

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

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CLEAR THE WAY

VFW COMMUNICATIONS:

Today the VFW's 2017 Legislative Conference comes to a close as VFW National Commander Brian Duffy testifies before America's lawmakers, reminding them of the promises they've made to America's veterans and their families.

The VFW's on-demand live stream allows you to easily catch up on any of the highlights from Legislative Conference you may have missed. Log on to www.vfw.org/VFWDC2017 to watch the delayed streaming of the national commander's testimony today at 5 p.m. EST, and also see which students were crowned the 2017 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen champions.

Even if you weren't able to join us in Washington, D.C. this year, follow us on social media and look for #VFWDC2017 on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to see what you missed!

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE/ACTION CORPS:

VFW Storms Capitol Hill

More than 500 VFW members were in Washington, D.C. this week for the VFW Legislative Conference. Members from each Department met with their members of Congress and staff to present the VFW's legislative priorities and *Less=More* talking points. The areas of focus are: sequestration, VA health care reform, appeals modernization, caregiver benefits, concurrent receipt, military benefits and military readiness. To view our talking points, go to:

<http://www.vfw.org/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Advocacy/Less-Equals-More-Packet.pdf>.

MEMBERSHIP:

MEMBERSHIP WEBINAR TRAINING

If there is a membership topic that you would like to see and discuss, all suggestions are welcomed and encouraged. Please contact Rick Butler, Director of Membership at 816-968-2752 or by e-mail: rbutler@vfw.org

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Top 5 Recruiters (as of 2/21/17):

George P. Fletcher - 199
VFW Post 7043, Dept. of PA

John M. Tellier - 146
VFW Post 4709, Dept. of TX

Thomas A. Brown - 130
VFW Post 928, Dept. of PA

Donald Cannon - 111
VFW Post 10692, Dept. of EU

Richard L. Quire - 107
VFW Post 4075, Dept. of KY

KANSAS CITY SPREE

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 100% membership by April 1, 2017, along with their spouse or guest, will be awarded:

- Round-trip airfare to Kansas City, MO, from the airport nearest the awardee's home.
- A fun-filled weekend (May 18-21, 2017) that may include but is not limited to – touring, shopping, and a complete tour of the VFW National Headquarters.

“POT O’ GOLD” MEMBER DRAWING

Three (3) winners will be drawn and accompany the Commander-in-Chief on an all-expense paid trip to Ireland (Fall 2017) along with their spouse or guest.

For any new/reinstated member recruited between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017:

- You will receive one (1) chance for every five (5) new/reinstated members recruited.
- You will receive ten (10) chances for every increment of 25 new/reinstated members recruited.

➤ **Attention Post and District Commanders:**

- ✓ You will receive ten (10) chances in recognition of 85%+ Post and District retention.

Drawing will take place **July 1, 2017**. All awards are non-transferable.

MEMBERSHIP FACEBOOK

Make sure you ‘like’ and ‘share’ our VFW National Membership Facebook page. We post updates, links, contest reminders, events, etc. for you. Share the good news of the VFW
<https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership/>.

DUES NOTICE SCHEDULE

Annual members will receive a *mailed renewal* notice 5 months, 3 months, and 1 month prior to their subscription end date. Annual members with a valid email address will also receive an *e-mailed renewal notice* 6 months, 4 months, and 2 months prior to their subscription end date.

Annual members will receive a *mailed lapsed notice* 1, 3, and 5 months following their subscription end date.

MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT OPTIONS

- **Members now have the option to enroll in two beneficial programs.** Once enrolled in either program, automatic payments are processed using the credit card information provided on the application. These are simply added options on the membership application. The traditional methods of signing up for both annual and Life membership are still options as well.
 - VFW Autopay—renews your annual membership automatically!
 - Life Installment Plan—automatic monthly payments option—with this option, there is no longer the need to complete a payment authorization form.
- **Recruiting Notes:** Encourage annual members to take advantage of the Life member installment plan. Encourage Life installment plan and annual members to take advantage of the automatic payment option.
- **Legacy Life Membership:** This prestigious program is available to all Life members and is now available in memoriam for past Life members. 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>Post</u>	<u>Department</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?

