

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

January, 2020

“Together We Can

Membership

Our Commander-in-Chief is offering a new Life membership incentive program. All members who either join the VFW as a new Life member, reinstate as a Life member, or upgrade their existing annual membership to Life beginning Sept. 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, will earn a \$50 store credit. This credit must be used prior to Aug. 31, 2020. Upgrade, pay off or reinstate your Life membership today oms.vfw.org/QuickRenew.aspx?srcid=275.

NEW MEMBERSHIP WEBINAR - TELEPHONE CAMPAIGNS

As we move through the membership year, we often get questions from Posts asking how they can better retain their annual members. We know from experience the best method of retaining and mentoring our membership is through personal contact; one of the best and most efficient ways to contact these members about dues renewal is through a telephone campaign. The National Membership Department has put together a short training video explaining how to put one of these calling campaigns together so that your Post can remain on top of membership retention goals keeping these members from falling through the cracks.

You can find this new video on YouTube at youtu.be/rvOL9lmqNB0. It's less than 12 minutes and provides a simple and concise lesson on putting a telephone calling campaign together. This video, along with other educational membership videos, can be found at vfw.org under the Training and Support section, which we encourage all of our Posts to visit and make use of.

DEPARTMENT "FIRST TO FINISH" INCENTIVE

For the Department that is first to attain 100% in membership, the Commander (plus guest) and the Quartermaster (plus guest) will each receive:

- **\$2,500 voucher through Veterans Travel Services (VTS) applied toward airfare, accommodations and transportation for a trip of their own choice.**

POST DEVELOPMENT

As you are planning for the New Year, make sure your Departments are in contact with the National Membership department to identify an area in need of Post development or a revitalization effort. There are many resources available to you, all you need to do is call. We are looking to start a Post or revitalize an existing Post in every single Department. Let's not wait until the middle of the year to identify an area. Let the Membership Department know now what you're working on so we can start tracking that information and provide assistance as needed. For any questions or further information, you may contact Corey Hunt in the Membership Department [via email at coreyhunt@vfw.org](mailto:coreyhunt@vfw.org) or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

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

VFW HUMANA ANNUAL MEETING

Representatives from the VFW and Humana met to review ongoing strategic initiatives on Dec. 4-5, 2019, at Humana's regional office in Overland Park, Kansas. Meeting outcomes include plans for national expansion of the VFW/Humana "Uniting to Combat Hunger" initiative, which will culminate once again at the 2020 VFW National Convention in Reno, and continuing collaborations between Humana and the VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) to enhance training for Humana associates and VFW-accredited veteran service officers.

VFW FOUNDATION DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

The VFW Foundation Board convened Dec. 9, 2019, at the VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. Issues discussed included the status of the VFW Foundation grants to other nonprofits and VFW Posts/Auxiliaries, corporate relations updates, the BURGER KING® [VFW's Unmet Needs](#) fall campaign, and Humana collaborations. Following the meeting, VFW Foundation Board member and Sport Clips Founder and CEO Gordon Logan, presented a contribution to the VFW Foundation in the amount of \$1.25 million. The generous gift will help support active-duty U.S. service members and veterans with scholarships through the VFW's "[Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship](#)" program.

ROCK BAND JACKYL RAISES MONEY FOR UNMET NEEDS

Jesse James Dupree, lead singer, guitarist and primary song writer for the rock band Jackyl, has been working closely with the VFW Foundation to raise awareness and support for the VFW Unmet Needs program. Concert-goers are encouraged to Text 'NEEDS' to 20222 in order to donate \$5 to the VFW Unmet Needs program during concerts, and local VFW Posts are hosting local events and raffles to raise additional funds. Combined efforts to date have raised over \$24,000 for Unmet Needs. Jesse stopped by VFW Headquarters on Friday, Dec. 20 for a meet-and-greet with VFW employees, and Jackyl performed in Kansas City the following night.

VFW National Convention

121st VFW National Convention housing will officially open Feb. 18, 2020. Housing reservation information will be located on the convention website accessed through the VFW website at vfw.org/convention. The convention website will also have general convention information including the registration form and links to other convention related information for Reno, Nevada, July 18-23, 2020, including a tentative agenda. Please note the convention is one day longer beginning in 2020.

2020 VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Annual Campaign Kicks Off – Your support is urgently needed for the 2020 VFW NVS Annual Campaign, which enables us to assist all generations of America’s veterans – especially those now home from Iraq and Afghanistan – receive the benefits they have earned. We can’t fight for veterans alone. Your donation right now ensures the VFW's national force of highly-trained service officers is at the ready to help America's veterans navigate the complicated VA system.

