

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

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FEB. 2017

CLEAR THE WAY

VFW COMMUNICATIONS:

We are again working on a mobile event app to keep you informed as the VFW storms Capitol Hill for the 2017 VFW Legislative Conference. The event app will feature several new features geared toward helping you make the most of your conference experience. Watch for future communication regarding the app's launch and availability.

If you haven't already, please remember to download the VFW mobile app from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#) to keep the power of the nation's largest organization of combat veterans just one click away! Use the VFW app to manage your membership, recruit new members and gain access to exclusive content.

VFW FOUNDATION:

THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION GRANTS TO OPEN ON FEBRUARY 1, 2017

Applications to submit The Home Depot (HD) Foundation Community Impact Grant is scheduled to begin on February 1, 2017. 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: <https://corporate.homedepot.com/grants/community-impact-grants>.

To help you complete the application, the VFW Foundation has once again 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

Please note that the guide will not be emailed until HD Foundation Community Impact Grant application is reviewed first to ensure the how-to guide is up-to-date.

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 a written 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 jcouch@vfw.org.

GOOD LUCK!

HENRY VFW TRIBUTE EDITION RIFLES

For a limited time only, Henry Repeating Arms is offering the Henry VFW Tribute Edition rifles directly from their factory at very special pricing to VFW Posts and members.

These rifles are a great way for your Post to boost fundraising efforts, increase profits, recognize milestones, and for members to build a personal collection.

There are two models, both Made In The USA; the VFW Post Tribute Edition and the VFW Tribute Edition. Both models are collector's items and unique to the Posts and/or members ordering these one-of-a-kind rifles.

For information or to order your Henry VFW Tribute Edition rifle, click on the following order form link: <https://henryrifles.com/wp-content/uploads/rifles/VFW-order-form.pdf>. If you would like to request additional brochures, please email Teresa at teresa@henryrepeating.com or call her toll free at 866-200-2354.

VETERANS & MILITARY SUPPORT PROGRAMS:

Legislative Conference ~ Washington, D.C.

There will NOT be a check presentation this year at the Legislative Conference. Please send your Veterans & Military Support donation directly to the office:

Veterans & Military Support
406 West 34th Street, Suite 902
Kansas City, MO 64111

ATTN: VMS Chairmen - If you picked up Veterans & Military Support 2016-17 lapel pins at National Convention, now would be a good time to mail in your donation which will represent your Department's fundraiser for VMS to qualify for All-American.

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, acting director of membership at 816-968-2752 or by email: rbutler@vfw.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:
Top 5 Recruiters (as of 1/24/17):

John M. Tellier - 143
VFW Post 4709, Dept. of TX

George P. Fletcher - 113
VFW Post 7043, Dept. of PA

Richard L. Quire - 106
VFW Post 4075, Dept. of KY

David B. Norris - 102
VFW Post 1051, Dept. of CA

Rodney L. Raulston - 98
VFW Post 812, Dept. of TX

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Early Bird Winners:

Division 1

Dist. 6 - Dept. of Minnesota
Dist. 2 - Dept. of Minnesota

Division 2

Dist. 17 - Dept. of Texas
Dist. 5 - Dept. of Kansas

Division 3

Dist. 7 - Dept. of Pacific Areas
Dist. 19 - Dept. of Texas

Division 4

Dist. 2 - Dept. of Pacific Areas
Dist. 1 - Dept. of Montana

Division 5

Dist. 2 - Dept. of Montana
Dist. 5 – Dept. of Pacific Areas

Division 6

Dist. 1 - Dept. of Louisiana
Dist. 6 - Dept. of Montana

Division 1

Post 4709 - Dept. of Texas
Post 5958 - Dept. of Pennsylvania
Post 3036 - Dept. of Mississippi

Division 2

Post 6311 - Dept. of California
Post 637 - Dept. of Virginia
Post 6450 - Dept. of West Virginia

Division 3

Post 3893 - Dept. of Texas
Post 2214 - Dept. of Alabama
Post 3103 - Dept. of Virginia

Division 4

Post 5579 - Dept. of New Jersey
Post 5350 - Dept. of New York
Post 7843 - Dept. of Texas

Division 5

Post 12041 - Dept. of Texas
Post 2655 - Dept. of California
Post 8703 - Dept. of New Mexico

Division 6

Post 10577 - Dept. of California
Post 3483 - Dept. of Ohio
Post 124 - Dept. of Pacific Areas

Division 7

Post 12146 - Dept. of Pacific Areas
Post 12014 - Dept. of Illinois
Post 5910 - Dept. of Kentucky

Division 8

Post 9215 - Dept. of New York
Post 2592 - Dept. of Oklahoma
Post 7103 - Dept. of Texas

Division 9

Post 3769 - Dept. of Kentucky
Post 376 - Dept. of New Jersey
Post 6596 - Dept. of Ohio

Division 10

Post 9275 - Dept. of Utah
Post 12156 - Dept. of Nevada

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.

