

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES**

General Orders No. 7

2017-18 Series

1. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 222 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure, which provides that each Post will pay, in advance, a National Convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the National Convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee. Posts are encouraged to register their Post delegate(s) online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or by submitting their National Convention Post and Delegate Registration form that will be mailed to all Posts as part of the Election Report/Convention Registration mailing going out later this month. Registration forms for the 119th National Convention may be mailed to: Convention Registration, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

2. Attention is directed to Section 217 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure covering the nomination, election and installation of Post Officers. Post Election Report forms are being mailed to Post Quartermasters with instructions that they complete the form online through the Online Membership System (OMS) or they can complete the form and return directly to National Headquarters immediately following the election of Post Officers but not later than June 1.

3. Section 222 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure provides that Posts shall elect delegates and alternates to District conventions at a regular meeting of the Post held not less than thirty (30) days prior to the District convention at which District officers are to be elected: one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate for each thirty (30) members or fraction thereof in good standing in the Post at the time of the election.

Delegates and alternates to the Department conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting of the Post held not less than thirty (30) days prior to the Department convention. Posts are entitled to one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate for each thirty (30) members or fraction thereof in good standing in the Post at the time of the election.

4. Pursuant to Section 403 of the National By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure, each District shall hold an annual District convention for the purpose of electing District officers, such convention to be held not less than ten (10) days nor more than seventy-five (75) days prior to the convening of the Department convention.

Pursuant to Section 403 of the National By-Laws – Regular Meeting, Districts shall hold at least two (2) regular meetings each year for purposes of transacting business and conducting schools of instruction.

Pursuant to Section 417 of the National Manual of Procedure, District officers shall not assume the duties of their office until the Department Commander is installed.

District officers shall not be installed or assume the duties of their office until proof of eligibility has been submitted and properly reviewed in accordance with Section 416 of the Manual of Procedure.

5. Attention of Post Commanders is directed to Section 218 (a)(11) of the National Manual of Procedure, Officers: Duties and Obligations. Trustees Report of Audit must be prepared in detail within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, one of which ends March 31.

6. Certificates of charter evidencing consolidation have been issued to the following Posts:

Post Nos. 8535 and 5073 are consolidated as Post No. 8535, Henderson, Texas
Post Nos. 497 and 3997 are consolidated as Post No. 497, Havre, Montana
Post Nos. 6831 and 7067 are consolidated as Post No. 6831, Anamoose, North Dakota
Post Nos. 1761 and 4527 are consolidated as Post No. 1761, Bangor, Maine

7. Announcement is made of the authorization of the charters for the following Posts:

Post No. 12166 – Gilbert, Arizona
12167 – Merritt Island, Florida

BY COMMAND OF
KEITH E. HARMAN
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

OFFICIAL:



Brian J. Duffy
Adjutant General

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

BULLETIN

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

VOLUME 42, NO. 7

FEB. 2018

SERVICE NOT SELF

MEMBERSHIP:

We are now 34,632 behind our last year's figures as of January 26, 2018. The time to recruit is now! You have to leave the Post in order to recruit new members. Find local events and ask if you can have a booth. Farmers markets, gun shows, trade shows and fall festivals are all great places to recruit local veterans. Bring along recruiting materials as well as materials on VFW Programs. If you need materials from Membership, call or email us at 1-888-JOIN-VFW or membership@vfw.org. If you're needing help to pay for a booth at a local event, call your Department Quartermaster as they have the funds available to help you get there.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 70 EARLY BIRD AWARD WINNERS!

The top three Post Commanders and Quartermasters and the top two District Commanders in each division worked hard to earn this award. For all their hard work, they've earned a stipend to attend the VFW Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Job well done!

KANSAS CITY SPREE

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 100% membership by April 1, 2018, 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 3-6, 2018) that may include but is not limited to – touring, shopping, and a complete tour of the VFW National Headquarters.

MEMBERSHIP FACEBOOK

Make sure you 'like' and 'share' our VFW National Membership Facebook page. We post updates, links, contest reminders, events, etc. for you. Share the good news of the VFW:

<https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership/>.

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 need to complete a payment authorization form.

NEW!

