veterans.

Legislative Victories

The VFW played an instrumental role in virtually every significant piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th century, as well as bills enacted in the 21st century. Note: In each case, this is the year an act was passed or an institution established.

For more information, contact the VFW National Legislative Service at vfwac@vfw.org.

- 1917 War Risk Insurance Act Amendments
- 1918 Vocational Rehabilitation Act
- 1919 Census Act Rider on Veterans Preference Discharge Allowance
- 1920 Widows and Orphans Pension Act (Spanish-America War)
- 1921 Veterans Bureau Act
- 1923 Veterans Preference Point System
- 1924 House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
World War Adjusted Compensation Act
- 1925 Senate Subcommittee on Veterans' Affairs
- 1926 Spanish-American War benefits
New Johnson Act (WWI benefits)
- 1930 Veterans Administration
World War Service Disability Pension Act
- 1931 Bacharach Amendment allows borrowing on WWI bonus certificates
- 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act: Veterans Employment Service
- 1934 Pension for widows of WWI vets
- 1936 VFW congressional charter signed by President Roosevelt
Bonus bonds (\$2.4 billion) to WWI vets redeemable
- 1938 Armistice Day (Nov. 11) legal holiday
- 1940 National Service Life Insurance
Selective Service & Training Act
- 1943 Benefits to WWII veterans
Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation Act
- 1944 GI Bill of Rights
Veterans Preference Act
- 1946 Veteran Emergency Housing Act
- 1947 Bureau of Veterans Re-employment Rights
- 1950 Vocational Rehabilitation Act
- 1951 Servicemen's Indemnity & Insurance
- 1952 Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Korean War GI Bill)
- 1954 Veterans Compensation Act
Nov. 11 declared as Veterans Day
- 1962 Veterans Benefits Act (Cold War GI Bill)
- 1966 Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act (Vietnam War GI Bill)
- 1970 Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
- 1972 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act

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1973 Federal court agrees veterans preference applies to state jobs
 1974 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act
 1976 Veterans Education & Employment Assistance Act
 1977 Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Act
 1978 Veterans preference preserved
 Veterans & Survivors Pension Improvement Act
 Veterans Day returned to Nov. 11
 1979 Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program
 1980 VFW calls for Agent Orange study
 Veterans Rehabilitation & Education Amendments
 1981 Former POW Benefits Act
 Veterans Health Care, Training & Small Business Loan Act
 1982 Veterans Employment and Training Service
 Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated
 1983 Emergency Veterans Job-Training Act
 1984 Montgomery GI Bill
 Veterans Dioxin & Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act: Agent Orange & Atomic Exposure
 1987 New GI Bill Continuation Act
 1988 Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act
 Department of Veterans Affairs Act
 Veterans Judicial Review Act
 1989 VA becomes a Cabinet department
 United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
 1990 Agent Orange service-connection
 1991 Agent Orange Act
 Persian Gulf War Veterans Assistance Act
 1992 Veterans Health Care Act
 1996 Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act
 1999 Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act
 2003 Concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 50% disabled or more
 2004 Full concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 100% disabled
 Traumatic Injury Insurance supplemental created
 2005 Protestors banned from military funerals
 Stolen Valor Act
 2006 Called for VA/military health care system review after Walter Reed outpatient debacle
 2008 Record VA discretionary budget approved
 21st Century GI Bill
 2009 Advance appropriations for VA
 2010 Family Caregiver Act
 Ensured all VA and DOD health care programs met minimum health care coverage standards
 2011 VOW to Hire Heroes Act
 VFW stopped TRICARE premiums from increasing annually
 2012 Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act
 Extended USERRA protections to veterans working for TSA
 2013 Reinstated Military Tuition Assistance programs
 Amended Stolen Valor Act
 Stopped Creation of Distinguished Warfare Medal (Drone Medal)
 2014 Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014
 In-State Tuition for Post-9/11 GI Bill eligible veterans
 Advance appropriations for VA Benefits

- 2015 Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act
Eliminated 1% COLA reduction penalty on future military retirees
Created government match to military Thrift Savings Plan accounts
- 2016 Toxic Exposure Research Act to evaluate impact on descendants
Enhanced fertility treatment and adoption services
- 2017 Forever GI Bill
Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act
VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act
Global War on Terrorism Memorial
Improved VA hiring and retention authorities
Veterans Choice Program improvements and expansion
Declassified toxic exposure documents
Prevented significant TRICARE copayment increases
- 2018 Expanded caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras
VA MISSION Act community care program
Process to evaluate and improve VA facilities to better serve veterans
Defeated proposed cuts to Individual Unemployability
- 2019 Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act
Elimination of the Widow's Tax
- 2020 Added bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism to VA's list of presumptive conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange
Changed the statutory definition of Vietnam veterans to include individuals who served in the Republic of Vietnam from Nov. 1, 1955, to Feb. 27, 1961
Deborah Sampson Act
Elimination of the 12-year limit on using Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) benefits
- 2021 Expanded maternity care options from community providers
PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act
- 2022 Honoring our PACT Act
Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act
Global War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act
UCMJ reform on sexual assault and harassment
- 2024 Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, which included the Not Just A Number Act
- 2025 ACES Act
VA Home Loan Program Reform Act
Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves Tuition Fairness Act



VFW Programs & Projects

Since its founding, the VFW has been a staple in the community. Troop support, youth activities, volunteering and scholarship programs are a few of the ways the VFW shines in the many communities and cities where Posts are located.

Youth Scholarship Programs

- ***Voice of Democracy***

This audio-essay competition annually awards nearly \$3 million in scholarships to students in grades 9-12. The first-place winner receives a \$35,000 scholarship

- ***Patriot's Pen***

More than \$1.2 million is awarded annually to students in grades 6-8 in this essay contest. The first-place winner receives \$5,000.

- ***Teacher of the Year***

The VFW annually recognizes three exceptional schoolteachers (one from each (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) for their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students. Awards include \$1,000 to the teacher of each category and \$1,000 for his/her school, along with an invitation to attend the VFW National Convention

Educational Outreach

- ***Echoes From the Wall***

The VFW partnered with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to distribute a curriculum, Echoes From the Wall, to 25,000 public and private high schools and donated \$50,000 to the project.

