

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

November 2023

**“To Command Is To Serve
Nothing More Nothing Less”**

Membership

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

This month, our nation honors all who have served; but in the VFW, every day is Veterans Day! This month, Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento is issuing a challenge to all VFW Departments to show your leadership and motivational skills to bring in new members!

Throughout the month of November, we will be comparing each Department's new and reinstated totals for the month to where they were in November of last year. The Commander-in-Chief wants to see every Department increase their New/Reinstated members by 10% over last year's November numbers! Every Department that meets this challenge will receive a \$500 cash award, plus a custom plaque to display at the Department Headquarters to commemorate your achievement!

This challenge will compare the totals of each Department's November 2022 new/reinstated members (annual and life) to your new/reinstated numbers for November 2023. To meet this challenge, the Department will need to show a ten percent increase from last year's November totals. Each Department's prior year totals and current totals will be shown on the tracker visible through the Online Membership System (OMS), click on the "Commander's Challenge" link under "Reporting."

The true mark of leadership is when you can motivate others to success, so we want all our Departments to contact your Districts and Posts, encourage and assist them to recruit and reinstate members into the organization, and to MEET THE CHALLENGE!

This contest will count all new and reinstated, Life and annual members processed between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30, 2023. 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.

2023-24 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The 2023-24 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 2023-24 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

MEMBERSHIP OBJECTIVES

As the membership year has begun, keep in mind our membership objectives, also written in the 2023-24 Membership Program.

- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- For Posts, District and Departments to reach 102% membership by June 30, 2024.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life membership and Legacy Life membership.
- Provide membership assistance, using teams from your conference to assist and mentor those who request assistance.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION DEPARTMENT AWARD

Congratulations to VFW Post 12225, Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, established on Oct. 18, 2023. If you have questions about Memstats, Post Query, or if you are trying to charter a Post and you have more than (15) members on a charter application, give me a call, Matt Nute at 816.968.1122. We have many resources available to help you.

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

Membership Monday training webinar will be on Nov. 6, 2023, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: New Member Application and Renewal Processing. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

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 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

The 10th Anniversary of the VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero campaign runs through Nov. 11, with over 1,800 franchised stores participating. Join the campaign and donate at vfw.org/2023HAH. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Brooke Brown, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, bbrown@vfw.org.

The VFW Foundation 2023-24 grant cycle is open! Applications are available at vfw.org/grants. VFW Posts, Districts and Auxiliaries may qualify for grant funding. There are a total of three reimbursement-based grant opportunities:

- #StillServing Grant (SSG) – This grant provides reimbursement of up to \$1,500 for expenses incurred while performing community service activities where Post/District/Auxiliary members engaged community members directly.
- Post Assistance Grant (PAG) – This grant provides reimbursement of up to \$2,500 for expenses incurred from purchasing qualifying equipment or making repairs/renovating a Post owned property.
- Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) Grant – This grant provides reimbursement of up to \$1,500 for donations made to food insecurity organizations or for the purchase of food that supports a Post or Auxiliary ran food pantry.

Please contact Grants Manager Jason Couch with any questions you may have at jcouch@vfw.org.

The VFW Foundation Board meeting was held on Tuesday, Oct. 3 at the National Museum of Military Vehicles in Dubois, Wyoming. Dan West, VFW Adjutant General and Board President gave an overview of VFW activities including how military families would be helped through Unmet Needs if there was a federal government shutdown. Marc Garduno, VFW Quartermaster General and Board Secretary-Treasurer discussed the Foundation's financial health and 2022-23 FY results. Additionally, there was discussion about the VFW National Convention sponsorship process, Board member nominations and informative reports from staff members Lisa Baronio, Brooke Brown and Ben Vargas as well as input from consultant Tony Lowe.

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

As we hear the season of giving, 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.*

VFW National Veterans Service Quarterly Supporter Newsletter – This month's edition is on its way! In this quarterly update, we will keep you informed about the impactful work being done by the VFW National Veterans Service for our veterans. You will see stories of how the VFW in D.C. is fighting for veterans' rights and legislation affecting veterans. We will also share heartwarming stories about VFW Accredited Service Officers actively aiding veterans in securing their well-deserved VA benefits, all made possible through your invaluable support of this essential program. If you, or a fellow veteran, are in need of assistance in filing a VA claim, please visit vfw.org/NVS.

VFW 2024 "Fly the Flag" – We are delighted to inform you that you will soon be receiving a special edition 2024 Fly the Flag" printable Calendar from the VFW. This distinctive patriotic calendar is our way of expressing gratitude for your unwavering membership and generous support of the VFW. As an added token of appreciation, we have included a bonus gift – the VFW "American Songbirds" Calendar. Our intention is for these special gifts to inspire you to proudly display the American flag, particularly on the dates highlighted in your calendar, demonstrating your unwavering support for all the veterans who have valiantly preserved our freedom.

To further fuel your patriotic spirit, visit heroes.vfw.org/Flag, where you can access a complimentary flag poster to print for display. **Your donations** will help **your VFW Department** serve veterans in need throughout the year. Veterans in your Department are counting on you!

