

# NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BULLETIN



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

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## Membership

For the month of March, the Post that leads each division will receive an 8-foot VFW personalized table cover customized for the Post to be used for meetings, recruiting events, and other functions. In addition, at the end of the year every Post who has led their division in the monthly challenges will be featured on a video display at the National Convention to recognize their achievements.

Keep it up and we will show everyone how NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS!

This contest will run from March 1, through March 31, 2025. Applications and payments processed online before close of business will be credited that day, payments and applications made through the mail will be processed when received. Questions about this or other membership programs can be sent to [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

As a reminder, every month we will award points to our Posts as follows:

- Recruit a new annual member into the Post: 1 point
- An annual or lapsed member converts to Life: 5 points
- Recruit a new Life Member into the Post: 10 points

### MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES:

Do you want to help your Post meet your membership goals? Log into [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) and go to <https://www.vfw.org/my-vfw/vfw-training-and-support/membership-recruiting-and-retention> where you can view training videos, download recruiting materials and posters, and gain access to all the tools you need in order to help recruit, retain, and mentor your members!

### MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As we continue in the membership year, keep in mind the membership requirements set out by the Commander-in-Chief:

- Achieve 102% in Membership
- For everyone to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Increase membership drives and/or events.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- Increase Life Membership and Legacy Life Membership.

## NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MATERIAL ORDER FORM

As we continue in the 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 these simple steps and if you have any questions, you may contact the Membership department at 1.888.564.6839 or email us at [membership@vfw.org](mailto:membership@vfw.org).

## UPCOMING TRAINING

Our next Membership Monday training webinar will be on March 10, at 2:00 PM, CDT, Topic: "Finding New Members." Learn how to locate potentially eligible veterans near your Post, and how to get involved in events where you can bring in new members. Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VFWMembership> to learn how to attend this online training.

## 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 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?*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP RECRUITERS!

Top Three Recruiters

Timothy M. Borland – 624  
VFW Post 9972, Dept of AZ

Ed Stefanak, Jr. – 251  
VFW Post 9539, Dept of SC

Steven L. Woodward – 210  
VFW Post 2224, Dept of W

These comrades are leading the charge for membership growth – will you take up the challenge and see your name on this list?

## VFW Foundation

On Feb. 20, representatives from the VFW Foundation, VFW, and corporate partner Humana convened for our annual strategy meeting to strengthen collaboration and communication. The discussion centered on key shared priorities, including enhancing support for the veteran community, expanding NVS outreach, planning for the VFW National Convention, advancing the Uniting to Combat Hunger & Homelessness (UTCH) campaign, and reinforcing partnerships to optimize resources for veterans in need. The meeting proved productive, emphasizing improvements in healthcare access, community engagement, and veteran education. Moving forward, strategic actions will be implemented to tackle emerging challenges and ensure a unified approach to common objectives.

## VFW National Convention

**VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSING** – 126th National Convention housing will officially open March 18, 2025. 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 Columbus, OH – Aug. 9-13, 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, Quartermasters are strongly encouraged to register delegates utilizing the on-line membership system (OMS).

## 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.*

**Soon to Arrive – Spring Edition All-Occasion Cards** – This spring, the VFW is mailing the 2025 Special Edition All-Occasion Card Collection and other gifts in recognition of your commitment to the VFW and our nation's struggling veterans of all generations. More importantly, there is a special Independence Day card included in the package. Please sign and return it right away so that we can deliver your message of gratitude to one of America's service members or hospitalized veterans in time for Independence Day. It means so much to them to know their fellow veterans remember and care.

Right now, thousands of veterans are living with the physical and mental trauma of war. The physical wounds can be seen, but what about those veterans who suffer in silence? There are thousands of veterans who carry the invisible wounds of war, such as Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress.

The VFW wants to be sure when veterans from all wars and conflicts turn to us for assistance, we have the programs available for them. When you send back the signed card, please send a donation in honor of your fellow veterans who now face a long road to recovery from injuries sustained in battle. Your gift will mean that these programs stay available and strong for all veterans, right in *your* Department.

**2025 Voice of Democracy® Winners** – It’s almost time to announce the 2025 Voice of Democracy National Winner. We hope you will take the opportunity to [listen to the essay](#) given by your state winner as well as the winners from other states. **The grand prize winner will be announced on Monday, March 3, at the VFW Washington Conference in Washington, D.C. Watch a livestream of the Parade of Winners on March 3, at 6:00 p.m. (EST).** If you are not currently a member of the VFW Friends of Freedom, you can sign up to receive these important alerts at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org).