In this package, many will receive a 2020 Petition to Congress and a Memorial Day card. Please sign the petition and card and return them. We will be collecting the petitions and delivering them to Congress to let them know that we will not sit by and allow Congress to balance the budget on the backs of veterans. The cards will be distributed to hospitalized veterans and service members in time for Memorial Day. Some members will receive the 2020 member survey to fill out and return.

Your 2019 Year-End Tax Receipt Is On Its Way! – Late-January, we will be mailing the 2019 Year-End Tax Receipts to VFW members who have requested to receive one at the end of the year.

Helping the VFW for Generations to Come – One of the easiest ways to continue providing support for your brothers and sisters-in-arms, as well as their families, is to name the VFW in your will or trust. It only takes a few words and you remain in control of your assets during your lifetime. Just a small percentage of your assets could go a long way in helping the VFW continue its mission into the future.

Free estate planning information is always available by contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119, email plannedgiving@vfw.org or visit vfw.org/plannedgiving.

Have You Heard About the VFW’s Partners in Patriotism? – Would you like to support 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 the 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 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. You need only go to heroes.vfw.org/vfwtools. The latest fundraising program information, ideas and promotional tools from the Development Department can be found here. Download ad slicks, ready-to-use articles and other items for your Department publications and/or website. Recent mailings and mailing schedules are also posted on a regular basis. Use the Department Resources tools to help strengthen your Department programs. Check it out today!

VFW Communications

If you're looking for new radio PSAs, we've got you covered. Several new radio PSAs have been made available in the Training & Support section of VFW.org, so log in today to download and share the new messages.

Veterans & Military Support Programs

There will NOT be a check presentation this year at the Legislative Conference. Please send your Veterans & Military Support donation directly to the office:

Veterans & Military Support
406 West 34th Street, Suite 902
Kansas City, MO 64111

All-American Requirement:

Encourage your Posts to donate directly to the VMS office to ensure they get credit for the VMS All American criteria. Post's minimum donation is \$100.00.

ATTN: VMS Chairmen - If you picked up Veterans & Military Support 2019-20 lapel pins at National Convention, now would be a good time to mail in your donation which will represent your Department's fundraiser for VMS to qualify for All-American.

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 and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP238.

FLY THE FLAG ON MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR'S BIRTHDAY. The U.S. federal flag code has been amended by Congress and signed by the president to add Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to the list of days on which the flag should be displayed. His birthday is observed on the third Monday in January; therefore, the flag should be flown on that day. To purchase a U.S. flag from the VFW Store, go to vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

Many communities are conducting community service projects that day. It is highly suggested that all members support this day of service.

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD. Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post and District level should be completed and the Department level should be close to completion. After Department judging, each Department forwards the entries of its selections to VFW National Headquarters for consideration in the national award contest. Deadline is Jan. 15, 2020. Each Department's selections will receive a National Commendation citation.

The Smart/Maher VFW 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 the VFW National Convention in July 2020 in Reno, NV. In addition, the top 10 national high school teachers will be invited to attend one of the available Summer Graduate seminars at the Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, PA.

Order the Citizenship Education Teacher Recognition Citation from VFW Store, product #4320, vfwstore.org/products/23980. Present to all teachers nominated at all levels for the national award.

PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT DEADLINE REMINDER. The deadline for mailing the Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and Teacher Award winner packets to National Headquarters is Jan. 15, 2020 (even if they have not been personally notified they are the winner).

The suggested deadline for Departments to have reviewed and approved their District and Post entries in the All-American Dashboard is Jan. 31. This will ensure we will have accurate reporting numbers across the organization and allot us the time to remedy errors. If you are unsure how to report your participation in the All-American Dashboard or if you are having login issues to the OMS system, contact Nick Lopez at nlopez@vfw.org or 816.968.1155.

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Departments are asked to submit three nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs Office no later than Feb. 1, 2020. **NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the "VFW Department Public Servant Award Citation Request Form" which is now available on the VFW website. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under "My VFW" in the Training & Support section.**

VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award

Each Department will receive their three awards and contact 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 general public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters and EMT's, 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: “NEW” VFW PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATION POST ENTRY FORM. This form has been developed to assist VFW Post Safety Chairmen with an entry form to hand out to the local Fire Department, Police Department, etc. to assist interested individuals in nominating one of their own. The entry forms along with the required documentation are to be returned to the local VFW Post for their judging. Once the winner in each category has been chosen, the Post will forward those entries on to the next level of judging.

Simply visit vfw.org, 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 **Public Servant Program**.

SCOUT OF THE YEAR PROGRAM. Annually, the VFW awards three individuals who are: Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, Venture Summit Award recipients and/or Sea Scout Quartermasters who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the qualities of that rank. An applicant has to have reached his or her 15th birthday and be enrolled in high school at the time of selection. Awards are as follows: \$5,000 – 1st place scholarship, \$3,000 – 2nd place scholarship and \$1,000 – 3rd place scholarship. The deadline for entry to a VFW Post is Mar. 1. A program brochure (designed to be duplicated for distribution) can be viewed at vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/ScoutoftheYearBrochureandEntryForm.pdf. For Scouting certificates, go to vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=scout%20of%20the%20year.