ADDITIONAL REMINDERS

- **V-mail:** There is a new face to VFW V-mail! Go online to <http://www.vfw.com> to stay in communication with other Posts as well as with National Headquarters. Check in often for important VFW updates and news from national. The VFW Membership Department will be using this avenue for communication more regularly. Stay tuned!
- **Shotgun Mailing Lists:** We can obtain lists that will assist you in increasing your membership. Please call Matt Nute in the Membership Department at 1-888-JOIN-VFW (1-888-564-6839) for assistance. The list cost is \$75.00 per 1,000 names.

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING:

118th National Convention Housing officially opened February 21, 2017. Housing reservation information is located on the convention website at www.vfw.org/convention. The convention website will also have general convention information including registration form and links to other convention related information for New Orleans, July 22-26, 2017.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION: Section 222 of the National By-Laws requires each Post will pay, in advance, a national convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee. All advance registrations should be mailed to the VFW National Headquarters, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111, **ATTN:** Convention Registration or you may register online by going to www.vfw.org.

“BUDDY”® POPPY:

NATIONAL “BUDDY”® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST. The time frame for registering and setting up the “Buddy”® Poppy displays for the national judging at convention will be the same as last year. Entries will be accepted for registration and may be set up beginning at 8 a.m., Saturday, July 22, until noon, Monday, July 24, 2017. Winning displays will be identified with appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning and announced later on the convention floor. Displays must be removed prior to 3:30 on Tuesday afternoon.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS JOINS "WORLD WAR I POPPY PROGRAM." The Veterans of Foreign Wars is joining the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission in announcing the WWI Poppy Program to raise awareness about World War I and generate funds for local VSO chapters all over the country.

The VFW is proud to share with you the WWI Poppy Program; an opportunity to generate resources for your Post while helping to honor the 4.7 million Americans who wore the uniform during WWI.

Poppies grew across the war-torn battlefields of Europe after World War I, and this year marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entering that war. From 2017 to 2019, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission United States will tell the story of those American Veterans, through events, exhibits, and memorial efforts, and the VFW is proud to be a partner in this important commemoration.

Click on this link to learn about the WWI Poppy Program and how your purchase of a Poppy Kit helps build the new National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC, while also helping to raise money for your Post.

Link: ww1cc.org/poppy

Here is a quick video that can help people understand why it is so important that we honor those who served during World War One: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_y4l49mZso.

The red poppy is an internationally-recognized symbol of veteran remembrance. Its use began in World War I and was captured in the war poem "In Flanders Fields," by Lt. Col. John McCrae.

MEMORIAL DAY “BUDDY”® POPPY CAMPAIGN. Plans should be under way for the Memorial Day “Buddy”® Poppy Campaign. **Contact your Department Quartermaster to place your order** for “Buddy”® Poppies. Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of 8 weeks in advance of your distribution date. *Be sure to specify a date by which the poppies are required; do not use “ASAP.”* Miscellaneous items (coin cans, caps, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at <http://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy> or the VFW Store/Emblem and Supply Catalog.

“To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs.” 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 chairmen 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 **only** for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th, 75th or 100th anniversary years. The anniversary poppies are approximately three times as expensive for us to produce, but because of the small quantities we deal in, we don’t pass those costs on to the Posts. The bigger issue is that we simply don’t have the inventory on hand to fulfill the potential orders that could come in if we open these items up to be ordered by anyone at any time.

Remember: With “Buddy”® Poppy, every day is Veterans Day.

- No extra cost for the commemorative poppies.
- Designate part of your regular poppy order as anniversary poppies if your Post is eligible.
- Different sizes of ads can be found on the VFW website. (Please go to www.vfw.org and log on to My VFW and click on VFW Training & Support. Select Community Service & Youth Programs and then click on “Buddy”® Poppy.)