- ***Educational Brochures***

The VFW produces and distributes a flag brochure and poster.

- ***Veterans in the Classroom***

November is officially known as VFW Veterans in the Classroom Month. Members demonstrate flag etiquette and share their wartime experiences with America's youth.

Youth Activities

Locally, VFW Posts sponsor various youth sporting programs such as baseball and ice hockey. In addition, many VFW Posts sponsor Boy and Girl Scout troops, Junior Olympics, bike safety, JROTC units, drill teams, color guards and a variety of other programs to build good citizenship and exemplary character in America's youth.

Community Volunteerism

Each year, VFW members volunteer millions of hours of service to various community endeavors.

- ***Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service***

The VFW was a charter member in 1946. VFW volunteers donate millions of hours of service annually at VA medical facilities.

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www.vfw.org

Troop Support

- ***Military Appreciation Program (MAP)***

Nearly 3.8 million service members and their families have been hosted at morale-boosting events sponsored by the VFW since 2005.

- ***Adopt-a-Unit***

More than 4,000 units and ships have been adopted through VFW Posts since 2007. VFW National Headquarters adopted the USS Cole in 2002.

- ***Care Packages***

Posts across the country show their support of America's military by collecting and distributing much-needed personal items for adopted units.

- ***VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members***

This program administers financial assistance in the form of grants to active-duty service members to include active Guard/Reserves and their families to help cover daily necessities such as residential expenses, vehicle expenses, childcare, food, and more. Since 2004, 11,641 grants have been issued totaling more than \$13.1 million.

- ***VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"***

Introduced in 2013, this program awards scholarships of up to \$5,000 to qualifying veterans and service members. The program has provided 3,546 scholarships totaling more than \$16 million.

- ***Student Veteran Support Grants***

Provides financial grants to VFW Posts, Districts, and Departments to assist with outreach and services to veterans on college campuses around the country.

VFW Service to Veterans

From lobbying Congress and monitoring the Department of Veterans Affairs to assisting veterans filing claims, the VFW remains a dedicated advocate for America's veterans, service members and their families.

National Veterans Service (NVS)

NVS is responsible for accrediting and training VFW's global network of professional VFW Accredited Service Officers. NVS provides annual training to VFW Accredited Service Officers. NVS staff represents veterans at the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C. Each year NVS provides more than \$2 million to VFW Departments in support of their veteran service programs.

- **Department Service Officers (DSOs)**

A global network of highly trained and VFW Accredited Service Officers helps veterans navigate the complex VA claims process. Department of Veterans Affairs statistics show that for 2025, the VFW helped recoup \$16.2 billion in earned benefits on behalf of approximately 164,000 veterans. The VFW's Accredited Service Officers also filed more than 14,500 VA claims resulting in more than \$187 million in disability compensation for transitioning service members. The VFW always provides this service FREE OF CHARGE.

- **Tactical Assessment Center (TAC)**

The VFW's TAC operates a toll-free hotline for veterans with questions or concerns about VA health care programs and VA benefits. The number is 1.800.VFW.1899. Veterans can also email vfw@vfw.org.

- **Health Fair**

The VFW hosts a health fair at its national convention. Attendees can receive an array of free services to include health screenings, learn about VA health care programs and how to enroll in VA health care. The health fair is a great place to have your VA health care questions answered by the experts.

- **Pre-Discharge Program**

Introduced in 2001, the VFW's pre-discharge program provides claims assistance to separating military personnel around the world by finding a pre-discharge claims representative at [Pre-Discharge Locations and Contacts - VFW](#) or emailing your name, location and date of separation to bdd@vfw.org.

- **VFW PACT Act Information**

The VFW is committed to providing all veterans timely and accurate information about this landmark legislative victory. To see if you or a loved one may qualify for benefits, please visit our website and referral tool at claims.vfw.org to be referred to a professionally trained, VA accredited VFW Service Officer for assistance which is always free for the claimant.

National Legislative Service

The NLS educates Congress and advocates for policies that improve the lives of veterans, active-duty military, and their families.

- **Action Corps**

This grassroots lobbying effort has more than 300,000 volunteer advocates who write, call and visit lawmakers to discuss issues related to veterans. Also, Action Corps members receive the VFW e-newsletter relating to current legislation and events.

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www.vfw.org

- ***Your Voice on Capitol Hill***

VFW members live in every congressional district. The VFW's membership size and effective advocacy ensures that members of Congress do not ignore the needs and preferences of those who have worn our nation's uniform. The VFW provides testimony dozens of times each year before Congress, including before an annual Joint Senate and House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing to consider the VFW's Priority Goals.

National Security and Foreign Affairs

The welfare of active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel and their families is of a prime concern to the VFW.

- ***POW/MIA***

The VFW national officers visit Asian and European countries to meet with host-country officials to stress the importance of conducting MIA investigation and recovery operations, as well as gaining access to documents and archival research facilities.

Employment Services

The VFW is a strong supporter of veterans' preference in government positions. The Washington Office actively works to advance veteran-specific employment legislation and works with the U.S. Department of Labor to ensure veterans have resources in their communities to find quality post-military careers.

WASHINGTON OFFICE



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Introduction

VFW Washington Office Mission

To prevail upon Congress and the Administration to fulfill our nation's commitment to care and provide for her defenders and their families, and to ensure that the United States of America remains forever vigilant and secure.

Philosophy

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was founded in 1899 by Soldiers, Sailors and Marines from the Spanish-American War and later, the Philippine Insurrection, who returned home to a government that provided virtually no healthcare or rehabilitation programs for their service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries. Our forefathers banded together to create an organization to change the way our nation treats those she sends to war, and in 1919, the VFW Washington Office was opened to ensure the veterans' voice was clearly heard on Capitol Hill.

Today, your VFW works with Congress, the Administration, and its agencies and departments to protect and create legislation and programs to enhance the quality of life of 22 million American veterans, 2.2 million active-duty military, Guard and Reserve members, and all their families.

