

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

March, 2023

“Florida Rocks”

Membership

Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland has laid down another challenge for the month of March. This one is focusing on renewing and reinstating members. Every year we lose members out the back door who opt to not renew their dues – this is the largest factor in membership decline over the past 30 years. We lose more members to non-renewals than we do to members passing away. We have the power to stop this leak, and the Commander-in-Chief is challenging all of us to focus on those members.

This month, the top Post in each membership division that renews and reinstates the most members will receive a \$500 award! But that's not all. At the end of the month, we will also be having a drawing in each division for the second through tenth place Posts to award another \$500! That's 11 more Posts that have a chance to receive an award for renewing and reinstating members.

We urge you to make the Posts in your Departments aware of this challenge, and of the importance of retaining and mentoring members. Recruiting is always a priority, but we need to ensure that the members we recruit are staying with the VFW. Take this month to reach out to your annual members whose dues might be expiring soon and those prior year unpaids who may have slipped through the cracks. Do a buddy check; let them know what the VFW is doing at the local level and for all veterans. Make sure they know we're here for them and that EVERY VETERAN COUNTS!

2022-23 NEW RECRUITING AWARD

One New Member Pin - As part of this year's membership incentives, Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland wants to drive home the message that EVERY VETERAN COUNTS. To support this message, every VFW member who recruits a new member will receive a special One New Member recruiting pin to show the world that they're doing their part to help our organization grow in strength and reach our membership goals.

2023 KANSAS CITY SPREE

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 100 percent membership by April 1, 2023, along with their guest will each be awarded:

- Round-trip airfare to Kansas City, MO, from the airport nearest the awardee's home.
- A fun-filled weekend (May 18-21, 2023) that may include but is not limited to touring, shopping and a complete tour of the VFW National Headquarters.

DEPARTMENT "100 PERCENT" INCENTIVE

Any Department that attains 100% in membership by close of business on May 1, 2023, will be entered into a random drawing. The Commander (plus guest) and the Quartermaster (plus guest) for the Department that is selected will each receive:

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

2022-23 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The 2022-23 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 2022-23 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION

March is Women's History Month! Did you know our nation's fighting females are the fastest growing demographic in the VFW?! Celebrate our women members this month and recognize their contributions. We need their leadership, and we need their perspective! As always, if you have more than 15 members ready to charter a new Post, give me a call! I know we have a few Departments close! We have resources to help get you where you need to be! If you have Posts needing revitalization, call us – we will help you! Call 816.968.2788 or email me at coreyhunt@vfw.org.

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

- **\$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used toward 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

The next Membership Monday training webinar will be on March 13, 2023, at 2 p.m., CST, Topic: Mentoring at the Post level.

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/VFWmembershipHQ/.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

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

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation Corporate Relations team is actively pursuing and securing corporate sponsorships for the 2023 VFW National Convention. We will be utilizing a new event management software platform powered by eShow goeshow.com/ that will be launching by mid-February to assist with a centralized collection of various sponsorship asset details such as booth space, logos, ads, registration bag inserts, videos and more.

If you have any potential corporate sponsors or connections that you would like us to reach out to, please let us know. For additional information, please contact Brooke Brown, Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations at bbrown@vfw.org.

A \$15,000 gift was recently received to support VFW programs from GovCIO, a veteran owned business consulting firm that focuses on cyber security, digital/data management, and IT services primarily for U.S. government agencies.

A VFW Foundation Board meeting was held on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, at VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City. Issues discussed included additional Board member nominations, VFW Burger King Unmet Needs campaign updates, the use of eShow software to manage sponsors/vendors for the upcoming VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, the creation of a Foundation informational video and a possible modification to the Foundation's vision/mission statements.

New Vision Statement: "The vision of the VFW Foundation is to create a positive impact on America's military veterans, service members and their families by addressing their unique needs."

New Mission Statement: "The mission of the VFW Foundation is to serve military veterans, service members and their families by securing resources for programs that facilitate enhanced life outcomes."

