

Membership

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE

Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch has laid down a challenge to all VFW Posts for the month of November 2020!

During the month of November, we're challenging Posts to reach out to their communities and help grow our membership!

For this month's Commander's Challenge, the top Post in each division with the highest increase in total membership percentage between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30 will receive a \$1,000 stipend deposited into the Post account.

We want our Posts to show that they're reaching out to the community via social media. If the top Post in the division also shares this post from the official VFW Membership Facebook page on their Post's Facebook page, they will receive an extra \$200 on top of the \$1,000 stipend!

We want to see our Posts reaching out through every available avenue to show that we are an active and progressive organization that has 20/20 VISION FOR VETERANS!

DEPARTMENT "100 PERCENT" INCENTIVE

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

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

DEPARTMENT EARLY BIRD INCENTIVE

For every Department that achieves 92% in membership by Jan. 1, 2021, the Department Commander will receive:

- **A Henry Golden Boy .22 Caliber Rifle or a credit voucher of equal value for use with Veterans Travel Service (VTS).**

2020-21 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM CHANGE

The 2020-21 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 2020-21 VFW National Membership Program in blue letters.

Oct. 7, 2020 UPDATE to the CIC program. This is the current version of the 2020-21 Membership Program and replaces any previous edition. Please refer to page 8 under important notes to see that the requirement to purchase Buddy Poppies has been REMOVED from the Post criteria to achieve All-American.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As you get started in the new membership year, we have made it easier for you to get all the recruiting brochures you will need to make this membership year successful! It's as easy as one two three!

1. Go to vfw.org and click the login link in the upper right corner. Sign in when prompted.
2. Under "Membership Quick Links," select **Membership Online Order Form**.
3. Use the dropdown list to indicate items you need. The form will automatically calculate the cost of items and shipping. When finished, click SUBMIT and it will take you to a billing page if there are any charges.

Follow the simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact Leticia Cortez at **1.888.564.6839** or email us at membership@vfw.org.

POST DEVELOPMENT

Thank you for responding to my latest Post development email to Department Quartermasters! I have heard from many Departments who have on-going plans moving forward with chartering new Posts and there are many revitalization efforts on-going. I would say this is exceptional during COVID times, but the VFW has been there for veterans and their communities throughout this pandemic and continue to serve! If you have questions regarding a new Post, please contact us in Membership and we will help you!

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

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

UPCOMING TRAINING

The next Membership Monday training webinar will be on Nov. 2, 2020, at 2:00 PM CST, and we will be covering the topic Retention. Look for the Membership Monday Zoom meeting invite in an OMS notification on Oct. 29, 2020. All members can join. In addition, the Zoom link will be emailed as a meeting invitation to each Department Leadership and VFW Auxiliary President.

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

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters (as of 10/28/2020):

Jack A. Hawley – 79
VFW Post 1087, Dept. of MT

Stephen M. Franklin – 71
VFW Post 1433, Dept. of AZ

Steven L. Woodward – 64
VFW Post 2224, Dept. of WA

LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

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

What will your Legacy be?

VFW Foundation

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and Sport Clips Haircuts are teaming up to host the first-ever virtual VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero Walk. The event offers supporters a safe and healthy way to engage in the Sport Clips' annual Help A Hero campaign which began in-stores on Oct. 12. VFW Sport Clips Help A Hero provides student veterans with post-secondary scholarships so they can complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. To date, \$8 million in scholarships have been awarded.

Participants in the virtual walk may register and fundraise individually or as a team, and the walk offers the flexibility to partake in the event where and when it is convenient. All participants are invited to join the VFW and Sport Clips for the Celebration Finale on the VFW's Facebook page on Dec. 5, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. CST. Complete details on the virtual Help A Hero Walk can be found at vfw.org/2020VirtualWalk. Questions about the virtual walk may be addressed to Brooke Brown, Assistant Manager, VFW Foundation Corporate Relations, at BBrown@vfw.org.