To the VFW, a nation that creates veterans has a sacred obligation to care for them when they return home. Using that as our guiding principle, the VFW Washington Office's philosophy is to:

- Directly assist and help ensure veterans are provided all the care, support and compensation they earned through their honorable service in a prompt and compassionate manner by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal organizations.
- Promote legislation in Congress to create and enhance the VFW's pro-veteran, pro-military and national security goals, and to defeat those proposals we deem detrimental to our veteran and military communities.
- Help ensure veteran and military spouse employment opportunities are supported by lawmakers, the private sector, and all concerned government entities through the enhancement of veterans' preference legislation, training, education, and interstate licensing and certification portability programs.
- And to strongly advocate for national security and foreign affairs policies that guarantee our security as a nation, promotes our democratic ideals and interests abroad, seeks the fullest possible accounting of our missing comrades, and backs a strong military that provides for the wellbeing of military service members, retirees and their families.

Continuing Commitment

Since our founding the VFW has helped to create, protect and enhance virtually every quality of life program provided by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs—from improved healthcare and benefits to disability compensation and pensions, military pay raises, new GI Bills, traumatic injury insurance, hazardous substance exposure compensation, family caregiver support, and better services for women veterans, among many others. But more still needs to be done, especially in this era of serious federal budget reductions and cost-shifting proposals.

Of tremendous assistance to our national legislative effort is the grassroots support provided by tens of thousands of VFW Action Corps members who reside in the home states and districts of all 535 members of Congress. So, too, is a strong membership, because on Capitol Hill, membership is the measure of influence and organizational strength.

When the VFW Commander-in-Chief testifies before Congress or meets with the president or other federal officials, it is well understood that he represents the largest organization of combat veterans in the nation, an organization and its Auxiliary with a total membership of more than 1.5 million. And with such influence comes responsibility, and your VFW Washington Office—consisting of National Legislative Service, National Veterans Service, and an Action Corps—is committed to the VFW’s principles of serving the nation and those who serve her in uniform, and to help ensure that “No One Does More for Veterans” than our VFW.

National Legislative Service

The VFW National Legislative Service represents the organization before the United States Congress to advance legislation that is beneficial to veterans, our military, and their families and to work toward the defeat of legislation that would harm them.

In our mission we:

- Testify before congressional committees and subcommittees.
- Educate Congress on VFW Priority Goals to advance veteran-friendly policies.
- Secure the introduction and passage of legislation favorable to our membership.

The issues we advance are derived from the resolutions passed at our National Convention. The members of the National Legislative Committee take these resolutions and establish our Priority Goals. These Priority Goals, in turn, become our key issues and let Congress know what we most strongly support. They are our mandates for action.

For the 119th Congress, our Priority Goals focus on:

- Budget
- Veteran's Health Care
- Toxic Exposure
- Concurrent Receipt
- Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance
- Among many others, for a complete list visit: www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service.

We encourage all of our members, and ask you to encourage all of your fellow members to become educated on these issues. **You have a strong influence in Washington, and you should to use it.**

VFW Action Corps

Action Corps is the grassroots network of the VFW. Our members and non-member advocates are encouraged to contact their legislators on a wide variety of VFW-supported issues, working hand in hand with National Legislative Service.

Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill famously said, "All politics is local." Your legislators truly care about what you think. They depend upon us for support and votes. It is up to us to educate our legislators so they know what we believe in and what we expect from them.

What Can We Do For You?

- Action Corps members receive the VFW Action Corps Weekly and Action Alerts to keep advocates up to date on federal legislation.
- We assist you, as a VFW leader, by providing materials to help educate your members on the important issues and how to play a larger, more active role in the political process.
- We provide information and resources on how to effectively communicate the VFW's message to those in Congress.

How You Can Help Us?

- Stay Informed. Know the Issues.
- Participate by responding to action alerts and surveys.
- Be an instructor to your members. Let all your members know about the issues and Action Corps.
- Be an educator to your legislators. Let Congress know our Priority Goals and what we want them to do.
- Encourage others to help. Sign up to be a veterans' advocate and join Action Corps. If every veterans' advocate could email, write or call their legislators, we would be an unstoppable force.
- Anyone who cares about veterans can join Action Corps for free. You do not need to be a VFW member. The more advocates we have, the stronger our voice will be on Capitol Hill. Sign up new advocates for Action Corps any chance you get (see next section To Get Involved).

To Get Involved:

Sign up for the Action Corps: visit [**https://votervoice.net/VFW/register**](https://votervoice.net/VFW/register)

Through Action Corps, you will be able to directly email your legislators. Please be reminded that the majority of information – Action Alerts, email updates and other breaking news – are sent via email. The speed with which legislation now moves requires the kind of instant action that only email can provide.

What's the Best Way to Communicate with Your Legislators?

- **Personal Visits-** This is the most effective way to communicate our message. Legislators make frequent visits to their district offices. Call their local office and ask for an appointment. When meeting, be organized and concise. Feel free to leave a fact sheet or a copy of the VFW Priority Goals for their future reference, which can be found at: vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service.
- **Town Hall Meetings** - Organizing a town hall meeting is an excellent way to get our issues in the forefront and discussed. Congressional leaders and candidates are always looking for places to host events and audiences to speak to. Local VFW Posts are perfect for this type of event. For more information about hosting/planning a town hall event, contact Action Corps at 202.608.8368.
- **Telephone Calls-** A short phone call, especially to the local district office, gives a clear indication of what our members think. Ask to speak to the person who handles veterans' issues and let them know what issue you are calling about, how you feel about it and how it would affect you personally. Five minutes of your time can lead to big results down the road. You can find phone numbers by visiting: <https://votervoice.net/VFW/Address>.
- **Email Messages-** Through Action Corps you can send letters and other information directly to your legislators with just a click of the mouse from your computer. We provide sample letters that you can customize and personalize, and because you are sending from our website, the information sent to the congressional offices identifies you as a constituent – critical in today's high tech world of spam and viruses.
- **Personal Letters-** A brief, clearly organized letter that focuses on one issue and why it's important to you lets them know how their constituents feel. Always be polite and professional. Be sure to specifically ask for a reply in your letter. Custom letterheads, envelopes and business cards with the VFW Logo are available from the VFW Store at 833.VFW.VETS (833.839.8387) or www.vfwstore.org.

