

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

October 2025

“United We Stand for God, Family & Country”

Membership

CONTINUE BUILDING MEMBERSHIP WITH THE COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE!

Our first Commander's Challenge for the year has been completed, you can find the winners announced on our Membership Facebook page, facebook.com/VFWMembership. As laid out in the 2025-26 Membership Program, we will be issuing quarterly challenges to our Posts and rewarding those who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. Every quarter (July 1 – Sept. 30, Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, Jan. 1 – Mar. 31, Apr. 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.

Congratulations to those Posts who are leading the charge towards membership success!

MEMBERSHIP GOALS

As we 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

ALL-AMERICAN POST CAP ORDER INFORMATION

Members of an All-American Post may submit their cap order through the VFW Store.

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into 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 in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

The 2025-26 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 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 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.

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 towards 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 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.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

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

What will your Legacy be?

These comrades are our first to cross the 100-members-recruited mark this year! How many of you will be joining them?

VFW Foundation

Sport Clips will launch the in-store Help A Hero fundraiser from Oct. 5 – Nov. 15. Since 2013, Sport Clips has been the primary supporter of 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 3,350 scholarships totaling \$15.3 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 Foundation Corporate Relations Manager, Savanna Cavanaugh, SCavanaugh@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 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's Special Edition Christmas Cards for 2025 – In September, we mailed the VFW's Special Edition Christmas Cards for 2025. We hope you enjoy these cards along with the other gifts that were included in the package. In the letter that was sent with the cards and gifts, we asked you to consider taking some time to visit or call a hospitalized veteran, service member or homebound veteran in your community. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Volunteer to find out about volunteering at your local VA facility. And please remember that the VFW's life-changing programs would not be available to veterans of all generations without the generosity of its members. Your donation to the VFW helps support programs for veterans and service members right in your own Department.

Honor Veterans During the National Moment of Silence – As Veterans Day approaches, Friends of Freedom online community members will receive an email inviting them to sign up for a reminder to join the VFW in a two-minute national moment of silence at 2:11 PM ET/ 1:11 PM CT on Veterans Day.

Keep an eye out for this email and click on the link to sign up to receive a reminder. When you make a pledge to join the VFW for the national moment of silence, you'll also be joining thousands of other proud citizens across the country to remember our fellow veterans' service and sacrifice. If you are not a member of the Friends of Freedom online community, just [click here](#) to help us honor this tradition!

Sign a Christmas Card for a Veteran – You may receive a package this month with a special Christmas card for you to sign for a lonely, hospitalized veteran or current service member. We want to get a Christmas card to as many veterans and service members in VA medical facilities as possible before December 25. Please sign the card and return by November 20 and a VFW volunteer will deliver it to a veteran who didn't think anyone remembered or cared. And when you mail the signed Christmas card back, please include a special holiday donation if you can help support the VFW National Veterans Service. With your support of VFW National Veterans Service, the VFW is able to fight – and win – vital legislative battles on Capitol Hill. The VFW is on the front line in the fight for education, jobs, health care and an overall better quality of life FOR VETERANS!

Support America's Heroes This October! – October may be known for spooky fun, but it's also a time to shine a light on giving and future planning!

DAF Day (October 9): No tricks here—just the treat of giving! Donor Advised Funds make it easy (and flexible) to support the organizations you care about most. For more information about DAF's, please visit [//vfw.planmylegacy.org//daf-easier-way-to-give](http://vfw.planmylegacy.org//daf-easier-way-to-give). Please contact VFW Major Gifts at 816.820.9768 or email vfwmajorgifts@vfw.org.

Estate Planning Awareness Week (October 20–26): Don't be haunted by uncertainty—this week is all about learning why planning for the future is so important. To get your free Estate Planning kit, visit [//vfw.planmylegacy.org/personal-estate-planning-kit](http://vfw.planmylegacy.org/personal-estate-planning-kit). Call 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org to contact the VFW Planned Giving Office with any questions.

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 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!

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

Marketing Communications

The VFW's Still Serving campaign has reached millions and helped showcase the amazing impact our members have on their local communities, but there's an even more powerful way to make an impact – by sharing your own story with other veterans. Your Still Serving story could help inspire other veterans around the country to give back in the same ways that you are.

