

Membership

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S HOME RUN CHALLENGE

We have passed the 100% mark in membership and the year is not yet over! To encourage everyone to keep working for membership growth all the way to the finish line, the Commander-in-Chief has issued a special challenge for June. The Post in each membership division that increases their membership percentage by the largest percentage will receive a \$750 cash award deposited into the Post account. In addition, the second through fifth place Posts in each division will be put into a drawing for an additional \$250 award. However, to qualify for this contest, the Post must have achieved over 100% in membership by close of business June 30 and must have put in at least one new or reinstated member during the month of June.

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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF KENTUCKY FOR WINNING THE DEPARTMENT 100% INCENTIVE CONTEST.

100% COMMANDER DRAWING

Each Post and District Commander that exceeds 100% in membership by June 1, 2023, will receive an entry in this drawing. Twenty (20) Post Commanders and twelve (12) District Commanders will receive:

- **A \$1,000 stipend to be used toward attending the VFW National Convention.**

TOP DEPARTMENT RECRUITER

The top recruiter in every Department on July 1, 2023, will receive:

- **A Henry .30-30 Caliber Rifle or a credit voucher of equal value for use with Veterans Travel Service (VTS).**

Note: Minimum of 25 new/reinstated members required to win this award.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION

New Post Development and Post Revitalization Department Award: For each new Post chartered, and/or revitalized, the Department Quartermaster will receive:

- **A \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post.**

UPCOMING TRAINING

The next Membership Monday training webinar will be on June 5, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., CST. We will be covering long-term planning, how to set benchmarks and achievable goals for the future of your Post, District, or Department. Every VFW member can benefit from this training. We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters (as of 5.25.23):

Timothy M. Borland – 553
VFW Post 9972, Dept. of AZ

Steven L. Woodward – 471
VFW Post 2224, Dept. of WA

Joseph M. Young – 294
VFW Post 7108, Dept. of TX

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 National Convention

CONVENTION HOUSING: 124th National Convention housing opened Feb. 17, 2023.

We encourage attendees to make their reservations now for the National Convention. We **cannot** guarantee there will be availability through the housing **deadline of June 21** as the rooms are booking quickly and are **first come, first served**. Book your reservation under 'attendee' guest type.

To make a reservation, go online to vfw.org/Convention or call 833.262.6900 (1+725.263.1068 internationally).

Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW's life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 18% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

June Currency Campaign – This month, the VFW will be sending its members a very special package that contains currency and a check. As a dedicated member and friend to your fellow veterans, you know just how important the need is to support the VFW. Each nickel and every check returned to the VFW counts and can help support the VFW's programs that fight for veteran's rights, help veterans claim their hard-earned benefits and support hardworking military families. Please send the nickels and check back so the VFW can stretch that money to deliver life-changing help to fellow veterans and service members, and please include the most generous gift you can. Don't forget to display the United States flag to show you stand proudly with your fellow veterans!

Independence Day is Coming Up – The VFW is preparing for a special online celebration of freedom with our annual observance of Independence Day. Please visit vfw.org to find ways you can honor our nation's veterans and service members by spreading a message of patriotism and remembrance to your friends and family.

Free Estate Planning Resources From the VFW – Most people know the importance of a will or estate plan. But did you know only 44% of adults ages 55+ and only half that for adults ages 35-54 have one in place!

The VFW is providing a free Personal Estate Planning Kit, which you can download at vfw.org/PlannedGiving. Once you have made sure your family and loved ones are taken care of, we invite you to consider a gift to the VFW in your will. It is simple and takes only a few words to provide support for future generations of veterans. Learn more 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? – Commander-in-Chief Timothy M. Borland 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 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 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!

Department Resources – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. By visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools, you will find the latest fundraising program information, ideas and promotional tools from the Development Department. 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

Meeting times at the National Convention in Phoenix:

VFW Programs and VMS Committee Town Hall Meeting (date, time, and location to be determined).