When Writing Your Representatives Use This Form:

The Honorable Joe Smith
United States House of Representatives (or Senate)
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515 (or 20510)

Dear Representative Smith: (or Dear Senator Smith:)

Working with Congressional Staff

When you contact a legislator's office, you will most frequently be working with their staff. Convincing the staff to support our legislative priorities is often as, if not more, important as convincing your legislators themselves. Working and developing a personal relationship with the staff member is the key to accomplishing great things in Washington.

We're Here to Help

As always, we're happy to help you with whatever you need. If you have questions, need information, or need any assistance, just contact us. We'll help you in any way we can. You can call the Action Corps at 202.608.8362 or email us at vfwac@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

Philosophy

The founding principle of the VFW is to ensure the provision of needed services to veterans by a grateful nation. For more than a century our organization has worked tirelessly to ensure that veterans are provided all the health care and benefits they have earned through their service and sacrifice in defense of our nation in a prompt and compassionate manner by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal departments and agencies.

The contents of this section are organized as follows:

- ***VA Health Care***
- ***VA Benefits Delivery***
 - A. VFW Department Service Officers
 - B. VFW “Post Benefits Advisor Guide”
 - C. VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Program
 - D. VFW Training and Quality Assurance
- ***Post/District Service Officers***
- ***VAVS & Community Volunteer Programs***
 - A. Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program (VAVS)
 - B. VFW Community Health Care Volunteer Program

VA Health Care

You may have the opportunity to attend high-level briefings or meetings with VA network or hospital directors and their staff during your year as Commander. We are available to help. At your request, NVS Health Team members are prepared to brief you directly about VA health care issues or provide written issue summaries that meet your needs. We can also prepare a list of customized questions for you if you know what topics will be discussed. Questions pertaining to the VFW position on VA health care issues or questions pertaining to a problem or other matters at a VA medical facility should be addressed to vfw@vfw.org or call 1.800.VFW.1899 (1.800.839.1899)

VA Benefits Delivery

The VFW is dedicated to assisting veterans, their dependents, family members and survivors at the community and national level to ensure that our nation never forgets the sacrifices made by its citizen soldiers. The VFW has played a major role in every legislative measure to establish veterans’ benefits which have been enacted into law in the last century and that continues today with landmark legislation like the PACT Act, GI Bill adjustments and others. However, the most tangible way in which we demonstrate this commitment to service is through the daily efforts of your Department Service Officers (DSO).

A. **Department Service Officers:** A VFW DSO is located either in or near every VA regional office or other VA property. In many departments, Assistant DSOs and Claims Consultants are found at VA medical centers and other out-based locations. These dedicated individuals are VFW-certified and VA- accredited to ensure veterans, their families and survivors receive FREE, professional representation in the submission of VA claims and appeals. These highly trained individuals stand ready and willing to provide whatever assistance is required. Those in leadership positions are encouraged to meet with their Department Service Officer to demonstrate interest and support. Get to know what the DSO does for you. More importantly, get to know what they do for others. Spend time in their offices and observe the first-class services they provide. The National Veterans Service provides support through a comprehensive training program and a communication system that enables the DSOs to provide world-class assistance and representation to those who place their trust in them.

Department Service Officers and their staff assist any veteran or eligible family member or survivor who seeks help, regardless of whether they are members of the VFW or not and always FREE of cost. Consequently, DSOs are often the first contact veterans have with our great organization. Once a DSO has provided a veteran with assistance in applying for VA benefits and entitlements, they should consider asking the veteran to join and provide the individual with the benefits of membership in the VFW.

(Actively soliciting VFW membership in a VA building is not permitted. However, we will work with your DSO to provide acceptable methods for obtaining consent from veterans to allow for membership recruitment.)

While many service officers are remarkably busy, there may be opportunities to conduct focused outreach to their local military installations, Guard and Reserve units, colleges and universities, community organizations, civic or religious groups, etc., to ensure that they are aware of the benefits and services to which they are entitled. Outreach enhances the Department Service Officer's recruiting efforts.

The DSO is further supported by a cadre of National Veterans Service (NVS) staff at the VA Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) who assist in representing individual veterans and other claimants who appeal their VA rating decisions.

NVS has an Assistant Director for Training, a Special Assistant and two Regional Quality Assurance Specialists responsible for training, technical support, and mentorship for your DSOs. Their primary responsibility is to review VFW service office operations and best practices regularly, to assist new service officers in the weeks or months before they come to NVS training, and to help resolve issues at the Regional Office (local) level. The ultimate goal of these positions is to ensure VFW is providing quality claims representation in all aspects of the claims process by supporting the needs of your DSOs and staff. The Quality Assurance team visits Department Service Offices to review service office operations, provide technical training and mentorship, and both share and gather best practices. Department leaders should contact the Director, NVS, to arrange for a service office site visit.

The John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year, established in 2015, is designed to provide annual VFW National recognition to an individual accredited by VA to represent claimants on behalf of the VFW before the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include VFW-accredited employees of State and County veterans' agencies. Guidelines for this award can be found at the end of this section.

B. **VFW “Guide for Post Benefits Advisor”**: Every VFW member involved in service work, at all levels from Post through Department, should have the latest edition of the VFW “Guide for Post Benefits Advisor.” This handbook is published electronically on the NVS web page, www.vfw.org/nvs, and comprehensively summarizes veteran's benefits and entitlement programs provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies. It is a handy reference useful in assisting and informing veterans of their entitlements under existing law. Questions pertaining to VA benefits should be directed to Mike Figlioli, Chief of Staff Washington Office, at 202.608.8373 or via email at mfiglioli@vfw.org.

C. **VFW Pre-Discharge Claims Program**: The VFW plays a critical role in the military's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) alongside our partners in the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. TAP is designed to ensure that separating service members – to include members of the Guard and Reserve – and their families receive information and assistance in qualifying for and obtaining VA benefits, VA health care, education, and post-military employment. The VFW's cadre of highly trained National Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives offers personal counseling and assistance to service members to submit complete VA claims prior to separation from active duty.

