

Membership

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENTS OF MONTANA, LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS, AND OKLAHOMA FOR ACHIEVING 100% IN MEMBERSHIP!

COMMANDER'S CHALLENGE FOR MAY

For this month's Commander's Challenge, we are challenging our Posts to increase their total membership percentage in the month of May. The top Post in each division (based on increase in membership percentage from May 1 through May 31) will receive a \$1,000 award.

In addition, each Post that ends the month over 100% in membership and has at least five new members during the month of May will be entered into a drawing for an additional \$500.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MONTANA AND LOUISIANA!

For having achieved 100% in membership by March 31, 2021, the Commander (plus guest) and Quartermaster (plus guest) for the Department have each received:

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

ALL-AMERICAN CAP ORDER INFORMATION

All District and Post Commanders who achieve 100% in membership will receive an email from National Headquarters requesting their VFW hat size and preference type of cap (female/male).

A District Commander will not be considered All-American until they hit the top 10 in membership in their division and have met all their program requirements.

A Post Commander will not be considered All-American until they achieve the required membership percentage in their respective division and have met all program requirements.

Only the top 25 in their respective division who achieve All-American status will receive an All-American cap from National Headquarters.

Once the email from National Headquarters has been received, click on the link and provide the data requested for hat sizes. Having the data will make it easier to place the All-American cap orders to ensure they arrive on time for the National Convention.

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.

VFW MEMBERSHIP CARDS

As a reminder, VFW membership cards are always sent directly to the member at the address on file and not to the Post. Our membership cards are printed and mailed from an offsite printing facility as an automated process. We do not have the ability to redirect a member's card to the Post.

In special instances, such as when a Life membership is being presented as an award or a gift, we recommend that the Post contact the Member Service Center directly and we may be able to assist.

POST DEVELOPMENT

A difficult year for developing new Posts for sure! Some Departments find themselves locked-down and unable to recruit at all while others are able to do some events although limited. Even in these difficult times, I get calls from members who believe they have what it takes to charter a new Post in their community. In fact, many have been inspired by the good work VFW Posts across the country continue to perform even during the COVID pandemic. Please continue to let us know how we can help you.

If you have any questions about chartering a new Post or revitalizing a Post in your area, please give me a call at 816.968.2788 or email coreyhunt@vfw.org.

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 May 10, 2021, at 2:00 PM CDT, we will be covering the topic: **How to Use Social Media Effectively**. Look for the Membership Monday Zoom meeting invite in an OMS notification on May 6, 2021. All members can join. In addition, the Zoom link will be emailed as a meeting invitation to each Department's 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 4/26/2021)

Robert Allan Clark – 176

VFW Post 4876, Dept. OK

Matthew B. Northen – 174

VFW Post 8862, Dept. of Europe

Stacey Reddig – 169

VFW Post 1843, Dept. of OK

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 and annual members. There are three levels of membership; each offer their own package of exclusive member benefits. Financial contributions to the Legacy Life Member Program are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Enrollment Cost:

Annual Payouts:

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

What will your Legacy be?

VFW National Convention

VFW Will Not Host National Convention in Baltimore *(The convention was scheduled for July 31-Aug. 5, 2021.)*

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has announced that the coronavirus pandemic has made it impossible to hold its 122nd VFW National Convention at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland, July 31-Aug. 5, 2021, as originally planned.

The decision comes as public-health concerns and social distancing mandates are expected to continue to span into the summer months ahead.

The VFW is currently exploring alternative location options and will provide more information as soon as it is available. Visit vfw.org/Convention for up-to-date information and alerts.

Baltimore 2021 Housing Reservation Cancellations

Anyone who made room reservations directly through VFW Housing will automatically have their reservation cancelled, but any members who made *room reservations independently will need to call their

hotel and cancel their reservation. No fees (first night deposits) have been charged to credit cards. No action is required on your part.

If you booked a hospitality suite, please contact your hotel directly.

*If you made a hotel reservation at a hotel outside of the VFW room blocks (official VFW hotels: Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Sheraton, Renaissance), you will need to call the hotel you directly made the reservation with and cancel that reservation yourself.