Oracle Cerner has agreed to sponsor the 2023 VFW National Convention and renew their \$50,000 philanthropic support to Unmet Needs with an additional \$25,000 toward National Veterans Service support as needed.

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

VFW National Convention

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING – 124th National Convention housing opened Feb. 17, 2023. Housing reservation information is located on the convention website accessed through the main 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 Phoenix, Arizona – July 22-27, including a tentative agenda.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION – Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure states each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the VFW National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee provided the Post has paid the mandated \$25 advance registration fee. All advance registrations should be mailed to the VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111, ATTN: Convention Registration or you may register online by going to vfw.org.

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

Soon to Arrive – Special Edition VFW Birthday Cards – This spring the VFW is mailing the 2023 Birthday Card Collection and other gifts in recognition of your commitment to the VFW – and to struggling veterans of all generations. Also enclosed is a special “American Hero Card of Recognition” for a veteran or service member. Please sign and return it right away. We will deliver your signed “American Hero” card to one of America’s service members or hospitalized veterans in time for Independence Day, this July 4th. It means so much to them to know their fellow veterans remember and care.

Right now, thousands of veterans are living with the physical and mental trauma of war. The physical wounds can be seen, but what about those veterans who suffer in silence? There are thousands of veterans who carry the invisible wounds of war, such as Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress.

The VFW wants to be sure when veterans from all wars and conflicts turn to us for assistance, we have the programs available for them. Please send a donation in honor of your fellow veterans who now face a long road to recovery from injuries sustained in battle. Your gift will mean that these programs stay available and strong for all veterans, right in *your* Department.

2023 Voice of Democracy State Winners – It’s almost time! Watch your email for an announcement of the 2023 Voice of Democracy State winners to VFW Friends of Freedom. We hope you will take the opportunity to listen to the essay given by your state winner as well as the winners from other states. If you are not currently a member of the VFW Friends of Freedom, you can sign up to receive these important alerts at [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org).

A Simple Way to Make a Big Difference – Making a gift in your will is the easiest way to support the VFW and your fellow veterans after your lifetime. Did you know just a few sentences in your will can make a lifetime impact? We invite you to learn more about this type of legacy gift and the lasting impact you can leave your family and the VFW. Free information is available by visiting [vfw.org/PlannedGiving](https://www.vfw.org/PlannedGiving), contacting the VFW Planned Giving office at 816.968.1119 or emailing plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Have You Heard About the VFW’s Partners in Patriotism? – Commander-in-Chief Timothy M. Borland 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 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 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!

VFW Communications

Get ready for the 2023 VFW Legislative Conference by downloading the new VFW Events app today in the [Apple App Store](#) or the [Google Play Store](#).

Not able to join us in D.C.? Watch the livestream of the Parade of Winners Monday, March 6 at 6 p.m. EST and the Chief’s testimony on March 8, all at vfw.org/VFWDC2023.

Stay up to date with all of the action throughout the legislative conference by following **#VFWDC2023** on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Veterans & Military Support Programs

As we plan for the **2023 National Convention in Kansas City**, we want to remind all VMS Chairs to get their money in for the 2022-23 lapel pins that were received at convention last year. We have a few Departments that are still delinquent. **Please contact the VMS office at 816.968.1102** if you have any questions on how much your Department needs to donate to resolve the delinquency.

There will be a new design for the **VMS Lapel Pins for 2023-24 Program year!** VMS Chairs will be able to pre-order their pins and will be able to pick them up at the convention again this year. **Departments that are delinquent will not be able to pre-order.** Request forms will be provided sometime in April.

VMS All-American Requirement

To qualify for All-American, **a minimum donation of \$100** must be donated to **VMS by June 30, 2023.**

Encourage your Posts to donate directly to the VMS Programs by going to the VFW Dashboard. Click on the “**VMS Donation**” link at the upper right-hand corner of the screen and follow the online donation form. Once the donation is made, you will receive a confirmation email. If you have any questions, please contact us at 816.968.1102. **Thank you for your continued support!**

Stay tuned for a new VMS and Programs donation portal for instant credit to the Dashboard.