Whether it was a time that you checked in on another veteran, participated in a local charity run/walk, or volunteered at your local boys/girls club, we want to hear about how you're Still Serving.

[Tell us your story today!](#)

Veterans & Military Support Programs

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 after **July 1, 2025, for the 2025-26 Program year.**

VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at mherron@vfw.org or 816.968.1102.

Military Appreciation Program (MAP) Grant Funds

The **VFW MAP Grant** is now open. Please use the All-American Eligible Dashboard to request this grant. The grant process will remain open until all funds have been depleted. Available MAP Grants funds are displayed on the All-American Eligible Dashboard in the upper left-hand corner of the website.

VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The **2026 Spring Semester** is now open and runs through Nov. 15, 2025. The application is only available online at vfw.org/Scholarship.

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!

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

PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD) Please encourage Posts to read the 2025-26 Membership program. Military Appreciation Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in 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 statistic. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

2025-26 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM. The Veterans of Foreign Wars wants to recognize the nation's top elementary, junior high and high school teachers (teaching at least half of the school day in a classroom environment) who teach citizenship education topics regularly and promote America's history, traditions, and institutions effectively through this program.

Now is the time to begin locating exceptional teachers for your Post to nominate for the next competition. All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous National winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

All Post level nominees should provide 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.

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 Dashboard by Feb. 1 for National judging. To submit their winners, the "VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form" should be completed, and the winning entry documentation uploaded.

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.

Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. have the correct teacher award entry deadlines and rules for the 2025-26 program year. The teacher entry form, information page, and Chairpersons Guide are available on the VFW website.

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 **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals and on the same page are all other program materials.

IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME! It is the perfect time to contact schools, youth groups, parent organizations and others with information about Voice of Democracy® and Patriot's Pen. Schools are making curriculum decisions now and parents are thinking about scholarships.

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

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

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2025–26 themes were chosen by Commander-in-Chief Carol L. Whitmore. The Voice of Democracy theme will be **“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”** and the Patriot's Pen theme will be **“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”**

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2025-26 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: [//www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy](http://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy) for Voice of Democracy and [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](http://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen) for Patriot's Pen.

NOTE: Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are available!

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, 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.

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Departments may submit up to five nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office no later than Feb. 1, 2025. All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through the Dashboard. VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW 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.

NOTE: VFW PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATION POST ENTRY FORM. This form was developed to assist VFW Post Safety Chairpersons with an entry form to hand out to the local Fire Department, Police Department, etc. to assist interested individuals in nominating one of their own. The entry form along with the required documentation are to be returned to the local VFW Post for their judging, by Oct. 31. Once a winner in each category has been chosen, the Post will forward the winning entries on to the next level of judging.

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. The 2025 Veterans Day speech will be available no later than two weeks prior to November 11. Click here for Veterans Day merchandise vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday.

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.

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

If you are a veteran or the spouse of a veteran, you may have questions about healthcare coverage, especially if you have VA health care benefits and you are eligible for Medicare.

The annual enrollment period for Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans is open Oct. 15-Dec. 7, making now an important time to reassess coverage needs.

If you receive VA healthcare benefits, the VA still encourages you to enroll in Medicare when you are eligible. Medicare can provide coverage if you need care from a non-VA hospital or doctor, if you want a second opinion, or if you'd like care closer to home.

Medicare Advantage plans, offered through private insurance companies, include Parts A and B and often include additional benefits. These plans can complement VA benefits to help close gaps in health care coverage, like dental, vision or hearing, in many instances.

Use credible sources such as Medicare.gov, online educational events, or licensed sales agents to compare your options. For more information, visit humana.com/medicare/veterans or reached a specially trained agents via the VFW's dedicated toll-free number at 1.877.850.0183.

"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 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 two (2) years of gold, three (3) years of diamond and fifty (50) years of silver.

