

Membership

CONTINUE BUILDING MEMBERSHIP WITH THE COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE!

As laid out in the 2025-26 Membership Program, we will be issuing quarterly challenges to our Posts and rewarding those who lead their divisions in recruiting as well as Life Member upgrades. Every quarter (Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, Jan. 1 – Mar. 31, Apr. 1 – June 30), we will award points to the Posts as follows:

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

At the end of the quarter, the Post that leads their membership division in points will receive a special award designated by the Commander-in-Chief. All Posts who meet these quarterly challenges will also be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

Congratulations to those Posts who are leading the charge towards membership success!

MEMBERSHIP GOALS

As we go through the membership year, we want everyone to remember the goals that the Commander-in-Chief has set out in her 2025-26 Membership Program:

- Achieve 101% in Membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership

MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into vfw.org and go to <https://vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

The 2025-26 Membership Program is available online at vfw.org, under MY VFW, scroll down to Membership Quick Links, click on Membership Recruiting and Retention. You will see the 2025-26 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

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 these simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact the Membership department at 1.888.564.6839 or email us at membership@vfw.org.

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GRANT

For each new Post chartered the Department Quartermaster will receive a \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used towards necessary materials for the new Post. Department Commanders and Quartermasters may apply for this grant directly through the National Membership Department.

For details on this and all other All-American membership incentives view the Commander-in-Chief's National Membership Program at vfw.org under *Membership Recruiting & Retention*.

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at membership@vfw.org or call us at 1.888.564.6839.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Membership Monday training webinars will be on December 8, 2025, at 7:00 PM, CDT, Topic: **FIVE STRATEGIES TO RETAIN YOUR MEMBERS**. All VFW and Auxiliary members are welcome to attend and engage in the interactive training by following the link on our VFW Membership Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/VFWMembership>. This training will be recorded and made available through the *Training & Support* section of vfw.org following the presentation We urge you to pass along this information to all who would be interested.

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to vfw.org, click on JOIN, and scroll down to Legacy Life Membership and then click on the video on the right. This prestigious program is available to all Life Members and is now available in memoriam for past Life Members. There are three levels of membership; each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life member program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Posts</u>	<u>Departments</u>	<u>National</u>
Gold 1,200.00	\$18.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
Silver- \$800.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Bronze -\$400.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00

What will your Legacy be?

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters as of 24 November 2025

Timothy M. Borland – 310 members
VFW Post 9972, Dept of AZ

Steven L. Woodward – 259 members
VFW Post 2224, Dept of WA

Laurence L. Lyons – 173 members
VFW Post 10223, Dept of Pacific Areas

These comrades are our first to cross the 100-members-recruited mark this year! How many of you will be joining them?

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 16% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

VFW Kicked Off the 2025 Year-End Campaign with the Friends of Freedom Online Community – November 25th was the start of the VFW's 2025 Year-End Campaign, running until December 31st! Keep an eye on your inbox for an email from the VFW and [consider making a generous, tax-deductible year-end contribution](#). We also encourage you to spread the word about the campaign across your social media networks. Given the rapidly increasing demand for VFW programs, your support for this year's 2025 Year-End Campaign is more vital than ever. Your contribution will directly impact veterans of all generations by enabling VFW Accredited Service Officers to provide essential assistance in applying for and securing their hard-earned VA benefits. It will also provide help accessing financial assistance and resources for military families struggling to cover necessities like rent, food or medicine. Furthermore, your generosity ensures that all veterans are effectively represented on Capitol Hill, safeguarding their rights and benefits. Your generosity creates life-changing opportunities for our nation's heroes when they need it most.

MATCHING GIFT OFFER! – Look out for a special notice coming to your mailbox this month! Friends of the VFW have generously pledged to triple your donation for the next 30 days, kickstarting our 2026 Annual Challenge with a commitment of \$50,000 from their own pockets. They recognize that the cost of war extends far beyond the battlefield and believe that there are many others who share this understanding. Proud VFW members like you are being called upon to support our newest veterans, especially those returning home disabled by war. Your contribution to the VFW today will not only be matched but tripled. To make sure every dollar counts toward the 2026 Annual Challenge, please ensure that all gifts are postmarked within the next 30 days. Your generosity will make a significant difference in the lives of our veterans right in *your Department*. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Celebrate the Holiday Season by Helping Fellow Veterans – Your support of the VFW this holiday season – and throughout the year – is extremely important in helping the VFW's efforts to serve and assist veterans of all generations who are sick, unemployed, homeless or suffering from combat wounds received long ago.