VMS Donation Reports

Donation reports are received on most Fridays and are uploaded to the Dashboard on the same day. The period of these reports is from the previous Friday to current Thursday.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **2023 Fall Semester** is available online at vfw.org/Scholarship with a **deadline date of April 30, 2023**.

VMS Program Chair Tools – This is our one-stop-shop for all your Chair needs. Please click the link below to access the webpage.

[Access the Veterans & Military Support Program Chairperson Tools webpage now.](#)

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

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 2022-23 Membership Program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance that 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 on the KPI tools section.

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD. Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post, District and Department level (if applicable) are completed. The Department Teacher winners that are received at National Headquarters will receive a VFW National citation for both the winning teacher and their school in each grade category. The National Teacher Award winners will be announced soon.

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.

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.

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

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.

"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

When the hustle and bustle of life gets going, it's easy to let financial goals and stress deter you from planning exciting experiences. Whether it's going to a concert or planning a trip around the world, making memories with family helps ensure we're living life to the fullest.

With access to exclusive discounts on everything from home goods and the latest gadgets, to entertainment, travel and big-ticket buys, being a VFW member means you get to save time AND money with the VFW Discount Saving Program from PerkSpot. Visit vfw.perkspot.com to start saving today.

"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.”

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 8 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 3 months after the 8-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. The 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

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR FOR 2022-23

On Feb. 3, 2023, all Departments were notified that nominations for the John A. Biedrzycki Service Representative of the Year for 2022-23 are now being accepted.

We encourage every Department to submit a nomination to show that Department leaders are aware of the significant contributions your service office staff and your program make in your community every day.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- VFW Department Service Officers
- VFW Assistant Department Service Officers
- VFW Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewers
- Any State or County VFW Accredited Representative
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- Previous recipients of the Accredited Representative of the Year Award

SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30 deadline.
2. A summary of no more than two pages is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee’s efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to):
 - Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted.
 - Community outreach conducted.
 - Examples of excellent customer service provided.
 - Meticulous use of VetraSpec or another electronic claims processing system used by the candidate (specify system).
 - Submission of **TIMELY** monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office).
 - Number of VFW members recruited (if any).
 -

AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this prestigious award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient will be furnished round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two nights hotel accommodation to attend the VFW National Convention where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

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

The VFW on Capitol Hill

Hundreds of VFW members will be in Washington, D.C., March 5-9, for the VFW Legislative Conference. Members from each Department will be visiting their congressional offices to present the VFW's [2023 Priority Goals and talking points](#). VFW National Commander Timothy M. Borland will testify on behalf of our organization before a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs on Wednesday, March 8. We will continue to forge ahead with the advocacy momentum we gained during the last Congress to ensure our nation's veterans, service members, and their families receive the benefits and services they have earned and deserve.

The Independent Budget Released

Leading veterans service organizations (VSOs) — Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — have released The Independent Budget (IB) Veterans Agenda for the 118th Congress. This report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future. “For over 30 years, the IBVSOs have coauthored the IB, offering substantive solutions and policy recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care, as well as appropriate earned benefits for the men and women who served,” said VFW Legislative Director Pat Murray. “With this year’s report now complete, it is imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with VSOs and other stakeholders, to put veterans’ needs on the top of their list.” [Read the IB report](#).

VFW Store



ORDER YOUR VFW UNIFORM CAP TODAY! Officer changes will be taking place soon. The peak season for ordering caps is April to August when the VFW Store processes thousands of cap orders. During this period, it can take up to 10 weeks to receive your cap. To order today, go to vfwstore.org/category/vfw/uniformcapandnametags or call 833.VFW.VETS (833.839.8387).

DAY OF SERVICE! Is your Post planning activities for the Day of Service? Get tea