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

Development

VFW 2021 "Fly the Flag" Calendar – The VFW is proud to let you know you may soon receive a special edition 2021 "Fly the Flag" Calendar. We created this special patriotic 2021 "Fly the Flag" Calendar in recognition of your loyal membership and generous support of the VFW. We have also included a bonus gift selection, which features a beautiful VFW "American Songbirds" Calendar. We hope these special gifts inspire you to show your patriotism by displaying the United States flag, especially on the days marked in your calendar, to show your support for all veterans who have fought to keep us free. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Flag to print a free flag poster to display. *Your donations* will help *your VFW Department* serve veterans in need throughout the year. Veterans in your Department are counting on you!

VFW National Veterans Service Quarterly Supporter Newsletter – The quarterly update on what the VFW National Veterans Service is doing for veterans will arrive this month. You will see stories of how the VFW in D.C. is fighting for veterans’ rights and legislation affecting veterans. We also share stories of VFW Service Officers assisting veterans in obtaining their VA benefits – all because of your support of this vital program. If you, or a fellow veteran, are in need of assistance in filing a VA claim, please visit vfw.org/NVS.

2020 Veterans Day Matching Gift Campaign to Friends of Freedom Online Community – Last month Friends of Freedom members received an email with exciting news! A generous friend of the VFW agreed to match every donation we receive up to \$50,000 until Veterans Day, November 11, 2020! This is an incredible opportunity for your contribution to go twice as far to honor the brave men and women who have dedicated themselves to our country. No matter the amount, your generosity will have twice the impact for service members and their families – please help us honor these brave men and women by giving as generously as you can! Watch your inbox for this incredible email so that your gift can go twice as far!

A Simple Way to Make a Big Difference – Making a gift in your will is the easiest way to support the VFW and your fellow veterans after your lifetime. Did you know that it takes only a few sentences in your will to complete? We invite you to learn more about this type of legacy gift and the lasting impact you can leave your family and the VFW. Free information is available by visiting vfw.org/PlannedGiving, contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or emailing plannedgiving@vfw.org.

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

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

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

Veterans & Military Support Programs

REMINDER: Visit your local Sport Clips for a haircut from now until Nov. 11 and donate to VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program. Your donation will provide scholarships to service members and veterans. **On Veterans Day**, Nov. 11, Sport Clips will donate \$1 to the VFW for every haircut given at more than 1,800 locations nationwide. Please contact Lynn Rolf at 816.968.1116 if you have any questions about the Help A Hero Scholarship Program.

Please use links below for all VMS programs and donations. We no longer accept email or faxed requests/reports.

VMS Formstack Links:

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

Donating to the VMS Program can also be done on the VFW Dashboard by going to the link "VMS Donation" on the upper right-hand corner of the screen. Your \$100 or more donation to the VMS Programs meets the eligibility for All American in this category. 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, Coast Guard and then Space Force. For military flags, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP238.

NEW 2020-21 SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD PROGRAM. Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects elementary, middle and high school teachers to participate in the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher program. Effective this year, VFW Post Teacher Award Chairman may submit a candidate to their Department Headquarters by Jan. 1 in each category. The Department may select a single candidate for each of the three categories and submit those to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1. VFW's Department Teacher winners that are received

at National Headquarters will receive a VFW National citation for both the winning teacher and their school in each grade category.

NOTE: The only item the National VFW Programs Department requires is the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” which will be available on the VFW website. 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**. The Teacher Entry form, Instruction sheet, Citation Request form and Chairman’s manual will be up on the VFW website in the near future.

All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

All Post-level nominees should provide a one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience (for example: references, news articles, etc.) and a head-and-shoulder photo of themselves. These items will be forwarded on to the Department with the winning Teacher Entry form.

Please verify that all websites, publications, announcements, etc. has the correct teacher award entry deadlines and information for the 2020-21 program year.

50TH ANNIVERSARY VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION PROGRAM. The Commemorative Partner Program is designed for federal, state and local communities, veterans' organizations and other non-governmental organizations to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring our Vietnam veterans and their families. As a Commemorative Partner, VFW Posts are encouraged to participate in the Commemoration of the Vietnam War by planning and conducting events and activities that will recognize the Vietnam veterans and their families' service, valor, and sacrifice.

Events and activities should be dignified, memorable occasions that show a sensitivity and appreciation for the solemnity of war and the losses suffered by many. Commemorative Partners should communicate how their events will achieve the congressionally-mandated objectives of the program. Events or activities should meet one or more of the following objectives.