We recently mailed a special edition of the 2026 VFW “Fly the Flag” Pocket Planner, and we also included a bonus gift – quick stick notes and a pen. The 2026 VFW Veterans Service Annual Campaign will be mailing early in January. By supporting these programs, you help veterans and their families in need throughout the year in *your Department* and across the country. And please display the U.S. flag – especially on patriotic holidays, which are marked in your new 2026 VFW Pocket Planner. You can visit <https://heroes.vfw.org/Flag> and print a free flag poster to display.

Salute Someone Who Changed Your Life – Honor. Remember. Give. Salute the hero who inspired you. Create a VFW tribute or memorial gift and salute the hero who inspired you. Learn the two most popular ways to establish a tribute gift by visiting <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/salute-a-mentor>. Contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or plannedgiving@vfw.org to speak with an officer about your options.

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

VFW Friends of Freedom – If you are not already a member of the VFW’s online community, please visit vfw.org and look for the gold banner that says “**Find Out What’s Happening**” to sign up. As a member of the VFW’s Friends of Freedom, you will receive special emails with breaking VFW news, legislative alerts and unique opportunities to help the VFW in assisting our nation’s veterans, service members and their families. You may also visit vfw.org/VFWatWork and click on “**Read VFW success stories**” to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans’ rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

VFW Department Resource Page – We encourage all VFW Departments to actively support the VFW Department Fundraising Programs. The success of these initiatives relies on the participation and backing of your department’s members. Promotional materials can be accessed by visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools.

Marketing Communications

The “Still Serving” campaign is a celebration of continued commitment — showcasing how the VFW and its members step up for each other, and our communities — leading efforts for improved quality of life for fellow veterans and advancing to meet the needs of an ever-changing world.

In August, we launched improved assets for the campaign to make it easier for you to get involved and amplify the campaign. [Download the campaign marketing guide](#) (note: a link to download the supporting assets is on page 2).

Still Serving is more than a tagline - it's a declaration that service doesn't stop with the end of military service.

Veterans & Military Support Programs

VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at mherron@vfw.org or 816.968.1102.

Military Appreciation Program (MAP) Grant Funds

Be advised that the VFW MAP Grant is now closed for the remainder of the 2025-26 program year. Funds have been depleted. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at M.A.P@vfw.org 816.756.3390 ext. 6287.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The **2026 Spring Semester** is now closed. The **2026 Fall Semester** opens Jan. 1, 2026, and runs through Apr. 30, 2026. The application is only available online at vfw.org/Scholarship.

All-American Eligibility

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2026**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the "**VMS Donation**" tab on the **Dashboard** to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters. If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs, and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate to the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

When you make your **\$125.00** or more donation, all that needs to be entered into the box is **125** or more. The **\$** and **.00** are **not required** in the donation amount box.

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

2025-26 VMS Lapel Pin payments should be paid through the Dashboard. Please use the **VMS Donation** link on the Dashboard to pay for your order. Please do this as soon as possible.

VMS Program Tools

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

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

VFW Programs

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

PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD) Please encourage Posts to read the 2025-26 Membership program. Military Appreciation Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Financial Assistance for Service Members financial grants & VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

2025-26 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM. SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM DEADLINE REMINDER. Post level judging should be completed at this time and their winners' nominations forwarded on to the next level of judging, District, if applicable, or on to their VFW Department Headquarters. A completed nomination should consist of a completed official entry form with a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five-pages, including the resume, as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, (for example: resume, references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves, if available at the time.

The corresponding deadlines for the next level of judging are as follows: Dec. 15, 2025, for completion of District judging, if applicable, and their winners forwarded to their Department Headquarters prior to Jan. 1, 2026; and Feb. 1, 2026, for completion of Department judging and their winners forwarded to National Headquarter. Each level may submit one candidate, in each grade category, on to the next level.

NOTE: The VFW National Programs Department requires the Department Headquarters to submit their winners via the Programs Dashboard.

VFW's National Citizenship Education Teacher awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and their school; and an all-expense-paid trip to attend a VFW National Convention.

If you have questions regarding any of the above, please email mspencer@vfw.org or call 816.756.3390 and ask for extension 6287 or Mary Spencer.

The teacher entry form, information page, and Chairpersons Guide are available on the VFW website.

Simply visit vfw.org/#login, log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Additional Resources**. Here you will find all program manuals and on the same page are all other program materials.

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

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

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

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2025–26 themes were chosen by Commander-in-Chief Carol L. Whitmore. The Voice of Democracy theme will be **“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”** and the Patriot's Pen theme will be **“How Are You Showing Patriotism And Support For Our Country?”**

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2025-26 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:

<https://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy> for Voice of Democracy and [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](https://www.vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen) for Patriot's Pen.

