

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

July 2024

“When in Command, Command”

MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE FOR JULY: IT'S TIME TO START STRONG!

As we begin a new membership year, we want to begin with a strong drive to recruit new members and retain our existing members, with a special focus on Life members! To drive this message home, every month during the 2024-25 membership year, we will reward our Posts who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. 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

Each month, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

For the month of July 2024, the Post that leads each division will receive an 8' table drape to use for your Post's events, such as recruiting and Buddy Poppy drives, anywhere that you want the VFW to be front and center! Let us start strong and show everyone how ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

This contest will run from July 1, 2024, through July 31, 2024. 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.

TOP RECRUITERS

Congratulations to all this year's Century Recruiters! More information to come!

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP CONVENTION BOOTH

If you are attending the 125th National Convention in Louisville, KY come by and see us at Booth #522 for the Membership Experience! Look for the Membership sky banner which hangs directly over the Membership Booth, near the center of the convention hall. All-American packets, Henry Rifle drawing, membership upgrades, and much more!

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & 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: TBD

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook to view the latest membership news, Post Shout-Outs, and important resource information throughout the year - facebook.com/VFWmembership/.

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. 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 Board meeting was held on Tuesday, June 4 at VFW Headquarters. Three new Board members were welcomed, Robert Wallace, past VFW Commander-in-Chief, and former Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office; Prasad Ready, CEO of Twisted X Global Brands; and Jordan Drury, the Vice President, Franchising and Development, for Midamerica Hotels Corporation.

The Wounded Warrior Project has awarded a \$250,000 renewal grant to the VFW Foundation in support of sustained operations for the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) component of VFW's National Veterans Service (NVS) program.

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 17% 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.*

Independence Day is Coming Up – Keep an eye out for the VFW's special online celebration of freedom and hope 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.

Matching Gift Opportunity to Support the VFW's Programs – The VFW has been presented with an incredible opportunity by a generous friend and supporter to triple your donation if you respond within 30 days of receiving this offer! When you receive this offer in the mail, please consider responding with whatever gift you can to ensure that we meet the matching offer of \$50,000 and help even more veterans.

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. Your generosity also helps the VFW fight — and win — vital legislative battles on Capitol Hill. The VFW is on the front line in the fight for education, jobs, health care and an overall better quality of life FOR VETERANS! This is a great opportunity to help support veterans of all ages, right in your Department.

Your Legacy Starts Now – Smart planning means creating your will long before it is needed. But protecting your legacy goes beyond your will. It is important to maintain your estate plans so that your values are reflected as time goes by. Regularly reviewing and updating your will is one way to do this. Sharing your charitable legacy with your loved ones is another helpful step you can take. Explore these two actions and more at <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/keep-control-of-your-estate>. We are happy to help you along the way! Reach out to the VFW Planned Giving Office by calling 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Adjutant General Dan West 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

Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Programs/All American

125th National Convention – Louisville, KY

As we prepare for the **2024 VFW National Convention**, the **2024-25 VMS Lapel Pins** will be available for pick up at our booth. **Payment can be made any time after July 01, 2024.** Please use the **VMS Donation** link on the Dashboard to pay for your order after **July 01, 2024, for the 2024-25 program year.**

Meeting dates, times and location are currently to be determined at the National Convention in Louisville, KY for both the **VFW Programs** and **VMS Committee Town Hall Meetings.**

Download the **VFW Events** mobile app and when it is updated you will be able to find the above information.

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$100** 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 for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

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 Chair Tools

The Veterans & Military Support Program Chair Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is <https://www.vfw.org/community/troop-support/VMSP-Chair-Tools>.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **2025 Spring Semester** will open **August 1, 2024**, and will run through **November 15, 2024**. The application is available online only at vfw.org/Scholarship.

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.

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

VFW 22nd ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION SILENT AUCTION INFORMATION. It is time again to check out the variety of great items that are donated by our VFW Departments. You will be able to view and bid on these items as they are received. Bidding begins at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, July 27, and goes on until Monday, July 29, at 3 p.m. when the bidding ends. Winners may pay for their items after 3:00 p.m., Monday at a specific register at the VFW Store until 4:00 p.m. For those winners unavailable Monday, may pay on Tuesday, July 30, beginning at 8:00 a.m., until NOON (12:00 p.m.), when the exhibit hall closes. Items not paid and picked up after this time will be returned to VFW National Headquarters and dispersed from there. Winning bidders are contacted for a shipping address and shipping costs will be applied to their bid. If we are unable to contact that person, the item will be offered to the next highest bidder.

VFW HONOR'S AMERICA'S NATIONAL 2023-2024 TEACHERS IN JULY. Congratulations to the following teachers who were selected National winners for 2023-24:

Elementary School level – Eugene V. Struzik, III, Northwest Elementary School, Dodge City, Kansas, selected by VFW Post 1714, Dodge City, Kansas.