**What Is Your ‘Why’?** – Think about your personal connection to the VFW. What is it that ties you to supporting America’s veterans? Maybe you served, are still serving, or you have a loved one who served. Whatever your story is, that’s your WHY. Creating a charitable legacy is a great way to ensure America’s heroes are still supported in the future. Make a gift to the VFW in your estate plans and share your WHY with our nation’s veterans for years to come. Read more: <https://vfw.planmylegacy.org/what-is-your-why>. To learn more about making a difference in the lives of veterans, contact the VFW Planned Giving Office at 816.968.1119 or email [plannedgiving@vfw.org](mailto:plannedgiving@vfw.org).

**Have You Heard About VFW’s Partners in Patriotism?** – Adjutant General Dan West would like you to join him in supporting the VFW’s life-changing programs for veterans, service members and their families. The VFW has an option that allows you to support VFW programs on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis, which helps reduce expenses and eliminates the amount of fundraising mail you receive. 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 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](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!

**VFW Department Resource Page** – We encourage all VFW Departments to actively support the VFW Department Fundraising Programs. The success of these initiatives rely on the participation and backing of your Department’s members. Promotional materials can be accessed by visiting [heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools](http://heroes.vfw.org/VFWTools).

# Veterans & Military Support Programs

## 2025 VFW Day of Service

Make your state stand out! We're kicking off 2025 VFW Day of Service, a nationwide community service effort, and we are counting on you to help make this year bigger and better. Please visit <https://todaysvfw.org/vfw-day-of-service/> to learn more, check out helpful tools and resources—and most importantly — sign up!

Day of Service events should be scheduled during the month of May 2025 and Dashboard credit for “Day of Service Participation” will not be applied until after May 2025. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Mark Herron at [mherron@vfw.org](mailto:mherron@vfw.org).

## VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members

For future reference, the **Unmet Needs Program** will now be called **VFW Financial Assistance for Service Members**. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact me at [mherron@vfw.org](mailto:mherron@vfw.org) or 816.968.1102.

## Military Assistance Program (MAP) Grant Funds

The **VFW MAP Grant** is **closed** for the 2024-25 program year. The 2024-25 MAP Grant funds have been depleted. Any events held after the closure of the MAP grant will not be reimbursed with the 2025-26 funds.

## VFW’s “Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship”

The **2025 Fall Semester** opened Jan. 1, 2025, and will close April 30, 2025. The application will be available online only at [vfw.org/Scholarship](https://vfw.org/Scholarship).

## All American Eligibility

To qualify for **All-American**, a **minimum donation of \$125** must be donated to **VMS** by **June 30, 2025**. VMS donations will only be handled through the Dashboard. All Posts must click on the “**VMS Donation**” tab on the **Dashboard** to donate. The link will point them to OMS. Please do not send checks to the National Headquarters. If a Post does not use a credit card, the Post will send their donation to their Department HQs and the Department HQs will submit the donation for their Post. Credit will automatically update on the Dashboard daily. Overseas Departments will donate to the other programs through the link also in lieu of participation. This will automatically update daily.

When you make your **\$125.00** or more donation, all that needs to be entered into the box is 125 or more. The **\$** and **.00** are **not required** in the donation amount box.

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

## VMS Lapel Pins

The 2025-26 VMS Lapel Pin design is underway. This year, we will be doing one design only.

The design and order form will be sent out next month.

We still have a few Departments that owe for the 2024-25 VMS Lapel Pins. You will be contacted soon. You won't be able to order new pins until this has been reconciled. You may utilize the **"VMS Donation"** link on the upper right-hand corner of the **Dashboard**.

## VMS Program Tools

The Veterans & Military Support (VMS) Program Tools webpage is updated every month. Link to the webpage is <https://www.vfw.org/VMSPTools>.

**Continue to do what you are doing and 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, Space Force and then Coast Guard. For military flags, go to [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag](https://www.vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=MilitaryFlag).

**VFW 125TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE POST PROGRAM SIGN UP.** We encourage as many of our VFW Posts to get signed up to become a 125th Anniversary community service Post. To date, we have 98. Please help us spread the word. Our birthday was a couple of days ago, but our celebration will last the rest of the year and conclude at the National Convention in Columbus.

The VFW National Commander invites all VFW Posts to be the catalyst to get their communities involved in commemorating the contributions of all veterans and their family members to our country during the VFW 125th Anniversary year. In addition, it is hoped you will encourage your community to study the history of this era to help ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

Have our Posts click this link <https://vfw125.org/get-involved/> and click on the **red** Accept Invitation icon for further information.