National Veterans Service

STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT GRANT

The VFW recognizes that both funding and support for our student veterans and dependents at institutions of higher learning can often be difficult to find. The **VFW's Student Veteran Support Grant** offers much needed assistance to support specific student veteran events. The grant, administered by the VFW Washington Office, focuses on supporting the overall student veteran population within the community, which consists of many student veterans at campuses across the country that are not affiliated with an SVA chapter. The grants will be disbursed to the VFW Post or Department that has submitted an application, to support the student veterans at the university or college.

Grant Eligibility:

- Applicants must be VFW members associated with an appropriate entity of the VFW (VFW Post, District, Department, or National).
- Appropriate VFW Post, District, Department, or National leadership serve as the convening authority on the grant request and is responsible for receiving funds.
- Funds must be utilized for events and outreach designed to assist and support veterans currently enrolled in institutions of higher learning.
- Grants may be awarded up to \$500 to support each event, and grants can be awarded to a VFW entity twice each fiscal year, totaling up to \$1,000.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

House Passes NDAA Including VFW-Backed TAP Promotion Act

The House passed [H.R.3838](#), *Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026*, with a bipartisan vote of 231-196. Included in Section 562 is the *TAP Promotion Act*, which is a top priority for the VFW to ensure that transitioning service members have direct access to accredited representatives for VA claims assistance to enable prompt receipt of earned benefits. This inclusion reflects the VFW's ongoing advocacy efforts to streamline the benefits process and support successful reintegration into civilian life and careers. This legislation also authorizes a 3.8% pay raise for service members and allocates funds to increase military readiness end strength by approximately 26,000 troops in 2026. [Read more.](#)

House Passes 14 Veteran Bills

Fourteen bipartisan veteran bills passed the House and now head to the Senate for consideration. They address a range of health care and benefits issues. VFW-supported bills include [H.R.3400](#), *TRAVEL Act of 2025*, to allow VA physicians to serve temporarily as traveling physicians in territories and possessions of the United States to provide health care services to veterans in underserved areas; [H.R.3951](#), *Rural Veterans' Improved Access to Benefits Act of 2025*, to extend license portability allowing eligible health care providers to perform disability examinations across state lines and expanding access for veterans; and [H.R.2334](#), *Servicemember Residence Protection Act*, to preempt state laws regarding squatter's rights for premises owned by individuals who are on active military service. [Read more.](#)

Administrative Operations

2026 REVISED PODIUM EDITION – CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER, BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL:

The 2026 podium edition which includes the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, reflecting the amendments adopted by the 126th National Convention, effective Sept. 11, 2025, can be purchased through the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/products/22690.

To access the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual online, log in on vfw.org and go to 'Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates' underneath Member/Post Resources where you will find the 2026 Podium.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Veteran Service Organizations National Headquarters/Cities/Municipalities, Museums

FROM: Army Donations Static Display Program, ILSC-Donations

SUBJECT: Significant Changes to the Army Donations Static Display Program – Notification of Process Update

1. Purpose: This memorandum informs you of critical changes to the process for acquiring donated Army static display pieces. These changes are effective immediately.

2. Background: The Army Donations Static Display Program has historically maintained a waitlist for organizations seeking donated equipment. Due to recent mission and staffing changes to our office resulting from the government-wide reorganization, we are streamlining the process to ensure efficient distribution.

3. Changes to the Acquisition Process:

- a. Elimination of Wait List: The existing wait list is being discontinued. We will no longer maintain or distribute a list of available pieces based on wait list priority.
- b. Letter of Interest Required: Organizations that already qualified to receive donations will now be responsible for proactively expressing interest in available pieces. When equipment becomes available, a listing will be posted on the Army Donations Program Office website and emailed to all qualified customers. Customers should ensure that their email addresses are up to date. Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) within 30 days of the listing date. A recipient will be selected from the organizations that submit a letter of interest.
- c. Responsibilities of Recipient Organizations: Recipient organizations will be fully responsible for all costs associated with acquiring the donated equipment, including, but not limited to:
 - * Demilitarization of the equipment (as required).
 - * Procurement and installation of pads and pedestals.
 - * All transportation costs from the current equipment location.
- d. Program Capacity: Due to a reduction of resources and the potential volume of expected donations, the Army Donations Program Office will no longer be able to proactively contact previously qualified organizations individually to gauge their interest in specific pieces.