Contact information: BuddyPoppy@vfw.org or (816) 968-1155. For “Buddy”® Poppy merchandise, go to <http://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy>.

VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT PROGRAMS:

As we plan for the 2017 National Convention in New Orleans, we want to remind all Veterans & Military Support Chairmen to get their money in for the 2016-17 lapel pins picked up in Charlotte. Please contact the Veterans & Military Support office at 816-968-1102 if you have any questions on how much your Department needs to send in.

There will be a new design for the Veterans & Military Support lapel pin for 2017-18! Chairmen will be able to request their pins to pick up in New Orleans but if you have not turned in your donation for the 2016-17 lapel pins, you will need to pay upfront for the 2017-18 pins. Request forms will be provided sometime in March.

Reminder: All donations to Veterans & Military Support programs must be received by April 30 to qualify for the Veterans & Military Support Certificate of Appreciation. To qualify for the certificate, a minimum of \$100 must be donated to Veterans & Military Support or any of the individual programs.

PROGRAMS:

VFW Posts and Auxiliaries reported donating almost 3.2 million volunteer hours and over \$17 million toward community service work from May 1 to October 31, 2016. The total value of our volunteers’ efforts is valued at over \$93 million.

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 and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to <http://www.vfwstore.org/products/GP238>.

50TH ANNIVERSARY VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION PROGRAM. The Commemorative Partner Program is designed for federal, state and local communities, veterans' organizations and other non-governmental organizations to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring our Vietnam Veterans and their families. As a Commemorative Partner, VFW Posts are encouraged to participate in the Commemoration of the Vietnam War by planning and conducting events and activities that will recognize the Vietnam Veterans and their families' service, valor, and sacrifice.

Events and activities should be dignified, memorable occasions that show a sensitivity and appreciation for the solemnity of war and the losses suffered by many. Commemorative Partners should

communicate how their events will achieve the Congressionally-mandated objectives of the program. Events or activities should meet one or more of the following objectives.

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

For VFW Posts interested in becoming an official Commemorative Partner, they must submit an application and a signed Statement of Understanding.

Applications are available at www.VietnamWar50th.com on the Commemorative Partner Program. The approval process is usually less than 30 days. Partners will be kept informed through electronic notifications. Once approved as a Partner, the Commemoration will provide organizations with a starter kit of materials for developing and implementing their programs. If you have any questions regarding the Commemorative Partner Program application process, please direct them to: whs.vnwar50th_cpp@mail.mil. For Vietnam War commemorative items, shop the VFW Store at <http://www.vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=vietnam>.

VFW HONORS AMERICA'S TEACHERS DURING 2016 – 2017 PROGRAM YEAR. Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post level should be completed and District level should be close to completion. Districts are to send their winning recipient from each level to the Departments by March 15. After Department judging, each Department forwards the names of its selections to VFW National Headquarters for consideration in the national award contest. Deadline is April 5, 2017. Each Department's selections will receive a National Commendation citation.

The Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and school; and, an all-expenses-paid trip to attend the VFW National Convention in July 2017 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Order the Citizenship Education Teacher Recognition Citation from the VFW Store, product #4320, <http://www.vfwstore.org/products/23980>. Present to all teachers nominated at all levels for the national award.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2017–2018 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Keith E. Harman. The Voice of Democracy theme will be “American History: Our Hope for the Future” and the Patriot's Pen theme will be “America's Gift to my Generation.”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN DEADLINE DATE. Please update all websites, publications, announcements, etc. with the new student entry deadline for the 2017-2018 program year. It will now be October 31, 2017 (instead of November 1, 2017) for both the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen contests. The updated entry form will be up on the VFW website no later than April 1 and will be available from the VFW Store soon after that.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN BROCHURES. The new 2017-18 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry forms will be available on the VFW website on April 1, 2017.