We consistently update the skills of our Pre-Discharge Claims Representatives by providing more than 80 hours of training each year and giving special attention to emerging issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI), military sexual trauma, and toxic exposure. Our presence on military installations continues to be well received as indicated by our BDD Client Satisfaction Survey, through which more than 99 percent of the VFW's Pre-Discharge clients report that they would recommend the VFW to a fellow service member. As a result, we have become the service organization of choice by officers and enlisted at the military facilities we cover. It is our goal to increase interest in membership by demonstrating excellence in service work. Currently, NVS has 24 National Pre-Discharge staff located at:

Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, CA	Ft. Bragg, NC
Naval Base San Diego, CA	Ft. Bliss, TX
Ft. Carson, CO	Ft. Hood, TX
Ft. Stewart, GA	VA Regional Office, Salt Lake City, UT
Ft. Riley, KS	Ft. Belvoir, VA
Ft. Campbell, KY	Joint Base Meyer-Henderson Hall, VA
Joint Base Andrews, MD	Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD	Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA
Nellis AFB, NV	Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, DC
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC	Ft. Drum, NY
VA Regional Office, Winston-Salem, NC	Naval Station Norfolk, VA
NSA Washington DC	NSA Annapolis, MD
Pentagon, VA (Upon Request)	VFW Washington Office (National Capitol Region)
Camp Humphries, South Korea	

Additional information on the Pre-Discharge program can be found at www.vfw.org/pre-discharge. Questions regarding our participation in the Pre-Discharge program should be directed to Gregg Orto, Deputy Director, at 202.608.8375 or via email at gorto@vfw.org.

D. **VFW Training:** The National Veterans Service focuses on expanding training initiatives and assessing the true quality and level of skill of VFW accredited service officers. We are responsible for the design and delivery of all training to VFW- accredited representatives who are assigned to a VA regional office or other VA facility. We also perform quality assurance by interacting with your Department Service Office staff and offering advice on more complicated claims issues. NVS periodically reviews the quality of the VA regional office decisions and the level of advocacy provided by VFW. A system has been put in place to evaluate and validate the skill level and quality of advocacy for VFW accredited service officers. Testing is a vital element in that system.

VFW-accredited Department Service Officers are required to attend NVS training as prescribed in the NVS Policy and Procedure. All other VFW-accredited staff assigned to a VA regional office are required to attend at least once annually. To ensure that training is effective, we test all students at the conclusion of training. You will be notified of your service office staff's test scores. We maintain a database of all scores so that we can determine an average grade. This is used to determine progress and/or difficulty in understanding the work. This is vital information we use in the mandatory five-year reaccreditation process. Our commitment to professionalism and quality has produced a higher standard of quality in the work of your service offices.

To enhance our training resources, VFW has partnered with PsychArmor, Inc. to deploy an online learning platform for VFW's accredited service officers. Each of your DSOs and other accredited department staff has a seat assigned on the learning platform. NVS also extends seats on the platform to cross-accredited County Service Officers and State Service Officers so that we can reach more VFW-accredited representatives around the country with the training and resources they need to effectively assist veterans and their loved ones.

Questions regarding NVS training and quality assurance should be directed to Christopher Macinkowicz, Deputy Director, NVS, at 202.608.8345 or via email at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org.

Post/District Benefits Advisors (Formerly Post/District Service Officers)

VA continues to expand outreach to veterans, and many veterans now begin the claims process online from their homes. As a result, veterans often turn to their local VFW Post for information about benefits. That first point of contact should be the Post Benefits Advisor (PBA).

Post and District Benefits Advisors play an important role in connecting veterans and their families with the resources available in their communities. They should be familiar with local, state, and federal programs and know how to direct veterans to trusted, verified resources. PBAs should also provide a report at each Post meeting and participate in annual training provided by Department Service Officers.

Post and District Benefits Advisors are not accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs and should not prepare or prosecute VA claims. Instead, they should understand the basics of VA benefits and refer veterans seeking claims assistance to accredited representatives, such as Department Service Officers or VFW-accredited state and county service officers.

Benefits Advisors should serve as a bridge between veterans and the resources they need. They should be experts on local benefits and programs and know how to connect veterans with accredited service officers for VA benefits assistance.

Under no circumstances should a Benefits Advisor retain a veteran's personal information or share personally identifiable information with anyone who is not a VFW-accredited service officer.

To make training more accessible, National Veterans Service offers virtual training opportunities and conducts a Post Benefits Advisor seminar at the VFW National Convention. These efforts help ensure that Benefits Advisors remain informed and prepared to serve veterans in their communities.

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) and Community Health Care Volunteer Programs

The VFW conducts a multifaceted volunteer program which includes the Department of Veterans Affairs VAVS Program and our Community Health Care Volunteer Program. Our network of more than 2,500 regularly scheduled and 4,900 Occasional VFW VAVS volunteers provides more than 240,000 hours of service each year to our nation's veterans in federal, state and community hospitals and nursing homes.

A. Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program (VAVS): The VAVS program is locally managed by the VFW VAVS Representative who is appointed by the Department Commander for each VA health care facility in your state. They are the cornerstone of our organization's efforts to serve our nation's hospitalized veterans.

Volunteer services are recognized in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins presented to those who have completed the number of hours prescribed for such awards (see the VFW Volunteer Program manual for further details. VFW members who want to volunteer at a VA health care facility should contact the Department Chairperson, local VFW Representative or VA Volunteer Service Program Manager at the VA health care facility of their choice.

VA has an extensive network of Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's. Members interested in volunteering at their local CBOC should contact the VA Volunteer Service Program Manager at the VA hospital which manages the local CBOC.

The VAVS program is not only a critical link for the VFW to what happens at our medical centers across the country, but also an excellent opportunity to allow veterans to see first-hand what VA offers to the veterans' community.

We urge Department Commanders and their leadership team to encourage their members to recruit new volunteers, and we are developing resources on the VFW national website to better promote the program, such as our web page located at www.vfw.org/VolunteerService.

A volunteer can be nominated for the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC Volunteer of the Year Award. This award recognizes volunteers who have given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans. Two award recipients, one male and one female, are selected each year by the Executive Committee of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee.

Questions and appointments pertaining to the VAVS program should be addressed to , Veterans Health Policy, at 202.608.8371 or via email at vfw@vfw.org

B. VFW Community Health Care Volunteer Program: This program was designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time at state, military, or community-based medical care facilities but who are not on official VAVS assignments.

