

## Membership

Our Commander in Chief has laid down a challenge for February 2021!

Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch is challenging our Posts to increase their Life membership. The Post in each membership division that recruits, reinstates, or converts the most Life members in the month of February will receive a \$1,000 award deposited into the Post's account! In addition, if the winning Post also shares the contest on their Post's Facebook page, they will receive an additional \$250!

Three-Month Lapsed Member Challenge: From Feb. 1 to April 30, the Commander-in-Chief has tasked all VFW Departments to work their lapsed member lists and bring members back into the fold. The Departments who recover the most members over the next three months will receive a monetary award into the Department account, but in addition to that every Department who recovers at least three lapsed members for every Post in their Department will be entered into a drawing for a .30-30 Henry Rifle!

### **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 Services (VTS) applied towards airfare, accommodations and transportation for a trip of their own choice.**

### **DEPARTMENT EARLY BIRD WINNERS!**

Congratulations to the following Departments for achieving above 92% in membership last month! Thank you for your hard work and dedication:

Montana, Alaska, Pacific Areas, Europe, Hawaii, Minnesota, Washington, Louisiana, and Wyoming.

### **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](http://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](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## **POST DEVELOPMENT**

Last month we discussed New Post Development training and the processes involved with chartering a new Post. This month the Membership Department is sending out two Post Chartering Kits with another two in the wings! It's no question this membership year is oddly unique. Our ability to recruit and grow Posts across all Departments have greatly diminished for the short-run. And yet we are still chartering new Posts.

How can we be developing new Posts in this time of a world-wide pandemic? As always, it is with your hard work! I have heard from many Departments who are locked-down and unable to develop new Posts. While this is disappointing, those efforts turn toward growing healthy Posts and revitalizing Posts in need. Please continue to let us know your achievements and the challenges you face getting through these times. 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](mailto:coreyhunt@vfw.org).

For any questions or further information, please contact the Membership Department via email at [membership@vfw.org](mailto: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/](https://facebook.com/VFWmembershipHQ/).

## **UPCOMING TRAINING**

The next Membership Monday training webinar will be on Feb. 8, 2021, at 2:00 PM CST, and we will be covering the topic **How to Hold a Successful Recruiting Event**. Look for the Membership Monday Zoom meeting invite in an OMS Notification on Feb. 4, 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](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOP THREE RECRUITERS!**

Top Three Recruiters (as of 1/25/2020):

**Steven L. Woodward – 90**  
VFW Post 2224, Dept. of WA

**Mathew B. Northen – 89**  
VFW Post 8862, Dept. of Europe

**Jack A. Hawley – 86**  
VFW Post 1087, Dept. of MT

## **LEGACY LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

CHECK OUT OUR LEGACY LIFE VIDEO! Go to [vfw.org](http://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 Foundation

**SPORT CLIPS HELP A HERO DONATION**

On Jan. 25, 2021, VFW Foundation Board Member and Sport Clips Founder & CEO Gordon Logan presented a \$1,026,105 donation check to the VFW Foundation to provide scholarships for service members and veterans through the Help A Hero Scholarship program. Considering the limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's effort was especially noteworthy. More than \$60,000 of the money raised was from Sport Clips' own \$1 per hair care service donation made on Veterans Day while clients, individual supporters, and Sport Clips team members donated the largest portion of the money raised in stores and through virtual walks. To date, more than 1,900 military and student veterans have benefited from the Help A Hero Scholarship program through \$8.7 million donated by Sport Clips Haircuts and its generous clients and product partners.

## VFW National Convention

**VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING** - 122nd National Convention housing will officially open March 19, 2021. Housing reservation information will be located on the convention website accessed through the main VFW website at [vfw.org/convention](http://vfw.org/convention). The convention website will also have general convention information including the registration form and links to other convention related information for Baltimore, MD, July 31 – Aug. 5, 2021, including a tentative agenda.

**CONVENTION REGISTRATION** - Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure states each Post will pay, in advance, a national convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the VFW National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the national convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee provided the Post has paid the mandated \$25 advance registration fee. All advance registrations should be mailed to the VFW National Headquarters, 406 W. 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111, ATTN: Convention Registration or you may register online by going to [vfw.org](http://vfw.org).