2023 Veterans Day Matching Gift Campaign to Friends of Freedom Online Community – Last month, Friends of Freedom members received an email with exciting news! A generous supporter of the VFW has graciously pledged to match all donations, dollar for dollar, up to \$50,000, until Veterans Day, which falls on Nov. 11, 2023! This represents an extraordinary opportunity for your contribution to have twice the impact in paying tribute to the courageous men and women who have selflessly dedicated themselves to our nation.

No matter the amount, your act of generosity will carry double the weight, directly benefiting veterans, service members and their families. Watch your inbox for this incredible email so that your gift can go twice as far!

Sign Your Name, Change Your Future – Research shows that people who give feel happier and healthier than those who do not. From collecting tax receipts to planning deadlines, our team at the VFW Planned Giving Office makes it easy for you to give. Include the VFW in your will or living trust by contacting our Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email us at 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

VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The 2024 Spring Semester deadline is Nov. 15, 2023. The application is available online only at vfw.org/scholarship.

REMINDER: This is our 10th year working with Sport Clips. Visit your local Sport Clips for a haircut from now until Nov. 11, 2023, and donate to the VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” program. Your donation will provide scholarships to service members and veterans. On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, participating Sport Clips stores will donate \$2 for every hair care service and many locations will offer free Veterans Day haircuts for veterans. Please contact us at mherron@vfw.org if you have any questions about the VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship” program.

VMS All-American Requirement

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.

Continue to do what you are doing and thank you for your continued support!

Veterans & Military Support (VMS)

If your Department has not paid for their 2023-24 VMS Lapel Pins, please pay for them as soon as possible. You may use the VMS Donation link on the upper right-hand corner of the Dashboard.

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

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.

BELLS OF PEACE 2023. On Nov. 11 at 11:00 a.m. local time...Americans everywhere and across the nation will toll bells in remembrance of those who served and those who sacrificed in the war that changed the world...
--Sign up to participate (once you have signed up, we will send you updates and notices).
--Recruit others including organizations to pledge with you.
--Find out more and see the special landing page for information and RESOURCES:
<https://bellsofpeace.org>

ALL AMERICAN DASHBOARD. Please encourage Posts to read the 2023-24 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 statistic. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ESSAY CONTEST DEADLINE REMINDER. The deadline for the annual Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay contests is quickly approaching. The students must have their completed entry form with the (audio and/or written) essay submitted to a participating VFW Post by **Oct. 31, 2023**. Each corresponding deadline for Post, District and Department to have their entries to the next level are Nov. 15, 2023, for completion of Post judging; Dec. 15, 2023, for completion of District judging; Jan. 10, 2024, for completion of Department judging and the Department winners are due to National Headquarters by **Jan. 15, 2024**.

Please ensure that the entry forms are filled out completely and that the appointed individual in the Post is available to receive the entries and answer questions. As we get closer to the deadline, more students and parents will be reaching out trying to find a participating Post so we want to ensure they can make contact.

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 **Chairperson Guides** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all the program materials.

Please remember that Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen are VFW programs supported by the VFW Auxiliary. It is inappropriate for the VFW Auxiliary to conduct separate judging at any level.

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

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS. Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen first place Department winner will receive a National scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National Awards now totals \$172,000, with the top three awards being raised to \$35,000, \$21,000, and \$15,000. The Patriot's Pen National Awards total is \$55,000.

Anyone (including students, parents, teachers, and chairpersons) 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.

VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH IN NOVEMBER. VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools to talk about their military and home front experiences to students. Invite your local military recruiter to join you to talk about military service today. Additional information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide.

Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals, and on the same page are all other program materials.

Participate in this activity during the week of Veterans Day, which is part of "National Veterans Awareness week," as designated by Congress. Find Pledge of Allegiance pencils and coloring books, plus other citizenship education tools at the VFW Store vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation.

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM DEADLINE REMINDER. The deadline for the annual Teacher Award contest is quickly approaching. All teacher nominations should have been completed and submitted to a participating VFW Post by Oct. 31, 2023. A completed nomination should consist of a completed entry form with a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five-pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teacher experience, along with a head-and-shoulder photo, if available at the time.

Each corresponding deadline for Post, District, if applicable, and Department to have their entries to the next level are as follows: Nov. 15, 2023, for completion of Post judging; Dec. 15, 2023, for completion of District judging, if applicable; Feb. 1, 2024, for completion of Department judging and their winners forwarded to National Headquarters.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” with the entry documentation downloaded. A link will be forwarded soon to the Department Adjutant/Quartermaster to submit it to National Headquarters. You can locate additional information by logging in to vfw.org and searching under “My VFW” in the Training & Support section.

The VFW’s Department Citizenship Education Teacher Award includes a citation for both the winning teacher and their school.

The VFW’s National Citizenship Education Teacher Awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher’s school; plaques for both the winning teacher and school; and an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email tbeauchamp@vfw.org or call 816.756.3390 and ask for extension 6287 or Tammy Beauchamp.