4. How to Express Interest:

- * Submit your Letter of Interest to: usarmy.detroit.tacom.mbx.ilsc-donations@army.mil
- * Check our website regularly for updated lists of available pieces: www.tacom.army.mil/ilsc/donations/

5. Request for Assistance: We are requesting your assistance in disseminating this information to all affiliated organizations within your network. Ensuring these changes are widely understood will facilitate a smooth transition to the new process.

6. Point of Contact: For questions regarding this change, please contact the Donations Program office at usarmy.detroit.tacom.mbx.ilsc-donations@army.mil

VFW Store

Entry deadlines are Oct. 31 for the teacher award, and the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen essay contests. Show appreciation for entrants at your post with commemorative items from the VFW Store:

Voice of Democracy: vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy?page=1&size=50

Patriot's Pen: vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen?page=1&size=50

Teachers: vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation

Veterans Day is just around the corner – order now to receive your merchandise in time. We offer parade items, patriotic apparel and more. Go to vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday

Buddy Poppy items are also available at the VFW Store. Go to

vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy?page=1&size=50

To order, go to vfwstore.org or call 1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387)

Roll Call of Departed Comrades

BURKE, HAROLD M., Jr. – Commander, Department of New York, 2003–2004; Department Quartermaster, 2006–2009; Department Adjutant, 2015–2021, and a Gold Legacy Life Member of Hilderbrand-Davis Post No. 1895, Schenectady, New York, on August 23, 2025.

START THE YEAR OFF STRONG WITH OUR FIRST COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE!

We are starting a new membership year, and we want to get momentum early with a strong drive to recruit new members and retain our existing members, with a special focus on Life Members! As laid out in the 2025-2026 Membership Program, we will be issuing quarterly challenges to our Posts and rewarding those who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. Every quarter (July 1 – Sept. 30, Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, Jan. 1 – Mar. 31, Apr. 1 – June 30). Every quarter, 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.

The award for the first quarter challenge will be posted soon to the VFW Membership Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/VFWMembership>).

MEMBERSHIP GOALS

As we 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

ALL-AMERICAN POST CAP ORDER INFORMATION

Members of an All-American Post may submit their cap order through the VFW Store.

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!

The 2025-26 Membership Program is available online at [vfw.org](https://www.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 is as easy as one two three!

1. Go to [vfw.org](https://www.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.

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 towards 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](https://www.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.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

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

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?

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation is proud to report that for the 2025 VFW National Convention, held in Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 9–13, we secured nearly \$900,000 in sponsorships — the highest amount ever raised! In addition, thanks to the Foundation’s efforts, the majority of the convention’s special receptions and luncheons were fully sponsored. Special recognition goes to our Corporate Relations staff: Tony Lowe, director of corporate relations; Savanna Cavanaugh, corporate relations manager; and Chris Johnson, corporate accounts manager; as well as Renee Martin, donation specialist who helped coordinate various aspects of the donation process.

The Parade Deck Exhibitor Stage at the VFW National Convention has generated more than 250,000 social media impressions to date — a number expected to climb to nearly 1 million once the final contributions from social media influencers are included.

The May 2025 Burger King/VFW Unmet Needs campaign raised \$341,719 which brings total BK fundraising since 2007 to over \$8 million!

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

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 Christmas Cards – This month we are mailing VFW Christmas Cards and VFW Tote Bags as our way of saying “Thank You” for your generosity in helping provide much-needed services to fellow veterans and service members. With the holidays quickly approaching, your support is urgently needed! Please help our fellow veterans and service members by sending a special donation when you receive this package. Your donations support the programs right in *your* Department and take the time to visit a hospitalized or homebound veteran or current service member this holiday season. Your best wishes and thanks for their service mean more than you can imagine. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Volunteer to find out about volunteering at your local VA facility.

Give Through Your IRA – While summer is quickly coming to an end, your giving does not have to! Use your individual retirement account (IRA) to make a gift the VFW without losing any of your money to the tax man. Here is how: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/tax-free-power-of-ira>. Please contact the Planned Giving Office at 816.820.2099 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org with any questions.