## Development

**2021 VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) Annual Campaign** – I hope you received the 2021 VFW NVS Annual Campaign mailing that was sent in early January. It contained a 2021 Petition to Congress and an American Hero Memorial Day card for you to sign and return. We will continue collecting the petitions and deliver them to Congress to let them know that we will not sit by and allow Congress to make sweeping fiscal changes that could threaten veterans' benefits. The cards will be distributed to hospitalized veterans and

service members by Memorial Day. Some members received the 2021 member survey to fill out and return, and we are continuing to collect and tally the responses.

In late-January, we sent out a reminder letter with a Special Veterans' Petition addressed to the president and congressional leaders. The VFW is doing everything it can to remind our president and congressional leaders to uphold the promises made to those who have fought for this nation. Please sign and return the petitions so we can forward them to Washington, D.C. When you do, please consider sending a gift to help the VFW National Veterans Service.

Your support is still urgently needed for the 2021 VFW NVS Annual Campaign. Your donation right now ensures the VFW's national force of highly trained, professional service officers is at the ready to help America's veterans navigate the complicated VA system.

VFW Service Officers help veterans and their survivors cut through the red tape to receive VA compensation and pension benefits they have earned. In fiscal year 2020, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported that the veterans represented by the VFW received more than \$9.7 billion in earned disability compensation and pension benefits. This includes more than \$1.4 billion in new benefits, submitted on behalf of more than 110,000 veterans. VFW Service Officers are there for all veterans to help them apply for and receive their hard-earned VA benefits. This service is available to all veterans FREE OF CHARGE — and made possible through your donations. Please, watch your mail for this important campaign.

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

**Free Estate Planning Resources From the VFW** – Most people know the importance of a will or estate plan. But did you know more than half of American adults do not have one in place! The VFW is providing a free Personal Estate Planning Kit, which you can download at visit [vfw.org/Plannedgiving](http://vfw.org/Plannedgiving). Once you have made sure your family and loved ones are taken care of, we invite you to consider a gift to the VFW in your will. It is simple and takes only a few words to provide support for future generations of veterans. Learn more by contacting the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](https://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!

## VFW Communications

In case you missed it, VFW National Commander Hal Roesch recently delivered the State of the VFW address live on Facebook to provide members with an update on organizational operations and a glimpse into the VFW's future! View it on demand here: [facebook.com/62330592135/videos/994610017731885](https://facebook.com/62330592135/videos/994610017731885).

## Veterans & Military Support Programs

### **All-American Requirement:**

Encourage your Posts to donate directly to the VMS office to ensure they get credit for the VMS All-American criteria. **Post's minimum donation is \$100.00.**

**ATTN VMS Chairmen** – If you were mailed your Veterans & Military Support 2020-21 lapel pins and have not reconciled payment, now would be a good time to take care of it so that your donation will represent your Department's fundraiser for VMS to qualify for All-American.

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](https://VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/websolutionapp)
- **AUX Website Solution:** [VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/auxwebsolutionapp](https://VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/auxwebsolutionapp)
- **Chairman Report:** [VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/vms\\_chairman\\_report](https://VFWPrograms.formstack.com/forms/vms_chairman_report)
- **MAP Grant Application:** [vfw.org/MAPGrantApplication](https://vfw.org/MAPGrantApplication)
- **MAP Grant Report:** [vfw.org/MAPGrantReport](https://vfw.org/MAPGrantReport)
- **Adopt a Unit Application:** [vfw.org/AdoptAUnitApp](https://vfw.org/AdoptAUnitApp)
- **Adopt a Unit Report:** [vfw.org/AdoptAUnitReport](https://vfw.org/AdoptAUnitReport)
- **VMS Online Donation:** [heroes.vfw.org/page/22950/donate1](https://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](http://vfwstore.org/products/GP238).

**SMART/MAHER VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARD.**

Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post, District and Department level (if applicable) should be completed. After Department judging, each Department may select a single candidate for each of the three categories and submit those to VFW National Headquarters by Feb. 1. The 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 to request the citations is the “VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form” which is available on the VFW website. Simply visit [vfw.org/#login](http://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 are up on the VFW website.

