

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
HEADQUARTERS**



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

April, 2025

“When in Command, Command”

Membership

For the month of April, the Post that leads each division will receive a set of six Branch of Service flags to fly at your Post to show your support for our Armed Forces. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

Keep it up and we will show everyone how NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

This contest will run from April 1, through April 30, 2025. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.

As a reminder, every month we will award points to our Posts as follows:

- Recruit a New Annual Member into the Post: 1 point
- An Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life: 5 points
- Recruit a New Life Member into the Post: 10 points

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org) and go to <https://www.vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As the membership year has begun, keep in mind the membership requirements set out by the Commander-in-Chief:

- Achieve 102% in membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As you get started in the new membership year, we have made it easier for you to get all the recruiting brochures you will need to make this membership year successful! It is as easy as one two three!

1. Go to [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org) and click the login link in the upper right corner. Sign in when prompted.
2. Under “Membership Quick Links,” select Membership Online Order Form.
3. Use the dropdown list to indicate items you need. The form will automatically calculate the cost of items and shipping. When finished, click SUBMIT and it will take you to a billing page if there are any charges.

Follow these simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact the Membership department at 1.888.564.6839 or email us at membership@vfw.org.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Our next Membership Monday training webinar will be on April 7, at 2:00 PM, Central time, Topic: “Long-Term Planning – A Look Ahead”. Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VFWMembership> to learn how to attend this online training.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to vfw.org, click on JOIN, and scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life Members and is now available in memoriam for past Life Members. There are three levels of membership; each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Posts</u>	<u>Departments</u>	<u>National</u>
Gold- \$1,200.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
Silver- \$800.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Bronze- \$400.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00

What will your Legacy be?

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation is proud to report that we secured critical sponsorships for the 2025 VFW Washington Conference. Through the generosity of our dedicated partners, nearly \$190,000 was raised to directly support key events including the Voice of Democracy® Parade of Winners, VFW/SVA Fellows Dinner and the Commander-in-Chief Reception. Tony Lowe, VFW Foundation consultant with assistance from Chris Johnson, Grants Coordinator, managed this extraordinary effort.

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations, Richard Freiburghouse, RFreiburghouse@vfw.org

Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 18% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

May is National Military Appreciation Month – May will be here before we know it and it is time to start thinking of ways you can support fellow veterans and service members. There are many ways to show your

support. Later this month you may receive a piece of mail asking for you to show your support by joining other veterans and military families in displaying the United States flag on all patriotic holidays, particularly this upcoming Memorial Day. If you don't have a flag, you can visit heroes.vfw.org/Flag and print a free flag poster to display. You can also check with your Post to see if they are planning to commemorate a special event for Military Spouses Day on May 9, Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15, Armed Forces Day on May 17, National Maritime Day on May 22, or Memorial Day on May 26. These are all great ways to get involved. In that mailer, you will also see that we have included a set of patriotic coasters as a gift for your past support of the VFW programs. Your continued support of the VFW helps us to provide life-changing assistance to all veterans, service members and their families when they need it most.

Support America's Heroes With a Gift of Stock – Do you own stock? Did you know that you can maximize your tax savings by donating your stock to the VFW? With a gift of stock, you can eliminate the capital gains tax and be able to deduct the entire amount as a charitable deduction. It is a win-win situation since your gift provides support for America's veterans. All you have to do is request a transfer of funds from your investment advisor. Learn more about this easy process: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/double-savings-with-stock>. Contact the VFW Major Gifts Office at 816.820.9768 or vfwmajorgifts@vfw.org for help with your donation.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. It is called Partners in Patriotism.

As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of January. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at partners@vfw.org with "Partners in Patriotism Application" in the subject line.

VFW Friends of Freedom – If you are not already a member of the VFW's online community, please visit vfw.org and look for the gold banner that says "**Find Out What's Happening**" to sign up. As a member of the VFW's Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts, and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation's veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit vfw.org/VFWatWork and click on "**Read VFW success stories**" to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans' rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

VFW Department Resource Page – We encourage all VFW Departments to actively support the VFW Department Fundraising Programs. The success of these initiatives rely on the participation and backing of your Department's members. Promotional materials can be accessed by visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools.

Marketing Communications

VFW Marketing Resources at Your Fingertips.

It is a busy time of year for the VFW, and that is why the VFW has promotional toolkits and resources in the Communications & Public Affairs section of Training & Support behind the member login.

Whether you are needing resources to promote Day of Service and #StillServing, or the 125th Anniversary, here is where you will find everything from logo guidance and radio spots to posters and suggested social media posts, and so much more!

Log in and start using these helpful tools today!

Veterans & Military Support Programs

2025 VFW Day of Service

Make your state stand out! We are kicking off 2025 VFW Day of Service, a nationwide community service effort, and we are counting on you to help make this year bigger and better. Please visit <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/> to learn more, check out helpful tools and resources—and most importantly — sign up!

Day of Service events should be scheduled during the month of May 2025 and Dashboard credit for “Day of Service Participation” will not be applied until after May 2025. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Mark Herron at mherron@vfw.org.

