

Membership

Commander-in-Chief Tim Borland has issued a challenge to all VFW members for the month of May 2023 focusing on renewing and upgrading our members!

This month, the Commander-in-Chief's challenge is focusing on our annual members. We want to see our Posts working on two aspects of retention: renewing our annual members and upgrading them to Life. While retention is necessary, we haven't forgotten about the importance of recruiting as well, so we will be issuing an additional individual recruiter challenge this month!

To focus on retention, we will be acknowledging the top Post in each membership division that shows the most renewals and Life member upgrades during the month of May. If a member pays their 2023 dues, whether annual or Life, this will be credited toward this month's challenge and the top Post in each division will receive a unique statue to display at your Post commemorating this important membership goal!

In addition, the top recruiter in each division during the month of May will receive a special recruiter plaque to recognize their part in helping grow and strengthen our membership. We want to see you all going out to bring new members into the VFW!

We have had a historic membership year so far, and we want to continue to keep that momentum going. Through recruiting new members and retaining the members we have, we will continue to show our strength as an organization, to help our fellow veterans and their families, and to prove to the world that EVERY VETERAN COUNTS!

This Post contest will count the number of annual members in a Post who pay membership dues, either annual or Life, from May 1 through May 31, 2023. Dues payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments made through the mail will be processed when received. The recruiter plaque award will count all new and reinstated members recruited between May 1 and May 31, 2023. Awards will take approximately six weeks to mail. Questions about this contest or other membership programs can be sent to membership@vfw.org.

2023 KANSAS CITY SPREE

The top two Post Commanders and the top two District Commanders in each division who achieve 100% membership by April 1, 2023, along with their guest will each be awarded:

- Round-trip airfare to Kansas City, Missouri, from the airport nearest the awardee's home.
- A fun-filled weekend (May 18-21, 2023) that may include but is not limited to touring, shopping and a complete tour of the VFW National Headquarters.

DEPARTMENT "100 PERCENT" INCENTIVE

Any Department that attains 100% in membership by close of business on May 1, 2023, 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:

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

NEW POST DEVELOPMENT & POST REVITALIZATION

Congratulations to the Department of Texas and Washington for chartering new Posts since the last publication! Post 12219 and Post 12221, the Canton and College Station Posts, respectively from the Department of Texas and Post 12220 Anacortes, chartered April 1, 2023, from the Department of Washington. This is hard work and deserves the shout out. Well done! We are now going into May, so break out those membership reports, the unpaid lists, your expiring list from the ole Post query. Make some calls and capture those continuous members! As we come out of winter and begin working towards this year's finish line, think about those Posts in your District that may need a boost in some way. Revitalization efforts come in all kinds of forms. Have a safe spring and, as always, if you have more than 15 members ready to charter a new Post, give me a call! We have resources to help you get where you need to be! If you have Posts needing revitalization, call us and we will help you! Call 816.968.2788 or email me at coreyhunt@vfw.org.

New Post Development and Post Revitalization Department Award: For each new Post chartered, and/or revitalized, the Department Quartermaster will receive:

- **A \$250 credit from the VFW Store to be used toward necessary materials for the new Post.**

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

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

UPCOMING TRAINING

The next Membership Monday training webinar will be on May 8, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m., CST, Topic: Life Member Installment.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters (as of 4.26.23):

Timothy M. Borland – 504
VFW Post 9972, Dept. of AZ

Steven L. Woodward – 455
VFW Post 2224, Dept. of WA

Joseph M. Young – 294
VFW Post 7108, Dept. of TX

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?

VFWS Foundation

Plenty of funding remains available to VFW Posts, Districts, and their Auxiliaries through the VFW Foundation’s grant programs. There are currently two opportunities available to Posts: (1) Community Support Grant; (2) Uniting to Combat Hunger (UTCH) Grant. One opportunity is available to Districts: District Corporate Partnership Grant.

Through these grants, Posts and Districts can receive \$1,500 in reimbursement for various qualifying projects. The applications for these grants, which include guidelines, can be accessed by visiting vfw.org/grants and vfw.org/utch-grant. Questions may be directed to Grants Manager Jason Couch at jcouch@vfw.org.

Due to scheduling conflicts with the Burger King Foundation, the Burger King/VFW Unmet Needs fundraising campaign will be conducted in May of this year. We continue to recruit BK franchisees across the US to help raise much needed funding for the Unmet Needs program which provides financial aid grants to veterans, service members, and their families that are experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. A list of participating Burger King restaurants is available at vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants

If you have any questions, please contact Ben Vargas, Assistant Director, VFW Foundation, at bvargas@vfw.org.