The local coordinator of this program, the Post Hospital Chairman, is responsible for the recruitment and placement of volunteers, maintaining records of hours served by each post volunteer and requesting awards from the Director, NVS, through the State Hospital Chairman. This program should not be confused with the VAVS volunteer program. For more information pertaining to awards, see your VFW Volunteer Program manual.

Questions pertaining to VAVS and Volunteer Programs should be directed to Veterans Health Policy, National Veterans Service, at 202.608.8371 or via email at vfw@vfw.org

GUIDELINES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (NAC) VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

OBJECTIVE: The NAC Volunteer of the Year Award Program allows the NAC to honor members who have given extraordinary service to our Nation's veterans.

SELECTION CRITERIA: Nominees for this award must participate in established VAVS assignments, serve as a volunteer, and meet one of the following criteria:

- a. Volunteer with hospitalized veterans
- b. Volunteer with veterans at outpatient clinics
- c. Volunteer with veterans in nursing homes
- d. Volunteer with homeless veterans
- e. Volunteer with veterans and veterans groups in the community
- f. Host veterans' functions in the lodge, post, chapter, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4th and Veterans Day observances, etc. that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- g. Host veterans' functions outside the lodge, post, chapter, i.e., fishing trips, day at the races, sporting events, etc. that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- h. Visit veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment
- i. Adopt-A-Veteran

Those eligible for the award are: NAC member organizations (such as the VFW) with emphasis on VAVS Representatives, Deputy Representatives, members who visit the VA medical centers, nursing homes, etc., or work at the lodge, post, or chapter veterans' functions either within or outside the lodge, post or chapter.

Nominees must participate in established VAVS assignments and serve as a regularly scheduled volunteer. There will be two recipients per year; one male and one female.

Nominations must be submitted in narrative format with name and NAC organization in the upper left-hand corner.

The narrative is not to exceed 500 words and must be submitted to the Director, National Veterans Service by November 30 of each year. VA staff making recommendations for this award must send the nomination for preliminary judging to the National Representative of the organization to which the nominee is a member. Failure to do so will invalidate the nomination.

The selection committee, with the assistance of the Executive Committee, will select the winners. The awards will be presented at the annual meeting of the NAC.

The male and female winner of the NAC Volunteer of the Year Award each receive an all-expense paid trip to the Annual VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting where they will be given an award.

GUIDELINES
VFW JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE:

This program is designed to provide annual VFW National recognition to an individual who is accredited by VA to represent claimants on behalf of the VFW before the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include employees of State and County veteran agencies, who meets the below criteria.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- VFW Department Service Officers
- VFW Assistant Department Service Officers
- VFW Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewers
- Any State or County VFW accredited representative
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- Previous recipients of the Accredited Representative of the Year Award

SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30, deadline.
2. A brief summary of no more than 2 pages is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee's efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to)
 - Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted
 - Community outreach conducted
 - Examples of excellent customer service provided
 - Meticulous use of TVB (Tyler's Veterans Benefits) or another electronic claims processing system used by the candidate (specify system)
 - Submission of **TIMELY** monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office)
 - Number of VFW members recruited (if any)

AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this prestigious award. The individual chosen as the recipient will be furnished round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two nights' hotel accommodation to attend the VFW National Convention where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

Please note that the selection committee will review NVS databases to understand how candidates served clients. Additionally, NVS training test scores, the results of any site visits, and other criteria may be considered in making the final decision.

Nominations should be sent to the Director, VFW National Veterans Service, either by email to taldana@vfw.org, or by fax to 202-547-3196 (ATTN: Service Officer Award) and **must be received not later than April 30.**

FOUNDATION



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WHO WE ARE

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Foundation is the official 501(c)(3) charity of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The VFW Foundation was established in 1996 to assist in securing financial resources for VFW programs and services. Through strategic relationships with corporations, private foundations, and individual supporters, the VFW Foundation helps fill in governmental assistance gaps for U.S. service personnel, veterans, and military families.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the VFW Foundation is to serve military veterans, service members and their families by securing resources for programs that facilitate enhanced life outcomes, now & for generations to come!

OUR VISION

The vision of the VFW Foundation is to create a positive impact on America's military veterans, service members and their families by addressing their unique needs.

WHO WE HELP

U.S. service personnel, veterans and military families have often personally sacrificed so much for us all. Thus, it is only right that we, in turn, provide for their urgent financial, physical, and emotional needs.

WHAT WE DO

The VFW Foundation secures donations from patriotic corporations, foundations and individuals to support urgently needed VFW programs and services such as National Veterans Service (NVS); Financial Assistance for Service members (FASM); Help-A-Hero Scholarship; Uniting For Veterans (UFV); Disaster Relief; Patriot's Pen & Voice of Democracy; etc.

Resources are secured through a variety of fundraising activities such as:

- Corporate relationships, employee matching gifts, and cause-marketing agreements
- Corporate sponsorships for the annual VFW National Convention and other VFW events
- Grants from corporations and charitable foundations
- Employee giving campaigns such as United Way, Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), etc.
- Individual gifts including major gifts, planned gifts, memorial gifts, vehicle donations, donor advised gifts, etc.
- In-kind product donations
- Fundraisers & Special Events

The VFW Foundation also assists VFW Departments, Posts and Auxiliaries in their local fundraising endeavors and provides grants to advance their community service efforts.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Visit www.vfwfoundation.org, email foundation@vfw.org or call (816) 968-1128.

VFW FOUNDATION

VFW FOUNDATION: GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

For over 125 years, VFW Posts have been pillars of support in their communities. From building local playgrounds and organizing clothing drives, to military support events and disaster relief efforts, we take great pride in our long history of service.

VFW community service projects continue to make a significant impact on local communities. To support VFW Posts and Auxiliaries in these endeavors, the VFW Foundation frequently offers grant opportunities each fall. Typically, these grants are awarded anywhere from \$1,000-\$1,500 in support of community-based projects. Information about current or upcoming VFW Foundation grant programs can always be found at www.vfw.org/grants.