Be sure to stop by the Veterans & Military Support booth to support the service challenge and get your “**newly designed**” Veterans & Military Support lapel pin!

2023-24 VMS Lapel Pins orders closed May 15, 2023. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Mark Herron via email at mherron@vfw.org or call 816.968.1102.

VMS All-American Requirement

To qualify for All-American, a **minimum donation of \$100** must be donated to **VMS by June 30, 2023**.

Encourage your Posts to donate directly to the VMS Programs by going to the VFW Dashboard. Click on the “**VMS Donation**” link at the upper right-hand corner of the screen and follow the online donation form. Once the donation is made, you will receive a confirmation email. If you have any questions, please contact us at 816.968.1102. **Thank you for your continued support!**

You can also use the link located on the **Veterans & Military Support Program Chairman Tools webpage**. Link to this is provided below.

Stay tuned for a new VMS and Programs donation portal for instant credit to the Dashboard.

VMS Donation Reports

Donation reports are received on most Fridays and are uploaded to the Dashboard on the same day. The period of these reports is from the previous Friday to current Thursday.

VFW's “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The 2023 fall semester is now **closed**. The **2024 spring semester** will open **Aug. 1, 2023**, and runs through **Nov. 15, 2023**. The application is online at vfw.org/Scholarship.

VMS Program Chair Tools webpage has been updated for March 2023. This is our one-stop-shop for all your Chairperson information, resources, and forms, and is now our monthly newsletter. **Add the below link to your shortcuts on your internet browser.**

[Access the Veterans & Military Support Program Chairperson Tools webpage now.](#)

Thank you for what you do every day! See you in Phoenix, Arizona!!

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.

FLAG DAY, JUNE 14. All VFW units are reminded to properly display the U.S. Flag on Flag Day, Wednesday, 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) to those who have daily displayed our national flag.

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

ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD. Please encourage Posts to read the 2023-24 Membership Program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National Headquarters to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants and VFW Sport Clips Help-A-Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside on the KPI tools section.

2023-24 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 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 District judging, then the 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 by Feb. 1 for National judging.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” which will be available on the VFW website soon. You can locate this form by logging in to vfw.org and searching under “My VFW” in the Training & Support section.

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 school; and an all-expenses-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 2023-24 program year. The teacher entry form will be up on the VFW website soon. The dates are Oct. 31, for entries to the Post, Nov. 15, for completion of Post judging, Dec. 15, completion of District judging, Jan. 1, for entries to Department, Feb. 1, completion of Department judging and their winner, in each category, are due to National Headquarters.

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, in the near future, and on the same page are all other program materials.

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

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

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

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN THEMES. The 2023-24 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. The Voice of Democracy theme will be “**What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?**” and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be “**How are you inspired by America?**”

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2023-24 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: “NEW” Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen posters are now available!

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

Confidently with Emergency Assistance Plus® (EA+®)

If you get sick or hurt while traveling – in a place you don't know, with unknown medical staff – the *Emergency Assistance Plus* program comes to your rescue with services that are vital in an emergency. Whether a few cities away, across the states, or around the world, EA+ provides 24-hour assistance while traveling, every time you travel. Services include:

- **Medical Evacuation & Transportation Home**
- **Medical Assistance**
- **Assistance for Companions**
- **Travel Assistance**

Emergency Assistance Plus® (EA+®) steps in to help you with more than 20 emergency and medical assistance services if an emergency arises while you are traveling. Get additional information at vfwmemberplans.com/emergency-assistance-plus.

“Buddy”® Poppy

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 usual. Department winning entries will be accepted for registration and may be set up beginning at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, July 22, until noon, Monday, July 24, 2023. Winning displays will be identified with appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning and announced later on the convention floor. Displays must be removed prior to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday. Any displays left after this time will be removed for disposal by convention center personnel during the disassembly of the hall.

“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.”

BUDDY POPPY UPDATE: National Headquarters conducted a review of the Buddy Poppy policy and procedures and implemented the following changes effective May 20, 2021:

- 1) If you do not receive your order within 8 weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact National Headquarters to report that you have not received the order.
- 2) If you do not report a missing order 3 months after the 8-week processing time, the order will NOT be replaced free of charge, and you will have to resubmit your order.