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

**PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT DEADLINE REMINDER.** The deadline for mailing the Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen winner packets to National Headquarters was Jan. 15, 2021 (even if they have not been personally notified they are the winner). This year, due to logistics and planning for the virtual Parade of Winners ceremony, Department winners will be contacted as soon as their packet is received by National Headquarters.

The suggested deadline for Departments to have reviewed and approved their District and Post entries in the All-American Dashboard was Jan. 31. This will ensure we will have accurate reporting numbers across the organization and allot us the time to remedy errors. If you are unsure how to report your participation in the All-American Dashboard or if you are having login issues to the OMS system, contact Nick Lopez at [nlopez@vfw.org](mailto:nlopez@vfw.org) or 816.968.1155.

**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](http://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](mailto:whs.vnwar50th_cpp@mail.mil). For Vietnam War commemorative items, shop the VFW Store at: [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=vietnam](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=vietnam).

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

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

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

### **WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL NEWS:**

**Is Your Post Named for a Veteran of the Great War (World War I)?** If so, we want to hear from you! The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission is collecting information on VFW Posts named after WWI veterans. If your Post is honored by the memory of a local doughboy, marine, sailor, or nurse who served and sacrificed their lives, we want to know more. Please send your information and material on the history of your Post to: David Hamon, Veterans and Military Affairs Director, U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, at [david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org](mailto:david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org) or you may call him at 540.379.8584. The Commission is collecting historical and archive information on the Great War to observe and commemorate those 4.7 million who served in that conflict. America never forgets its veterans. Help them build a national memorial in Washington, D.C. To learn more, go to: [ww1cc.org/memorial](http://ww1cc.org/memorial).

**Help Build America's World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C.** The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission recently announced the creation of the AEF (Allied Expeditionary Forces) Memorial Corps. The program is a special designation for Posts, patriotic organizations, local chapters of civic organizations,

among others, to be recognized as an official "AEF Memorial Corps Post" for making a donation to build the national WWI memorial in Washington, D.C. Your Post will be certified with a special Centennial Certificate commemorating your contribution in "going over the top" to get the memorial built. For more information, please write Mr. David Hamon: [david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org](mailto:david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org) or call him at 540.379.8584. To view the progress of the memorial, go to: [ww1cc.org/memorial](http://ww1cc.org/memorial). Your VFW Post will forever be enshrined in history as having pushed to get the memorial built. America never forgets her veterans!

**NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM.** This program is designed to provide recognition and awards to VFW members who volunteer their time to outside organizations. Recognition is in the form of certificates and/or lapel pins which are given to volunteers who have completed the number of hours prescribed for those awards. For more information, see the VFW Community Activities and Citizenship Education Chairmen's Manual or contact Tammy at 816.756.3390, ext. 6287 in the VFW Programs department for a nomination form.

**POW/MIA FLAG -- OFFICIAL DISPLAY DAYS.** Public Law 105-85 (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](http://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

Take Care of You and Your Family with Emergency Assistance Plus!

*The Emergency Assistance Plus® (EA+®)* program for VFW Members provides a solid back-up plan that helps you handle almost any crisis when you travel away from home. If you get sick or hurt while away from home, EA+ steps in to provide critical services for emergencies that health and travel insurance generally will NOT cover. This includes:

- Medical Evacuation
- Medical Assistance
- Travel Assistance
- Assistance for Companions

EA+ will even provide a nurse escort to assist with your travel home, if medically necessary. Get affordable member-only rates for you and your family now! Get additional information at [vfwmemberplans.com/emergency-assistance-plus](http://vfwmemberplans.com/emergency-assistance-plus).



**“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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](https://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.

## National Veterans Service

### Seeking Nominations for VFW Service Officer of the Year

Now more than ever the role of an accredited veterans service representative is of vital importance to the continued well-being of our nation's veterans and their families. Even during the ongoing global pandemic, our accredited representatives have continued to counsel veterans, complete paperwork, and submit VA claims for earned entitlements and benefits. In many cases easing the hardships our veterans and their families are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is the opportunity for your Department to nominate one accredited representative from your Department for the John A. Biedrzycki Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award for 2020-2021.