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

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

Applications are available at VietnamWar50th.com on the Commemorative Partner Program. The approval process is usually less than 30 days. Partners will be kept informed through electronic notifications. Once approved as a Partner, the Commemoration will provide organizations with a starter kit of materials for developing and implementing their programs. If you have any questions regarding the Commemorative Partner Program application process, please direct them to: whs.vnwar50th_cpp@mail.mil. For Vietnam War commemorative items, shop the VFW Store at: vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=vietnam.

VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM MONTH IN NOVEMBER. VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are encouraged to volunteer in their schools to talk about their military and home front experiences to students. Invite your local military recruiter to join you to talk about military service today. Additional information can be found in the 2020–21 VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education VFW Chairman’s Manual. Simply visit vfw.org and LOG IN (or create an account if you do not have one). After logging in, you’ll be redirected to the “My VFW” page where you will click on VFW Training & Support and then Community Service, Youth Scholarships & Activities where you’ll have access to the “CHAIRMAN MANUALS.” *Participate in this activity during the week of Veterans Day, which is part of “National Veterans Awareness week,” as designated by Congress.* Find Pledge of Allegiance pencils and coloring books, plus other citizenship education tools at the VFW Store vfwstore.org/category/programs/citizeneducation.

VFW SPECIAL PROJECT PROGRAM. This program was put in place to recognize VFW units for creating and completing unique and extraordinary community service projects.

Record book entry nominations that are found to be complete and well-substantiated should be endorsed by the Department Adjutant or VFW Department Community Activities Chairman and forwarded to National Programs Department. Deadline for entries is April 30 of each year.

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

YOUTH HUNTING AND SHOOTING PROGRAMS. VFW has been involved with the National Rifle Association (NRA) since 1920. Through the NRA, hundreds of VFW Posts provide hunter safety courses and sponsor shooting competitions. Annually, VFW and NRA offer junior and adult small-bore rifle and air rifle individual and team matches conducted by mail called Postal Matches.*

NRA Postal Matches are designed for VFW rifle teams as a sport activity for youth and adults to build interest in rifle shooting and safety. A Postal Match is a match in which competitor’s fire on their home ranges using targets which have been marked for identification. The team match is a series of four monthly matches for teams sponsored by VFW Posts held from December through March. The individual VFW match is fired in the fall with a December closing date. The scores are then mailed to the NRA for ranking of awards.

If your VFW Post does not already participate in the Youth/Adult Rifle Program and would like to take part in a program that has great appeal for youngsters as well as adults, please go to the NRA’s Postal Match website nrahq.org/compete/dept-postal.asp.

Complete program information, rules, and entry form (in PDF format) are available: postalmatches.nra.org/documents/pdf/compete/Postals/VFW%20Postal.pdf.

If you have any questions, please contact the NRA directly at:

National Rifle Association
Competitive Shooting Division
11250 Waples Mill Rd.
Fairfax, VA 22030
Email: postals@nrahq.org
Phone: 703.267.1482

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the VFW Programs Office at 816.968.1155 or email nlopez@vfw.org.

*There are clubs and Posts, etc. that have local shooting programs all around the world. They teach gun safety and target shooting. Often, they wish to compete against other groups but cannot afford to travel to competitions. The NRA created “postal matches,” where a team of shooters can have their own local competition using paper targets. These are NRA-sanctioned targets and must be signed by local officials verifying the manner in which the competition was conducted and the age of the participants. Those targets are then sent to the NRA Postal Match Program and, using the targets from the various groups, the NRA judges determine who wins, places, etc. and awards prizes. That way, the shooting match can involve shooters and clubs from almost anywhere without anyone having to travel. It’s all done through the U.S. Postal System. Hence, the term, “Postal Match.”

VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS. Departments are asked to submit three nominees (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office no later than Feb. 1, 2021. VFW Programs will create citations for the following awards in each Department:

- VFW National Law Enforcement Award
- VFW National Firefighter Award
- VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Award

Each Department will receive their three 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 general public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters and EMTs, 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.