**PROGRAMS DASHBOARD TOOL. (NOTE: Previously ALL-AMERICAN DASHBOARD)** Please encourage Posts to read the 2024-25 Membership program. Military Assistance Program grants have been launched to show Departments and Posts how much in grant assistance has been received from National HQs to supplement the Unmet Needs financial grants & VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship statistics. The information charts reside in the KPI tools section.

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

Nominations for this award and the judging at the Post, District and Department level (if applicable) are completed. 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. The National Teacher Award winners will be announced soon.

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.

**VFW NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVANT AWARDS.** Judging at all levels should have been completed at this time or the near future. Once completed, VFW Departments may submit their up to five winning nominees, if available, (one for each career area) to the VFW Programs office, by completing the “VFW Department Public Servant Award Request Form” through Formstack. VFW Programs staff has emailed the form link to Department Adjutants/Quartermasters prior to the deadline of Feb. 1.

Each Department will receive their requested awards and should contact their recipients to arrange a presentation. Department Commanders may present the awards at their Department Convention, but are encouraged to also present the award in front of the recipient’s peers at a professional association event, city council meeting, etc. The purpose of the second venue is to expose these VFW awards to the public and especially other law enforcement personnel, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and EODTs personnel, many of whom are veterans eligible for VFW membership. Order plaques and citations for public servants from the VFW Store [vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant](http://vfwstore.org/searchresults?q=public%20servant).

NOTE: Remember, the First Responder Medal is available through the VFW Store. To review this item, please click on the following link: [vfwstore.org/products/32134](http://vfwstore.org/products/32134).

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND PATRIOT’S PEN NATIONAL AWARDS.** Every Voice of Democracy and Patriot’s Pen® first place Department winner will receive a National scholarship or award. The amount for the Voice of Democracy National awards now totals \$174,500, with the top three awards being raised to \$35,000, \$21,000 and \$15,000. The Patriot’s Pen National awards total is \$55,000.

**PLEASE REVIEW UPDATE ON O.C.S.P. PROGRAM.** VFW National Programs has updated Outstanding Community Service Post award programs starting this program year. Please share this with your Community Service Chairpersons.

**OUTSTANDING NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD.** Each year on July 1, the national Programs office will determine the top community service Posts in each conference, based off their community service reporting and total impact, from July 1 to June 30 the previous year. Your community service total impact is figured by the money spent to host and organize the community service event, plus total hours all volunteers participated, plus the mileage for all volunteers (Dollars Donated + Hours + Mileage = Total Impact).

These four Posts will be awarded the Award for Community Service and will be invited to attend the VFW National Convention. The Post Commander (or designated representative) and a guest will receive round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations for five nights, and a \$599 stipend to receive the award at the VFW National Convention.

**NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POST OF THE YEAR.** Each Department will have an NCSP winner based on total impact also. National will select based on end of year reports on July 1. Winners will also be published in the Convention program booklet and receive a street sign identifying this national award for the Post to put up in their community.

**“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 (Nov. 7,

2019), it is required that the POW/MIA flag, on certain federal properties, 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](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

### Guard Against Tax Season Identity Theft

Tax season is prime time for identity thieves. Criminals use phishing emails, texts, calls, and even steal documents to obtain your personal information and file fraudulent returns.

Be Alert for some of these warning signs:

- The IRS rejects your tax return
- You receive a W-2 or 1099 form from an unknown employer
- IRS notices about unreported income
- Inaccurate Social Security statements

Protect Yourself with ID Resolve:

Don't let tax season become a nightmare. ID Resolve is the concierge ID monitoring and resolution solution that delivers 24/7 U.S. based human support for prevention & restoration. ID Resolve takes the hassle out of identity theft recovery by proactively identifying scams, addressing threats, and doing the legwork to restore your identity and recover your losses. Get peace of mind knowing you're protected. [Enroll online now](#) or call 1.833.203.9232.

## "Buddy"<sup>®</sup> Poppy

**"BUDDY"<sup>®</sup> 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 three (3) weeks in advance of your distribution date.



## BUDDY POPPY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- 1) Departments must order poppies through OMS.
- 2) All claims of non-receipt of a Buddy Poppy order must be made within 60 days of the date of the order or will NOT be replaced free of charge.
- 3) All orders for the traditional Buddy Poppy, Anniversary Poppies or tin tab poppies must be placed through your Department Headquarters. Auxiliaries must go through their Post to order all poppies.
- 4) The tin tabs do count towards the Buddy Poppy requirement for the All-American program.
- 5) If you do not receive your order within four weeks of placing it with your Department, please contact your Department Headquarters to report you have not received your order.
- 6) All poppies are shipped within 10 days of ordering except orders placed in June and July, due to preparation for National Convention, please allow an additional five business days.

