

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

August 2023

**“To Command Is To Serve
Nothing More Nothing Less”**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DUANE SARMIENTO!

Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento is issuing his first challenge to all our Posts to get a strong start to membership growth and to move us toward our goal of 102% for this membership year! This membership year is already off to a strong start, and the Commander-in-Chief wants to keep that momentum going. To do that, he's set out the first of his membership challenges this year to encourage Posts to raise their membership numbers.

For this month's challenge, we're going to continue focusing on membership growth and see how many members a Post can bring in during the month of August. New, renewed, and reinstated members, as well as dues-paying transfers will all count towards this contest goal. The Post in each membership Division that shows the highest increase in their membership total will win a \$500 cash award and a framed citation for the Post! This contest will specifically count annual members; since Life will not show up in your Post's totals until September, they will not factor into this month's contest.

Membership is a continual process through the year, and it's always the right time to bring in new members, make sure your annual members renew or convert to Life, and work those unpaid/expired lists to bring members back into the fold.

The goal for this year is 102%, and with hard work we know that it is within our reach. This is going to be the year that we show exceptional growth because this will be the year everyone will go out and MEET THE CHALLENGE!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS:

The Triple Crown Pin is awarded to those who achieved All-American Commander at the Department, District and Post level.

Luddie Austin (NJ)
William Beams, Jr. (AR)
Bobby Edwards (IL)
Barbara Hagemann (NJ)
John Hamilton (FL)
Dale Hoogeveen (MN)
Richard Leirer (IN)
Geoffrey Lyster (VA)
Warren Maxson (Pacific Areas)
Dean Rakoskie (GA)
Michael Raymond (MA)
Eric Segundo (MA)
Richard Shawver (TX)
Edward Stefanak, Jr. (SC)
Danny Zaharias (UT)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 48 DEPARTMENTS, 232 DISTRICTS AND 854 POSTS FOR THEIR DISTINCTION AS 2022-23 ALL-AMERICAN!

Thank you for all your hard work and a job well done!

ALL-AMERICAN POST CAP ORDER INFORMATION

All-American Quartermasters and Post members may submit their cap order through the VFW store.

2023-24 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The 2023-24 Membership Program is available online at vfw.org, under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention. You will see the 2023-24 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

MEMBERSHIP OBJECTIVES

As the membership year has begun, keep in mind our membership objectives, also written in the 2023-24 Membership Program.

- 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.
- Provide membership assistance, using teams from your conference to assist and mentor those who request assistance.

POST DEVELOPMENT

The 124th National Convention is in the past and we are moving forward to 102% in membership! As your membership committees begin to meet and discuss your Post's recruiting events and your mentorship program, look ahead to mitigate known problems early in the year to set yourself up for success. If you are trying to charter a Post and you have more than (15) members on a charter application, give me a call, Corey Hunt at 816.968.2788. We have many resources available to help you.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT AND POST REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT AWARD

New Post Development and Post Revitalization Department Award: For each new Post chartered, and/or revitalized, the Department Quartermaster will receive:

- A \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives, view the Commander-in-Chief's National Membership Program at vfw.org under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at membership@vfw.org or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Membership Monday training webinars will be in August 2023. We will be covering topics intended to help grow membership at the Post level. Long-term planning, how to set benchmarks and achievable goals for the future of your Post, District or Department are all ingredients we use in our presentations. Every VFW member can benefit from this training. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

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 offers 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 announces the engagement with our new independent fundraising contractor, Tony Lowe. Tony will initially focus on contributions from the eastern U.S., especially the Washington, DC, and Atlanta metro areas. Tony is an Air Force veteran who has experience working with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has also served for over five years as a VFW National Service Officer, and as the COO for the Washington, DC VFW office and is currently VFW Post 341 (Washington, DC) Commander. He has nonprofit experience as the Executive Director of Miles of Giving (a charity that provides financial assistance to wounded warriors and their families).

The May 2023 Burger King/VFW Unmet Needs campaign has raised over \$384,000 which brings total fundraising for this fiscal year to nearly \$700,000.

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. The 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.*

VFW 2024 Special Edition Calendar – The exclusive 2024 VFW Calendar package was mailed the first week of July. We hope you have received it and are pleased with the special Fly the Flag calendar along with the Songbird calendar.

Please show your pride in our country and your fellow veterans by displaying your calendar in a prominent place in your home, office or Post. Your calendars are filled with patriotic images and beautiful songbirds. They also contain information on VFW programs available for veterans, service members and their families as well as patriotic holidays and observances. Please remember to display the U.S. flag. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Flag to download and print a free flag poster to display.

If you haven't already, please send the most generous gift you can. Your support of the 2024 VFW Calendar program helps your VFW Department serve veterans in need throughout the year.

Join the Prestigious VFW Heroes Circle! – You can join an elite group of our most dedicated members and supporters in the VFW Heroes Circle! Comprised of those who wish to further our mission with a gift in their wills or other estate plans, the VFW Heroes Circle was created to honor our most loyal supporters who have made this extraordinary commitment to America's veterans, service members and their families.

