

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



**BULLETIN**

**Ocala, Florida**

**November, 2024**

**“When in Command, Command”**

## **VETERANS DAY IS AROUND THE CORNER!**

November 11 is Veterans Day, and presents an ideal opportunity for our Posts, Districts, and Departments to hold recruiting events, Buddy Poppy drives, calling campaigns, and other activities to help build and strengthen our membership. We encourage all levels of VFW leadership to go forth and motivate our Posts to be visible in our communities at this time when our nation turns its thoughts to those who have served.

## **COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE**

To encourage growth, Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt has instituted a monthly Commander's Challenge. Every month, we will award points to our Posts as follows:

- Recruit a New Annual Member into the Post: 1 point
- An Annual or Lapsed Member converts to Life: 5 points
- Recruit a New Life Member into the Post: 10 points

For the month of November 2024, the Post that leads each division will receive a customized 7' x 3' vinyl banner to display at the Post, during parades, or at events to recognize their achievement. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

Keep it up and we will show everyone how **NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!**

This contest will run from Nov. 1, 2024, through Nov. 30, 2024. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## **MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:**

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org) and go to <https://www.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 in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

## **MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

As the membership year has begun keep in mind the membership requirements set out by the Commander-in-Chief:

- Achieve 102% 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.

## NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As you are starting in the new membership year, we have made it easier for you to get all the recruitment brochures you will need to make this membership year successful! It is 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).

## UPCOMING TRAINING

Our next Membership Monday training webinar will be on November 4th, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: “**How To Set Up A Recruiting Booth**”. We will provide examples of successful booths at various types of events, as well as how to stock and display recruiting materials, interact with potential members, and other ways to make your recruiting event successful. Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VFWMembership> to learn how to attend this online training.

## 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?*

These comrades are leading the charge for membership growth – will you take up the challenge and see your name on this list?

Since 2013, Sport Clips has been the primary supporter of the VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program, which provides scholarships for service members and veterans for use at post-secondary and trade schools. To date, the program has awarded more than 2,720 scholarships totaling \$12.3 million. We ask that during the fundraiser, you visit our great friends at your local Sport Clips, get a haircut and donate to the campaign!

Contact: VFW 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 17% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

**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](http://vfw.org/NVS). The service is 100% free of charge.

**VFW 2025 "Fly the Flag"** – We are delighted to inform you that you will soon be receiving the VFW's 2025 "Fly the Flag" Calendar. 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 2025 "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](http://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!

**2024 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, November 11, 2024! 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! If you have not received this offer by email, you can [click here](#) to make a donation online!

**Transform Obligation into Inspiration** – Required minimum distributions (RMD), after we hit the age of 73, are dollars that must be withdrawn from retirement plan accounts each year. Did you know that you can fulfill all or a portion of your RMD and, at the same time, help support veterans? When you make a gift to the VFW as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), you will not be taxed on it. You can start making QCD contributions when you reach age 70 ½. Learn more: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/rmd>. The VFW Planned Giving Office is happy to talk with you about your options for making estate plans that can benefit you and America’s heroes. Reach out at 816.968.1119 or [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@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 visit [vfw.org/VFWatWork](http://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!

**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).

## Veterans & Military Support Programs

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2025**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the “**VMS Donation**” tab on the **Dashboard** to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters. If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate for the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

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.

### VMS Lapel Pin Payment

If your Department ordered and received the 2024-25 VMS Lapel Pins, please pay for them as soon as possible. You may utilize the “**VMS Donation**” link on the upper right-hand corner of the **Dashboard**.

## 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>

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

The **2025 Spring Semester** is still open and will close **Nov. 15, 2024**. The application is available online only at [vfw.org/Scholarship](http://vfw.org/Scholarship).

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

# VFW Programs

**DISPLAYING MILITARY SERVICE SYMBOLS.** Military service flags, insignias, etc. should be displayed in the following order (left to right as you face the flags): Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag).

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

**VFW 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE POST PROGRAM SIGN UP.** We encourage as many of our VFW posts to get signed up to become a 125th Anniversary community service Post. To date, we have forty-three. Please help us spread the word. Our birthday was a couple of days ago, but our celebration will last the rest of the year and conclude at the National Convention in Columbus.

The VFW National Commander invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their family members to our country during the VFW 125th Anniversary year. In addition, it is hoped you will encourage your community to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Have our posts click this link <https://vfw125.org/get-involved/> and click on the **red** Accept Invitation icon for further information.

