

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



**BULLETIN**

**Ocala, Florida**

**May 2026**

**“United We Stand for God, Family & Country”**

## **CONTINUING TO BUILD MEMBERSHIP WITH THE COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE!**

As laid out in the 2025-26 Membership Program, we will be continue issuing quarterly challenges to our Posts and rewarding those who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. Every quarter (April 1 – June 30), we will award points to the 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

At the end of the quarter, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. All Posts who meet these quarterly challenges will also be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

## **MEMBERSHIP GOALS**

As we continue to go through the membership year, we want everyone to remember the goals that the Commander-in-Chief has set out in her 2025-26 Membership Program:

- Achieve 101% in Membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member
- Increase membership drives and/or events
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership
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## **MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:**

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into [vfw.org](https://vfw.org) and go to <https://vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

The 2025-26 Membership Program is available online at [vfw.org](https://vfw.org), under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention. You will see the 2025-26 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

## **NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM**

We have made it easier for you to get all the recruiting brochures you will need to make this membership year successful! It's as easy as one two three!

1. Go to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and click the login link in the upper right corner. Sign in when prompted.
2. Under “Membership Quick Links,” select Membership Online Order Form.
3. Use the dropdown list to indicate items you need. The form will automatically calculate the cost of items and shipping. When finished, click SUBMIT and it will take you to a billing page if there are any charges.

Follow these simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact the Membership department at 1.888.564.6839 or email us at [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## NEW POST DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GRANT

For each new Post chartered the Department Quartermaster will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used toward necessary materials for the new Post. Department Commanders and Quartermasters may apply for this grant directly through the National Membership department.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives view the Commander-in-Chief’s National Membership Program at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership department via email at [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org) or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

## UPCOMING TRAINING

Membership Monday training webinars will be May 11, 2026, at 7:00PM, CDT, Topic: TBD. All VFW and Auxiliary members are welcome to attend and engage in the interactive training by following the link on our VFW Membership Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/VFWMembership>. This training will be recorded and made available through the *Training & Support* section of [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) following the presentation We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

## LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to [vfw.org](http://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

*What will your Legacy be?*

In April 8-12, VFW Foundation Executive Director Hal Roesch and Corporate Relations Manager Savanna Cavanaugh represented the Foundation at the Spirit of America program, hosted by Founding Forward.

This initiative sponsored by our generous corporate partner Twisted X facilitates the attendance of every VFW Voice of Democracy (VOD) state winner at Founding Forward's Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, campus. Participants are provided with a comprehensive, immersive educational experience through a suite of impactful in-person programs, historic resources, and distinguished learning opportunities.

The investment by Twisted X in this program underscores a mutual dedication to civic education and the development of youth leadership. During the VOD Parade of Winners, Clayton Smith of Twisted X emphasized the significance of this collaboration, stating that supporting such programs is vital to *"helping shape informed, engaged citizens who will carry our values forward for generations to come."*

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations, Richard Freiburghouse, [RFreiburghouse@vfw.org](mailto:RFreiburghouse@vfw.org)

## 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 16% 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.*

**Matching Gift Opportunity to Support the VFW's Programs** – The VFW has been presented with a fantastic opportunity by generous friends of the VFW. They have made an offer to triple your donation made within 30 days of receiving the offer! They have committed \$50,000 of their own money for this challenge. They believe there are many others who understand the cost of war extends well beyond the battlefield. They are asking proud VFW members like you to support fellow veterans of all generations who have been disabled by war.

Thanks to dedicated members like you, we have been able to provide life-changing assistance our veterans need. 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 fantastic opportunity to help support veterans of all ages, *right in your Department*. To receive every dollar of this incredible offer, all gifts must be postmarked within 30 days of receipt of the offer.

**May is National Military Appreciation Month** – Is your Post planning a special event for Military Spouses Day on May 8, Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15, Armed Forces Day on May 16, National Maritime Day on May 22, or Memorial Day on May 25?

If your Post is planning a special event this month to commemorate any of the above-mentioned special days, please share your success story with us. We will be looking for special stories from Posts like yours to feature in upcoming monthly e-newsletters and in the [VFW at Work Archive](#). You may email your story to [success@vfw.org](mailto:success@vfw.org).

**Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism?** – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. 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 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](mailto: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](http://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 read [VFW Success Stories](#) to learn how the VFW is at work 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!

