**NEW MEMBER GUIDE**

**Veterans of Foreign Wars**

**POST NAME AND NUMBER**

A close-up of a badge

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**ADDRESS, EMAIL, CONTACT INFORMATION.**

A red and white logo

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**WELCOME NEW COMRADE!**

**WELCOME MESSAGE FROM POST TO NEW MEMBER.**

**ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans' service organization composed of combat veterans as well as active-duty, Guard and Reservists who continue to serve in harm's way.

Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of combat veterans and its oldest major veterans' organization. With nearly 1.9 million members located in more than 6,800 VFW Posts worldwide, "NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS." The VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to veterans’ service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs worldwide. For more information visit our website at www.vfw.org.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE VFW**

(as Defined by Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter)

The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever.

**POST HISTORY**

**ADD INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR POST AND ITS HISTORY.**

**DISTRICT INFORMATION**

Post **(Number)** is a member of District **(Number)**

**ADD ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DISTRICT**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**THIS INFORMATION IS BASED ON YOUR POST BYLAWS, CHANGE AS NEEDED.**

Nominations for elected positions are held in March and elections in April.

The installation of officers is usually held in May.

The newly installed officers take over after the Department Convention.

**POST ELECTED OFFICERS**

* Commander
* Senior Vice Commander
* Junior Vice Commander
* Quartermaster
* Trustees (typically just the 3 year)

Note: Trustees are also elected but are not considered officers. Their duty is to audit the post financial books quarterly. Other positions may also be elected but depend on the post bylaws.

**POST APPOINTED OFFICERS**

* Chaplain
* Judge Advocate
* Adjutant
* Service Officer
* Committee Chairman

Note: Some of these positions may be elected but depend on Post bylaws.

**POST COMMITTEES**

**UPDATE THIS SECTION PER YOUR POST BYLAWS.**

* House Committee - Oversees the physical post & canteen and its hired employees.
* Membership Committee - Verifies the eligibility of potential new members.
* Finance Committee – Assists QM with finance matters and yearly budget.
* Bylaw Committee - Proposes new Post bylaw changes for the next year.

Note 1: House Committee members are also elected and not considered officers. They oversee the maintenance of the post & canteen.

**DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF VFW POST OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

**DUTIES OF THE COMMANDER**

* Preside at all meetings of the Post, conducting such meetings in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and other applicable parliamentary rules.
* Enforce strict observance of the laws and usages of this organization, including Post, County Council (if applicable), District and Department Bylaws and the Congressional Charter, National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual and all lawful orders from proper authorities
* Insist that Post business and activities be conducted in such a manner that they do not violate any applicable governmental law, ordinance or regulation nor bring or tend to bring dishonor or embarrassment upon the Post, its members or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
* Decide all questions of law and usage in the Post, subject to appeal pursuant to the Bylaws.
* Upon entering into office, appoint all other officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.
* Approve all disbursements of funds properly authorized by the Post by use of voucher or payment order.
* Assure that the office of Quartermaster is bonded according to Section 703 of the Bylaws.
* Assure that all dues and other monies due the National Headquarters and Department are forwarded promptly together with accurate reports and returns pertaining thereto.
* Assure that all reports are correctly prepared and promptly forwarded, that all the business of the Post is handled with dispatch and that all necessary licenses and permits are obtained for proper operation. Ensure that a properly completed Report of Election of Officers for the ensuing year is submitted to Department and National Headquarters by June 1.
* Assure that the Post Trustees have examined the books and records of the Post and prepared the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit no later than the end of the month following the last day of each quarterly period.
* Assure that the Commander or their representative attend all properly called District Conventions or meetings and County Council meetings (if applicable).
* Comply with and perform all of the duties required by the laws and usages of this organization, the provisions of these Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure and Ritual and Department, District, County Council (if applicable) or Post Bylaws pertaining to the duties and obligations of a Post Commander and lawful orders from proper authority and perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office.
* Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
* Failure without just cause could result in removal from office.

**DUTIES OF THE SENIOR VICE COMMANDER (SVC)**

* The Post Senior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order.
* Preside at meetings in absence of the Commander.
* Understudy and assist the Commander in the performance of his/her duties.
* Chair the Membership Committee.

**DUTIES OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER (JVC)**

* The Post Junior Vice Commander shall assist the Commander in preserving order.
* Preside at meetings in absence of the Commander and SVC.
* Understudy and assist the Commander in the performance of his/her duties.
* Chair the Youth Activities and Awards Committees.

