

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

July, 2020

“Teamwork Makes The Dream Work”

Membership

Congratulations to the Department of Maryland, Maine, and Pacific Areas for achieving 100 percent in membership! Let's make a final push to 100 percent in membership and show that we "Dared to Care." Contact the National Membership Department at 888.JOIN.VFW (888.564.6839) or email us at membership@vfw.org if there is anything we can do to assist you with achieving your goals.

ALL-AMERICAN 2019-2020 UPDATE

On behalf of the Membership Department, I hope that everyone out there is staying safe and taking care of yourself and your family during this stressful time. The ongoing pandemic has impacted much of the VFW's operations, but we're proud to say we are still seeing growth and retention of our membership as we approach the last months of the membership year.

Many have asked if this will affect programs such as the All-American contest. After discussion with Commander-in-Chief Doc Schmitz, the following changes have been made:

- Post All-American: the requirement to purchase Buddy Poppies has been waived, due to the current inability to fulfill orders from the National Headquarters.
- Department All-American: the requirement to establish one new Post or raise three Posts that began the year under 50 members to above 50 members has been waived, due to the ongoing pandemic making it impossible to hold Post institution proceedings or recruiting events.
- Department All-American: membership percentage quotas have been adjusted to 98%.

No other changes have been made at this time; all other membership and program-related criteria remain the same. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Butler, Membership Director via email at rbutler@vfw.org or 816.968.2752.

Once again, we encourage everyone to stay safe and take care of yourself and our fellow veterans. Especially in this time of crisis, we all have to look out for each other and show that **NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS**.

POST DEVELOPMENT

Comrades, as states begin to open up and get back to full capacity, be sure communities across the country have benefited from your strong VFW presence during the COVID-19 pandemic! One does not have to look hard to find the many stories of VFW Posts helping veterans and in some cases providing critical support for communities. Even in the wake of this pandemic, we have new Posts emerging. Congratulations to the following Departments for establishing new Posts: Department of Tennessee, Great Smoky Mountains Post 12199, and Department of Nevada, Stephen P. Gibbs Memorial Post 12198!

BULLETIN ALERT! Membership Mondays are making a comeback! Stay tuned for a schedule of diverse topics we will cover in our Membership Monday webinar series aimed at helping you better understand all aspects of growing and retaining your membership. If you have topics you would like us to consider for a Membership Monday webinar, please let us know!

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

As always, please remember you have many resources available to you at vfw.org, and don't forget to follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/VFWmembership. The Membership Facebook page has been routinely updated to showcase informational videos during the pandemic. View our latest Hip-Pocket training video on memstats, answering the most frequently asked questions. For any questions or further information, contact the Membership Department via email at membership@vfw.org or call us at 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

HELP FOOD INSECURE VETS

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for all Americans including the need for increased food assistance. In response, the VFW Foundation is mobilizing donors and volunteers through our existing "Uniting to Combat Hunger" campaign to help food insecure veterans and their families. By donating directly to VA medical centers across the country, we are able to take a targeted approach to assist our nation's service men and women and ensure donations go directly to those experiencing food insecurity. Please visit vfw.org/UTCH to make a monetary donation to a VA medical center near you, and help ensure no veteran goes hungry.

THANK BK APPRECIATION WEEK 2020

VFW Posts/Auxiliaries were asked to recognize our great friends at BURGER KING® (BK) by mobilizing membership to visit their local [BK restaurants](#) during #ThankBK Appreciation Week – May 10-16, 2020. There were 176 entries – despite the disruption of the coronavirus pandemic – which attests to the dedication and commitment of VFW and Auxiliary members. Participating Posts/Auxiliaries were entered into a random drawing to win one of ten \$1,000 Community Support Grants from the VFW Foundation. The following Posts and one Auxiliary were chosen: VFW Post 7720, Cornelia, GA; VFW Post 10904, Manchester, TN; VFW Post 5867, Lakeside, CA; VFW Post 7327, Springfield, VA; VFW Post 2667, Newnan, GA; VFW Auxiliary Post 2667, Newnan, GA; VFW Post 10076, Mount Airy, MD; VFW Post 4075, Frankfort, KY; VFW Post 2016, Amesbury, MA; and VFW Post 10555, Panama City Beach, FL.