**VFW Department Resource Page** – We encourage all VFW Departments to actively support the VFW Department Fundraising Programs. The success of these initiatives relies on the participation and backing of your Department's members. Promotional materials can be accessed by visiting [heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools](http://heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools).

## Marketing Communications

**It's not too late to join us for the fifth annual 2026 VFW Day of Service.**

[Signing up](#) is easy and we have plenty of [great ideas and free resources](#) to help you execute another meaningful community service. Once you have your event idea nailed down, we can help you promote it, too! Head over to the resource page and use some of the free tools there to help you plan, promote and execute an amazing VFW Day of Service outing!

You'll find:

- [Ready-made social posts](#) you can plug and play to promote your VFW Day of Service event.
- Helpful event planning [checklists](#).
- And new this year, customizable [signage and flyers](#) to help you spread the word.

Events are being hosted throughout the entire month of May, and we can't wait to see how your event comes together!

*NOTE: The Programs Dashboard All-American fulfillment tracking for Day of Service event will show as "pending" until after May 31. Please contact Lynn Rolf at [LRolf@vfw.org](mailto:LRolf@vfw.org) with any questions about Program's All-American requirements.*

# Veterans & Military Support Programs

## 2026 VFW Day of Service

Make your state stand out! We're kicking off the **2026 VFW Day of Service**, a nationwide community service effort, and we are counting on you to help make this year bigger and better. Please visit <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/> to learn more, check out helpful tools and resources – and most importantly – sign up!

**Day of Service events** should be scheduled during the month of May 2026. **Dashboard credit for “Day of Service Participation” will not be applied until after May 2026.** If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Mark Herron at [mherron@vfw.org](mailto:mherron@vfw.org).

## 127th National Convention – Reno, Nevada

As we plan for the **2026 National Convention**, there is a new **VMS Keychain** for the **2026-27 Program year!** ADJs/QMs will be able to pre-order their keychains and will be able to pick them up at the convention again this year. Notification and order forms will be emailed soon. If your Department has an outstanding balance from last year, you will need to remedy that before you can pre-order for this year.

## VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at [mherron@vfw.org](mailto:mherron@vfw.org) or 816.968.1102.

## Military Appreciation Program (MAP) Grant Funds

Be advised that the VFW MAP Grant is now closed for the remainder of the 2025-26 program year. Funds have been depleted. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at [M.A.P@vfw.org](mailto:M.A.P@vfw.org) – 816.756.3390 ext. 6287.

## VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

**The 2026 Fall Semester** closed as of Apr. 30, 2026. Spring 2027 applications opens Aug. 1 through Nov. 15, 2026. The application is only available online at [vfw.org/Scholarship](http://vfw.org/Scholarship).

## All-American Eligibility

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2026**. 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 to the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

When you make your **\$125.00** or more donation, all that needs to be entered into the box is **125** or more. The **\$** and **.00** are **not required** in the donation amount box.

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

**2025-26 VMS Lapel Pin payments should be paid through the Dashboard.** Please use the **VMS Donation** link on the Dashboard to pay for your order. Please do this as soon as possible.

### **VMS Program Tools**

The Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Program Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is <https://www.vfw.org/VMSPTools>

**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](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag).

**PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL.** (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD) Please encourage Posts to read the 2025-26 Membership program. Military Appreciation Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Financial Assistance for Service Members financial grants & VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

**VFW HONOR'S AMERICA'S TEACHERS DURING 2025-26 PROGRAM YEAR.** Congratulations to the following teachers who were selected National winners for 2025-26:

Elementary School level – Elizabeth Lee, Ranson Elementary School, Ranson, West Virginia, selected by VFW Post 3522, Charles Town, West Virginia.

Middle School level – Tammy Gipson, St. Joseph School, McPherson, Kansas, selected by VFW Post 2715, McPherson, Kansas.

High School level – Jeron Velasco, Dischii'Bikoh High School, Cibecue, Arizona, selected by VFW Post 9907, Show Low, Arizona.

National awards will be presented in July to each teacher during the VFW National Convention in Reno, Nevada. Each of the winners will receive an all-expense-paid trip to the National Convention and a \$1,000 cash award for professional development expenses (winners will receive a 1099-MISC); \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and his or her school. Each Department's recipients and their schools will receive a National Commendation citation, which will be sent to the Department Headquarters prior to the National Convention for presentation.

**VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS.** Department Headquarters are in the process of receiving their requested awards, according to their presentation dates listed on Formstack. They should be contacting 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 public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EODTs personnel, 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](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant).

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: [vfwstore.org/products/32134](http://vfwstore.org/products/32134).

**OUTSTANDING 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 total impact of community service 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.

**NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR.** Each Department will have an NCSP 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.

**NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES.** The 2026–27 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Cory Geisler. The Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen theme will be "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

**NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS.** The new 2026-27 Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

**HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG.** The U.S. Flag should be at half-staff on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May (federal holiday - half-staff until noon). Flags available at VFW Store [vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags](http://vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags).

**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 displayed our national flag daily.

**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](https://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.

**NATIONAL CONVENTION SILENT AUCTION.** Silent Auction forms have been emailed to each Department. **ATTENTION WINNING BIDDERS:** All payments for winnings bids will need to be by credit card. All major credit cards will be accepted including Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Cash App.

## VFW Member Benefits

Every trip starts with confidence — but accidents don't follow your itinerary. Whether you're running a quick errand, hitting the highway for a family road trip, or boarding a flight across the country, "On-The-Move" Travel Accident Protection for VFW members has you covered from the moment you pull out of the driveway.

For just \$7.61 a month, VFW members receive up to \$300,000 in accidental death coverage — whether in a personal vehicle or on a plane, cruise ship, bus, or train. Get hospitalized due to a covered travel accident? You'll receive \$500 cash per day for up to a year.

Best of all, acceptance is guaranteed — no health screenings, no hassle. Your family deserves that peace of mind. [Enroll today.](#)

## "Buddy"® Poppy

**NATIONAL "BUDDY"® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST.** Buddy Poppy Display contest entry forms have been sent to VFW Departments for dissemination. A VFW Department officer must sign off on the form and submit it to VFW National Programs office by July 1, 2026. 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 25th, until noon, Monday, July 27, 2026. Winning displays will be identified with the appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning, and announced later, on the convention floor.

**Displays must be removed prior to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday.** Any displays left after this time will be removed for disposal by convention center personnel during the disassembly of the exhibit hall.

**“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](http://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 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 traditional & tin tab 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.

# Quartermaster General

The Life Membership Board of Trustees, with the concurrence of the National Council of Administration, pursuant to Section 111 of the VFW Bylaws, has determined that for the 2026-27 membership year, the Life Membership Fund will pay out as follows:

- Plan ABC - A total payout of \$10.50 for each life member (\$3.50 to each Post, Department and National)
- Plan D - A total payout of \$12.54 for each life member (\$4.18 to each Post, Department and National)
- Plan E - A total payout of \$24.30 for each life member (\$8.10 to each Post, Department and National)
- Note: At-Large Members are corresponding Plan pay out amount divided by two. For example, Plan ABC At-Large Payout is \$5.25.

Payment will be made in September 2026 for all Life Members recorded as of August 31, 2026. In addition, a payment will be made in January 2027 for all Life Members processed during the period September 1 through December 31, 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact Marc Garduno, Quartermaster General, [MGarduno@vfw.org](mailto:MGarduno@vfw.org).

# National Veterans Service

## VA RESTARTS ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS DEPLOYMENT

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is resuming deployment of its new Electronic Health Records (EHR) system following a three-year pause. Here are the sites that will have the new system this year:

### April 2026

- VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System – Ann Arbor, MI
- VA Battle Creek Medical Center – Battle Creek, MI
- VA Detroit Healthcare System – Detroit, MI
- VA Saginaw Healthcare System – Saginaw, MI

### June 2026

- Chillicothe VA Medical Center – Chillicothe, OH
- Cincinnati VA Medical Center – Cincinnati, OH
- Cincinnati VA Medical Center – Fort Thomas – Fort Thomas, KY
- Dayton VA Medical Center – Dayton, OH

### August 2026

- Fort Wayne VA Medical Center – Fort Wayne, IN

- Marion VA Medical Center – Marion, IN
- Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center – Indianapolis, IN

October 2026

- Alaska VA Healthcare System – Anchorage, AK
- Cleveland VA Medical Center – Cleveland, OH

More information about the deployment of the new VA EHR can be found at:

[EHR Deployment Schedule - VA EHR Modernization](#)