126th National Convention – Columbus, OH

As we plan for the **2025 VFW National Convention**, there is a new design for the **VMS Lapel Pins** for the **2025-26 Program year**! ADJs/QMs will be able to pre-order their pins and will be able to pick them up at the convention again this year. Notification and order forms have been emailed and provided. If your Department has an outstanding balance from last year, you will need to remedy this before you can pre-order for this year.

VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

The **VFW Unmet Needs Program** will now be called **VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members**. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at mherron@vfw.org or 816.968.1102.

Military Appreciation Program (MAP) Grant Funds

The **Military Assistance Program (MAP)** is now being named as the **Military Appreciation Program (MAP)**, effective immediately.

The **VFW MAP Grant** is **closed** for the 2024-25 program year. The 2024-25 MAP Grant funds have been depleted. Any events held after the closure of the MAP grant will not be reimbursed with the 2025-26 funds.

VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The **2025 Fall Semester** opened Jan. 1, 2025, and will close April 30, 2025. The application is available online only at vfw.org/Scholarship.

All American Eligibility

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2025**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the “**VMS Donation**” tab on the **Dashboard** to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters. If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate to the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

When you make your **\$125.00** or more donation, all that needs to be entered into the box is 125 or more. The \$ and .00 are **not required** in the donation amount box.

Do not use the red donate link in the upper right-hand corner of this webpage. This is for general donation purposes only.

VMS Program Tools

The Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Program Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is <https://www.vfw.org/VMSPTools>.

Continue to do what you are doing and thank you for your support!

VFW Programs

DISPLAYING MILITARY SERVICE SYMBOLS. Military service flags, insignias, etc. should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag.

VFW 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE POST PROGRAM SIGN UP. We encourage as many of our VFW Posts to get signed up to become a 125th Anniversary community service Post. To date, we have 100. Please help us spread the word. Our birthday was a couple of days ago, but our celebration will last the rest of the year and conclude at the National Convention in Columbus.

The VFW National Commander invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their family members to our country during the VFW 125th Anniversary year. In addition, it is hoped you will encourage your community to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Have our Posts click this link <https://vfw125.org/get-involved/> and click on the **red** Accept Invitation icon for further information.

PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD) Please encourage Posts to read the 2024-25 Membership program. Military Appreciation Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Financial Assistance financial grants & VFW Help a Hero Scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

VFW HONORS AMERICA’S TEACHERS DURING 2024–25 PROGRAM YEAR. Congratulations to the following teachers who were selected National winners for 2024-25:

Elementary School level – Tim Smiddy, Staunton Elementary School, Staunton, Illinois, selected by VFW Post 1241, Staunton, Illinois.

Middle School level – Christie Wingo, Colorado Springs Christian School, Colorado Springs, Colorado, selected by VFW Post 7829, Monument, Colorado.

High School level – Rebecca Byrd, Sevier County High School, Sevierville, Tennessee, selected by VFW Post 12199, Sevierville, Tennessee.

National awards will be presented in August to each teacher during the VFW National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. Each of the winners will receive an all-expense-paid trip to the National Convention and a \$1,000 cash award for professional development expenses (winners will receive a 1099-MISC); \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and his or her school. Each Department's recipients and their schools will receive a National Commendation citation, which will be sent to the Department Headquarters prior to the National Convention for presentation.

OUTSTANDING NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD. Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, 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).

These four Posts will be awarded the Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR. Each Department will have an NCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. 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 NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Department Headquarters are in the process of receiving their requested awards, according to their presentation dates listed on Formstack. They should be contacting their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient's peers at a professional association event, city council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EODTs personnel, many of whom are veterans eligible for VFW membership. Order plaques and citations for public servants from the VFW Store vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant.

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: vfwstore.org/products/32134.

HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG. The U.S. Flag should be at half-staff on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May (federal holiday - half-staff until noon). Flags available at VFW Store vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

FLAG DAY, JUNE 14. All VFW units are reminded to properly display the U.S. Flag on Flag Day, Saturday, June 14 and to conduct a ceremony or program as feasible. You may contact the VFW Communications Department for a Flag Day speech. It is also suggested Posts should award the VFW Patriotic Citizen Award (Product No. 4385) for those who have displayed our National flag daily.

“UPDATED” POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag. Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Nov. 7, 2019), it is required that the POW/MIA flag, on certain federal properties, be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP237.

IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot’s Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

VFW Member Benefits

Save Money While Making Memories.

Life experiences can often change our view of the world and how we perceive others. Trips to new places often offer the chance to experience new perspectives and help us grow as human beings. While money can come, and money can go, making memories helps create a narrative that can be shared and passed along to children, grandchildren, and our friends and family.

Now, with access to exclusive discounts on everything from home goods and the latest gadgets to entertainment, travel, and big-ticket buys, being a VFW member means you get to save time AND money! Visit <https://vfw.perkspot.com/login> to create an account and save on your next adventure.