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.

The new programs are as follows:

FRED C. HALL MEMORIAL AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE. 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 Fred C. Hall Memorial 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 OCSF 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.

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. All nominations, consisting of a completed Post entry form and the required documentation, should be in the hands of the local Post by Oct. 31, so they may begin their judging. Once their judging has been completed, VFW Post Safety Chairperson’s are to submit up to five winning nominees (one for each career area) to their Department Headquarters for judging no later than Jan. 1.

Once judging has been completed, Departments are asked to submit their five winning nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office, by completing the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants/Quartermasters prior to the deadline of Feb. 1.

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

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National 911 Dispatcher Award
- VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (E.O.D.T.) Award

All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters. Deadline for Department submissions to National is Feb. 1.

Each Department will receive their requested awards and should contact their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient’s peers at a professional association event, city council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the general public and especially other law enforcement, 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.

Simply visit vfw.org, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Public Servant Program**.

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.

CONDUCT A VETERAN’S DAY PROGRAM ON NOV. 11. Organize a community event on Veterans Day honoring all veterans. For a ceremonial procedure, refer to the information found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education VFW Chairperson’s Guide. If you should need a Veterans Day speech, please go to: vfw.org/MY-VFW/Patriotic-Holiday-Speeches. Click here for Veterans Day merchandise vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday.

HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG ON DEC. 7. Public Law 103-308, passed in 1994, designates Dec. 7 as “National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day” and requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day. To order a flag, go to vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

“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

Do not Get Stuck with Costly Medical Bills.

If you are a veteran and have TRICARE insurance coverage, you still may be on the hook for out-of-pocket health care expenses. As of 2023, TRICARE Select now has a YEARLY catastrophic cap of \$4,028 — that can be a lot to pay each year.

The VFW's exclusive provider, SelmanCo, offers its members a group rate on a TRICARE Supplement Insurance Plan. The rates are based on age and can cover the health care costs left behind by your TRICARE plan. Those additional savings can really add up!

[Click here](#) to download the CONFIDENCE OVER CHANCE Info Guide and discover more.

"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 three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

BUDDY POPPY UPDATE: National Headquarters conducted a review of the Buddy Poppy policy and procedures and implemented the following changes effective Aug. 1, 2023:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) 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.
- 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 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) If you do not report a missing order within 90 days of processing, 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.

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 due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of the Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 3.5 years of the Gold, 5 years of Diamond and 52 years of the Silver.

National Veterans Service

2023 VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS) NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NAC) VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Nominations for Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer of the Year awards are underway! Nominations are for two awards (one male and one female), which will be presented during the 2024 VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting. **Nominees for this award must participate in established VAVS assignments, serve as a Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteer and meet one of the following criteria:**

- Volunteer with hospitalized Veterans
- Volunteer with Veterans at Outpatient Clinics
- Volunteer with Veterans in Community Living Centers
- Volunteer with homeless Veterans
- Volunteer with Veterans and Veterans groups in the community
- Host Veterans functions in the Lodge, Post, Chapter, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4th and Veterans Day observances, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment.
- Host Veterans functions outside the Lodge, Post, Chapter, i.e., fishing trips, day at the races, sporting events, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment.
- Visit Veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment.
- Adopt-A-Veteran

VFW Department Commanders, Adjutants, Quartermasters, and Hospital Chairpersons, please select your two candidates (one male and one female) and send all supporting documentation along with their nomination letters to: jmoss@vfw.org. Deadline for submission is Dec. 8, 2023, (VAVS VOY information in connection with nomination will be emailed to VFW Department leadership).

Your Voice on Capitol Hill

The VFW National Legislative Service staff regularly testifies before Congress on behalf of our VFW members. Our testimonies cover a wide array of issues that are critically important to veterans from all eras, as well as current active duty and Guard/Reserve service members and their families. We have been invited to testify before the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs on many different topics such as military to civilian transition; mental health and suicide prevention; Department of Veterans Affairs' accountability; education and employment assistance; concurrent receipt and retirement compensation; and numerous pieces of pending legislation concerning benefits options and delivery of care. Read our [congressional testimony](#) or view the list of [current legislation](#) for which the VFW is advocating.

In addition, we also regularly have meetings with senators, representatives, and key committee staffers to field questions and provide detailed information regarding the [VFW's position](#) on specific issues. Making sure our veterans receive the benefits and care they deserve is paramount and always our priority, and your members of Congress know it. They often reach out to ask for our input and support on issues they know are important to our membership. We stand firm with our legislative priorities, and Congress listens.



VFW Store

One of the most effective and visible ways to show your pride in the VFW, and raise awareness of programs in your community, is to purchase branded merchandise from the VFW Store. Your VFW shirt, cap or pin will spark curiosity in others. That, in turn, can lead to meaningful conversations about our organization. To shop for VFW logoed merchandise, click vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/vfwlogo?page=1&size=100.