**DUTIES OF QUARTERMASTER (QM)**

* Qualify and secure a bond in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
* Collect all monies due the Post, giving receipt therefore, and have charge of the funds, securities and other property of the Post, all of which shall be placed in their care. The Quartermaster shall be the accountable officer of the Post and the Treasurer of all committees handling funds.
* Disburse funds as properly authorized by the Post using accepted banking practices. Unless otherwise provided for in Post Bylaws, all disbursements of Post funds shall bear the signature of the Quartermaster or other person(s) authorized by the Quartermaster. Such other authorized person(s) shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which the Quartermaster may be accountable in accordance with Section 703.
* Receive annual membership dues (admission fees if applicable) and life membership fees and forward the Department and National dues and life membership fees immediately to National Headquarters as prescribed in Section 104.
* Provide the Post Trustees with all records, files and statements required or necessary for the preparation of the Post Trustees Quarterly Report of Audit.
* Reconcile and verify all transactions listed on all bank statements to assure the accuracy of Post records. The books and records of the Quartermaster shall be maintained in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times. Unless specifically authorized by the Post to remove such books and records from its facilities, they will be kept at the Post facilities.
* Provide access and transfer to their successor in office or anyone designated by higher authority, without delay, all books, records, papers, monies, securities and other property of the Post in their possession or under their control.
* Comply with, and perform all duties required of the Quartermaster by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.
* Report on transactions concerning receipts and expenditures, for any given period, at a regular or special meeting of the Post.
* File appropriate forms as required by Federal, State and Local Statutes or regulations.
* To serve as Treasurer of all Post Committees.

**DUTIES OF ADJUTANT**

* Be the official corresponding officer for the Post and shall attest to all official communications and reports with their signature.
* Under the direction of the Commander, prepare all reports and returns required of the Adjutant.
* Maintain the books and records in a legible and uniform format. Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a back-up is maintained. Books and records shall be available for inspection by authorized officers and Post members at all reasonable times. Unless specifically authorized by the Post to remove such books and records from its facilities, they will be kept at the Post facilities.
* The Post Adjutant shall maintain the following records:
  + 1. A copy of the original application of every member admitted to the Post.
  + 2. Minutes of each Post meeting after correction and approval.
  + 3. All current orders or circulars issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, the Department Commander, the District and/or County Council Commander (if applicable) and the Post Commander.
  + 4. A correspondence file.
  + 5. A file containing a copy of the proof of eligibility submitted by officers pursuant to Section 216.
* Maintain a current copy of the Bylaws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and copies of the Bylaws of the Post, Department, District and County Council (if applicable).
* Transfer to their successor, without delay, all books, papers, records, monies and other records and property of the Post in their possession or under their control.
* Comply with and perform all duties required of the Adjutant by the laws and usages of this organization, applicable Bylaws and orders from lawful authority and perform such other duties as are incident to such office.Attest by his/her signature and the seal of the Post all official actions of the Post.

**DUTIES OF CHAPLAIN**

* Visit the sick and shut-in Post members and report on visits.
* Organize and lead all Post and ceremonial prayers.
* Organize and lead all Burial and Memorial services.

**DUTIES OF JUDGE ADVOCATE**

* Provide Commander Interpretation of By-Laws, Manual of Procedures and Ritual.
* Interpretation of local laws as applicable to Post operations.

**DUTIES OF SURGEON**

* Promote health programs for the benefit of the Post and the community.
* Maintain an up-to-date file of prevailing health issues.

**DUTIES OF TRUSTEE**

* At least monthly, review the Monthly Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Post Quartermaster.
* Within thirty (30) days from the end of each quarter, properly audit the books and records of the Post Quartermaster, Post Adjutant, and any activity, club room, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of the Post and submit a Post Trustee’s Report of Audit to the Department Quartermaster for referral to the Department Inspector.
* The Report shall be in accordance with and upon such form as may be prescribed by the Adjutant General. The audit shall be signed by the Post Commander and Trustees, who shall, by their signatures, certify to the accuracy of the information contained therein.
* Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of the organization or lawful orders from proper authority.
* Verify all expenditures of the Post for correctness and accuracy.
* Audit all committees having receipt or expenditure of Post funds.

**DUTIES OF THE OFFICER OF THE DAY**

* Custodian of the Post colors, altar flag, Bible, ballot box, gavel, and other property for Post meetings.
* Inspect member dues cards at the beginning of each meeting.
* Make Post property available at the opening of the meeting and retrieve at close of the meeting.
* Control balloting when ballots are cast.

**DUTIES OF SGT. OF THE GUARD**

* Allow no one to enter a Post meeting without a current dues receipt or life member card.
* Notify the Officer of the Day of the presence of all distinguished guests.

