

Membership

Congratulations to the Department of Louisiana and Department of Montana for achieving 100% in membership!

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

This month's Commander's Challenge, the top Posts in each division with the highest total of new members (Annual, Life, or Installment Life) will receive a \$1,000 award deposited into their Post account.

In addition, if the top Post also shares this challenge on your Post's Facebook page, they will receive an additional \$250 award! Get the word out and let's increase our Life membership!

Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch is focusing on bringing lapsed members back into the fold in 2021. To this end, we're issuing a three-month challenge to every VFW Department. From Feb. 1 through April 30, we want you, as Department leaders, to get your Posts working those lapsed member lists and bringing former members back into the VFW. For this contest, we're going to be focusing on members whose dues lapsed prior to Jan. 1, 2021. We want to see how many of those lapsed members can be recovered by your Posts over these three months, either as dues-paying annual or Life members. We've split the Departments into two groups:

- Group A for those Departments who had over 20,000 members at the end of the last membership year.
- Group B for the Departments who had fewer than 20,000 members. After close of business on April 30, we'll look at how many members each Department has recovered; the top finisher in each group will receive a \$5,000 award, the second-place finisher will receive \$3,000, and the third-place finisher will receive \$2,000.

Three-Month Lapsed Member Challenge: From Feb. 1 to April 30, the Commander-in-Chief has tasked all VFW Departments to work their lapsed member lists and bring members back into the fold. The Departments who recover the most members over the next three months will receive a monetary award into the Department account, but in addition to that every Department who recovers at least three lapsed members for every Post in their Department will be entered into a drawing for a .30-30 Henry Rifle!

DEPARTMENT "100 PERCENT" INCENTIVE

Any Department that attains 100% in membership by close of business on March 31, 2021, will be entered into a random drawing. The Commander (plus guest) and the Quartermaster (plus guest) for the Department that is selected will each receive:

- **\$2,500 voucher through Veterans Travel Service (VTS) applied towards airfare, accommodations and transportation for a trip of their own choice.**

KANSAS CITY SPREE ** IMPORTANT UPDATE******

The CIC Kansas City Spree scheduled for May 20-23 has unfortunately been canceled due to current COVID-19 restrictions in the city and lack of facilities that can handle the large group.

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 100% membership by April 1, 2021, will now be awarded:

- A Veterans Travel Service (VTS) travel voucher in the amount of \$500.
- A Kansas City Spree insulated coffee mug and CIC citation.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As you get started in the new membership year, 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 the simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact Leticia Cortez at **1.888.564.6839** or email us at membership@vfw.org.

VFW MEMBERSHIP CARDS

As a reminder, VFW membership cards are always sent directly to the member at the address on file and not to the Post. Our membership cards are printed and mailed from an offsite printing facility as an automated process. We do not have the ability to redirect a member's card to the Post.

In special instances, such as when a Life membership is being presented as an award or a gift, we recommend that the Post contact the Member Service Center directly and we may be able to assist.

POST DEVELOPMENT

Congratulations to the Department of Virginia and Department of Louisiana for establishing new Posts in this incredibly difficult COVID time in our country. Post 12201 - Kilmarnock, Virginia, established March 6, 2021, and Post 12203 - Kinder, Louisiana, established March 20, 2021.

I have heard from many who are excited to be planning events with their communities this spring and summer as we try to get back to normal. Please continue to let us know of your achievements and the challenges you face working through these difficult times. If you have Posts in your Departments/Districts deserving of a Membership Shout Out, please send us details and pictures if you have them! The National Membership team would like to recognize those efforts by calling attention to them and passing along the lessons learned as well. If you have any questions about chartering a new Post or revitalizing a Post in your area, please give me a call at 816.968.2788 or email coreyhunt@vfw.org.

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.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook to view the latest membership news, Post Shout-Outs and important resource information throughout the year - facebook.com/VFWmembershipHQ/.

UPCOMING TRAINING

The next Membership Monday training webinar will be on April 5, 2021, at 2:00 PM CDT and we will be covering the topic **Eligibility**. Look for the Membership Monday Zoom meeting invite in an OMS notification on March 31, 2021. All members can join. In addition, the Zoom link will be emailed as a meeting invitation to each Department's leadership and VFW Auxiliary President.