Simply visit <https://www.vfw.org/Login.aspx>, log in to My VFW, then click on **VFW Training & Support** under the **Member Resources** heading, then click on Community Service & Youth Programs, then click on **Chairman Manuals** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all program materials.

Additionally, as of April 1, anyone (including students, parents, teachers and chairmen) can download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen by visiting the below links:
Voice of Democracy: <http://www.vfw.org/VOD/>
Patriot's Pen: <http://www.vfw.org/PatriotsPen/>

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

YOUTH HUNTING AND SHOOTING PROGRAMS. VFW has been involved with the National Rifle Association (NRA) since 1920. Through the NRA, hundreds of VFW Posts provide hunter safety courses and sponsor shooting competitions. Annually, VFW and NRA offer junior and adult small-bore rifle and air rifle individual and team matches conducted by mail called Postal Matches*.

NRA Postal Matches are designed for VFW rifle teams as a sport activity for youth and adults to build interest in rifle shooting and safety. A Postal Match is a match in which competitor's fire on their home ranges using targets which have been marked for identification. The team match is a series of four monthly matches for teams sponsored by VFW Posts held from December through March. The individual VFW match is fired in the fall with a December closing date. The scores are then mailed to the NRA for ranking of awards.

If your VFW Post does not already participate in the Youth/Adult Rifle Program and would like to take part in a program that has great appeal for youngsters as well as adults, please go to the NRA's Postal Match website <http://www.nrahq.org/compete/dept-postal.asp>.

Complete program information, rules and entry form (in PDF format) are available:
<http://postalmatches.nra.org/documents/pdf/compete/Postals/VFW%20Postal.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please contact the NRA directly at:

National Rifle Association
Competitive Shooting Division
11250 Waples Mill Rd.
Fairfax, VA 22030
e-mail: postals@nrahq.org
phone: (703) 267-1482

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the VFW Programs Office at 816-968-1117 or e-mail kharmer@vfw.org.

*There are clubs and Posts, etc. that have local shooting programs all around the world. They teach gun safety and target shooting. Often, they wish to compete against other groups but cannot afford to travel to competitions. The NRA created "Postal Matches," where a team of shooters can have their own local competition using paper targets. These are NRA-sanctioned targets and must be signed by local officials verifying the manner in which the competition was conducted and the age of the participants. Those targets are then sent to the NRA Postal Match Program and, using the targets from the various groups, the NRA judges determine who wins, places, etc. and awards prizes. That

way, the shooting match can involve shooters and clubs from almost anywhere without anyone having to travel. It's all done through the U.S. Postal System. Hence, the term, "Postal Match."

VFW SPECIAL PROJECT PROGRAM UPDATES. This program was put in place to recognize VFW units for creating and completing unique and extraordinary community service projects.

Record book entry nominations that are found to be complete and well-substantiated should be endorsed by the Department Adjutant or VFW Department Community Activities Chairman and forwarded to the National Programs Department. Deadline for entries is April 30 of each year. All entries receive a Community Service Citation. Noteworthy entries receive a Merit Award Plaque. Exceptional entries receive an *Award of Excellence*.

NEW - *A maximum of eight (8) Posts per conference who receive the *Award of Excellence* in the May Special Project judging will receive a \$5,000 Community Service Grant. *A maximum of \$40,000 per conference will be awarded. This may be less if fewer than eight (8) Posts receive the *Award of Excellence*. *Those qualified Posts that have earned the *Award of Excellence* will then compete for the Fred C. Hall Award and could earn an additional \$5,000 and attendance at National Convention.

Complete information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairman's Manual. You may visit <http://www.vfw.org> and log in as a VFW member (then click on **MY VFW** in the top banner on the home page). Under the **Member Resources** heading, you would click on **VFW Training & Support**. Go to the **Community Service & Youth Programs** area. You will find the chairman's manuals on this page. If you have any questions, please contact John Linstra in VFW Programs at jlinstra@vfw.org or 816-756-3390, ext. 6211.