Matching Gift Opportunity to Support the VFW's Programs – The VFW has been presented with a great opportunity by generous friends of the VFW. They have extended the offer to triple your gift until June 26, 2020, up to \$50,000! Many veterans and returning service members are turning to the VFW for assistance in filing for their hard-earned VA benefits for injuries received in combat or during deployments, as well as financial assistance grants for rent, food, medicine ... and so much more. Thanks to dedicated members like you, we have been able to provide the life-changing assistance our veterans need. The VFW is on the front line in the fight for education, jobs, health care and justice FOR VETERANS! This is a great opportunity to help support veterans of all ages, right in your Department. Be as generous as you can and send your gift in by June 26, 2020, to make sure it is tripled!

VFW Tote Bag – This one-of-a-kind VFW Tote Bag will be sent out the last week of June and has been created as a special thank you for your continued support of the VFW and the life-changing programs for all veterans. Your support gives wounded veterans hope in the face of tragedy – those coping with Post-Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury and other horrible war wounds that will haunt them forever. When you receive your VFW Tote Bag, please be as generous as possible. Your donation helps veterans of every generation. And please remember to display the U.S. flag, especially on patriotic holidays.

Independence Day is Coming Up – The VFW is preparing for a special online celebration of freedom with our annual observance of Independence Day. Please visit vfw.org to find ways you can honor our nation's veterans and service members by spreading a message of patriotism and remembrance to your friends and family.

Create Your Legacy With Just a Few Words – Having a will helps ensure your family and loved ones will be taken care of after your lifetime. Should you like to support future generations of veterans once your family is covered, you can do so by adding a gift to the VFW in your will. To learn more about wills and how easy it is to make a gift to the VFW in yours, visit vfw.org/plannedgiving. You can also contact the VFW Planned Giving Office to request information on estate planning. Call us at 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org today.

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 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.

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!

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.

FLAG DAY, JUNE 14. All VFW units are reminded to properly display the U.S. Flag on Flag Day, Sunday, 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 daily displayed our National flag.

PATRIOT DAY, SEPTEMBER 11. Per Presidential Proclamation, September 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.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN THEMES. The 2020–21 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Harold J. “Hal” Roesch, II. The Voice of Democracy theme will be “Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?” and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be “What is Patriotism to Me?”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN BROCHURES. The new 2020-21 Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to **My VFW**, then click on **VFW Training & Support** under the **Member Resources** heading, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs and Activities**, then click on **Chairman Manuals** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all program materials.

Additionally, anyone (including students, parents, teachers, and chairmen) can download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen by visiting the below links:

Voice of Democracy: vfw.org/VOD/

Patriot's Pen: vfw.org/PatriotsPen/

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.

YOUTH PROGRAMS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES. Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to **My VFW**, then click on **VFW Training & Support** under the **Member Resources** heading, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs and Activities**, then click on **Chairman Manuals** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all program materials.

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 Chairmen's Manual or contact Tammy at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

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 15, 2021 (third Saturday in May); Memorial Day, May 31, 2021 (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

It can be hard to remember the last time you left the veterinarian's office spending less than \$100. With the average cost of quality, routine pet care increasing year after year, it is expensive to care for your furry companions.

For example, an X-ray, spaying and neutering can cost you hundreds of dollars, while hip and knee replacements, emergency operations and cancer care for your pet can cost thousands. At a minimum, these costs can be a disruption to your finances or worse, a blow to your savings.

Just like health insurance for you and your family, pet insurance can sometimes help you budget for routine and unexpected medical costs. Rather than having to deal with an unwelcome expense, pet insurance helps you save and plan for pet care.