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 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.

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

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 do not 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.

National Veterans Service

JUNE 30, DEADLINE FOR POST SERVICE OFFICER SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION REPORTS FOR ALL-AMERICAN PROGRAM.

This is a reminder that June 30 is the deadline for receipt of Post Service Officer (PSO) School of Instruction reports from Departments. Holding a PSO School of Instruction is one of the criteria to qualify for the All-American Program. The other NVS-specific criteria for All-American is to have a State/Department Service Officer and for that Department Service Officer to successfully complete NVS (National Veterans Service) training with a passing grade of 70% or higher.

In accordance with the National Veterans Service Policy & Procedure, one of the duties of the Department Service Officer (DSO) is to conduct at least one PSO training session for all Post, County and District Service Officers in the Department, during each VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) year. After conducting such training, DSOs (Department Service Officer) shall provide an annual PSO School of Instruction report to both their Department Headquarters and the Director, National Veterans Service by the end of June. The report shall include the date and location of the training, topics taught, and a roster of attendees. The report for the Director, National Veterans Service, should be forwarded to taldana@vfw.org.

VFW VAWS VOLUNTEERS

Now that the National COVID Emergency has ended, volunteers are encouraged to check with their local VA (Veterans Affairs) and state veterans' home medical facilities to see if they are allowing volunteers entry. **Hospitalized veterans need your support!** See vfw.org/VolunteerService for more information.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Voice on Capitol Hill

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on VA's implementation of the PACT Act. The committee covered issues related to VA's processing of PACT Act claims, automated decision technology, and communications to veterans about their benefits. VFW National Legislative Service Director Pat Murray submitted a statement for the record outlining numerous observations VFW staff have made through assisting thousands of veterans with their claims. "In early 2023 the VFW launched PACTActInfo.org to help guide veterans through the benefits process for free, with no strings attached. We have assisted with 2,500 claims for hypertension, more than 2,000 related to sinusitis/rhinitis, 1,800 on respiratory issues, and more than 1,800 gastrointestinal issues. While the burden of proof for service connection has been relaxed, hurdles still remain," Murray wrote. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#), which begins at the 15:04 mark.

Administrative Operations

In an effort to better serve the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, tools are available at "VFW Training and Support." There you will find Member & Officer Training, Forms and Templates; training material relating to Membership Recruiting and Retention; Community Service & Youth Programs; Communications & Public Affairs; Post Service Officers; and Veterans & Military Support. To utilize these valuable training guides, videos, forms and templates, please login at vfw.org/#login, proceed to "My VFW" and click the link "VFW Training and Support."

The online "Document Repository" is a system of managing documents utilized primarily by Department Officers and members of the National Council of Administration.

Important Reminder: The 2023-24 Department Roster is now an Online Membership System (OMS) submitted report. The interactive report will cover reporting of all Department elected and appointed officers and committee chairmen. In addition, the District Election Report is also contained within the Online Membership System (OMS). Portions of the District report will feed into the Department report (i.e. the District Commander position).

Adjutants and Quartermasters can access the roster by logging into their OMS account under the “Election Report” drop down in the left-hand navigation pane. Membership numbers of each elected/appointed officer and/or chairman is needed to complete the report. Your cooperation in completing the roster immediately following your convention is appreciated. Any additions, corrections or changes will be submitted through OMS as they occur throughout the year.

VFW Store

Order your patriotic items now for your **4th of July** celebration. VFW Store has table runners, patriotic apparel, flags, jewelry and more. Go to vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/4thofjuly?page=1&size=100.

Don't forget your **Officer Cap, pins and accessories**. Orders can be placed at vfwstore.org or by calling 833.VFW.VETS. We also have a variety of business essentials, from business cards to padfolios, ink stamps to award certificates. To see all the options, go to vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/officergiftsandawards?page=1&size=100.