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 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 read [VFW success stories here](#) 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.

Marketing Communications

In case you missed any of the happenings from the 126th VFW National Convention as it came to a close Aug. 13, we have you covered. Now available on demand, watch National Commander Carol Whitmore's installation as VFW National Commander, or just catch up on anything you might have missed at vfw.org/Convention.

Veterans & Military Support Programs

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.

126th National Convention – Columbus, Ohio

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 after **July 1, 2025, for the 2025-26 Program year.**

VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact mherron@vfw.org or 816.968.1102.

Military Appreciation Program (MAP) Grant Funds

The **VFW MAP Grant** is **closed** for the 2024-25 program year. The 2024-25 MAP Grant funds have been depleted. Any events held after the closure of the MAP grant will not be reimbursed with the 2025-26 funds.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **2026 Spring Semester** opened Aug. 1, 2025, and runs through Nov. 15, 2025. The application is available online only at vfw.org/Scholarship.

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.

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 in 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 statistic. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

2025-26 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM. The Veterans of Foreign Wars wants to recognize the nation's top elementary, junior high and high school teachers (teaching at least half of the school day in a classroom environment) who teach citizenship education topics regularly and promote America's history, traditions, and institutions effectively through this program.

Now is the time to begin locating exceptional teachers for your Post to nominate for the next competition. All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous National winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members, or other interested individuals.

All Post-level nominees should provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages, including the resume, as a maximum documentation of their teaching experience (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available.

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 Dashboard by Feb. 1 for National judging. To submit their winners, the "VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form" should be completed, and the winning entry documentation uploaded.

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.

Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. have the correct teacher award entry deadlines and rules for the 2025-26 program year. The teacher entry form, information page, and Chairpersons Guide are available on the VFW website.

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.

PATRIOT DAY, SEPT. 11. Per Presidential Proclamation, Sept. 11, is designated as “Patriot Day.” The President requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) and a moment of silence observed in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day due to terrorist attacks on the United States. For flags and other patriotic items, click here vfwstore.org/category/patriotic/miscpatriotic.

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, SEPTEMBER 19. Posts should conduct an appropriate ceremony. Information on conducting a ceremony can be found in the current VFW Manual of Procedure. For POW/MIA merchandise, click vfwstore.org/category/memorial/pow-mia.

IT’S SCHOLARSHIP TIME! It is the perfect time to contact schools, youth groups, parent organizations, and others with information about Voice of Democracy® and Patriot’s Pen. Schools are making curriculum decisions now and parents are thinking about scholarships.

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

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

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN THEMES. The 2025–26 themes were chosen by Commander-in-Chief Carol L. Whitmore. The Voice of Democracy theme will be “**How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?**” and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be “**How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?**”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2025-26 Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy for Voice of Democracy and vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen for Patriot’s Pen.

NOTE: Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are available!

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.

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Departments may submit up to five nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office no later than Feb. 1, 2026. All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through the Dashboard. VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW 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.

NOTE: VFW PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATION POST ENTRY FORM. This form was developed to assist VFW Post Safety Chairpersons with an entry form to hand out to the local Fire Department, Police Department, etc. to assist interested individuals in nominating one of their own. The entry form along with the required documentation are to be returned to the local VFW Post for their judging, by Oct. 31. Once a winner in each category has been chosen, the Post will forward the winning entries on to the next level of judging.

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.

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.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM. This program is designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time to outside organizations. Recognition is in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins which are given to volunteers who have completed the number of hours prescribed for those awards. For more information, see the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairperson's Guide or contact Mary at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

"UPDATED" POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag.

Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Feb. 21, 2020), it is required that the POW/MIA flag be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP237.

IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot's Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

VFW Member Benefits

Dental issues can arise unexpectedly and be quite costly. For instance, the average price for a dental crown is \$1,515. With Dental Insurance, you can lower your out-of-pocket expenses and keep your smile healthy through preventive care.

Dental Insurance provides coverage for dental costs that might not be included in your medical plan. It covers routine cleanings and exams and reduces expenses for X-rays, fillings, and more.