Miscellaneous items (coin cans, buttons, posters, etc.) should be ordered directly from the VFW Store at [vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy](https://vfwstore.org/category/programs/buddypoppy) or by calling Member Service Center at 1.833.839.8387.

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

**VFW ANNIVERSARY BUDDY POPPIES.** Special poppies are available to Posts celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries. The poppies are the same design as traditional poppies but come in silver for the 25th anniversary Post, gold for the 50th anniversary Post and diamond (iridescent white) for the 75th anniversary Post. Posts currently in their 100th anniversary year can order any color and as many as they need. If not in your 100th anniversary year, please limit your order of anniversary poppies to 1,000 to ensure stock does not run out. These are ordered through the Department in OMS and processed the same as red poppies and should be distributed and used in displays just like the red poppies.

Currently we have no plans to replenish inventory of Anniversary Poppies due to increased cost and the small quantities we sell of Anniversary Poppies. Based on the past four years' sales, we have sufficient inventory for the next 1.1 years of the Gold, 1.2 years of Diamond and 14 years of the Silver.

## National Veterans Service

### **NOMINATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE JOHN A. BIEDRZYCKI ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD 2024-25**

On Jan. 21, 2025, all Departments were notified that nominations for the John A. Biedrzycki Service Representative of the Year for 2024-25 are now being accepted.

We encourage every Department to submit a nomination to show that Department leaders are aware of the significant contributions your service office staff and your service program make in your community every day.

#### ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible nominees include:

- Department Service Officers
- Assistant Department Service Officers
- Claims Consultants/Representative/Analysts/Reviewers
- 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
- Previous recipients of the Accredited Representative of the Year Award
- Individuals who do not have VFW accreditation

#### 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 of no more than 2 pages is to be submitted which explains the who, what, when, where, why, 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 Tyler Veterans Benefits (TVB) 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.

#### AWARDS:

Each Department Commander may nominate one eligible individual for this prestigious award. The individual who is ultimately chosen as the recipient will be provided with round-trip travel (for the winner and one guest) and two nights' hotel accommodation to attend the VFW National Convention 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 may be considered in making the final decision.

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

Nominations must be received not later than Apr. 30, 2025.

# National Legislative Service/Action Corps

## The VFW on Capitol Hill

Hundreds of VFW members will be in Washington, D.C., March 2-6, for the 2025 VFW Washington Conference. Members from each Department will visit their congressional offices to present the VFW's [2025 Priority Goals and talking points](#).

VFW National Commander Alfred Lipphardt will testify on behalf of our organization before a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs on Tuesday, March 4. We will continue to forge ahead with our advocacy efforts in the 119th Congress to ensure our nation's veterans, service members, and their families receive the benefits and services they have earned and deserve.

## Independent Budget Released

Leading veterans service organizations — Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — have released *The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2026-2027*. This report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future. “While the Independent Budget is now complete, it is imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other stakeholders, to make the needs and interests of all veterans a top priority,” said VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci. “We have co-authored this report and offered budgetary recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care and earned benefits for the men and women who served.” [Read the report](#).

# VFW Store

**ORDER YOUR VFW UNIFORM CAP TODAY!** Officer changes will be taking place soon. The peak season for ordering caps is April to August, when the VFW Store processes thousands of cap orders. During this period, it can take up to 10 weeks to receive your cap. To order today, go to [vfwstore.org/category/vfw/uniformcapandnametags](https://vfwstore.org/category/vfw/uniformcapandnametags) or call 833.839.8387.



As the national winners of the VFW's Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth scholarship contests are announced during the Washington Conference in Washington, D.C., let's remember to thank all the participants and to recognize their efforts with tokens of appreciation from the VFW Store. You'll find backpacks, power banks, water bottles and more.

Voice of Democracy: [vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy](https://vfwstore.org/category/programs/voiceofdemocracy)

Patriot's Pen: [vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen](https://vfwstore.org/category/programs/patriotspen)

## Roll Call of Departed Comrades

JONES, ALAN, Q., Commander, Department of Pennsylvania, 1986-1987, and a Gold Legacy Life Member of Walter E. Brown Post No. 21, Connellsville, Pennsylvania, December 5, 2024.

COCA, FELIX, J., Commander, Department of New Mexico, 1969-1970, and a Gold Legacy Life Member of Santa Fe Post No. 2951, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 5, 2025.

MEIER, RODGER, W., All American Department Quartermaster 2020, 2021 and 2023, Department Adjutant/Quartermaster 2019-2025 and a Gold Legacy Life Member of Rancho Cordova Post No. 10125, Rancho Cordova, California, February 6, 2025.