## **VFW POST BENEFITS ADVISOR SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION**

In accordance with the National Veterans Service Policy & Procedure, one of the duties of the Department Service Officer (DSO) is to conduct at least one VFW Post Benefits Advisor School of Instruction for all Post, County and District Benefits Advisors in the Department, during each VFW year. After conducting such training, DSOs shall provide an annual VFW Post Benefits Advisor School of Instruction report to both their Department Headquarters and the Director, National Veterans Service, by the end of June. The duties reflected in the Manual of Procedure reflect a local approach to available state and local benefits as well as advising those currently appointed to refer all requests for federal benefits to the Department Service Officer or other accredited representative. The report shall include the date and location of the training, topics taught, and a roster of attendees. The report should be addressed to the Director, National Veterans Service, and be sent via email to [taldana@vfw.org](mailto:taldana@vfw.org).

## **MEMORIAL DAY**

This year, we will be celebrating Memorial Day on Monday, May 25, 2026. Originally called "Decoration Day," Memorial Day is observed to honor those who died while serving in the U.S. military.

While many Americans will celebrate the holiday with their families, countless VFW-accredited service representatives will be spending their day volunteering at Memorial Day events answering questions about VA benefits and assisting our Nation's veterans and their families in their quest to obtain their earned entitlements. Whether having a presence on the National Mall over a weekend of remembrance or visiting an unaccompanied hospitalized veteran in a VA Medical Center, the value a Service Officer brings to the lives of others cannot be underestimated.

# National Legislative Service/Action Corps

## **VFW Story Banking Initiative**

The VFW recently launched VFW Voices of Service – Stories in Action, a new national initiative to collect veteran and family experiences that inform and strengthen our legislative advocacy.

We will be gathering stories on a wide range of issues, including VA health care access; toxic exposures; concurrent receipt and the *Major Richard Star Act*; VA benefits and disability claims; education, employment and transition; mental health and suicide prevention; food insecurity; caregiver and survivor benefits and other challenges facing the veteran and military community. Submissions will help us to identify patterns, gaps, and real-world impacts that shape legislative priorities, congressional engagement, testimony, education and

grassroots advocacy throughout the year. Every experience adds to the overall picture. [Share your story](#) and help turn your personal experience into advocacy action.

## Fort McClellan Epidemiological Study Update

As directed in Section 801 of Public Law 117-168, *Honoring our PACT Act of 2022*, VA contracted with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to conduct an epidemiological study of personnel who served at Fort McClellan, Alabama, from 1979 to 1999. NASEM commenced the study in February 2026 with a multidisciplinary panel of scientific experts and is soliciting perspectives from individuals stationed there during the study timeframe. VA and NASEM anticipate officially releasing the study's results in the fall of 2028 after a rigorous external peer-review process. [Read more](#) and share your experience.

# Administrative Operations

## Replacement Charter - Price Increase

National Headquarters will be implementing a revision to the fee structure for charters. This adjustment applies to all requests for replacement charters, including those required due to name changes or changes in charter location.

Effective **July 1, 2026**, all such requests will be subject to the updated pricing structure below:

- \$50.00 – Date of Institution from 2003 to present
- \$75.00 – Date of Institution from 1980 to 2002
- \$100.00 – Date of Institution prior to 1980

This updated fee structure ensures we can continue to provide accurate and timely charter processing while accounting for the additional resources required.

# VFW Store

## Cashless at the 2026 National Convention

The VFW Store will be **cashless** at the 2026 National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

This change will allow for faster checkouts, shorter lines, improved accuracy, and enhanced security. Powered by Clover POS system and accepting all major credit cards including Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Cash App digital payment methods.

We appreciate your support as we make this transition to better serve you and enhance your convention experience.

## Youth scholarships

The Veterans of Foreign Wars concluded its 79th annual Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth scholarship competitions April 11, with its annual Parade of Winners ceremony, which was held at the Union League of Philadelphia. This year's theme for students was "How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"

Show appreciation for all entrants with a token from the VFW Store, such as water bottles, notepads, lanyards, backpacks and more. To shop for Voice of Democracy, click [vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy).

To shop for Patriot's Pen, click [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen).

**Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary this 4th of July**

This year, Independence Day marks the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. Show your pride with apparel and more from the VFW Store. Click [vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/4thofjuly](http://vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/4thofjuly). To shop for other items from the VFW Store, click [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org).