Middle School level – Monica Galloway, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School, Laurel, Maryland, selected by VFW Post 9376, Clinton, Maryland.

High School level – Edward M. Graf, Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School, Bridgewater, New Jersey, selected by VFW Post 7858, Bernardsville, New Jersey.

Their national awards will be presented on Tuesday, July 30, during the VFW National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Please show your support during their presentations if you are available.

NEW UPDATES. VFW National Programs has updated the Fred C. Hall and Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

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.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR. Each Department will have an OCSP 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.

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 a VFW Auxiliary to conduct separate judging at any level.

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

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2024–25 themes were chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Alfred J. “Al” Lipphardt. The Voice of Democracy theme will be “**Is America Today Our Forefathers’ Vision?**” and the Patriot's Pen theme will be “**My Voice in America’s Democracy?**”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2024-25 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: Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are available!

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.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, SEPT. 20. 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.

“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, July 27, until noon, Monday, July 29, 2024. Winning displays will be identified with appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning and announced during the Business Session on Wednesday, July 31. **Please Note: Displays must be removed by noon on Tuesday, July 30.** Any displays left after this time will be removed by convention center personnel during the disassembly of the hall and be discarded.

“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 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. 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 in OMS and processed the same as the red poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish 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 2.5 years of the Gold, 4 years of Diamond and 51 years of the Silver.

National Veterans Service

Mike Figlioli, Director, VFW National Veterans Service (NVS), would like to invite all delegates and attendees of the upcoming VFW 125th National Convention in Louisville, KY, to participate in the following events. Please check the convention schedule or download the convention app for the most current location. Saturday, July 27 through Monday, July 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Tuesday, July 30, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (dates & times subject to change), there will be a **Veterans Walk-in Claims Clinic** at which veterans and dependents will be assisted by a combined team of VFW Service Officers and VA benefits and health care representatives to facilitate and expedite new and existing claims, appeals and health care issues.

At 8:00 a.m., Saturday, July 27 the **National Veterans Service Advisory Committee** will meet to discuss matters of importance to the VFW national service program. Please check the convention schedule or download the convention app for the most current location.

On Sunday, July 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, NVS will be presenting **Veteran Benefits Training**, during which we will be providing information about VFW's benefits assistance program, VA Voluntary Service, and answer questions on how the PACT Act, Appeals Modernization Act and other programs affect the VFW and the veterans we serve.

On Sunday, July 28, at 2:00 p.m., representatives from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Labor responsible for VA benefits & healthcare and DOL employment policies will be addressing the **Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions**. If you do not have an assigned Committee meeting or workshop to attend at that time, we encourage you to sit in and listen to what they have to say.

National Veterans Service & National Legislative will have a joint booth on the exhibit hall floor. Please visit us!

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Come See Us at Convention

The VFW National Legislative Service staff will be in attendance at our 125th National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Everyone is invited to join us on Sunday, July 28, from 11a.m.-12p.m. for the **Update on VFW Legislative Priority Goals** meeting. We will also be on hand at the Update on Federal Benefits and Services for Veterans meeting with the VFW National Veterans Service staff on Tuesday, July 30, from 1p.m.-2p.m. Both departments will be manning our joint NLS/NVS booth in the exhibition hall of the Kentucky International Convention Center.

VA Expands Toxic Exposure Presumptions

The Department of Veterans Affairs has added three cancers to the list of presumptive diseases covered under the *Honoring our PACT Act of 2022* (P.L. 117-168). Male breast cancer, urethral cancer, and cancer of the paraurethral glands are [now presumed](#) service-connected disabilities due to toxic exposure, streamlining the claims process for eligible veterans with evidence of a diagnosis. [Learn more](#) about PACT Act benefits or find an [accredited service officer](#) to help file a claim.

Administrative Operations

All Departments & Posts:

Pursuant to Section 1401 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure all proposed National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual amendments as well as all National Resolutions to be considered at the 125th National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky will be made available at least fifteen (15) days prior to the assembling of the Convention. These files will be available online at www.vfw.org; members will need to login to access these files. Members who have never logged in to www.vfw.org will need to create a new user account using the "Sign up with Troop ID" icon. Once successfully logged in, click on the "Document Repository" link listed under "Member/Post Resources." Members can access these files within the "125th National Convention Bylaws/Manual of Procedure/Ritual Amendments & Convention Resolutions – PROPOSED" folder within the Document Repository. Access to the Document Repository can also be found within the Online Membership System (OMS).

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; Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates; Communications & Public Affairs; Post Service Officers; VFW Foundation; Veterans & Military Support; and Department Resources.

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 2024-25 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 chairpersons. 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 chairperson 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.

VFW Store

Convention Attendees – this year marks the celebration of the VFW’s 125th Anniversary! If you’re attending the National Convention later this month in Louisville, Kentucky, stop by the VFW Store’s booth to shop the selection of 125th Anniversary products available. For those unable to attend the National Convention, all 125th Anniversary gear will be available online later this month.