Development

Memorial Day Campaign – You should be receiving a package within the next few days with 4 Nickels, a \$1.50 check and a set of patriotic coasters. These items are simple reminders of how much your generosity means to the VFW and all the veterans we serve. When you return the nickels and check with the most generous gift you can manage, it will mean the VFW will continue to be there to help veterans and military families receive financial grants when times are tough, assist veterans in obtaining the benefits they have earned and ensure the rights of veterans of every generation are respected and protected. The coasters are a thank you for your continuing support. I also hope that you will join other veterans and military families in displaying the U.S. flag on all patriotic holidays, particularly this upcoming Memorial Day. You can visit heroes.vfw.org/Flag to print a free flag poster to display.

Matching Gift Opportunity to Support the VFW's Programs – The VFW has been presented with a great opportunity by generous friends of the VFW. They have made an offer to triple your gift until June 19, 2021, up to \$50,000! Many veterans and returning service members are turning to the VFW for assistance in finding and training for jobs when they return from long deployments, as well as financial assistance grants for rent, food, medicine ... and so much more. Thanks to dedicated members like you, we have been able to provide the life-changing assistance our veterans need. As the COVID-19 situation continues, our service members are still some of the hardest hit in the wake of this global emergency. The VFW is on the front line in the fight for education, jobs, health care and justice FOR VETERANS! This is a great opportunity to help support veterans of all ages, right in your Department. Be as generous as you can and send your gift in by June 19, 2021, to make sure it is tripled!

Show Your Gratitude and "Sign The Card" – This month we will be deploying the May Sign A Card Email Campaign. Help us say "Thank you" to the National Guard and VFW Posts that participated in assisting with COVID-19 vaccine efforts. Once you receive the email, you can read how to add your name to a virtual online "card" that will be shared with those still on the front lines of the pandemic. **Show our fellow brothers and sisters-in-arms your gratitude and add your name.**

May is National Military Appreciation Month – Is your Post planning to commemorate a special event for Military Spouses Day on May 7, Peace Officers Memorial Day and Armed Forces Day on May 15, National Maritime Day on May 22 or Memorial Day on May 31?

If your Post is planning a special event this month to commemorate any of the above mentioned special days, please share your success story with us. We will be looking for special stories from Posts like yours to feature in upcoming monthly e-newsletters and on vfw.org/VFWatWork in the Story Archive. You may email your story to success@vfw.org.

Simplify Your Will Planning While Supporting the VFW – If you are considering a gift to the VFW through your will or other estate plans, you can visit vfw.org/PlannedGiving for helpful tips, tools and other

FREE resources! Request our Estate Planning Kit to help simplify and organize the estate planning process for you and your attorney. For assistance or more information, please contact VFW Planned Giving at 816.968.1119 or email 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: To qualify for All-American regarding VMS, the minimum donation is \$100.00. The dashboard is updated weekly every Friday. Stay safe.

VMS Formstack Links and Websites:

- **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

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/products/GP238.

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.

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.

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

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

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

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN THEMES. The 2021-22 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic. The Voice of Democracy theme will be "America: Where do we go from here?" and the Patriot's Pen theme will be "How can I be a good American?"

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2021-22 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

UPDATED VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN CHAIRMAN'S MANUAL. An updated version of the Voice of Democracy Chairman's Manual is now available on the VFW website. Changes to program include:

- Judging no longer has to be conducted in person, and can be completed remotely at the Post, District and Department level.
- The preferred format for Voice of Democracy audio essays is now Flash Drives/USBs or email submission. CDs will no longer be accepted.

Simply visit vfw.org/Login.aspx, log in to My VFW, then click on **VFW Training & Support** under the **Member Resources** heading, then click on Community Service & Youth Programs and Activities, then click on **Chairman Manuals** under the **Additional Resources** heading. Here you will find all program materials.

Additionally, anyone (including students, parents, teachers, and chairmen) can download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen by visiting the below links:

Voice of Democracy: vfw.org/VOD/

Patriot's Pen: vfw.org/PatriotsPen/

For Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen brochures, posters, awards and more, visit the VFW Store: vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy for Voice of Democracy and vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen for Patriot's Pen.

U.S. FLAG DISPLAY REMINDER. The U.S. Flag is normally designated to be at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15, however, this day is also Armed Forces Day, which the flag is to be placed at full-staff, therefore, the flag should be displayed at full staff on May 15, 2021.