50TH ANNIVERSARY VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION PROGRAM. The Commemorative Partner Program is designed for federal, state and local communities, veterans' organizations and other non-governmental organizations to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring our Vietnam veterans and their families. As a Commemorative Partner, VFW Posts are encouraged to participate in the Commemoration of the Vietnam War by planning and conducting events and activities that will recognize the Vietnam veterans and their families' service, valor, and sacrifice.

Events and activities should be dignified, memorable occasions that show a sensitivity and appreciation for the solemnity of war and the losses suffered by many. Commemorative Partners should communicate how their events will achieve the congressionally-mandated objectives of the program. Events or activities should meet one or more of the following objectives.

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

For the VFW Posts interested in becoming an official Commemorative Partner, they must submit an application and a signed Statement of Understanding.

Applications are available at VietnamWar50th.com on the Commemorative Partner Program. The approval process is usually less than 30 days. Partners will be kept informed through electronic notifications. Once approved as a Partner, the Commemoration will provide organizations with a starter kit of materials for developing and implementing their programs. If you have any questions regarding the Commemorative Partner Program application process, please direct them to: whs.vnwar50th_cpp@mail.mil. For Vietnam War commemorative items, shop the VFW Store at: vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=vietnam.

YOUTH HUNTING AND SHOOTING PROGRAMS. VFW has been involved with the National Rifle Association (NRA) since 1920. Through the NRA, hundreds of VFW Posts provide hunter safety courses and sponsor shooting competitions. Annually, VFW and NRA offer junior and adult small-bore rifle and air rifle individual and team matches conducted by mail called Postal Matches*.

NRA Postal Matches are designed for VFW rifle teams as a sport activity for youth and adults to build interest in rifle shooting and safety. A Postal Match is a match in which competitor's fire on their home ranges using targets which have been marked for identification. The team match is a series of four monthly matches for teams sponsored by VFW Posts held from December through March. The individual VFW match is fired in the fall with a December closing date. The scores are then mailed to the NRA for ranking of awards.

If your VFW Post does not already participate in the Youth/Adult Rifle Program and would like to take part in a program that has great appeal for youngsters as well as adults, please go to the NRA's Postal Match website <https://competitions.nra.org/competitions/nra-postal-matches/>.

Complete program information, rules, and entry form (in PDF format) are available: <https://competitions.nra.org/media/8139/vfw-program.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please contact the NRA directly at:

National Rifle Association
Competitive Shooting Division
11250 Waples Mill Rd.
Fairfax, VA 22030
email: ddanielson@nrahq.org
phone: 703.267.1398

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the VFW Programs Office at 816.968.1155 or email nlopez@vfw.org.

*There are clubs and Posts, etc. that have local shooting programs all around the world. They teach gun safety and target shooting. Often, they wish to compete against other groups but cannot afford to travel to competitions. The NRA created "postal matches," where a team of shooters can have their own local competition using paper targets. These are NRA-sanctioned targets and must be signed by local officials verifying the manner in which the competition was conducted and the age of the participants. Those targets are then sent to the NRA Postal Match Program and, using the targets from the various groups, the NRA judges determine who wins, places, etc. and awards prizes. That way, the shooting match can involve shooters and clubs from almost anywhere without anyone having to travel. It's all done through the U.S. Postal System. Hence, the term, "Postal Match."

VFW SPECIAL PROJECT PROGRAM. This program was put in place to recognize VFW units for creating and completing unique and extraordinary community service projects.

Record book entry nominations that are found to be complete and well-substantiated should be endorsed by the Department Adjutant or VFW Department Community Activities Chairman and forwarded to National Programs Department. Deadline for entries is April 30 of each year.

Every Post Special Project receiving the Award of Excellence in the May judging will be entered in the Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project Competition. Complete information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairman's Manual.

WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL NEWS:

Is Your Post Named for a Veteran of the Great War (World War I)? If so, we want to hear from you! The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission is collecting information on VFW Posts named after WWI veterans. If your Post is honored by the memory of a local doughboy, marine, sailor, or nurse who served and sacrificed their lives, we want to know more. Please send your information and material on the history of your Post to: David Hamon, Veterans and Military Affairs Director, U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, at david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org or you may call him at 540.379.8584. The Commission is collecting historical and archive information on the Great War to observe and commemorate those 4.7 million who served in that conflict. America never forgets its veterans. Help them build a national memorial in Washington, D.C. To learn more, go to: ww1cc.org/memorial.