**DUTIES OF THE SERVICE OFFICER**

* *The Post Service Officer shall advise members of the Post, their family members and survivors of benefits and services that are available in the local community such as homeless services, employment opportunities, and companies that offer discounted goods or services to veterans. The Post Service Officer shall direct individuals seeking Federal benefits assistance to the Department Service Officer. The work of a Post Service Officer shall be performed in accordance with the instructions contained in the VFW Guide for Post Service Officers under the general supervision of the Post Commander. The Post Service Officer shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office and as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.* To assist members of the Post, their widows, orphans, and other worthy cases brought forward in obtaining rightful benefits from federal and state governments.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

A committee chairman will work diligently to:

* Accomplish the programs assigned by the Post Commander.
* Select volunteers to assist in completing the assigned task in the time allotted.
* Make regular reports to the membership on progress of the committee.
* Select volunteers in adequate numbers to complete the assigned task within the time allotted.

**MEETINGS**

**UPDATE ACCORDING TO YOUR POST MEETING DATES AND TIME.**

Proper Attire: The only uniform in the VFW is the VFW cover. Certain gatherings will require different attire. Coordinate with the Post Commander.

**THE COMMANDER'S USE OF GAVEL MEANS:**

1. One loud rap: Be seated and give your attention to the member that has the floor.
2. Two loud raps: Stand.

When you wish to address the post: Raise your hand for recognition by the commander. When recognized, stand, and salute and state your information or report (in a voice loud enough to be heard by all Comrade Commander) I wish to report on ....(at the end). state... "Commander that completes my report." Salute - the commander will return the salute and you may be seated.

Leaving the meeting room during the course of the meeting: If you wish to leave the meeting room during the course of the meeting, take the following action: Stand, salute the Commander and retire quietly from the room.

Upon return, salute the Commander and return to your seat.

Meeting ethics: During the course of the meeting, make every effort not to disturb the forum. If discussion is necessary with a fellow member, keep it at a very low tone. If a point is made during a meeting that is not clear to you, do not hesitate to ask for recognition and have the point clarified. Feel free to participate; after all, it is your post!

Make every effort not to pass between the Commander’s podium and the altar. This is considered "Hallowed Ground"....in memory of our departed comrades.

**QUARTERMASTER’S REPORT**

The quartermaster’s report of receipt and disbursement is usually condensed so as to expedite the meeting. If a member wishes to review the QM's worksheet and ledger for a detailed account of the month’s financial activities, the QM and his records will be available at the close of the meeting. The financial records are always open to any post member upon request.

**UNIFORM**

Post Meetings - The VFW hat is the only hat allowed during meetings, otherwise no hat should be worn.

Proper attire should be worn at all times for post and district meetings.

**MOTIONS IN MEETINGS**

There are times in the meeting where post business or money spending motions are entertained: \*1.

1. Unfinished business - decisions made on business not finished in the last meeting.
2. New business - new motions are made here.

\*1 - Quartermaster can ask for motions on matters pertaining to his/her report.

Motions are made and acted upon in the following manner. A motion is made and seconded. Then the motion is discussed. After the discussion is finished a vote is taken.

**VFW AUXILIARY**

The former Ladies Auxiliary VFW, founded in 1914, is the VFW’s highly regarded support organization and is considered its “Partner in Service.”

Under its former name Ladies Auxiliary VFW, membership within the organization was offered exclusively to female spouses and family members of any member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The gender-specific eligibility requirement remained for more than 100 years until July 20, 2015, when delegates to the VFW’s 116th National Convention in Pittsburgh voted to amend the dated by-law to extend the same membership opportunity to eligible males.

Appropriately, the Ladies Auxiliary VFW has changed its official name to the VFW Auxiliary.

We are the nation’s oldest veterans’ service organization auxiliary with over 480,000 members representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several foreign locations (Germany, Guam, and Panama). Our members are relatives of those who have served in overseas combat. For more than 100 years, we have been supporting the Veterans of Foreign Wars, serving veterans and their families, active- duty military and their families, and spreading patriotism nationwide.

During the 2025–2026 Program Year, VFW Auxiliary members:

Provided over $154,000 in monetary aid and donated goods/services to veterans, active-duty military and their families. Volunteered more than 410,000 hours in VA Medical centers, hospitals, nursing homes, and Veterans homes. Made over 122,000 legislative contracts to support or oppose key bills affecting veterans and their families. Awarded nearly $175,000 in Scholarships, including National awards through the Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen contests. Worked with more 6,500 youth across 197 youth groups, promoting patriotism and civic engagement. Distributed more than 15,500 American and POW/MIA flags to promote Americanism and honor national pride.

**MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE**

The Military Order of the Cootie (MOC) can trace its ancestry to the Imperial Order of the Dragon, a similar fun-loving auxiliary that was affiliated with the United Spanish American War Veterans (USAWV). After World War I, two veterans who were members of both the USAWV and the VFW thought that the VFW might be able to attract more members if it formed an auxiliary modeled on the Imperial Order of the Dragon.