Representatives from Humana and the VFW/VFW Foundation convened on April 6, 2023, at the Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri, for the annual Strategic Initiatives meeting. Discussion focused on impactful ways that both organizations could promote overall health and wellness in the veteran community. Primary consideration was given to raising awareness of the VFW’s NVS outreach in alignment with Humana’s mission to reduce food insecurity, social isolation, and healthcare equity.

Contact: Richard Freiburghouse, VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations, rfreiburghouse@vfw.org.

VFWS National Convention

CONVENTION HOUSING: 124th National Convention housing opened Feb. 17, 2023. A memo was sent out to the VFW Departments on April 10, 2023, with the following information:

We are **71** days until housing cut-off (**June 21**) for the July 22-27, 2023 convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

We have had an overwhelming number of early housing reservations for the National Convention. Due to this early booking pattern, many state Department blocks are now **sold-out**. For those sold-out Departments with new reservations, many individuals have been placed on a **wait list** for their assigned hotels.

In order to accommodate this growing wait list, all remaining rooms at each hotel (VFW Department blocks) will be placed into one **common block of rooms**, known as “**free-sell**.” This means any remaining available rooms in each state block will no longer be earmarked for a specific state and will be part of the **free-sell block**, giving every state in its assigned hotel the ability to book rooms from the **free-sell block** and allowing us/VFW to fill the contracted room blocks at the hotels.

NOTE: All wait list requests will be fulfilled before new reservations are processed.

If your Department has rooms remaining in your assigned block, your attendees have until **Monday, April 17** to book these rooms. **Beginning, Tuesday, April 18**, any remaining rooms will be put into the **free-sell** block to fulfill wait listed requests. Beyond that, all subsequent new housing reservations will be taken from the “**free-sell block**” **based on availability**. Room type requests will be honored when possible, however, it will be dependent on the availability of each type of room in each hotel.

VFW National is under contract with the current VFW hotels, therefore it is our goal to utilize all rooms contracted in each of those hotels **first** to avoid any penalties for not filling the contracted blocks.

In the event a hotel or hotels sell out completely, we will make every attempt, based on availability, to secure additional rooms at that hotel. If there are no additional rooms available to us, we will continue to fill up the other official VFW hotels to satisfy our contractual obligations before we move forward to secure additional rooms (overflow) at other nearby hotels. If this occurs beyond the cut-off date of June 21, a determination will be made if VFW National is in a position to sign a contract for overflow hotel(s) and to be obligated should those contracted overflow rooms not be utilized.

We encourage your attendees to make their reservations now for the National Convention. We **cannot** guarantee there will be availability through housing **cutoff of June 21** as the rooms are booking quickly and are **first come, first served**.

To make a reservation, go online to vfw.org or call 833.262.6900 (1+725.263.1068 internationally). The Customer Care is open from 9a-6p, EST, Monday – Friday.

Development

Here is some helpful information about why the support of every VFW member is vitally important. VFW’s life-changing programs are not possible through membership dues alone. In fact, **membership dues alone cover just 18% of the cost of programs**. As a nonprofit organization, the VFW relies heavily on the generosity of its members and patriotic supporters. When members donate, 100% of their net donation goes directly back to support their Department. *Please spread the word and give as generously as you are able.*

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 donation for the next 30 days! They have committed \$50,000 of their own money for this challenge. They believe there are many others who understand the cost of war extends well beyond the battlefield. They are asking proud VFW

members like you to support fellow veterans of all generations who have been disabled by war. Thanks to dedicated members like you, we have been able to provide life-changing assistance our veterans need. The VFW is on the front line in the fight for education, jobs, health care and an overall better quality of life FOR VETERANS! This is a great opportunity to help support veterans of all ages, *right in your Department*. To receive every dollar of this incredible offer, all gifts must be postmarked within 30 days.

May is National Military Appreciation Month – Is your Post planning to commemorate a special event for Military Spouses Day on May 12, Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15, Armed Forces Day on May 20, National Maritime Day on May 22, or Memorial Day on May 29?

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.