Help Build America's World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission recently announced the creation of the AEF (Allied Expeditionary Forces) Memorial Corps. The program is a special designation for Posts, patriotic organizations, local chapters of civic organizations, among others, to be recognized as an official "AEF Memorial Corps Post" for making a donation to build the national WWI memorial in Washington, D.C. Your Post will be certified with a special Centennial Certificate commemorating your contribution in "going over the top" to get the memorial built. For more information, please write Mr. David Hamon: david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org or call him at 540.379.8584. To view the progress of the memorial, go to: ww1cc.org/memorial. Your VFW Post will forever be enshrined in history as having pushed to get the memorial built. America never forgets her veterans!

POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997) indicates the days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices are required to display the POW/MIA flag. The days are: Armed Forces Day, May 16, 2020 (third Saturday in May); Memorial Day, May 25, 2020 (last Monday in May); Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; National POW/MIA Day, Sept. 18, 2020 (third Friday in Sept.); and Veterans Day, Nov. 11. 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

We all know that insurance comes with its own language and can often be confusing. That's why the VFW Insurance Program is here to help you understand insurance terms and products.

Whether you're looking for life insurance, Medicare products or insurance for your Post, you can find the information you need to make a knowledgeable decision about your insurance.

Our goal has always been to provide VFW members with excellent service, so we want you to know that we are here for you. If you ever have a question or need more information about the VFW Insurance Program, click [here](#).

"Buddy"® Poppy

"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 8 weeks in advance of your distribution date. Be sure to specify a date by which the poppies are required, do not use "ASAP." 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 chairmen 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 only for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. The anniversary poppies are approximately three times as expensive for us to produce, but because of the small quantities we deal in, we don't pass those costs on to the Posts. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out. 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.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS JOINS "WORLD WAR I POPPY PROGRAM." The Veterans of Foreign Wars is joining the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission in announcing the WWI Poppy Program to raise awareness about World War I and generate funds for local VSO chapters all over the country.

The VFW is proud to share with you the WWI Poppy Program; an opportunity to generate resources for your Post while helping to honor the 4.7 million Americans who wore the uniform during WWI.

Poppies grew across the war-torn battlefields of Europe after World War I. From 2017 to 2019, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission will tell the story of those American veterans, through events, exhibits, and memorial efforts, and the VFW is proud to be a partner in this important commemoration.

Click on the following link to learn about the WWI Poppy Program and how your purchase of a Poppy Kit helps build the new National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., while also helping to raise money for your Post.

Link: ww1cc.org/poppy

Here is a quick video that can help people understand why it is so important that we honor those who served during World War I: youtube.com/watch?v=l_y4l49mZso.

The red poppy is an internationally recognized symbol of veteran remembrance. Its use began in World War I and was captured in the war poem "In Flanders Fields," by Lt. Col. John McCrae.

National Veterans Service

Accredited Representative of the Year Award

Be on the lookout for the official nomination criteria for the VFW Accredited Representative of the Year Award criteria which will be sent out to Department Leadership this month. This award recognizes the contributions our professionally trained, accredited advocates make to the lives of veterans and their families every day. We encourage every Department to put forth a candidate. A nomination shows that Department leadership is aware of the significant contributions your program makes in your community every day.

Service Officers from Departments of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Mexico and Texas have earned this award since its inception four years ago. These Service Officers stood out from our nationwide cadre for not only meeting the challenge daily, but exceeding it through exemplary commitment, technical knowledge, and customer service.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

VFW Priorities Enacted into Law: On Dec. 20, 2019, the President signed the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020* (NDAA). The NDAA includes a 3.1 percent pay raise for troops and improving occupational license portability for relocated military spouses. Other important VFW-supported provisions include expanding Arlington National Cemetery, granting full military honors for Medal of Honor and Prisoner-of-War Medal recipients, directing DOD to conduct post-deployment medical assessments for burn pits, toxic airborne chemicals, and other airborne contaminants, and incorporating blast exposure history into service members' medical records. The NDAA also ends a decades-long fight to eliminate the Widow's Tax, which forced the survivors or military retirees and those who die on active duty to forfeit one earned benefit for another.

How Veterans Can Access Commissaries and MWR Facilities: Starting Jan. 1, 2020, there will be expanded access for Commissaries, Military Service Exchanges, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities for newly eligible veterans. Next month, veterans who received a Purple Heart, were former POWs, or veterans with a service-connected disability rating will be able to physically access on-base facilities that were previously off limits to those veterans. Veterans seeking access to military installations will require identification. Veterans can use their current VA-issued Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC). If a veteran is ineligible for a VHIC, DOD will temporarily accept the VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A that indicates Priority Group 8E and an acceptable identification credential, like a REAL-ID-compliant