VFW NATIONAL DOOR KNOCK CAMPAIGN - FEBRUARY 17-19, 2017

Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters is challenging every Post to put together teams to get facetime with lapsed members who have expired and members who will be coming due in the next few

months. This event will take place February 17-19. Get out and knock on the doors of your members in hopes to collect 2016-2017 membership dues and help us make 100% membership as a national organization for the first time in 24 years!

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.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE/ACTION CORPS:

Stay on Top of the Latest Information

Do you know what issues are important to our military members and veterans? The ***VFW 2017 Priority Goals*** provide our organization's overview of the areas of focus regarding military benefits and quality of life programs. The Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provide vital services and care to our military members, veterans and their families. It is imperative that both DOD and VA receive sufficient funding for the services they provide, and that VA is held accountable for the timeliness and quality of services it delivers to our veterans. The areas of focus fall into the following categories:

- Budget
- Work Force Development and Accountability
- Health Care
- Compensation and Benefits
- Transition Assistance
- Education, Employment and Transition Assistance
- Defense/Homeland Security
- Military Quality of Life
- POW/MIA

The VFW National Legislative Service works closely with VA and members of Congress to ensure that our military members and veterans are properly cared for both during and after their service to our country. We work with Congress to pass meaningful legislation that protects the interests and rights of our current service members and veterans of all eras. To view our current priority goals and read more information from VFW National Legislative Service, click here:

<http://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service>.

Stay informed about the latest legislative developments through our ***VFW Action Corps Weekly*** e-newsletter. If you are not already a veterans' advocate, please join us and be involved as a member of the VFW grassroots effort on Capitol Hill. You will receive our e-newsletter and Action Alerts that pertain to critical legislation. To become an Action Corps Advocate, click here:

<http://capwiz.com/vfw/mlm/signup.htm>.

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT:

2017 VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Annual Campaign – I hope you received the 2017 VFW NVS Annual Campaign mailing we sent early in January. It contained a 2017 VFW National Veterans Service Certificate of Appreciation, personalized address labels and a special Memorial Day “American Hero” Ribbon card to sign and return for a hospitalized veteran or service member. If you have not yet responded, you may receive a reminder letter in the mail. Your support is still urgently needed for the 2017 VFW NVS Annual Campaign. Your donation right now ensures the VFW's national force of highly trained service officers is at the ready to help America's veterans navigate the complicated VA system.

Along with the reminder letter, you will find a Special Veterans' Petition addressed to the President, the Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House. The VFW is doing everything it can to remind our President and Congressional leaders to uphold the promises made to those who have fought for this nation. Please sign and return the petitions so we can forward them to Washington, D.C. When you do, please consider sending a gift to help the VFW National Veterans Service.

Annually, every VFW Service Officer helps an average of 317 veterans and their survivors cut through red tape to receive the VA benefits they have earned. From 2013 through 2015, the VFW's nationwide

cadre of 1,850 VA-accredited service officers and representatives helped more than 255,000 veterans obtain nearly \$4.5 billion in earned disability compensation and pension from the VA. The final numbers are not in for 2016 at this time, but rest assured, VFW Service Officers are there for all veterans to help them apply for and receive their hard earned VA benefits.

This service is available to all veterans **FREE OF CHARGE** — and made possible through donations. Please, watch your mail for this important campaign.

Voice of Democracy State Winners Coming to the Web – It’s almost time! Watch the VFW’s website in late February to see the faces – and hear the performances – of the state winners of the Voice of Democracy audio-essay competition. Sign up at www.vfw.org to receive alerts in your inbox.

Helping the VFW for Generations to Come – One of the easiest ways to continue providing support for your fellow veterans and their families is to name the VFW in your will or trust. It’s easy and only takes a few words, and you remain in control of your assets during your lifetime. Just a small percentage of your assets could go a long way in helping the VFW continue its mission into the future.

Free estate planning information is always available by contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at (816) 968-1119, email plannedgiving@vfw.org or visit 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 read 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 the 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!

NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE:

VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award

National Veterans Service (NVS) is now accepting nominations for the VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award. This award is designed to provide annual recognition to an

individual accredited by VA to represent claimants on behalf of the VFW before the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include employees of state veterans agencies, who meets the below criteria.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- Department Service Officers
- Assistant Department Service Officers
- Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewer
- 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):
 - # of individuals with VFW POAs assisted
 - Community outreach conducted
 - Excellent customer service provided (examples required)
 - Use of VetraSpec or another electronic claims processing system (specify system)
 - Submission of **TIMELY** monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office)
 - # of VFW members recruited

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 where the award will be presented. A stipend in the amount of \$599.00 will also be given to the recipient to cover out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with the trip.