Create Your Legacy in Just a Few Words – Having a will helps ensure your family and loved ones will be taken care of after your lifetime. Should you like to support future generations of veterans once your family is covered, 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 vfw.org/PlannedGiving. You can also contact the VFW Planned Giving Office to request information on estate planning by calling 816.968.1119 or email plannedgiving@vfw.org.

Have You Heard About the VFW's Partners in Patriotism? – Commander-in-Chief Timothy M. Borland 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 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 toll-free at 1.833.VFW.GIVE (1.833.839.4483) or email us at partners@vfw.org with "Partners in Patriotism Application" in the subject line.

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

Department Resources – Many great resources are available for your Department to use in promoting fundraising programs. By visiting heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools, you will find the latest fundraising program information, ideas and promotional tools from the Development Department. 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!

VFW Communications

It's not too late to join us for the second annual 2023 VFW Day of Service.

[Signing up](#) is easy and we have plenty of [great ideas and free resources](#) to help you execute another meaningful community service. Once you have your event idea nailed down, we can help you promote it, too! Head over to the resource page and use some of the free tools there to help you plan, promote and execute an amazing VFW Day of Service outing! You'll find:

- [Ready-made social posts](#) you can plug and play to promote your VFW Day of Service event.
- Helpful event planning [checklists](#).
- [Signage and flyers](#) to help you spread the word.

Events are being hosted throughout the entire month of May, and we can't wait to see how your event comes together.

Veterans & Military Support Programs

As we plan for the **2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona**, we still have a few **Departments** that are **still delinquent**. **Please contact the VMS office at 816.968.1102** if you have any questions on how much your Department needs to donate to resolve the delinquency. Department won't be able to order the new pins until the delinquency is brought current.

The new design for the **VMS Lapel Pins** for the **2023-24 Program year** is here and we are receiving and still taking orders. **Please do not pay for these pins until the 2023-24 Program year starts on July 1, 2023.**

VMS All-American Requirement

To qualify for All-American, a **minimum donation of \$100** must be donated to **VMS by June 30, 2023.**

Encourage your Posts to donate directly to the VMS Programs by going to the VFW Dashboard. Click on the **"VMS Donation"** link at the upper right-hand corner of the screen and follow the online donation form. Once the donation is made, you will receive a confirmation email. If you have any questions, please contact us at 816.968.1102. **Thank you for your continued support!**

Stay tuned for a new VMS and Programs donation portal for instant credit to the Dashboard.

VMS Donation Reports

Donation reports are received on most Fridays and are uploaded to the Dashboard on the same day. The period of these reports is from the previous Friday to current Thursday.

VFW's "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"

The 2023 Fall Semester is now **closed**. The **2024 Spring Semester** will open **Aug. 1, 2023**, and runs through **Nov. 15, 2023**. The application is online at vfw.org/Scholarship.

VMS Program Chair Tools webpage is also the VMS Monthly Newsletter. This is our one-stop-shop for all your Chair information, resources, and forms. Please click the link below to access the webpage. **Add the below link to your shortcuts on your internet browser.**

[Access the Veterans & Military Support Program Chairperson Tools webpage now.](#)

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

Thank you for what you do every day! See you in Phoenix, Arizona!!

VFW Programs

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

ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD. Please encourage Posts to read the 2022-23 Membership Program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National Headquarters to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants and VFW Sport Clips Help-A-Hero scholarship statistics. The information charts reside on the KPI tools section.

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 Chairperson's Guide or contact Tammy at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

VFW HONOR'S AMERICA'S TEACHERS DURING 2022-23 PROGRAM YEAR. Congratulations to the following teachers who were selected National winners for 2022-23:

Elementary School level – Kelly L. Garey, Van Buren Elementary School, Caldwell, Idaho, selected by VFW Post 3886 and Auxiliary, Caldwell, Idaho.

Middle School level – Susan Allgood, Stephens County Middle School, Toccoa, Georgia, selected by VFW Post 4346 and Auxiliary, Toccoa, Georgia.

High School level – Javier F. Martinez, Kaneland High School, Maple Park, Illinois, selected by VFW Post 5819 and Auxiliary, Lemont, Illinois.

National awards will be presented in July to each teacher during the VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Each of the winners will receive an all-expense-paid trip to the National Convention and \$1,000 cash award for professional development expenses (winners will receive a 1099-MISC); \$1,000 award to each winning teacher's school; plaques for both the winning teacher and their school. Each Department's recipients and their schools will receive a National Commendation citation, which will be sent to the Department Headquarters for presentation.