In the years after its founding, the MOC took on several special projects designed to bring smiles to the faces of two special groups of people -- hospitalized veterans and residents of the VFW National Home. Its involvement with the National Home came first. In fact, the Cooties were the first to back Amy Ross's plan for the Home, and, in 1924, helped persuade the VFW to sponsor the project. Since then, there has never been a period of any extended length in which the Cooties have not been involved in some project for the Home's betterment or for the happiness of those who live there.

As dear to a Cootie's heart as its National Home projects are, auxiliary members support its program for hospitalized veterans with equal enthusiasm. This program got its start in the 1940's, when auxiliary members realized that World War II would soon fill the hospitals with sick and wounded veterans. To help these veterans keep their spirits up, many Cooties took it upon themselves to entertain the patients.

Soon Cooties all over the country were visiting hospitalized veterans, pledging to "Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White." Today this goal is still one of the auxiliary's highest priorities. Many Pup Tents and their Auxiliaries not only work with VAVS Hospital teams, but also perform services of their own at VA Hospitals and nursing homes. Thousands of Cootie hours and thousands of dollars are donated each year in carrying out this program.

Membership is open to members in good standing in the VFW who have displayed their willingness to work for the parent organization and is by invitation only.

The Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary (MOCA) draws its membership from the ranks of Auxiliary members 16 and older who have been active members of the VFW Auxiliary for at least six months and who is a member in good standing.

**POST REGULAR HOLIDAY EVENTS**

**ADD HERE YOUR POST HOLIDAYS, EVENTS, AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS.**

**POLITICALLY THE VFW IS ONLY CONCERNED WITH VETERANS AND SERVICEMEN'S ISSUES, NOT PARTISAN POLITICS.**

* The VFW has prayers to God in its rituals but does not endorse a particular religion.
* The VFW supports civic and educational activities but does not direct them.
* The VFW offers a hand up to distressed veterans, but not necessarily a handout.
* Draping the Charter is only done for members of our post.
* The use of swear words during meetings is not acceptable.
* To speak to the membership during meetings you have to be recognized by the Commander.
* Interrupting a comrade who has been recognized to speak by the Commander is not allowed.
* When speaking to or addressing a person at a meeting, they should be addressed as ― Comrade, or if they are an officer then they should be addressed as ― Comrade (title).

If a member would like to review a copy of the Post By-laws, the Adjutant has the information. If you would like information on the current financial position of the post, the QM has that information.

**VOLUNTEERING**

**Update this section with events that your post does every year and may need help with**.

Volunteers are the backbone of our post. Without them we would not be able to provide the services we do. Volunteers are needed in every area that we take part in. We are always looking for anyone with special skills that can help with work around the homes or yards of the elderly Veterans in our area. Anything you can do, even if it is just offering your expert advice, is a help in maintaining your post home.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the VFW can be done in two ways. Either as a continuous member who pays their dues annually to the post or as a Life member who is paid up for life.

Do not forget to look at your VFW Membership card for the date to renew your membership.

Annual Members can pay their dues at Post number or online at vfw.org, or by mail directly to   
VFW National:

VFW National Headquarters Third Floor, Room 316

406 West 34th St.

Kansas City, MO 64111

(Please include your membership #)

If you are a continuous member (one who pays yearly dues) this may be a good time to evaluate life membership. Over the years of life membership use, you may save money versus an annual membership every year.

By becoming a VFW Life Member, you make a lifetime commitment to serving your fellow service members and veterans. That is something to take great pride in. You can also enjoy many great benefits of being a life member!

You will:

* Avoid annual dues and renewals.
* Maintain your membership in any Post you choose, worldwide!
* Never pay an increase in dues—Guaranteed!
* Receive a 10% discount on exclusive VFW Store merchandise for the first year. You can become a VFW Life Member by making a one -time payment as shown below. You can also pay for your Life Membership through our installment plan, with an initial $45 payment, with the Life Membership amount billed over an 11-month period. Look at a current new member application for updated Life Membership amounts.

Payment Plan Terms & Conditions: The VFW Life Membership installment plan allows any VFW member/applicant to purchase a Life Membership by making an initial payment of $45.00 and (11) monthly payments. The member will be issued an annual membership card and can elect, upon receipt of the first monthly invoice, to pay via check, credit card or ACH Debit. The applicable Life Membership fee is to be determined from the schedule using the applicant’s age on Dec. 31 of the installment plan year in which the application is submitted, regardless of actual date of birth. A permanent Life Membership card will be issued upon completion of this agreement.

Recruiting is everyone’s task. If you know a veteran or family member who qualifies, take a moment to tell them of all the good things we do to help veterans. Membership applications are available to any Comrade or Auxiliary member for the asking.

If you have any questions, ask them. Remember, there are no dumb questions. We all started as a new member at some time in the past.