We encourage every Department to put forth a candidate. A nomination shows that Department leadership is aware of the significant contributions your program makes in your community every day, even during these times when many of us are working from our homes.

#### ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- Department Service Officers
- Assistant Department Service Officers
- Claims Consultants/Representatives
- Veterans Service Officers/Representatives

Individuals **NOT** eligible for this award are:

- VFW National Staff
- VFW Contractors
- VFW accredited representatives whose primary employer is other than the VFW or a State veterans agency

#### SELECTION CRITERIA:

1. Nominees for the annual award must have demonstrated exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their families during the 12 months preceding the April 30 deadline.

2. A brief summary (no more than two pages) is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, and how the nominee's efforts are considered exemplary. Suggested items for consideration (but not limited to):
- Number of individuals with VFW POAs assisted
  - Community outreach conducted
  - Examples of excellent customer service provided
  - Meticulous use of VetraSpec or another electronic claims processing system (specify system)
  - Submission of TIMELY monthly reports (if located in a VA regional office)
  - Number of VFW members recruited
  - Innovative methods of assistance provided during the COVID-19 pandemic

#### AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient of the award will be furnished round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two night's hotel accommodations to attend the VFW National Convention (if an in-person event is held) where the award will be presented. In addition, the award recipient will receive \$599 in recognition of their accomplishments and to offset travel expenses.

Please note that the selection committee will review NVS databases to understand how candidates served clients. Additionally, the results of test scores at NVS training, the results of any site visits, and other criteria be considered in making the final decision.

Nominations may be sent to the Director, VFW National Veterans Service, either by email to [taldana@vfw.org](mailto:taldana@vfw.org), by mail (200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002 ATTN: Service Officer Award), or by fax to 202.547.3196 (ATTN: Service Officer Award).

**Nominations must be received not later than April 30.**

Past winners of this award have been service officers from the Departments of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. These service officers stood out from our worldwide cadre for not only meeting the challenge daily, but exceeding it through exemplary commitment, technical knowledge, and customer service.

## National Legislative Service/Action Corps

### **Stay Informed and Be Involved in the 117th Congress**

The 116th Congress is now in the books, and we had some big successes! Bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism were added to the Agent Orange presumptive list; the statutory definition of Early Vietnam veterans was changed; the *Deborah Sampson Act* became law; and the 12-year limit on VR&E benefits was eliminated. However, a lot of our legislative priorities did not become law, so there is still much work for us to do during the 117th Congress.

The [2021 VFW Priority Goals](#) provide our organization's overview of the areas of focus regarding military benefits and quality of life programs. The Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provide vital services and care for our military members, veterans, and their families. It is imperative that both DOD and VA receive sufficient funding for the services they provide. We must hold VA

accountable for the timeliness and quality of services it delivers to our veterans, and we must ensure that Congress passes meaningful legislation.

### **Know Your Members of Congress and Make Sure They Know Our Priorities**

As of January 2021, there are 70 new members in Congress—nine in the Senate and 61 in the House—with one House seat still pending. Do you know who represents your state and district in the 117th Congress? Do your congressional members and their staffers know what issues are important to our military members and veterans? The VFW is committed to working with all members of Congress to ensure that laws and regulations favor our service members, veterans, and their families. We encourage you to contact your congressional members and inform them of the VFW's position on important legislative issues.

[Find Your Legislators](#) and share our [2021 VFW Priority Goals Brochure](#) via email or print. Stay informed, be involved, and help us to succeed with our advocacy. There is still work to be done!

## VFW Store

**Presidents' Day is coming up.** Shop the VFW Store for items to celebrate the day - [vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/presidentsday?page=1&size=100](https://vfwstore.org/category/more/specials/presidentsday?page=1&size=100).

**Clearance items** are still on sale, while quantities last - [vfwstore.org/category/more/clearance?page=1&size=100](https://vfwstore.org/category/more/clearance?page=1&size=100).

## Roll Call of Departed Comrades

PAGE, FRANK V., All American Commander, Department of Arizona, 2003-2004 and a Gold Legacy Life member of George T. Diehl, Sr. Post 7968, Apache Junction, Arizona, January 10, 2021.