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 2023-24 themes have been chosen by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. The Voice of Democracy theme will be **"What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?"** and the Patriot's Pen theme will be **"How are you inspired by America?"**

NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT'S PEN ENTRY FORMS. The new 2023-24 Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entry forms are now available on the VFW website.

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

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

U.S. FLAG HALF-STAFF REMINDER. The U.S. Flag should be at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day on Monday, May 15.

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, Wednesday, 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.

"UPDATED" POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS. Under previous Public Law 105-85 (Nov. 16, 1997), it indicated there were only six days that federal agencies, military installations and U.S. post offices were required to display the POW/MIA flag. Now under new law, Public Law 116-67 (Feb. 21, 2020), it is required that the POW/MIA flag be flown on all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed. To purchase a POW/MIA flag, go to vfwstore.org/products/GP237.

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

VFW Member Benefits

With May being Healthy Vision Month, our friends at Eyemart Express want to remind you that an eye exam not only ensures your eyes are healthy but can uncover hidden heart health issues.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In fact, one person dies from heart disease every 34 seconds. However, most people don't know that an eye exam can give you a heart health checkup. That is why optometrists from Eyemart Express, the VFW's exclusive eye care provider known for helping people see clearly faster, are educating consumers about this simple way to uncover hidden heart health issues.

In addition to evaluating your eye health and vision, annual comprehensive eye exams can provide medical insights about the heart such as high cholesterol, which contributes to heart disease and an increased risk of heart attacks and even diabetes.

Find your [local Eyemart Express store here](#).

"Buddy"[®] Poppy

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 usual. Department winning entries will be accepted for registration and may be set up beginning at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, July 22, until noon, Monday, July 24, 2023. Winning displays will be identified with appropriate ribbons on Tuesday morning and announced later on the convention floor. Displays must be removed prior to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday afternoon. Any displays left after this time, will be removed for disposal by convention center personnel during the disassembly of the hall.

"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."

BUDDY POPPY UPDATE: National Headquarters conducted a review of the Buddy Poppy policy and procedures and implemented the following changes effective May 20, 2021:

- 1) If you do not receive your order within 8 weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact National Headquarters to report that you have not received the order.
- 2) If you do not report a missing order 3 months after the 8-week processing time, the order will NOT be replaced free of charge, and you will have to resubmit your order.

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 chairperson's guidebooks are used as an example of promoting these programs.

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

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 do not 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

POST SERVICE OFFICER SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

In accordance with the National Veterans Service Policy & Procedure, one of the duties of the Department Service Officer (DSO) is to conduct at least one VFW Post Service Officers School of Instruction for all Post, County and District Service Officers in the Department, during each VFW year. After conducting such training, DSOs shall provide an annual Post Service Officer School of Instruction report to both their Department Headquarters and the Director, National Veterans Service by the end of June. The report shall include the date and location of the training, topics taught, and a roster of attendees. The report for the Director, National Veterans Service, should be sent to taldana@vfw.org.

Of note, holding a PSO School of Instruction is also one of the criteria to qualify for the All-American Program. The other National Veterans Service criteria for All-American are to have a State/Department Service Officer and for that Department Service Officer to successfully complete NVS training with a passing grade of 70% or higher.

MEMORIAL DAY

This year, we will be celebrating Memorial Day on Monday, May 29, 2023. Originally called "Decoration Day," Memorial Day is observed to honor those who died while serving in the U.S. military.

While many Americans will celebrate the holiday with their families, countless VFW-accredited service representatives will be spending their day volunteering at Memorial Day events answering questions about VA benefits and assisting our Nation's veterans and their families in their quest to obtain their earned entitlements. Whether having a presence on the National Mall over a weekend of remembrance or visiting an unaccompanied hospitalized veteran in a VA Medical Center, the value a Service Officer brings to the lives of others cannot be underestimated.

PACT ACT

VFW National Veterans Service recently launched a website to help veterans, their family members or survivors learn if they may be eligible for benefits under the PACT Act. Those who are interested can log on

to pactactinfo.org, answer a few brief questions and determine if they may qualify. This tool makes direct referrals to our network of professionally trained, accredited representatives who can assist with applying for VA Disability benefits. Please refer those who may have questions about their eligibility to this website as we continue to try to reach as many veterans as possible.

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 services 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 2023-24 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 stick flags. Order by May 12. Go to vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/memorialday?page=1&size=100.