Upon applying for any grant, a VFW or Auxiliary can expect to wait no longer than 30 days for a decision notification from the VFW Foundation. If the request is approved, it may take up to 6 weeks for the award funding to hit the Post's bank account. The timeline for review and payment is dependent on the workload of the Foundation staff, and applicants often receive funding in less than two weeks of applying.

While each of these grants has its own unique guidelines, there are some minimum requirements a Post or Auxiliary must meet to be eligible to apply:

- To be eligible to receive a grant your Post must:
- Have a completed election report on file at VFW National Headquarters
- Not owe any outstanding grant reports to the VFW Foundation
- Not be on suspension or in financial arrears
- Be in good standing for the IRS 501 status
- Have a qualifying project

Sometimes, grants require that you work with one of our eligible partners listed at: <https://www.vfw.org/grants-supporters>

For further information on these opportunities, please visit www.vfw.org/grants

FUNDRAISING IDEAS FOR VFW POSTS

Successful fundraising begins with a clear plan and a commitment to pursuing multiple funding opportunities. The following suggestions may help your Post increase financial support for projects, programs, and community initiatives.

Start with a Clear Goal

Before beginning any fundraising effort, determine exactly what you need funding for and how much money is required. Whether your goal is building improvements, accessibility upgrades, equipment purchases, community programs, or other projects, having a defined objective is essential.

If your project involves construction or renovations, obtain estimates from local contractors to establish a realistic budget. If the project changes the size or use of your building, check with local city or county officials to ensure compliance with zoning and permitting requirements.

Consider State Resources

While federal grants are generally not a practical option for VFW Posts due to limited eligibility and complex compliance requirements, some states offer assistance programs for veterans' organizations. Contact your state legislators or local government representatives to learn about available funding opportunities, including grants for building improvements, energy-efficiency upgrades, or community programs.

Learn from Other Posts

Pay attention to fundraising methods that have worked for other VFW Posts in your state. Successful ideas can often be adapted and implemented in your own community.

Building Your Donor Network

1. Identify Potential Donors

Consider your Post's location and surrounding community. If you are located in or near an urban area, contact your local Chamber of Commerce, community foundation, or public library to obtain information on major employers and businesses in your county. These organizations can help you develop a list of prospective donors.

2. Reach Out to Existing Business Partners

Start with businesses that already have a relationship with your Post, such as:

- Utility companies
- Banks
- Beverage distributors
- Insurance providers
- Vendors and suppliers

Ask these organizations to support your fundraising efforts. Donations may range from modest contributions to significant gifts that can greatly impact your project.

3. Connect with Trust Officers

Many banks employ Trust Officers who oversee charitable trusts and foundations established through wills and estates. These funds often support nonprofit organizations in local communities.

Trust Officers frequently have authority over annual charitable distributions and can be valuable contacts when seeking funding. They are most commonly found at larger bank headquarters rather than local branch locations.

4. Leverage Member Connections

Your members can be one of your greatest fundraising resources. Encourage them to identify:

- Business owners
- Community leaders
- Philanthropists
- Church members
- Friends and neighbors with charitable interests

Personal introductions often open doors that would otherwise remain closed. Additionally, encourage members to consider including the Post in their estate planning and charitable giving.

5. Contact Local Casinos

If your Post is located near commercial or tribal casinos, reach out to their Community Relations or Public Affairs departments. Many casinos support local nonprofit organizations through charitable giving programs and community grants.

Tell Your Story

Create a Community Impact Sheet

Develop a one-page summary or brochure highlighting the services and programs your Post provides. Most potential donors are unaware of the full scope of a VFW Post's community involvement.

Consider including:

- Support for deployed service members
- Assistance to homeless veterans
- Food pantry and community outreach programs
- Visits to VA facilities and veteran care centers
- Use of Post facilities by community organizations
- Participation in Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy programs
- Scholarships and educational support provided to local students
- Honor Guard and memorial activities
- Community service projects

Use specific numbers, examples and photos whenever possible to demonstrate impact.

Additional Fundraising Assistance/Resources Available Through the VFW Foundation

Please Note that all VFW Foundation services are free-of-charge to VFW Posts!

The VFW Foundation can provide:

A. Fundraising Templates

A variety of customizable fundraising letters are available in Microsoft Word format and can be tailored to your Post's specific needs.

B. Foundation Research

The Foundation has access to a nationwide database containing information on charitable foundations and grant-making organizations across the United States.

Research can identify potential funding sources within your county and provide:

- Foundation names
- Contact information
- Mailing addresses
- Telephone numbers
- Application requirements

Many Posts have successfully secured grants exceeding \$25,000 through foundation opportunities identified through this research.

To request foundation research, contact Jason Couch, VFW Grants Manager, at jcouch@vfw.org, 816.968.1174

C. Pass-Through Donations

Most VFW Posts operate as 501(c)(19) veterans' organizations rather than the more familiar 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. While donations to a 501(c)(19) generally receive similar tax treatment, some corporations, foundations and individuals prefer to contribute *only* to a 501(c)(3).

In these situations, the VFW Foundation may be able to assist by serving as a pass-through fiscal agent on behalf of your Post.

Donors can make contributions (checks) payable to the "VFW Foundation" instead of to your Post. The donor or the Post then would send the check to the VFW Foundation, 406 W 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111, with instructions that the gift is for Post (insert your Post #)..

Key points to share with potential donors:

1. The full amount, 100% of the donation with no administrative fees deducted is routed to the Post's bank account via ACH electronic transfer usually within two (2) weeks.
2. The donor receives a charitable tax receipt directly from the VFW Foundation, a recognized 501(c)(3) organization.

Posts should contact the VFW Foundation before arranging these donations to ensure proper processing and tracking.

Note:

- Government funds cannot be processed through the Foundation.
- A donation must exceed \$200 to qualify for this service as it would be overwhelming to our staff to process small gifts of say \$10 or \$25.

If you or your potential donors have any questions, contact Richard Freiburghouse, Senior Director of Operations, rfreiburghouse@vfw.org, or 816.968.1124

Final Thoughts

Fundraising success requires dedication, persistence, and a willingness to pursue multiple opportunities. Building relationships, telling your story effectively, and actively engaging your community can significantly increase your chances of securing support.

