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

BULLETIN

OCALA, FLORIDA October, 2026

“Continue the Mission”

Membership

STARTING THE YEAR STRONG WITH THE COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE!

As laid out in the 2026-27 Membership Program, we will continue 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), we will award points to the Posts as follows:

- Recruit a new annual Member into the Post: 1 point
- An annual or lapsed Member converts to life: 5 points
- Recruit a new Life Member into the Post: 10 points

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

MEMBERSHIP GOALS

As is set out in the 2026-27 National Membership Program, we are aiming for membership growth as well as a minimum of 80% retention of our annual members. Focusing our efforts on growth through recruiting and stability via retention will be essential in our efforts to increase our membership strength. The 2026-27 National Membership Program can be downloaded through the Training & Support page on vfw.org.

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 to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

The 2026-27 VFW National 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 2026-27 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 Quartermaster will receive a $250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives view the Commander-in-Chief's National Membership Program at vfw.org under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at membership@vfw.org or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

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:***		
Levels		***Posts***	***Departments***	***National***
Gold-	$1,200.00	$18.00	$18.00	$18.00
Silver-	$800.00	$12.00	$12.00	$12.00
Bronze-	$400.00	$6.00	$6.00	$6.00

What will your Legacy be?

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation recently relaunched its website, creating a refreshed resource for information about the Foundation's mission, impact and opportunities to support veterans, service members and their families.

The Foundation has also introduced a new "Share Your VFW Post or Auxiliary Fundraising Success Story" feature. Posts and Auxiliaries are encouraged to share successful fundraising events, campaigns, community partnerships and other ideas that may be useful to fellow members. Approved submissions may be featured on the VFW Foundation website as part of a growing collection of practical, member-driven fundraising resources.

To share a fundraising success story, visit vfwfoundation.org/vfw-post-or-auxiliary-post-fundraising-stories/.

Contact: VFW Foundation Grants Manager Jason Couch, jcouch@vfw.org.

Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 16% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

VFW's Special Edition Christmas Cards for 2026 – In September, we mailed the VFW's Special Edition Christmas Cards for 2026. 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.

Sign a Card, Lift a Veteran's Spirit – As Veterans Day approaches, the Friends of Freedom are inviting you to pick a card and sign it online. We'll print and deliver it to a hospitalized veteran or service member. You know what it means to serve. A card from a fellow veteran says you're not forgotten. It only takes a minute, but it means the world. Sign your card now!

Sign a Christmas Card for a Veteran – You may receive a package in the mail 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 Dec. 25. Please sign the card and return by Nov. 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!

Veterans Day Donations Will be Matched! — Friends of Freedom members received an email with exciting news: a generous VFW supporter has pledged to match every donation, dollar for dollar, up to $50,000, through Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2026. Membership dues help keep the VFW strong, but they don't cover the full cost of the VFW programs that change veterans' lives. That's where your generosity comes in. Time is limited, so make your gift today to ensure it goes twice as far.

Donor Advised Funds: Your Amazing Charitable Investment Account – Join the VFW on Oct. 8 to maximize your giving and celebrate National DAF Day. You can use your DAF to be more thoughtful with your giving, enhance your charitable donations and end the hassle of receipts piling up.

BONUS: You can name the VFW as a beneficiary of your DAF! To see how you can do so, visit https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/daf-charitable-investment-account. Please contact the Major Gifts Office at 816.820.9768 or vfwmajorgifts@vfw.org if you have 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 to learn how the VFW is at work fighting for veterans' rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

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

Veterans & Military Support Programs

All-American Eligibility

Donating to **NVS** (no longer referred to as VMS) and **DPAA** (new for 2026-27) can only be done via the **Dashboard** by going to the link **"NVS/DPAA Donation"** at the upper right-hand corner of the screen. For the **2026-27 Program Year**, your **$125** or more donation to **NVS meets the eligibility criteria** for **All-American** in this category. Your **$75** donation or more to **DPAA meets the eligibility criteria** for **All-American** in this category. **Donations must be received by June 30, 2027, to make All-American.**

When you make your donation for either category, all that needs to be entered into the box is 125 for NVS or 75 for DPAA. No $ and no .00 are required in the donation amount box.

PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY OF THE RED/WHITE DONATE LINKS IN THE UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF ANY WEBPAGE. THIS LINK GOES TO THE GENERAL DONATION PAGE AND WILL NOT BE CREDITED AS An NVS/DPAA DONATION.

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

MAP Grant funds for the 2026-27 program year opened Sept. 1, 2026.

The eligibility criteria have changed. There is a cap on how much funds can be received per adopted unit annually, and the grant is now a reimbursement grant. We no longer provide funds before an event. Once you complete an event you will then request a reimbursement. More information is provided on the All-American Eligible Dashboard under the Military Assistance Program Grant Guidelines application.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at M.A.P@vfw.org or 816.756.3390 ext. 6287.

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.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **Spring 2027 Semester** application is now open and runs through Nov. 15, 2026. 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!

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 2026-27 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.

2026-27 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 the 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 2026-27 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 2026–27 themes were chosen by Commander-in-Chief Cory Geisler. The Voice of Democracy theme will be **"What a Veteran has taught me about America"** and the Patriot's Pen theme will also be **"What a Veteran has taught me about America."**

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2026-27 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, 2027. 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 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.

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 need a Veterans Day speech , please go to: vfw.org/MY-VFW/Patriotic-Holiday-Speeches. The 2026 Veterans Day speech will be available no later than two weeks prior to Nov. 11. Click here for Veterans Day merchandise vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/veteransday.

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 816.968.1187 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

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

The annual enrollment period for Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans is Oct. 15-Dec. 7, making now a good time to review your healthcare coverage and ensure it continues to meet your needs.

If you receive VA healthcare benefits, the VA still encourages eligible veterans to enroll in Medicare. Medicare can help cover care received outside the VA system, including visits to non-VA doctors or hospitals. It may also provide additional options for accessing care when and where you need it.

Taking time to review your healthcare coverage each year can help ensure it continues to meet your needs and budget.

Learn more about Medicare coverage and if you have questions, specially trained agents can be reached via the VFW's dedicated toll-free number at 833.839.8387.

"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 2 years of Gold, 3 years of Diamond and 50 years of Silver.

Adjutant General

General Counsel/Legal

Music Licensing for Posts

We continue to be contacted by Posts in different Departments with concerns about being contacted by companies regarding the need to obtain a license to play music. Please share the following with your Departments and Posts.

The issue is these Posts are playing music without the required license from a Performing Rights Organization (PROs), which collect and distribute royalties to songwriters, composers, and music publishers when their music is publicly performed/played. Generally, under U.S. copyright law, any business or organization that publicly performs copyrighted music must obtain a performance license from the copyright holders or their representatives. This includes playing music over a sound system, jukebox, karaoke machine, live band, or DJ — even if the music is purchased legally.

ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), BMI (Broadcast Music International) and SESAC (Society of European Stage Authors and Composers) are the three largest PROs that are charged with collecting royalties for songwriters and publishers for "public performances" of songs in their respective catalogs. Whether your taste in music ranges from Billie Eilish to Englebert Humperdinck, Posts should be licensed to play it.

If the Post is running a business, then it is considered a business with all strings attached. For music, the Posts do not own the rights to play the songs for commercial use. That is a matter of licensing.
If you neglect the requirements that pertain to playing music in your Post, and just turn a device on and play what you want, you open your Post to legal claims by music rights holders, which could be very costly.

There is, however, a **limited statutory exemption** that may apply to certain events held by nonprofit veterans' organizations and fraternal organizations. This exemption is found in 17 U.S.C. § 110(10) of the U.S. Copyright Code.