Now Department and Post Quartermasters have the option to enroll new members as installment Life on the Online Membership System. See the Hip Pocket Training for Nov/Dec link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixuesaN90Ps&index=16&list=PLS17GMBriUlatKGz_QdpAoUHnXAvaPXi

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>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:
Top Three Recruiters (as of 1/26/2018):

Kenneth L. Kraft - 218
VFW Post 12140, Dept. of OR

Glenn E. Hohman - 148
VFW Post 9972, Dept. of AZ

Larry M. Gerlt - 138
VFW Post 2704, Dept. of NE

DEPARTMENTS WITH NEW POSTS:

VFW Post No. 12166 in Gilbert, Arizona

ADDITIONAL REMINDERS & CHANGES

Digital Membership Cards: Members now have the ability to download their digital version of their membership card. Depending on whether a member has an iPhone or Android, they will be able to download and access their digital membership card from the VFW app.

This will not replace the physical VFW membership card - we will still be sending out membership cards to all our annual and Life members. This is intended as another option for our members' convenience. When asked to show a VFW membership card, a member can either produce their physical card out of their wallet or display their digital card on their smart phone.

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. If you need assistance logging in or your password, contact Leticia Cortez in the Membership Department at 816-756-3390, ext. 6292.

Hip Pocket Training: Login and go online to <https://www.vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> to view the latest training videos from the Membership Department. If you have any questions or topics you would like covered, please email them to membership@vfw.org in advance and we will cover them on the next training video. We also post these webinars on our Facebook page! If you're not on Facebook, you can still view the webinars on YouTube here: https://youtu.be/z_5MovJgD6E?list=PLS17GMBRjUlatKGz_QdpAoUHnXAvaPXi.

Changes to "Find a Post": When a visitor goes to www.vfw.org in their browser, one of the first links they will see at the top of the page is "Find a Post." Clicking on this link takes the visitor to a page where they can enter a zip code or city and state and then search by distance for VFW Posts in the area. Now, in addition to the Post information, they will see the dues amount for the Posts in their area. This is useful information for veterans looking to connect with a local Post, but it is also useful information for recruiters looking to connect veterans with a Post in their area. Lastly, when you click on "Find a Post" you will see a link to "Click here for Non-U.S. Posts" which will provide you with a comprehensive list of all the VFW Posts located overseas.

NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE:

Annual Joint Review (AJR) Reminder for VAVS

The Annual Joint Review (AJR) is conducted to assess the organization's participation in the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program during the preceding year and to develop goals for the next year. It summarizes VFW volunteer activity at specific VA locations and is an essential tool that provides an opportunity for VFW VAVS Representatives and VA Medical Facilities Voluntary Service Program Chiefs/Managers to develop plans to ensure active participation by the VFW in programs related to the welfare of Veteran patients. The annual reporting/review period for all VFW teams is April. Assigned certified VFW VAVS Representatives along with the VA Voluntary Service Program leader must schedule a time during the review month to complete (prepare and sign) the AJR summary. VFW Department Leadership is being asked to encourage their VAVS Representatives to turn in their AJRs to Laverne Lambright, National Veteran Service, at llambright@vfw.org no later than April 15. Questions can be directed to James Moss at jmoss@vfw.org. Your participation and cooperation in the review is greatly appreciated.

Request for nominations for Accredited Representative of the Year Award

The Accredited Representative of the Year Award recognizes the contributions our professionally trained, accredited advocates make to the lives of veterans and their families every day. We encourage every Department to put forth a candidate. A nomination shows that Department leadership is aware of the significant contributions your program makes in your community every day.

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.

Please note that the selection committee will review our 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 proficiency 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.

Over the past two years, NVS has recognized service officers from the Departments of New Hampshire and Rhode Island respectively. These service officers stood out from our nationwide cadre for not only meeting the challenge daily, but exceeding it through exemplary commitment, technical knowledge, and customer service.

VFW FOUNDATION:

THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION GRANTS TO OPEN ON FEBRUARY 1, 2018

Applications to submit The Home Depot (HD) Foundation Community Impact Grant are scheduled to begin on February 1, 2018. Eligible VFW Posts may receive up to \$5,000 to fix up their buildings.

Grants are awarded on a first-come first-serve basis until funding is exhausted. 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!

DONATE YOUR VEHICLE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donate your car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat while supporting the VFW! Donating your vehicle is easy. Simply call 844-839-4438 (7 days a week—any questions answered) or complete the simple online form at www.vfw.careasy.org.

Then schedule a convenient free pick-up time (most vehicles can be picked up within 24-72 hours).

You will receive an initial car donation receipt upon pick-up that can be used for tax purposes and if your vehicle sells for more than \$500, you will be mailed an additional more comprehensive "IRS Form 1098-C" receipt.

The VFW benefits 80% from the proceeds (after expenses) of any vehicle donation. That's money to support great VFW programs that directly aid veterans, military personnel and their families!

