

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



BULLETIN

Ocala, Florida

September, 2024

“When in Command, Command”

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

The monthly Commander's Challenge is rolling along as we see our Posts making great strides in recruiting and upgrading members to Life membership! To remind everyone, every month during the 2024-25 membership year, we will reward our Posts who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. Every month, we will award points to our Posts as follows:

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

Every month a different award will be given out to the Posts that lead their divisions, and at the end of the year at our National Convention, each Post will be recognized for their achievement on a video display at the Membership booth.

Let us continue to prove just how **NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!**

ALL-AMERICAN POST CAP ORDER INFORMATION

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

2024-25 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM – UPDATED!

The 2024-25 Membership Program has updates, the newest version dated Aug. 26, 2024, 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 2024-25 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As we continue through the membership year, we want everyone to remember the requirements that the Commander-in-Chief has set out in his 2024-25 Membership Program:

- Achieve 102% in membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership

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.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Membership Monday training webinar will be on Sept. 9, 2024, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Awe will cover how to understand the numbers when it comes to reading membership statistics and reports. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to vfw.org, 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?

VFW Foundation

The VFW Foundation received extremely positive feedback from the VFW National Convention with strong commitments to support future initiatives and corporate partnerships. We are actively working on securing sponsorships for the upcoming September NVS Training Conference, the 2025 Washington Conference, and initiatives in support of National Day of Service.

The VFW is expanding its Unmet Needs program to be more than just a request for financial assistance as it currently exists. The expansion will allow for the inclusion of all programs that veterans have unmet needs in such as our National Veterans Service that is provided in every state to assist veterans file disability claims that can dramatically change veterans' lives as well as their families. Last year VFW service officers recouped \$11.2 billion for veterans.

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

VFW Christmas Cards – This month we are mailing VFW Christmas Cards 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.

Feel Secure in Retirement – Lots of people nearing or in their retirement years think about the future of their assets. Did you know you can support the VFW while you (and/or a loved one) receive a secure annual income? With a charitable gift annuity, you can depend on steady payments that are fixed for life regardless of the changing market, with tax benefits as well! Get financial peace of mind for you and your family while giving back to the VFW. Learn more about donating your assets to the VFW in this article: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/feel-secure-when-retired>. And find out how this plan may be beneficial for you by contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Once you join Partners in Patriotism, you will only receive the Quarterly Supporter newsletters to keep you informed of the many efforts your monthly gifts are making possible and a Year-End Tax Receipt mailed by the end of January. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at partners@vfw.org 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 – Please watch your email for more information on all new resources to promote your VFW Department fundraising programs to your members.

Veterans & Military Support Programs

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

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

VMS Lapel Pin Payment

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

VMS Program Tools

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

VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The **2025 Spring Semester** is now open and will run through **Nov. 15, 2024**. The application is available online only at vfw.org/Scholarship.

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

VFW Programs

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

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

2024-25 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 Formstack by Feb. 1 for National judging. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to the deadline. To submit their winners, the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” should be completed, and the winning entry documentation downloaded.

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 2024-25 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, SEPTEMBER 11. Per Presidential Proclamation, September 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, SEPT. 20. 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 2024–25 themes were chosen by Commander-in-Chief Alfred J. “Al” Lipphardt. The Voice of Democracy theme will be **“Is America Today Our Forefathers’ Vision?”** and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be **“My Voice in America’s Democracy?”**

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2024-25 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!

PLEASE REVIEW. VFW National Programs has updated Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

OUTSTANDING NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD. Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

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

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR. Each Department will have an NCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community.

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. 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 Formstack. VFW Programs staff will email the form link to Department Adjutants and Quartermasters prior to the deadline. 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 Tammy 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

The following information is being sent to VFW members by Lockton Affinity, LLC, a licensed insurance producer. Any recommendation or advice provided is based upon the opinion of Lockton Affinity, LLC and not VFW.

A Medicare provider that supports active military and veterans

In 2012, VFW selected Humana as its national exclusive Medicare Advantage provider.

If you need additional coverage beyond your Medicare Part A Hospital insurance or Medicare Part B Medical insurance, Humana can help. Available through the VFW Insurance Program, you have access to:

Medicare Advantage

All-in-one coverage

Includes prescription drug coverage and offers the security of an annual out-of-pocket maximum. Many plans include routine dental, vision, and hearing care, with a \$0 monthly premium in most areas.

Medicare Part D

Rx coverage

Closes the gap in your coverage with a stand-alone prescription drug plan.

Medicare Supplement

Medigap options

Helps pay some of the out-of-pocket costs that standard Medicare does not, like copayments and deductibles.

Learn more today at VFWInsurance.com/Medicare.

The VFW Insurance Program is administered by Lockton Affinity, LLC d/b/a Lockton Affinity Insurance Brokers, LLC in California.

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

National Veterans Service

HUMANA SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

For the third consecutive year, VFW was able to offer scholarships to cross-accredited state or county service officers/claims representatives to attend VFW accredited representative skill training being held September 22-26, in Annapolis, MD. 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

VA Dashboard Shows PACT Act Performance

In recognition of the second anniversary of the passage of the PACT Act (Public Law 117-168), VA has published a special issue of the [VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard](#) that shows statistics compiled over the past two years. Highlights include one million related claims VA has approved totaling \$6.8 billion, more than five million toxic exposure screenings, and an increase of nearly 186,000 new enrollees in VA health care. [Read more](#) about the expanded VA health care and benefits or find an [accredited representative](#) for claims assistance.

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.