If you would like to suggest a Membership Monday training topic, please email us at membership@vfw.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters (as of 3/24/2021)

Matthew B. Northen – 142
VFW Post 8862, Dept. of Europe

Robert Allan Clark – 135
VFW Post 4876, Dept. of OK

Karol A. Carswell – 118
VFW Post 9983, Dept. of NC

DEPARTMENTS WITH NEW POSTS:

VFW Post No. 12201 in Kilmarnock, VA

VFW Post No. 12203 in Kinder, LA

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 and annual 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 Post Pandemic Relief Grant has closed. We are proud to announce that approximately \$1 million in funding was distributed to over 400 VFW Posts in need of financial assistance due to the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ATLAS (Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations) is part of VA's Anywhere to Anywhere telehealth initiative, which seeks to better serve the nearly nine million veterans who receive care through the VA. The service by Philips is especially relevant in rural areas as ATLAS sites provide free, internet broadband access for veterans to connect to VA providers by video. Currently, there are two VFW Posts which are active ATLAS sites: Post 6786 -- Eureka, Montana, and Post 7842 -- Linesville, Pennsylvania; with three more Posts soon to be online: Post 2487 -- Los Banos, California, Post 5007 -- Gowanda, New York, and Post 7103 -- Athens, Texas. Additionally, Philips has committed to be a significant sponsor of the 2021 VFW National Convention.

Contact: VFW Foundation Administrator Richard Potter at RPotter@vfw.org.

Development

VFW to Host Virtual 2021 Parade of Winners – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is hosting its first-ever virtual Parade of Winners [live on Facebook](#) April 1, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. CDT. The event will recognize all state winners of the VFW's Voice of Democracy scholarship competition as well as the national Patriot's Pen contest winner, and will include special guest appearances by those known to the VFW community. The [virtual Parade of Winners](#), sponsored by Twisted X and Dell, will culminate with the surprise announcement and onsite presentation of the first place \$30,000 T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship award at the winner's home. Learn more about this year's event at vfw.org/ParadeofWinners, and be sure to tap "interested," then "going" on the Facebook event to ensure you stay up-to-date and receive all event notifications.

VFW Special Edition VFW Birthday Cards – Last month the VFW mailed the 2021 Birthday Card Collection and other gifts in recognition of your commitment to the VFW – and to struggling veterans of all generations. Enclosed in that package was 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.

The VFW wants to ensure when these newest veterans – and veterans from all 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.

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

To learn how easy it is to make an impact on future generations of veterans, please contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org. More information is available online at vfw.org/PlannedGiving.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Commander-in-Chief Harold “Hal” Roesch, II would like you to join with him in supporting the VFW’s life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families and reduce the amount of mail you receive. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis, as well as reduce expenses and eliminate the fundraising 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. Once you join the VFW’s 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 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!

Department Resources – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. These resources are available at 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 mail schedules are also posted on a regular basis. Use the tools found on the VFW Department Resources Page to help strengthen your Department programs. Check it out today!

Veterans & Military Support Programs

As we plan for the 2021 National Convention in Baltimore, we want to remind all Veterans & Military Support Chairmen to get their money in for the 2020-21 lapel pins that were mailed to you directly. Please contact the Veterans & Military Support office via email at VeteransAndMilitarySupport@vfw.org, mherron@vfw.org or by phone 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 (VMS) lapel pin for 2021-22! Chairmen will be able to pre-order their pins to be picked up in Baltimore or mailed to them. If you have not turned in your donation for the 2020-21 lapel pins, you will need to pay for them before you can order your 2021-22 lapel pins. Request forms will be provided sometime in April.

Veterans & Military Support Recognition Program – All donations *must* be received in the office before **April 30, 2021**. The Veterans & Military Support Recognition Certificates will be sent to the Departments for presentation at the Department Conventions.

VMS Formstack Links and Websites:

- **VFW Website Solution:** VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/websolutionapp
- **AUX Website Solution:** VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/auxwebsolutionapp
- **Chairman Report:** VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/vms_chairman_report
- **MAP Grant Application:** vfw.org/MAPGrantApplication
- **MAP Grant Report:** vfw.org/MAPGrantReport
- **Adopt a Unit Application:** vfw.org/AdoptAUnitApp
- **Adopt a Unit Report:** vfw.org/AdoptAUnitReport
- **VMS Online Donation:** heroes.vfw.org/page/22950/donate1

Applying for a VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship for the 2021 Fall Semester - Please get the word out to your local service members and veterans who are going to school in the fall to apply for this wonderful scholarship program. Go to vfw.org/scholarship/ for details and eligibility requirements. Deadline is **April 30**. If you have any questions, please contact Mark Herron at VeteransAndMilitarySupport@vfw.org, mherron@vfw.org or by phone at 816.968.1102.

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, Coast Guard and then Space Force. For military flags, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP238.

WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL NEWS. Join us for a live broadcast of the First Colors Ceremony on April 16 at 10:00 AM EDT/7:00 AM PDT.

With less than a month to go, we are counting down the days until we raise the Flag of the United States of America for the first time over the newly constructed National WWI Memorial in Washington, DC. We are honored to celebrate this momentous occasion with each of you via live broadcast on **April 16**.

Please click on the video below to hear more from our host, Award-Winning Actor, Gary Sinise.

[first colors registration - World War I Centennial \(worldwar1centennial.org\)](https://worldwar1centennial.org)

You can register to attend at the same link.

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

Applications are available at 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: vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=vietnam.

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.

IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME! April is the perfect month to begin contacting 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 the VFW Auxiliary to conduct a separate judging at any level.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email lrolf@vfw.org or call 816.968.1116.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2021-22 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic. The Voice of Democracy theme

will be “America: Where do we go from here?” and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be “How can I be a good American?”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN BROCHURES. The new 2021-22 Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen entry forms will be available soon on the VFW website.

Simply visit 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 and Activities, then click on **Chairman Manuals** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all program materials.

Additionally, 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: vfw.org/VOD/

Patriot’s Pen: vfw.org/PatriotsPen/

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store:

vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy for Voice of Democracy and

vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen for Patriot’s Pen.

HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG. The U.S. Flag should be at half-staff on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May (federal holiday - half-staff until noon). Flags available at VFW Store vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

VFW SPECIAL PROJECT PROGRAM. 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 National Programs Department. Deadline for entries is April 30 of each year.

Every Post Special Project receiving the Award of Excellence in the May judging will be entered in the Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project Competition. Complete information can be found in the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairman’s Manual.

WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL NEWS:

Is Your Post Named for a Veteran of the Great War (World War I)? If so, we want to hear from you! The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission is collecting information on VFW Posts named after WWI veterans. If your Post is honored by the memory of a local doughboy, marine, sailor, or nurse who served and sacrificed their lives, we want to know more. Please send your information and material on the history of your Post to: David Hamon, Veterans and Military Affairs Director, U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, at david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org or you may call him at 540.379.8584. The Commission is collecting historical and archive information on the Great War to observe and commemorate those 4.7 million who served in that conflict. America never forgets its veterans. Help them build a national memorial in Washington, D.C. To learn more, go to: ww1cc.org/memorial.

Help Build America's World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission recently announced the creation of the AEF (Allied Expeditionary Forces) Memorial Corps. The program is a special designation for Posts, patriotic organizations, local chapters of civic organizations, among others, to be recognized as an official "AEF Memorial Corps Post" for making a donation to build the national WWI memorial in Washington, D.C. Your Post will be certified with a special Centennial

Certificate commemorating your contribution in "going over the top" to get the memorial built. For more information, please write Mr. David Hamon at david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org or call him at 540.379.8584. To view the progress of the memorial, go to ww1cc.org/memorial. Your VFW Post will forever be enshrined in history as having pushed to get the memorial built. America never forgets her veterans!

FLAG DAY, JUNE 14. All VFW units are reminded to properly display the U.S. Flag on Flag Day, Monday, June 14 and to conduct a ceremony or program as feasible. You may contact the VFW Communications Department for a Flag Day speech. It is also suggested Posts should award the VFW Patriotic Citizen Award (Product No. 4385) for those who have daily displayed our National flag.

POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 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 15, 2021 (third Saturday in May); Memorial Day, May 31, 2021 (last Monday in May); Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; National POW/MIA Day, Sept. 17, 2021 (third Friday in Sept.); and Veterans Day, Nov. 11. 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

USAA is dedicated to serving military members and their eligible family members by offering more benefits than any other major financial service provider. Best of all, USAA is free to join, and you can pass the benefits of membership to your children no matter their age.

Because the USAA understands the unique needs of our military members and their families, they offer valuable financial resources and benefits that can last a lifetime. They have earned the trust of their members by providing years of award-winning service through a comprehensive suite of financial products, tools and advice.

[Learn more about](#) these benefits [today!](#)

"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 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, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or the VFW Store/Emblem and Supply Catalog.

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.

Contact information: BuddyPoppy@vfw.org or 816.756.3390, ext. 6722 for any questions or concerns.

NATIONAL "BUDDY"® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST. The time frame for registering and setting up the Department winning Buddy Poppy displays for the national judging at convention will be the same as last year. Department winning entries will be accepted for registration and may be set up beginning at 8 a.m., Saturday, July 31, until noon, Monday, Aug. 2, 2021. Winning displays will be identified with appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning and announced later on the convention floor. Displays must be removed prior to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon.