To learn how easy it is to make an impact on future generations of veterans, please contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org. More information is available online at vfw.org/PlannedGiving.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Commander-in-Chief Duane T. Sarmiento would like you to join with him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families and reduce the amount of mail you receive. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis, as well as reduce expenses and eliminate fundraising mail. 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 the VFW's 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!

Department Resources – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. By visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools, you will find the latest fundraising program information, ideas, and promotional tools from the Development Department. Download ad slicks, ready-to-use articles, and other items for your Department publications and/or website. Recent mailings and mail schedules are also posted on a regular basis. Use the tools found on the VFW Department Resources Page to help strengthen your Department programs. Check it out today!

Veterans & Military Support Programs

If you ordered and received your **2023-24 VMS Lapel Pins**, please pay for them as soon as possible. You may utilize the VMS Donation link on the upper right-hand corner of the Dashboard.

VMS All-American Requirement

As the **Veterans & Military Support Program** evolves and streamlines our operations, we have augmented the current **Veterans & Military Support Programs Chair Tools** webpage. This will be updated every month.

VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard moving forward. An email was sent out on **June 29, 2023**, annotating this change, and explaining the **NEW donation page**. All Posts have to do is click on the **VMS donation tab on the Dashboard** to donate. **The link will point them to OMS. No more 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 fill out the donation for their Post. Credit will **automatically update on the Dashboard daily**. No more weekly updates.

Overseas Departments will donate for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. Again, this will automatically update for credit daily.

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

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **2024 Spring Semester** will open **Aug. 1, 2023**, and runs through **Nov. 15, 2023**. The application is available online only at vfw.org/Scholarship.

It was great to see everyone at the VFW National Convention! Thank you for what you do every day!

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.

ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD. Please encourage Posts to read the 2023-24 Membership Program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National Headquarters to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants and VFW Sport Clips Help-A-Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

2023-24 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD

PROGRAM. The Veterans of Foreign Wars wants to recognize the nation's top elementary, junior high and high school teachers (teaching at least half of the school day in a classroom environment) who teach citizenship education topics regularly and promote America's history, traditions, and institutions effectively through this program.

Now is the time to begin locating exceptional teachers for your Post to nominate for the next competition. All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

All Post-level nominees should provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available.

VFW Post Teacher Award chairpersons may submit one candidate, in each grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), to their District by Nov. 15. If a Department does not have District judging, then the entries would be submitted to the Department Headquarters and/or Department Chairperson by Jan. 1. The Department may select a single candidate, in each grade level, and submit them to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1 for National judging.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the "VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form" which will be available on the VFW website soon. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.

VFW's Department Citizenship Education Teacher award includes a citation for both the winning teacher and their school.

VFW's National Citizenship Education Teacher awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and school; and an all-expenses-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. have the correct teacher award entry deadlines and rules for the 2023-24 program year. The teacher entry form will be up on the VFW website soon. The dates are Oct. 31 for entries to the Post, Nov. 15 for completion of Post judging, Dec. 15 for completion of District judging, Jan. 1 for entries to Department, Feb. 1 for completion of Department judging and their winner, in each category, are due to National Headquarters.

Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals, soon, and on the same page are all other program materials.

IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME! It is the perfect time to contact schools, youth groups, parent organizations and others with information about Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen. Schools are making curriculum decisions now and parents are thinking about scholarships.

Please remember that Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen are VFW programs supported by the VFW Auxiliary. It is inappropriate for the VFW Auxiliary to conduct a separate judging at any level.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email nlopez@vfw.org or call 816.968.1155.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN THEMES. The 2023-24 themes have been chosen by Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. The Voice of Democracy theme is “**What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?**” and the Patriot’s Pen theme is “**How are you inspired by America?**”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2023-24 Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy for Voice of Democracy and vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen for Patriot’s Pen.

NOTE: “NEW” Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are now available!

PATRIOT DAY, SEPT. 11. Per Presidential Proclamation, Sept. 11 is designated as “Patriot Day.” The President requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) and a moment of silence observed in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day due to terrorist attacks on the United States. For flags and other patriotic items, click here vfwstore.org/category/patriotic/miscpatriotic.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, SEPT. 15. Posts should conduct an appropriate ceremony. Information on conducting a ceremony can be found in the current VFW Manual of Procedure. For POW/MIA merchandise, click vfwstore.org/category/memorial/pow-mia.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM. This program is designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time to outside organizations. Recognition is in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins which are given to volunteers who have completed the number of hours prescribed for those awards. For more information, see the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson’s Guide or contact Tammy at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

“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 (Feb. 21, 2020), it is required that the POW/MIA flag 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

Dental problems can be unpredictable and expensive. For example, did you know the average cost of a dental crown is \$1,424. With Dental Insurance, you can reduce your out-of-pocket expenses and maintain your smile with preventive care.