Dental Insurance not only assists with paying for dental care but also helps in preventing issues. When preventive care is covered, you are more likely to attend cleanings and checkups, which can help you avoid problems before they become too expensive or complicated.

For more details about Dental Insurance, click [here](#).

"BUDDY"® POPPY CAMPAIGN. Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades. Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as "They Gave, Will You?" is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

BUDDY POPPY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 60 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tin tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or by calling Member Service Center at 1.833.839.8387.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

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

National Veterans Service

JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER FOR 2024-2025

During our recently concluded 126th National Convention held in Columbus, Ohio, VFW National Veterans Service was pleased to recognize Belinda M. Boldoe, VFW Department of Georgia, as the recipient of the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Representative of the Year Award for 2024-25. It was an honor to recognize her before the membership of our great organization.

HUMANA SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

For the fourth consecutive year, VFW was able to offer scholarships to cross-accredited county service officers/claims representatives to attend VFW accredited representative skill training being held Sept. 21-25, in Annapolis, Maryland. Each scholarship covers hotel, transportation, conference fees and per diem for the recipient.

These scholarships are made possible thanks to a donation from Humana Inc., and the VFW has chosen to dedicate these resources to help provide quality training to VFW-accredited representatives who do not usually have an opportunity to train with the organization, thus allowing the VFW to reach deeper into communities to provide high-quality, free claims assistance to veterans.

All scholarship recipients are currently accredited with the VFW through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of benefit claims before VA on behalf of VFW claimants.

VFW's accredited representative training is one of the ways the VFW satisfies VA Office of the General Counsel's continuing education requirements for its global network of accredited representatives and is subject to periodic audit from OGC.

We thank our Humana Partners for such an incredibly generous donation to further the goals and objectives of the National Veterans Service in providing world class representation on behalf of our veterans, claimants, their families, and survivors.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

VFW Fall Legislative Conference

The VFW National Legislative Committee will gather in Washington, D.C., Sept. 7-11, to meet with senators, representatives, and congressional staffers regarding key [VFW legislative priorities](#). This year's discussions will focus on passing concurrent receipt legislation, specifically [S. 1032](#), *Major Richard Star Act*; advancing [H.R. 1845](#), *TAP Promotion Act*, to strengthen service member transition; supporting alternative treatments for PTSD; and pushing for reforms to VA community care. Committee members will bring the voices and experiences of veterans from every corner of the country directly to the halls of Congress, ensuring lawmakers cannot ignore the needs of those who have served.

Aviation Cancers Study Bill Becomes Law

After being introduced in three successive congresses, the VFW-supported *ACES Act of 2025* was finally signed into law on Aug. 14, 2025. [Public Law 119-32](#) mandates a comprehensive study of cancer prevalence, morbidity, and mortality among military fixed-wing aircrew, with a focus on potential links to occupational toxic exposures. Targeted cancers include brain, colorectal, melanoma, and prostate.

Administrative Operations

REQUESTING CEREMONIAL RIFLES, AMMUNITION & MILITARY EQUIPMENT

Department Adjutants and Quartermasters are asked to remind all Post officers to refer to the revised information located at vfw.org where they will need to log in to the “My VFW” page and select the “VFW Training and Support” link, then “Member & Officer Training, Forms and Templates” where you’ll have access to “Training Guides & Standard Operating Procedures” and then click on “Ceremonial Rifles, Ammunition & Military Equipment” when requesting a “conditional” donation of any government military equipment, ceremonial rifles or ammunition.

Before contacting the governmental agency, a formal written request is to be addressed and mailed to the Adjutant General at VFW National Headquarters and must be completed and signed by the current *Post Commander*, *Post Adjutant* or *Post Quartermaster*, one of whom needs to be the contact person.

Also to be included is that contact person’s email, mailing addresses and phone number. Address the request to the Adjutant General, VFW National Headquarters, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. Include the proper information as outlined in the “Ceremonial Rifles, Ammunition & Military Equipment” pages in the website. It is requested that a Post *not* go through their Department Headquarters (but send them a courtesy copy). This only slows down the processing and creates unnecessary paperwork for the Department personnel.