HALF-STAFF U.S. FLAG. The U.S. Flag should be at half-staff on Memorial Day, the last Monday in May (federal holiday - half-staff until noon). Flags available at VFW Store vfwstore.org/category/flags/usflags.

FLAG DAY, JUNE 14. All VFW units are reminded to properly display the U.S. Flag on Flag Day, Monday, June 14 and to conduct a ceremony or program as feasible. You may contact the VFW Communications Department for a Flag Day speech. It is also suggested Posts should award the VFW Patriotic Citizen Award (Product No. 4385) for those who have daily displayed our National flag.

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

The average cost of a 3-day hospital stay is around \$30,000.

No matter the type of insurance you have, hospital bills can quickly add up to thousands of dollars. Even the costs for a brief hospital stay can add unwanted stress to an already stressful situation.

However, with the VFW Hospital HELP Plan, administered by AGIA, you can prevent some of that financial stress. This coverage accrues cash benefits and more during covered hospital stays:

- Money back in your wallet if you are sick or hurt and end up in the hospital.
- Added protection to give you and your family an extra stream of cash benefits.
- Coverage that is not tied to your medical insurance.
- Payment regardless of any other health plan.

Plus, benefit payments are sent directly to you, to be spent as you'd like. [Get coverage today.](#)

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

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

NATIONAL "BUDDY"® POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST. The time frame for registering and setting up the Department winning Buddy Poppy displays for the national judging at convention will be the same as last year. Department winning entries will be accepted for registration and may be set up beginning at 8 a.m., Saturday, July 31, until noon, Monday, Aug. 2, 2021. Winning displays will be identified with appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning and announced later on the convention floor. Displays must be removed prior to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon.

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.

National Veterans Service

May 2021 NVS Accredited Service Officer Proficiency Training Conference

Due to continued COVID-19 precautions, the NVS Proficiency Training Conference for accredited representatives is being held in a virtual format with live instruction May 3-11, 2021 each business day (*weekends excluded*) from 2:00PM - 4:30PM EDT via video teleconferencing. This conference is intended for all Department Service Officers and one other accredited representative from the regional office. An end of conference test will be given, and Department leadership will be advised of their attendees' test scores.

If you have any questions regarding training for VFW accredited representatives, please feel free to contact Chris Macinkowicz, Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance at cmacinkowicz@vfw.org.

National Legislative Service/Action Corps

Your Voice on Capitol Hill

The National Legislative Service staff regularly testifies before Congress on behalf of our VFW members. Our testimonies cover a wide array of issues that are critically important to veterans from all eras, as well as current active duty and Guard/Reserve service members and their families. We have been invited to testify before the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs on many different topics such as Department of Veterans Affairs' accountability; mental health and suicide prevention; needs specific to women veterans; toxic exposure; transition assistance; education and employment; concurrent receipt and retirement compensation; and numerous pieces of pending legislation concerning veterans' earned benefits, care options, and delivery. All of our [testimonies are posted](#) on the VFW website.

In addition to providing testimony, we also regularly have one-on-one meetings and conversations with senators, representatives, and key committee staffers to field questions and provide detailed information regarding the [VFW's position on specific issues](#). Making sure our veterans receive the benefits and care they deserve is paramount and always our priority, and your members of Congress know it. They often reach out to ask for our input and support on issues they know are important to our membership. We stand firm with our [legislative priorities](#), and Congress listens.

If you don't already receive it, [sign up](#) for the *Action Corps Weekly* e-newsletter. You will receive updates on what is happening on Capitol Hill. It also provides a way for you to take action by responding to Action Alerts when the VFW needs to use its full power on crucial legislative issues.

Administrative Operations

Post Election Reports must be submitted no later than June 1 to the National Headquarters. We encourage all Post Quartermasters to use the online Election Report process featured in the Online Membership System (OMS), which is located behind the member's "LOGIN" at vfw.org.

The 2021-2022 Department Roster is now an Online Membership System (OMS) submitted report. The interactive report will cover reporting of all Department elected and appointed officers and committee chairman. In addition, the District Election Report is also contained within the Online Membership System (OMS). Portions of the District report will feed into the Department report (i.e. the District Commander position).

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

Get items for your Memorial Day commemorations at the VFW Store, including grave markers, floral wreaths and flags. Go to vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/memorialday?page=1&size=100.