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 Chairmen's Manual or contact Tammy at 816-756-3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs Department for a nomination form.

WORLD WAR I COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP. In observance of the upcoming centennial of World War I, 100 matching grants of up to \$2,000 apiece will be awarded for the restoration of 100 World War I memorials across the United States. Any municipal government, individual, or organization may apply. The purpose of the program is to get local communities involved in recognizing and commemorating the WWI centennial and assisting them in restoring their local memorials. Pritzker and WWICC have jointly allocated \$200,000 for matching grants. Very little has been dispersed so far, as they expect most applications to come in closer to the deadline which is June 15, 2017. Applicants have until November 11, 2018, to complete their projects.

More than 100 projects will be supported. The top 100 will be highlighted in a coffee table book. All projects will be listed on their website.

The VFW's role is to help publicize the program and get local Posts (and Auxiliaries) involved.

A sample project is at: <http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/resources.html#project-profiles>. (See the Ocean Springs video.)

A fun starting point is to first find memorials around the country. Information on this is at <http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/memorial-hunters-club-about.html>. Scouting groups and 4-H clubs can also get involved.

There is a process for submitting a grant application, which helps to guide the local organization in assessing the project and getting all the right approvals (local governments, historical societies, etc.) before beginning any work. In their blog, they address a question from a VFW Post about the grant writing process which is meant to help guide the applicant - <http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/100-cities-100-memorials-blog.html>.

To participate and submit a grant request, go directly to: <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/2016-07-06-00-52-42.html>.

For any follow up questions, please contact Lynn Rolf, Programs Director, at lrolf@vfw.org or 816.968.1116.

POW/MIA FLAG – OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Public Law 105-85 (November 16, 1997) indicates the days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices are required to display the POW/MIA flag. The days are: Armed Forces Day, May 20, 2017 (third Saturday in May); Memorial Day, May 29, 2017 (last Monday in May); Flag Day, June 14; National POW/MIA Day, September 15, 2017 (third Friday in September); Independence Day, July 4; and Veterans Day, November 11. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to <http://www.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 FOUNDATION:

THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT IS NOW OPEN!

The 2017 Home Depot (HD) Foundation Community Impact Grant is now available to receive applications. Eligible VFW Posts may receive up to \$5,000 to fix up their buildings; however, of course, there is no guarantee of funding. To begin the process, go to: <http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-grant>.

To help you complete the application, the VFW Foundation has prepared a step-by-step how-to-apply guide. Any deviation from this guide will most likely result in not being able to submit the application.

To receive this how-to-apply guide, send an email to: foundation@vfw.org
Type the following in the email subject heading: Home Depot Guide Request

The application must be filled out via the internet only (no telephone calls, emails or written submissions to HD will be accepted **nor** will you be able to turn this application in at your local HD store).

If your Post receives funding, it will come in the form of HD gift cards that can be used to buy materials at your local HD store. You will need to recruit Post members or other community volunteers to do the work. The project must be completed within six months. You will also be required to fill out a final project report. Failure to do so will negatively impact your Post's ability to receive any future funding from HD.

After submission of the application, you should receive an email response from HD Foundation, usually within six weeks, letting you know if you received the grant.

Should you have any further questions or need to discuss special concerns, please contact Jason Couch, VFW Foundation Grants Coordinator, at (816) 968-1174 or email at jcouch@vfw.org. GOOD LUCK!

MEMBER BENEFITS:

As we age, making healthier choices while maintaining an active lifestyle is key to longevity. Garmin's wearable activity trackers and watches offer cutting-edge technology that make it possible to have vital health information at our fingertips. From víovfit trackers to Forerunner watches, Garmin's innovative products monitor everything from the number of steps we take and the calories we've burned, to our heart rate and sleep patterns. Knowing more about our daily fitness habits makes it easier to monitor personal progress and find the motivation we need to move a little more each day. For more information, log on to your account at www.vfw.org and from the My VFW page, select Member Benefits from under the Member Resources section and then click on Technology and Electronics.