The VFW Foundation is available to assist Posts and Departments with fundraising questions, donor outreach strategies, and foundation research. Don't hesitate to take advantage of these resources as you work toward your fundraising goals. We are here to help!

AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS



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Amendments and Resolutions

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PREPARING A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE OR RITUAL

Bylaws: Any member in good standing, a Post, a District, or a Department, may propose an amendment to the National Bylaws; provided, however, before consideration at the National Convention, the proposed amendment must be approved by a Department Convention. Immediately following a Department Convention, the proposed amendment(s) must be forwarded to National Headquarters.

Manual of Procedure and Ritual: Any Post, District, or Department may propose an amendment to the Manual of Procedure or Ritual; provided, however, before consideration at the National Convention, the proposed amendment must have been forwarded, through channels and have been properly approved.

In order to meet National Bylaw/Manual of Procedure Article XIV requirements, to provide fifteen (15) day notice to all Posts of all amendments, the Adjutant General requests all amendments be forwarded to National Headquarters no later than two (2) working days following the close of the Department Convention.

Bylaw, Manual of Procedure or Ritual changes not in proper form, unclear as to meaning, or concerning matters clearly not within the scope and purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars cannot be considered by the National Convention.

A proposed change to the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual must be submitted as such, not as a resolution. Proposed amendments must be definite and specific as to the verbiage to be deleted or added. Use of the most recent amended copy of the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual is encouraged, as proposed changes considered by Convention delegates cannot be amended on the floor.

EXAMPLE 1

Proposed Amendment to National Bylaws proposed by Department of _____.

Section 202 – Bylaws.

Amend Section 202, National Bylaws, by deleting the words “two-thirds (2/3)” in the first sentence of paragraph one, and inserting, in lieu thereof, the following:
“majority”.

EXAMPLE 2

Proposed Amendment to National Manual of Procedure proposed by Department of _____.

Section 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.

Amend Section 518, Manual of Procedure, by deleting paragraph (a) (1) d. in its entirety and inserting, in lieu thereof, the following:

“Plan and organize all social functions.”

EXAMPLE 3

Proposed Amendment to National Ritual proposed by Department of _____.

Amend the Ritual by deleting on page 48, in the last sentence of the Member’s Obligation, the words “and a citizen of our great republic.”

Further amend by placing a period after the word “comrade” in the same sentence.

If you require help composing a proposed change to the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual, please contact Administrative Operations at National Headquarters for advice and assistance in properly preparing a proposed amendment to be voted upon by your department convention.

PREPARING A RESOLUTION TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The policy of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is established by resolutions adopted by the delegates attending Department and National Conventions. Most resolutions originate at the Post level and are passed through the District and Department before being acted upon at a National Convention. Many times, an otherwise worthy idea gets nowhere merely because it is not correctly presented.

A resolution contains two separate parts; a statement of the problem to be solved, and the proposed solution to the problem. The problem is outlined in the “*WHEREAS*” clauses, and the proposed solution is given in the “*RESOLVED*” section.

The “*RESOLVED*” section of a resolution should be complete in itself without depending on the “*WHEREAS*” clauses to give it meaning.

EXAMPLE

WHEREAS, the rising cost of living has created an intense hardship on those disabled veterans whose only income is a meager pension check; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would provide a substantial increase in non-service connected pension rates.

If a resolution deals with a local problem, it needs no action on a level higher than that of the Post. If the problem concerns an area larger than that served by the Post, it should, after Post approval, be presented before the District or County Council. All resolutions of statewide, regional or national concern must be acted upon by the Department Convention. Those resolutions approved by a Department Convention, which affect persons or matters outside the state boundaries, must be forwarded to the National Convention for final disposition.

When submitting a resolution to the Department Convention, a notation on the bottom should show the previous action taken, such as, approval by Post and, if applicable, by the District. A Post or District submitting a resolution to its Department Convention must follow guidelines established by the Department, which may require submitting the resolution to the Department Adjutant prior to the convening of the convention.

Resolutions not in proper form, with unclear meaning, or concerning matters clearly not within the scope and purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars cannot be considered by the National Convention.

Resolutions approved by a Department Convention, which affect matters outside state boundaries, must be forwarded by the Department Adjutant to the National Convention for final disposition. Approved resolutions should be sent to National Headquarters at the close of the Department Convention. The Adjutant General requests all resolutions be forwarded to National Headquarters no later than two (2) working days following the close of the Department Convention. A resolution disapproved by the Department Convention or not acted upon by the Department Convention will not be considered by the National Convention.

Resolutions may also be originated by Department officers or by the Department Convention itself and acted upon by the Department Convention. A National Officer may originate a resolution concerning National affairs and submit it directly to the National Convention without Department action. Likewise, a National Convention Committee may originate a resolution and present it for approval during the National Convention.

Policy set by the National Convention is binding upon all subordinate units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. No Post or Department is permitted to take any individual action or espouse any cause contrary to the National Bylaws or to the actions of the National Convention except that it may propose changes in policy by the preparation of a resolution for consideration as outlined herein.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1) Any member in good standing may propose a National Bylaw, Manual of Procedure, or Ritual amendment directly to the National Convention delegates.
☐ True
☐ False
- 2) Article XIV of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure require the Adjutant General to provide ____ day notice to all Posts on any proposed amendment to be decided by the delegates of the National Convention.
A. 10
B. 15
C. 20
D. 30
- 3) National Bylaw, Manual of Procedure, or Ritual amendments are submitted to the Adjutant General in the form of a resolution.
☐ True
☐ False
- 4) A resolution adopted by the National Convention sets policy which is binding for all subordinate units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
☐ True
☐ False
- 5) In a resolution the “WHEREAS” represents the issue and the “BE IT RESOLVE” proposes the solution.
☐ True
☐ False
- 6) Resolutions approved by a Department Convention that affect matters outside its geographical boundary must be forwarded to the National Convention for final disposition.
☐ True
☐ False

1) False – An amendment must be approved by a Department Convention (or be submitted by a National Officer) before it can be considered by the National Convention; 2) 15 days; 3) False, the amendment must be specific; 4) True; 5) True; 6) True



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.®

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
www.vfw.org