“Buddy”® Poppy

NATIONAL “BUDDY”® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST. The time frame for registering and setting up the Department winning Buddy Poppy displays for the national judging at convention will be the same as usual. Department winning entries will be accepted for registration and may be set up beginning at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 9, until noon, Monday, Aug. 11, 2025. Winning displays will be identified with the appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning, Aug. 12 and announced later, on the convention floor. Displays must be removed prior to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday. Any displays left after this time will be removed for disposal by convention center personnel during the disassembly of the exhibit hall.

“BUDDY”® POPPY CAMPAIGN. Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades. Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as “They Gave, Will You?” is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

BUDDY POPPY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 60 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tin tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or by calling Member Service Center at 1.833.839.8387.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

VFW ANNIVERSARY BUDDY POPPIES. Special poppies are available to Posts celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries. The poppies are the same design as traditional poppies but come in silver for the 25th anniversary Post, gold for the 50th anniversary Post and diamond (iridescent white) for the 75th anniversary Post. Posts currently in their 100th anniversary year can order any color and as many as they need. If not in your 100th anniversary year, please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as red poppies and should be distributed and used in displays just like the red poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish the inventory of Anniversary Poppies due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 1.1 years of the Gold, 1.2 years of Diamond and 14 years of the Silver.

Quartermaster General

The Life Membership Board of Trustees, with the concurrence of the National Council of Administration, pursuant to Section 111 of the VFW Bylaws, has determined that for the 2025-26 membership year, the Life Membership Fund will pay out as follows:

- Plan ABC - A total payout of \$10.50 for each life member (\$3.50 to each Post, Department and National)

- Plan D - A total payout of \$11.70 for each life member (\$3.90 to each Post, Department and National)
- Plan E - A total payout of \$23.10 for each life member (\$7.70 to each Post, Department and National)
- Note: At-Large Members are corresponding Plan pay out amount divided by two. For example, Plan ABC At-Large Payout is \$5.25.

Payment will be made in Sept. 2025 for all Life Members, recorded as of Aug. 31, 2025. In addition, a payment will be made in Jan. 2026 for all Life Members processed during the period Sept. 1 through Dec. 31, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact Marc Garduno, Quartermaster General, MGarduno@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service

LAST CALL FOR VFW SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2024-25 NOMINATIONS

The deadline for submitting nominations for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2024-25 is **April 30, 2025**.

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient of the award will be furnished round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two night's hotel accommodations 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.

We encourage every Department to put forth a candidate. A nomination shows that Department leadership is aware of the significant contributions service representatives make in your community.

Nominations can be submitted to NVS via email to taldana@vfw.org by no later than April 30.

ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING, ANNAPOLIS, MD, APRIL 27-30, 2025

The upcoming VFW National Veterans Service Proficiency Training Conference (PTC) for accredited representatives is being held April 27-30, 2025, at the Doubletree, Annapolis, Maryland, with a virtual workgroup option for those who cannot attend our live conference.

While registration has already ended, this is a reminder that your Department Service Office may be closed while your accredited representatives attend this training which is essential to maintaining expert knowledge of the veterans' benefits system.

Questions regarding this or any VFW National Veterans Service sponsored training, should be addressed to Mike Figlioli, Director, VFW National Veterans Service, at mfiglioli@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Your Voice on Capitol Hill

The National Legislative Service staff regularly testifies before Congress on behalf of our organization. Our testimonies cover an array of issues that are critically important to veterans and their families from all eras, as well as current active duty and Guard/Reserve service members. We have been invited to testify before the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs on many different topics such as VA community care; mental health services and suicide prevention; Claim Sharks; transition assistance; and numerous pieces of pending legislation concerning earned benefits. All of our [testimonies](#) are posted on the VFW website.

In addition to providing testimony, our staff members also regularly have one-on-one meetings and conversations with senators, representatives, and key committee staffers to field questions and provide detailed information regarding the [VFW's position](#) on specific issues. Making sure our nation's veterans receive the compensation and care they deserve is paramount, and congressional members know it. They often contact us for input and support on important pending legislation. We stand firm with our [legislative priorities](#), and Congress listens.

Be sure to read the *Action Corps Weekly* e-newsletter to stay informed about what is happening on Capitol Hill. Please respond quickly to Action Alerts when the VFW needs you to maximize our grassroots advocacy power.

Administrative Operations

Post Election Reports must be submitted no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters.

Installing officers are directed to see to it that the Post Election Reports have been completed and submitted to National Headquarters. If a Post Election Report has not been forwarded to National Headquarters at the time of installation, the installing officer shall complete and forward such report at the time of the installation of Post Officers no later than June 1. **We encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS)**, which is located behind the member's "LOGIN" at [vfw.org](#). Post Election Reports received electronically will be forwarded to the Department Headquarters.

VFW Store

BE PART OF THE 4TH ANNUAL VFW DAY OF SERVICE! The event starts Saturday, May 3, and continues all month. Get coordinating shirts for your team's service project at the VFW Store. To order go to [vfwstore.org/products/GP393](#) or call 833.839.8387.