NOTE: Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen posters are available!

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Departments may submit up to five nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office no later than Feb. 1, 2025. All Department Public Servant Citations must be requested through the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through the Dashboard. VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award
- VFW National 911 Dispatcher Award
- VFW National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (E.O.D.T.) Award

Each Department will receive their requested awards and should contact their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient's peers at a professional association event, city council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EODTs personnel, many of whom are veterans eligible for VFW membership. Order plaques and citations for public servants from the VFW Store [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant](https://www.vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant).

Simply visit [vfw.org](https://www.vfw.org), log in to My VFW, then look under Member Resources, click on **VFW Training & Support**, then click on **Community Service & Youth Programs**, then look under **Public Servant Program**.

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: [vfwstore.org/products/32134](https://www.vfwstore.org/products/32134).

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN DEPARTMENT DEADLINE REMINDER. The deadline for submitting the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winner packets to National Headquarters is Jan. 15, 2026 (even if they have not been personally notified they are the winner).

The suggested deadline for Departments to have reviewed and approved their District and Post entries in the All-American Dashboard is Jan. 31. This will ensure we have accurate reporting numbers across the organization and allot us the time to remedy errors. If you are unsure how to report your participation in the All-American Dashboard or if you are having login issues to the OMS system, contact John Linstra at jlinstra@vfw.org or 816.968.2787.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS. Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen first place Department winner will receive a National scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National Awards now totals \$172,000, with the top three awards raised to \$35,000, \$21,000 and \$15,000. The Patriot’s Pen National Awards total is \$55,000.

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

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

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

HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG ON DEC. 7. Public Law 103-308, passed in 1994, designates Dec. 7 as “National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day” and requests the flag of the United States to be flown at half-staff (sunrise to sunset) in honor of the individuals who lost their lives on that day. To order a flag, go to vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

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

[According to the National Cancer Institute](#), approximately 38.9% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer at some point during their lifetimes.

Be prepared for the unexpected.

[The Cancer Care Insurance Plan for VFW members](#), administered by A.G.I.A., Inc. and underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, provides cash benefits if you're diagnosed with cancer. Use the cash benefits however you need — from hospital bills to everyday expenses like your mortgage or car payments.

This coverage helps ease the financial strain so you can focus on what matters most: your recovery.

To learn more about costs, benefits, limitations, exclusions and rates, [click here](#) or call 1.877.850.0183.

"Buddy"® Poppy

"BUDDY"® POPPY CAMPAIGN. Although we emphasize Buddy Poppies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, it is important to realize that the distribution of Buddy Poppies should be a year-round exercise. Each time a Post participates in an activity where the public will be present, Buddy Poppies should be present as a fundraising tool and simply to recognize our fallen comrades. Where the VFW appears, Buddy Poppies should be a constant reminder that we will never forget those who have perished in the name of liberty. Just as "They Gave, Will You?" is a year-round thing, so should the distribution of VFW Buddy Poppies.

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.

BUDDY POPPY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 60 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tin tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy or by calling Member Service Center at 1.833.839.8387.

The Manual of Procedure provides that Post relief funds may be used for programs such as Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Citizenship Education, and Community Service as long as suggestions in the chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that non-profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist with the distribution of Buddy Poppies, provided there shall be no division of proceeds. A donation to these groups may be made from the Post general fund.

VFW SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES. The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need.

Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as the traditional & tin tab poppies. Currently we have no plans to replenish inventory of Anniversary poppies due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of Anniversary Poppies.

National Veterans Service

NVS is excited to announce that Virtual Basic Accredited Representative Training will be available Jan. 26-30, 2026, for newly accredited representatives who have not yet received official Basic training from NVS. This conference will be a hybrid conference, with attendees receiving video training using the VFW Online Learning Portal as well as daily live instruction using Zoom teleconferencing software.

Formal notifications to students who are required to participate in this conference will be sent in the coming weeks, along with instructions on how to register and access the course.

If you have questions regarding the NVS accredited representative training program, please contact Chris Macinkowicz, NVS Deputy Director at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org or Keith Garrison, NVS Assistant Director Training, at kgarrison@vfw.org.

VFW Store

Shop the VFW Store for the holidays! Check out the **patriotic ornaments** and more at vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/holiday



Poppy seeds are now back in stock at the VFW Store. Shop all Buddy Poppy items at

vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy

VFW Podiums are now in stock! Order yours today:

vfwstore.org/products/22690

You can **pre-order** your **official ballcap** starting on Tuesday, Dec. 2, with delivery expected to take place in late January 2026.

To order, go to vfwstore.org or call 1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387)