The selection committee will review NVS's Team Support database to view the number of incidents (both positive and negative, if any) reported to NVS. Additionally, the results of test scores at VFW NVS training, results of any site visits, and other criteria MAY be used in making the final decision.

Nominations may be sent to the **Director, VFW National Veterans Service**, either by mail (200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002, ATTN: Service Officer Award), faxed to 202-547-3196 (ATTN: Service Officer Award), or scanned and emailed to taldana@vfw.org.

Nominations must be received not later than **April 30**.

"BUDDY"® POPPY:

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 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 <http://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy> or the VFW Store/Emblem and Supply Catalog.

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.

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 not-for-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) 968-1155 for any questions or concerns.

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>.

SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR. The VFW 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 the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award program. Nominations can be submitted by fellow teachers, VFW Posts, supervisors or other interested individuals (not relatives). Self-nominees are not eligible.

Important Deadlines: Here are the deadline dates for the program:

- February 15, 2017 – Teacher Nominations to the Post
- February 28, 2017 – Completion of Post Judging
- March 15, 2017 – Completion of District Judging
- March 30, 2017 – Completion of Department Judging
- April 1, 2017 – District Participation Reports due to Department Chairmen
- April 5, 2017 – Department Winners to National
- April 15, 2017 – Department Reports to National

Now is the time to begin locating exceptional teachers for your Post to nominate for next year's competition. Based on the nominees submitted by the February 15 deadline, local VFW Posts will recognize one outstanding teacher in grades K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Posts then submit the winners' names to their District level judging who will forward their winners to the Department (or state level) by March 15. After judging, each Department forwards the names of its winners to VFW National Headquarters for consideration in the national awards contest.

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 and Auxiliary national event.

A program brochure (designed to be duplicated for distribution) can be viewed at <https://www.vfw.org/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Community/TeacheroftheYearAwardBrochure.pdf?la=en>, ordered through <http://www.vfwstore.org/products/22917> or by calling the VFW Store at 1-800-821-2606 and asking for item #4450.

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.

SCOUT OF THE YEAR PROGRAM. Annually, the VFW awards three individuals who are: Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, Venture Summit Award recipients and/or Sea Scout Quartermasters who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the qualities of that rank. An applicant has to have reached his or her 15th birthday and be enrolled in high school at the time of selection. Awards are as follows: \$5,000 – 1st place scholarship, \$3,000 – 2nd place scholarship and \$1,000 – 3rd place scholarship. The deadline for entry to a VFW Post is March 1. A program brochure (designed to be duplicated for distribution) can be viewed at http://www.vfw.org/uploadedFiles/VFWorg/MY_VFW/ScoutoftheYearBrochureandEntryForm.pdf. For Scouting certificates, go to <http://www.vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=scout%20of%20the%20year>.

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 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.

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.

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 got 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.

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.

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.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

Guaranteed Term Life Insurance

You know that financial planning can take many shapes and should include a variety of approaches for a sound foundation. But did you know that term life insurance is one of the tools recommended to ensure your legacy is one you can feel confident in?

Acquiring term life insurance can give you comfort in knowing funds will be available for your family to pay necessary bills, provide for a higher education for grandchildren, or even make a bequest to the charity of your choice after you've passed.

As a member of the VFW, premiere options are available to you to secure this fundamental coverage – including not only low premiums, but your acceptance is guaranteed and you get up to \$25,000 without a medical exam or even a health question asked.

For additional information on these options, click [here](#) or call 1-800-749-6983 to speak to a licensed representative.

VFW STORE:

Is your Post celebrating a milestone anniversary this year?

Commemorate the event with custom gear from the VFW Store. You can customize affordable souvenir items such as cups, coasters and koozies. You may also want to consider custom T-shirts, polos and ball caps.

For a free, no-obligation quote, call custom consultant Kim Winston at 1-816-968-1181 or send email to kwinston@vfw.org.



Also, check out what's new at <http://www.vfwstore.org/category/more/newitems>. The new performance fabric T-shirt (pictured here) features a camo pattern on the shoulder panels and sleeves, with the branded logo printed on the front. Prices start at \$21.95 for sizes Small through X-Large. Also available in 2X-Large and 3X-Large!

ROLL CALL OF DEPARTED COMRADES:

ANTONIETTI, DANIEL P., Commander, Department of Montana, 1991-1992 and a Gold Legacy Life member of Butte Post 1448, Butte, Montana, January 5, 2017.

KISH, ROBERT S., Commander, Department of West Virginia, 2016-2017 and a Life member of Elm Grove Memorial Post 4442, Elm Grove, West Virginia, January 9, 2017.