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE/ACTION CORPS:

Our Legislative Priorities

The *VFW 2018 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 are:

- Budget
- Work Force Development and Accountability
- Health Care
- Compensation and Benefits
- 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:

<https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts>.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

Pet Insurance

When was the last time you left the veterinarian's office spending less than \$100? With the average cost of quality, routine pet care increasing year-over-year, it is expensive to care for your furry friends.

Whether you have a clumsy puppy or a nosy cat, it is hard to anticipate accidents and illnesses that will happen. Nationwide® Pet Insurance makes it easier to be prepared.

Just like health insurance for you and your family, Nationwide® Pet Insurance can help you budget for routine and unforeseen medical expenses. Policies are available for cats and dogs, and cover a multitude of medical problems and conditions from common wellness procedures to common illness treatments that your pets may experience over the course of their lives.

For additional information about Pet Insurance, click [here](#) or call 1-877-738-7874.

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT:

VFW Calculator Coming! – As a special thank you for all of your support of fellow veterans and the programs the VFW offers to veterans of all generations – we are sending a VFW Calculator to arrive early in February! We hope you enjoy your gift and continue to support the many life-changing programs the VFW offers. Without your support, many veterans would have a difficult time getting the assistance they need. In this special package, we also ask you to remember to display the U.S. flag to honor all service members and veterans who have served this great nation.

2018 VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Annual Campaign – I hope you received the 2018 VFW NVS Annual Campaign mailing we sent early in January. It contained a 2018 Petition to Congress and a 2018 Memorial Day card. We will continue collecting the petitions and delivering them

to Congress to let them know that we will not sit by and allow Congress to balance the budget on the backs of veterans. The cards will be distributed to hospitalized veterans and service members. Some members received the 2018 member survey to fill out and return, and we are continuing to collect and tally the responses.

In late January, we sent out a reminder letter with 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.

Your support is still urgently needed for the 2018 VFW NVS Annual Campaign. Your donation right now ensures the VFW's national force of highly trained, professional service officers is at the ready to help America's veterans navigate the complicated VA system.

Annually, every VFW Service Officer helps an average of 317 veterans and their survivors cut through the red tape to receive VA compensation and pension benefits they have earned. In 2016, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported that the veterans represented by the VFW received more than \$7 billion in earned disability compensation and pension benefits. This includes more than \$1.2 billion in new benefits, submitted on behalf of more than 116,000 veterans. The final numbers are not in for 2017 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 your donations. Please, watch your mail for this important campaign.

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

Create Your Legacy With Just a Few Words – A will helps ensure your family and loved ones will be taken care of after your lifetime. Once you have your family covered and you would like to support future generations of veterans, you can do so by adding a gift to the VFW in your will. To learn more about wills and how easy it is to make a gift to the VFW in yours, visit www.vfw.org/plannedgiving. You can also contact the VFW Planned Giving Office to request more information on estate planning by calling (816) 968-1119 or emailing plannedgiving@vfw.org.

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 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. If you are interested in joining Partners in Patriotism, you may contact Donor Services in the VFW Development Department 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 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 www.vfw.org/vfwatwork and click on "**Read VFW**

success stories” to learn how the VFW is fighting for veterans’ rights, assisting veterans in need, educating our youth and aiding military families across the nation. Check back often to see newly posted stories!

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

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 2017-18 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.

“BUDDY”® POPPY:

By the time you read this, VFW and Auxiliary members will have spread out across the landscape distributing the familiar red 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 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 <https://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 nonprofit 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.

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

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

Poppies grew across the war-torn battlefields of Europe after World War I, and this year marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entering that war. From 2017 to 2019, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission 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: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_y4l49mZso.

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

PROGRAMS:

VFW Posts and Auxiliaries reported donating almost 8.9 million volunteer hours and over \$52 million toward community service work from November 1, 2016, to October 31, 2017. The total value of our volunteers' efforts is valued at over \$265 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>.

VFW HONORS AMERICA'S TEACHERS DURING 2017-18 PROGRAM YEAR. Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post, District and Department level are completed. After Department judging, each Department forwards the entries of its selections to VFW National Headquarters for consideration in the national award contest. Each Department's selections will receive a National Commendation citation.

The Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher awards include: three national \$1,000 awards for the top K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 teachers for professional development expenses; \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and school; and, an all-expenses paid trip to attend the VFW National Convention in July 2018 in Kansas City, Missouri.

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

The Department report forms for the Teacher Award program were due to National Headquarters by January 31, 2018. If you have not sent them in, please email them to Tbeauchamp@vfw.org, or fax to (816) 968-1149, to the attention of Tammy Beauchamp. If you have any questions, please contact the VFW Programs office at (816) 756-3390, ext. 6287.