NOTE: VFW PUBLIC SERVANT AWARD CITATION POST ENTRY FORM. This form was developed to assist VFW Post Safety Chairmen with an entry form to hand out to the local Fire Department, Police Department, etc. to assist interested individuals in nominating one of their own. The entry form along with the required documentation are to be returned to the local VFW Post for their judging. Once the winner in each category has been chosen, the Post will forward those entries on to the next level of judging.

Simply visit 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**.

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. Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997) indicates the days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices are required to display the POW/MIA flag. The days are: Armed Forces Day, May 15, 2021 (third Saturday in May); Memorial Day, May 31, 2021 (last Monday in May); Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; National POW/MIA Day, Sept. 17, 2021 (third Friday in Sept.); and Veterans Day, Nov. 11. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP237.

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

VFW Member Benefits

As a veteran, there are many health insurance plans and options available to you but not all coverage is equal. Even with the best coverage on the market, you may find to you need supplemental insurance coverage.

TRICARE and CHAMPVA are supplemental medical programs for veterans. TRICARE is a medical program available to uniformed service members—including those on active duty, National Guard and Reserve members, and retired service members—and their families. The TRICARE Supplement Insurance Plan can help with expenses like prescription copays, copays and cost sharing for in- and out-of-network care and excess out-of-network charges.

CHAMPVA is available for the spouse or widow(er) and children of a veteran who was permanently disabled doing work associated with their military service. This program is open to anyone who fits these criteria and is not eligible for TRICARE.

Even if you have existing TRICARE or CHAMPVA supplemental coverage, it's a good idea to occasionally research your coverage options and make sure your plan meets your current needs, especially if there has been a change to your status.

For more information about VFW member benefits like supplemental insurance, visit vfwinsurance.com/healthcare or call the VFW Member Benefits Department at 833.VFW.VETS (833.839.8387).

"Buddy"® Poppy

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

Remember that your poppies should be ordered a minimum of 8 weeks in advance of your distribution date. Be sure to specify a date by which the poppies are required, do not use "ASAP." Miscellaneous items (coin

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

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

Posts are further reminded that Section 711 of the Manual of Procedure provides that 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 816.756.3390, ext. 6722 for any questions or concerns.

VFW SILVER, GOLD AND DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POPPIES. The silver, gold and diamond anniversary Buddy Poppies are for Posts that are currently in their 25th, 50th or 75th anniversary years. For Posts currently in their 100th year anniversary, they can order any color and as many as they need. The anniversary poppies are approximately three times as expensive for us to produce, but because of the small quantities we deal in, we don't pass those costs on to the Posts. Please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out, unless you are currently in your 100th year. These are ordered through the Department and processed the same as the red poppies. Annotate on the order to National that it is for anniversary poppies and specify which one.

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

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

Poppies grew across the war-torn battlefields of Europe after World War I. From 2017 to 2019, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission will tell the story of those American veterans, through events, exhibits, and memorial efforts, and the VFW is proud to be a partner in this important commemoration.

Click on the following link to learn about the WWI Poppy Program and how your purchase of a Poppy Kit helps build the new National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., while also helping to raise money for your Post.

Link: ww1cc.org/poppy

Here is a quick video that can help people understand why it is so important that we honor those who served during World War I: youtube.com/watch?v=l_y4l49mZso.

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

Seeking Nominations for VA Volunteer of the Year

The VFW National Veterans Service is seeking nominations for the 2020 VA Voluntary Service Volunteer of the Year award. This award recognizes VFW volunteers who have given extraordinary service to our nation's hospitalized veterans located in VA and VA-affiliated medical facilities. Nominees for this award must participate in established VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) assignments and serve as a Regularly Scheduled Volunteer. National Veterans Service is seeking nominations for at least one male and one female volunteer for each VFW Department for consideration for these prestigious awards by the Executive Committee of the VAVS National Advisory Committee. VFW's volunteers have a long history of taking home these awards, so please consider nominating the exemplary VAVS volunteers from your Department. Nominations are due to the VFW National Veterans Service no later than Nov. 30, 2020. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact VFW Assistant Director for Health Policy James Moss at JMoss@vfw.org.