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. 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. 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 and processed the same as the red poppies. Annotate on the order to National that it is for anniversary poppies and specify which one.

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. From 2017 to 2019, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission 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 the following 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, D.C., 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 I: 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.

Quartermaster General

CBIZ Cottonwood, a professional actuarial firm, recently completed an evaluation of the Life Membership Fund. Based on this evaluation, the Life Membership Board of Trustees, with the concurrence of the National Council of Administration, pursuant to Section 111 of the VFW Bylaws, has determined that for the 2022 membership year, the Life Membership Fund will pay out **\$3.50** for each **Plan A, B and C** Life member, **\$4.00** for each **Plan D** Life member and **\$8.44** for each **Plan E** Life member to their Post, Department and to National Headquarters. Payment will be made in Sept. 2021 for all Life members recorded as of Aug. 31, 2021.

In addition, **\$8.44 will be paid in Jan. 2022** for each Life member processed from Sept. through Dec. 2021 (Plan E) to their Post, Department and to National Headquarters.

If you have any questions, please call Debra Anderson at National Headquarters.

National Veterans Service

Last Call for VFW Service Officer of the Year Nominations

The deadline for submitting nominations for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2020-21 is **April 30, 2021**.

Now more than ever the role of an accredited veterans service representative is of vital importance to the continued well-being of our nation's veterans and their families. Even during the ongoing global pandemic, our accredited representatives have continued to counsel veterans, complete paperwork, and submit VA claims for earned entitlements and benefits. In many cases easing the hardships our veterans and their families are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A nomination shows that Department leadership is aware of the significant contributions your program makes in your community every day, even during these times when many of us are working from our homes.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- Department Service Officers
- Assistant Department Service Officers
- Claims Consultants/Representatives
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- VFW accredited representatives whose primary employer is other than the VFW or a State veterans agency

SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30 deadline.
2. A brief summary (no more than 2 pages) is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee's efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to):
 - Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted
 - Community outreach conducted
 - Examples of excellent customer service provided
 - Meticulous use of VetraSpec or another electronic claims processing system (specify system)
 - Submission of TIMELY monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office)
 - Number of VFW members recruited
 - Innovative methods of assistance provided during the COVID-19 pandemic

AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient of the award will be furnished round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two night's hotel accommodations to attend the VFW National Convention (if an in-person event is held) where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

Please note that the selection committee will review NVS databases to understand how candidates served clients. Additionally, the results of test scores at NVS training, the results of any site visits, and other criteria be considered in making the final decision.

Nominations may be sent to the Director, VFW National Veterans Service, either by email to taldana@vfw.org, by mail (200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002 ATTN: Service Officer Award), or by fax to 202.547.3196 (ATTN: Service Officer Award).

May 2021 NVS Accredited Service Officer Proficiency Training Conference

To ensure the safety of everyone involved, VFW has made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the annual in-person NVS Proficiency Training Conference scheduled for May 2021 due to continued COVID-19 precautions. However, to still provide quality training, NVS has converted this conference to a virtual format with live instruction taking place May 3-11, 2021, each business day (*weekends excluded*) from 2:00PM – 4:30PM EDT via video teleconferencing.

Please note that this training conference is intended for all Department Service Officers and one other accredited representative from the regional office. If your Department wants to send additional attendees to this conference, they may be added on a space available basis once the registration period has ended.

Registration instructions will be emailed to all prospective attendees in the next few weeks. Prior to the start of the conference, registered attendees will receive an electronic "Welcome Packet" that will include the information needed to attend this conference including the conference agenda, rules, and links to the classes.

If you have any questions regarding training for VFW accredited representatives, please feel free to contact Chris Macinkowicz, Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org.

VFW Commander-In-Chief Testifies Virtually Before Congress

On March 18, 2021, VFW National Commander Hal Roesch testified for the first time via video teleconference before a special joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs. The VFW spotlighted its top priority of toxic exposure reform, demanding Congress develop a comprehensive solution for veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals during their time in service. Roesch cited examples of toxic exposure throughout history, countering the notion that the claim is a new phenomenon. "Toxic exposure for our troops has been synonymous with service for more than a hundred years, but every time we're faced with it, we act as if it's never happened before," Roesch said. The VFW also discussed recommendations centered on veteran economic issues, veteran claims and benefits, and underserved veteran populations. [Watch the hearing.](#) [Read the testimony.](#)

VFW Store

Promote your Buddy Poppy campaign with a new Buddy Poppy T-shirt from the VFW Store. Find it and other Buddy Poppy supplies and accessories at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy.