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. National 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. 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 2017–18 VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairman’s Manual.

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN THEMES. The 2018–19 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Vincent “B.J.” Lawrence. The Voice of Democracy theme will be “Why My Vote Matters” and the Patriot’s Pen theme will be “Why I Honor the American Flag.”

WORLD WAR I COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP. In observance of the upcoming centennial of World War I, a total of 100 matching grants of up to \$2,000 a piece will be awarded for the restoration of 100 World War I Memorials across the United States. The first 50 of these were announced on September 27, 2017, and the second 50 will come from ROUND #2 of the matching grant challenge.

Any municipal government, individual, or organization may apply. Likewise, any individual, organization or company can become a sponsor of this effort, as the more we can raise toward this program, the greater the amount of the matching grant to the winning memorials.

<http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/about-the-program.html>

The VFW 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 19, 2018 (third Saturday in May); Memorial Day, May 28, 2018 (last Monday in May); Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; National POW/MIA Day, September 21, 2018 (third Friday in September); and Veterans Day, November 11. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to <http://www.vfwstore.org/products/GP237>.

IRS AND VFW AWARD MONIES. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that any recipient that receives more than a \$599 award should receive a Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable. This will include the VFW programs Patriot's Pen and Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

VFW STORE:



It's time to start thinking about Department Conventions! To ensure that your apparel and gifts arrive in time, contact custom consultant Kim Winston now. She can help you with logo design (if you don't already have one) and has thousands of items to choose from. To receive a free, no-obligation consultation, call her at 816-968-1181 or email her at kwinston@vfw.org.

Add some pizzazz to your VFW Post with an LED sign that lets you promote upcoming events as well as the VFW's mission in your community. Check out the VFW Store's partners and licensed vendors page at <https://www.vfwstore.org/category/more/partnersandlicensedvendors> and scroll down to Stewart Signs.

Presidents' Day is Feb. 19. When you're visiting classrooms for this patriotic holiday, take along the U.S. Presidents ruler from the VFW Store. It's a great way to connect with your community! Click <https://www.vfwstore.org/products/22894>.



PLANNING CALENDAR

SCHEDULE OF VFW MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Rev. February 2018

2018

March 3 - 7	Voice of Democracy Washington, DC
March 4 - 8	Legislative Conference Washington, DC
April 5 - 8	Senior Vice Commanders/Adjutants Training Kansas City, MO
May 6 - 9	NVS Service Officer Proficiency/Phase I, Part 2 Training King of Prussia, PA
July 21 - 25	National Convention Kansas City, MO
August 12 - 17	NVS Service Officer Basic/Phase I, Part 1 Skill Level Training Annapolis, MD
August 24	National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting Kansas City, MO
August 25 - 26	National Council of Administration Meeting Kansas City, MO
September 10 - 13	Fall Legislative Committee Meeting Washington, DC
September 20 - 23	Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming Albuquerque, NM
October 11 - 14	Junior Vice Commanders/Quartermasters Training Kansas City, MO
October 15 - 19	NVS Service Officer Advanced Skill Level Training Annapolis, MD
October 18 - 21	Southern Conference Louisville, KY
October 19 - 21	Big Ten Conference St. Louis, MO
November 1 - 4	Western Conference Vancouver, WA
November 16 - 18	Eastern States Conference Framingham, MA

2019

March 2 - 6	Voice of Democracy Washington, DC
March 3 - 7	Legislative Conference Washington, DC
April 4 - 7	Senior Vice Commanders/Adjutants Training Kansas City, MO

July 20 - 24 National Convention
Orlando, Florida

August 23 National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting
Kansas City, MO

August 24 - 25 National Council of Administration Meeting
Kansas City, MO

August 29 - September 1 Commander-in-Chief's Homecoming
Albany, NY

September 9 - 12 Fall Legislative Committee Meeting
Washington, DC

October 10 - 13 Junior Vice Commanders/Quartermasters Training
Kansas City, MO

October 25 - 27 Eastern States Conference
Rocky Hill, CT

October 31 - November 3 Western Conference
Anchorage, AK

2020

April 2 - 5 Senior Vice Commanders/Adjutants Training
Kansas City, MO

July 18 - 23 National Convention
Reno, Nevada

August 21 National Budget & Finance Committee Meeting
Kansas City, MO

August 22 - 23 National Council of Administration Meeting
Kansas City, MO

**November 5 - 8 Western Conference
Cheyenne, WY**

2021

July 31 - August 5 National Convention
Baltimore, MD

2022

July 16 - 21 National Convention
Kansas City, MO