For additional information about Pet Insurance, click [here](#) or call 1.877.738.7874.

"Buddy"® Poppy

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the cancellation of the VFW National Convention in Reno, Nevada this year there will be no National Buddy Poppy Contest judging.

National Veterans Service

Service Officer Virtual Proficiency Training Conference (VPTC)

The first ever VFW Service Officer Virtual Proficiency Training Conference will be held each Tuesday and Thursday, from June 9 to June 23, 2020, during which NVS staff will be providing virtual training to two VFW accredited representatives from each VA regional office.

During this period, 1 (one) course will be held each Tuesday and a different course each Thursday. In order to accommodate those located in different time zones, identical live instruction is being provided twice each day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

A mandatory end of course examination will be administered electronically and will be available from Wednesday, June 24 – Monday, June 29, 2020. As with all NVS service officer testing, results will be shared with Department Leadership.

So that VFW-accredited representatives who are unable to attend in real time may still receive the information and training that we are providing, each course will be recorded and made available on the VFW Online Learning Portal (OLP).

For more information on VFW Accredited Service Officer Training, please contact Mike Figlioli, Deputy Director, NVS at mfiglioli@vfw.org or 202.608.8373.

VAVS Annual Joint Reviews

Every spring, the VFW's dedicated volunteers at VA health care facilities meet with the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) leaders to conduct Annual Joint Reviews (AJRs). These reviews are critical to evaluating the contributions that the VFW's volunteers make to assist our sick, injured, and hospitalized veterans around the country.

This year, with the COVID-19 pandemic, our volunteers have not been allowed to contribute to the mission in-person at VA facilities. However, VAVS leaders are still looking to complete these critical AJRs either over the phone or via the internet.

NVS has started to receive some of these reviews – but not many. This is why we are encouraging VFW Department leaders to talk with your VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives to ensure they are proactive in contacting their local VAVS leaders to conduct these important reviews.

For more information on the AJR process or for assistance in completing an AJR for your facility, please contact James Moss, Assistant Director for Health Policy, NVS at jmoss@vfw.org or 202.608.8371.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Have Your Voice Heard!

S. 3393 or H.R. 5995, the [*Major Richard Star Act*](#), would enable Chapter 61 veterans, who have been medically discharged due to combat-related injuries, to rightfully receive Department of Defense (DOD) retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation without offset. As of FY18, there are 42,163 who are affected by this offset. As Congress gears up to work on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA), it is imperative that this legislation be included in the final bill. Please use the [Action Corps Action Alert](#) to let your representatives know that you want them to cosponsor this legislation, which will assist in bringing awareness and support during the NDAA process.

Administrative Operations

In an effort to better serve the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, tools are available at "VFW Training and Support." There you will find Member & Officer Training, Forms and Templates; training material relating to Membership Recruiting and Retention; Community Service & Youth Programs; Communications & Public Affairs; Post Service Officers; and Veterans & Military Support. To utilize these valuable training guides, videos, forms and templates, please login at vfw.org, proceed to "My VFW" and click the link "VFW Training and Support."

The online "Document Repository" is a system of managing documents utilized primarily by Department Officers and members of the National Council of Administration.

Important Reminder: The 2020-2021 Department Roster is now an Online Membership System (OMS) submitted report. The interactive report will cover reporting of all Department elected and appointed officers and committee chairmen. In addition, the District Election Report is also contained within the Online Membership System (OMS). Portions of the District report will feed into the Department report (i.e. the District Commander position).

Adjutants and Quartermasters can access the roster by logging into their OMS account under the "Election Report" drop down in the left hand navigation pane. Membership numbers of each elected/appointed officer and/or chairman is needed to complete the report. Your cooperation in completing the roster immediately following your convention is appreciated. Any additions, corrections or changes will be submitted through OMS as they occur throughout the year.