**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, 2024**. Each corresponding deadline for Post, District and Department to have their entries to the next level are Nov. 15, 2024, for completion of Post judging; Dec. 15, 2024, 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, 2025**.



**Please ensure that the entry forms are filled out completely and that the appointed individual at 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](http://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 a VFW Auxiliary to conduct separate judging at any level.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email [Jlinstra@vfw.org](mailto:Jlinstra@vfw.org) or call 816.968.2787.

**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 \$5,000.

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/](http://vfw.org/VOD/)

Patriot's Pen: [vfw.org/PatriotsPen/](http://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](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy) for Voice of Democracy and [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](http://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](http://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](http://vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation).

**SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM DEADLINE REMINDER.** The deadline for the annual Teacher Award contest has arrived. All post-level nominations should have been completed and submitted to a participating VFW Post by Oct. 31. 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 teaching experience, (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available at the time.

**Please ensure that the nominations received have the required documentation listed above and that the appointed individual at the Post is available to receive the nominations and answer questions. As we get**

**closer to the deadline, more teachers or other nominators will be reaching out trying to find a participating Post so we want to ensure they can make contact.**

VFW Post Teacher Award chairpersons may submit one candidate, in each grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), to their District by Nov. 15. If a department does not have a District judging, then the Post entries would be submitted to the Department Headquarters and/or Department Chairperson by Jan. 1. The Department may select a single candidate, in each grade level, and submit them to VFW National Headquarters through Formstack by Feb. 1 for National judging. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to the deadline. To submit their winners, the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” should be completed, and the winning entry documentation downloaded. You can locate additional information by logging in to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and searching under “My VFW” in the Training & Support section.

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

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 their 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](mailto:tbeauchamp@vfw.org) or call 816.756.3390 extension 6287.

**PLEASE REVIEW UPDATE ON O.C.S.P. PROGRAM.** VFW National Programs has updated Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

**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 community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

These four Posts will be awarded the Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

**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.

**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 may 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 may submit their five winning nominees, if available, (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

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 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](https://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant).

Simply visit [vfw.org](https://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](https://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](https://vfw.org/MY-VFW/Patriotic-Holiday-Speeches). Click here for Veterans Day merchandise [vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday](https://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](https://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 (Nov. 7, 2019), it is required that the POW/MIA flag, on certain federal properties, 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.

# VFW Member Benefits

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 2024, TRICARE Select now has a YEARLY catastrophic cap of \$4,157 — that can be a lot to pay each year.

VFW's exclusive provider, SelmanCo, offers 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 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 SILVER, GOLD, AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES.** The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as the red poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish inventory of Anniversary poppies due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 2 years of the Gold, 3 years of Diamond and 50 years of the Silver.

## National Veterans Service

### **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 coming soon! **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 under a VAVS program
- Volunteer with Veterans and Veterans groups in the community under VAVS
- Host Veterans functions outside the Post, i.e., Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and Veterans Day observances, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment
- Visit Veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment

VFW Department Commanders, Adjutant/Quartermasters, and Hospital Chairmen, please take a look at who you may want to nominate. We will publish deadlines and nomination forms criteria through the HQ Bulletin, Action Corps, and our VFW VA Health Watch website. Thank you for supporting your volunteers work under the VAVS program!

## National Legislative Service/Action Corps

### **Tell Congress to Include VFW Priority**

The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. An important VFW legislative priority, S.2888 / H.R.3933,

*TAP Promotion Act*, is currently in the House version (Section 563) only. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition, and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide. [Tell Congress](#) to keep the *TAP Promotion Act* in the final version of the defense bill to make permanent VA's practice of including accredited claims representatives in TAP classes.

### **VFW, SVA Announce 2024/2025 Student Veteran Fellowship Class**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) have selected six student veterans for the 2024/2025 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship. In its 11th year, the fellowship is an academic experience during which students advocate for a policy proposal that addresses a legislative issue important to both organizations. The issue of focus for this class is parity of GI Bill benefits for members of the National Guard and Reserve. The fellows have the opportunity to attend SVA's National Conference in January and VFW's Washington Conference in March. The 2024/2025 legislative fellows are:

- Jose Ayon, Army veteran, University of Southern California
- Jennifer Ross, Air Force veteran, Cornell University
- Noah Sorseth, Army veteran, George Fox University
- Casey Stege, Army veteran, Baylor University
- Terry Traylor, Marine Corps veteran, North Dakota State University
- Polina Washington, Army veteran, The University of Texas at Austin