To qualify for this exemption:

1. The organization must be nonprofit veterans or fraternal organization of the Internal Revenue Code (which includes VFW Posts).
2. The music must be nondramatic, such as typical songs played on the radio or at social events (not musicals or operas).
3. The performance must occur during a social function conducted by the Post.
4. The event must not be open to the general public – it must be restricted to members and invited guests.

5. Any proceeds, after deducting reasonable costs for the performance, must be used for charitable purposes and not for financial gain.

To summarize:

- If your Post advertises an event to the public, sells tickets to the general public, or otherwise allows unrestricted public access, **the exemption will not apply**, and a license may be required.
- The exemption does **not cover businesses operating inside the Post**, such as canteens or restaurants that may play music for the general public.
- The exemption is limited to **live or recorded performances** of nondramatic musical works at qualifying private social functions.

The VFW remains committed to ensuring that our Posts operate in compliance with the law while keeping administrative burdens as light as possible. We encourage all Posts to take steps to understand and, where applicable, invoke the exemption under 17 U.S.C. § 110(10).

If you have any doubt as to whether you need to adhere to copyright laws, I draw your attention to the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, at Sec. 218, 418, 518, and 618 that requires Commanders to, "Insist that that the business and activities of the organization are conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation or bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment on this organization." Copyright laws are applicable laws.

Recommendations

- Review your Post's music use to determine whether it meets the criteria for the exemption.
- If you receive a letter or invoice from a performing rights organization, do not ignore it. Evaluate whether your Post qualifies for the exemption and respond accordingly.
- When in doubt, consider consulting legal counsel or reaching out to the VFW National organization for guidance.

Some additional information on this issue can be found here: Music Licensing for Bars and Restaurants: What You Need to Know | Bar Marketing - Bar Business - Opening a Bar - Bar Owner

National Veterans Service

ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING, ANNAPOLIS, MD, OCT. 4-9, 2026

The upcoming VFW National Veterans Service Basic & Skill Level Training Conferences for accredited representatives is being held Oct. 4-9, 2026, at the Doubletree Annapolis, Maryland, with a virtual workgroup option for those who cannot attend the Skill Level session in person. There is no virtual option for the Basic training. The next Virtual Basic training will be offered in early 2027.
While registration has already ended, this is a reminder that your Department Service Office may be closed while your accredited representatives attend this training which is essential to maintaining expert knowledge of the veterans' benefits system.

Questions regarding this or any VFW National Veterans Service sponsored training, should be addressed to Chris Macinkowicz, Deputy Director, VFW National Veterans Service, at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Advocacy Efforts Continue During Congressional Recess

Opposition to Section 108 of the Take Care of America's Veterans Act continues as Congress is in recess until Nov. 9. The VFW is encouraging advocates to continue contacting their lawmakers via in-district meetings, email and phone calls to make our concern clear and tell them to remove Section 108 before advancing this legislative package. Take action.

Administrative Operations

2027 REVISED PODIUM EDITION – CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER, BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL:

The 2027 podium edition which includes the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, reflecting the amendments adopted by the 127th National Convention, effective Aug. 28, 2026, 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 2027 Podium.

VFW Store

Grunt Style "Honor the Contract" T-shirt: Stand for those who stood for freedom. Honor the contract.

When the uniform comes off, the mission isn't over. The Grunt Style "Honor the Contract" T-Shirt is a declaration of loyalty to those who served. This shirt represents accountability, respect, and action, because the debt to our veterans doesn't come with an expiration date.



This shirt is a reminder to push back against legislation and budgets that reduce compensation for veterans. Oppose predatory "claim sharks" who charge veterans for assistance with VA claims. And promote transition assistance programs and mental health resources.

You can support the advocacy initiative by purchasing the "Honor the Contract" T-shirt from the VFW Store. Click https://www.vfwstore.org/products/GP457.

To shop for other items online, go to vfwstore.org. Need help with an order? Call the MSC at 1.833.839.8387.