National Veterans Service Intermediate Skill Level Training to be Held Virtually

Even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to grip our nation, NVS remains committed to providing the best possible training to our accredited representatives. Therefore, the previously cancelled in-person Intermediate Skill Level Training (ISLT) scheduled for Annapolis, Maryland in November has been rescheduled for Nov. 9-19, 2020, as the Virtual Intermediate Skill Level Training (vISLT) conference. Instruction will be delivered at 2:00 pm (Eastern) each weekday (excluding Veterans Day) through video teleconferencing and the VFW Online Learning Platform for accredited representatives. Invitations to attend have already been sent to potential attendees.

November 9-19 Virtual Intermediate Skill Level Training (vISLT) for Accredited Representatives
Via teleconference – 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time (weekdays only)
No training will be held on Veterans Day, Wednesday, 11/11/2020

John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2019-20 Winner

Congratulations to Wendy Griffin, Service Officer, VFW Department of Utah, for being selected as the winner of the 2019-20 John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award.

Griffin was nominated by her Department Commander for her sustained commitment to her veteran clients and for demonstrating this commitment by putting in the extra effort to meet clients in the community – not just waiting for clients to come to the office. When she took over her service office in 2015, she also worked to ensure that her Department line officers spent time in the service office to better understand the challenges Utah's veterans face.

Wendy joined the VFW in 2007 and after working her way through various post, district and state positions was elected State Commander for VFW Department of Utah in June 2016. In addition to holding the position of VFW Service Officer at the Salt Lake City VARO, she continues to serve in her local post as Adjutant, and in the VFW Auxiliary as a post treasurer as well as the Department Auxiliary Junior Vice President. Wendy is a Gold Legacy Life member of VFW Post 6154, Life member of VFW Auxiliary Post 3586, and a Life member of the VFW National Home for Children. She also competes annually with the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games and has won multiple Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in various sports. Wendy is an Air

Force veteran and a graduate of Indiana University. She earned her VFW eligibility serving in Korea as a cryptologic linguist.

VFW Secures Nearly \$10 Billion for Veterans

In October, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provided its final report to the VFW on fiscal year 2020, showing that more than 550,000 veterans and eligible dependents represented by the VFW's global network of accredited service officers received more than \$9.7 billion in earned benefits last year.

Despite COVID-19 shutdowns across the country, the VFW continued to assist veterans in navigating their benefits remotely, and the report further demonstrated that the VFW's work grew by a ratio of six to one over the last year.

Of the VFW's nearly 550,000 benefit clients, more than 110,000 veterans filed a claim action with one of our service officers in FY2020, resulting in VA awarding more than \$1.4 billion in new benefits.

“988” America’s New National Suicide Prevention Number

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act signed Oct. 17, 2020, by the President designated “988” as the new national suicide hotline number. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), rules were adopted recommending the use of the three-digit-code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800.273.8255) for anyone in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. Switching to an easy-to-remember 988 as the ‘911’ for suicide prevention and mental health crisis services will make it easier for anyone in crisis to access the help they need and decrease the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues. As the transition takes place over the next two years, phone service providers will be directing 988 calls to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1.800.273.8255), a national network of approximately 170 local and state-funded crisis centers. Veterans and Service members may still reach the Veterans Crisis Line by pressing 1 after dialing, as well as by chatting online at veteranscrisisline.net or texting 838255.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Driving Our Grassroots Efforts

With every issue that Congress votes on, there is a local connection in your hometown that serves as the face of that issue. That grassroots connection is what builds the momentum to make a law become reality and the VFW's Action Corps is the program which drives our grassroots efforts to ensure that we are successful on Capitol Hill.

Being part of the VFW's Action Corps is an important way to keep tabs on those in office now – how they vote and what important issues they are having to consider. Being part of Action Corps and reading the Action Corps Weekly e-newsletter will help keep you informed. [Join VFW Action Corps!](#)

VFW Store

One of the most effective and visible ways to show your pride in the VFW, and raise awareness of programs in your community, is to purchase branded merchandise from the VFW Store. Your VFW shirt, cap or pin will spark curiosity in others. That, in turn, can lead to meaningful conversations about our organization. To shop for branded merchandise, click vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/vfwlogo.



Roll Call of Departed Comrades

GARDNER, RICHARD LEE, current Quartermaster, Department of Nevada, 2020-2021 and a Life member of John Strozzi Post No. 12108, Beatty, Nevada, October 26, 2020.