Dental Insurance offers coverage that helps with dental expenses that may not be covered under your medical plan. It helps pay for routine cleanings and exams and reduces costs for X-rays, fillings and more.

Dental Insurance not only helps you pay for your dental care, it also can help prevent problems.

When your preventive care is covered, you're more likely to go for cleanings and checkups — this can help you avoid problems before they become too costly or complicated.

For additional information about Dental Insurance, click [here](#).

"Buddy"® Poppy

NATIONAL "BUDDY"® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST WINNERS:

Category 1 (Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign)

First Place - VFW Auxiliary to the Parnell-Burt Post No. 3615, Ruston, Louisiana

Second Place - VFW Auxiliary to the Lexington VFW Post No. 8738, Lexington, South Carolina

Third Place - VFW United Post No. 2975 and its VFW Auxiliary, Beresford, South Dakota

Honorable Mention - VFW Auxiliary to the Superstition Mountain Post 9399, Apache Junction, Arizona

Category 2 (Memorial or Inspirational Displays)

First Place – VFW Auxiliary to the Alfred Pepin VFW Post 798, Newport, Vermont

Second Place – Hometown-Murray VFW Post 9773 and its VFW Auxiliary, Hometown, Illinois

Third Place – Robert V. Lindsey VFW Post 10041 and its VFW Auxiliary, Bethel, Alaska

Honorable Mention – VFW Auxiliary to the Virgil Wilson VFW Post 4961, Seaford, Delaware

Category 3 (Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies)

First Place – Not Applicable

Second Place – VFW Auxiliary to the Private Allen J. Beck, Jr. VFW Post 5265, Spring Grove, Pennsylvania

Third Place – VFW Auxiliary to the Raymond L. Greene VFW Post 6917, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Honorable Mention – VFW Auxiliary to the Brigadier General Clifford H. Shuey VFW Post 6306, Golden Shores, Arizona

Director's Award – Fort Morgan VFW Post 2551, Fort Morgan, Colorado & VFW Auxiliary to the Ralph Frank Janousek Post 2788, Penrose, Colorado

"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 eight (8) weeks in advance of your distribution date. Be sure to specify a date by which the poppies are required; do not use "ASAP."

BUDDY POPPY UPDATE: National Headquarters conducted a review of the Buddy Poppy policy and procedures and implemented the following changes effective May 20, 2021:

- 1) If you do not receive your order within eight weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact National Headquarters to report that you have not received the order.
- 2) If you do not report a missing order three months after the eight-week processing time, the order will NOT be replaced free of charge, and you will have to resubmit your order.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or the VFW Store/Emblem and Supply Catalog.

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.

Contact information: BuddyPoppy@vfw.org or 816.756.3390, ext. 6722 for any questions or concerns.

VFW SILVER, GOLD, AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES. The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need. Anniversary poppies are approximately three times as expensive for us to produce, but because of the small quantities we deal in, we do not pass those costs on to the Posts. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department and processed the same as the red poppies. Annotate on the order to National that it is for anniversary poppies and specify which one.

National Veterans Service

ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING, ANNAPOLIS, MD, SEPT. 10-15, 2023

National Veterans Service will conduct a hybrid training conference for VFW accredited representatives Sept. 10-15, 2023, at the DoubleTree Annapolis Hotel in Annapolis, MD. This hybrid course will include in-person instruction that will be live-streamed simultaneously via electronic media to those who are unable to attend in person. Additionally, NVS will host Basic Skill Level Training during the same week which is intended for newly hired and accredited representatives. Formal notification to students who are required to participate in these conferences has already been sent out. Please address questions relating to accredited service officer training to Chris Macinkowicz, Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance, NVS, at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org.

JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER FOR 2022-23

During our recently concluded 124th National Convention held in Phoenix, Arizona, VFW National Veterans Service was pleased to recognize David Lowe, Service Officer, VFW Department of Oregon, as the recipient of the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Representative of the Year Award for 2022-23. It was an honor to recognize him before the membership of our great organization.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

August Recess – Your Congressional Members at Home

Congress is in recess for the month of August, which means your congressional members will be back in their home states. This is a good opportunity for VFW members to contact and visit their district/state offices, or participate in town hall meetings and focus attention on the VFW's [legislative priorities](#). Familiarize yourself with [the VFW's stance](#) on topics including toxic exposure; suicide prevention; transition assistance; education and employment; and concurrent receipt and retirement compensation. Make sure your senators and representatives know what they need to do to meet the needs of our service members, veterans, and their families. Help us hold Congress accountable to the VFW's legislative priorities!

Administrative Operations

2023-24 Commander, Quartermaster and Trustee Guides

The newly revised 2023-24 Commander, Quartermaster and Trustee guides are now available online. You can access the guides behind the member's "LOGIN" at vfw.org, then navigate to My VFW, Member/Post Resources, Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates, then Training. The full guides are in their respective section under "Elected and Appointed Officer-Specific Materials." These guides are a great resource for elected and appointed officers at every level of the organization to assist you in your roles and ensure our continued success.