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT:

Soon to Arrive – Special Edition Birthday Cards – This spring the VFW is mailing the 2017 Birthday Card Collection and other gifts in recognition of your commitment to the VFW – and to struggling veterans of all generations. Also enclosed with your gifts is a special Thank You card for a veteran or service member; please sign and return it right away. We will deliver your signed Thank You card to one of America's service members or hospitalized veterans in time for Independence Day, this July 4th. It means so much to them to know their fellow veterans remember and care.

Approximately 2.8 million men and women have served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thousands of them have come home with injuries that will require a lifetime of care. Some injuries you can plainly see ... like burns and amputations. Other wounds are invisible, but often just as devastating. Since 2000, more than 357,000 service members have suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury — and the numbers are rising every day. More than half of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans treated by the VA have received care for mental health issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The VFW wants to be sure when these newest veterans – and veterans from all past wars and conflicts – turn to us for assistance, we have the programs available for them. Please send a donation in honor of your fellow veterans who now face a long road to recovery from injuries sustained in battle. Your gift will mean that these programs stay available and strong right in your Department.

2017 Voice of Democracy National Winner Announced – On February 27, we sent an announcement of the 2017 Voice of Democracy National winner to VFW Friends of Freedom. We hope you had a chance to watch and listen to the essay given by the grand prize winner as well as the winner from your state. If you are not currently a member of the VFW Friends of Freedom, you can sign up to receive these kinds of alerts at www.vfw.org.

Join the Prestigious VFW Heroes Circle! – You can join an elite group of our most dedicated members – the VFW Heroes Circle! Consisting of those who wish to further our mission with a gift in their will or other estate plans, the VFW Heroes Circle was created to honor our most loyal supporters who have made the extraordinary commitment to America's veterans, service members and their families.

To learn how easy it is to make an impact for future generations of veterans, please contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at (816) 968-1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org. More information is also available online at www.vfw.org/plannedgiving.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Would you like to support the VFW's life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families without receiving all of the unwanted mail? The VFW has developed an option that lets you support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis, as well as reduce expenses and eliminate unwanted mail. It is called Partners in Patriotism. As a member of Partners in Patriotism, you choose a set dollar amount for your

donation (minimum amount of \$10) that is either charged to your credit card or set up as an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) from your bank account. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact the VFW Development Department Donor Services at 816-756-3390, ext. 7108 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 www.vfw.org and look for the 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 www.vfw.org/vfwatwork and click on “**Read VFW success stories**” to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans’ rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

Department Resources – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. You need only go to heroes.vfw.org/vfwtools. The latest fundraising program information, ideas and promotional tools from the Development Department can be found here. Download ad slicks, ready-to-use articles and other items for your Department publications and/or website. Recent mailings and mailing schedules are also posted on a regular basis. Use the Department Resources tools to help strengthen your Department programs. Check it out today!

VFW STORE:



Order your VFW uniform cap today! Department Conventions are quickly approaching and officer changes will be taking place. The peak season for ordering caps is April to July, when the VFW Store processes over 10,000 cap orders! During this period, it can take up to 10 weeks to receive your cap. To order today, go to <http://www.vfwstore.org/category/vfw/uniformcapandnametags> or call 1-800-821-2606.



Promote your Post within your community with a custom banner, yard sign, decal or wall sign – all created by the VFW Store! We can print on wood, acrylic, aluminum, vinyl and more. Call Custom Consultant Kim Winston at 816-968-1181 or send email to kwinston@vfw.org for a free, no-obligation quote!

ROLL CALL OF DEPARTED COMRADES:

PETERSON, LOUIS A. “SANDY,” Commander, Department of Maine, 2010-2011 and a Gold Legacy Life Member of Deering Memorial Post 6859, Portland, Maine, February 12, 2017.